



# Women migrants in South Africa: An intersectional analysis

- Most migrants are from African countries (68% SADC, 75%+ African)
- Minority of work permits go to non-African nationals (7 out of top 10 non-African)
- No visas for low or unskilled migrants causes irregular migration
- Irregular = overstaying, claiming asylum, clandestine or false documents
- ‘Extremely’ strong connection to home – 90% return home annually
- Special dispensations gender-biased

# PATHWAYS

- Land routes
- Popular corridors
- Low smuggler use
- Borders most dangerous



# 'Feminisation' of Migration

	<b>Total female migrants</b>	<b>Female migrants as % of total population</b>	<b>Female migrants as % of total migrants</b>
<b>1990</b>	446 656	2,3	38,4
<b>1995</b>	392 724	1,8	39,1
<b>2000</b>	401 793	1,7	40,1
<b>2005</b>	498 717	2,0	41,2
<b>2010</b>	880 757	3,4	42,0
<b>2015</b>	1 694 596	6,0	44,4
<b>2017</b>	1 792 275	6,2	44,4

Source: UNDESA 2017 mid-year data<sup>31</sup>

- Rise in women migrants
- Rise in independent migration

- Shaped by male labour migration
- Decrease: Migrants in mines 60% in 2003 to 23% in 2013
- More 'other' migration, including women and youth
- Men 67% asylum seekers (2015)
- No gendered work permit data, but 'reasonably' conclude male bias due to employment, capital, education and skills criteria
- Policies and publications 'gender-neutral'

1. **Violence** - encountered at source, transit and end
2. **Harmful practices** – escaping harmful practice or enter into them on arrival out of desperation
3. **Undervalued and unprotected work** – domestic, care, agricultural or informal
4. **Exploitation and abuse** – particularly undocumented and young. 80% of trafficking victims are women.
5. **Papers** – more likely to be ‘under’ man’s documents, less documented and isolated
6. **Access to information** – women have less information on rights and options
7. **Access to services** – problems with healthcare, education, justice, housing
8. **Burden of care** – changes in migration, typically adds responsibilities.
9. **Family separation** – often a trade off for women ‘economic’ migrants
10. **Gender norms** – migration disrupts these. Women most typically move to more progressive
11. **Remittances** – women remit more often over longer periods

1. More women are coming and coming alone.
  - Policies must recognise this and prioritise protecting them
2. Low asylum abuse
  - Restrictions to reduce asylum abuse are directed towards men
  - Must consider impacts on vulnerable women and children
1. Punitive and restrictive measures increase vulnerability
  - Detention, deportation and strict borders drive illegality and vulnerability
  - Ineffective and proven not to work
  - Borders are particularly violent and abusive for women
  - Asylum centres will expose women to risks



#### 4. Development potential of migration

- Major development potential for both countries
- These decrease when irregular, instead go to corruption and black markets
- Improve security and data

#### 5. Access to safe and productive work

- Regularisation programmes must consider gendered perspective
- SADC visas are promising but do not include gender considerations
- Punitive measures must avoid punishing women over employers





## 6. Triple' effect of xenophobia, racism and patriarchy

- Policy makers must recognise the damaging effects of each and follow through on plans to address them instead of promoting them for political gain

## 7. Gender disaggregated data

- Gender-neutral policies and information disadvantages women
- Must apply gender mainstreaming to all policies

# RECOMMENDATIONS



VOA

- 1. Rights-based, gender-sensitive policies and practices are urgent**
- 2. Advance progressive legal methods that promote legal channels that match reality on the ground**
- 3. Legal channels must include gender considerations**
- 4. Recognise development potential and change conversation on migration.**
- 5. Gender considerations and data should be incorporated to all policies and publications**