

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS** 

# **SOUTH AFRICA**

5 APRIL 2007

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# 1. Preface

This Country of Origin Information (COI) Key Documents has been produced by Research, Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office, 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 5 April 2007.

- 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 Home Office opinion or policy.
- For Home Office 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 key 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 documents are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

#### **Country of Origin Information Service**

Home Office Apollo House 36 Wellesley Road Croydon CR9 3RR United Kingdom

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Website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country\_reports.html

#### Advisory Panel on Country Information

The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information was established under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the Home Office's country of origin information material. The Advisory Panel welcomes all feedback on the Home Office's country of origin information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at <a href="https://www.apci.org.uk">www.apci.org.uk</a>.

It is not the function of the Advisory Panel to endorse any Home Office material or procedures. In the course of its work, the Advisory Panel directly

reviews the content of selected Home Office COI documents, but neither the fact that such a review has been undertaken, nor any comments made, should be taken to imply endorsement of the material. 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.

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# 2. Background Information about 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)** 

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#### **G**EOGRAPHY

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)** 

#### MAPS



**Map courtesy of United Nations** 

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## **RECENT HISTORY**

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

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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)

On 14 April 2004 South Africa held her third General Election since the end of Apartheid. President Thabo Mbeki was re-elected as President for a second five-year term. The ANC won 70% of the vote on a 77% turnout. Its nearest rival was the DA with 12%, followed by the IFP with 7%. The NP, renamed the New National Party (NNP) in 1997, voted in 2005 to disband. [3a] (Foreign and Commonwealth Office – South Africa Country Profile)

## RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

On June 2 [2005], the Durban high court convicted Schabir Shaik, financial advisor to former deputy president Jacob Zuma, of two counts of corruption and one count of fraud, including the payment of bribes to Zuma. On June 14, President Mbeki dismissed Zuma for suspected corruption. [2a] (USSD 2006) However, Zuma maintained his position as deputy party leader of the ANC. [4c] (BBC News, 14 June 2005) In December 2005, Zuma was also charged with rape in an unrelated case, and suspended his participation in the ANC leadership for the duration of that case. [4d] (BBC News, 7 December 2005) After his acquittal on the rape charge in May, 2006, he resumed his ANC duties; the corruption case was dismissed in September 2006, for procedural reasons. [4e] (BBC News, 21 September 2006)

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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)

Exchange rate: On 5 April 2007 £1 bought 14.167 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 eke 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 "After 12 years of democracy, South Africa is still struggling to implement the progressive human rights protections guaranteed in the country's constitution. Particular areas of concern relate to the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, sexual violence against women and children, access to primary education in rural areas, and the government's response to one of the world's most serious HIV/AIDS epidemics." [10a]

In addition, the USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2006, 6 March 2007, 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 pretrial 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 labor, including forced child labor and child prostitution." [2a] (Introduction)

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# 3. Index to key source documents

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

KEY FACTS AND GEOGRAPHY	[2a]	USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2006, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78758.htm
	[2b]	USSD, Background Note: South Africa, last updated October 2006 <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm</a>
	[3a]	FCO, Country Profile: South Africa (last updated on 13 October 2006) <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019745081555">http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019745081555</a>
	[4a]	BBC, Country Profile: South Africa, Last updated 2 February 2007 <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1071886.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1071886.stm</a>
	[5a]	CIA, The World Factbook, South Africa, last updated 8 March 2007 <a href="https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/sf.html">https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/sf.html</a>
	[5b]	CIA, Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments, South Africa, Last updated 31 March 2006 https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/chiefs165.html
	[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>
	[11c]	Jane's Security Sentinel, South Africa - geography, 2 March 2006 <u>Hard saved copy only</u>
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	[12a]	Encarta Encyclopaedia, Map, South Africa (accessed 21 March 2007) <a href="http://encarta.msn.com/map">http://encarta.msn.com/map</a> 701516639/South Africa.htm <a href="http://encarta.msn.com/map">l</a>
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	[2b]	USSD, Background Note: South Africa, last updated October 2006 <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm</a>

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HISTORY CONT'D	[3a]	FCO, Country Profile: South Africa (last updated on 13 October 2006) <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019745081555">http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&amp;c=Page&amp;cid=1007029394365&amp;a=KCountryProfile&amp;aid=1019745081555</a>
	[4a]	BBC, Country Profile: South Africa, Last updated 2 February 2007 <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1071886.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1071886.stm</a>
	[4b]	BBC, Timeline: South Africa, last updated 2 February 2007 <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1069402.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1069402.stm</a>
	[6a]	Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2006: South Africa <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7060">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7060</a>
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	[2b]	USSD, Background Note: South Africa, last updated October 2006 <a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm">http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm</a>
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	[4c]	BBC, South African leader sacks deputy, 14 June 2005 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4092064.stm
	[4d]	BBC, Jacob Zuma's ANC duties suspended, 7 December 2007 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4506608.stm
	[4e]	BBC, Press assesses Zuma judgement, 21 September 2006 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/5367798.stm
	[6a]	Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2006: South Africa <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7060">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&amp;year=2006&amp;country=7060</a>

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POLITICS AND RECENT EVENTS CONT'D	[10a]	Human Rights Watch, World Report 2007: South Africa, (Accessed 21 March 2007) <a href="http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/safric14710.h">http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/safric14710.h</a> <a href="mailto:tm">tm</a>
	[11a]	Jane's Security Sentinel, South Africa country profile - at a glance, 23 October 2006  Hard saved copy only
	[11b]	Jane's Security Sentinel, South Africa: Internal affairs, 3 November 2006 Hard saved copy only
	[13a]	Amnesty International, Annual Report 2006, (Accessed on 21 March 2007) <a href="http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/zaf-summary-eng">http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/zaf-summary-eng</a>
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	[6b]	Freedom House, Countries at the Crossroads 2006: Country Report - South Africa http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&ed ition=7&ccrpage=31&ccrcountry=123
	[10a]	Human Rights Watch, World Report 2007: South Africa, (Accessed 21 March 2007) <a href="http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/safric14710.h">http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/safric14710.h</a> <a href="http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/safric14710.h">http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/safric14710.h</a> <a href="http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/safric14710.h">http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/safric14710.h</a>
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	[16a]	University of Minnesota, Human Rights Library: Ratification of International Human Rights Treaties – South Africa, accessed 22 March 2007 http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/ratification-

		southafrica.html		
HUMAN RIGHTS – SPECIFIC ISSUES:  (IN ADDITION TO GENERAL REPORTS ABOVE, INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IS PROVIDED IN THE DOCUMENTS LISTED BELOW)				
CHILDREN	[2a]	USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2006, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78758.htm		
	[2c]	USSD, Trafficking in Persons Report 2006, 5 June 2006 <a href="http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65987.htm">http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65987.htm</a>		
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	[18a]	UNICEF, Info by Country: South Africa <a href="http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southafrica">http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southafrica</a> 31204.htm <a href="http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southafrica">l</a>		
	[18b]	UNICEF, Women and Children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality - The State of the World's Children 2007 <a href="http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org/docs/unicef">http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org/docs/unicef</a> stat e world children 07.pdf		
	[18c]	UNICEF, South Africa: Annual Report 2006 <a href="http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/SAF_resources_annual2006.pdf">http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/SAF_resources_annual2006.pdf</a>		
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	[19a]	IRIN, South Africa: Rural orphan-care programmes struggle, 12 February 2007 <a href="http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=70122">http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=70122</a>		
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	[21a]	South African Department of Home Affairs, South African Citizenship, accessed 27 March 2007 <a href="http://home-affairs.pwv.gov.za/sa_citizenship.asp">http://home-affairs.pwv.gov.za/sa_citizenship.asp</a>
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