



Information Alert

22 February 2023

ZLHR INTERVENES TO COMBAT CHILD TRAFFICKING

ZIMBABWE Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) has intensified efforts to rescue a three year-old baby, who is a victim of child trafficking, by partnering with Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), in a bid to save the minor child.

The three year-old baby was separated from her mother **Charlene Gugulethu Moyo** in December 2022 after her grandmother **Clara Ndlovu** asked Moyo to allow her grandchild to visit her home in Bulawayo and spend time with her during the festive season with the agreement that the child would be returned home towards the opening of schools in January 2023.

Moyo's child was not returned and instead the mother received a picture from some of Ndlovu's relatives with information that the child was enjoying the festive season in South Africa.

Alarmed that her daughter was undocumented and did not have any travel document such as a passport to allow entry into South Africa and that as her biological mother, she never signed the internationally required affidavit that she was consenting to her child travelling beyond Zimbabwe's borders, Moyo filed a report at Pumula Police Station about her missing three year-old child.

Instead, ZRP officers at Pumula Police Station referred Moyo to the Children's Court after advising her to apply for custody of her minor child, and with Ndlovu having travelled to her rural home in Buhera in Manicaland province, service of summons for the grandmother to appear in court could not be effected and the matter was never heard in court.

This compelled Moyo to engage ZLHR lawyer **Prisca Dube** on 1 February 2023 who contacted law enforcement agents at Pumula Police Station to verify why they had refused to open a docket for the contravention of the Trafficking in Persons Act.

On 2 February 2023, Dube told police officers at Pumula Police Station that in terms of the Trafficking in Persons Act, an offence had been committed and thus a docket should be opened to enable the minor child to be brought back to Zimbabwe.

On 3 February 2023, police officers advised Dube that investigations were now underway.

Moyo informed Dube that the father of the minor child was demanding that she should pay a certain cross-border driver ZAR1 000 to facilitate the return of her daughter and this information was relayed to ZRP officers.

On 13 February 2023, the human rights lawyer wrote a letter to the Officer-in-Charge of Pumula Police Station only identified as Inspector **Madlambe** requesting to be furnished with a progress report on the child trafficking incident and she was advised that an investigating officer Constable **Ngwena**, was now tasked with leading investigations into the matter.

On 16 February 2023, ZRP officers contacted Dube requesting to be furnished with the minor child's birth certificate and her clear photograph, which they need to send to **International Criminal Police Organisation** (INTERPOL) to be assisted in South Africa in getting the minor child back to Zimbabwe.

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