



15 May 2017

Minister Hlengiwe Mkhize  
Department of Home Affairs  
**Per email:** [Minister@dha.gov.za](mailto:Minister@dha.gov.za)

c/o Mr Patrick Williams  
Chief of Staff  
**Per email:** [patrick.williams@dha.gov.za](mailto:patrick.williams@dha.gov.za)

Dear Minister Hlengiwe

**Corruption Watch Request: Working together to address corruption affecting refugees and asylum seekers**

1. We refer to the above matter.
2. Corruption Watch is a civil society organisation that opened its doors to the public in January 2012. We are registered as a non-profit company in terms of the Companies Act.
3. Corruption Watch seeks to expose corruption and the abuse of public funds. We aim to expose those who engage in corrupt activities, nepotism and abuse of public funds in both the public and private sector.
4. As part of our mandate, we are committed to strengthening the criminal justice system, including efforts to address financial crime; to the refinement of our planning and procurement systems; and to supporting and strengthening the ability of private and public bodies to better detect and address corruption in their spheres of operation.

5. We would like to congratulate you on your appointment as the new Minister of Home Affairs, and wish you well in your new portfolio.
6. We also wish to acknowledge the Department of Home Affairs (DHA's) commitment to combatting corruption and recent efforts at addressing the root causes for corrupt activity which included outdated systems and processes for asylum applications. We attended the recent launch of the Desmond Tutu Refugee Reception Office and were informed of the new infrastructure and other changes at the office.
7. We wish to commend these efforts and we see them as positive steps towards rooting out all corrupt practices in the DHA however, we regard infrastructure and technological changes as only one part of the solution and would like to work together with the DHA on implementing a holistic and long term solution to both preventing and addressing corruption affecting refugees and asylum seekers.
8. In this regard, we are concerned about the DHA's failure to respond to allegations of corruption involving certain DHA officials and a failure to respond to our recommendations on how we could work together going forward. A history and background to our work in this area as well as recommendations from various civil society actors appear below.

#### *About Project Lokisa*

9. On or about June 2015, Corruption Watch launched a project called *Project Lokisa* ("Let's fix it") to address corruption affecting refugees and asylum seekers. This initiative was borne out of a need to address a high number of complaints received through our reporting channels from refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>1</sup>
10. As a result of *Project Lokisa*, we investigated a number of reports and obtained documentary, photographic and video footage as evidence implicating two DHA

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Project-Lokisa-Digital-FINALRRU-Logo-2Dec2016.pdf>

officials and one interpreter employed by ZRGB Translation and Interpretation Services. We have since lodged criminal complaints against the three implicated officials at the Johannesburg Central Police Station.<sup>2</sup> The criminal complaints have been assigned the following case numbers: **934/11/16**; **935/11/16** and **936/11/16**.

11. On 24 October 2016, Corruption Watch wrote to the DHA requesting a response to queries relating to the publication of our report titled "*Asylum at a price*". For ease of reference, see annexure "**A**" attached. To date the DHA has refused to respond to our letter, we would therefore greatly appreciate your response to this correspondence.
12. On 14 and 21 November 2016, we invited the DHA to the launch of our "*Asylum at a price*" report. We also requested the DHA to indicate whether they like to would participate with the steering-group consisting of other civil society interest groups to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the report. We did not receive a response and would like to extend another invite to the DHA for a meeting to discuss the outcomes of Project Lokisa and the way forward to raise issues which pertain solely to corruption and maladministration.
13. Kindly provide us with a response by **Friday, 19 May 2017**. In addition, please note that in the interests of transparency, we may publish this correspondence and any response thereto.
14. We trust that you find the above in order.

Yours faithfully,

Leanne Govindsamy,  
**Head: Legal and Investigations**  
**Corruption Watch**  
***[Unsigned due to electronic transmission]***

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<sup>2</sup> The three implicated officials are Gladwin Cameron Monareng(DHA official), Mtetho Macanda (DHA official), and Mutombo Odimegwu (interpreter).