Nation-building and reconciliation have been central to the post-apartheid South African project. However, in spite of this emphasis, South Africa has witnessed an increase in xenophobia and of gender based violence. This research was constructed with African women living in Johannesburg, South Africa who have been forcibly displaced. It will consider the constructions of women refugees within South African national discourse through an analysis some of the policies and procedures set up to provide service to and assist refugee women. Drawing on interviews with forcibly displaced women, I will consider the multiple and complex ways in which women position themselves and negotiate their identities within these powerful discourses. Emphasis will be placed on the ways in which women reconcile and negotiate their varied wartime experiences within a powerful national discourse that constructs them predominantly as peacemakers, unique victims and caregivers and the ways in which these constructions function to marginalize women whose experiences contradict them. I will argue that notions of reconciliation and post-war reconstruction have reproduced representations of refugee women found in such nationalist rhetoric by reinforcing notions of women’s passivity and political disengagement. Some of the implications of these representations will be elaborated, particularly as they relate to the development of gender specific programmes and policies for forcibly displaced women in post-war situations.