



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH 2024 KEY MESSAGES

BRIEF:

South Africa will this year commemorate Human Rights Month under the theme: **“Three Decades of Respect for and Promotion of Human Rights”**. The main event will be held on 21 March 2024 at the George Thabe Stadium, in Sharpeville, Gauteng.

This year’s theme pays tribute to the 30th anniversary of freedom and democracy. The whole month of March will be used to reflect on our achievements to promote respect for basic human rights and restoring human dignity in line with the Bill of Rights.

The history of Human Rights Day is grounded in the Sharpeville Massacre that took place on the 21 of March 1960, where the apartheid police shot and killed 69 people during a peaceful protest march.

The month is also used to honour those who fought for our liberation and to celebrate the many rights guaranteed under our Constitution that we continue to enjoy today.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
<i>Join us as we commemorate Human Rights Month</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Rights Month continues to remember and honour those who made it possible for us to achieve freedom and democracy.• This includes the courageous men and women who marched in Sharpeville and Langa on 21 March 1960 for the total abolition of the pass laws.• The Sharpeville massacre and Langa march exposed the brutality of apartheid for the whole world to see and united our people’s unyielding resolve for freedom.• It forced the international community to put pressure on the apartheid government to change its oppressive and inhumane policies.• During this period, we should also reflect on strides we have made to ensure that human rights become a reality for everyone.• We also pay tribute to many people who fought for the human rights and the sacrifices they made for us to be here.
<i>South Africa remains committed to the fight for human rights for all.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Even though the main event will be held on 21 March, government uses the month of March to promote respect for basic human rights and restoring human dignity in line with the Bill of Rights.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bill of Rights ensures that everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection. • It ensures everyone has a right to freedom of movement, to use their language, participate in cultural life and to reside wherever they choose. • Socio-economic rights such water, education, social development and healthcare are included in the Bill of Rights. • We must also promote human rights and build a united, non-sexist, non-racial and democratic South Africa.
<p><i>The Constitution anchors government's resolve for a better life for all. .</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution was designed to create an environment for all South Africans to work together to address the legacy of our divided past. • It is truly one of the country's greatest national achievements and everything government does is guided by the Constitution and its vision of the society we are building. • It protects the rights of all people living in the country, South Africans and foreigners alike. • It explains our obligations as citizens in building the country as envisioned in the National Development Plan. • It ensures that everyone, no matter his or her status is equal before the law and further ensures that all have the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. • As we commemorate Human Rights Month, let us also redouble our efforts to create a just and fair place for everyone especially women. • Such a society requires all of us to play our part and ensure that we do not tolerate the culture of violence against women and girls in our communities.
<p><i>We have made great strides to ensure human rights and dignity becomes a reality for all South Africans.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 30 years of democracy is an opportunity to celebrate the great strides we have made in building a democracy that is founded on equal human rights for all people. • We are pleased that successive administrations since 1994 have taken bold steps to ensure that these rights are realised by all South Africans. • Census 2022 paints a picture of a society on the move and there have been improvements across most indicators. • Census 2022 shows that the provision of housing and basic services such as electricity, water and waste removal has increased steadily over the last three decades. • Around two million indigent households receive free basic water, free basic electricity and free solid waste removal. • Despite these massive advances, Census 2022 also pinpoints what still needs to be done and we are

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	determined to redouble our efforts to build a better tomorrow for all and leave no one behind.
<p><i>Let us continue breaking down barriers which divide us.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together we must build a South Africa that is tolerant and we all have a responsibility to fight racism whenever it rears its ugly head. • Racism is not only a threat to our democracy but it is a barrier towards transforming our country as envisaged in our Constitution. • Racism weakens the fabric of our society and erodes the trust and the optimism on which economic growth depends. • We call on all sectors of society to collaborate with government and Chapter 9 institutions in implementing anti-racism and anti-discrimination educational campaigns. • The National Action Plan provides the basis to raise awareness of anti-racism, equality and anti-discrimination issues among public officials, civil society and the public. • Let us join the conversation in our places of worship, in our schools, our communities and among our friends to create the building blocks of social cohesion and common understanding.