



*Pan Somali Council
For Peace and
Democracy
Ururka Israaca
Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*

Her Excellency Barbara Joyce Masekela
3051 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Your Excellency,

The Pan-Somali Council for Peace and Democracy wishes to express its grave concern over the worsening atmosphere of physical insecurity that Somali refugees and/or immigrant communities in South Africa have been experiencing for the last two years or so. We are particularly alarmed by recent reports that Somalis as an ethnic group are specially targeted for violent acts of hate that in many instances have led to deaths and serious injuries to victims. As media reports in South Africa indicate, the bulk of the attacks targeted Somali shopkeepers and other small business owners who are there to make a livelihood for their displaced families, while contributing to the economy of South Africa. It is most disturbing to hear that in many instances would-be perpetrators undertake their criminal acts in a mob fashion, with some police officers complicit in at least one of these crimes, as reported recently in the Cape Times.

Your Excellency, we would like to remind the people of South Africa that Somalia was among the most outspoken leaders of the movement to abolish apartheid and its evil structure in South Africa. The Somali people were there all along during the struggle, lending material and moral support to their African brothers and sisters and helping them realize their dream of attaining freedom from oppression. Many of us remember vividly South African comrades who attended Somali universities free of tuition with room and board, attained college degrees, while waiting their next assignment from the ANC leadership. Some of these South Africans are in positions of Leadership in Today's South Africa! Now that the Somali people have fallen into difficult circumstances because of the sudden collapse of their state, some have fled to South Africa - where they hoped to find a safe haven - to rebuild their lives, believing that their South African brethren have garnered enough experience in social strife to appreciate their plight.

Your Excellency, we fail to comprehend the reasons why a comprehensive investigation has not been undertaken to determine if there are any underlying causes for what appears to be special targeting of the Somali refugees for robbery and murder. The implication of police officers in some of these robberies is alarming and, to say the least, profoundly unsettling. We urge the government of South Africa to take appropriate steps to extend the protection of the law to the helpless immigrant community from Somalia through deeper and far-reaching investigations, the provision of stronger security and deterrents against similar crimes, and the compensation of those whose lives and properties have been violated as a result of

these waves of criminal act.

Your Excellency, the Pan-Somali Council for Peace and Democracy hopes that you will convey our deep concerns to the government and the people of South Africa and assure the continuation of a long lasting friendship and hospitality between the peoples of Somalia and South Africa.

Executive Director

Said A. Salah
Copy-(Hand delivered)