



South Africa's People

People

It was Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu who coined the well-known phrase “the Rainbow Nation” to describe the melting pot of people and cultures living together in South Africa.

According to the *Mid-Year Population Estimates 2013* from Statistics South Africa, the country's population stood at 52 982 000 in 2013, of which 27 158 700 were female and 25 823 300 were male.

About 29,2% of the population is aged younger than 15 years and approximately 7,8% (4,15 million) is 60 years or older.

Gauteng comprises the largest share of the South African population. Approximately 12,7 million people (24%) live in this province. KwaZulu-Natal has the second largest population, with 10,5 million people (19,7%) living there. With a population of approximately 1,16 million people (2,2%), Northern Cape remains the province with the smallest share of the South African population.

The black African population group are in the majority (42,28 million) and constitute almost 80% of the total South African population. The white population is estimated at 4,60 million, the coloured population at 4,77 million and the Indian/Asian population at 1,33 million.

The South African population consists of the Nguni comprising the Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi people; Sotho-Tswana consisting of the Southern, Northern and Western Sotho (Tswana people); Tsonga and Venda; people from mixed origin generally referred to as coloureds; people from European origin (Afrikaans- and English-speaking); Indian/Asian; and those who have immigrated to South Africa from the rest of Africa, Europe and Asia and who maintain a strong cultural identity. A few members of the Khoi and the San are also part of South Africa's population.

Languages

South Africa is a multilingual country with 11 official languages, each of which is guaranteed equal status. Most South Africans are multilingual and able to speak at least two of the official languages. English is most widely used for official and commercial communication. IsiZulu is the most common home language spoken by 22,7% of the population, followed by isiXhosa at 16%, Afrikaans at 13,5%, and English at 9,6%, Sesotho sa Leboa (Sepedi) 9,1%, Setswana at 8%, Sesotho at 7,6%, and Xitsonga at 4,5%. Siswati is spoken by 2,5% of the population, Tshivenda by 2,4% and isiNdebele by 2,1%.

Government passed the Use of Official Languages Act in 2012, as part of promoting social cohesion.