1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This case study presents findings of a research conducted by the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) in KwaMashu, KwaZulu-Natal during May 2016 and March 2017. This initiative was undertaken as part of research conducted in parallel across 16 South African communities documenting and explaining the status of social cohesion across the country. More specifically, it endeavours to identify the causes of group-based conflicts, communal violence, and patterns of violent exclusion. Through these efforts, the research should contribute to developing more effective intervention programmes by external stakeholders working with community members to promote social cohesion and peaceful cohabitation.

The findings presented here are informed by individual qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with residents and relevant key informants conducted between 2 and 13 May 2016 as well as between 9 and 15 March 2017. A team of four ACMS researchers spent 17 days in the area and conducted a total of 41 individual interviews and 3 focus groups discussions with relevant stakeholders. Participants included South Africans and foreign residents as well as key informants including representatives of the local authority, community leaders, faith-based, and community based organisations. Secondary literature provides additional background and insight. Recognising that perceptions drive social interactions and mobilization as much as facts,¹ our approach documents and where possible distinguishes between the two.

1.2 Primary Findings and Conclusions

The following is a brief summary of the research findings regarding the social cohesion status, challenges and opportunities in KwaMashu:

1. **Socio-economic challenges and hardships:** Most of the KwaMashu residents face significant challenges in terms of unemployment, poverty, poor service delivery, violence and crime. Socio-economic hardships are a serious obstacle to social cohesion because they lead to other social ills that have the potential to fray the social fabric and are often the source of negative perceptions and attitudes towards outsiders;

2. **Negative perceptions towards outsiders:** Despite some relatively positive social, economic and

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institutional interactions, KwaMashu local residents generally harbour negative perceptions towards foreign nationals living in their midst. This research shows that these perceptions are an obstacle to building sustainable social cohesion and peaceful cohabitation between locals and outsiders;

3. **Lack of trusted local authority and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms:** KwaMashu residents expressed a generalized sense of dissatisfaction with the local structures of leadership and authority. The absence of a fully trusted local authority and of formal and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms leads to mob justice and the normalization of violence (individual or collective) as an effective mechanism to resolve conflicts and restore order. This is a major challenge to social cohesion as it undermines the rule of law and due process, and often leads to outsider violent exclusion;

4. **Group conflicts and violence:** KwaMashu has a well-documented long history of group-based conflicts and violence, particularly political violence and xenophobic violence, targeting foreign nationals. In particular, KwaMashu is renowned for a multi-decade history of political rivalry, violence and politically motivated killings mainly involving members of ANC, IFP and the NFP political parties;

1. **Xenophobic violence:** The main episodes of violence against foreign nationals in KwaMashu occurred in April 2015 and May 2017. The violence is often characterised by the looting of foreign-owned businesses and the displacement of foreign nationals from targeted locations. The violence has multiple drivers including negative attitudes and strong resentment towards foreign nationals and the lack of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms. Xenophobic violence is an unmistakable indicator of social cohesion fault lines and its multiple drivers. Embedded in the socio-economic and political life of the area are equally visible signs of fraying social fabric or social ties among KwaMashu residents.

After this brief introduction, the report offers the research site’s background information in terms of socio-economic data. It then provides a detailed account of the study’s findings. The final section of the report summarises the key findings and implications.
2. BACKGROUND

KwaMashu is a township located some 20km North of Durban (eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality) in KwaZulu-Natal Province. It resulted from the mass resettlement of the slum population of Cato Manor between 1958 and 1965. KwaMashu is one of the first of Durban’s townships that emerged with the implementation of the Apartheid Group Areas Act during the 1950s. KwaMashu became home to many of the people who were displaced through the implementation of the Act. Image 1 below shows map of KwaMashu and its surroundings.

*Image 1: Map of KwaMashu and surroundings*

The research site falls within Wards 39, 40, and 41 of the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. These correspond to sections A, C, and J of KwaMashu, respectively. Cumulatively, these wards have a total population of 89,989 individuals living in 30,976 households across a geographic area of 6.3 kilometres. The following table describes the cumulative sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Wards 39, 40, and 41, based on information from the 2011 South Africa Census and the Independent Electoral Commission.

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2 http://www.sahistory.org.za/place/kwamashu
Table I: Socioeconomic Characteristics (Wards 39, 40, 41) eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociodemographic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>98,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households</td>
<td>35,092</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>44% of the population is aged between 10 -29 years; 27.5% are under the age of 18.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>45% of the population is female; 55% is male.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linguistic Diversity</td>
<td>99% of the population mostly speaks IsiZulu at home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic Diversity</td>
<td>99% of the population is Black African; the rest is Coloured, Indian or Asian, White, or Other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>97% of the population was born in South Africa (SA); 89% was born in KwaZulu-Natal; Nearly 0.3% was born outside of SA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter Turnout</td>
<td>Of the 52,625 registered voters, 55.5% voted in the 2016 municipal elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting Patterns</td>
<td>69% of the voting population voted for the African National Congress (ANC); 22% voted for the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP); 3% voted for the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socioeconomic</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>41% of the population of workers over the age of 15 is unemployed or not economically active.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Levels</td>
<td>9% of households have an annual income of R0; 16% have an income between R 10 000-20 000; 23% of households have incomes between R20 000 – 40 000;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Rate</td>
<td>19% of households have an annual income of below R 9600.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Levels</td>
<td>73% completed Grade 9 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household (HH)Types</td>
<td>30% of households are shacks/informal dwellings; 56% are classified as houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of HH</td>
<td>34% of households are headed by women; 66% are headed by men.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Service Provision</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>93% of the population receives water from a regional/local service provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>14% of households have electricity for some cooking, heating or lighting. 81% of households have electricity for all three and 5% have no electricity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush Toilet</td>
<td>81% of the population have access to a flush toilet either with a septic tank or connected to sewerage system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse Disposal</td>
<td>94% of the population has access to regular refuse removal by a local authority or private company.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. FINDINGS

3.1 Nature of Community and Social Interactions

KwaMashu hosts a predominantly Black and Zulu speaking population. In line with the census data cited above, respondents indicate that the majority of the population are Black with a few Whites, Coloured, and Indians. According to respondents, Zulus are the dominant South African ethnic group, followed by Xhosas and a few foreign nationals from different nationalities including Zimbabwe, Somalia, Pakistan, and Ethiopia. Asked about the dominant language and ethnic groups in KwaMashu, a local South African resident responds:

The well-known languages are IsiZulu and IsiXhosa and English but mainly people are using IsiZulu. The main ethnic group in the area is Zulus. The main racial groups are the black South Africans who come from different places. It depends but mainly we have people coming from deep rural areas especially the hostel dwellers for various reasons. And apart from that we have people who are coming from Zululand, Eastern Cape, Lady Smith, Newcastle and lower South Coast of KZN.3

Another local South African resident confirms the various origins of KwaMashu South African residents (hereinafter referred to as ‘locals’): “Nowadays we have people coming from as far as Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, Zululand, Port Shepstone, Ladysmith, Johannesburg, Matatiela, Ixopo, Newcastle and many other areas. We are very mixed in terms of ethnic groups and as a result many new surnames are found here.”4

Respondents indicate that the predominant religions in the area include Christianity, Shembe, and Islam and main spaces of social interactions are religious activities, business and workplace, self-help groups (e.g., stokvels), sport clubs and events, cultural events, music festivals, political rallies, weddings, funerals, public holiday celebrations and taverns. One local resident responds when asked about his spaces of social interactions:

I socialize mostly in places such as IFP meetings and gatherings and ward committee meetings. I always spend my time with my comrades deliberating on things that will build our organization so that we can win the upcoming elections. We also socialize when we work with Youth in Action and other youth organizations to bring about change towards young people. We also assist in terms of sport coordination with SALGA KwaNaloga games in bringing different sports to young people.5

However, despite these numerous social interactions, respondents indicate that people generally ‘live isolated lives’ and there appears to be no strong sense of collective efficacy (when people work together to

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3 Interview with a male South African respondent; member of local CPF; KwaMashu, 4 May 2016
4 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 11 May 2016
5 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
solve common problems) even though community leaders sometimes call public meetings to discuss common challenges (e.g. service delivery, crime, political violence, xenophobia, etc.) and possible solutions.

3.2 Profile of Outsiders

3.2.1 Origins, social interactions and livelihoods

In KwaMashu, local residents understand outsiders to be all foreign nationals living in the area although they sometimes refer to some South African ethnic groups (e.g. Xhosas) as such. One local resident responded when asked about outsiders living in KwaMashu: “We usually refer to foreigners as outsider groups but sometimes Xhosas are also called outsiders and this is not very surprising because if you travel to the Eastern Cape Province the Xhosas would exclude or mistreat you and the same goes with the Zulus here because of the tribalism.”

According to respondents, foreign nationals living in KwaMashu come mainly from Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, Pakistan, and Ethiopia. They are comprised of new arrivals as well as those who have been staying in the area for more than a decade. They engage in social interactions and relationships with locals in different ways and for different purposes. In particular, relationships are formed through working relations and business transactions (e.g., renting business premises) as well as through intermarriage. One foreign resident noted: “We do not interact a lot with local people but we have developed connections and built strong relationships with my two local employees and we do help each other in times of need. We do have that working relationship and mutual respect for each other.”

A local respondent indicated that: “Some [foreigners] have been here for more than 10 years, like John he was living at Ntuzuma before I met him; he has been here long and I have three children with him, first born is only five.”

Like locals, foreign nationals generally have access to basic public services but some feel excluded from some essential services and opportunities. One foreign resident remarked: “We do have access to accommodations and health facilities, etc. but with public schools and jobs I feel like the system doesn’t allow us.” Local residents believe that foreign nationals should have access to public services but only those who are in the country legally. One local respondent stated:

I believe that outsiders should as well have access to jobs, accommodation, schools and health facilities. We do read newspapers and watch news; surely we do understand circumstances back

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6 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
7 Interview with a Somali national; KwaMashu, 7 May 2016
8 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 5 May 2016
9 Interview with a Zimbabwean national; KwaMashu, 8 May 2016
home and therefore we should sympathize with them. But we are not saying that foreigners should come in like floods; at least legal documents should be obtained first, before accessing those services... So yes, they should have access as long as those outsiders are legal and have all necessary documents needed to be here.10

Foreign nationals residing in KwaMashu earn their living from a wide range of livelihood activities including self-employment in informal businesses (spaza shops, street vending, hawking) and casual labour in farms and construction (e.g., labourers, bricklayers). When asked what foreigners do for a living in KwaMashu, one local resident responded: “The outsider groups engage in casual jobs whereas some own or rent shops at each and every corner in the townships.”11 Respondents indicate that entrepreneurship, hard work and internal cooperation are the main characteristics that distinguish foreigners from locals in terms of their respective livelihood activities and approaches. One local resident observed:

Some outsiders are working as general workers same as local people but many are very brave for starting businesses and they can persevere despite challenges that come along. That’s how their livelihood activities differ from locals’. I respect foreigners; they are very good in terms of forming partnerships and help each other of which we lack as locals; amongst ourselves as locals we lack that; we are not united at all, we have too much pride that can kill us one day.12

Another local resident concurred:

Their [foreigners’] livelihood activities are not different from the locals but I should acknowledge that they are always up for a challenge. I doubt if local people can go door to door selling blankets.... So what I think make their livelihoods differ from locals’ it is that they are willing to start businesses from nowhere and they support each other.13

3.2.2 Community perceptions about outsiders

Respondents both local and foreign indicate that KwaMashu residents have mixed feelings about the presence of foreign nationals in the area. Some residents perceive foreign nationals as helpful and useful to the community. One respondent stated: “they [foreigners] give service to the community through spaza shops, they rent from us and some employ locals, which is a source of income for locals; they are reliable in their shops, they open early which is convenient to the communities.”14

That said however, respondents note that the majority of local residents perceive foreigners as a danger to their lives and livelihoods as they steal jobs by providing cheap labour; kill local businesses; are responsible for most of the crimes committed in the area; bring dangerous diseases into local communities; steal

10 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 13 May 2016
11 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
12 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
13 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 11 May 2016
14 Ibid
women; sell drugs to the youth, etc. Respondents express their feeling and perceptions in different ways. When asked about locals’ perceptions about foreigners, a local resident replied: “As I said earlier, what comes to mind is that they will take our jobs and that they come to South Africa with drugs. Of which, I can say yes. I’m not sure where you stay but if you pay attention, you will realise that ever since they arrived drug percentage is very high, so they have great influence in drugs.” 15 Another local respondent agrees: “Since they [foreigners] became part of the community, more youth have started using whoonga [a type of drug].” 16 Another argued that locals’ main perception is that foreigners steal opportunities and claim to be cleverer than those from the area. In his words: “They grab all the opportunities that are there, they are coming from their country and claiming to be cleverer than the South Africans. This is something that is said all over.” 17

Foreign nationals living in KwaMashu are aware of such perceptions, which have negative consequences with regard to their relationships not only with other local residents but also with the local police. One foreign resident observed: “We are perceived as people who are here to sell drugs and steal jobs. As a result, the police without a warrant just lock down and search our supermarkets and businesses at any given time. That is the kind of life that one has learnt to adapt to and make peace with; we don’t have privacy as foreigners.” 18

Some respondents are not sure about what informs such negative perceptions. One local resident describes the situation as follows:

There is jealousy in all this because most of the people here say that the foreigners are here to take our jobs. Then my question would be, which are those jobs they are taking from us because most of the time they are self-employed. It is either they use a table and cut hair or they are just selling things on the streets which is something we could do as well if we wanted to but we don’t. So that is where my questions is, like which are those jobs they are taking from us? Most of them are in the roads and streets selling. 19

According to most respondents, such negative perceptions and attitudes towards foreign nationals are borne out of local’s frustrations over their socio-economic hardships. One local explained: “Foreigners are always blamed for all the wrongs things such as bringing drugs, stealing jobs. […] People like myself out there are angry, desperate, struggling, living in poor conditions. Poverty is a reality to us… so these are the sources of these perceptions.” 20 Similarly, another local admits to sharing such negative receptions and also believes they are informed by poor living conditions: “We see them as criminals who are selling drugs to

15 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 11 May 2016
16 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 7 May 2016
17 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 11 May 2016
18 Interview with a Somali national; KwaMashu, 7 May 2016
19 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 11 May 2016
20 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
Our children and people who are here to steal our jobs. We still fear that these people are bringing in diseases and drugs. [...] The limited resources that all of us are fighting over... basically the crisis on service delivery is the source of these perceptions.”

In sum, despite some relatively positive social, economic and institutional interactions, KwaMashu local residents generally harbour negative perceptions towards foreign nationals living in their midst. Largely informed by socio-economic hardships and resented competition for scarce resources and opportunities, these negative perceptions are evidently not only a symptom of poor cohesion but are also an obstacle to building sustainable social cohesion and peaceful cohabitation between locals and outsiders. Indeed, as will be discussed in following sections, they are one of the main underlying causes of xenophobic violence KwaMashu has experienced on a number of occasions.

3.3 Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Conditions

According to respondents, the main livelihoods activities of KwaMashu local residents include formal employment for the lucky few, informal trading (tuck shops, street vending, hawking), casual labour and social grants for the unemployed. Service delivery is relatively satisfactory in formal sections but poor in hostel and shack areas. When asked what locals do to earn their living, a local resident responded:

The local people are involved in different livelihood activities; some of them are working while some are involved in the informal trading such as spaza shops, car wash, etc. The municipality has rolled out programmes in responding to unemployment that is very high, but to be honest with you they might be good but they are not enough and don't reach the actual desperate young people.

Another local shared a similar view:

Local people are working in shops; some are general workers (cleaning), whereas others are formally employed by companies such as Transnet and Gateway Mall. Other people are involved in the informal trading. However, the sad truth is that there are no jobs out there; it doesn’t matter whether one has qualifications or not. I think they should have training programmes such as skills training or computer classes like in rural areas, because in township such programmes don’t exist; government is paying attention to rural areas.

As previous respondents suggest, unemployment is one of the main socio-economic challenges KwaMashu residents face. Other challenges include poor service delivery in hostel and informal areas; high rates of crime; drug and alcohol abuse; high rates of teenage pregnancies and political tensions and violence (see

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21 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
22 Interview with member of local SAPS; KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
23 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
The level of unemployment is very high; there are lots of people who after five years since they arrived in here are still searching, the unemployment is very high and number of people are joining the area everyday hoping that they will get jobs. It is a matter of who one is connected to and how to bribe them to make things happen, even in companies. [...] The housing conditions are in very poor conditions; six people are sharing a room, one sleeping in a corner and there is no privacy at all, but it depends on how much one is paying at the end of the day. The conditions are very bad and people are building informal houses and no one bothers to intervene; the situation is very worse. [...] We are always experiencing power cuts and that is why many people have connected electricity illegally and the municipality is not taking us seriously whenever we complain about electricity. Water and sanitation are also critical issues; maybe in the formal houses they do get them regularly but not here; we are that dumping site that no one bothers to even send out notices, we are always told that we are the causes of that because we have connected electricity illegally and we are stealing electricity cables and lastly we are misusing water since we don’t have water meters. [...] The shootings and killings are the other main problem here; we are living in fear every day, because not all people who are targeted are politicians; sometimes it is just personal grudges. So the main challenges we face daily are the living conditions; we no longer have dignity because of where we live. Even after work one is reminded that you are going back to that noisy and dirty place. The conditions that we are living under discourage us and make us to even question our democracy as to whether we are really free.\(^{24}\)

For another local, unemployment and ensuing poverty robbed people of dignity and lead to other social ills such as crime and drug abuse. In his words:

The main challenge we face daily is of unemployment; being unemployed robs us of the power and the dignity to accomplish greater things in life. Currently we are facing the issue of crime, unemployment, drugs abuse, inequality and many other issues. The main problem in this community is the issue of crime and drugs that is increasing dramatically because people are out here trying to make a living out of nothing. The sad reality is that there is no job out there and people are without hope that there will be tomorrow; being unemployed reaps off your dignity even in family gatherings.\(^{25}\)

Foreign nationals living in KwaMashu also realize most locals live in poor and difficult conditions and sympathize with them. One remarked:

Many people are always complaining about being jobless, whether you have put a notice outside that there’s no job people will still come and beg you for job. People are living in the informal settlement all over here, but some get access to hostel rooms and that is what everyone is dreaming about. People do not get regular service delivery because sometimes out of nowhere they [relevant authorities] cut power and water for two consecutive days without apologizing to

\(^{24}\) Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
\(^{25}\) Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
anyone. This place is a mess; no one is cleaning, it smells; even public bathrooms are in no good conditions to be used by human beings. [...] Crime, safety, unemployment, poor living conditions, houses and many more challenges here. Crime is a serious concern in this area; we are not safe even during the day, and one is forced to lock down the place. The living conditions and the environment are very bad; no one deserves to live in such a place and I feel sorry for them.26

Socio-economic hardships are a serious obstacle to social cohesion because they lead to other social ills that have the potential to fray the social fabric and are often the source of negative perceptions and attitudes towards outsiders. Such attitudes often lead to marginalization and discrimination and at times to outsider violent exclusion as discussed later.

3.4 Community Leadership and Conflict Resolution

3.4.1 Leadership structures and their relationships with communities

KwaMashu falls under the EThekwini Metropolitan Municipality led by ANC local government. Some ward councils and committees are however led by IFP as one local observed when asked about local government and community leadership:

There are councillors and ward committees government structures, under the ANC political party. However, other wards are governed by IFP of which there is huge tension and violence so far caused by the upcoming local government elections. Wards councillors and ward committees are the most influential community leaders because of the mandated role in our communities. You have to remember that KwaMashu is a township unlike rural areas whereby there are both political and traditional leaders; here it is only politicians who are in charge. Therefore, political leaders are the most important because of their influence towards service delivery and the mere fact that they are located within and close in communities.27

In addition to ANC and IFP, other political parties present in KwaMashu are NFP, EFF, and DA. Other local institutions of authority and leadership include SAPS; CPF; a community safety forum (Abaphelezeli), and block leaders in KwaMashu Hostel.

Regarding the relationship between leadership structures and communities, respondents indicate that residents generally do not trust their political leaders due to infightings, poor service delivery, lack of transparency in decision making and leadership position candidates’ nomination processes and chronic conflicts with other political parties. One local resident s observed:

The power is centralized in these leadership structures but local people are always complaining that ANC councillors do not consult them rather they take decisions that often affect them at the

26 Interview with a Somali national; KwaMashu, 7 May 2016
27 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 4 May 2016
end of the day, for instance with recent RDP houses people are not satisfied in terms of the conditions. We are not entirely being involved in decision making. Even in community meetings, it just merely a wish list of what people want and also a platform to express dissatisfaction. I am saying this because no major decisions are taken in those meetings; even with the current nominated candidates for upcoming local government elections it is only those who are political connected who were involved in nominating these candidates.\textsuperscript{28}

Residents also perceive SAPS to be too slow in responding to the community’s calls for help. Respondents reported that police never respond to prevent killings at the hostel; they only come after people have been killed. SAPS are also perceived as corrupt, committing crime and working with criminals and as such they cannot get crime under control. CPFs are perceived as powerless because they either fear crime perpetrators, are just not keen or have no incentive to do voluntary work. In one local’s words:

The police are very lazy to control crime but in other wards there are initiatives including safety forum in response to crime. We are really not safe even during the day because of the whoonga boys. These young people who drop out at schools and take different drugs and when they struggle to have money they end up stealing from us. If only the police can find the way of dealing with them, I’m sure that crime can be addressed. There is no street committee currently. And I wish there was because the police alone are doing not enough to arrest those people who are in forefront with killings at the hostel. And those who are claiming to be leaders and I’m not sure as to who are they are leading, because we are only recognized during elections so that we can vote for them.\textsuperscript{29}

Another local respondent shared similar sentiments: “[The police] always come long after the crime; here there are killings every day, the police are not there to do something. Here people are dying like flies, last week three people were shot. Everyone is wondering who will be next.”\textsuperscript{30} For another local respondent, the police and all other leadership structures are failing the community and are only motivated by their own interests:

Crime is a serious issue in this area I don’t think it is under control, people are not arrested but they are well known to be criminals the police need to start doing their job otherwise a conflict will erupt. There was a safety forum that was very active especially in dealing with crime and shootings in the hostel, but we’ve lost them one by one and those who were at the forefront decided to dissolve the forum fearing their lives. Now there is no authority or leadership structure that is playing an important role. People only care for their positions. If we had a well-recognized leadership and authority, the shootings and killings would have been addressed long time ago. Now we no longer have leaders who were born to be leaders; it is the matter of people who are opportunists that are leading us.\textsuperscript{31}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{28} Ibid
\footnote{29} Interview with a female South African resident; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
\footnote{30} Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 4 May 2016
\footnote{31} Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
\end{footnotes}
The local SAPS acknowledge these short comings but attribute them to lack of capacity and lack of community cooperation in terms of help in identifying criminals and testifying against them in courts. One SAPS member observed:

We are struggling with resources; the number of cars is limited and some senior staff used them for their own personal things. The number of staff is also an issue so we are trying with limited resources that we have to be responsive when we received a call by the community. Having said that we can’t use our personal cars rather we wait for the government official car wherever it was with that commander. [...] Crime is under control even the hostel, our busiest place, the number of murders recently dropped. I was checking provincial statistics. We have interventions such as every Friday we shut the area down and search almost everyone; we hide team cars and walk each block. However last time it was very unfortunate that right after we’ve finished our regular searched someone was murdered. But that case is under investigation I won’t make a reference of, we don’t find any guns and we are suspecting that maybe they hide them somewhere close maybe in the nearest informal settlements. [...] We have a CPF that my colleagues is working very close with, the CPF in hostel is very effective, when I was in the investigation team they would risk and give us confidential information that will later on lead to arrest, but our challenge as that most of our hostel cases don’t rich the magistrate because local people and CFF whether they witness the incident, they are afraid to witness in court as a results many criminals are walking free. Sometimes it is very funny that these shooting are sometimes not political motivated some are issues over girlfriend, over positions at work because an old man want to put his older son, some are fighting over cattle’s back home. Whereas some murders can be easily be linked to politics between IFP and NFP members, because ever since the NFP was formed the number of murders has increased dramatically especially in KwaMashu.32

There is a generalized sense of community dissatisfaction with the local structures of leadership and authority and a deep sense of fear and safety concerns among community members due to on-going political tensions, violence, and crime. Some respondents were reluctant to speak to researchers out of fear of being targeted for violence or victimised on the suspicion that they might have shared incriminating information. Safety fears are so real that they even undermine public participation. Indeed some respondents report that when attending meetings called by the community leaders safety concerns prevent them from freely raising their views and opinions. “If you voice your opinion against the majority, people involved will kill you”,33 in one respondent’s words. These safety concerns compound existing unhappiness about unemployment and poor service delivery in the hostel and shack area and make community dissatisfaction with leadership structures even more bitterly felt.

3.4.2 Conflict resolution mechanisms

The levels of community dissatisfaction described above result in –and is in turn reinforced by– residents’ pervasive belief that local authority and community leadership structures have no capacity to effectively

32 Interview with member of local SAPS; KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
33 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 7 May 2016
resolve individual and/or group conflicts. In particular, local residents believe that all public institutions in the area (including the police) have yet to get crime under control or resolve political and group conflicts in the hostel. This partially explains community members’ reliance on forms of mob justice as alternative conflict resolution mechanisms.

All respondents indicated that community members often rely on mob justice in dealing with ‘serial offenders.’ While recognising that such strategies do not necessarily reduce crime, residents nonetheless believe that mob justice is faster and more effective than police and justice system processes. If nothing else, it punishes criminals and provides victims timely satisfaction. In one local respondent’s assessment:

There are no community level mechanisms in place to resolve conflicts. Rather we depend on SAPS to resolve conflicts. In terms of crime prevention, CPFs and SAPS are trying but when they fail people do not hesitate to take matters into their own hand, there are few offenders who are no more, the community members are not afraid to kill people. If the community members kill a person who is a problem in the community, in that way a clear message is send to those individuals. ... Yes the community sometimes uses violence to warn offenders as a way of teaching them a lesson. 34

Another local offered similar views:

There are no mechanisms that are in place to resolve conflict; instead our government waits for the outbreaks of violence before any action. If the police are failing us, violence becomes the only option; the community has before sorted out whoonga boys through beating them to death. They [mechanisms] are effective because others who are trouble makers learn a lesson in a hard way and start to respect the community. Violence is the only language that the offenders are able to grasp; violence is used sometimes but as a last option. If police arrest people and the following day they are out nothing can be done except taking law into our own hands.35

Another respondent noted that suspected criminals were often killed during mob justice. In his words: “We are not cowards in the hostel; we sort out that nonsense; yes we do use violence against those who are offenders. We don’t wait for the police; we use our weapons, sticks to sort out the offenders; some don’t survive the brutality that is used, no we don’t use neckacing rather we hit them to death.”36 Some local leadership structures also confirmed that beating criminals is the only way they have to deal with high rates of crime in the area. A member of a local crime fighting organisation for example stated:

Let me be honest here because what we do here, we are facing with different crime activities. We have no option other than to beat someone. That is the only way that we reduce crime here; that is

34 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
35 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
36 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 13 May 2016
the strategy. Criminals know that when we catch them they will be punished they will be punished [laughs]... there is no any other way... 37

The local SAPS are aware of the mob justice practice in the area and understand that community members perceive it as more effective than the justice system. One local SAPS member observed:

There are safety forums and us that community relies on to resolve conflict, and we’ve introduced various interventions to ensure peace and stability in the area. However some community members are not afraid to take law on their own hands; we have few cases of people who were brutally murdered by the community members. [...] In as much as community members do not understand and fully comprehend that we are doing as best as we can, but these mechanisms are very effective for them. When the members of the community feel that they have reached a dead end, they kill offenders. 38

In sum, the absence of a fully trusted local authority and of formal and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms is a serious obstacle to social cohesion. It leads to mob justice and the normalization of violence (individual or collective) as an effective mechanism to resolve conflicts and restore order. This is a major challenge to social cohesion as it undermines the rule of law and due process, and often leads to outsider violent exclusion, a point discussed further in later sections.

3.5 History of Group Conflicts and Violence

KwaMashu has a well-documented long history of group-based conflicts and violence. It is notable for high levels of political violence, intimidation and violence against new hostel dwellers, as well as xenophobic violence targeting foreign nationals. The following paragraphs explain.

3.5.1 Political violence

KwaMashu is renowned for a multi-decade history of political rivalry, violence and assassinations mainly involving members of ANC, IFP, and the NFP political parties. Struggles over power and monopoly of local leadership and authority continue to characterise KwaMashu and its political landscape. They often intensify during periods leading to local government elections. In the words of one respondent:

This [political violence] started long time ago; it has always been political rivalries between the IFP and the ANC. Now that the NFP is there it is now between all of the three. But now I do not know why the leaders are denying that; they always say it is that and that. But the councillor shot the other member of IFP during the court case, and the councillor that disappeared what about him? You can say that it was not political? I wonder because even the mugging of people that has increased so much it just started and people are now saying it is because of this political violence.

37 Group discussion with a local crime fighting organisation; KwaMashu, 14 March 2017
38 Interview with member of local SAPS; KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
Yes, there are some crimes reported but the politics are the reason behind these regular shootings. Before it was ANC and IFP particularly in the hostel, there are always shootings between those two parties and then the NFP came and got involved as well. There is a mix up now; the shootings won’t stop, especially now that local government elections are approaching.39

Respondents indicate that tensions and violence between IFP and NFP started soon after NFP was founded in 2011 and IFP members started joining its ranks. One local IFP leader observed:

Yes there is conflict between our political parties the IFP and the NFP. We are on an on-going direct and indirect conflict. It can be traced way back after some individuals who plotted to destroy our organization joined force with one of the NFP; those were individuals who were bitter and hungry for power and positions. Currently we are being suspected as those who are murdering the NFP members and one day we will prove them wrong. People are forgetting that there other political parties and within the NFP there are divisions which can result in such killings and threats. We are always being threatened by NFP members especially with the upcoming local government elections, those who are nominated to stand for elections are forever receiving threats ... but that’s politics.40

Another local resident similarly noted:

We continue to witness the conflict between IFP and NFP, fighting over positions and politics in general. They started right after the members of the IFP joined the NFP that how conflict started; up until now many people are still subjected to threats. The situation is still tense we really don’t know what will happen as we are approaching local government elections. The IFP members are threatening the NFP members especially those nominated candidates to stand for local government election. Some of these kinds of tensions involved a direct fights, threats or killings.41

According to respondents, these political tensions and violence affect not only political opponents and hostel dwellers but all community members in neighbouring locations. As one local resident remarked:

KwaMashu hostel is a well-known violence area; we have experienced conflict especially between political parties IFP and NFP and they have murdered each other and continue to threaten each other. Conflict were started because of people moving from IFP to NFP, that is how the conflict started. IFP members couldn’t bear the way NFP continue enjoy being elected and decided to form partnerships with communities. KwaMashu is the most violent hostel in KwaZulu-Natal followed by the famous Glebeland. There people are always murdered almost every week. So the problems faced by the community members, people are living in fear around as to who is next to be murdered. The violence has affected not only the hostel dwellers but the people who live adjacent to the hostel. 42

39 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 4 May 2016
40 Interview with a local IFP leader, KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
41 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
42 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 13 May 2016
That tensions and violence have continued over the years and show no sign of abating is evidence the police and the local authority in general have not been able to deal and effectively address the situation. Local residents are well aware of that inability. In one respondent’s words:

The existing tension is between IFP and NFP members in the hostel. It is very serious that even the SAPS police are failing to control the situation. Local people continue to threaten and kill each other. The nearest informal settlement called Ezimpohlweni is a place to hide guns and other dangerous weapons; as a result when SAPS search the hostel find nothing but on the next day they will hear about another shooting. I think people who are always involved are the hostel dwellers because the hostel block leaders are able to mobilize them despite their concerns. The SAPS are supposed to resolve violence because they have the resources, but they are struggling to bring about peace.43

The local police acknowledge that they face difficulties in addressing the situation. These are heightened because local residents fear coming forward with relevant information or to testify in courts against suspected perpetrators. SAPS also suspect that weapons used in those killings are hidden outside the hostel in the nearby informal settlements. One police officer explained:

As I indicated earlier, some murders can be easily be linked to politics between IFP and NFP members because ever since the NFP was formed the number of murders has increased dramatically especially in KwaMashu hostel. I have highlighted earlier on that recent conflict was political motivated between IFP and NFP, even now the situation is an on-going process because we continue experiencing murders. The conflict between the IFP and NFP was caused by the friction of the IFP member who left the party and formed NFP. Many NFP councillors have been murdered and even with the upcoming local government elections we are still monitoring the situation very closely. We are always required to act whenever there is violence and a number of arrests have been made. However, some cases don’t reach a magistrate due to evidence that is limited and witnesses being afraid to come forward. Also when we go to search the hostel, we don’t find any guns and we are suspecting that maybe they hide them somewhere close maybe in the nearest informal settlements.44

While the 2017 follow up interviews reveal that the situation is relatively calm compared to the pre-election period, respondents indicated that political tensions remain. One community leader responded when asked whether political tensions had eased in the area:

It is still the same, tensions are still here... yes, it is still the same. People are unhappy and still don’t attend meetings, they stay home, they say why are you a councillor because we didn’t choose you? They got those tensions until now. [...] Politics is a dirty game. Sometimes local people can actually prefer someone but the party can bring somebody else and sometimes local people wouldn’t be

43 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
44 Interview with member of local SAPS; KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
happy about the candidate. The party chooses other people we don’t like, which causes tensions in communities.45

3.5.2 Violent attacks on foreign nationals

While there were incidents of xenophobic violence in 2008, KwaMashu experienced the main episodes of violence against foreign nationals in 2015 and in 2017. Details on this violence, its underlying and immediate causes as well as its significance and implications for social cohesion are provided in the next section.

3.6 Violence against outsiders

3.6.1 Profile of the violence

The main episodes of violence against foreign nationals in KwaMashu occurred in April 2015 and in May 2017. In 2015, foreign owned businesses near the men’s hostel were looted, set on fire and foreign nationals displaced. Perpetrators blocked roads with burning barricades to prevent the police from intervening. In ward 41, foreigners operating spaza shops were threatened (by anonymous eviction notices and notices calling community members to attack foreigners) and vacated the area immediately. According to respondents, violence started near the hostel area and spread to other locations. One local witness described the violence:

Yes it is true, violence happened here; it did but then that is settled, they [foreigners] are no longer attacked, everything is back to normal but the current killings are there not the locals on foreigners know this is something aside from the foreigner attacks. It is political. [...] I do not know how it started; all I know is that I heard noises of the people and the sirens from the police cars on the day it started here, but it had already started by the hostels and it was the people from the hostel who were coming this side to attack. We never started bothering anyone in this area until those people from the hostel came. It is the hostel dwellers who started this violence.46

Another resident shares similar views:

In fact the attacks did not really occur here in this area; people attempted to attack the foreigners were not from this area; they were from the hostel, the wave came this way after they have been chasing those foreigners in the hostel and then they started coming this way because we are not far from the hostel. But they did not find foreigners here because they were told to close their shops and leave before the hostel dwellers attack them. After the situation was calm, they [foreigners] can come back.47

45 Focus group discussion with a local crime fighting organisation, KwaMashu, 14 March 2017
46 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 11 May 2016
47 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 5 May 2016
As the two respondents allude to above, foreigners were not physically harmed and there were no deaths as a result of the violence because foreigners were forewarned (through eviction letters or advice by landlords) and pre-emptively left the area. When asked to describe the violence, a local resident responded:

I should tell you that last year no foreigners were killed or attacked physically here. They dealt with them before the outbreak of xenophobia. Meaning those who are saying they did receive letters are telling the truth, there were people who were distributing those letters. We are so fortunate that we have only few foreigners here, so people were reading stories somewhere and the media was painting that bigger pictures about KwaMashu no one was killed. Many people in the province started to act after the King Zwelithini has delivered his speech of which he was later blamed for, for bringing chaos in the country.48

Similarly, another resident indicated foreigners responded to threats and eviction letters and left the area before the actual violence started. In his words:

It was a different case with the outbreaks of xenophobia last year. The number of foreigners is limited at KwaMashu; there is that stigma that Mashu is a violent place; as a result, foreigners are not flooding like in other areas. The last year’s case didn’t reach a point of there being violence on people; those few individuals left the area as soon as they received threats. Some reported that unknown letters were sent to them. After the attacks in other areas those individuals managed to return and continue with their businesses as normal. The locals are interacting well with foreigners and some locals are also employed by foreigners as their assistants.49

Foreign respondents similarly indicated that no one was physically harmed during the attacks because all foreigners had already left the area. When asked what happened during the violence, one foreign business owner stated:

As I have told you what happened last year, my business was disturbed but I wasn’t harmed at all because we had an opportunity to leave as soon as possible. I don’t know, but no one was injured here in Mashu. The main owner of this supermarket warned me that I should leave as soon as possible because there are rumours of xenophobic attacks. In some areas our brothers received those letters instructing them to leave as well. They were targeting us, foreigners; mostly we were accused of stealing jobs and drugs and many other things. But currently no one has given us trouble ever since we returned.50

In May 2017, foreign shopkeepers were similarly the target. Their shops were looted and vandalised. The shop owners had to flee the area for safety. Media reports indicated that the violence was triggered by

48 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 13 May 2016
49 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 12 May 2016
50 Interview with a Somali national; KwaMashu, 7 May 2016
false social media rumours that foreign nationals had abducted a local young girl. Local authorities confirmed indeed that the rumours were false as no young girl had gone missing.51

3.6.2 Organization and mobilization for violence52

According to respondents, the 2015 violence against foreign nationals and their businesses in KwaMashu was organised by hostel block leaders (in response to the King’s speech and what was happening in neighbouring locations) together with local business owners (unhappy about the competition that was ‘killing’ their businesses). One local resident, who participated in the attacks, outlined the role of block leaders in mobilising community members:

I will refer to last year’s incident; we were called by the block leader and told to act since in Isipingo there were already attacks, but some raised the issue that all foreigners are no longer in the area. Before the violence outbreaks some foreigners agreed that they did receive warning letters, ordering them to leave the area and they followed orders. We did have serious cases last year and during 2008 I was not around but it was also a different case I heard that some foreigners suffered minor injuries and one shop by the sport field was looted and people stole some stuff. Last year, it was a response to the King’s speech; so others are hiding behind that explanation. [...] In these meetings that we are always called to attend, our block leaders sometimes imposed things on us, for instance last year we were told to take action as well because in Isipingo local people were attacking foreigners. That is the kind of leadership we are exposed to, but it was very unfortunate that there are a few, too few foreigners in the area and during that time they were long gone. The situation was not as tense and rough as it occurred in other areas, we didn’t kill any foreigners. Even the shops are owned by locals, they were leasing them to foreigners.53

According to other respondents, local businesses owners were also involved in organizing the violence because they want to chase away foreigners whose presence was undermining their businesses. When asked why foreigners were attacked, one observed:

Foreigners’ prices are different from South Africans’; you find that from them you get an item very cheap. And I think that is one of the reasons why local business people were involved; they wanted to chase them away because they complained about that they don’t see profit, because when foreigners arrived they made things cheap, so they don’t see what they are working for.54

3.6.3 Logic, underlying causes and triggers of the violence

52 Discussions in this and the following subsections focus mainly on the April 20105 violence because the 2007 violence occurred after the research team had completed the second round of filed work.
53 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
54 Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 11 May 2016
According to respondents, there was clear logic behind the violence: instigators and perpetrators wanted to force foreigners to leave the area and go back to their countries of origin. As elsewhere, instigators consider removing foreigners from their respective areas as an effective way of addressing the social ills they (foreigners) are associated with. One local respondent recounted:

It started as criminal activities, there were house break-ins. But I think even though criminal activities were involved, but I think there was a force behind, they formed a force, a small group that sat down and planned that they are attacking these people. They wanted to intimidate them and force them to go back to their countries, because others said they should leave South Africa and go back to their countries because their presence is not good for us and the country. [...] Some people wanted foreigners to leave the area and yes they achieved that. The victims left to hide in a safety camps, their businesses were safe those especially who are owned by locals.\(^{55}\)

Foreign nationals, victims of the attacks were aware of that intention as one of them noted: “They wanted to get rid of us and the message was clear. The Zulu King was quoted in one of the newspapers saying ‘No one was born without a home’, which means they were sending us back to our homes.”\(^{56}\)

As in other violence affected areas, the underlying causes include negative attitudes and strong resentment towards foreign nationals due to the socio-economic ills they are associated with as well as what locals perceive to be illegitimate competition for socio-economic resources and opportunities. Another significant underlying cause is the lack of conflict resolution mechanisms and a propensity to resolve political or social conflict through violence (see discussion under conflict resolution). When violence is normalised as an effective mechanisms to resolve conflicts and restore order, there should be no surprise that violence is used to resolve conflicts between locals and foreign nationals.

Similarly, respondents and perpetrators believe that it was the King’s speech that triggered violence in KwaMashu. However, as observed elsewhere (see Isipingo profile), the King’s speech alone cannot explain the occurrence of violence in some areas of the ‘Kingdom’ and not in others. Rather instigators and perpetrators of collective violence use precipitants – in this case the King’s speech – as justification and legitimization for the violent acts they were already considering.\(^{57}\) As one of the respondents stated above, KwaMashu’s local players used the speech as an excuse or opportunity to act. Indeed the Special Reference Group (SRG) led by former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay found that the attacks on foreign nationals in KwaZulu-Natal last year were aimed at shutting down their businesses and could not link Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini to the attacks. Judge Navi Pillay stated: “The SRG found that the

\(^{55}\) Interview with a female South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016

\(^{56}\) Interview with a Somali national; KwaMashu, 7 May 2017

immediate cause of the violent attacks was the result of deliberate efforts to drive away competition by foreign national-owned businesses.”58

3.6.4 Responses to violence and interventions for return and reintegration

According to respondents, some community members (landlords) tried but failed to stop the violence or at least protect their property (that foreigners rent and use as business premises). SAPS escorted foreign nationals out of volatile areas to places of safety. Local authorities and civil society organisations organised meetings and community dialogues to calm the situation down, facilitate return and reintegration. However, while some of the displaced returned after the situation became calm and after spending several weeks in camps, many left and did not return to KwaMashu due not only due to fear of further attacks, but also to general safety concerns. Some of the victims of the 2015 violence returned to their home countries and by the time of fieldwork, some were still living in a shelter in Durban and wanted resettlement to a third country because i) they could not go back go back to communities that attacked them and with no guarantees of safety, and ii) they have lost everything they had worked hard for many years. One of the victims of the violence described what he witnessed regarding interventions and responses to violence:

We were taken to refugee camps and many agreed to be sent back home, in their various countries because we were no longer safe in our places in Durban. When I returned nothing was destroyed in the supermarket and that was caused by the fact that some of these shops are owned by locals and foreigners are renting them. Even some of those shops owned by foreigners they were not burned down, everything was still the same. No one provoked me since I came back, things are back to normal. I lost so much money because for two to three months the supermarket was closed. And emotionally we were affected because our families back home were calling us nonstop. [...] There were many interventions by the social relief organizations, SAPS police, Metro police, politicians and church leaders to bring us emotional support and food parcels and blankets and to organise campaigns and dialogues with communities and their leaders.59

Respondents also indicated that the police made some arrests and started patrolling to ensure public safety during and after the violence. As one local respondent observed: “SAPS intervened and made many arrests, but I remember here in the area, last year after we saw on television the situation at Glebeland hostel the SAPS together with metro started to do regular patrols ensuring the safety here as well.”60 However, as elsewhere in the province, respondents were not clear what happened to those arrested. The idea of setting up dedicated courts to speed up the prosecution of perpetrators did not seem to have materialized. Indeed in April 2015, the National Prosecuting Authority stated that it was working with the police and the

58 http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/7d0c12004c4b464db4bcbf66ac5e10bb/SRG-releases-findings-on-Xenophobic-attacks-in-KZN-20160504

59 Interview with a Somali national; KwaMashu, 7 May 2016

60 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 6 May 2016
The South African government vowed swift action against xenophobic attackers: Jeff Radebe, Minister in the Presidency, announced that the Department of Justice and National Prosecuting Authority would set up special courts to fast-track prosecutions. But it seems this is not what has happened. Of the 87 cases brought before the criminal justice system, 83 cases have been postponed for further investigation. I followed up with foreign nationals who had been injured or their businesses looted. All said they have yet to receive any follow-up with regards to their cases. I also visited the Umlazi Magistrates court – one of the courts where these cases are supposed to be prioritized - as well as the Durban Magistrates Court. No one had any idea what I was talking about, and there were no special courts allocated.62

While some displaced foreign nationals were able to return and reopen their businesses, most live in fear and have indeed expressed safety concerns. They believe that violence targeting them can erupt again anytime given ongoing violence in the area and the fact that there are no preventative measures in place. Some describe KwaMushu as ‘a war zone’. Local residents also indicate that, despite the return and current relative calm, tensions between locals and foreigners remains. One local resident noted: “Last year there were rumours of xenophobic attacks and immediately the foreigners were ordered to live the area. Therefore ever since they returned there is ongoing tension between foreigners and locals.”63 In March 2017 (the time of the second round of fieldwork for this research), there was no sign of social cohesion interventions or programmes designed to ease these tensions and promote peaceful cohabitation. Foreign nationals indicated that they still lived in fear as one stated:

We are always on our toes although we are doing ok with business. We live in fear. We never know when people can gang up against us. So we are always vigilant. When the community has unmet needs, like the delivery of basic services such as water and electricity, we become the target because the government does not pay attention to the people’s needs thus people use us to get the attention of the government.64

In sum, as in many of the other sites described in this project, violence against outsiders is another visible symptom of social cohesion fault lines which further undermines the prospects for a better future in terms of social relations and peaceful cohabitation between locals and outsiders. The discussion also shows that the multiple drivers of violence are embedded in the socio-economic and political life of the area, and are also signs of fraying social fabric or social ties among KwaMashu residents.

62 https://www.ecr.co.za/other/empty-promises-or-simply-slow-justice/
63 Interview with a male South African respondent; KwaMashu, 13 May 2016
64 Interview with a Somali business owner, KwaMashu, 14 March 2017
4. CONCLUSIONS: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

While its population is predominantly Black and Zulu speaking, KwaMashu it also home to other ethnic, national, religious, cultural and linguistic population groups. Indeed, in addition to the majority Blacks, the township also hosts Whites, Coloured, Indians, as well as foreign nationals from different nationalities including Zimbabwe, Somalia, Pakistan, and Ethiopia. The area and its residents face serious socio-economic challenges including high unemployment rates, poverty and poor service delivery particularly in hostel and informal settlement areas, high rates of violent crime, drug abuse’ as well as chronic group conflicts and violence. In addition to socio-economic challenges, KwaMashu has serious social cohesion fault lines as evidenced by political violence and exclusion, negative perceptions and attitudes towards outsiders, as well as repeated incidents of anti-outsider violent exclusion. The main social cohesion challenges in KwaMashu are as follows:

1. Socio-economic challenges and hardships: As indicated above, most of the KwaMashu residents face significant challenges in terms of unemployment, poverty, poor service delivery, violence and crime. Socio-economic hardships are a serious obstacle to social cohesion because they lead to other social ills that have the potential to fray the social fabric and are often the source of negative perceptions and attitudes towards outsiders;

2. Negative perceptions towards outsiders: Despite some relatively positive social, economic and institutional interactions, KwaMashu local residents generally harbour negative perceptions towards foreign nationals living in their midst. Largely informed by the above-mentioned socio-economic hardships and resented competition for scarce resources and opportunities, these negative perceptions are evidently not only a symptom of poor cohesion but are also an obstacle to building sustainable social cohesion and peaceful cohabitation between locals and outsiders. Indeed, as this study shows, they are one of the primary underlying causes of xenophobic violence KwaMashu has repeatedly experienced;

3. Lack of trusted local authority and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms: KwaMashu residents expressed a generalized sense of dissatisfaction with the local structures of leadership and authority. They also voiced a deep sense of fear and safety concerns due to on-going political tensions, violence and crime. These safety concerns compound existing unhappiness about unemployment and poor service delivery in the hostel and shack areas and make community dissatisfaction with leadership structures even more bitterly felt. This community dissatisfaction results in –and is in turn reinforced by- residents’ pervasive belief that the local authority and community leadership structures have no capacity to effectively resolve individual or group
conflicts in KwaMashu. In particular, local residents are of the opinion that all local institutions of authority and leadership (including the police) have thus far not been able to get crime under control or intervene and resolve political and group conflicts in the hostel. This helps explain why communities often prefer using mob justice as an alternative conflict resolution mechanism. The absence of a fully trusted local authority and of formal and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms is a serious obstacle to social cohesion. It leads to mob justice and the normalization of violence (individual or collective) as an effective mechanism to resolve conflicts and restore order. This is a major challenge to social cohesion as it undermines the rule of law and often leads to outsider violent exclusion;

4. **Group conflicts and violence:** KwaMashu has a well-documented long history of group-based conflicts and violence, particularly political violence and xenophobic violence targeting foreign nationals. In particular, KwaMashu is renowned for a multi-decade history of political rivalry, violence and politically motivated killings mainly involving members of ANC, IFP and the NFP political parties. These struggles over power and monopoly of local leadership and authority continue to characterise KwaMashu and its political landscape and often intensify during periods leading to local government elections. With no effective preventive measures in place, residents expressed their fears that political conflicts and violence, which affect entire communities and not just the political antagonists, are likely to continue and even intensify in the area;

5. **Xenophobic violence:** The main episodes of violence against foreign nationals in KwaMashu occurred in April 2015 and in May 2017. On both occasions, foreign owned businesses were looted, vandalised and burned down while foreign nationals, particularly business owners were displaced. In KwaMashu, the main drivers of the violence include negative attitudes and strong resentment towards foreign nationals due to the socio-economic ills they are associated with as well as what locals perceive to be illegitimate competition for socio-economic resources and opportunities. Another significant underlying cause is the lack of conflict resolution mechanisms and a propensity to resolve political or social conflict through violence. When violence is normalised as an effective mechanism to resolve conflicts and restore order, there should be no surprise that violence is used to resolve conflicts between locals and foreign nationals. This research shows that xenophobic violence is clearly an unmistakable indicator of social cohesion fault lines and that its multiple drivers, embedded in the socio-economic and political life of the area, are equally visible signs of fraying social fabric or social ties among KwaMashu residents.