



OFFICIAL GUIDE TO  
South Africa  
2018/19

**People of  
South Africa**



## People

For 2019, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) estimates the mid-year population at 58,78 million. Approximately 51,2% (approximately 30 million) of the population is female. The black African population is in the majority (47,4 million) and constitutes approximately 81% of the total South African population.

The white population is estimated at 4,7 million, the coloured population at 5,2 million and the Indian/Asian population at 1,5 million. Gauteng comprises the largest share of the South African population, with approximately 15,2 million people (25,8%) living in this province.

KwaZulu-Natal is the province with the second largest population, with an estimated 11,3 million people (19,2%) living in this province. With a population of approximately 1,26 million people (2,2%), Northern Cape remains the province with the smallest share of the South African population.

About 28,8% of the population is aged younger than 15 years and approximately 9,0% (5,3 million) is 60 years or older. Of those younger than 15 years of age, the majority reside in Gauteng (21,5%) and KwaZulu-Natal (21,1%). Of the elderly (those aged 60 years and older), the highest percentage 23,9% (1,27 million) reside in Gauteng. The proportion of elderly persons aged 60 and older is increasing over time.

Life expectancy at birth for 2019 is estimated at 61,5 years for males and 67,7 years for females.

The infant mortality rate for 2019 is estimated at 22,1 per 1 000 live births. The estimated overall HIV prevalence rate is approximately 13,5% among the South African population.

The total number of people living with HIV is estimated at approximately 7,97 million in 2019. For adults aged 15-49 years, an estimated 19,07% of the population is HIV positive.

The decline in the percentage of AIDS-related deaths since 2007 can be attributed to the increase in the roll-out of antiretroviral therapy (ART) over time. The national roll-out of ART began in 2005 with a target of one service point in each of the 53 districts of South Africa at the time (later reduced to 52 districts).

The estimated number of AIDS-related deaths declined consistently since 2007 from 267 417 to 126 805 AIDS-related deaths in 2019.

Access to ART has changed significantly over time, altering the pattern of mortality over time. It has extended the lifespan of many in South Africa, who would have otherwise died at an earlier age, as evidenced in the decline of AIDS deaths post 2006.

## Migration patterns

Migration is an important demographic process, as it shapes the age structure and distribution of the provincial population.

According to Stats SA's *Mid-year population estimates* for 2019, for the period 2016-2021, Gauteng and Western Cape are estimated to experience the largest inflow of migrants of approximately, 1 643 590 and 493 621 respectively.

Gauteng and Western Cape received the highest number of in-migrants for all periods. The Eastern Cape and Gauteng experienced the largest number of outflow of migrants.

Owing to its relatively larger population size, Gauteng achieved the highest number of in- and out-flows of migration. Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West and Western Cape received positive net migration over all three periods.

For all periods, the number of international migrants entering the provinces was highest in Gauteng, with Western Cape ranking second.

The provincial estimates show that Gauteng has the largest share of the population followed by KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape and Eastern Cape. Inter-provincial as well as international migration patterns significantly influence the provincial population numbers and structures in South Africa.

By 2019, about 11,4% of South Africa's population lived in Western Cape. Northern Cape has the smallest share of the population (2,2%). Free State has the second smallest share of the South African population constituting 4,9% of the population. Limpopo and Eastern Cape (both 33,3% respectively) have the highest proportions of persons younger than 15 years.

The highest proportions of elderly persons aged 60 years and above are found in Eastern Cape (11,3%), Northern Cape (10,2%) and Western Cape (10,0%).

## 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 Act of 1992 governs the registration of births in South Africa.

The Births and Deaths Registration Act of 1992 has been amended several times, with the last amendment, Births and Deaths Registration Amendment Act, being 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 2010 amendment Act 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.

According to Stats SA's General Household Survey of 2018, nationally, just over one quarter (25,3%) of individuals spoke isiZulu at home, while 14,8% of individuals spoke isiXhosa, and 12,2% spoke Afrikaans.

English was spoken by 8,1% of individuals at home, making it the sixth most common home language in South Africa. English is, however, the second most commonly spoken language outside the household (16,6%) after isiZulu (25,1%), and preceding isiXhosa (12,8%).

It is notable that the use of most languages outside the household declined, with the notable exceptions of isiZulu and Setswana.

The Indian/Asian population group was the most monolingual with 92,1% who spoke English at home. More than three-quarters (77,4%) of coloured individuals spoke Afrikaans at home while 20,1% used English.

More than three-fifths (61,2%) of white South Africans spoke Afrikaans and 36,3% spoke English. By comparison, black Africans spoke a much larger variety of languages. Besides the two most commonly spoken languages, isiZulu (31,1%) and isiXhosa (18,2%), notable sub-groups of black African individuals also spoke Sepedi (12,4%), Setswana (11,1%) and Sesotho (9,7%). Other official languages are isiNdebele (1,6%), Siswati (2,8), Tshivenda (2,5) and Xitsonga (3,6).

In terms of the Use of Official Languages Act in 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.

## Religious beliefs

According to Stats SA's Community Survey 2016, the distribution of religious beliefs in South Africa is as follows:

- Christianity – 43 423 717
- Islam – 892 685
- Traditional African religion – 2 454 887
- Hinduism – 561 268
- Buddhism – 24 808
- Bahaism – 6 881
- Judaism – 49 470
- Atheism – 52 598
- Agnosticism – 32 944
- No religious affiliation/belief – 5 964 892
- Other – 1 482 210
- Do not know – 704 358.



