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PASSOP invited to present to a Parliament Committee

On Monday, April 11th, PASSOP Director Braam Hanekom was invited by the National Parliament's Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation to meet and discuss recent human rights abuses in Zimbabwe.

The invite follows the March 1st protest that PASSOP organized outside Parliament at which a memorandum was submitted to the Speaker of Parliament to highlight these issues. "The invitation shows that South Africa's democracy can give everyone a voice, and that voicing our concerns through protest can be effective", said Braam Hanekom.

The meeting was constructive, with members of the Committee seeing eye to eye with the issues raised by us. It seems that South Africa has finally started taking a tougher stance on President Mugabe, as witnessed by the news emerging from the Troika meeting in Lusaka late March. We welcome this development, as it reaffirms our view that migration is ultimately a foreign policy issue that can only be tackled efficiently as such.

Assault and abuse as Zimbabwean Consulate finally delivers passports to applicants in Cape Town

For four days between April 28th and May 1st, the Zimbabwean Consulate finally delivered many of the much-needed passports to Zimbabweans who applied for them in Cape Town. The move followed months of misinformation and outright refusal to do so. Just two weeks ago the Consulate imposed a fictitious 'deadline' by which applicants country-wide were expected to pick up their passports in Pretoria. This prompted widespread panic and many Cape Town-based applicants to take up the long and expensive journey to Gauteng.

PASSOP criticized the Consulate heavily and repeatedly in the media for this and called on passports to be delivered to applicants where they applied for them. Following a recent PASSOP press statement highlighting the issue, the Consulate General was forced to publicly commit to delivering passports to Cape Town.

PASSOP monitors were on the ground at the Bellville Home Affairs to oversee and observe the distribution of passports during the three days. The monitoring team uncovered widespread corruption as well as countless other inconsistencies. Monitors also witnessed and recorded numerous instances of verbal abuse and even physical assault. In one instance a man was beaten



Figure 1: Confusion outside Bellville Home Affairs

and handcuffed to a pole for four hours by security guards working for the Zimbabwean Consulate.

When there were still hundreds of people in the queue waiting to receive their passports on Sunday afternoon, Consulate officials told them to return on Tuesday, as a trick to disperse the crowd. On Tuesday the offices were closed again. We estimate that there are still roughly 1,000 Zimbabweans in Cape Town who have been unable to collect their passports.

Finally, we also note with concern that there remain a considerable number of applicants for the Zimbabweans Dispensation Project who still need to apply for passports. They were promised they would get an opportunity to do so, but then the Consulate closed their offices and has not yet delivered on its commitment.

New ZDP Appeals Project Launched

PASSOP will monitor the adjudication and appeals processes of the remainder of the Zimbabwean Dispensation Project (ZDP) and provide assistance and advice to applicants whose applications were initially rejected.

The Department of Home Affairs' ZDP, which intended to regularize the stay of and document as many of the Zimbabweans eligible to work in South Africa as possible, is intended to be completed in July. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) received over 275,000 applications for temporary residence permits through the ZDP between October and December last year. While roughly 150,000 permits have already been approved, according to the DHA, over 120,000 have now been found to be incomplete and applicants will need to submit missing documents and/or fingerprints.

The aim of this new project is hence to ensure that as many of these 120,000 Zimbabweans are given a given a fair chance to appeal, and that the adjudication processes are transparent and consistent across the country.

The reason why so many of the applications are incomplete in the first place is because: 1) the lifespan of the ZDP was too short, with 275,000 applicants rushing to apply in the just three months given; 2) the rules and regulations of the ZDP were constantly changed; and 3) the Zimbabwean Consulate have lacked transparency, been inconsistent and downright ineffective in the delivery of the essential passports. Hence, the majority of incomplete applications are not the fault of the Zimbabwean applicants.

The four key objectives of the project are:

- 1) Monitoring the adjudication process to ensure that the process is transparent, fair and accountable;
- 2) Advising and assisting rejected applicants and informing them about their available options;
- 3) Assisting eligible applicants in the appeals process through consultation and advice, helping to draft and print letters of appeal, and following up with employers about providing the necessary documents; and
- 4) Compiling a monitoring report that assesses the overall quality of the appeals and adjudication processes of the ZDP and recommends a list of 'lessons learned' for similar projects in the future.

We will continue to work constructively with the DHA, both in this province and nationally, to ensure that the ZDP is concluded in a fair manner.

Over the past few weeks and months, PASSOP has already been assisting rejected applicants in the appeals process. Through the resources from this ZDP Appeals Monitoring Project, PASSOP has hired two new staff members specifically to provide support to rejected applicants. In this way, we will be able to provide many more rejected applicants with assistance and guidance in the adjudication processes and in appealing their rejections.

If you would like further information about the ZDP Appeals Monitoring Project or if your application for the ZDP has been denied and you need assistance in the appeals process, please contact PASSOP at office@passop.co.za or call us at 021 820 4664.

The last word...

On the night of May 1st, a fire burnt down 1500 shacks and left over 4000 people homeless in Masiphumelele. The PASSOP help desk office, which is located in the heart of the township, was also damaged. In the wake of this we have launched a drive to assist the community. You can donate food, clothing or money to help the victims of the fire. We are also holding a fundraising event on Thursday May 5th at Zula Bar on Long Street, all proceeds of which will go to assist the victims in Masiphumelele.



Coming next month...

- **New LGBT Refugee Support Project Launched**
- **Imizamo Yethu Unity Football Tournament**
- **Update on ZDP appeals process**

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