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**Immigrants Protest Alleged Police Murder in South Africa**

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A wave of immigrants have left the country due to rising xenophobic violence.

South African police fired rubber bullets and stun grenades over the weekend at crowds protesting the alleged police murder of a Nigerian immigrant accused of selling drugs.

Officers of Gauteng province insist that the man, Timothy Chinedu, choked on drugs that he swallowed during his arrest. But a Nigerian witness said that the Chinedu had his hands tied and was suffocated with a plastic bag—an “extrajudicial killing,” he told Nigerian media.

More than 300 protesters threw stones and bottles at police Saturday, drawing attention to a rise in xenophobic violence and police brutality against dark-skinned immigrants in South Africa.

South Africans attacked Nigerian businesses in April, killing seven people and prompting thousands of immigrants to pack their bags. Several cases of people killing Nigerians, often in poor neighborhoods, have been reported since April.

Some say that the xenophobia is egged on by anti-immigrant rhetoric, such as Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini’s statement that immigrants, whom he called “lice” and “ants,” “must take their bags and go where they came from.”

Nigerian senators have warned of retaliation, such as targeting South African businesses. The South African consulate in Abuja, the Nigerian capital, is currently closed, with the South African government accusing Nigerians of “using social media to blow an already tense situation in South Africa out of proportion and stoking emotions.”

The Nigeria Union in South Africa is urging federal action. “The union believes that there is the due process to follow after a suspect is arrested instead of resorting to torture,” its president, Ikechukwu Anyene, told the News

Agency of Nigeria.

The Independent Police Investigative Directorate conducted a post-mortem Sunday.

"They said the police were killing their people and this was not the first time," said IPID spokesperson Robbie Raburabu. "They prevented the forensic vehicle from leaving the area."

Anti-immigrant violence has targeted other foreign nationals, including Somalis, Zimbabweans and Mozambicans. In November, eight police officers were sentenced for torturing and killing a Mozambican immigrant.

National Police Chief Kgomoetso Phahlane has said that anti-immigrant police brutality will not be tolerated and that the latest case will be investigated.

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