



## **Response**

**2 July 2026**

### **June 30th and Issues of Governance**

The various marches on June 30<sup>th</sup> against the presence of African foreigners in South Africa seemed to go off without the degree of chaos, violence and destruction that many people were afraid of. Among the many lessons that can be drawn from the day, and from the campaign preceding it, at least three concern issues of governance.

To begin with the positive: the security services were much better prepared on this occasion than they were five years ago, in July 2021, when the sentencing of Jacob Zuma sparked widespread unrest and looting, and the deaths of 350 people. Then, the police were fast asleep; there was no intelligence work, no prior planning to deal with the predictable anger of Zuma supporters, and a hapless response once they woke up.

Given the dire situation in the leadership of SAPS, as revealed in evidence before the Madlanga Commission every week, it might have been expected that something similar would happen this time around. That it did not is a credit to SAPS and to the various municipal police services and private security companies that worked with them. Credit must also be given to the leadership of the acting police minister, Prof Firoz Cachalia, who ensured that the necessary preparations were made and that there was proper co-ordination of security resources. The benefits of having someone like him, more a technocrat than an active politician, in charge of the police are obvious.

The other two governance issues are negative. Most immediately, as various commentators have pointed out, the xenophobic movements were allowed, over a period of months leading up to June 30<sup>th</sup>, to issue threats, engage in violent rhetoric, instill genuine fear into thousands of people, cause panic, and do considerable economic and reputational harm to the country – all without any noticeable push-back from the government. All there was were calls for calm and admonitions to demonstrate peacefully. On the day itself, even though widespread violence was avoided, there were nevertheless a number of incidents: spaza shops were looted, bystanders were harassed and some beaten, journalists were assaulted, foreigners were instructed to leave the country, and all over the place there was plenty of threatening and intimidatory behaviour of a kind that it is unacceptable in a constitutional democracy.

South Africa has laws against intimidation, hate speech and terrorism, all of which were arguably present in the anti-foreigner movements' campaigning, but at no point were any of these laws applied. The very setting of a 'deadline' by a civil society group which has absolutely no authority to do so was a usurpation of state power, and it met with no resistance. The tens of thousands of Zimbabwean, Malawian and other African nationals who flocked to their embassies and to other emergency facilities were effectively denied their rights and protections under the Constitution, and the government simply turned a blind eye, conceding the field to the xenophobes.

And then there are the longer-term underlying failures of governance which March and March, Operation Dudula, and some political parties have exploited in the furtherance of their crusades. It has been insisted over and over again that inadequate education, health-care and other social services, and high unemployment rates, cannot be blamed on the presence of a few million fellow-Africans in our country. But it is pointless to make this argument if nothing is being done to address poor services or to improve the lives of the poorest citizens – unscrupulous leaders and their gullible followers will keep scapegoating

foreigners. So it was sadly ironic that President Ramaphosa chose June 30<sup>th</sup> to reappoint to cabinet the disgraced former Communications Minister Dina Pule as the new Minister of Social Development.

We are told that this post, which is obviously a key one when it comes to looking after the interests of our most vulnerable citizens, is traditionally given to a senior member of the ANC Women's League – hence some of its less than stellar previous incumbents, such as Sisisi Tolashe and Bathabile Dlamini. Ms Pule was fired from Jacob Zuma's cabinet in 2013 and formally reprimanded in Parliament for having used her position to benefit a romantic partner and, according to the Public Protector, for 'persistently lying' about her actions. Now, in order to satisfy internal ANC loyalties, and with absolutely no indication that she brings any relevant skills or experience to the position, or that she has repented of her previous corrupt actions, she is given charge of this key portfolio.

Such decisions can only undermine the hard work and professionalism demonstrated, in the present matter, by the acting Police Minister and, for that matter, the President's own calls for calm and for people not to allow their frustrations to turn them against their African brothers and sisters.

---

**Mike Pothier**  
**Programme Manager**  
[mike@cpl0.org.za](mailto:mike@cpl0.org.za)



The Democracy & Governance Project of the CPLO is supported by the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF).  
The opinions and statements contained in CPLO's publications do not necessarily reflect  
the views of the HSF.

This Response, or parts thereof, may be reproduced with acknowledgement.