



OFFICIAL GUIDE TO SOUTH AFRICA 2019/20

**PEOPLE OF
SOUTH AFRICA**

People

For 2020, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) estimates the mid-year population at 59,62 million. Approximately 51,1% (approximately 30 million) of the population is female.

Gauteng still comprises the largest share of the South African population, with approximately 15,5 million people (26,0%) living in this province. KwaZulu-Natal is the province with the second largest population, with an estimated 11,5 million people (19,3%) living in this province. With a population of approximately 1,29 million people (2,2%), Northern Cape remains the province with the smallest share of the South African population.

About 28,6% of the population is aged younger than 15 years and approximately 9,1% (5,4 million) is 60 years or older. Of those younger than 15 years of age, the majority reside in KwaZulu-Natal (21,8%) and Gauteng (21,4%). Of the elderly (those aged 60 years and older), the highest percentage 24,1% (1,31 million) reside in Gauteng. The proportion of elderly persons aged 60 and older is increasing over time.

Migration is an important demographic process, as it shapes the age structure and distribution of the provincial population. For the period 2016-2021, Gauteng and Western Cape are estimated to experience the largest inflow of migrants of approximately, 1 553 162 and 468 568 respectively.

Life expectancy at birth for 2020 is estimated at 62,5 years for males and 68,5 years for females. The infant mortality rate for 2020 is estimated at 23,6 per 1 000 live births. The estimated overall HIV prevalence rate is approximately 13,0% among the South African population. The total number of people living with HIV is estimated at approximately 7,8 million in 2020. For adults aged 15-49 years, an estimated 18,7% of the population is HIV positive.

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 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 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.

In September 2020, the Pan South African Language Board launched the South African Sign Language Charter (SASL Charter). The charter was conceptualised to address issues that relate to communication, access to information, facilities and social justice for the Deaf community, including the type of service provided by SASL interpreters in general.

The SASL Charter articulates and affirms the linguistic rights of Deaf persons in South Africa and is aimed at creating conditions for the development of SASL. The charter compels all government departments and other organs of state as well as the private sector to make provisions for SASL interpreting and guarantees access to services by Deaf persons by ensuring essential service staff such as social workers and police officers receive advanced level training in SASL.

SASL is a language with its own distinct grammatical structures and lexicon. The launch of the charter was a giant stride towards ensuring the officialisation of SASL as the 12th South African official language.

Religious beliefs

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