

Press Statement

07 August 2025

Women's Day - Building Resilient Economies for All

Under the theme “*Building Resilient Economies for All*,” the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA) commemorates Women’s Month, and more specifically, Women’s Day, celebrated annually on 9 August.

Women’s Day commemorates the historic 1956 march to the Union Buildings, where over 20,000 women came together to protest against the discriminatory pass laws. This powerful act of unity showed women’s leadership in the fight for justice and human dignity. Observing this day is a time to reflect, recommit, and take action toward building an inclusive society where all women can thrive. The courage of the women who marched in 1956 laid the foundation for progress and inspired generations to continue the fight for equality in South Africa.

However, many women in South Africa still face serious challenges. Economic, social, and financial empowerment remain a huge challenge many with women having fewer job opportunities, and limited access to resources compared to their counterparts. Adding to these struggles is the alarming rate of gender-based violence directed at women that continues to exist in our societies. Many women experience different forms of abuse, often from which limits their freedom, and affects their ability to participate fully in economic activities, and community life. These challenges are connected; from physical and emotional violence, inequality, and financial exclusion, all feed into each other, making it clear that the fight for women’s rights protection is far from over.

In recent weeks, we have seen vigilante action by anti-migrant groups denying migrant women access to health care facilities and services. CoRMSA strongly condemns the ongoing denial of access to healthcare services for migrant women by anti-migrant groups. These actions are not only unlawful but also deeply inhumane, undermining the constitutional and human rights that South Africa upholds. Every person within our borders, regardless of nationality or immigration status—has the right to access essential healthcare, particularly maternal and reproductive health services. Targeting and intimidating vulnerable women seeking care is a gross violation of their dignity and safety.

CoRMSA calls on the government, healthcare institutions, and civil society to take urgent, coordinated action to protect the rights of migrant women and to ensure that healthcare remains a safe, accessible, and non-discriminatory space for all.

Let National Women’s Day be a powerful reminder of the courage and determination of the women who fought for women’s rights in South Africa. As we honour their legacy, we must also confront the urgent struggles women continue to face today and ensure that addressing these challenges remains a national priority.

For more information, please contact communications@cornsa.org.za