

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation  
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## News release

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### **South Africans bemoan the presence of foreigners in their spaces.**

The most recent attacks on foreigners in Soweto and Kagiso that resulted in the deaths of 6 people and the looting of over 70 foreign owned shops, raises critical questions about the security of foreigners in a country that prides itself in the philosophy of Ubuntu. In the latest round of the South African leg of the Afrobarometer Survey, a substantial majority (88%) of respondents reported distrust of foreigners living in their country. This figure, which was recorded in 2011, is five percentage points higher than the 83% who displayed this sentiment in 2008, when the country experienced its worst xenophobia outbreak to date.

The survey revealed that close to five in ten (45%), South Africans blame foreigners in their country for limited job opportunities. A further (44%) indicated that South Africa should not provide protection to asylum seekers.

At the same time respondents questioned their government's commitment to address such xenophobic attacks. Close to two thirds (63%) of respondents doubted its commitment to address migration challenges, and almost half (49%) said the government had performed "fairly badly" or "very badly" in resolving violent conflicts between communities.. These findings should be read against the background of attacks against, foreigners which have ebbed and flowed, since the 2008 crisis.

Further analysis from the survey do reveal a strong interplay between education and attacks on foreign nationals, with lower levels of tolerance that correlate with lower educated respondents (See Figure 3). The survey therefore points to the critical role that education has to play in the array of measures that the government should take to counter the sentiments that endanger the livelihoods and lives of foreign nationals.

More insights are likely to come from the next round of the South African Survey, which will be conducted in April 2015. These findings should give us critical insights into whether South Africans have become more tolerant towards foreign nationals and to what extent they take the government's state commitment to act on instances of xenophobia where and when it occurs? These and many other questions will be answered in the next round of the Afrobarometer survey-to be held around April 2015.

### **Key findings**

- By a 5 percentage gap, more South Africans in 2011 reported distrust of foreign nationals -compared to 2008 (88%vs 83%). Just one in ten said they trust foreigners in Oct-Nov 2011-see figure 1.
- Pluralities (44%) disagree to South Africa providing protection to asylum seekers, whilst 38% were assertive-Figure 2.
- 45% against 38% agreed that foreigners must not be allowed to live in South Africa because they take jobs and benefits away from South Africans-Figure 2.

- The less educated are more xenophobic. Close to half (49%) uneducated respondents with no formal education would take action to prevent foreigners to operate businesses in their areas, against 36% with primary and secondary education and 35%-holders of a post secondary education, including university and post graduate education-Figure 3.
- By a two thirds majority(63% vs 33%), South African disapproved government`s performance in managing migration challenges in the country.

Clearly, respect for other people is one of the many choices that humans are free to chose. However, when a few society breach this freedom, the under privileged see themselves at the helm of destruction. It therefore calls for societies to move from a politics of omission to a politics of inclusion, where people awards dignity, pays respect and celebrate the existence of humanity as a gift.

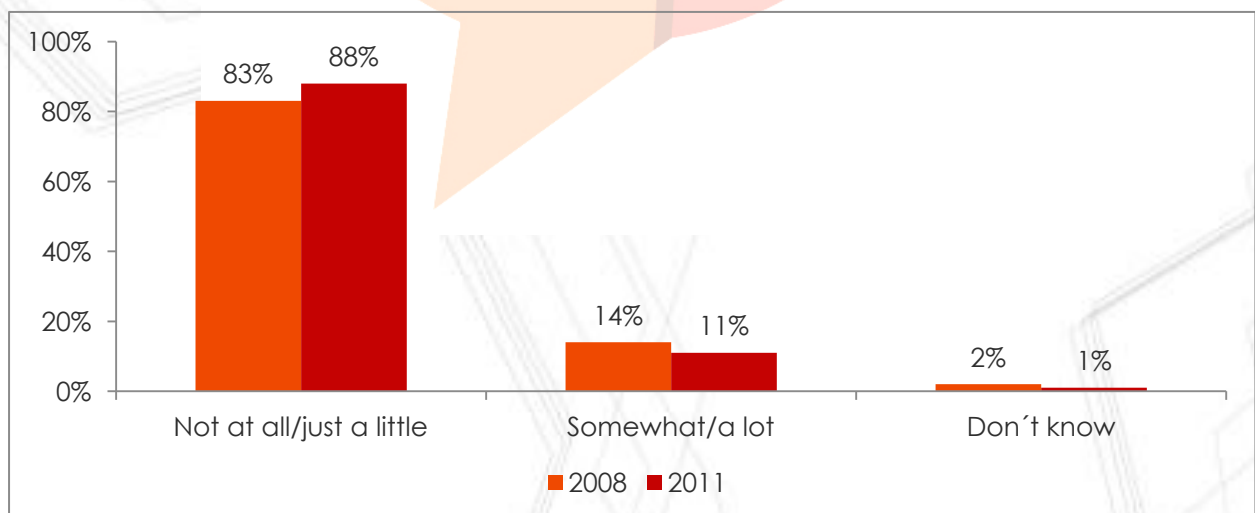
### Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is an African-led, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and Round 6 surveys are currently under way (2014-2015). Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of between 1,200 and 2,400 respondents.

The Afrobarometer team in South Africa, led by Citizen Surveys, interviewed 2,400 adult South Africans in October-November 2011. A sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in South Africa in 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2011.

### Charts

**Figure 1: Trust of foreigners | South Africa | 2008-2011**

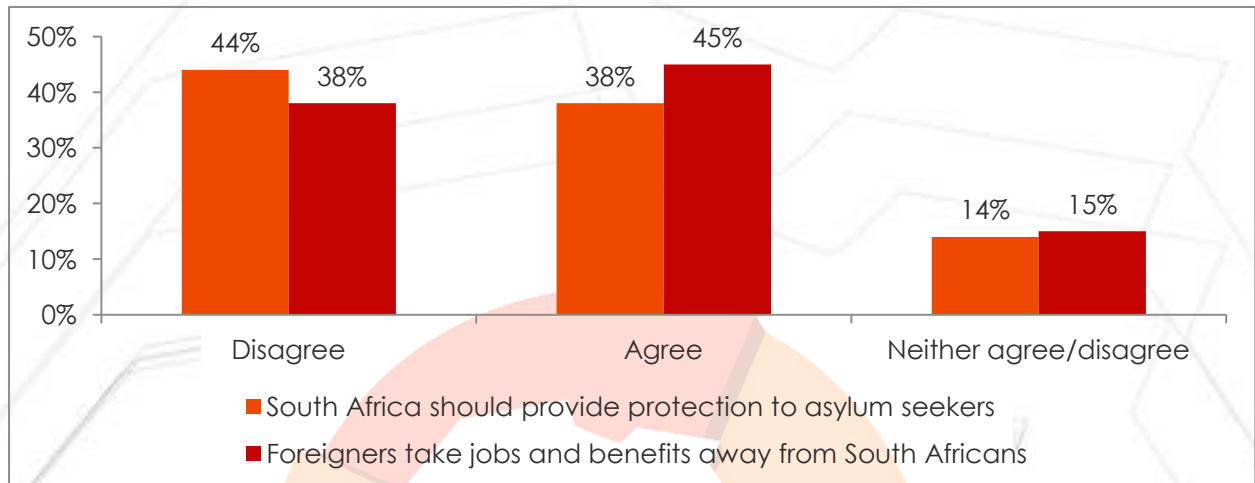


**Respondents were asked:** How much do you trust each of the following types of people:

- Your relatives
- Your neighbors

C. Other people you know  
 D-SAF. And what about foreigners living here in South Africa

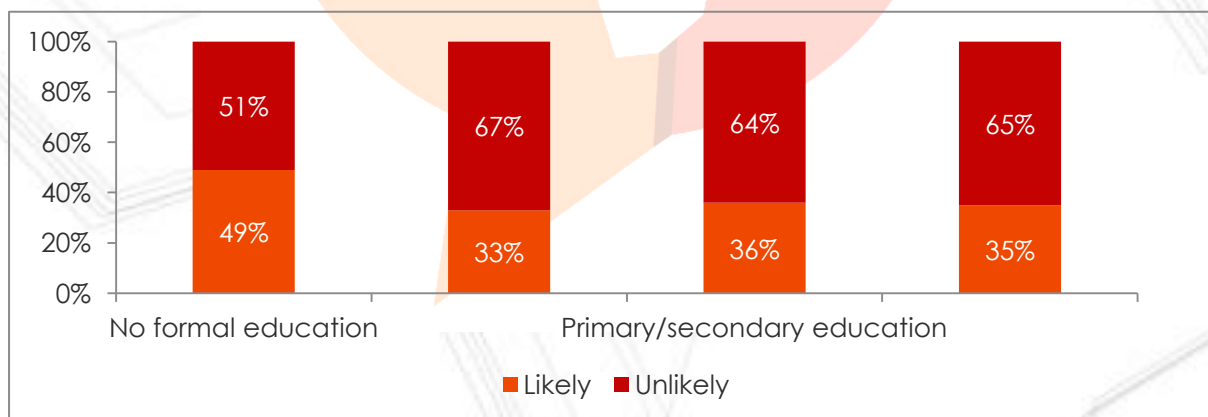
**Figure 2: Attitudes towards foreigners | South Africa | 2011**



**Respondents were asked:** For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree?

- A. People who are persecuted for political reasons in their own countries deserve protection in South Africa.
- B. Foreigners should not be allowed to live in South Africa because they take jobs and benefits away from South Africans.

**Figure 3: South Africans` level of tolerance for foreigners by education level | South Africa | 2011**



**Respondents were asked:** How likely is it that you would take part in action to prevent people who have come here from other countries in Africa from:

- B. Operating a business in your area?

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