

GERMANY- RESPONSE FROM MAISHA E.V- AFRICAN WOMEN IN GERMANY TO THE CALL FOR INPUTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS_ COVID-19 AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1. Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights**
- 2. Special Rapporteur on the right to food**
- 3. Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing**
- 4. Working Group on Persons of African Descent**
- 5. Special Rapporteur on Access to Health during the COVID- 19**

WHO WE ARE

Maisha e.V. –Maisha African Women Organisation in Germany was founded 1996 by African Women living in Germany (Maisha is a Kiswahili word meaning “Life”)

We have many years of experiences in the following fields:

- Empowerment and human rights of migrant women across Germany
- Promoting equal treatment and equal rights
- Ensuring attention to the specific needs of migrant women
- Working on enhancing the integration of migrant women
- Health for undocumented migrant women
- Helping in shaping social policies and designing action programmes addressing migrant women, both at national and EU level

OUR WORK

We run a counselling centre that supports African women in questions of integration, asylum, health, education and family problems, and questions of return. In addition, the association organizes seminars, workshops and conferences on a National level on integration and gender issues that affect the psychosocial and health sectors, such as FGC/female genital cutting. Additionally, the association lobbies for the interests of African women in Germany and in their home countries. Maisha e.V.-African Women in Germany, has already held numerous successful international conferences and projects for women and girls in the field of migration, integration and health issues. We are currently concerned with the issues of migration of women and girls and the trafficking of women and girls.

The main focus of Maisha's work is migration, integration, health and return preparation and support for migrant and refugee women. The association is responsible as a clearing office of Frankfurt city health department for undocumented women. We offer equal access to medical care and therapeutic facilities, as these women need medical and psychosocial care due to traumatic experiences

1. SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON EXTREME POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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A COVID-19 DIFFICULTY

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In a large metropolitan centre like Frankfurt, we need to appreciate that mainly for economic reasons and because of the Schengen agreement, there are large groups of African undocumented workers in the informal Sector. They have seen their work disappear and suddenly with the closure of food banks they have faced serious food challenges.

Some of the undocumented Migrants Women are highly-skilled and are not able find a job that is matching to their skills as many Companies were forced to closed down during the COVID- 19

Undocumented African Migrants can only participate in the informal sector as they lack legal working permits.

2. SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD

Maisha e.V. Support group of African women in Germany

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COVID-19 RESPONSE

In a large metropolitan centre like Frankfurt, we need to appreciate that mainly for economic reasons and because of the Schengen agreement, there are large groups of African undocumented workers in the informal Sector. They have seen their work disappear and suddenly with the closure of food banks they are faced with serious food challenges

This has resulted in us being able to apply for a small grant to help families monthly with food. This is short-term, since there is no reason to believe that some of these jobs will be available for migrants, as some businesses may close and the problem will be for a lot longer than the limited number of months that

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we have money to cover. We had these migrants coming to us to see how we can help, but our funding can't cover such emergencies. COVID-19 has had a domino effect if one looks at the implication on people who no longer have employment and suffer food challenges.

3. SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

MAISHA E.V. SUPPORT GROUP OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN GERMANY

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COVID-19 RESPONSE

COVID-19 has had a domino effect if one looks at the implication on people who no longer have employment and suffer food challenges. When you are not able to work, there is no longer a guarantee of housing from the “landlord/friend” who was able to benefit financially from your employment. Consequently, people’s vulnerability is increased, especially when it pertains to adequate housing.

Most undocumented Migrant Women stay in overcrowded Homes, the situation is very difficult at the moment when it comes to take care of hygiene measures because of the COVID 19 Virus.

4. WORKING GROUP ON PERSONS OF AFRICAN DESCENT

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COVID-19 RESPONSE

The pandemic has also coincided with issues of the Civil Rights of minorities in the Western world at the moment. During this pandemic, it is emerging that many Africans in Germany are being deported and the issues of lockdown is certainly seen as a way of blindsiding the African population about what is happening. However, these vulnerable Africans are easily identified, as they are the ones challenged by food, shelter and medicinal insecurities. There seems to be a strategic move to identify and deport vulnerable Africans at this time.

However, since the George Floyd murder and the protests raised by Black Lives Matter, people of African descent seem to face a backlash, as the climate is now about open discrimination towards people of African descent in many spheres in Germany.

5) Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

(In our estimation, this area has sadly been overlooked at this time of a Health crisis.)

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COVID-19 RESPONSE

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Our Health Centre normally works with pregnant undocumented African migrants and during this time of COVID-19, our partner, Frankfurt Health Authority which provides a doctor and medications, is now only providing medication and no examinations as everyone in the Department is focusing on COVID-19. This action in our opinion has implications for both the health of the mother and child. It is also affecting the mental health of the mothers, as they worry about the health of their babies. Additionally, we are launching a project for helping the undocumented migrants with masks and gloves, as the costs of both items are beyond their means at the moment, unless they wash the same items for months and re-use, actions, which are not advisable for good health

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