



# Statement on the Planned Nationwide Anti-Immigration Protests: 30 June 2026

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# Statement on the Planned Nationwide Anti-Immigration Protests

The Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) notes the planned nationwide anti-immigration protests scheduled for 30 June 2026.

As the national professional body representing psychology in South Africa, PsySSA recognises that many communities are experiencing socioeconomic challenges, including unemployment, poverty, inequality, crime, and concerns about access to public services. These realities have psychological, social, and economic consequences and warrant public engagement, evidence-informed policymaking, and leadership.

At the same time, PsySSA affirms that the protection of human life, human dignity, property, and the principles of social justice must remain central throughout any public demonstration.

South Africa's Constitution guarantees the rights to peaceful protest, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly. These rights carry a shared responsibility to ensure that demonstrations remain peaceful and do not result in violence, intimidation, discrimination, destruction of property, or harm to any individual or community, irrespective of nationality, citizenship, or immigration status.

PsySSA recognises that periods of public tension can have psychological impacts on migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and host communities, underscoring the importance of promoting safety, dignity, and social cohesion for everyone living in South Africa.

Psychological science demonstrates that fear, uncertainty, misinformation, and the scapegoating of vulnerable groups can intensify prejudice, deepen social divisions, erode trust, and increase the risk of interpersonal and collective violence. While public frustration regarding socioeconomic conditions deserves serious attention, directing blame towards particular groups rarely addresses the structural drivers of inequality, unemployment, or insecurity. Lasting solutions require dialogue, evidence-informed policy, accountable leadership, and collective action that strengthens communities.

PsySSA also recognises the role of the media and digital communication platforms in shaping public understanding during periods of public tension. Journalism, accurate reporting, and engagement on social media can help reduce misinformation, discourage rhetoric that incites hostility, and support informed public dialogue. Conversely, the spread of unverified information, sensationalism, or content that promotes hatred or fear can increase anxiety, polarisation, and the potential for violence. PsySSA therefore encourages all those communicating with the public to do so responsibly, accurately, and in ways that uphold human dignity and social cohesion.

PsySSA therefore calls on:

- Participants in the planned demonstrations to exercise restraint, responsibility, and respect for the rights, dignity, and safety of all people.
- Community leaders, organisers, and public representatives to promote peaceful, lawful, and non-violent conduct and to reject rhetoric that may incite hatred, discrimination, or violence.
- Media organisations, journalists, and users of digital and social media platforms to communicate responsibly, verify information before publication or sharing, avoid amplifying misinformation or inflammatory content, and promote reporting that contributes to informed public discourse and social cohesion.
- Law enforcement agencies to fulfil their constitutional mandate by facilitating peaceful protest while protecting all persons and property, acting with professionalism, impartiality, and respect for human rights.
- Government, civil society, and community stakeholders to strengthen dialogue and responses that address the causes of social and economic hardship while advancing inclusion, justice, social cohesion, and sustainable development.

South Africa's diversity is one of its strengths. Building a safe and prosperous society requires empathy, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to constitutional values, human rights, and the dignity of every person.

PsySSA stands in solidarity with efforts to protect human life, preserve peace, and promote social cohesion. The choices made during periods of public tension shape the society we become. We therefore call on all South Africans to choose dialogue over division, evidence over misinformation, and humanity over hostility as we work together to build communities characterised by justice, safety, belonging, and respect for the dignity of every person.

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**The Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA)**

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