



For immediate release:

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Human Rights Day Commemoration Press Statement.

“CoRMSA calls for the Advancement of Rule of Law and Human Rights Protection”

“This year we are celebrating and commemorating the National Human Rights month (March), with the National Human Rights Day on the 21st of March during a difficult period, clouded and apprehensive of the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, it is so unfortunate, hapless and uncalled for, that more than 25 years post the apartheid regime, we are still witnessing the growing lawlessness and human rights violations, this time, perpetuated by informal social movements who hold strong dislike for foreign nationals”, Says CoRMSA.

Historically, Human Rights Day in South Africa emanates from the Sharpeville Massacre of 21 March 1960 where many people died in cold blood during a brutal shooting by the Apartheid police in the course of a peaceful protest. This protest exposed the apartheid government’s deliberate violation of human rights in South Africa and to the world. Post this event, the month of March is celebrated and commemorated as the National Human Rights month with the 21st March declared as the Human Rights Day to honour those who fought for our liberation and to recognise and respect the human rights for all who live in South Africa. The theme for this year’s day is “**Freedom of movement and residence**” – everyone has a right to freedom of movement and to reside anywhere in the country. The 2022 commemoration of Human Rights Day is in line with the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the South African Constitution which enshrines the Bill of Rights of all people in South Africa.

In the recent years and currently, CoRMSA has observed and witnessed the continuous perpetuation of the gruesome violence, lawlessness, human rights violations, discrimination and xenophobic attacks directed to the vulnerable asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. These social ill actions that are directed to non-nationals do not assert with the respect of the rule of law and the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom set-out in our constitution. These includes the right to freedom of movement and residence, language and culture, and the right to life.

Our Constitution ultimately protects the Human Rights of everyone in South Africa. Contrary to the Bill of Rights, on-going xenophobic attacks and the demand of one’s documentation are being carried out in Soweto, the CBD and recently in Alexandra township by groups of people “*under the banner of Operation Dudula*”. The fact that this group also takes the law into their own hands is horrifying and uncalled for as it has left many asylum seekers, refugees and



migrants in turmoil leading to disintegration, traumatised and helpless. South Africa is believed to be a country with progressive laws and policies that strives to harmonise and promote equality and freedom. The lawlessness and inhumane actions by these groups of people cannot be allowed to continue to terrorise our integrated communities and democracy.

In view of the above, CoRMSA calls upon all law enforcement agencies and Chapters 9 institutions tasked and mandated to protect the lives of everyone within the republic to take full responsibility of protecting the human rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in South Africa for the advancement of the rule of law in the country. CoRMSA believes that **No** one is above the law, but Operation Dudula seems to be above the law judging from the actions that they have been carrying out in our communities. This cannot be allowed at all. We further urge the law enforcement agencies to bring the perpetrators of human rights violation and xenophobic violence to book and restore peace and equality in communities.

Furthermore, we call upon the government to strive for inclusive socio-economic development while combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all related intolerances as well as gender-based violence which diminishes our human rights culture and Ubuntu. Lastly, CoRMSA encourages everyone to distance themselves from these groups of people that disrespect the rule of law and violates the human rights of others to serve their own interests. We encourage everyone to partake in advancing social cohesion, unity, nation-building and a shared identity and to honour and respect each other's human rights and dignity, irrespective of one's nationality or documentation status.

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