

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Gender-based violence against zimbabwean migrant women in Botswana

Tholwana B. Kereeditse<sup>1</sup>, Stanley Osezua Ehiane<sup>1,2</sup> David Mandiyanike<sup>1</sup>, Claudine Hingston<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana. Email: boikereeditse@gmail.com, ehianes@ub.ac.bw, mandiyanike@ub.ac.bw

<sup>2</sup> School of Public Management, Governance, and Public Policy (SPMGPP), College of Business and Economics (CBE), University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa. Email: sehiane@uj.ac.za

<sup>3</sup> MACONSA, Durban, South Africa. Email: claudhings@yahoo.com

\* Corresponding author: Stanley Osezua Ehiane, ehianes@ub.ac.bw

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### ABSTRACT

This study prioritises the experiences of Zimbabwean migrant women and their human security in the context of gender-based violence in Botswana. The study utilised the social constructivism theory and the social-ecological model to provide a comprehensive understanding of how gender-based violence occurs in society and how social realities construct migrant women's experiences. Using a qualitative research approach, secondary data was collected to investigate the gender-based violence experiences of Zimbabwean migrant women. The study found that migrant women experienced various forms of abuse, including intimate partner violence with both foreign and local partners, sexual violence and harassment in their host communities, trafficking and smuggling, and sexual abuse in detention centres, all rooted in xenophobic sentiments. Power imbalances and irregularities in structural relationships between men and women were identified as significant factors contributing to violence. The findings indicate that cultural beliefs and gender roles from the country of origin and host country contribute to migrant women's reluctance to report or disclose their experiences of gender-based violence. Patriarchal ideologies further affect judgment towards survivors and contribute to the acceptance and normalization of gender-based violence. This study contributes to the literature on human insecurities faced by migrant women and their responses to these insecurities. It highlights the need for policies that address the underlying causes of gender-based violence and promote the empowerment of migrant women.

**Keywords:** human security; migration; gender-based violence

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## 1. Introduction

Socio-economic and political turmoil in Zimbabwe has led many Zimbabweans to migrate to neighbouring countries, such as Botswana, for sustenance. Botswana is one of the leading countries in which Zimbabweans relocate. The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency's National Census (2022) indicates that Botswana hosts forty-seven thousand, nine hundred and twenty-eight (47,928) Zimbabwean emigrants (comprising both men and women), making it the country with the second-largest population of Zimbabwean

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emigrants after South Africa. It should be noted that this figure does not include undocumented migrants. Over the past few decades, “there has been a gendered trend of migration from Zimbabwe, with as many women migrating as men, fleeing poverty, hunger, persecution, and harassment”<sup>[1]</sup>. It is important to note that gendered power relations become exacerbated during and after migration, leaving women and girls more susceptible to physical and psychological abuse<sup>[2]</sup>. Zimbabwean migrant women in Botswana are not immune to this and are prone to GBV. This is exacerbated by the fact that gender-based violence in Botswana is rife. Gender-based violence against women is one of the world’s most prevalent human rights violations and it manifests in various forms such as intimate partner violence, femicide, sexual violence, human trafficking, female genital mutilation, child, early or forced marriage and online/digital related violence<sup>[3]</sup>. To illustrate the prevalence of gender-based violence, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Botswana indicates that over 67% of women in Botswana have experienced various forms of abuse and violence despite the solid legal frameworks established by the government to prohibit gender-based violence and discrimination. To reiterate this, Botswana has the second-highest rape cases globally, with 92.90 cases over 100,000 citizens<sup>[4]</sup>. Gender-based violence is a social and personal security concern for women and girls in Botswana. With the increasing rates of gender-based violence in Botswana, migrant women are even more susceptible to exploitation and abuse<sup>[5]</sup>.

Female Zimbabwean migrants are highly susceptible to the existing discrimination and gender-based violence in Botswana. This is accounted for by the fact that the intersectional status of their illegality and womanhood highlights their particular vulnerability and showcases the fluidity of gender-based violence<sup>[6]</sup>. Zimbabwean migrant women residing in Botswana face verbal, physical and sexual abuse at the hands of men. However, many of them fail to report these altercations due to fear of being detained or deported for flouting the immigration and labour laws of the country. Exposures to GBV, in turn, negatively impact these women, their families, and their communities and pose an obstacle to their participation in development.

It is in this vein that the paper seeks to call attention to the gender-based violence that Zimbabwean women in Botswana experience identify the cause of the violence and explore their response to it. This study thus aims to expose the prevalence of gender-based violence against Zimbabwean migrant women and highlight ways through which Zimbabwean migrant women navigate gender-based violence attacks in Botswana. In short, it explores how they navigate their insecurities in host communities while being mindful of social challenges due to their foreign status and gender. This study adopts a feminist approach as it exposes the insecurities faced by this marginalised group (illegal Zimbabwean migrant women in Botswana) and calls for their protection.

Conducting this study is crucial in shedding light on the relationship between migration and human security and filling the literature gap on gender-based violence of African female migrants in Botswana. The category of Zimbabwean migrant women prioritised in this study is those working illegally in the non-formal sector as their illegality and gender identity make them more vulnerable to violation and discrimination. The study recognises that a comprehensive understanding of Zimbabwean women’s experiences in navigating their security can aid in creating robust human security frameworks that address the obstacles and challenges faced by female migrants in their host communities. The specific objective is to understand various gender-based violence experiences by Zimbabwean women in Botswana and the cause of gender-based violence among Zimbabwean women in Botswana. Lastly, to understand ways through which Zimbabwean migrant women navigate gender-based violence attacks.

A systematic literature review was employed in this study. This involved identifying and synthesising relevant publications and documents to provide reliable findings and reliable conclusions for the study. The use of a systematic review enabled an understanding of how Zimbabwean migrant women navigate their human security amid gender-based violence attacks in Botswana. Data collection for the study was thus

secondary and it involved reviewing, evaluating and interpreting to elicit meaning and gain an understanding of existing materials such as textbooks, journal articles, and archival materials<sup>[7]</sup>. By examining data collected from different secondary sources, the researchers were able to corroborate findings across data sets. It must be noted that this study would have greatly benefitted from primary data from the research population but is constrained by costs and time. The researcher acknowledged that the study would have greatly benefited from primary data from the research population and would have liked to emulate Merino et al<sup>[8]</sup> by drawing from literature and the voices of migrant women and support professionals. Merino et al<sup>[8]</sup> study on Gender and Social Discrimination of Migrant Women Victims of Gender-Based Violence encapsulates the challenges and experiences of migrant women experiences in the social and health access realm. However, due to time and financial constraints, the authors of this study prioritised secondary research,

## **2. Theoretical framework**

This study employs the social constructivism theory and the social-ecological model. Vygotsky's social constructivism theory (1968) suggests that individuals acquire new knowledge via social interaction and can construct mental models of their social world based on their experiences<sup>[9]</sup>. This theory emphasizes the active construction of knowledge<sup>[10]</sup> and the influence of society on shaping an individual's understanding of their environment. Social constructivism theory posits that daily constructions and interactions in society shape subjective opinions into objective truths and common sense, leading to the creation of a social reality that determines the differences between normal and abnormal behaviours and actions. These constructions are continuously negotiated and subject to change through social interactions, making the theory an effort to understand the process of social construction and its impact on people's reality<sup>[9,10]</sup>.

Social constructivism theory is influential in understanding and challenging marginalization and inequality in society. For example, Muehlenhard and Kimes (1999) used the theory to reveal that societal trends in defining violence influence how behaviours are viewed as acceptable. Similarly,<sup>[11]</sup> used the theory to explain how socially constructed gender norms render women vulnerable to gender-based violence. Buzan (1991) links migration and security and argues that the social construction of interests turns foreigners into perceived threats, leading to their marginalization and vulnerability to violence. The theory is essential in understanding how social encounters construct experiences and threats, especially for marginalized groups like Zimbabwean migrant women facing gender-based violence<sup>[11-13]</sup>.

However, scholars have identified weaknesses in the social constructivism theory that are worth noting. An important weakness tied to this theory is that knowledge is not a self-sufficient entity; therefore, it is not directly transmittable from person to person. Instead, it is individually and idiosyncratically constructed and/or discovered<sup>[14]</sup>. The theory needs to consider the intra-personal process of attaining individual knowledge. This weakness highlights the need for a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals acquire knowledge beyond social interaction. One theory that attempts to fill this gap is cognitive constructivism, which focuses on individuals' cognitive processes and how they construct knowledge based on their experiences and mental models<sup>[15]</sup>.

Despite its weaknesses, social constructivism theory remains a valuable framework for understanding how social interactions shape an individual's understanding of reality. It has been applied to various fields, including education, sociology, and psychology. In the context of gender-based violence, it is a useful tool for understanding how social norms and constructions of gender influence the perpetuation of violence against women. In conclusion, the social constructivism theory is a powerful lens through which to examine how social interactions shape individuals' understanding of reality. The theory provides a framework for understanding how society constructs knowledge, and how that knowledge impacts individuals' perceptions

of themselves and others. While the theory has its limitations, it remains a valuable tool for understanding complex social issues such as gender-based violence.

### **3. Zimbabwean migrant women's experiences of gender-based violence in Botswana**

In Botswana, sexual violence and harassment are prevalent among Zimbabwean migrant women, with local and migrant men often being the perpetrators. von Kitzing's study found "that Zimbabwean migrant women often do not report incidents of sexual violence and harassment to relevant authorities, leaving them vulnerable to abuse"<sup>[6]</sup>. Discrimination and violence against Zimbabwean migrant women are prevalent, based on multiple factors such as gender, non-citizen status, race, and socio-economic status. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO), and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2021) report highlighted that anti-foreign hostility is prevalent worldwide, leading to exclusion, hostility, and violence against individuals based on their perceived foreign status.

Studies indicate that Zimbabwean migrant women feel that xenophobic attitudes often exacerbate their experiences of gender-based violence. Thereby, von Kitzing<sup>[6]</sup> argues that the general misconception of migrants as the external other, criminal and undeserving of protection affects various migrants differently, and illegal migrant women are mostly affected. Mutambara (2018) supports von Kitzing's (2017) idea and further argues that the lack of agency exacerbated by economic restraints and structural factors such as legality makes Zimbabwean migrant women vulnerable to xenophobic gender-based attacks. Waiganjo<sup>[17]</sup> study proposed that xenophobic sentiments have affected several migrant women through violence that is incited on their bodies through sexual assault, emotional abuse, and beatings. Further, Waiganjo indicates that the violence that migrant women encounter, whether emotional or physical, is embedded in patriarchal structures that exist within cultures that strengthen gender inequality.

A study published by Matose et al.<sup>[18]</sup> indicates that Zimbabwean migrant women are often vulnerable to different forms of gender-based violence during both their transit and their residence in Botswana. The study points out that Zimbabwean migrant women, during their transit, often encounter *amagumaguma* who ambush them and rape them in the bushes along Plumtree and Botswana border<sup>[18]</sup>. The study further points out that female migrants, while in transit, are often raped and sexually assaulted by soldiers and government officials. Most of these cases are often not reported because the migrants are undocumented and fear being to report at the police.

Zimbabwean migrant women face psycho-emotional harassment in Botswana<sup>[18]</sup>. The study indicated that Zimbabwean migrant women are called derogatory names by Botswana, law enforcement officers and smugglers. One of the participants in the study indicated that "...those soldiers are rough, and they called us prostitutes and loose women"<sup>[18]</sup>. Zimbabwean migrant women also often fall victim to trafficking and smuggling. Due to limited work choices and limited or no access to social protection, undocumented migrants are exposed to situations of exclusion and exploitation in abusive work environments, rendering them vulnerable to trafficking. The lack of legal residency status of Zimbabwean migrant women is an effective means used by traffickers to exercise control over them and effectively prevent them from seeking external support from authorities. During smuggling and trafficking, migrant women are at risk of experiencing sexual abuse. Studies suggest that "smuggled men and women are usually separated to inflict different types of violence, with women being primarily targeted for sexual abuse"<sup>[19]</sup>. Zimbabwean migrant women often succumb to sexual violence as a way of paying for their transportation or as bribes to avoid detainment or deportation<sup>[18]</sup>. Their vulnerability increases during detention as they are exposed to physical and emotional

violence, including sexual harassment, assault, and forced prostitution by guards, police officers, and other male detainees. Matose et al.<sup>[18]</sup> aver that the lack of separate facilities in some police stations in Botswana for female detainees is a contributing factor to their vulnerability in detention centres.

#### **4. Gender-based violence against Zimbabwean migrant women in Botswana**

This study finds that gender-based violence perpetuated on Zimbabwean migrant women stems from “sociocultural beliefs and practices that attach specific roles and responsibilities, behaviours, expectations, opportunities, and limitations to being male or female”, as argued by Heise et al. Tang and Kuschmider’s<sup>[20]</sup> article indicated that economic hardships create power imbalances that cause violence against illegal migrant women. The authors raised the issue of the economic hardships of illegal migrant women in exposure to gender-based violence, demonstrating an unequal relationship between victims and perpetrators in control or access to resources<sup>[20]</sup>. “The lack of income-generating activities or the lack of the right to work creates vulnerabilities and illegal migrant women often resort to transactional sex or staying in abusive relationships for survival”<sup>[22]</sup>. Studies reveal that Zimbabwean migrant women, particularly unskilled and undocumented women are often employed in the informal sector as domestic workers, hairdressers, and street vendors<sup>[23]</sup>. Seeking employment in the informal sector exposes these women to gender-based violence amplified by their nationality, gender, social class, and migration status.

The informal sector in Botswana is excluded from the legal framework. Therefore, Zimbabwean migrant women working in the informal sector are often not legally protected. Studies reveal that scarcity and competition for opportunities in the informal sector makes it difficult for Zimbabwean migrant women to earn sustainable income and they resort to engaging in sex work as a means of survival.

According to Ngwenya<sup>[23]</sup>, a report by the Botswana Ministry of Health revealed that *there are more than one thousand five hundred (1500) Zimbabwean sex workers operating in Botswana*. Most of these sex workers are found in Gaborone, Francistown and Kasane. Engaging in sex work has rendered Zimbabwean female migrants vulnerable to sexual exploitation and exposed them to HIV/AIDS infections. The report suggested that HIV/AIDS prevalence is high among Zimbabwean sex workers compared to their Botswana counterparts<sup>[23]</sup>.

Amani’s<sup>[24]</sup> journal article revealed that gender-based violence may also be used to maintain or suppress power in times of economic hardship. Men’s frustration over the inability to provide for the household and the disruption of traditional gender roles when women are registered as the head of the household may contribute to intimate partner violence and gender-based violence<sup>[24]</sup>. As such, men perpetuate violence against female Zimbabwean migrant women as a way of maintaining dominance over these women.

Tang and Kuschmider’s<sup>[25]</sup> study revealed that the lack of documentation is another factor that illustrates power imbalances as a cause of gender-based violence against illegal migrant women. Robinson et al.’s<sup>[26]</sup> study states that while maintaining an undocumented status persists in higher risks of gender-based violence on its own, illegal female migrants tend to face different risks compared to illegal male migrants. Studies reveal that undocumented female Zimbabwean migrants, for instance, are largely vulnerable to gender-based violence, with one in three experiencing unwanted sex in borders, revealing that border crossings, roadsides, and prisons are common places where illegal migrant women are at risk of gender-based violence victimization. As such, gender-based violence against illegal Zimbabwean migrant women relies on the level of gender inequality and power imbalances in communities and families.

## **5. Zimbabwean migrant women's response to gender-based violence in Botswana**

The literature analysed in this research study indicates that the way illegal migrant women understand gender-based violence determines how they respond to the attacks. Several studies reviewed by this study indicate that women are often reluctant to report or disclose abuse that they are dealing with. This reluctance is further justified by Bui and Morash's<sup>[27]</sup> study, which revealed that migrant women, unlike local women, are unlikely to report or disclose any gender-based violence incidents. The study argued that the reluctance to report abuse by illegal migrant women is due to a combination of cultural beliefs and gender roles from their country of origin and the immigration law that they are faced with in an immigration context<sup>[27]</sup>.

Enex and Hartley<sup>[28]</sup> found that migrant women report gender-based violence based on their interpretation. A study by Ahmad et al.<sup>[29]</sup> notes that migration increases women's vulnerability to patriarchy. In African societies, patriarchal beliefs and practices are deeply ingrained in norms, roles, and customs. This is evident in Botswana, where patriarchal cultural practices and norms contribute to the risk of violence against women. Women who accept patriarchal norms may not recognize abusive behaviour, making it less likely for them to seek support<sup>[29]</sup>. They may not perceive a situation as abusive and, therefore, unlikely to disclose it. Other women may also downplay the victim's experience by assuring her that it is not gender-based violence<sup>[29]</sup>. Also, because patriarchy places the responsibility of family maintenance on women, the fear of dishonouring their family may deter many abused women from seeking help or making reports<sup>[21]</sup>. Menjivar's<sup>[8]</sup> research findings indicate that migrant women who originate from societies and or families where gender-based violence is prevalent and accepted as usual or where police authorities do not respond to gender-based violence are also less likely to report GBV incidences.

Women's response to GBV is also influenced by their perceptions of love and affection. Rasool et al.<sup>[30]</sup> study established that there is a socialized perception of gender-based violence as a demonstration of love and affection. This perception, according to the authors, influences how migrant women respond to gender-based violence attacks.<sup>[30]</sup> reveal that some women justify abuse and remain in abusive relationships, perceiving the abuse as a sign of love. Patriarchal ideologies defining socio-symbolic relations between genders affect judgment towards survivors and contribute to the non-recognition or acceptance of IPV<sup>[31]</sup>. Men who are violent and murderous toward their wives are often described as "being under the influence of uncontrollable emotions, such as having 'too much pain' or being 'too much in love' but are rarely seen as aggressors"<sup>[32]</sup> Therefore, adherence to romantic love can help make IPV socially acceptable in perceiving violence as a male form of amorous expression, a sign of intimacy or affection rather than something problematic (Bonomi et al.. According to feminist perspectives, Monckton-Smith<sup>[13]</sup> argues that the social valorization of romantic love helps to maintain gender inequalities through the naturalization of a culture of male dominance. Gluck<sup>[33]</sup> asserts that violence against women inevitably occurs in traditional set-ups that put women beneath men in status and personhood.

Studies reveal that IPV is common among Zimbabwean migrant women who are unable to leave their husbands or partners because they financially depend on them. As such, these women remained in abusive relationships to have access to essential commodities such as clothing, food, and shelter. Wood<sup>[34]</sup> notes that although migrant women perceive gender-based violence as an unacceptable relationship they endure it due to the lack of alternative solutions and the need for survival. The need for basic survival leads migrant women to engage in relationships of convenience due to their failure to cope as migrants and this influences how they respond to gender-based violence<sup>[34]</sup>. Several studies, such as Wood<sup>[34]</sup> indicate that for undocumented Zimbabwean migrant women, the situation is worse as they do not have easy access to health facilities and

reporting gender-based violence could have them being arrested and deported. Such women, therefore, fear to report GBV and opt to suffer in silence.

Botswana Police has been reported to have shown reluctance in dealing with cases of violence against women. Several studies have indicated that Police Officers who deal with gender-based violence often exacerbate the matter putting Zimbabwean women's lives in more jeopardy. Taranto et al.<sup>[35]</sup> in their study assert that the attitudes of Police Officers have been built into the fabric of society and influence how some women perceive the role of the Police in society when it comes to combating gender-based violence. Mutambara<sup>[16]</sup> in her study asserts that the prevalence of gender-based violence perpetuated on Zimbabwean migrant women is institutionalized and police officers often snub the cases that are reported to them. For illegal and undocumented Zimbabwean migrant women, this makes reporting gender-based violence cases impossible due to the fear of further discrimination and mostly arrest and deportation.

The lack of proper documentation by illegal Zimbabwean migrant women denies them access to proper public health services. Mutambara's<sup>[16]</sup> study findings reveal that migrant women also fear public hospitals because of xenophobic health practitioners. Researchers have previously reported barriers that Zimbabwean migrant women encounter when attempting to utilize mainstream health services and have concluded that these services are often not accessible to these women<sup>[36]</sup>. Migrant women and their acquaintances have had bad experiences in public hospitals in the past. These experiences and perceptions corroborate the social constructivism theory, which assumes that the social reality of an individual is shaped by the experiences they are familiar with Mutambara<sup>[16]</sup>. The fear of approaching public hospitals by Zimbabwean migrant women when hurt by GBV makes them resort to private health care which charges exorbitant prices or they self-treat themselves.

## **6. Concluding remarks**

The main objective of the study was to understand the GBV experiences of Zimbabwean migrant women in Botswana and investigate how they navigate their security amid gender-based violence attacks in Botswana. Secondary data used in this study indicates that Zimbabwean migrant women migrated to Botswana because of state failure, environmental distress, and livelihood collapse. Unfortunately, in their endeavours to attain sustainable livelihoods, they are often susceptible to gender-based violence attacks. The study discusses the leading causes of gender-based violence against migrant women. An unequal power balance is the leading cause of violence against women. Economic hardships, lack of income-generating activities, and lack of documentation create power imbalances that render migrant women vulnerable to gender-based violence. Illegal migrant women are susceptible to domestic violence perpetuated by both local or foreign husbands or partners, sexual violence and harassment, xenophobic attacks, trafficking and smuggling, and sexual abuse in detention centres.

The study was guided by the social constructivism theory developed by Lev Vygotsky in 1968 and the social-ecological model developed by Lori Heise in 1998. The two theories are relevant to the study because they both explain why and how gender-based violence occurs in society. The social constructivism theory assumes that an individual's experience is shaped by society. Therefore, how migrant women are understood in society influences the behaviours and values placed on them, which has implications for how they are treated in the host communities. The social-ecological model explains that gender-based violence occurs because of the social customs grounded on the individual.

Journal articles, official reports, and books analyzed in this research essay indicate that Zimbabwean migrant women are often reluctant to disclose abuse. This is due to a combination of cultural beliefs and gender

roles from their country of origin and immigration laws in Botswana as a host country. The study points out that some Zimbabwean women do not consider some actions or treatments as gender-based violence. Due to patriarchal beliefs and ideas, male domination is justified in societies, and women who accept patriarchal norms may not recognize abusive acts. The study indicates that there is a socialized perception of gender-based violence as a demonstration of love and affection, and this perception influences how Zimbabwean migrant women respond to gender-based violence attacks. Lastly, the basic need for survival leads Zimbabwean migrant women to engage in relationships or companions due to their failure to cope as illegal migrants, and this influences how they navigate their security amid gender-based violence attacks.

## **7. Recommendation**

The social-ecological model assumes that violence prevention requires multifaceted interventions that target change at multiple levels, including the individual, family, neighbourhood, social institutions, community organizations, and cultural environment. Considering this, the following recommendations are provided for the community, government, and the international community.

### **7.1. The Community**

This study recommends that to create effective change, engaging community members and developing leadership that goes beyond formal governmental institutions is imperative. The study recommends that communities in Botswana take the lead in supporting, developing, and implementing prevention strategies that target change in individuals and the community. These strategies include educating communities on gender-based violence, organizing community groups to challenge social norms that contribute to the perpetration of violence against women, advocating for community accountability, and developing programs that strengthen social networks and build support for prevention efforts. Society should promote social and cultural patterns of behaviour of people of all genders to eradicate harmful gender stereotypes and myths about violence against women. This can be done through informed awareness-raising campaigns directed to everyone in Botswana. All these strategies have the potential to transform social norms and structures that are the root causes of gender-based violence. This study is of the view that the cultivation of grassroots community leadership can enhance the long-term sustainability of violence prevention efforts against Zimbabwean migrant women and women in general.

### **7.2. Government**

The government of Botswana should consider increasing its commitment to eradicating violence against Zimbabwean migrant women by monitoring the implementation of existing gender-based violence policies and re-evaluating the Domestic Violence Act of 2008. The Domestic Violence Act of 2008 should be re-evaluated and amended to protect migrant women against gender-based violence. As such, the policies and laws established by the government should be effective in protecting both local and migrant women from gender-based violence. This study recommends that the government of Botswana should adopt and promote legal and safe migration for children and women and further protect and promote the rights of all migrants, especially children and women. These rights should protect girls and women from gender-based violence, domestic violence, and abusive labour practices. The government should aim to protect Zimbabwean migrant women from abuse and discrimination by implementing a range of policies and activities. The government of Botswana should provide adequate legal protection for the rights of local and foreign women. It is equally important to have a legal system that functions and regulates people's behaviour to prevent abuse and ensure accountability when abuses happen.



Effective systems and mechanisms ought to be in place to ensure consistent enforcement, accountability, and sanctions. These systems and mechanisms should be available to ensure that migrant women and local women equally seek and receive effective legal remedies and redress when they face any discrimination and violence. The government of Botswana should provide people with recourse to independent and impartial authorities with the power and capacity to investigate and decide whether violence has occurred and order cessation and redress. This study further recommends that the government of Botswana should expand support services for victims of gender-based violence and provide relevant and specialized training to support workers, such as policing authorities, immigration officers, border officials, and prosecutors, on how to prevent and deal with cases of gender-based violence.

This study recommends that the international community should promote gender-sensitive international migration policies and member states should be assisted in the signing and ratification of international instruments that aid in the protection of migrants. Regional institutions such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and international organizations such as the African Union (AU) ought to assist Zimbabwe and Botswana (and other countries hosting Zimbabwean migrants) in incorporating a gender perspective in their respective legislature and policies on international migration. Lastly, this study recommends that the same institutions should assist in fostering interstate dialogues and enhancing bilateral, regional, inter-regional and international cooperation in migration issues.

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