



# ICRC

## **A new memorial honouring missing migrants and their families to open on International Day of the Disappeared**

30 August 2021

Harare (ICRC) – As the world marks International Day of the Disappeared, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Regional Delegation in Southern Africa has unveiled a memorial exhibition in commemoration of the countless missing migrants and their families.

The memorial features a series of 60 images in an incomplete puzzle with each puzzle piece representing individuals who migrated from Zimbabwe to South Africa and went missing along the journey or after arrival. These families form part of the ICRC's Missing and Deceased Migrants Programme, which, with the involvement of the authorities, seeks to clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing individuals, help families restore and maintain contact and increase the rate of identification of bodies in South African and Zimbabwean mortuaries.

"I'd be so grateful if he's found, my heart will be at peace. I haven't given up," says Solomon Ncube from Sukwe in Gwanda who is searching for his grandson, Sibane Ncube.

Members of the ICRC's Missing and Deceased Migrants Programme traversed the length and breadth of Zimbabwe, speaking to families who are searching for relatives who have been missing for months, years, in some cases, decades due to migration.

"The family members who are left behind are deeply affected as they face uncertainty of not knowing whether their loved ones are alive or dead. This causes great suffering and can be extremely distressing," says Marie-Astrid Blondiaux who coordinates the ICRC's protection work which is aimed at mitigating the consequences of armed conflict, violence, natural disasters and migration. "Families of missing migrants also often face multiple administrative, legal and economic difficulties due to the absence of the breadwinner," Blondiaux adds.

The memorial symbolizes how the families of missing migrants are connected in their search for their missing loved ones but similarly to the fragmented memorial puzzle, for the families, their lives remain incomplete as the search for answers continues.

The plight of missing migrants and their families is without doubt a humanitarian issue that requires efforts and commitment from the authorities and other actors.

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