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SOUTH AFRICA AND XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS: IMPLICATIONS ON NIGERIA RELATIONS[1]

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Abstract. *Xenophobia attacks have become a recurrent decimal in South Africa with implications on diplomatic relations between Africa countries especially Nigeria and the world. That is why this paper examines implications of xenophobic attacks on Nigeria-South Africa relations and other Africa countries. The objective of this paper is to identify the implications of xenophobic attacks on Nigeria-South Africa diplomatic relations and to proffer some practical steps to tackle the menace. The paper adopts secondary sources which include published books, journals, newspapers magazines, and internet sources. Interdisciplinary approach to historical research was adopted using content analysis. The paper discovered that massive evacuation of private businesses control by foreign national from South Africa has increase the level of poverty and unemployment in the country. Also, high rate of unemployment and inadequate housing accommodation perhaps the most frequently cited explanation for South African xenophobia, the evidence is mixed. This study concludes that Nigeria - South Africa diplomatic ties has been negatively affected by the xenophobic attacks. The consequential effect cut across economic, political and socio-cultural diplomatic relations between the two countries. However, the study recommended among others that South African government should enhance her diplomatic relations with other African countries especially Nigeria whose citizens have fall victims of xenophobic attacks in their countries, and a pragmatic measure should be taken to eradicate discrimination in South Africa.*

Keywords: *Xenophobic Attack, Diplomatic, Liberation Struggle, Xenophobia, Foreigners.*

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1. Introduction

Xenophobic attacks and violence against foreign nationals in South Africa have increased dramatically over the past decades. This has prompted the international community, including the United Nations, international human rights, social-economic international organisations, among others, to issue condemnation statements on the human rights violation and abuses regularly suffered by non-nationals in some parts of troubled areas of South Africa (Human Rights Watch, 2024). The experimental tendencies in which xenophobia and other forms of violence arise in the country of South Africa represents a combination of socio-economic and political conditions, necessitating the comprehension of specific contexts of contemporary prejudice. Such knowledge is crucial for the formulation of effective policies to address these critical dilemmas (Ajala, 2019).

Xenophobia has become a prominent aspect of life African countries. For instance, xenophobia extends from Kenya to the Maghreb, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia and South Africa, to mention a few (Okolie, 2021). Xenophobia represents a betrayal of cordial relations across Southern Africa, with discrimination against foreign nationals, particularly fellow Africans, having persistently risen in 21st century (Charman & Piper, 2012). The perennial spate of attacks on foreign-owned shops and businesses in some parts of South African townships where such incidents were recorded in 2008, 2016, 2017 and 2022 raises uncomfortable questions about xenophobia in South Africa (Ijimakinwa & Oshineye, 2025).

A plethora of social challenges has been observed on the African continent, ranging from terrorism, kidnapping, robbery and subsequent genocides propagated by religious-cultural groups such as Boko Haram, Fulani Headmens, ISIS, Biafra agitation, Oodua People's Congress, Niger Delta militants, to mention a few in Nigeria, to many other environmental deficiencies (Crush, 2001), all with a devastating negative impact on Africa's industrial development and economic growth agenda, as well as ethnic-tribal civil wars that threaten civil cohesion in the Great Lakes Region (Godson & Delofs, 2009).

According to international Human Rights (2022), xenophobic violence erupted in South Africa in 2022, leaving more than 120 people dead and tens of thousands of people displaced in its wake (Abdulrasheed & Muhammad, 2024). The incident sent shock waves through the country, the continent and across the globe. Xenophobic violence has occurred repeatedly in the country since the early 1990s, most notably in the murder of more than 20 Somali traders in Cape Town in 2005 and 2006. More often than not, these outbreaks have been brief and geographically

constrained to particular areas or towns (Ibrahim, 2019). The attacks began in Alexandra and then spread to other areas in and around Johannesburg, including Cleveland, Diepsloot, Hillbrow, Timbisha, Primrose, Ivory Park and Thokoza. Violence also occurred in Kwazulu-natal, Mpumalanga and Cape Town (Cloandia *et al.*,2011).

Despite the policy framework instituted by South African government to eradicate criminal offences and prosecute perpetrators of various attacks, these virtues have not been effectively transformed into a reduction in xenophobic attacks on Africans in South Africa. It has been observed that ineffectiveness has created a strenuous relationship within Africa-South Africa partnerships over the years (Adebisi, 2017). Beyond this strenuous relationship is the lack of mutual diplomatic reciprocity on the part of the South African government and the country's non-state actors for the strategic role Africa played in the struggle against apartheid. It is therefore pertinent to assess the pitfalls or effects of xenophobic attacks on South Africa's economic state of affairs and to explore the possible implications of xenophobia for diplomatic relations between Africa and South Africa.

The main objective of this study is to examine the extent of xenophobia attacks and violence against foreign nationals in South Africa and to identify the best strategies to curtail the situation. The study adopts a case study and ex post facto research, based on data readily documented over time. The study area, of course, is South Africa as a whole. Xenophobic violence against foreign nationals and its concomitant mayhem has led to loss of lives and destruction of property.

2. Methodology

This section presents the methodology adopted for this work and the analysis of the data gathered in the course of writing this paper. It dwells on research design, sources of data, methods of data collection and analysis. The study engaged secondary sources of data, which were gathered from government gazettes, bulletins, magazines, journals, newspapers, textbooks, internet sources and archival documents on the subject matter. This also includes a historical analysis of Nigeria-South Africa relations.

3. Conceptual and theoretical framework

The term xenophobia has generated conceptual difficulties and a growing body of literature concerning its meaning and effects in Africa. Scholars such as Rosenanu (1990), Ibraham (2019) and Adewale (2017) argue that the concept of xenophobia includes aspects of violence and

physical abuse. The term xenophobia must embody action or practice and cannot merely be defined as an attitude (Clanssen, 2017). This argument signifies that, apart from dislike and fear, there must be acts of violence and attacks that result in harm or damage to life and property. The definition of xenophobia must therefore be further restructured to include specific targets, namely particular individuals or groups against whom fear, hatred or acts of violence are directed (Armstrong, 2014).

Xenophobic attacks in South Africa have been linked to the presence of various African immigrants since the early 1990s, including Nigerians and other African immigrants from Angola, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zimbabwe, many of whom fled political and humanitarian crises (Versanka *et al.*, 2017). According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), xenophobic violence in South Africa is mostly aimed at other African nationals rather than foreigners in general. The Council also noted that such violence has been largely confined to urban informal settlements in South Africa's major cities (HSRC, 2008).

The word xenophobia refers to an affective and behavioural distortion towards foreign nationals and people perceived as aliens (Vender & Westhuizen, 2015). Solomon & Kesata (2013) view it as a psychological state of mind that makes South Africans fear or become hostile towards foreigners. They believe that xenophobia is an anxiety disorder that manifests when one comes into contact with people of different historical descent; it is perceived as discord and hatred towards strange things or foreigners. In the view of Onke (2019), it involves the perceptions of an in-group against an out-group, as members of the former suspect the activities of the latter. The "out-group" in this context refers to other nationals or citizens of other nations. Oyelana (2016) sees xenophobia as a primitive group syndrome, expressing itself in dislike and even hostility towards outsiders and encouraging an attitude of suspicion and exclusion instead of trust and inclusion. Xenophobia becomes specific and possibly more dangerous when it is targeted at a particular alien group, as was the case in Europe against Jews and other minorities during the era of anti-Semitism (Abdulrasheed & Muhammad, 2024). This alien group was given derogatory and classificatory names and labels (Onyido, 2018).

The South African High Commissioner to Nigeria, Lulu Aaron-Erewa, described the current xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals in South Africa as part of a broader pattern of conflict. Behind any conflict, whether in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Sudan, the genocide in Rwanda, apartheid in South Africa or the problems in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine, there

are dimensions of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or related intolerance (Bordean, 2010).

South Africa's long track record of xenophobic violence as a means of protest, the targeting of foreign nationals in particular, and the documented tensions over migration policy and the scale of repatriation provide an important explanation for xenophobia in the country (Ajala, 2019). The attacks were mostly directed against foreign nationals, primarily Africans, especially Nigerians carrying out legitimate businesses (Chandia & Hart, 2016). Attacks were also noted against Chinese speakers, Pakistani migrants, as well as South Africans from minority language groups.

The current wave of attacks and violence has extended beyond a simple conception of foreigners versus nationals, traversing the spectrum of ethnicity, indigeneity, citizenship and even legal status. Settlements that have recently experienced xenophobic attacks have also been the sites of violent and other forms of protest around townships, spreading to other areas in and around Johannesburg, to the provinces of Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, and to Cape Town, most notably in relation to service delivery (Atsenuwa & Adepoju, 2010). Hence, the inability of the South African government to deliver effective services has been expressed in the form of xenophobic violence.

In 2008, South Africa experienced two weeks of violence that left 62 people dead, 21 of whom were South African citizens, over 100,000 people displaced and 1,300 people arrested (Abdulrasheed & Muhammad, 2024). Mozambican Ernesto Nhamuave, who became an awful symbol of the violence, was burned alive in Ramaphosaville on the East Rand (Patel & Essa, 2015). Perpetrators stole goods worth millions of rand and destroyed homes. Those especially targeted were foreigners, people married to foreigners, anyone who refused to participate, and those who belonged to groups unable to justify their claim to a piece of urban land (Mutanda, 2017). The government claimed that this violence consisted of random acts of criminality, but it was specifically targeted at people believed to be a threat to South Africans (Idehen & Osagbe, 2015).

A similar incident broke out in 2013, when violence against foreigners occurred in the Eastern Cape, in communities around Port Elizabeth, after a 19-year-old South African was shot to death, allegedly by a Somali immigrant (Mosselson, 2015). This shows that xenophobia has become violent in nature in South Africa. One must not, however, forget that xenophobia also takes less extreme forms and often affects the daily lives of foreigners. The xenophobic events

that are the focus of this case study took place in De Doorns. De Doorns is a small rural town in the Western Cape, mainly known for producing table grapes. The Zimbabwean community was forcibly chased from the informal settlement in November 2009 and fled; their homes were torn down, burned and destroyed. Over 3,000 people were displaced to the farms of their employers or to the shelter erected on the local rugby field (Mudzanami, 2016).

In February 2017, further attacks and looting of Nigerian-owned businesses in Pretoria West were confirmed by the Nigerian community in South Africa. Buildings and a mechanic's garage, with 28 cars under repair and other vital documents, were burned during the attacks (Onyielo, 2018).

3.1. Theoretical framework

This paper is anchored on the Frustration-Aggression theory. Although the concept of theory is subject to different definitions and explanations, a theory may be understood as a lens through which we empirically see the world around us (Ibrahim, 2019). It is a set of empirically related generalizations and a cause-effect logical explanation of a phenomenon and prediction of its subsequent development. It also represents the highest level of generalization in a scientific discipline, containing all the essential elements of explanation at a particular stage of knowledge and embodying the laws, principles and hypotheses that clarify issues at corresponding levels of analysis (Lisca, 1992; Harris, 2002). Furthermore, Rosenun (1990) defined theory as a collection of interrelated law-like statements or hypotheses intended to explain a political phenomenon or event.

The Frustration-Aggression (F-A) hypothesis, commonly called the Frustration-Aggression (F-A) theory, is a seminal theory in psychology that has been used several times in other fields of study to explain aggressive human behaviour (Abdulrasheed & Muhammad, 2024). Central to the Frustration-Aggression theory is the tenet that there is a causal relationship between frustration and aggression. This conviction of a nexus between frustration and aggression was first held by a group of Yale University psychologists - John Dollard, Leonard W. Doob, Neal E. Miller, Orval H. Mowrer, and Robert R. Sears - in their co-authored monograph, Frustration and Aggression (1939). The theory was later revised by Neal E. Miller (1941) and Leonard Berkowitz (1969).

For the Yale group, frustration is "an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response at its proper time in the behavior sequence" (Lisca, 1992). In other words, it is a situation in which the attainment of a desired goal by a person or group of people is hindered.

Succinctly, aggression is a "sequence of behavior, the goal-response to which is the injury of the person toward whom it is directed" (Lisca, 1992). According to Dollard and his colleagues, "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression" (Northedge, 1991). Two years later, Neal E. Miller reformulated the original assumption as follows: "frustration produces instigations to a number of different types of response, one of which is instigation to some form of aggression" (Northedge, 1991). Ibrahim (2019), on his part, pointed out that frustration does not immediately trigger aggression in a person or group of people, but creates a "readiness for aggressive acts" (Lisca, 1992).

Central to the theory is the assumption that all aggression has its root cause in the frustration of more actors' goal achievement. In other words, conflict can be the product of unfulfilled personal or group goals and the frustration that this brings. Put differently, when there is a gap between the level of value expectation and the level of value attainment, due to a lack of capability to establish congruence between both levels, tension builds up because of the pressure of an unfulfilled aspiration or an unsatisfied urge or need. Thus, Northedge (1991) posited that, when such tension is not arrested in time, it leads to frustration. Frustration, when it builds up, leads to the rise of suppressed emotions of anger, which are often directed against the party considered to be the source of deprivation or dissatisfaction. This strong emotion finally finds an outlet through aggressive and often violent dispositions towards the environment.

4. The impact of foreign national on South Africa economy

Foreign nationals in South Africa contribute significantly to the economy in both formal and informal ways. Crush (2012) noted that the largest share of South Africa's public spending budget, for example, especially in 2011, came from Personal Income Tax (PIT), which contributed approximately R393.9 billion, followed by Value Added Tax (VAT) at R283.8 billion, Corporate Income Tax at R202 billion, customs and excise duties at R76.1 billion, fuel levies at R55.7% and other sources at R69.8 billion (Isike, 2012). Apart from the smaller number of legal immigrants living and working in South Africa compared to the overall economically active South African population, questions remain as to the contribution of illegal immigrants in this scenario, especially in relation to Personal Income Tax (PIT) and Corporate Income Tax. These are people with no formal skills or qualifications. The majority of Zimbabwean nationals, for instance, work on commercial farms, providing cheap labour to

white farmers (Mabera, 2017), while some are absorbed as domestic workers, security guards and taxi drivers, among others.

Karlsson (2018), in an interview conducted via electronic mail with the investigative journalist Mr Michael Opara in the Nahelele area of Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, reported that the majority of Zimbabwean nationals, unlike other foreign nationals, were not involved in informal entrepreneurship, such as retail and grocery shop entrepreneurship, which could employ South Africans. In South Africa, it is easy to identify an increase in business activity in the informal sector through foreign nationals involved in illegal goods and food markets. There are many fake food products, such as potato chips, sweets, soaps and soft drinks, manufactured in unlicensed home-based and unaccountable factories. These contraband businesses operate tax-free and compete with legal products sold by locals. Because the fake products are cheaper for customers, foreign nationals have a better market base than locals, and their informal businesses are therefore sustainable.

For instance, in Makhado town, a survey of informal businesses revealed some form of underhand business tactics in most businesses run by foreign nationals (Karlsson, 2018). For example, illegal contraband cigarettes were being sold cheaply in most hair salons. Residents have witnessed daylight gun battles between the police and criminal syndicates from across the border with Zimbabwe, which sought to smuggle illegal contraband cigarettes into South Africa. These are not allegations of criminality in the informal business subsector involving foreign nationals, but realities.

These illegal cigarettes provide a cheaper market that competes with the local market. Men from Zimbabwe approach locals in public spaces to buy illegal diamonds in broad daylight, yet there are still people who deny the reality that criminality has set in among foreign nationals and, to a certain extent, has become a cause of prejudice against foreign nationals (Madue, 2015). The diamond and cigarette smuggling cross-border groups are organised criminal syndicates sustained by the hard-core criminality of corrupt members of the South African police services and customs officials at various borders (Hayem, 2013).

However, on the one hand, foreign nationals who are better skilled and trained are employed in private companies and other government parastatals, including institutions of higher learning (Eze & Agena, 2017). For instance, in recent years, because of the shortage of Mathematics and Science teachers, some schools have resorted to hiring Zimbabwean teachers to address the challenge. The fact that foreign nationals contribute to the job market in South Africa, in some

limited sectoral systems, is not unique to foreign nationals in South Africa. The significance of immigration lies in the search for improved economic benefits, such as employment opportunities, where migration is encouraged by unfavourable economic factors in labour-donating countries (Gopal, 2013).

South Africans also do the same in other countries to which they emigrate. The significance is that skilled immigrants make the job market more competitive because of the options that potential employers acquire from labour supply. The benefits of skilled labour supply for any job market are therefore not particular to the South African economy, because this is a universal phenomenon across the world. While foreign nationals are an important element of the South African job economy, it appears that the contribution of foreign labour supply to the job market in South Africa is exaggerated and overstated. It is a common belief that foreign nationals grow economies. However, what foreign nationals do for the South African economy is not unique.

5. Nigeria-South Africa relation

Nigeria-South Africa relations were witnessed during the civilian administration of the late President Shehu Shagari and the succeeding military administrations of Muhammadu Buhari and Ibrahim Babangida. Yet there was hardly any difference in their pursuit of Nigeria-South Africa relations (Klotze, 2016). During the regime of Muhammadu Buhari (1983-1985), the Afrocentric foreign policy of the Nigerian government towards the South African apartheid regime was revitalised. The only appreciable impact of Nigeria–South Africa relations under the Buhari regime was the hosting of the Second International Conference on Apartheid, tagged "Legal Status of the Apartheid Regime", held in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1984. The aim of this conference was to reinforce Nigeria's determination to eradicate all vestiges of racist regimes in Africa (Ajala, 2019).

It is clear that Nigeria's policy towards South Africa between 1960 and 1993 was characterised by the former's disdain for the latter's apartheid policy. Although Nigeria, from independence, maintained a hostile attitude towards South Africa for several decades until the early 1990s, both countries established formal diplomatic relations in 1994 following the termination of apartheid policy and the release of the African National Congress (ANC) leader. Prior to this time, the Nigerian mission was operating through the Angolan High Commission in Pretoria (Salau, 2017). Subsequently, an exchange of High Commissioners was undertaken by the two countries, with each acutely conscious of the fact that both countries needed each other's

support in the mutually advantageous conduct of their bilateral relations and multilateral diplomacy in Africa (Ramachundran, 2014).

During the regime of General Sani Abacha, between 1993 and 1998, Nigeria-South Africa relations began with a major disagreement over Nigeria's domestic policy and its decision to hang Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni men on 10 November 1995. This provided the first occasion for open diplomatic strain in the relationship between Nigeria and South Africa in the aftermath of the apartheid era (Shara, 2018; Saleh, 2015). Following the alleged role of South Africa in the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth at the Auckland Summit in November 1995, the Nigerian state retaliated against this diplomatic offensive by severing diplomatic relations with South Africa (Ramachundran, 2014; Salau, 2017; Eze & Agena, 2017). The frosty relationship between the two countries was consequently amended by the military regime of Abdulsalami Abubakar, whose reconciliatory trip to South Africa marked the beginning of a relatively new relationship between the two countries (Crush, 2015; Garba, 2022).

Nigeria and South Africa began to redefine their bilateral and multilateral relationships in 1999, as the period coincided with democratic transitions in both countries. Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo and his South African counterpart, Thabo Mbeki, were major contributing factors to the emerging cordial relationship between the two countries (Mufukata, 2015). Obasanjo and Mbeki perceived the urgent need for Africa's rebirth, and they shared equal passion for the realisation of such a goal.

In more recent times, Nigeria-South Africa diplomatic relations have deteriorated on many fronts, prompting the visit of former President Goodluck Jonathan to South Africa, where he addressed the latter's joint parliament. The presidential visit was prompted by the yellow fever certificate saga that involved both countries (Klotze, 2016). The South African government had, on 2 March 2012, deported 125 Nigerians for possessing fake yellow fever vaccination cards (Mathebula, 2015). The Nigerian government immediately retaliated against what was generally perceived as unfair treatment of Nigerians, indeed an affront to diplomatic norms, by deporting a total of 128 South Africans within two days, citing "lack of proper documentation" as the reason for shutting them out (Neil, 2019).

Consequently, the arms deal involving Nigeria and South Africa came on the heels of the collapse of a building at the Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos, a Nigeria-based religious centre, which claimed the lives of about 84 South African nationals. This became the

latest in the series of diplomatic embarrassments that have bedevilled Nigeria-South Africa relations. Onke (2019) noted that the failure of the Nigerian government to officially declare the cash sum of USD 9.3 million loaded into a Nigerian-owned jet to South African Customs, as required by South African law, attracted a negative diplomatic reaction from the South African government.

Based on the above submission, it is evident that the history of Nigeria-South Africa relations has vacillated between cooperation and discord, shaped by each country's foreign policy, domestic intricacies and international diplomacy. These dynamics have also produced the context in which xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa may be examined.

6. Causes of xenophobic attacks in South Africa

In some villages and cities under the administration of this municipality and town, there are incidents involving foreign nationals, such as Zimbabwean nationals, who engage in organised criminal activities with South African traditional leaders in order to obtain South African citizenship by bribing these chiefs (Klotze, 2016). These foreign nationals, such as Zimbabweans, buy their way into the local village of a particular chief in order to become residents and, from there, collude with the village leadership to fraudulently obtain South African documents (Salau, 2017). Some of these foreign nationals are able to access government social services, such as social grants for children, old-age grants and disability grants. According to the respondents, this triggers resentment against known foreign nationals, such as Zimbabweans, who access government services ahead of citizens. On criminality and attacks against locals in Makhado town, most of these foreign nationals are involved in criminality, such as robbery, kidnapping and other forms of social disorder. One respondent put it this way:

In order to prevent criminality, some residents formed night-patrolling groups. They take turns patrolling the neighbourhood. However, others, especially the affluent, have private security on their properties. Some respondents also cited challenges in the town, such as increased prostitution, especially during the day in selected areas of the town. Respondents indicated that the majority of the young girls involved in prostitution were from Zimbabwe, Ghana and Nigeria (Karlsson, 2018).

They hire cheap rooms for accommodation in the town, especially from landlords who have property in town but do not stay there. These girls take their clients to these rooms, while others

use nearby bushes for sexual services. The risk of spreading diseases such as HIV/AIDS remains high (Salau, 2017). The police fail to address these practices for various reasons.

It was discovered that Musina town and its townships are among the most uncontrollable spaces in terms of the influx of foreign nationals into South Africa. In fact, some respondents mentioned that the town had more foreign nationals than South Africans, and that the most spoken languages in the area are Shona and Ndebele, more than any other local South African languages, in this Zimbabwe-South Africa border town (Klotze, 2016). It was also revealed that Zimbabweans cross the border on a daily basis for shopping, while others cross to visit their relatives, seek employment, engage in pastimes and informal business in the town, or access services such as medical attention in local clinics and hospitals. Every person within the Republic has the right to access health services. However, how does Garba (2022) explain a situation in which citizens of another country cross borders to seek medical help in another country? Some respondents in Musina revealed that there were Zimbabweans who crossed the border to obtain medical assistance in South Africa. Obviously, when locals run short of medicines, as is usually the case in Musina health-dispensing centres, they are bound to raise concerns over the increasing number of Zimbabwean patients who have just crossed the border for treatment at health facilities, rather than having fallen ill while already in South Africa, thereby contributing to shortages.

Eze and Agena (2017) opined that South Africa has limited resources or lacks the will or commitment to assist patient border-crossers. The issue of South Africans expressing dislike of foreign nationals based on access to public resources, such as healthcare, housing and education, emanates from these kinds of practices, which place locals at a disadvantage. It is not necessarily an empty fear of foreign nationals on the part of the South African public that translates into xenophobia. This makes it impossible for the state “to balance the needs of the immigrants and those of the citizens”.

In the view expressed by Eze and Agena (2017), South Africans are xenophobic for protesting against being placed at a disadvantage or for refusing to provide services to these patient border-crossers. In addition, such failure to comply positively demonstrates “the failure to supply basic rights to masses of impoverished South Africans”, which eventually “adds an additional obstacle to South Africa’s ability to ensure basic rights to non-nationals”.

Thohoyandou is one of the fastest-growing towns in the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. The town has one of the greatest retail industries in the district, coupled with massive chain

stores, supermarkets and government service offices. There is also a university with a population of approximately 12,000 persons, and hardly four kilometres away there is a tertiary college offering Further Education and Training (FET) to a population of approximately six thousand students (Eze & Agena, 2017). The town has a magnificent five-star hotel providing gambling facilities. There are many Indian, Chinese, Ethiopian, Ghanaian, Nigerian and Somali grocery stores, hair salons and hardware-shop entrepreneurs in the town. This is generally a peaceful town (Crush, 2015).

There have been growing attacks and violence against foreign nationals in the major town. Eze & Agena (2017) noted that the majority of these attacks and acts of violence targeted foreign nationals because they were seen as criminals by locals. Each time there was a crime in the town, from petty theft and robbery to murder, foreign nationals, such as Zimbabweans, were often blamed (Salau, 2017).

7. Implications of Xenophobia on Nigeria-South Africa Relations

In May 2019, reports of spontaneous assaults by some South African members of the Port Nolloth community were said to have targeted the Nigerian community living in the area. They were reportedly chased out of their homes, their property was looted, and their shops were burnt. The attackers often accused Nigerians of dealing in drugs, but the Nigerian community in South Africa denied the allegation. President Jacob Zuma of South Africa and President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria initiated high-level diplomacy to repair the damage brought about by the incident. In fact, the rate of xenophobic violence in South Africa, coupled with other recorded cases of violence, qualifies the country as one of the most violent societies in the world (Garba, 2022).

7.1. Political and diplomatic implications

Politically, the current and incessant wave of violent attacks on Nigerians in South Africa has several implications if the two countries fail to muster enough political will to deal with this unbecoming situation. It can mar the ties between the two countries (Garba, 2022). In diplomatic circles, once there is a severe row between countries, the next option is the recalling of ambassadors, and whenever there is a breakdown of relations between countries, it usually takes time for such relations to be restored. Taking into cognisance the position of Nigeria and South Africa on the African continent, such a breakdown would also be to the detriment of the progress of other African countries.

Loss of African Solidarity: Africans usually regard each other as brothers and, in many circumstances, speak with one voice in the international arena. It is reasoned that a break in relations between Nigeria and South Africa would lead to a divided Africa, thereby limiting their chances of making waves in international politics (Ajala, 2019).

7.2. Economic implications

The economic implications of the recurring xenophobic attacks in South Africa would be enormous. Fundamentally, one of the principal reasons for xenophobic attacks in South Africa is tied to the economy, as, according to South Africans, citizens of other African countries are taking over their jobs and businesses, leading to a high rate of unemployment, especially among locals. While this argument appears to be correct, it is relatively weak, as these people are doing genuine and legal businesses in South Africa. Equally, taking cognisance of the fact that South Africans are also doing business in other African countries, it is better imagined what reprisal attacks on South Africans residing and doing business in other African countries would imply (Garba, 2022).

The implications for the overall economy of Africa, should these scenarios play out, were clearly depicted by the Nigeria–South Africa Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber holds the view that the outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa and reprisal events in Nigeria, including direct attacks on foreign-owned businesses in both South Africa and Nigeria, pose a threat to Africa's fragile economic recovery.

7.3. Socio-cultural implications

Africa's colonial heritage and the inhuman, albeit regrettable, apartheid system in South Africa did enough damage to the psyche of Africans. Having suffered these ordeals from Europeans, Africans believed, after the granting of independence and the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, that they were brothers with a common history and descent and, to that extent, would respect one another's dignity. Be this as it may, the xenophobic, or so-called Afrophobic, attacks by South Africans against their African brothers have several socio-cultural implications, as follows.

Identity Crisis: Identity conflict is one of the worst forms of conflict, as it affects the psychology of the victims, thereby preventing them from realising and achieving their self-esteem and full potential.

Disunity: When Africans begin to see their fellow brothers and sisters as strangers and thereafter treat them as such, the by-product of this state of things is disunity on a continent whose people regard each other as coming from the same parentage. The implication of this is the fear that Africans will have when they are in African countries other than their country of birth (Garba, 2022).

8. Conclusion

The paper reveals that foreign nationals were innocent victims of paranoid South Africans and their government, which undermined issues of international law relating to immigration and migration. This paper also argued that some foreign nationals fomented attacks, violence and xenophobic prejudices because of criminality and unfair business practices, which gave them profit advantages and prospects of sustainability over South Africans.

Xenophobia in South Africa is rooted in the nature and character of apartheid and its discriminatory policies against the black majority, which incidentally denied them economic opportunities, ultimately fuelling attitudes of suspicion and hatred towards foreigners, as well as xenophobia and prejudice against foreign nationals in South Africa.

Therefore, the paper concludes that, if the South African government is genuinely interested in enhancing its diplomatic relations with Nigeria and other African countries whose citizens have fallen victim to xenophobic attacks in South Africa, pragmatic measures should be taken to eradicate discrimination in the country.

9. Recommendations

As a matter of policy recommendation, the South African government should enhance its diplomatic relations with other African countries, especially Nigeria, whose citizens have fallen victim to xenophobic attacks in South Africa, and pragmatic measures should be taken to eradicate discrimination in the country. Also, there is a need for educational campaigns by stakeholders to conscientise foreign nationals about the dangers of engaging in any kind of criminality, because xenophobic sentiments characterising society today may emanate from such crimes.

There is a need for Nigeria–South Africa relations to strengthen the instrumentality of the Nigeria-South Africa Bi-National Commission as an alternative platform for resolving diplomatic impasses arising between the two countries. In the same vein, Nigeria and South

Africa must move beyond rhetoric and embrace their continental responsibility for Africa's development and renaissance.

More importantly, sustained job creation, particularly for Nigerian citizens, and positive image-building abroad would enhance the respectability of Nigerians in the diaspora and address the negative way in which foreigners adjudge Nigerians and the nation. Furthermore, the Nigerian government at home must understand the relationship between poverty, irregular migration and the broader issue of xenophobia, which is not new in South Africa.

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