



African Think Tank Inc.

WORKING WITH VICTORIA'S AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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RE: ATT Media Release: ATT condemns all forms of discrimination and violence

The African Think Tank condemns all forms of discrimination and violence. We are alarmed by the recent attacks on Jewish teenagers in Melbourne, particularly as the same perpetrator(s) seem to have been involved (Jewish teens 'bashed by same man,' The Age, 17/10/07), within a general pattern of racially motivated violence increasing for vulnerable members of our society.

We support Manny Waks of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission and the Jewish community, and endorse calls for increasing anti-Semitic and other attacks on distinct ethnic groups to be treated seriously as racially motivated violence, with strong preventative measures invoked by the appropriate authorities.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that racial attacks on Africans, including children, surged with recent statements criticizing African refugees by Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews, and the associated media coverage. All elected officials and particularly Members of Parliament, play a pivotal role in modelling public discourse that promotes harmony, safety and mutual respect for all members of Australian society.

African refugee parents have faced the heartbreak of their children saying they wished they had not been born with black skin, and otherwise showing serious effects of trauma and loss of senses of self-confidence and self-worth due to negative public statements aired in the media related to African ethnicity. Africans came to Australia to escape the crushing oppression of brutal regimes abroad, and we hope to realize our dreams of a safe, productive, peaceful future in Australia in harmony with all other members of the Australian community.

We all need to do our part to build a better Australia free of gratuitous verbal or physical violence towards any individuals or groups.

Dr. Berhan Ahmed,
Chairperson
African Think Tank Inc.