Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It is with deep heart that we take the news from South Africa on what is happening.

Mr Speaker, my worry again is, as your opening statement indicated, there should be “carefully worded comments”. So long as we continue to make “carefully worded comments” in Africa on what is happening in South Africa, sadly, this would continue to happen.

Mr Speaker, I have been a member of the Pan-African Parliament since 2012 and had witnessed a number of such incidents even while we were in South Africa. I have made a Statement on these xenophobic attacks in the Pan-African Parliament in South Africa, as a member from Ghana.

It is very sad that our brothers and sisters from South Africa are losing focus of what we are as a people. This is because when you enter the Pan-African Parliament, it is boldly written there: “One people, one voice, one nation. I am because you are and you are because I am”.

That is what is written there, it means that we are one people; and it acknowledges that we depend on one another.

The last one that happened was in April 2015, and Members of Parliament from the various African countries, who normally converge about four times in a year in Midrand to deliberate on issues that affect Africa, were very firm to the extent that some Hon Members suggested that if these xenophobic attacks would continue — the 2015 one was about the eighth — we should relocate the Pan-African Parliament out of South Africa because they do not deserve to have the Pan-African Parliament where the whole of Africa and their representatives meet to deliberate on African issues.

There were several assurances from their Ministers and even a message from the President assuring Africans that this was an unfortunate incident and they were taking every step to make sure that the perpetrators were brought to book.

As we speak today, nothing has been done to any of the attackers even though some of them were caught on camera. Some were purported to be family members of some of the high-ranking officials in South Africa. Their comments were videoed yet nothing has happened.

Mr Speaker, you said our comments should be well guarded because of diplomacy. My worry is, for how long can we continue to do this kind of “diplomacy” while our people continue to suffer? For how long can we continue to do this kind of nice talking while our people continue to suffer in others’ hands?
There are so many South African businesses across Africa. In fact, our last check in 2015, in the Pan-African Parliament, indicated that South Africa was rather doing more businesses across Africa than any other African country. This means their interest in our countries put together, their businesses were so huge that, in actual sense, they were riding on the back of Africans and benefiting than the parochial thinking back home that others have come into their countries to make them jobless.

With your permission, let me quote President Mugabe. He said:

“How can a doctor take the job of somebody who is just a loading boy?”

Mr Speaker, I am guided by your wise counsel and direction that we need to be guided. However, I would beg you to suggest this:

could all Africans avoid any product from South Africa as a way of showing them that we depend on one another?

My Hon Colleagues who are on the Pan-African Parliament would observe that since the xenophobic attacks in 2015, I have never bought anything in South Africa apart from the food and water that I drink. I have said it in the Pan-African Parliament because that was my protest as an individual to show that I would never go to their market to buy anything. I would never spend on anything apart from what would keep me alive and, that is, food and water. I have stuck to that up to date.

Mr Speaker, yes, we need to be diplomatic but the only way that a blind man can see that the eye of the sighted is really red is for him or her to give the blind man a knock. This is because until you give him or her a knock, because the person has challenges with sight, he or she would never see how serious your face looks.

The time has come for Africans to unite around this, not to violently attack their properties and other citizens in their countries but to boycott their products. If we begin to boycott South African products, they would begin to feel the heat home and that would let them know that we would not countenance it.

In South Africa, in 2015, I remember when we were debating this, we were reminded of how Nigerian students had to forego their lunch and supper and contribute that money to fight apartheid in South Africa. How many Africans put their laws aside and gave their freedom fighters passports, shelter, food, etcetera for them to get out of their difficulty?

Today, in less than 25 years, they have so soon forgotten that we were the people standing together with them and pushing to get them liberated. Now they are venting their anger on innocent Africans who are there and struggling daily.

Sometimes, when you visit where Ghanaians and Nigerians live and see the way they work so hard in South Africa just to make ends meet and be able to build those businesses, you would wonder whether anybody would envy them. This is because they really work hard.
Sometimes, they live in very deplorable conditions just to be able to put up those small businesses. Then just before they can say jack, some group of people would come and burn everything and send them back 10 years where they started. This is very unfortunate.

Mr Speaker, guided by your caution, I would urge that our Minister for Foreign Affairs, who has ably made this Statement, summons the South African Ambassador to her office and find out why he keeps assuring us yet he does nothing.

If they were to punish the perpetrators like any other offenders in South Africa, I am sure this would come to an end. However, if they continue dressing the issue and pretending to be doing something when in actual sense they are doing nothing, I am sorry we would continue to have these sad situations.

Let me commend the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs for the swiftness with which she has brought this Statement to the House. We hope that she would equally be swift in trying to get the authorities in South Africa, especially the Ambassador to come and answer to her what is happening to our dear citizens and other citizens of Africa in South Africa.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.