



Nairobi, July 15, 2021

NANHRI Statement on NANHRI Solidarity with the South African Human Rights Commission on its calls for calm in South Africa

The Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) is deeply concerned with the ongoing violent riots in the Republic of South Africa following the incarceration of former President Jacob Zuma.

The violence, which has led to loss of lives and destruction of property, has gone unabated in spite of calls led by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) for peaceful demonstrations.

Despite these calls for calm through media statements and other interventions of the SAHRC and other actors, violence has escalated and properties have been looted and destroyed across the country, with Gauteng and Kwa Zulu Natal being the most affected.

These heinous acts against innocent people and business owners not only perpetuate impunity, but also taint the image of the Republic of South Africa against investments. The impact of this is loss of jobs and other forms of revenue flow, which will compound the economic crisis which countries in Africa, including South Africa, are going through as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Network of African National Human Rights Institutions recognises the right of freedoms of assembly, expression, demonstration and picketing, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other international instruments. Such rights have to be exercised with responsibility and within the confines of the law.

We support the SAHRC in encouraging the parties involved in the chaos to uphold constitutionalism and join in the calls condemning the violence.

We call on security agents to restrain from excessive use of force in dealing with the protesters to avoid more fatalities. Any use of excessive force has to be justified and be the last resort.

We call for the arrest and prosecution of the suspects who are involved in these incidents. They must be held accountable. We also encourage the SAHRC to continue monitoring the situation for further course of action as per its mandate, as stipulated by the South African Human Rights Commission Act, 2013, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and other human rights instruments.

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