



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **CoRMSA condemns irregularities during the deportation of Zimbabwean nationals in Musina**

CoRMSA and its partners express their concern over the irregularities noted during the deportation of Zimbabwean nationals on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2011 in Musina. Network partners in Musina report that about 150 Zimbabwean nationals were rounded up by uniformed members of the South Africa National Defence Force (SANDF) at 08h30 within the perimeter of the Refugee Reception Office (RRO) where they had gathered waiting for RRO services.

The members of SANDF bundled Zimbabwean nationals onto four trucks and proceeded to the border post. This happened without an immigration officer present and thus without proper verification of the deportees' status. The immigration officials at the border later confirmed to civil society monitors that all the deportees were dumped on the Zimbabwean side of the border.

This practice is in clear breach of the immigration directive on the deportation of Zimbabwean nationals issued by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) on September 27. The directive clearly states that deportation can only be conducted after a thorough verification check of the deportees to establish whether or not they have a pending application to reside legally in South Africa. Deportees must be interviewed and the arresting official should indicate in a statement that the above procedure was followed and ensure that the information given by the suspect was verified.

Regrettably, the above procedure was not followed in the case of Zimbabwean nationals who were arrested while waiting for service at the Musina RRO. They were arbitrarily rounded up and deported, in flagrant disregard of due process.

CoRMSA calls upon the DHA, and all the law enforcement entities involved in the deportation process to respect the regulations of the directive set to guide such deportations.

CoRMSA further calls upon the DHA to provide clear and proper guidelines on the processes to be followed by the law enforcement authorities in conducting deportations.

CoRMSA stresses that the South African government must uphold its commitment to respect the human rights of all in South Africa and ensure that deportations of all non-nationals are conducted in a procedurally fair and humane manner.

**For more information please contact:**

Wozani Moyo or Alfani S. Yoyo, Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA) on +27(0) 11 403 7560.