

**UNITING REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
GENERAL SYNOD**

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**Statement of the Uniting Reformed Church on the Afrophobic Attacks and
Cases of Femicide in South Africa**

The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) (Southern Synod) is dismayed and shaken by reports of acts of violence perpetrated against women by men and foreign nationals in some parts of the country. We as the church, have witnessed the displacement, loss of property, loss of livelihood of our brothers & Sisters as a result of these Afrophobic attacks. These attacks are mostly directed at African foreign nationals who seem to be an easy target for those who are perpetrating these attacks. These senseless attacks seem to have been given rise by the deplorable conditions South Africans find themselves in. The high levels of unemployment, systematic poverty and frustrations as a result of helplessness amongst South Africans have led South Africans to try to find easy targets and attack them with the hope that this will bring change in their conditions. Africans seem to be in the receiving end of these attacks. These deplorable conditions of South Africans have resulted in South Africans fearing mostly their African brothers & Sisters and developing hatred towards them. These conditions have resulted in South Africans thinking that their fellow Africans are taking jobs that should be reserved for them, spaces which should be occupied by them, enjoying the fruits (a better life for all) of democracy as promised since 1994. These conditions have resulted in South Africans mostly in townships to be victims and perpetrators of Afrophobia. Their frustrations are directed at the wrong place.

We therefore as the church, call upon South Africans to put an end to these senseless attacks on our fellow brothers & Sisters. We call upon the government to work tirelessly to

address the frustrations of South Africans and start changing their living conditions. We call upon the government to protect our fellow brothers and sisters. We also call upon the law enforcement agencies to investigate and act decisively against the crimes related to drugs, hijacking of buildings, child & human trafficking and any other related crimes committed by South Africans and foreign nationals.

We as the church, have also witnessed a sad trend which has resulted in a systematic rise of gender-based abuses, killings (murder) (Femicide) against women by men. We hear reports of women being abused, tortured and killed by their loved ones. We hear of incidents of women who get abused in churches, universities, taxi ranks and in every space. We hear of incidents of sick men who suffer from entitlement mentality, cowardice and patriarchy. These developments are evil and must be condemned. South African men must put an end to the systematic killings of women and deal with the sickness created by patriarchy which elevates men to positions of moral, political, social, spiritual power. South African men must start calling each other out. They must start in their safe spaces where sexist jokes are made. They must stop looking away. They must stop seeing and hearing only what they want to see and hear. They must rid themselves of the disease of entitlement. They must rid themselves of the mentality of objectifying women. They must rid themselves of the mentality of covering each other and covering up. They must start calling each other out.

Therefore, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa calls upon its members and South Africans in line with its confession- the Belhar Confession to *Stand Where God Stands* that is with the wronged, abused, oppressed etc. Standing with God means taking side with the wronged, abused, oppressed, exploited. Standing with God means fighting against Afrophobia and Femicide. Standing with God means not only saying not in my name but acting to put an end to Afrophobia and Femicide.

Prof L Modise (Moderator: URCSA)

Vision: A committed and United Church in service of Unity, Reconciliation and Justice to all people through Christ