



PEOPLE OF
SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICIAL GUIDE TO
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People of South Africa

Statistics South Africa's Census 2022 showed that the population of South Africa increased from 51,7 million in 2011 to more than 62 million in 2022; a growth rate of 1,8% in the intercensal period. Females constituted 51,5% of the total population, while 48,5% were males. Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal had the highest populations at 15 million and 12,4 million respectively, while the Northern Cape had the smallest (1,3 million).

Black Africans remain the dominant population group at 81,4%, followed by the coloured population at 8,2%. The white population percentage declined to 7,3% in 2022 from 8,9% observed in 2011, while that for Indians/Asians increased slightly from 2,5% in 2011 to 2,7% in 2022. The median age increased to 28 years from 25 years in 2011, suggesting a consistent increase over time and an overall increase of three years.

More than 55 000 homeless individuals were recorded, with more males (70,1%) than females (29,9%), for both roofless and sheltered. Homelessness was more prevalent in metropolitan areas (74,1%) compared to non-metropolitan areas (25,9%). City of Tshwane recorded the highest proportion of homeless persons (18,1%), followed by City of Johannesburg at 15,6%. Looking at the top five reasons for homelessness, job loss/no income was the most cited for both males and females (41,3%), followed by alcohol and drug abuse (25%).

Internal migration results showed that two provinces still dominate internal migration in South Africa. Gauteng remained the dominant migration stream, receiving more than a third of all internal migrants, followed by Western Cape with 15%. Over the intercensal period, four provinces experienced an outflow of people, namely Limpopo, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State.

Census 2022 showed there were more than 2,4 million international migrants, which equates to just above 3% of the total population. Most of these came from the Southern African Development Community region (86%) and of these, 45,5% came from Zimbabwe, followed by Mozambique with 18,7% and Lesotho with 10,2%. The top five sending countries to South Africa were Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho and the United Kingdom; these five countries have also maintained their rank since 2011.

More than three million children (0–4 years) participated in Early Childhood Development (ECD). Provincially, children in Northern Cape (57%) and North West (52,4%) were more likely not to participate in ECD, compared to other provinces.

Registration of births

In South Africa, the right to identity – which includes nationality, name and family relations – is enshrined in Section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. The Births and Deaths Registration Act of 1992 governs the registration of births in South Africa.

The last amendment on the Births and Deaths Registration Act of 1992 was made in 2010. The registration of births in South Africa falls under the mandate of the Department of Home Affairs. To better enforce the registration of births, the

Amendment Act of 2010 mandates the registrations of births within 30 days from date of birth. The Constitution and the Act reaffirm South Africa's commitment to Articles seven and eight of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child.

The agreements mandate the preservation of children's rights to identity, a nationality, to a name from birth, family ties and birth registration immediately after birth. The realisation of the right to be registered is closely linked to the safeguarding of a whole range of fundamental rights, including healthcare, social security, education, participation and protection.

The primary purpose of the records derived from the civil-registration process is to create a permanent record of the birth occurrence and for the issuing of a birth certificate, which is a personal document to attest birth registration and the most visible evidence of the government's legal recognition of the child. In essence, without a birth certificate the unregistered babies/children essentially do not legally exist.

Languages

South Africa is a multicultural society that is characterised by its rich linguistic diversity. Language is an indispensable tool that can be used to deepen democracy and also contribute to the social, cultural, intellectual, economic and political life of the South African society.

The country is multilingual with 11 official languages, each of which is guaranteed equal status. Most South Africans are multilingual and able to speak at least two or more of the official languages.

In terms of the Use of Official Languages Act of 2012, and as part of promoting social cohesion and nation-building, every government department, public entity and enterprise is expected to establish a language unit and adopt a language policy.

On 2 May 2023, the National Assembly approved that Section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 be amended to include the South African Sign Language (SASL) as the 12th official language to promote the rights of persons who are deaf and hard of hearing.

On 19 July 2023, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed into law the SASL Bill during a ceremony at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

The SASL is an indigenous language that constitutes an important element of South African linguistic and cultural heritage. It has its own distinct grammatical structures and lexicon and it is independent of any other language. The new legislation seeks to:

- advance the cultural acceptance of SASL;
- ensure the realisation of the rights of persons who are deaf and hard of hearing to equal protection and benefit of the law and human dignity; and
- promote inclusive and substantive equality and prevent or eliminate unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability, as guaranteed by Section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa on 1996.

South Africa became the fourth African country after Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda to recognise sign language as an official language.

Religious beliefs

Religious beliefs in South Africa include Christianity; Islam; Traditional African religion; Hinduism; Buddhism; Bahaism; Judaism; Atheism, Agnosticism and Satanism.