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**OFFICIAL  
GUIDE TO**  
South Africa  
**2020/21**

**PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

For 2021, Statistics South Africa estimates the mid-year population at 60,14 million people. Approximately 51,1% (about 30,75 million) of the population is female and approximately 48,9% (about 29,39 million) is male.

Life expectancy at birth for 2021 was estimated at 59,3 years for males and 64,6 years for females. The infant mortality rate for 2021 is estimated at 24,1 per 1 000 live births. Life expectancy at birth for 2021 is estimated at 59,3 years for males and 64,6 years for females. The infant mortality rate for 2021 is estimated at 24,1 per 1 000 live births.

The estimated overall HIV prevalence rate is approximately 13,7% among the South African population. The total number of people living with HIV is estimated at approximately 8,2 million in 2021. For adults aged 15–49 years, an estimated 19,5% of the population is HIV positive.

For the period 2016 to 2021, Gauteng and Western Cape are estimated to experience the largest inflow of migrants of approximately, 1 564 861 and 470 657 respectively. Gauteng still comprises the largest share of the South African population, with approximately 15,81 million people (26,3%) living in this province.

KwaZulu-Natal is the province with the second largest population, with an estimated 11,5 million people (19,1%) living in this province. With a population of approximately 1,30 million people (2,2%), Northern Cape remains the province with the smallest share of the South African population.

About 28,3% of the population is aged younger than 15 years (17,04 million) and approximately 9,2% (5,51 million) is 60 years or older. Of those younger than 15 years of age, the majority reside in Gauteng (21,8%) and KwaZulu-Natal (21,2%). The proportion of elderly persons aged 60 years and older in South Africa is increasing over time and as such policies and programs to care for the needs of this growing population should be prioritised.

The approximately 34% rise in deaths in adults in the year 2021, significantly affected the life expectancy at birth in South Africa. In South Africa, female mortality was already disproportionately higher than male mortality due to the impact of HIV and AIDS. In the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, female life expectancy declined by 3,8 years and male life expectancy declined by 3,1 years.

## 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.

## Religious beliefs

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