

SAfrican churches to use World Cup to highlight drive against human trafficking

Text of report by Ramatsiyi Moholola entitled "Churches to act against human trafficking" published by Johannesburg Sowetan Online on 27 January

Religious leaders have endorsed a plan to use the Soccer World Cup to step up the campaign to stop human trafficking across the world.

Hope Africa's Nomzamo Landingwe said they wanted to ensure the visibility of the campaign, funded by the ministry of foreign affairs of Finland, during the World Cup.

The campaign is supported by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa through Hope Africa, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, Churches United Against HIV and Aids in Eastern and Southern Africa, and the Helsinki Deaconess Institute of Finland.

Though South Africa is a major destination for human trafficking for neighbouring countries, the challenge of the scourge is global.

"Human trafficking, devious and exploitative by nature, takes advantage of the social challenges and human hardships caused by poverty, unemployment, inadequate education and political instability," Landingwe said.

"Many African countries are sources and transits for human trafficking. South Africa is a major destination country for its neighbouring countries.

"The International Organization for Migration says that each year at least 1,000 women are trafficked into South Africa from neighbouring countries for sexual exploitation.

"The Stop Human Trafficking campaign in Southern Africa seeks to restore human dignity and uphold the sanctity of life.

"We want to raise awareness and sensitise the public on the ills of human trafficking, build the capacity of religious institutions and leaders in countering the practice and to facilitate the support to victims through safe spaces."

Landingwe said they would also identify like-minded organizations that work against human trafficking in the region.

"We will also identify safe houses for victims and map out a support plan to build their capacity," she said.

Source: Johannesburg Sowetan Online in English 27 Jan 2010