

**Submission by AfriForum and AfriForum Youth**  
**on**  
**“Minority youth: towards inclusive and diverse societies”,**  
**made during the**  
**10th Session of the Forum on Minority Issues**  
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**Introduction**

In South Africa, the youth faces many serious challenges. AfriForum and AfriForum Youth are two organisations established in the country by civil society, inter alia to address these issues and to play an active role in ensuring that young South Africans can look forward to a viable future.

AfriForum, established in 2005, focuses on minority rights issues in general and Afrikaner rights in particular. It comprises 204,159 members,<sup>1</sup> each contributing a monthly donation to AfriForum. The organisation is inclusive and committed to the promotion of a culture of mutual recognition and respect amongst all South African communities. The maintenance of rule of law is of paramount importance to it.

AfriForum Youth is the youth wing of AfriForum. It has been in existence for nine years and has several thousand members across South Africa. It has been the spearhead of several campaigns that focus on the protection of the rights of young Afrikaners, without infringing on the rights of any other South African communities.

AfriForum Youth is a registered youth organisation at six major South African universities and has more than thirty youth structures in towns and cities across South Africa. These youth branches actively contribute to the welfare of all in the areas in which they have been established by:

1. Developing young leaders within society;
2. Implementing protocols to ensure the safety of all South Africans;
3. Actively participating in the political scene in South Africa;
4. Opposing racially-based policies in all spheres of society; as well as
5. Promoting mother-language education in general, and Afrikaans mother-language education in particular.

**Some of the most serious challenges facing the South African youth**

**1. A dysfunctional education system**

In 2015, South African schools ranked second-to-last in the world according to a survey conducted re science and mathematical proficiency by the

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1. Report received from AfriForum data base manager, 22 November 2017.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In January 2017, *The Economist* stated that the country's schools are amongst the most inept in the world.<sup>2</sup> Mother-language education in any language apart from English is under threat, as officials, politicians and even an increasing number of court rulings allege that mother-language education in effect benefits those receiving it, while denying access to children of other language groups and therefore cannot be tolerated. Despite the fact that South Africa is one of the countries with the largest budgets for education, the infrastructure is also insufficient to meet the needs of an increasing youth population. In Gauteng – the country's central province and economic engine hub – there is a shortage of 195 schools, yet only 17 new schools have been built in the past two years. Proposed amendments to existing legislation entail taking away the responsibility and decision-making capacities in public schools from the community and instead concentrating all power in the hands of the Minister of Basic Education and his officials, despite the fact that public schools with actively involved parent communities are the most successful in the country. AfriForum is opposing this education bill. It is also involved in legal action to assist an indigent, rural community to get a school. Despite promises spanning decades, they are still waiting in vain for the school, with children having to walk distances of more than 10 kilometres to get to a school, cross rivers (even when they are in flood) and having no access to textbooks. These are but a few examples of the many problems typical to South African education.

## 2. Unemployment

The country has an unemployment rate of 67,4% amongst the youth younger than 25. This rate is calculated using the expanded definition – in other words, not only including people actively seeking jobs, but also discouraged youths not actively seeking employment. Economists refer to this situation as a “national crisis”.<sup>3</sup> For minority communities in South Africa such as the Afrikaner youth, the situation is even more gloomy, as racially based quotas are being applied to employment opportunities. Even though South Africa has entered a new political dispensation, affirmative action is being applied in the labour sector without any sunset clause, forcing local businesses and government institutions to use the national demographic compilation when appointing and promoting staff. As a result, 80% of the employment opportunities are allocated to black South Africans, 9% each to so-called coloured and white South Africans and 2% to South Africans of Asian descent.<sup>4</sup> In provinces where specific races are more concentrated

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2. <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/sa-education-system-one-of-the-worst-in-the-world-the-economist-20170106>; <https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21713858-why-it-bottom-class-south-africa-has-one-worlds-worst-education>.

3. <https://www.fin24.com/Economy/youth-unemployment-in-sa-a-national-crisis-economists-20170807>.

4. <https://www.enca.com/south-africa/concourt-victory-for-solidarity-in-key-affirmative-action-case>; <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politics/race-discrimination-coloureds-are-on-their-own--so>;

than others, they have little to no chance of all being treated fairly and equally when this calculation is enforced. Quotas also apply to access to tertiary education, accommodation and funding for students. Thus an increasing number of young South Africans decide to emigrate in order to study and work abroad. South Africa has a very high emigration rate and this has extremely negative short- and long-term implications for the country in general.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. High levels of crime – especially violent crime

According to the crime statistics of the 2017 financial year, released by the South African Police Service in October 2017, the number of incidents in categories of violent crime increased or decreased as indicated below. The number of crimes compared to the South African population of an estimated 56,5 million South African residents, are disconcertingly high, with an average of 52 murders being committed per day in the country:<sup>6</sup>

| Category  | 2016    | 2017    | Change  |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Carjacking  | 14 602  | 16 717  | +14.48% |
| Drug-related crime                                    | 259 165 | 292 689 | +12.94% |
| Robbery of cash in transit                            | 137     | 152     | +10.95% |
| Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition         | 14 772  | 16 134  | +9.22%  |
| Stock-theft   | 24 715  | 26 902  | +8.85%  |
| Robbery at residential premises                       | 20 820  | 22 343  | +7.32%  |
| Robbery with aggravating circumstances                | 132 527 | 140 956 | +6.36%  |
| Sexual offences discovered as result of police action | 5 830   | 6 164   | +5.63%  |
| Commercial crime                                      | 69 917  | 73 550  | +5.20%  |
| Robbery at non-residential premises                   | 19 698  | 20 680  | +4.99%  |
| Murder  | 18 673  | 19 016  | +1.84%  |
| Burglary at non-residential premises                  | 75 008  | 75 618  | +0.81%  |
| Attempted murder                                      | 18 127  | 18 205  | +0.43%  |
| Truck hijacking                                       | 1 184   | 1 183   | -0.08%  |
| Theft out of or from motor vehicle                    | 139 386 | 138 172 | -0.87%  |
| Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle                 | 53 809  | 53 307  | -0.93%  |
| Common robbery  | 54 110  | 53 418  | -1.28%  |
| Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs       | 76 159  | 75 034  | -1.48%  |

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/solidarity-takes-complaints-over-sas-equity-policy-to-un-9049661>.

5. <http://sa-monitor.com/cheers-south-africa-reasons-behind-spike-emigration-city-press-21-july-2016/>; <https://businesstech.co.za/news/wealth/212025/south-africa-expected-to-break-emigration-records-in-2018-expert/>.
6. <https://businesstech.co.za/news/lifestyle/207087/south-africa-crime-stats-2017-everything-you-need-to-know/>.

|   |         |         |         |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Burglary at residential premises                        | 250 606 | 246 654 | -1.58%  |
| Shoplifting   | 68 786  | 67 454  | -1.94%  |
| Malicious injury to property                            | 119 901 | 116 409 | -2.91%  |
| All theft not mentioned elsewhere                       | 340 372 | 328 272 | -3.55%  |
| Common assault  | 164 958 | 156 450 | -5.16%  |
| Sexual offences   | 51 895  | 49 660  | -4.31%  |
| Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm | 182 933 | 170 616 | -6.73%  |
| Arson   | 4 903   | 4 321   | -11.87% |
| Bank robbery  | 6       | 3       | -50.00% |

#### 4. Service delivery failures by authorities at all levels

South Africa experiences about one service delivery protest every second day. Delivery problems are a scourge affecting all, but especially the most vulnerable members of communities, including the youth. For example, poor service delivery resulted in the death of at least three babies who contracted waterborne diseases because of contaminated drinking water in the area of a town called Bloemhof, due to the municipality's failure to provide safe drinking water and maintain the infrastructure to do so.<sup>7</sup> A recent report pointed to only 5% of the bridges in Johannesburg – the largest city in South Africa – being safe.<sup>8</sup> Among the causes of problems such as these are a misappropriation of funding, resulting in neglected maintenance, as well as a lack of skilled labour. The latter also has to do with the point raised above, namely that the most skilled applicants are not appointed in crucial positions, as preference is rather given to candidates of the right race to ensure meeting the demographic requirements. Apart from the physical danger posed by this situation, a failing infrastructure discourages investment and development, which in turn also exacerbates the unemployment situation. It becomes a vicious circle.

#### 5. Political instability

The South African government is currently embroiled in numerous scandals, claims of corruption and state capture. The State President is at the heart of these allegations.<sup>9</sup> Even international authorities such as the FBI, Britain's Public Relations and Communications Association, the Financial Conduct Authority, the Serious Fraud Office and the National Crime Agency are investigating allegations of money laundering and other illegal practices

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7. [https://www.groundup.org.za/article/three-infants-die-polluted-water-northwest-justice-must-be-done\\_1864/](https://www.groundup.org.za/article/three-infants-die-polluted-water-northwest-justice-must-be-done_1864/).
  8. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/gauteng/joburgs-infrastructure-on-the-verge-of-collapse-11930782>.
  9. <http://sa-monitor.com/new-book-brings-explosive-allegations-south-african-president-jacob-zuma-pri-20-november-2017/>.

in this regard.<sup>10</sup> Business confidence is at a record low,<sup>11</sup> while political assassinations are becoming prevalent.<sup>12</sup> Racial scapegoating is used to deflect attention from these issues. The role of, for example, the British public relations company Bell Pottinger, has by now become public knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Thus politicians and populists polarise the South African community, leaving radicals to believe that violence committed against minorities can be justified. This is even more true of the white, Afrikaner community, because of the history of apartheid. The latter came to an end in 1994, but a whole generation is still being held accountable for a system they had no hand in. Restitution has become retribution.

### **AfriForum and AfriForum Youth's endeavours to improve the situation**

Both organisations believe in getting actively involved to effect a positive change in the country. To do so, they also forge relationships with other local and international communities. Some examples of their projects and activities are mentioned below:

#### **1. The dysfunctional education system**

Actions are undertaken at several levels. In individual cases, like that of the community desiring a school mentioned above, but also when it comes to issues of national significance, like the proposed new legislation, AfriForum obtains legal advice and support all affected by the travesty in question. Both organisations play an active role to inform communities about the importance of mother-language education – sometimes by means of projects with a lighter approach, like video clips or theatre productions, at other times by means of lectures, the publication of research results, pamphlets, etc. Misappropriation of funding is identified, investigated and the responsible parties are held accountable. The right of communities to participate in the management of schools, including the right to decide on a school's language and access policy are defended and alternative private schooling systems are being investigated at all levels. Affordable private education is supported. AfriForum and AfriForum Youth also develop youth leadership by means of debating competitions, lectures, anti-bullying campaigns and teacher support campaigns.

#### **2. Unemployment**

AfriForum helps young South Africans to develop entrepreneurial skills in an effort to help them become self-reliant. Race-based systems detrimental to employment of candidates who are not only the best suited to a job, but also able to stimulate the economy via their employment, are actively opposed

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10. <https://www.biznews.com/global-citizen/2017/10/19/peter-hain-uk-govt-zuma-guptas/>;  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-41835937>.

11. <http://ewn.co.za/2017/09/06/sa-s-business-confidence-at-lowest-in-over-30-years>.

12. <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/former-anc-branch-chair-gunned-down-while-delivering-food-to-kzn-school-20171120>.

13. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05b8njy>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-41151361>.

by AfriForum Youth. South African emigrants are assisted to return to the country and bring back their skills, knowledge and networks with them.

### **3. High levels of crime – especially violent crime**

AfriForum and AfriForum Youth helps to establish neighbourhood watches and farm patrols to cooperate with the police in preventing crime in their communities. Where several South African tertiary education institutions expressed concerns about a rape culture on the campuses, students were trained to defend themselves against possible rapists. In this manner AfriForum and AfriForum Youth endeavour to enable South Africans to accept responsibility for their own security both in a safe manner and within the framework of the law.

### **4. Service delivery failures by authorities at all levels**

AfriForum and AfriForum Youth hold mismanaged authorities accountable for the failure to provide services, carefully monitor spending and appointments, oppose ideologically or race-based appointments and encourage communities to form partnerships with local authorities in order to take an active role in the maintenance of their own infrastructure. A better maintained infrastructure of course engenders investment, economic growth, higher levels of employment and finally, greater political and economic stability – all elements that are vital to the establishment of a viable future.

### **5. Political instability**

Concerning racial scapegoating, AfriForum and AfriForum Youth play a watchdog role. Both organisations also advocate equal treatment for all in the eyes of the law. The matters that necessitated a deflection of public attention by means of this scapegoating in the first place, such as state capture and wide-spread corruption, are also addressed, inter alia by means of AfriForum's newly established private prosecution unit under advocate Gerrie Nel. Meanwhile events are organised or attended where closer ties with other South African communities can be established.

## **Appeal for help**

AfriForum and AfriForum Youth appeal to the Forum on Minority Issues to support the actions of South African NGOs such as ourselves by applying pressure on the South African government to address all of the abovementioned issues as a matter of urgency.

We also hope that the international community will encourage the South African authorities to cooperate with NGOs, instead of opposing them and threatening to restrict their access to international platforms such as this forum.<sup>14</sup>

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14. <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/southafrica.html>.

In conclusion, we wish to thank you for the opportunity to share ideas on youth challenges and possible solutions with the forum and delegates. We appreciate this opportunity to exchange best practice examples.

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