



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS

# SOUTH AFRICA

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6 MAY 2008

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## Preface

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- i This Country of Origin Information Key Documents (COI Key Documents) on South Africa has been produced by COI Service, UK Border Agency (UKBA), for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. It provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The COI Key Documents includes information available up to 6 May 2008.
- ii The COI Key Documents is an indexed list of key reports, papers and articles produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. It does not contain any UKBA opinion or policy.
- iii For UK Border Agency users, the COI Key Documents provides direct electronic access to each source referred to in the document, via a link on the source numbers in the index and list of sources. For the benefit of external users, the relevant web link has also been included, together with the date that the link was accessed.
- iv As noted above, the documents identified concentrate mainly on human rights issues. By way of introduction, brief background information on South Africa is also provided. Please note, this background material is not intended to provide a summary of the material contained in the documents listed.
- v This COI Key Documents and the documents listed are publicly disclosable.
- vi Any comments regarding this COI Key Documents or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to COI Service as below.

Country of Origin Information Service

**UK Border Agency**

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**Email:** [cois@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cois@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

**Website:** [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country\\_reports.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html)

## ADVISORY PANEL ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

- vii The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI) was established in 2003 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the UK Border Agency's country of origin information material. The APCI welcomes all feedback on UKBA's COI Key Documents, COI Reports and other country of origin information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at [www.apci.org.uk](http://www.apci.org.uk)

- viii In the course of its work, the APCI reviews the content of selected UKBA COI documents and makes recommendations specific to those documents and of a more general nature. The APCI may or may not have reviewed this particular document. At the following link is a list of the COI Key Documents, COI Reports and other documents which have, to date, been reviewed by the APCI: [www.apci.org.uk/reviewed-documents.html](http://www.apci.org.uk/reviewed-documents.html)
- ix Please note: It is not the function of the APCI to endorse any UKBA material or procedures. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

**Advisory Panel on Country Information:****Email:** [apci@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:apci@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)**Website:** [www.apci.org.uk](http://www.apci.org.uk)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SOUTH AFRICA

**Full Country Name:** The Republic of South Africa.

**Area:** 1,228,376 sq.km

**Population:** 42.6 million (est 2005)

**Capital City:** Pretoria/Tshwane (1.25 million)

**People:** African/Black, white, coloured, Indian/Asian

**Languages:** South Africa has eleven officially recognised languages: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu.

**Religion(s):** All principal religions are represented in South Africa, but the large majority is Christian (nearly 85% at the 1996 census).

**Currency:** (ZAR) Rand (100 cents = 1 Rand)

**Major political parties:** African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), United Democratic Movement (UDM), Independent Democrats (ID), South African Communist Party (SACP)

**Government:** ANC Alliance - ANC/SACP/Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

**Head of State:** President Mr Thabo Mbeki

**Foreign Minister:** Dr Clarice Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

**Membership of international groupings/organisations:** United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), Commonwealth, Non Aligned Movement (NAM), Southern African Development Community (SADC). [3a] (Foreign and Commonwealth Office – South Africa Country Profile, last updated 21 May 2007)

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## GEOGRAPHY

“South Africa's land area is 1,228,376 km (larger than The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy & Germany combined). It borders Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland & Zimbabwe to the north, and entirely surrounds Lesotho (a total land border of 4,750 km.) It has a coastline of 2,954 km, with few natural harbours.”

“The coastal strip is below 1,500 feet and fringed by steep mountain ranges, with a high plateau in the interior ranging up to 6,000 feet above sea level. On the West Coast, the cold Atlantic current produces arid scrubland conditions, changing to summer rainfall grassland approaching the central plateau. A continuous mountain range runs down the East Coast warmed by the Indian Ocean giving a sub-tropical climate. The North of the country has savannah-type vegetation, whilst the Southern tip has a winter rainfall and Mediterranean-type climate.” [3a] (Foreign and Commonwealth Office – South Africa Country Profile, last updated 21 May 2007)

## MAPS



Map courtesy of United Nations

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## RECENT HISTORY

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office reported that: “The South African Native National Congress, later renamed the African National Congress (ANC) was formed in 1912... Repressive NP [National Party] policies in the 1950s compelled the ANC to turn to mass civil disobedience; also the breakaway Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) formed in 1959. After protests following the police killing of 67 peaceful demonstrators at a PAC gathering at Sharpeville in 1960, both the ANC and the PAC were banned. The following year, an ANC military wing led by Nelson Mandela was formed called Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK – ‘Spear of the Nation’) that included white members of the South African Communist Party (SACP). In the same year, South Africa was declared a Republic and left the Commonwealth. Mandela was detained in 1962 and sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of sabotage in 1964.”

“P.W.Botha took over as Prime Minister in 1978; he increased the role of the military in the state. In November 1983 white voters approved his constitutional plan for a tricameral Parliament, comprising separate houses for Whites, Coloureds and Indians in a referendum: the United Democratic Front (UDF) had been formed to oppose the plan, on the grounds that it excluded the black majority. In 1984 elections were held and P.W.Botha became South Africa’s first executive president. The black townships erupted in violence, supported by strikes in the mining industry. On 12 June 1986 the

existing State of Emergency was extended to the whole country. As many as 24,000 people, mainly young, were detained without trial and soldiers replaced police in the townships. Such measures brought the unrest under control during 1987.”

“P.W.Botha suffered a stroke in early 1989 and later relinquished the NP leadership to F.W.de Klerk. The latter was confirmed as State President at elections in September 1989. In 1990 he released Mandela after 27 years in prison and rescinded the ban on the ANC, PAC, SACP and 33 other organisations, including the UDF. The repeal of all apartheid legislation was announced in February 1991 and completed by mid-year. Multiparty talks resulted in agreement on an interim constitution that was approved by the tricameral parliament in December that year.” [3a] (Foreign and Commonwealth Office – South Africa Country Profile, last updated 21 May 2007)

## RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

BBC News reported in an article dated 20 December 2007, that; “Despite his unequivocal election victory as leader of South Africa’s ruling African National Congress (ANC), Jacob Zuma is by no means assured of the presidency in 2009. After years of investigation, the National Prosecuting Authority is threatening to again press charges of corruption linked to controversial 1999 arms deal, forcing Mr Zuma to resign if convicted.” [4c] (BBC News, 20 December 2007) BBC News reported in an article dated 14 December 2007 that “For the first in its history, South Africa’s governing African National Congress (ANC) is facing deep divisions over its choice of leader – a reflection of the state of the country itself, where the gap between the rich and the poor is more evident than ever.” [4d]

IRIN News reported in an article dated 8 April 2008, that: “Less than a month ago, three men died in mob attacks aimed at foreigners throughout the Brazzaville, Saulsville, Phomolong and Vergenoeg informal settlements west of South Africa’s capital, Pretoria... Attacks on foreigners in South Africa are far from new. But according to Jack Redden, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) regional spokesperson, there has been an alarming increase in recent months; and no one is quite sure why.” [19i] IRIN News reported in an article dated 24 October 2007, that: “An unannounced visit by a South African parliamentary committee to Cape Town’s refugee centre last week found foreign nationals being treated like “animals” by officials responsible for running the centre. Although South Africa’s Department of Home Affairs, whose duties include processing refugee applications, is routinely criticised for its treatment of foreign nationals, the aftermath of the parliamentarians’ visit to the refugee centre has sparked a political furore, because Home Affairs Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula had shied away twice from meeting the parliamentary committee to explain the “deplorable state” of her department.” [19j] IRIN News reported in an article dated 17 April 2008, that: “The goal of Southern African regional integration is being set back by the outflow of Zimbabwean migrants to neighbouring countries, according to researchers. An estimated three million Zimbabweans have emigrated as a result of the county’s economic and political crisis, many of them heading to neighbouring South Africa and Botswana. Their arrival has triggered a rise in xenophobia as locals complain about competition for jobs and rising crime rates.” [19k]

The Institute For Security Studies reported in an article on 17 April 2008, that: “The protection of Information Bill recently released in South Africa for public comment has sparked a wide range of criticism and speculation. This is primarily based on the fear that the national intelligence structures are trying to curtail access to information, as the Bill will criminalise the use of secret information to cause disrepute or harm to the state.

Furthermore, concerns have been raised about the declassification of apartheid era documents and the possible instability that this could cause.” [45a]

The Institute for Security Studies also reported on 22 April 2008, that: “South Africa is the Southern African Development Community (SADC)-mandated mediator for the Zimbabwean political quagmire. However, South Africa’s National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), the cabinet committee responsible for implementing South Africa arms control policy and legislation, recently issued a permit allowing Chinese arms and ammunition to be transported across South African soil to Zimbabwe.” [45a]

IRIN News reported in an article dated 17 April 2008, that: “Thousands of members of the Congress of South African Trade Unionist (COSATU) took to the streets of Johannesburg on Thursday to protest rocketing food and electricity prices.” [19l]

IRIN News reported on 31 March 2008, that: “Alleged human rights abuses by Anglo Platinum (AP), the world’s leading producer of platinum, could spark investigations through –out South Africa’s mining industry The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) said it would probe accusations by international rights watchdog, Action Aid, of forced resettlement and contamination of water supplies in communities surrounding AP’s Limpopo province mines in the north of the country.” [19m]

IRIN News reported in an article dated 29 February 2008, that: “Although the South Africa’s government’s Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is on track to achieve its main objective of creating one million jobs for the poor by 2009, significant and sustained poverty alleviation is unlikely, according to an independent review of the project.” [19n] IRIN News reported in an article dated 4 December 2007, that: “An innovative outreach programme that uses local schools as the point of entry into South Africa’s poorest communities is helping tens of thousands of impoverished rural people obtain previously inaccessible grants and services. Many South African’s have been unable to access services because they do not have an identity document, which places citizens on the national database. The outreach programme, created and implemented by the Durban-based Media in Education Trust (MiET), a non-governmental organisation focusing on rural development, helps to bridge this gap by assisting school children and their families to obtain identity documents.” [19o]

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## ECONOMY

**GDP:** US\$239.510 billion (2005)

**Annual Growth:** Growth in 2005 was 4.9%.

**Inflation:** 3.9% (2005)

**Major Industries:** mining (world's largest producer of platinum, gold, chromium), automobile assembly, machinery, textile, iron & steel, chemicals, fertiliser, foodstuffs. Financial services; Manufacturing; Wholesale & Retail Trade; Transport, Storage & Communication; Mining; Other

**Major trading partners:** US, UK, Germany, Japan [3a] (Foreign and Commonwealth Office – South Africa Country Profile, last updated 21 May 2007.)

**Exchange rate:** On 21 April 2008 £1 bought 15.4206 South African Rand. [44] (x-rates.com)

“In part, South Africa has a sophisticated economy based on manufacturing, mining and financial services – in which macro-economic indicators like interest rates and the strength of the Rand are critical. But it also has an economy consisting of the very poor who make out a living through near-subsistence agriculture or the informal sector, for whom economic statistics are meaningless. Relatively small improvements in living standards can make a huge difference to their lives. Unemployment levels are officially 26.7% (September 2005), and the employment rate is at 41.4%.”

“Government has viewed economic restructuring through privatisation as important for growth and employment generation in the long run, despite short-term transitional costs. There have been political difficulties in pushing privatisation forward. The left-leaning and union elements within the ANC governing alliance are strongly opposed to privatisation: handing control of state assets to what is still a white dominated business sector. The Government has recently shifted its focus from pursuing wholesale privatisation to developing profit oriented public sector enterprises. Strike action in the first quarter of 2006 demonstrated strong union resistance to restructuring in the state-owned transport parastatal, Transnet, that aimed to sell off non-core operations. Since 1994 the South African Government has followed prudent economic policies which are beginning to be reflected in increased rates of growth.” [3a] (Foreign and Commonwealth Office – South Africa Country Profile)

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## HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Watch’s World Report: South Africa 2007, noted that “Emerging from a history of institutionalized racial inequality, South Africa has made admirable progress in transforming the state and society to ensure respect for fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, an independent judiciary, and free and fair elections. Nevertheless, widespread poverty, unemployment, persistently high levels of violent crime, and gender inequality continue to inhibit the full enjoyment of human rights”. [10a]

The Human Rights Watch report continues: “Poverty in South Africa has a strong rural dimension: the rural poor suffer from higher unemployment rates, lower educational attainment, and lower access to essential services. South Africa’s Bill of Rights provides for binding and justifiable rights for all South Africans to education, housing, health care, food, water, and social security. A priority concern for the nongovernmental human rights sector in South Africa is to ensure that the government continues to address the progressive realization of socioeconomic rights and to hold

the government accountable to fulfil these rights as binding obligations rather than programmatic aspirations.” [10a]

In addition, the USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2007, 11 March 2008, noted that “The government generally respected the human rights of its citizens. However, the government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and local media reported the following serious human rights problems: police use of excessive force against suspects and detainees, which resulted in deaths and injuries; vigilante violence and mob justice; abuse of prisoners, including beatings and rape, and severe overcrowding of prisons; lengthy delays in trials and prolonged pre-trial detention; forcible dispersal of demonstrations; pervasive violence against women and children, and societal discrimination against women and persons with disabilities; trafficking in persons; violence resulting from racial and ethnic tensions and conflicts with foreigners; and child labour, including forced child labour and child prostitution.” [2a] (Introduction)

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## Hiv/Aids

IRIN News reported in an article dated 24 January 2008, that: “South African AIDS activists have called on doctors and nurses to act in the best interest of HIV – positive pregnant women and their unborn children by not waiting any longer for an official directive to switch from single antiretroviral (ARV) treatment to more effective dual treatment for the prevention of mother– to-child HIV transmission. (PMTCT)” [19e] IRIN News also reported in an article, dated 31 October 2007, that: “Hunger and HIV/AIDS are reinforcing each other in Southern Africa, “leading to a potentially tragic new level of famine”, says a book published by a regional agricultural think-tank. “ [19f] IRIN News reported in an article dated 10 September 2007, that: “Thandi Nxamakele, 27 was one of 240 South Africans who took part in a phase II HIV vaccine trial conducted by the Aurum Institute for Health Research, an independent medical scientific organisation...Volunteering for the trial, known as “Phamili” (going forward), meant making a four – year commitment to visit the clinic at regular intervals and, in the case of female volunteers, avoiding pregnancy.” [19g] IRIN News reported in an article, dated 1 May 2007, that: “South African rape survivors are not receiving vital anti-HIV treatment due to ignorance and a lack of basic treatment procedure at government health facilities and justice departments, new research shows... According to the study, almost a third of government health practitioners at 31 national rape centres said they did not consider rape to be a serious medical condition.” [19h]

The South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) reports that: “The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on AIDS was the first high-level political body that was established to oversee the national response to HIV and AIDS. This committee was established at the end of 1997 and was chaired by the then Deputy President, Mr Thabo Mbeki. All ministers and deputy ministers attended committee meetings. The main objectives of the committee were to provide leadership, political oversight and guidance to the HIV and AIDS programme... South Africa is uniting in its efforts to combat the epidemic and from now on SANAC will embody that unity and purpose... The South African Government recognises the seriousness of the HIV and AIDS epidemic and its impact to the country. Hence partnerships and joint efforts were noted as critical points in addressing the challenges brought by HIV and AIDS and also reversing the epidemic.

The South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) was formed to strengthen the strong political leadership as well as to ensure inclusion of civil society in the overall

response to HIV and AIDS. The Council is composed of both government and civil society organisations.” [47]

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## ETHNIC GROUPS

Jyvaskyla University reports that: “Until 1991, South African law divided the population into four major racial categories: (1.) The Black Africans, of which the Nguni and Sotho groups account for 90% of the Black population. Black population accounts 75% of the South Africa's entire population. (2.) The Whites who account for about 13% of the population. (3.) The Indians who account for around 3 % and (4.) the Coloreds who are mixed White and Black descent and account for 9% of the population. Although the South African law of racial categories has been abolished, many South Africans still view themselves according to these categories. The black population consists of several groups: Khoi-San, Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, Sotho, Shangaan and Venda, just to name a few. The biggest groups are Zulus (21 %), Xhosas (17 %) and the Sotho (15%). Next smaller minorities are the Tswana, Venda, Ndebele, Swasi, and Pedi, among others.” [46]

US Library of Congress reported in the South African country studies that: “The Nguni peoples are classified into three large subgroups, the Northern Nguni, the Southern Nguni, and the Ndebele. [40b] At least 7 million Sotho (also BaSotho) people who speak seSotho and related languages live in South Africa. Another 3 million Sotho and closely related people live in neighbouring countries. The diverse Sotho population includes the Northern Sotho (Pedi), the Southern Sotho, and the Tswana (BaTswana), each of which is itself a heterogeneous grouping. [40c] The Tsonga are a diverse population, generally including the Shangaan, Thonga, Tonga (unrelated to another nearby Tonga population to the north), and several smaller ethnic groups. Together they number about 1.5 million in South Africa in the mid-1990s, and at least 4.5 million in southern Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The Venda (also VaVenda) population of about 600,000 people coalesced into an identifiable social unit in the area of the northern Transvaal and in Zimbabwe over several centuries.” [40d]

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### 3. Index to key source documents

(KB users - click source number to access document directly)

<p><b>KEY FACTS AND GEOGRAPHY</b></p>	<p>[2a] USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2007, 11 March 2008 <a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100505.htm">http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100505.htm</a></p> <p>[2b] USSD, Background Note: South Africa, last updated April, 2008 <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm</a></p> <p>[3a] FCO, Country Profile: South Africa (last updated on 21 May 2007) <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/country-profiles/sub-saharan-africa/south-africa">http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/country-profiles/sub-saharan-africa/south-africa</a></p> <p>[4a] BBC, Country Profile: South Africa, Last updated 29 February 2008 <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1071886.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1071886.stm</a></p> <p>[5a] CIA, The World Factbook, South Africa, last updated 15 April 2008. <a href="https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sf.html">https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sf.html</a></p> <p>[5b] CIA, Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments, South Africa, Last updated 9 November 2007 <a href="https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/world-leaders-s/south-africa.html">https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/world-leaders-s/south-africa.html</a></p> <p>[9a] Department for International Development, South Africa Fact Sheet, 1 March 2006 <a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/africa/southafrica.asp">http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/africa/southafrica.asp</a></p>
<p><b>MAPS</b></p>	<p>[5a] CIA, The World Factbook, South Africa, last updated 15 April 2008 <a href="https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sf.html">https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sf.html</a></p> <p>[12a] Encarta Encyclopaedia, Map, South Africa (accessed 22 April 2008) <a href="http://encarta.msn.com/map_701516639/South_Africa.htm">http://encarta.msn.com/map_701516639/South_Africa.htm</a></p>
<p><b>HISTORY</b></p>	<p>[2a] USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2007, 11 March 2008 <a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100505.htm">http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100505.htm</a></p> <p>[2b] USSD, Background Note: South Africa, last updated April, 2008 <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm</a></p> <p>[3a] FCO, Country Profile: South Africa (last updated on 21</p>

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