



## 'Foreigners are reintegrating'

Although some hostility towards immigrants in South Africa persisted, many foreigners had been re-integrated back into their communities, home affairs minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said on Monday.

"Communities affected by the violence have engaged amongst themselves and, although hostility still continues in a few communities, the vast majority of those displaced have been reintegrated," she told a conference on xenophobia in Pretoria.

She was speaking ahead of the Constitutional Court's decision on whether Gauteng refugee shelters should stay open.

"It is now time to listen to victims of violence, it is not time for us to accuse each other. It is time to restore peace," Mapisa-Nqakula said.

She said she noticed that people were talking "past each other" about foreigners.

"It will take time for wounds to heal. There is no room for arrogance."

She added that the loss of more than 60 lives in the xenophobic attacks was "pure criminality".

This opinion was shared by minister in the presidency Essop Pahad, who called the xenophobic violence which started on May 12 "dastardly".

South African Human Rights Commission chairman Jody Kollapen said although the constitution made provision for diversity, this was still a very "romantic and elusive" notion.

"We are grappling with who we are," Kollapen told delegates.

- Meanwhile, the Constitutional Court was told on Monday that the government had done nothing to help victims of xenophobic violence be reintegrated into communities.

All it had done was extend the deadline for the closure of the shelter camp to give refugees more time to make their own arrangements, advocate Nadine Fourie told the court.

Fourie was appearing for foreign nationals Odinga Mamba, Vasch Mitabelee, Kiza Milinga Issa, Davidzo Aabidah Maduviko and the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa. They have asked the Constitutional Court to compile and publish a plan for the reintegration of the victims of xenophobic violence within 30 days; also for the court to order the government to implement such a plan within 60 days. - Sapa

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