

Republic of South Africa



South Africa, as suggested by its namesake, is the southernmost country in Africa. The country is unique in having three official capitals, each responsible for one of the three branches of government in South Africa. Like most all countries in Africa, South Africa for some of its history came under colonial rule, becoming part of the British Empire. During colonial rule, the smaller white majority established norms of segregation from the majority black community. Eventually, in 1910, the process to give South Africa sovereignty from Great Britain began, and by 1931, the state was entirely independent from their former colonial rulers.

Shortly after, however, the infamous laws of Apartheid were passed and the earlier norms of segregation became laws of segregation. Laws prohibiting relationships with different races and the creation of a class system based on race were introduced into South African everyday life. Apartheid went as far as removing citizens from their homes and forcing them to relocate to segregated neighborhoods, sometimes being stripped of their South African citizenship. As apartheid laws continued, social unrest within the country and outside countries and organizations placing trade embargos on South Africa forced the country to move to abolish the laws, ending finally in 1991 and, in 1994, the country elected former prisoner under apartheid Nelson Mandela to become South Africa's first president.

Geography

Official name: **Republic of South Africa (RSA)**

Conventional Short Form: **South Africa**

Region: **Africa**

Area in square kilometers: **1,221,037**

Bordering countries: **Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe**

Physical features: **South Africa is located at the southern tip of Africa and has over 2,500km of coastline. The north of the country is mountainous, while the rest of the country is rather flat.**

Climate: **The majority of South Africa experiences warm days and cool nights, with more of a desert climate in the northwest part of the country.**

Natural hazards: **Droughts**

People and Society

Population: **53,700,304 (26th in the world)**

Ethnic groups: **Black (80.2%), Colored–mixed ethnic background (8.8%), White (8.4%), Indian/Asian (2.5%)**

Official language: **South Africa has eleven official languages: Afrikaans, North Sotho, English, Southern Ndebele, Southern Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu**

Other languages spoken: **Some unofficial languages include Fanagalo, Nama, and South African Sign Language**

Religions: **Protestant, Muslim, Catholic, other, unspecified, none**

Capital city: **Pretoria (Executive), Bloemfontein (Judicial), Cape Town (Legislative)**

Other major cities: **Johannesburg, Durban**

Median age (*half the people are younger than this age and half are older*)

Total population: **26.8**

Male: **26.5**

Female: **27**

Literacy rate (*percentage of the population 15 and older who can read and write*)

Male: **95.5**

Female: **93.1**

Total population: **94.3**

Life expectancy at birth (*average number of years to be lived by those born in the same year*)

Male: **63.1**

Female: **63.6**

Total population: **64.6**

Government

Founded: **May 31, 1910 (independence from Great Britain)**

Type of government: Unitary Parliamentary Constitutional Republic

Countries leaders

President: Jacob Zuma

Deputy President: Cyril Ramaphosa

Allies: Russia, China, Lesotho, Namibia

Enemies: Difficult to say with the consistent changing of political policies

Economic Geography

Currency: South African rand

GDP: 326,541 billion

Natural Resources: Gold, diamond, platinum, vanadium,

Unemployment Rate: 26.8% (2016 est.)

Population Below Poverty Line: 16.6% (2015 est.)

Major imports and exports

Imports: Motor vehicle parts, motor vehicles, televisions, radios

Exports: Iron, steel, refined petroleum products, basic chemicals, precious metals

Biggest trading partners

Imports: China, Germany, United States, Japan, India

Exports: United States, Germany, Japan, Zimbabwe, China

More information can be found at:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sf.html>