



16 June 2021

**National Youth Day June 2021- Press Release.**

***“The Year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke: Growing youth employment for an inclusive and transformed society.”***

Johannesburg – 16 June 2021, the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA), representing asylum seekers, refugees and migrants’ communities, joins the rest of South Africans in celebrating the contributions made by the youth of, 1976 under the national theme of ***“The Year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke: Growing youth employment for an inclusive and transformed society.”*** CoRMSA would like to extend the national theme by adding that ***“Youth Power: Growing South Africa Together In The Period Of Covid-19”***.

Emanating from South Africa’s past, this year marks the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the June 16 1976 student uprising in Soweto. Historically, the young people of 1976 became part of our history as their actions contributed to change towards the socio-political spheres of our nation. CoRMSA acknowledges the positive contributions made by the youths and migrants youth in the various sectors of South African societies.

While the youth of 1976 fought for freedom and creation of a democratic South Africa, CoRMSA call upon the youth of today to be change makers and pursue a unified South African societies free of xenophobia, violence and discrimination influenced by hatred and lack of human rights awareness. ***A Youth is a Youth***, irrespective of their country of origin, ethnicity, race or documentation statuses. CoRMSA would like to urge all citizens and non-nationals to recognise that South Africa is a member of the international community and has signed numerous human rights and migration treaties hence South Africa like any other countries hosts asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

It is with great regrets and uncalled for situation that we are commemorating and celebrating the 44<sup>th</sup> Youth Day Anniversary and 25 years of the Constitution which stresses the need to create a society that is “open and democratic”, equality and access to justice under continuous life threats directed to non-nationals in South Africa. The current hate speech and xenophobic sentiments taking rounds on social

media platforms such as the “**Operation Dudula**” raises a lot of concerns relating to the protection of human rights for all and the abuse of social media platforms and posters to promote hate speech and hate crimes amongst the communities. CoRMSA strongly believes that the Youths of 1976 fought to liberate all of us **Not** to promote division and injustices amongst “**everyone**” who lives in South Africa. This kind of behaviour cannot be allowed in our democratic South Africa.

In light of the above, CoRMSA invites today’s youths’ activism to partake in intercepting the challenges of poverty, unemployment, the fight against the spread of Covid-19, corruption, xenophobia, racial discrimination, crimes against the LGBTQI+, economic and social freedom of South Africa and to refrain, ignore and challenge all uncalled for activities, undemocratic and xenophobic statements that tarnishes the much admired foundation laid by the Youths of 1976. Henceforth, in celebrating this day, we should also take this as an opportunity to recollect the massive sacrifices made by South African youth in 1976 in struggling against oppression and better opportunities for all and implement programmes that promote the economic opportunities for all the youths including migrant youths.

Furthermore, CoRMSA calls the government of South Africa especially the South African Police Service, South African Human Rights Commission, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and the Office of the President to strongly condemn all acts of hate speech and hate crimes and to hold those involved accountable to their human rights abuse conduct and actions. South Africa of today cannot allow an oppression of other by the other.

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