

SOUTH AFRICAN CHARTER AND COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

On Thursday 21 October 2010 a ***South African Charter of Religious Rights and Freedoms*** was endorsed, amongst other, by:

- most of the major religions in South Africa:
 - the Jewish religion;
 - Christians (24 denominations and religious bodies);
 - the Muslim religion (Muslim Judicial Council and Ismaeli Community);
 - the Hindu religion;
 - the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of South Africa;
 - African Traditional Religions; and
 - African Independent Churches.
- The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities;
- Theologians and other academics from various universities;
- Women's movements;
- Youth Movements;
- The Christian education desk of the DRC;
- The Griekwa Independent Church;
- The Religious Department (Genre) of the SABC Television;
- The Religious Liberty Commission of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa;
- The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa;
- Transworld Radio; and
- Media Production Houses.

The signatories represent millions of adherents to and supporters of the religions in South Africa. They are now the owners and trustees of the Charter.

After the endorsement ceremony a ***South African Council for the Protection and Promotion of Religious Rights and Freedoms*** was established. A Steering Committee was also appointed to prepare a Constitution for the Council.

The Council will seek ways and means to protect and promote religious rights and freedoms in South Africa and also to bring the Charter before Parliament to enact it as a law of the land. In the meantime religious communities are encouraged to make the Charter part of their official documents.

The keynote speaker for the day was the Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa, Mr Dikgang Moseneke. In an interview with SABC 3 after his address he described the Charter and its endorsement as a historical moment in history of South Africa.

The Charter is available in six of the official languages of South Africa. Religious communities and individuals who have not yet endorsed the Charter can still do so, by contacting the address below.

P Coertzen

(Convenor Steering Committee of the SA Council for Religious Rights and Liberties)

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Stellenbosch

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