

Herzlia school sends petition to mayor and premier asking for Caledon Square refugees to be sheltered

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On the evening of 23 May, about 150 people displaced by xenophobic violence gathered outside Caledon Square, Cape Town's main police station. They have two demands: (1) they need shelter and protection in the CBD area (or surrounding suburbs) and (2) they want the United Nations to assist most of them to return to their home country or repatriate to a third country.

For four nights they stayed at Herzlia Weizmann School before funding was raised to shelter them for a week. As of Sunday evening 8 June it is not clear where the Caledon Square displaced people will be able to stay. Premier Rasool and Mayor Zille have not given any indication of how they will help them. Consequently parents, learners and friends of Herzlia Weizmann School have sent the following petition to the mayor and the premier:

Dear Premier Rasool and Mayor Zille

We are parents, learners and friends of Herzlia Weizmann School in Sea Point. We are providing shelter until Sunday afternoon 1 June in our school hall to about 150 people displaced by xenophobic violence in Cape Town. Some of us have met this group. We are in awe of their dignity. They have said they will leave our hall by 5pm on Sunday night because that is what we agreed with them. They have also said they will not leave the CBD area and will sleep outside if there is no accommodation. They will not separate as a group. They have leadership and are organised. Among them are business people and a published writer. Nearly all work and all try to work. At all times they have acted peacefully, despite the dreadful deeds that have been perpetrated against them.

We believe this group of people, nearly all immigrants to our country, are an essential part of the cosmopolitan life of Cape Town. They have been wronged. We as a city and a province have a duty to right those wrongs and to help them reintegrate into our city. We have a duty to grant their reasonable demand that they be given shelter in the area. We have to go the extra mile. If their wish is not granted and they are left with no option but to go to one of the camps established by the city, it is a victory for xenophobia.

We call on you to open a venue in the CBD (or Atlantic Seaboard), such as the Sea Point Civic Centre or Good Hope Centre. As a community we have contributed to the relief of the displaced people and we commit to continue doing this.

[Download the petition here.](#)

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