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Monday, June 29 2026

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# THE MERCURY

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## Law enforcement readies for KZN immigrant marches

Community leaders and police collaborate to maintain order during marches

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A STRONG contingent of law enforcement officials, made up of police, the army, and thousands of patrollers, will be deployed across the province to guard against criminal activity during the highly anticipated anti-illegal immigrant marches tomorrow.

Acting Police Minister Professor Firoz Cachalia revealed during a parade in KwaZulu-Natal yesterday that an additional 9 000 patrollers will be deployed across the province on top of the police and other security officials. The province is expected to be the epicentre of the march.

The acting police minister warned that the government wants no violence, stating that while the grievances are legitimate, "the remedy for violence is never the right response; every action must be lawful, proportional, and accountable."

He called on the police to act responsibly, stating: "In a democratic society that we fought for, our people have the right to vote. We uphold those rights, and every SAPS member must remember that the authority of the police derives from the law, and their conduct must remain within those bounds."

KZN Premier Thami Ntuli said they have met with the organisers, who have given them assurance that there will be no violence. "More significantly, perhaps, is the undertaking we received directly from the organisers of the marches, Mr Phakelumthakathi of Insizwa Nobunsizwa and Jacinta Ngobese-Zuma.

"Both gave their word to the government, their followers, and this province that their activities will be peaceful, and they distanced themselves from any calls for violence or looting."

He said they expect that all the marchers will honour this commitment. "Organisers of any march have the responsibility to ensure that enough marshals are deployed to control marchers. We know there are those who see this as an opportunity to plunge our province back into the conflict we lived through in 2021. We see them, and we know their intentions."

Ntuli said the damage that occurred in 2021 was extensive, and some of the businesses that were damaged then never recovered.

"We are still counting the cost of those days; the damage to the province's economy is close to R20 billion, and more than 40 000 people were affected, watching their livelihoods burn." He confirmed that the military has been deployed to the province to guard against any threats of violence.

"There is the deployment of the police, and there will also be the presence

of the SANDF"

The Msunduzi Municipality and the eThekweni Metro said they are unaware of the routes of the march and the security measures put in place by the organisers. The head of Metro Police, Sbonele Mchunu, said eThekweni had not received such details, and he declined to speak further on the issue, stating that the matter is being handled by the police.

Police had not responded to a request for comment on the logistics of the marches.

A source in the KwaZulu-Natal government revealed that the marchers have not filed a proper security plan detailing the march.

"We clashed with the marchers because they did not want to provide us with details that include indemnity, the details on whether they have enough marshals, and the details of their marching route. They essentially told us that they wanted to march to the Durban site, where foreign nationals are being processed.

"We said they cannot do that because they are marching to the government and not foreign nationals, and that is where things ended with eThekweni. As such, the marchers made an agreement with the SAPS."

The Mayor of the Msunduzi Municipality, Mzimkhulu Thebolla, said: "We have seen claims online that they were denied a permit to march, but that is not true; they have not submitted an application, and we urged them to do so even at this 11th hour because we want to know where they will be and what they will be doing.

"We do not know where the marchers will be coming from, but the organisers have given an assurance that there will be no violence, and we want to place hope on that. On our side, we are ready for any eventuality with all law enforcement."

March and March said they had a meeting yesterday evening, and only then will they be able to release the details on the logistics.



ACTING Minister of Police Firoz Cachalia. | KAPTURED\_CONCEPTS



A GROUP of private security personnel, accompanied by SAPS members, checked hotspots in Hillbrow for undocumented foreigners. They arrested a few individuals and conducted their operation in the street. | TIMOTHY BERNARD ANASTUDIO

CRISIS

## Foreign nationals flock to consulates amid concerns over June 30th

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WHILE foreign nationals flock to the consulates across the country ahead of June 30th, concern and worry remain over whether an over-reliance on repatriation will address wider systemic governance issues.

The City of Cape Town, in collaboration with the Department of Home Affairs and the Zimbabwean Consulate, was relocating Zimbabwean residents who had gathered in large numbers outside the Consulate in District Six over the weekend.

The residents were then moved to the Home Affairs Repatriation Centre in Epping, which is the designated facility for processing voluntary repatriation and is properly equipped to manage this volume of residents safely and humanely.

The city had urged Zimbabwean residents wishing to be repatriated to instead go to the Epping Repatriation Centre, which will be the sole official site for processing before residents are transported to Beit Bridge.

The relocations came as South Africa braces for tense anti-illegal immigration protests on June 30 across the country, with police warning those planning to

participate to behave and to adhere to the law.

The chairperson of Zimbabweans in Cape Town, Weston Willie, said that Zimbabweans from across the province, in places like Bredasdorp, Hermanus, and Robertson, came to the consulate.

"The only place that they could find is the consulate because they know that it is the only place they could come for safety, so that's why you see there are a lot of people. There is immigration, which has its own way of processing. Also, our consulate has its own way of processing, so that they have counterparts, they are working together."

According to the civil group, Siyafana Sonke Campaign, the Western Cape is not only the place that has seen such mobilisation from foreign nationals amid growing concerns over Tuesday. They said that African citizens are not voluntarily requesting repatriation but are instead fleeing from intimidation and violence.

"Thousands of migrants and refugees from across South Africa are coming together for safety in urban centres, with their belongings and entering involuntary repatriation processes. In each of these sites, basic needs and support are provided from communities, faith groups,

and humanitarian organisations," they said.

They said that the Zimbabwean nationals in the Western Cape have been arriving over the past 10 days. "The majority are women and children seeking transport home. While the Zimbabwean Consulate has been arranging buses back to Zimbabwe, many families have had to wait for days before departure, with no access to shelter and limited ablution facilities.

Following sustained advocacy by activists and members of the public across South Africa, permission was granted late last night for a temporary tent to be erected to provide basic protection while people await transport to the Epping Repatriation Centre. An increased police presence has also helped to support the management of the site," they said.

Throughout KwaZulu-Natal, refugees and migrants are being displaced, either unlawfully evicted or fleeing threats, and are congregating in urban centres.

Volunteer Yesh Govender said, "We now have 2 000 people at a site that is able to support 300, and people are arriving every day, desperate. We are also aware that there are potentially hundreds of people afraid to travel and are in hiding, and this is another level of humanitarian

assistance and security needed."

On Friday night, 26 June 2026, about 400 people gathered outside the Malawian consulate in Woodmead, Sandton. The group includes a pregnant woman and a newborn baby. They were stranded outside in winter conditions. A decision was made to move the group to the Lindela Repatriation Centre, and transport was eventually arranged on Sunday morning.

Activist Tessa Dooms said: "People are arriving all the time. We are seeing violence emerging in some areas, and foreign nationals are being intimidated even in places they have fled to for shelter." There is a real risk of a humanitarian crisis emerging."

International relations expert Siseko Maposa, who is the director of Surgetower Associates — Management Consultancy, said that it is naive to assume that deportation alone addresses the structural issues.

"We have porous borders, and that reality has undeniably fueled tensions. However, focusing solely on enforcement is a significant risk. I would caution that if we over-rely on repatriation without fixing systemic governance weaknesses, we are likely to create a scenario that exacerbates xenophobic tensions rather than solving the core issues.

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