

SOUTH AFRICA

Region: South Africa (Sub-Saharan Africa)

Population (2022): 59.9 million (23rd)

Life Expectancy at Birth (Women): 68.29 years

Governance System: Constitutional parliamentary republic

Capital: Cape Town, Pretoria, Bloemfontein

Land Area (km²): 1,213,090 (24th)

Major Languages: 12 official languages

Select Global Rankings

GDP (2022): 39th (405,870 US\$ Millions)

Human Development Index: 109th (High)

Fragile States Index - Inverted: 102nd (Cat. 7)

Good Country Index: 44th

Human Freedom Index: 77th

World Happiness Ranking: 85th

Select Global Rankings (Gender-Focus)

Gross National Income Per Capita (Women): 79th

Gender Social Norms Index: 62nd

Women's Power Index: 11th

Social Institutions and Gender Index (World Cup rank): 23rd

Gender Inequality Index: 97th

Global Gender Gap Index: 20th

Women Peace & Security Index: 66th

Elite Sport System Rankings

2020 Summer Olympic Women's Medals (% of Total): 3 (100%)

2022 Winter Olympic Women's Medals (% of Total): none

Global Cup Ranking (Women): 31st

Football/World Cup Profile

FIFA Region: CAF

FIFA Ranking: 54th

World Cup Appearance: 2nd

Best World Cup Performance(s): Group Stage (2019)

Qualification: African Cup of Nations semi-finalist

World Cup Group: G

Last World Cup Appearance: 2019

SOUTH AFRICA in International (Gender) Affairs

In 1948 a policy of apartheid was adopted when the National Party took power. By 1950 the Group Areas Act was passed to classify the South African population by race and segregate blacks and whites. The African National Congress (ANC) led by Nelson Mandela responds to the passing of the Group Areas Act with civil disobedience. In 1960 the police killed 69 unarmed people in a protest in Sharpeville against the pass laws, which led to a state of emergency and the banning of the ANC. Mandela was one of the thousands who was detained in the during the state of emergency leading to his adjudication in the Treason Trial.

Mandela was acquitted in the Treason Trial and continued his work to end segregation. Mandela wrote to the Prime Minister “requesting a national convention on a non-racial constitution, and to warn that should he [Prime Minister] not agree there would be national strike against South Africa becoming a republic”. Mandela was then asked to lead the armed struggle and lead the Spear of the Nation, “which launched on 16 December 1961 with a series of explosions”. In early 1962 Mandela secretly left the

country and was caught upon his return. He was convicted of leaving the country without a permit and inciting workers to strike, he was sentenced to five years, he was released in June of the same year. In 1964 Mandela and seven others were sentenced to life imprisonment for sabotage. Mandela spent much of his imprisonment detained at Robben Island and was released in [1990](#), four months after the release of the others he was convicted with. Shortly after in 1994 Mandela was elected as South Africa's president.

Throughout South Africa's apartheid pressure was placed on the nation to drop their race-based constitution including pressure from sporting organizations. The International Olympic Committee barred South Africa from the Olympics for 32 years beginning in 1964 and ending in [1992](#). FIFA similarly banned South Africa beginning in 1961 and reinstated South Africa's membership in the 1990s. In 2010 South Africa hosted the [World Cup](#).

Presently, South Africa has one of Africa's biggest and most developed economies. However, in 2022, "the World Economic Forum warned that South Africa risked state collapse, with record unemployment levels, high crime rates, unsustainable state spending, mismanaged institutions, and [corruption](#)".

Gender Equity

South Africa is a signatory to the main International Convention relating to Gender Equality and the protection of women and in-line with these convention South Africa has developed legislation that specifically addresses gender [equity](#).

The Commission for Gender Equity (CGE) found that women not accompanied by a male relative or husband were "obviously more sexually vulnerable than those who had male protectors. There was evidence to show that women and children were vulnerable to sexual harassment and [rape](#)". As a result of known high level of violence against women and girls the South African government has identified combating these violent crimes as a priority. However, concerns from organizations like CGE continue with the accuracy and availability of gender [statistics](#).

South Africa enters the World Cup as the African champions, while the nation has swelled with excitement this is not to say there have not been issues. Off the pitch there has been a "standoff between the players and the South African Football Federation ([SAFA](#)). The Women's National team was scheduled to play Botswana as its final preparatory game before flying to New Zealand. "The players decided to boycott the match, protesting both the substandard state of the field they were supposed to play on, the quality of the opponent (FIFA ranking 150), and the unacceptable remuneration they were set to receive for representing their country on the world stage. The protest generated public outcry and crisis talks were convened between SAFA, the South African Football Players Union, Banyana Banyana [South African Women's National Soccer Team], and the Minister for Sports, Arts and [Culture](#)". On July 5th an agreement has been reached with the "Motsepe Foundation - created by South African businessman, Patrice Motsepe, who also happens to be the president of the Confederation of African Football - stepping in to help pay the players their World Cup appearance [fees](#)".