



CoRMSA Newsletter

Edition 1 — 30 April 2011

Introduction:

Welcome to CoRMSA's first Newsletter for 2011! The newsletter aims to highlight developments in the migration sector in South Africa and beyond. This issue highlights the Zimbabwe Documentation Project, CoRMSA's engagement in the region, work that is being done by various organisations in the sector and many other issues.

Zimbabwe Documentation Project (ZDP)—Cape Town and Johannesburg Passports are ready for collection

Zimbabwean nationals who applied for the ZDP permits may need to enquire with their Consulate or on the Consulate's website (provided bellow) to check if their passports are ready for collection: <http://www.zimbabweconsulate.co.za/index.html>

The Consulate has clarified that despite the indication of the deadline which was initially set for 8 April, passports will still be available even after the deadline. It has also indicated that there is a link on the website where applicants are required to insert their details and know if their passports are ready for collection or not.

In total, 20 000 passports were received by the Consulate and they are all ready for collection. Applicants from Cape Town and other cities are requested to collect their passports in person in Johannesburg. An ID and receipt of R750 will be required by the Consulate upon collection at 1 Essex Street, Beula Park International Conference Centre, Meadowdale in Johannesburg. The office is closed temporarily but it will reopen early in May and arrangements were made by the Consulate to facilitate Cape Town applicants to collect their passports from Cape Town Home Affairs at Boston Centre in Bellview instead of travelling to Johannesburg.

CoRMSA Regional Advocacy Work at a Glance

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights:

CoRMSA attended the 48th Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in Banjul, Gambia in November 2010. During this session its application for an observer status was submitted and granted. CoRMSA also made a statement on behalf of Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) advocating for the extension of the ZDP. CoRMSA can now make its own statements in future meetings.

CoRMSA participated in the proceedings of an NGO Forum at which a coordination project for the SADC NGOs was initiated. Along with HURISA, who provides the SADC representation on the NGO Forum Steering Committee, and two other SADC NGOs, an agreement was reached to thoroughly prepare for future sessions as a region. It is for this end that a 3 day workshop was organised in Luanda from 12 to 14 April. SADC NGOs that have applied or are applying for an observer status were invited and requested to submit a brief report on their areas of work prior to the meeting so that a focussed SADC report to the NGO Forum could be prepared.

The workshop programme also included a training on how to utilise the African human rights mechanisms such as the SADC Tribunal and African Court on human rights. CoRMSA addressed a session on the AU Internally Displaced Peoples' Convention and the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Peoples as an attempt to popularise and promote the use of these regional instruments as a lobbying focus for refugee and migrant issues on the agenda of other SADC NGOs in the human rights, disability and gender sectors. This was also meant to mainstream refugee and migrant issues in the SADC NGO inputs.

Regional Consultation on the Plan of Action for the AU Internally Displaced Peoples' Convention:

CoRMSA was invited to attend the Regional Consultation on 17 and 18 March in Lilongwe, Malawi. It was one of the two South African NGO represented. One member of the national parliament and two DHA officials also attended the meeting. The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights of Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) explained the negotiating process that led to the adoption of the Convention. The meeting focussed on strategies outlined in the Plan of Action to ensure that the Convention is signed and ratified and comes into force. It was noted that South Africa is the SADC 'Champion' of this Convention but it has neither signed nor ratified it. CoRMSA, together with the member of the national parliament and the DHA officials will follow up on this to find out the country's position and devise an advocacy strategy to ensure that South Africa fulfils its mandate.

African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM):

CoRMSA was invited to be part of the process of drafting a shadow report on the APRM follow-up process. A draft tracing the issue of xenophobia, which the APRM indicated as a national challenge the year before the 2008 violence, and analysing the government's response as reported in the 2011 APRM follow-up report has been submitted.

It is noteworthy that the Second Implementation Report, covering January 2009 to September 2010 and submitted to the APRM Forum in January 2011 by President Jacob Zuma, devotes a whole section to xenophobia which, whilst it may not concur completely with the findings of the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) (formerly known as Forced Migration Studies Programme) research into the causes of the xenophobic violence, certainly goes much further in taking xenophobia seriously and reporting on a number of initiatives. The report recognises that CoRMSA called for an official investigation and states that: "this report is currently being used by the government and other stakeholders in their efforts to address the challenges of xenophobia in the country". It also states that "The APRM National Consultation called for a special summit to discuss xenophobia".

Migrating out of Poverty:

CoRMSA participated in a two day regional workshop organised by the African Centre for Migration and Society to look at information gaps and possible research topics to present to the '*Migrating out of Poverty*' programme at Sussex University, UK, funded by DFID. The outcome of the funding proposals is not yet known, but the workshop provided a good network for researchers in the field in our sub-region and afforded a better understanding of refugee and migrant research in our region. Some of the research topics that arose out of the discussion could be pursued through other mechanisms if they do not end up forming part of the DFID programme.

Inaugural Meeting of the Regional Advocacy Network:

CoRMSA has initiated a regional advocacy network in conjunction with Jesuit Refugee Service's regional office. The first meeting took place on 5 April 2011 and served as a brainstorming session to gather ideas on what issues should be particularly taken forward at the regional level. A number of items were suggested that could be addressed broadly in the region or lobbied for by rights-based NGOs. Experiences were shared and a list of issues and strategic actions to be taken was developed. We will keep you updated on developments in this regard.

For more details please contact Roshan Dadoo: roshan@cormsa.org.za

Update on the ZDP

The Department of Home Affairs should be commended for accommodating the views of the civil society in an effort to eradicate the bottlenecks that beset the ZDP. Its staff should also be

commended for ensuring that as of 30 March 2011, 119 009 applications had been adjudicated with 156 753 still outstanding. Those remaining are expected to be finalized in 53 working days at the rate 3000 per day.

Zimbabwe Exiles Forum's Role in the Zimbabwe Documentation Project

Since September 2010, Zimbabwe Exiles Forum (ZEF) has been at the centre of assisting undocumented Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa to regularize their stay in the country.

The aim of the ZDP was, in essence, to regularize the stay of Zimbabweans and document as many of the unregistered Zimbabweans as possible. This is meant to assist the South African government in terms of security, planning for service delivery and for taxation purposes. Moreover, the ZDP will empower Zimbabweans in this country to claim their rights more boldly where violated. This registration process means that Zimbabweans in South Africa have dignity and they can now demand humane treatment from the police, employers and any other concerned party. In the medium term, being registered in South Africa also enables Zimbabweans in this country to go back to Zimbabwe and vote in the referendum and the next elections without fear of being prevented from coming back to work, study or do business in South Africa. As part of the Stakeholders Forum, ZEF and other organizations have been assisting the Department of Home Affairs to ensure that those who want to take advantage of the ZDP are regularized.

Challenges—ZDP applications

Presently, ZEF is receiving on average over 80 phone calls and 30 e-mails per week from Zimbabweans in reference to their ZDP appeals. The organization is also currently attending to over fifty people that visit the office on average each week with appointments to deal with this issue. This is likely to increase considerably in the coming weeks and months, as some of those who have submitted applications are rejected, or remain uncertain of the status of their applications. ZEF's major challenges in this regard are therefore resources to assist with appeals, and to investigate the status of applicants. However, ZEF will work closely with the Ministry of Home Affairs to ensure a smooth end of the project, and to protect the rights of those who are likely to be candidates for deportation or those affected by xenophobic treatment.

For more details please contact Gabriel Shumba: gabmrech@gmail.com

Lawyers for Human Rights Criticize DHA's Use of Unlawful Measures to Exclude Refugees from South Africa.

The Department of Home Affairs has begun implementing one of the most controversial elements of the Immigration Amendment Bill—the use of pre-screening procedures for asylum seekers at the border. While members of the Department have issued conflicting statements over what this provision will mean in practice, the Minister has stated that asylum seekers will be subject to the 'first safe country' principle, and that those individuals who passed through

other countries where they could have applied for asylum will be turned away at the border.

Nothing in South African law currently provides for this practice, and our courts have ruled to the contrary, holding that an individual cannot be denied asylum in South Africa because he or she first passed through another country. But there are increasing reports of individuals being turned away at the border on this basis, without any proper determination of their need for asylum protection.

During a National Assembly session on Wednesday 23 March 2011, a member of the Democratic Alliance asked the Minister to provide assurances that she would stop this practice in order to bring South Africa in line with its human rights obligations. The Minister however refused to give such an assurance.

'While heated debate continues around the proposed amendments to the Immigration Bill, the Minister of Home Affairs has rejected the important role that such debate plays in a parliamentary democracy by implementing some of the amendments without waiting for them to become law,' said Kaajal Ramjathan-Keogh of Lawyers for Human Rights.

The Minister's refusal to end this practice contravenes both domestic and international law. Said Ramjathan-Keogh: 'Home Affairs is not above the law, and may not institute practices that fall outside of existing legal provisions, particularly when the practice is still being debated through the proper legislative procedure. Such procedures are meaningless if the Department chooses to circumvent them.'

Internationally, South Africa is bound by the UN and African Refugee Conventions, which prevent a country from returning an asylum seeker to a country where he or she may face persecution. The practice of turning away individuals at the border violates this non-refoulement principle. In January this year, the European Court of Human Rights found this same practice illegal, ruling that returning an individual to a country whose asylum system was deficient constituted 'indirect refoulement.'

According to Ramjathan-Keogh, 'Individuals are being turned away at the border without proper procedures, and risk being unlawfully returned to situations of grave human rights abuses.'

Crown Mines Refugee Reception Centre is set to close in May 2011:

The Refugee Reception Centre in Crown Mines, Johannesburg is due to close at the end of May 2011. The Department has been aware of the court challenge as well as the possibility of an order as to the closure yet the Department has not made any contingency plans to deal with this problem. The effect of the closure will be far-reaching, as asylum seekers and refugees would experience difficulties renewing their permits and thus face the risk of detention and deportation. Asylum seekers and refugees are also likely to face fines, and significant transportation costs, as well as bureaucratic difficulties, if access to this refugee reception office is not resolved or a temporary solution is not found soon.

Proposed changes to the Immigration Act: Number of Days of Validity of the Asylum Transit Permit:

The Immigration Amendment Bill proposes to change the validity of the asylum transit permit (Section 23 permit) from 14 days to 5 days. These have not taken into account the difficulties of asylum seekers for meeting this reduced time period. This change will have the effect of preventing asylum seekers from lodging asylum applications and subjecting them to refoulement, in violation of international law. However, it is worth noting that South Africa has made international commitments to protect refugees and to abide by the duty of non-refoulement.

For more details please contact Kaajal: kaajal@lhr.org.za

The Parliamentary Monitoring Group Informs the Refugee Community About Some of the Pending Bills:

The Immigration Amendment Bill was introduced in March 2011, and is currently under discussion at the NCOP. The Minister of Home Affairs explained that it was introduced to put some checks and balances in place to stop the spread of organised crime, trafficking in persons and corruption, and to address abuses that had grown up around South Africa's open immigration policy. She stressed that the immigration policy should, whilst taking human rights requirements into account, also be in line with national priorities, including those of job creation. The new system is aimed at attracting highly-skilled workers. Foreign companies can obtain a business visa if they intend to engage in a business that is "in the national interest" and that will employ a prescribed number of South African citizens. The Bill was criticised as providing little opportunity for low-skilled immigrants, and civil society organisations also objected to the possibility of pre-screening at borders, and the new requirement for asylum seekers to report to a Refugee Reception Centre within five days of entering South Africa. The Department and Portfolio Committee did not support these objections. The Bill also calls for all children under 16 to have their own passports, to reduce trafficking. Immigration practitioners may continue to give advice, but foreign nationals must now apply in person for visas. A positive change has been the proposed reintroduction of a provision that would allow foreigners under the age of 25 years, to obtain permits or visas to seek work in community-based organisations.

The Refugee Amendment Bill has been returned to the National Assembly for consideration of some amendments by the NCOP. It was introduced to rectify problems with the Refugees Act of 1998, in particular the loss of credibility in the system, which resulted from adjudications by a low-level official, and the number of improper applications that were clogging the process. The Bill proposes a Refugee Status Determination Committee which would decide on applications, decisions would be automatically reviewed by the Director General of Home Affairs and appeals would lie to the Refugee Appeals Authority. In addition, an asylum seeker or refugee, whose child is born in South Africa, will in future be required to submit the birth certificate to a Refugee Reception Centre to ensure that the child is registered as a dependent, and can be provided with healthcare and education services.

For more details please contact the Parliamentary Monitoring Group: info@pmg.org.za

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)—Refugee Rights Centre: Achievements and challenges:

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University—Refugee Rights Centre started operating on 2 August 2010. NMMU is in the process of forming a comprehensive network within the Port Elizabeth area which will provide not only access to legal services but also access to social services to refugees and migrants.

The NMMU—Refugee Rights Centre can be approached by refugees and asylum seekers in the following circumstances:

- If refugees and asylum seekers feel that their rights in terms of Refugee law and the Constitution of South Africa have been violated;
- If refugees and asylum seekers are in need of legal advice, assistance and protection;
- If refugees and asylum seekers need support with the submission of asylum applications and refugee status applications;
- If newcomers need assistance at the Refugee Reception Office;
- If refugees and asylum seekers need support with appeals against rejected claims;
- If refugees and asylum seekers need representation in cases of unlawful arrest and detention;
- If refugees and asylum seekers need support with application for permanent residence.

Achievements:

It is worth noting that through networking with other stakeholders such as Legal Aid SA, the NMMU—Refugee Rights Centre has broadened the range of legal services available to refugees and asylum seekers. Swift legal intervention was made in two cases where clients were detained and about to be deported. Through urgent High Court Applications NMMU lawyers succeeded to have the clients returned from Lindela Deportation Facility to Port Elizabeth. They were immediately released and issued with temporary permits until the final ruling of the Court. It used to be a big challenge for asylum seekers whose permits were issued at the refugee reception offices elsewhere in the country to renew their permits at the Port Elizabeth Refugee Reception Office. This had dire consequences for asylum seekers whenever their permits expired until the NMMU—Refugee Rights Centre intervened and put a stop to this malpractice.

Since its inception, the Centre has provided legal representations in wide-ranging refugee matters such as:

- Obtaining appeal decisions from the Refugee Appeal Board;
- Assistance to undocumented asylum seekers;
- Intervention where a valid Section 22 permit is not recognized as a valid work permit by prospective employees;

- Assistance to expedite the process of certification as indefinite refugees to enable clients to apply for permanent residence.
- Intervention with SAPS to step up patrols in areas where businesses of foreign traders were at risk.



NMMU—Refugee Rights Centre Director, Mr Linton Harmse (left) with Sarah Hatamere (right) from Uganda. Photo: NMMU—Refugee Rights Centre.

Sarah was arrested and taken to Lindela. This happened while her Asylum application was still in process. The NMMU—Refugee Rights Centre lodged an urgent High Court application after which Sarah was immediately released from Lindela and sent back to Port Elizabeth where a new Permit was issued to her immediately while awaiting finalization of the High Court proceedings.

Challenges:

- Large numbers of asylum seekers being turned away from the Refugee Reception Office without being afforded the opportunity to apply;
- Reluctance of RRO staff members to attend workshops/training organised by legal organisations on refugee law;
- Language barrier during consultation. The Centre intends to address this problem by securing interpreters;
- Lack of a human rights culture among the public and public officials. A number of advocacy strategies will be undertaken by the Centre to address this challenge.

For more details please contact Sarine: Sarine.Broderick@nmmu.ac.za

Scalabrini's Foreign Educators Access Programme

For a while now, the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town has been running the Foreign Educators Internship Programme (FEIP). To date 76 educators participated in the programme. Throughout 2010 this programme successfully facilitated the placing of (unemployed) foreign educators in unpaid internships in schools in the greater Cape Town area. The objective of these placements is to provide the teachers with a platform to gain experience in South African schools and to work towards paid employment. At the same time, the programme hopes to address staff shortages at local schools by providing the required assistance through highly skilled foreign professionals.

With regards to this programme there have been two developments which currently require the attention of Scalabrini's advocacy and employment access specialists.

Firstly, since many of the foreign teachers in the FEIP originate from Zimbabwe, Scalabrini has been following the ZDP process closely to ensure that their clients benefit from the process. Secondly, Scalabrini has noted concerns about the Western Cape Education Department's apparent policy to not consider foreign educators' applications for permanent teaching positions solely on the basis of their nationality.

The Scalabrini Centre has been repeatedly pointing out to the Department that this practice is unlawful. When a foreign educator holds a valid work permit or has been recognized as a refugee, he or she has the right to take up employment in the South African teaching sector – without any limitations as to whether temporary, contract or permanent positions are concerned.

For more details please contact Daniela: daniela@scalabrini.org.za

Refugee Children's Project (RCP) Launches New Programmes for Children:

RCP continues to facilitate the effective integration of refugee children and their families into the local community by empowering them through the provision of a multi-faceted support system to women and children and other disadvantaged groups. Such support would provide a base for refugee families to engage in sustainable economic and social activities that would eventually improve their living standards in South Africa.

The vision behind RCP is simple: "To integrate and empower" refugee women and children in South Africa. Its mission is to alleviate the suffering of refugee women and children by offering them adequate assistance that would foster their effective integration into local communities.

RCP launched the following new programmes in April 2011:

The Scholarship Programme: This aims at providing grants to deserving and financially needy refugee youth to be able to continue with their college or University studies. The scholarship programme will benefit at least 30 youth who will be selected out of over 500 applicants during the first year. Due to financial limitations, the RCP will have to select only 30 beneficiaries out of such a large number of applicants. This programme will provide financial support to the academically talented but financially challenged under-graduate students at South African colleges or universities. This is meant to equip children and youth with marketable skills that will help them integrate in the national labour market, raise their living standards and uplift the refugee community as a whole. The selection criteria will focus on the applicants' performance. Selected students will receive support for a minimum period of two to three years.

Children and Youth Development Programmes: This programme hopes to provide various activities such as mass choir, life orientation and guidance, music and dance, psychosocial support, peer leadership and sport activities for children. It aims to enhance skills development among children, to deter trauma and help them to think creatively and use their artistic talents to promote their integration into local communities. This will also enable them to participate in decision making processes, to get involved in HIV/AIDS awareness, health and sanitation endeavours and to instil a sense of responsibility in them. These activities will provide opportunities for young refugee and migrants to develop within the youth programme circles and to become future group leaders. This will involve youth from ten to thirty schools in the city of Johannesburg, and it will cater for 100 to 300 youth led by 10 youth leaders who will be supported by a number of community volunteers.

Women and Girls Empowerment Programme: The focus of this programme is to ensure that vulnerable refugee women and girls are empowered to make a sustainable living. Ultimately, the intention is to make RCP a viable investment option, especially for refugee women and girls. The programme will help women and girls to set up small businesses through the provision of vocational skills training and financial support.

Refugee Children's Project has Closed Down its Offices in Musina

Due to the world economic meltdown and limited financial resources, RCP has been facing many challenges to support its programmes. It is for this reason that the RCP board has decided to close down its Offices in Musina in order to maximize its impact in Gauteng. However, such decision does not hamper RCP efforts to explore other avenues that will see its activities extended to other parts of the country.

RCP to establish the Johannesburg Centre for Refugee Integration and Empowerment (JCRIE)

Recently, RCP secured partnership with the Institute of the Diaspora for International Education, based in California, USA, to work together to establish a Johannesburg Centre for Refugee Integration and Empowerment (JCRIE). This initiative will contribute to the creation of an equitable and open society in South Africa, particularly in Johannesburg City. This will be accomplished by building on and scaling up viable initiatives that provide holistic support to marginalized refugee children and their families and build the capacity of the community to better care for children and protect children's rights.

The main objective of the JCRIE is to establish a Centre in Johannesburg that will work towards the delivery of accessible and high-quality services to refugee women and children, to facilitate their integration into the local community. This is also meant to provide multi-faceted services that will focus on sustainable integration and empowerment.

The JCRIE activities will be adapted according to the community needs and employ a holistic approach, providing culturally relevant resources and support to refugee children and women to keep them in touch with their societal, historical and cultural values.

For more details please contact Ebalo Justin: ebjustin@rcpafrica.org.za

UNHCR radio programmes engage communities on xenophobia

As rumours of renewed xenophobic violence gained momentum towards the conclusion of the FIFA Football World Cup in July 2010 displacing hundreds of fearful refugees and foreign nationals from the communities in which they were residing, South African Police Services (SAPS) Minister and chairman of government's inter-ministerial committee on xenophobia, Nathi Mthethwa, assured foreign nationals and the country at large that relevant authorities had the situation under control and that the law would guarantee everyone's safety.

While the South African Police Services (SAPs) increased its presence in volatile areas in Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), among other things, busied itself on the Minister's call for organisations and concerned individuals to support the role of law enforcement with education campaigns aimed at countering xenophobia.

With xenophobic sentiment fomented for the most part at community level, UNHCR began working with identified community radio stations through the production and airing of public service announcements (PSAs) and a radio drama to engage listeners on the ills of intolerance which invariably lead to xenophobic motivated violence.

Community radio is not only one of the best platforms for informal and creative education but it is also able to focus at length on pertinent issues relating to intolerance and xenophobia, peculiar to a given environment.

UNHCR began its relationship with identified community radio stations through the airing of PSAs which are produced in South Africa's eleven official languages. The PSAs are short awareness raising messages of between 30 seconds to two minutes whose intention is to change public attitude towards refugees and foreign nationals.

Popular South African personalities such as Bonginkosi 'Zola 7' Dlamini, arguably the most popular Kwaito artist in the country, Jabulani Tsambo a.k.a HHP who has traced his ancestry to the Tshopi people of northern Mozambique and Dr. Irvin Khoza, Chairman of the South African

Premier Soccer League and Vice-President of the South African Football Association including many others lent their support and voices to the production of the PSAs. Their messages of tolerance encourage a healthier approach to dealing with potential conflict and misunderstanding between foreigners and their local hosts. The PSAs are also a productive way to open up debate on xenophobia from which a number of programmes and initiatives can be started.

UNHCR's 15 minute radio drama series which is produced in Nguni and Sotho and set in a fictional township called *Harmony*, is very popular amongst community radio listeners. The story of the residents of *Harmony*, a community modelled on a typical South African township, pits the socio-economic interests of foreign nationals against those of their South African hosts with betrayal, peer pressure and an intercultural love affair adding zest and character through 13 episodes of disquiet, conflict and eventual resolution. The series concludes with home grown solutions made of inputs from both foreign nationals and locals, which returns the community to a level of peace and tolerance.

The radio drama offers insight into how members of a community, foreigners and locals alike, if encouraged and determined to work together are able to address most of their challenges. The listener is further engaged on the subject of the story through a 15 minute question and answer session which engages listeners to respond to questions that provide food for thought and alternative suggestions to xenophobic violence.



Nthabiseng Galane (right) and her mother, tune into another episode of the UNHCR radio drama, New Nation. Photo: UNHCR/P.Rulashe.

UNHCR first partnered on this initiative with AlexFM, the community radio station in Johannesburg's Alexandra Township. Alexandra Township, as most would recall, won the unfortunate title of 'most xenophobic township' in Gauteng following the xenophobic violence of 2008. To change this perception, AlexFM jumped at the chance of engaging its listening audience on efforts to counter xenophobia.

AlexFM's relationship with UNHCR stretches over several years beginning with the station's participation in a community media workshop UNHCR co-hosted with the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ) in 2009 titled *Reporting on Refugees*. To date, the station has co-hosted community outreach activities with UNHCR and plans to host a human rights film festival and music concert during Heritage month.



Isaiiah Ramogale of community radio station AlexFM hosts UNHCR radio drama, New Nation. Photo: UNHCR/P.Rulashe

With over 15 identified community radio stations across Gauteng, Limpopo, the Free State, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape broadcasting the PSAs since the last quarter of 2010 and the radio drama since February 2011, indications are that both initiatives can help change the often emotional and ill thought out decision to lash out and attack foreign nationals. UNHCR's partnership programme with community radio stations however is not without challenge. The human and financial resources required to maintain an ongoing and long term relationship with radio stations across the country is huge. At this point such resources are not exhaustive but maintaining the relationship with community radio is critical. Without the required resources, monitoring and evaluating the impact of these initiatives is extremely difficult.

While UNHCR engages with possible funders and like minded organisations to support the community radio initiative, it will continue interacting with identified stations in South Africa's long term goal to counter xenophobia.

For more details please contact Pumla Rulashe: RULASHE@unhcr.org

Echoes from the Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities (CBRC)

CBRC has embarked on a series of information sharing programmes on Refugees and migrants Rights as enshrined in the Refugee Act, the Immigration Act and other international protocols and/or agreements South Africa ratified. The launch of the programme was made possible and successful through the participation of role players from researchers to legal consultants.

CBRC points out that this programme was informed by a lack of information which acted as a detriment to many advocacy endeavours undertaken on behalf of refugees and migrants in the country. Regardless of a good deal of publications on rights of refugees and migrants, little has been achieved compared to the collective efforts invested. Nevertheless, this should remain a focal point to ensure the effectiveness of collective efforts in the advocacy sector.

Besides the awareness campaign series, CBRC has been encouraging refugee and migrant parents to personally get involved in the education of their children starting by the registration process in schools. These parents are, however, advised to contact CBRC wherever assistance is required in this regard. They are also assisted with applications for school fees exemption.

CBRC has referred a good number of cases to specialised service providers such as LHR, ProBono.org, Wits Law Clinic, CSV Trauma Clinic, and others. CBRC would further like to draw the attention of refugee and migrant organisations on the issues pertaining to access to specialised health care, the integration of migrants into the mainstream South African society, administrative and social justice.

For more details please contact Jacques: refugee@cbrc.org.za

PASSOP Concerned Over the Mass Dismissals of Immigrants by Private Security Companies across South Africa

The growing number of immigrant workers being dismissed by private security companies in recent weeks and months is extremely concerning. It appears that there is a countrywide government clampdown on companies employing foreigners in the security sector. As a result of this clampdown, companies who willingly employed immigrants are now dismissing them. Over the last few weeks, foreign security workers have lost their jobs *en masse*. PASSOP deplors these dismissals citing they are made in violation of labour law procedures.

The reason given by companies to their dismissed workers is that it is illegal for security companies to employ people who are not registered by the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) in terms of Section 23 of the Private Security Regulatory Act. It is alleged that PSIRA has recently started clamping down and refusing to register foreigners. In some cases it was alleged that PSIRA revoked permits they had already issued to foreigners. As a result, thousands of foreign security workers across South Africa have been losing their jobs.

PASSOP encourages government efforts towards job creation, but stresses that jobs should not stem from dismissing non-South African workers.

For more details please contact David Burgsdorff: david@passop.co.za

Christians for Peace in Africa Mark 10 years of Existence:

Christians for peace in Africa is celebrating its 10th anniversary in June this year. Since its inception, the organization has been working towards conflict resolution for the promotion of genuine peace and stability in war-torn countries. Its support strategies to refugees and migrants in South Africa seek to instill a human rights culture and build a more economically independent and sustainable society that will benefit the beneficiaries' home countries soon or later.

It is in this vein that the organization has been organizing International Conferences on Peace in Africa since 2009 in Johannesburg, followed by the 2010 conference in Pietermaritzburg and in September this year, this conference will be held in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo. The aim of the conference is to promote genuine peace and stability in Africa.

Christians for Peace in Africa has also been playing a major role in the City of Johannesburg's Johannesburg Migrants' Advisory Panel where its founding president is the chairman. This Panel is made of different organizations operating from the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality to address and deliberate on various issues affecting refugees and migrants in the city and meets every first Thursday of the month.

For more details please contact Pastor Thomas Kitutu: christianforpeaceinafrica@yahoo.com