

# Retaliatory protests against S’Africa spread across Nigeria

•1 feared killed, as protesters target MTN, Shoprite ...Attack on S’African businesses’ll hurt Nigeria – Experts

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**A wave of retaliatory attacks on businesses with South African interest spread across major Nigerian cities yesterday as protesters targeted Shoprite, MTN and Multichoice outlets in Ikeja, Lekki in Lagos among others establishments in the country in response to rising Xenophobic uprising against Nigerians.**

Although the protesters were prevented from burning the businesses targeted in yesterday’s protest by security agencies, Daily Sun learnt that management of the organisations have promptly shut down their various offices in Lagos, Abuja and other cities to prevent possible human and material losses.

It was reported that at least one person was feared killed as police shot into the air to disperse the protesters around the Lekki axis of Lagos.

The protesters, who attempted to break into mall of South Africa-owned Shoprite were resisted by policemen on ground.

To forestal any incident, the Ikeja branch of Shoprite hurriedly shut down yesterday.



The retaliatory move by Nigerians came after reports of violence against Nigerians living in South Africa went viral.

Earlier on Tuesday, MTN a leading South African telecommunications company issued a statement condemning Xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in their home country.

Ferdi Moolman, the telecommunications company boss in a statement on Tuesday said, “MTN Nigeria strongly condemns hate, prejudice and xenophobia and reiterate our unequivocal condemnation of all violence.

We seek to connect people, bring people together and provide a platform for everyone’s voice to be heard.

“We are against all forms of bigotry and discrimination; they should have no place in society.

“Everyone has the right to a world where their rights and freedoms are respected – the right to live and earn a living, freely, safely and protected by the law.”

At the time of filing this report, there were unconfirmed reports of attacks on an MTN office in Uyo.

In July, MTN had directed its staff to stay away from its offices after the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) threatened to picket its outlets.

Most of those in support of the retaliatory protests have described the xenophobic attack on Nigerians in South Africa, saying the barbaric, even as others insist that the shut down call was uncalled for if the Federal Government can step in to engage its South Africa counterpart in a dialogue over the unwarranted killing and attacks on Nigerian business interests.

Speaking in separate interviews with Daily Sun, they called on the government to be responsive and act swiftly in the interest of its citizens.

According to Mr. David Adonri, Chief Executive Officer, High Cap Securities, the attack on Nigerians and their business in South Africa is condemnable even as he also tasked the government to come out and to defend the citizens.

Also reacting, Mr John Chukwu, said it was about time the Nigerian government carried out investigations and stiffer diplomatic measures against South African.

He also advised that Nigerians would be doing great service to the nation by shunning South African enterprises by focusing on what is indigenous to them.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government yesterday, appealed to Nigerians not to attack South African companies operating in the country in retaliation for the ongoing xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa.

In a statement issued in Abuja on Tuesday, the Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, described as deeply disturbing the reports that some Nigerians, angered by the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, have started attacking South African companies in Nigeria.

He said that targetting South African companies in Nigeria for attack is, for Nigerians, a classic case of cutting off your nose to spite your face, because the investors in such companies, especially MTN and Shoprite, are Nigerians.

Alhaji Mohammed said the majority of the workers in the South African companies operating in Nigeria are also Nigerians, meaning that its Nigerian workers who will be hardest hit if such companies are forced to shut down for fear of attacks.

He assured Nigerians that the Federal Government was already taking decisive measures to put an end to the persistent xenophobic attacks against their citizens in South Africa.

Responding to the wave of retaliatory attacks targetted at South African companies in Nigeria and its implication of the country, immediate past Chairman, National Association of Small Scale Industrialists (NASSI), Lagos State Chapter, Mr.Segun Kuti-George, said the development portends doom for the economy.

He explained that most of the locations where Shoprite operates from have some other Nigerian businesses in them and any attempt to attack them will have ripple effect on such Nigerians.

He noted that Nigeria, being a trading economy cannot afford to sever ties with other countries who are trading in commodities.

“What is the percentage of South Africans working in Shoprite? They are insignificant compared to the number of Nigerians who eke a living there.

Organised Private Sector (OPS) yesterday said billions of dollars investments of South Africa in Nigeria may be at risk if the crisis in South Africa is not nipped in the bud immediately.

This is even as they warned that the AFCTFA agreement on regional trade among African countries may be at risk due to recent events unfolding in South Africa.

The Director General of Lagos Chambers of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Mr. Muda Yusuf said the incident was not a very good development as it can scale reprisal action from Nigeria, warning that Nigerians should not take action too drastic.

He said, “Of course the South African businesses in Nigeria runs into billions of dollars, talking of telecoms and others. Their companies are contributing well to the economy, creating lots of jobs, we have to take all these into consideration.

“We also need to look at it whether it is xenophobia or criminal act. More so, the South Africa government is not in support of it.”



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