

Casual Workers Advice Office

CWAO STILL STANDS AGAINST VIOLENT ATTACKS

CWAO OFFICE TRASHED AND BURNT

A wave of violence is sweeping over South Africa targeting first of all women and people perceived as foreigners. This sickening racist xenophobia, sexism and criminality is a direct result of the current intensification of the historic exploitation of the black working class by white monopoly capitalists and the state – the ultimate enemy.

The immediate struggle now is about survival. Women and so-called foreigners from the rest of Africa are in the forefront, but no member or supporter of the working class can stand aside. There is no neutral ground. Violent sexists and xeno/afrophobes must be stopped.

CWAO commends Lawyers for Human Rights in Johannesburg for calling civil society and working class organisations together for a united response to the violence. We will respond to this call.

As some already know, our office was attacked, looted and burnt tonight by a group of about two hundred. We lost our furniture, printing and communication equipment, our case files and, for the time being, our office. This is a heavy loss in already difficult circumstances.

Were we targeted specifically, or did we simply fall victim to a general attack? At this point we do not know. There are however worrying signs that this might have been a targeted attack. Some of our members had noticed two men watching the office from a Toyota Venture over the last few days; our coordinator's cell phone stopped functioning at the very moment of the attack; and out of all the shops that was attacked in the vicinity, only our office was burnt.

Whatever the case, we remain vigilant and resolute. Our strength is not in the things we lost in the fire. Our strength comes from the solidarity, organising and struggles of the thousands of workers in the Simunye Workers Forum. Those struggles will continue to grow whether there is a CWAO or not. But rest assured, there is very much a CWAO. Our plans to continue are already in place. Not one meeting, not one workshop or dispute or workplace group or protest or strike will be stopped because of this attack. We are women and we are foreigners and we struggle for survival.

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