

Article 1.
All human beings are born free and equal
in dignity and rights.



International Migrants' Day 2009: FIDH and Zimrights call on the Republic of Zimbabwe to ratify the United Nations Convention on Migrant Workers

Open Letter to Mr Robert Mugabe, Republic of Zimbabwe

Paris, Nairobi, Harare, 18 December 2009

Your Excellency,

As we mark International Migrants' Day, we are writing to you to urge your government to take immediate steps to increase the protection of migrant workers in your country.

One year from now we will mark the 20th anniversary of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW). The ICRMW is the cornerstone of international protection of migrants' rights. As yet, Zimbabwe has not ratified this core United Nations instrument. Today, we call upon you to do so, thereby demonstrating your commitment to ending the violations and exploitation suffered daily by migrant workers.

More than 200 million persons across the world are migrants, representing nearly 3% of the world population. All countries are affected by migration either as origin, destination or transit countries and all states are thus confronted with the challenges of developing effective migration policies with human rights at their core.

Although, for many, migration is a positive experience, many others migrate under duress and face severe hardships in their countries of destination. Migrant workers all over the world remain particular targets of abuse, discrimination and exploitation by traffickers, smugglers and employers. Yet an instrument is at your government's disposal to minimise this and to strengthen their legal protection.

The ICRMW recognises the specific vulnerabilities of migrant workers and promotes humane and lawful working and living conditions and the need for increased protection. It provides guidance on the elaboration of migration policies, which can only be effective if they are based on legal standards and the rule of law. This Convention is thus a vital part of efforts to combat exploitation of migrant workers and members of their families.

Since its adoption by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990, the ICRMW has been ratified by 42 states. However, in order to become an effective instrument for fighting violations of migrants' human rights, all states, those of departure, transit and destination of migrants, must ratify.

We therefore urge the Government of Zimbabwe seize this occasion to ratify the ICRMW and to send a strong message to the international community of your commitment to the protection of the human rights of all human beings, including migrant persons. We strongly hope that on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Convention we can also celebrate its ratification by Zimbabwe.

We would be very interested to receive your Government's views on the matters raised in this letter and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SB', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Arnold Tsunga
President, Zimrights

Souhayr Belhassen
President, FIDH