

STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE



Photo: UNICEF/ Giacomo Pirozzi

THE SOUTH African Business Schools Association (SABSA) unequivocally condemns in the strongest terms the violence currently tearing South Africa apart in all its manifestations from xenophobia to gender-based violence.

In finding sustainable solutions to this crisis though it is critically important to understand that the problem is neither new nor are the causes simple, instead this is a scourge that has its roots in our historic inequality, exacerbated by grinding levels of poverty and increasing joblessness.

It flourishes because of the continued lack of accountability at the highest levels of government and commerce for corruption and state capture. It is further bedevilled by the lack of a coherent and urgent plan to grow the country's economy from government to begin to address the inequality and infuse hope into what is rapidly becoming a hopeless situation.

SABSA's role, at the intersection between business and higher education, is to continue to ensure that our graduates understand that business cannot be trivialised to profit and self-enrichment, but instead about creating businesses that provide the foundation to a prosperous society in which a better life for all is not a slogan but an achievable reality for everyone who lives in South Africa. Shared prosperity and the creation of value must underpin that better life which also means that no one lives in fear of their lives because of their class, colour, creed or country of origin.

We commit ourselves unequivocally to the Universities South Africa (USAf) pledge to ensure our own houses are in order when it comes to rooting out violence in any form on our campuses. We commit to becoming deeply committed activists for positive change, to change any narrative that normalises violence in any shape in our societies; whether on campus, in boardrooms or on the shop floor. We commit ourselves to working with all like-minded institutions and organisations in our country to finding long-term broad-based solutions for this scourge.

But, in doing so, we call on all business leaders and our students to set the example in their companies and firms, rooting out prejudice, discrimination, harassment and any other factors that help normalise gender-based or xenophobic violence.

We call on political parties to work together in purposeful and transparent way and put aside their agendas and blame politics to score points and instead work together. They can start by outlawing xenophobic and gender-based violence; whether uttered or actual, in their own ranks.

We call on government to take decisive action to create the necessary direction and policy certainty to unlock South Africa's economy and allow it to grow and transform our society.