



SOUTH AFRICA

No Healing Here

Violence, Discrimination and Barriers to Health
for Migrants in South Africa

HUMAN
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Asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants who come to South Africa are particularly vulnerable to illness and injury as a result of various factors including violence, forced displacement, poor living conditions, and food insecurity. Even though South African law protects their rights to seek and obtain health care, they are often faced with discrimination, unlawful demands for fees, and denial of care.

No Healing Here documents both migrants' vulnerability to violence and communicable disease, and the discrimination and other barriers they face when seeking healthcare. Migrants interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported being denied care outright because they lacked documentation or simply because they were perceived as foreign, verbally harassed by health care staff, and charged illegally high fees that preclude obtaining care. For migrants without documentation, fear of arrest or deportation can be a serious barrier to seeking health care, even for survivors of rape or xenophobic violence.

The routine denial of healthcare to migrants not only places their lives at risk, but also undermines South Africa's attempts to constrain the spread of communicable diseases like HIV, TB, and cholera in the community at large. South Africa must fulfill its duty under international and domestic law to protect the right to health for everyone, and to ensure that the most vulnerable members of its society are not left out.

A refugee man looks out his tent made out of plastics after waking up at a refugee camp, north of Pretoria, South Africa.

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