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Excellency,

I write to inform you that in the course of its 78th session, the Committee considered information on allegations of acts of ill-treatment and of life threatening situation of refugees and asylum seekers following the 2008 outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa, on a preliminary basis, under its early warning and urgent action procedure, in light of information submitted by non-governmental organizations.

The Committee expresses its deep concern about information received concerning continuing xenophobic acts and racist violence, reportedly targeting refugees and asylum-seekers of predominantly African origin who reside in camps in South Africa.

The Committee is concerned at reportedly dire conditions in the camps, in particular in the RIET at Randfontein, the Orange Farm and Rosettenville-Akasia camp. It is reported that refugees and asylum-seekers are victims of xenophobic attacks which have resulted in deaths, suffer ill-treatment and degrading treatment, and have been denied access to food, water and healthcare.

The Committee recalls that in its concluding observations (CERD/C/ZAF/3, 2006, paras. 21, 23 and 27), it recommended that the State party, inter alia, expedite the process of granting asylum so as to clear the backlog of asylum applications, eradicate all forms of ill-treatment of foreign nationals and ensure that all foreign nationals are fully aware of their rights and strengthen measures for dealing with xenophobia and prejudices which lead to racial discrimination.

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The Committee urges the State party to provide information to the Committee on measures taken or envisaged to combat xenophobic attitudes and to stop ongoing racist violence against non-citizens, in particular against refugees and asylum seekers living in camps; measures to ensure their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights; and measures to ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers have adequate and safe living conditions. The Committee also requests the State party to provide details on measures taken to investigate and punish those responsible for the xenophobic and racist violence against refugees and asylum-seekers living in camps.

In accordance with article 9 (1) of the Convention and article 65 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee would be grateful to urgently receive information on all of the issues and concerns as outlined above, before **31 July 2011**.

The Committee also notes with regret that the State party has not yet submitted its combined fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports which are overdue since 9 January 2010, and requests to submit the overdue reports, in one document, at its earliest convenience.

Allow me, Excellency, to reiterate the wish of the Committee to continue to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government of South Africa, with a view to provide it with assistance in the effective implementation of the Convention.

Yours sincerely,



Anwar Kemal
Chairperson of the Committee
on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination