

## **ILRIG 2022 Political School on Combating Xenophobia**

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From 16 – 19 September 2022, The International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG), an independent NGO that does research, popular education, popular publications and platforms to forge solidarity for community organisations, labour and social movements, held their 19<sup>th</sup> Annual ILRIG Political School in Johannesburg at Bosco Youth Centre, in Walkerville.

The school was attended by different organisations from across the country such as Simunye Workers Forum, Abahlali BaseMjondolo, Kopanang Africa Against Xenophobia, Swaziland Unemployed Peoples Movement, Swaziland Rural Women's Assembly, Women In Diaspora Association, Gauteng Housing Crisis Committee and other organisations.

The theme and focus of the school were on the unpacking of xenophobia, its causes, the argumentation, as well as its consequences for this issue. The political school itself and the whole programme was meant to combat xenophobia in the country and get people to understand and participate in the anti-xenophobia movement. The other objectives of the school were to educate people and help them understand the reasons for xenophobia as well as its sources to help them organise and combat the issue in an organised manner.

The content of the discussion on the school under the context of xenophobia was a dialogue on what xenophobia is and why it exists in communities; again, what the causes of it are, as well as the forces of xenophobia. The school helped push these discussions with movies and clips based on xenophobia, and activities such as the creation of murals or art that captures the issues of the school.

The school also gave space for some discussion on the political assassinations and repression of activists in communities. It highlighted the community of eKhenana where the assassinations of Lindokuhle Mnguni and Nokuthula Mabaso took place and reached out for support from the different organisations' presence for solidarity in the struggle for justice.

At the school, participants were engaging and interested in the concepts. They exchanged many opinions and discussions as well as solutions and certain projects that they are working on in combating xenophobia.

22-year-old Lerato Tala, an ICT staff member at Khanya College, also participating at the school said, "I have joined the school to learn more about the struggles other organisations are facing and to be informed on how to tackle issues around xenophobia which were raised at the school."

Tala said that she also joined the school to get good outcomes from the programme and to learn as well. She said she met those goals as she met other organisations since she learned different ways on how they handle the issues around xenophobia. "It was very informative as different organisations came together in solidarity for one cause," said Tala.

“I have never attended the school before as it was my first time attending, it was very interesting, especially getting to know other organisations from other provinces,” said Tala

She also said that the issue that stood out for her the most was that raised by Abahlali BaseMjondolo about the assassination of their leaders, especially Lindokuhle Mnguni, for trying to build a better working class.

Throughout the school, one could pick up the change in the participants as they each had different views but slowly came together to understand the issues that they faced through the engagements and information provided for them.

The school once again commenced in Cape Town on Sunday, 11 November 2022 and will end on Wednesday, 14 November 2022.

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