



Press release

25 November 2021

Let's end violence against women now! asylum seekers, refugee and migrant women inclusive.

Johannesburg – 25 November 2021, as we commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA), joins South Africa and the rest of the world in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and support gender equality under the theme, “Orange the World: End Violence against Women Now!” This is a crucial day in which the world takes action to support the elimination of gender-based violence through raising awareness of the crisis faced by women and girls including asylum seeker, refugee, stateless and migrant women and girls.

It is unfortunate that we are commemorating this day during the Covid-19 pandemic which has worsened the scourge of GBV. The UN Women reported that nearly 1 in 3 women have been abused in their lifetime. In times of crises, the numbers rise, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic and recent humanitarian crises, conflicts and climate disasters. A new report from UN Women, based on data from 13 countries since the pandemic, shows that 2 in 3 women reported that they or a woman they know experienced some form of violence and are more likely to face food insecurity. Only 1 in 10 women said that victims would go to the police for help. Other than the physical abuse, CoRMSA adds that migrants' women abuse extend to the denial of access to enabling documents which then exacerbates their challenges in accessing critical basic services in host countries. CoRMSA has witnessed and observed through its work the denial of access to justice, health care service and education for migrant women and girls based on their nationality and documentation status. CoRMSA believes that the denial of access to these basic needs is another form of violence against women that needs to be addressed and put to an end.

CoRMSA further notes that the plight of women, including migrant women across the globe is a major concern that needs everyone to stand up and put an end to their challenges. CoRMSA believes that although gender-based violence seems to be prevalent and inevitable,

it can still be prevented and stopped. It is time to, “Orange the World, and end violence against women!” In view of the above, CoRMSA encourages everyone to play a part in stopping gender-based violence through believing the survivors of violence, adopting comprehensive and inclusive approaches that addresses the causes of gender-based violence, bring transformation of social norms that are harmful and foster empowerment among women and girls. This can be achieved if the world stands in solidarity and promote gender equality. In support of this call, the World health Organisation stated on their website that “preventing and responding to violence against women is a human right, gender equality and public health priority. In every country and culture, more action is needed to ensure that all women in their diversity live a life free of violence and coercion”.

In summing up, CoRMSA also calls all the relevant authorities in South Africa especially law enforcement agencies and all states actors in the world to bring to book all perpetrators of gender-based violence. Women around the globe need to be heard, their voices should not be silenced and their experiences should be recognised. The dignity of women can be upheld when their human rights are protected by all of us.

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