

# BREAKING BORDERS & BINARIES

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...

WITH  
DOREEN  
NDEBELE  
SHE/HER



## BREAKING BORDERS & BINARIES

Doreen Ndebele arrived in South Africa in 2018 from Zimbabwe after being compelled to leave because of the persecution she has faced as a result of her sexual orientation. Doreen has been living in South Africa on a visitor's visa which requires her to often travel back to Zimbabwe in order to have it renewed. This poses safety risks for her.

Doreen elected not to apply for asylum because of the well documented abuse and discrimination people with asylum claims based on their sexual orientation and gender identity often suffer at different refugee reception offices (RROs). Doreen's fear of RROs is further exacerbated by the experiences of her friend who have previously attempted to apply for asylum. Doreen hopes for the asylum system that is understanding of sexual and gender minority's rights.

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“I am afraid of attending the refugee reception offices to apply for asylum because of what other people who have went through this process have told me.”

- DOREEN NDEBELE

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# BREAKING BORDERS & BINARIES

*Focus: Transgender and gender non-conforming people have a right to not be discriminated against*

Transgender and gender non-conforming people in South Africa face significant discrimination and violence due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identities. As a result, transgender and gender non-conforming people are afraid to lodge asylum claims for fear of further persecution or mistreatment.

Despite legal protections for transgender and gender non-conforming people, discrimination and violence remain pervasive, particularly in rural areas and townships. The fear of being targeted by law enforcement or anti-transgender and gender non-conforming groups compounded with the fear of being targeted by anti-migrant groups also discourages many transgender and gender non-conforming people from seeking asylum or reporting crimes.

To address this problem, it is essential to increase awareness and understanding of issues facing transgender and gender non-conforming people among law enforcement and to establish effective channels for reporting and addressing hate crimes and hate speech. It is also important to provide support and resources to transgender and gender non-conforming asylum seekers, including, legal assistance, and mental health services.

## How to Report Discrimination or violation of a Human Right

The South African Human Rights Commission is an institution that ensures and protects everyone's human rights. To lodge a complaint, visit <https://www.sahrc.org.za/> or email [complaints@sahrc.org.za](mailto:complaints@sahrc.org.za). The SAHRC will usually not be able to help you where: Your case doesn't involve a violation of any of the rights in the Bill of Rights.

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