

Red lights flicker at human rights abuses in South Africa

Written by Solidarity Research Institute

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All South Africans do not enjoy equal access and protection of their human rights and South Africa is guilty of many serious human rights violations. This was revealed by the Solidarity Research Institute (SRI) first annual human rights barometer today on the eve of Human Rights day. In addition, more human rights in South Africa are threatened than protected.

The human rights barometer focuses on all the entrenched civil and political and socio-economic rights in the Bill of Rights. This shed light on controversial human rights abuses such as invasion of South Africans' right to equality, security and safety, access to information and violation of minority rights.

According to Peter Kruger, head of the SRI, it is especially alarming that the rights of proactive action by government are the most threatened. The barometer will be unveiled on Human Rights day, in Johannesburg by AfriForum to the Human Rights Commission, and next week to the United Nations (UN) Forum on Minority Affairs in Switzerland.

According to Kruger, serious human rights violations are cited in respect of six of the rights, including the right to life, safety, clean environment and minority rights. Moreover, South Africans' right to equality, freedom of speech and information have been violated, while a further four of the 27 human rights are threatened.

One of the most serious human rights violations currently violating South Africa, is the right to life and various violations of minority rights. South Africa has the second highest murder rate in the world. More than 50 people per day in South Africa are killed, and hate speech and racism are the order of the day. The low rate of convictions in respect of South Africa's violent criminals is a further proof that not enough value is given to the right to life itself.

The human rights barometer shows affirmative action in South Africa, to have a permanent nature, despite international guidelines that it is temporary in nature. Affirmative action based on demographic representation also encourages more inequality within the designated group, because most Africans in those designated groups benefit, Kruger explained. In addition, items are often left vacant, as is the case currently in the South African Police Service, rather than employing a white candidate which is more than competent to do the job. This is despite South Africa's high unemployment rate, he adds. In such cases the community bears the brunt of poor service delivery.

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