

South Africa

BASIC STATISTICS

- ☒ **Total population:** 49,053,000 (2009 - Ranked 24th in the world by the CIA). This number deliberately reflects the effect of AIDS and subsequent high death rate).
- ☒ **National GDP:** \$493.5 billion (2008).
- ☒ **GDP per capital:** \$10,136.
- ☒ **Median Age:** 24.4 years old.
- ☒ **Infant Mortality:** 42.4 per 1000 live births.
- ☒ **People with HIV/AIDS:** 5.7 million

GEOGRAPHY

- ☒ **Location:** Southern tip of the African Continent.
- ☒ **Borders:** Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, encompasses Lesotho.
- ☒ **Capitals:** Cape Town (legislative), Pretoria (administrative), and Bloemfontein (judicial).
- ☒ **Area:** 471,443 square miles.
- ☒ **Major cities and population:** Cape Town, 3,497,000; Johannesburg, 3,888,000; Pretoria, 2,346,000;
- ☒ **Topography:** 2,700 miles of coastline encircles the large interior plateau to the east, south, and west. Rainfall in the east is more plentiful than in the west, where the rainfall is negligible.
- ☒ **9 Provinces:** Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, Northern Province, North-West, and Western Cape.

DEMOGRAPHY

- ☒ **Population density:** 106.2 per square mile.
- ☒ **0-14 years:** 28.9% (male 7,093,328/female 7,061,579)
- ☒ **15-64 years:** 65.8% (male 16,275,424/female 15,984,181)
- ☒ **65 years and over:** 5.4% (male 1,075,117/female 1,562,860) (2009 est.)
- ☒ **Male to female ratio:** 99/100 (2009).
- ☒ **Birth rate:** 19.9 per 1,000 people.
- ☒ **Life expectancy at birth:** 49.8 for males, 48.1 for females.
- ☒ **Infant mortality rate:** 44.4 per 1000 live births.

- ☒ **Official Languages:** IsiZulu 23.8%, IsiXhosa 17.6%, Afrikaans 13.3%, Sepedi 9.4%, English 8.2%, Setswana 8.2%, Sesotho 7.9%, Xitsonga 4.4%, other 7.2% (2001 census)
- ☒ **Ethnic Groups:** black African 79%, white 9.6%, colored 8.9%, Indian/Asian 2.5% (2001 census)
- ☒ **Religious affiliations:** 68% Christian, 28.5% Traditional, Animistic.
- ☒ **Religious group representation:** 83.1% Christian (30,942,000), 8.4% Ethno-religionist (3,375,777), 2.4% Hindu (959,356), 2.4% Nonreligious (957,006), and 2.4% Muslim (947,148). Less than 1% of the following: Baha'i, Jew, Atheist, Buddhist, Sikh, Chinese folk-religionist, Spiritist, Confucianist and other.
- ☒ **Education:** 13 years from primary to tertiary.
- ☒ **Literacy rate:** 86.4%.

ECONOMY

- ☒ **Currency:** Rand.
- ☒ **GDP per capita:** \$10,136.
- ☒ **National GDP:** \$493.5 billion.
- ☒ **Major Industries:** Mining, steel, chemicals, vehicles, machinery, textiles.
- ☒ **Chief crops:** Corn, wheat, vegetables, sugar and fruit.
- ☒ **Electricity production:** 240.3 bil kWh (2007).
- ☒ **TV Sets:** 101 per 1000 people.
- ☒ **Radios:** 273 per 1000 people.
- ☒ **Telephones:** 95 per 1000 people.
- ☒ **Daily newspaper circulation:** 33 per 1000 people.

POLITICS

- ☒ **Government type:** Constitutional Democracy.
- ☒ **Head of state and government:** President Jacob Zuma.
- ☒ **International organization memberships:** United Nations, the Commonwealth, Organization for African Unity.
- ☒ **Historical Background:** There is evidence that the San bush people—traditionally hunters and gatherers—and the Khoikhoi—traditionally nomadic herders—lived thousands of years ago in the region now known as South Africa. Long before European settlers, Bantu-speaking people migrated here from central Africa and are thought to be the ancestors of the Zulu, Xhosa, and Swazi peoples. In the mid 1600s, the Dutch East India Company established a fort in what came to be known as Cape Town. Dutch, Germans, and French Huguenots were encouraged to immigrate here, establishing the Cape Colony. These became known as Boers or Afrikaners. By the early 1700s, the Khoikhoi had lost most of its land due to war, and the devastation of European-imported diseases and

the San had been forced further north. The mixing of these ethnic groups spawned the distinct ethnic group known as the Cape Coloreds. In the early 19th century, the competition for land between the Sotho and Nguni Bantu groups forced further migration of the Bantus, known as the crushing. This period of devastation for some groups led to the strengthening of the Zulu, Swazi, and Sotho kingdoms. These new kingdoms came into direct conflict with European expansion. In 1814, Britain was given control of the Cape Colony in negotiations following the Napoleonic Wars. By 1820, thousands of British colonists began to impose English law, which encouraged the northern migration of the Afrikaners. The increasing migration of Europeans sparked bloody battles between indigenous Africans, especially the Xhosa, and those of European heritage beginning in 1781 and continuing on for over 100 years. The British parliament established its control with the South Africa Act of 1910. From 1924 until the 1990s, South Africa's system of Apartheid legally divided the country by race. In the 1990s, the Apartheid laws were repealed and a transitional government was instituted to bring South Africa to a more democratic society. On May 9, 1994, Nelson Mandela, a black African leader, was elected President.

TRENDS AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Understanding the trends and social issues of a particular country should always take into consideration the opinions of persons within the country. The Center for Youth Studies is looking for contributors from each country to add to our appreciation and understanding of South Africa's culture, potential, trends, and critical issues.

We currently have several contacts in South Africa from whom we look forward to hearing their insights. The world press has reported extensively on AIDS and South Africa, the current status of race relations, and South Africa's role in OAU. What are the most important issues for South African's today? This will be added as we receive this information.

SOURCES TEXT

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[US Census Bureau, International Database](#)

[United Nation Statistics Division](#)

[South African Government Website](#)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How important do you see South Africa's leadership role in Africa and in the world?
2. What are the realistic expectations for the new South Africa?
3. What most impresses you about the above information?
4. Do you take issue with any of the above? If so, how would you express it differently?
5. What strikes you most about the population of South Africa and the literacy rate? Why?
6. What do you see as the historical and cultural contributions of South Africa to the world?
7. How has South Africa handled its part in AIDS crisis?
8. What can we learn from South Africa and the South African people?

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