



Country Intelligence Brief

South Africa

Overall Risk Rating

3.50 - High

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Ratings Overview

Security

3.75 - High

Civil Unrest	● 4.00
Crime	● 4.00
Kidnapping	● 3.25
Terrorism	● 2.50
Armed Conflict	● 1.50
Security Services	● 3.00

Infrastructure

3.50 - High

Ground Transport	● 3.50
Cyber	● 3.00
Maritime	● 2.50
Air Travel	● 2.00
Utilities	● 3.50

Environment

2.50 - Moderate

Man-Made Hazards	● 3.00
Seismic	● 2.50
Storm Systems	● 2.75
Natural Hazards	● 2.75

Health and Medical

3.25 - Moderate

Disease and Health Threats	● 3.25
Medical Facilities and Services	● 3.00
Mental Health	● 2.75
Food and Water Safety	● 3.00

Political

3.00 - Moderate

Corruption	● 3.00
Government Stability	● 3.00
Rule of Law	● 2.50
Sanctions	● 1.50

LGBTQ Security

3.00 - Moderate

LGBTQ Legal Environment	● 2.00
LGBTQ Enforcement	● 3.00
LGBTQ Social Environment	● 3.00

FactBox

Location	South Africa
Government Type	Parliamentary Republic
Population	64,747,319 (2025)
Languages	Official languages: Afrikaans, English, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and South African Sign Language. Other languages that are considered official or widely spoken: Khoi, Nama, and San. Languages that should only be used discreetly: None.
International Country Code	+27
Time Zones	UTC+2
Traffic	Drives on the left
Drinking Water	Not safe to drink

Overview

3.50 - High

South Africa's security environment is considered a high threat, mostly due to the prevalence of violent crime directly impacting foreign nationals. Gun violence, kidnappings, carjackings, and assault are commonly reported nationwide.

- **Trend:** Despite repeated policing strategies, the environment is considered to be worsening. Some areas, however, are considerably safer than others.

Current situation

South Africa has made significant strides politically and economically since the end of apartheid rule in the early 1990s. However, the legacy of race-based policies remains visible in many segments of society. Politics continue to be largely dominated by the African National Congress (ANC), which remains unable to address long-running socio-economic issues, the collapse of energy production, and widespread corruption affecting all spheres of government.

Most threats are socio-economically driven. Civil unrest, including disruptive protest and strike actions, remains widespread and frequent, often revolving around service delivery and labor-related grievances. Unequal wealth distribution, primarily along ethnic lines, fuels a prevalent crime rate which undermines economic development.

The primary threats to foreign travelers include violent criminal activity and high rates of road traffic fatalities. Infrastructure is relatively well-developed throughout much of the country but is significantly less so in less developed areas, while changing weather patterns and the mismanagement of public utilities have led to frequent water and electricity supply disruptions.

Elevated Risk Areas

The complexity of South Africa's security environment lies in part with the great heterogeneity of its locations: safer locations can be located adjacent to high threat areas. As such, no single city can be assigned a uniformly low threat level to foreign nationals.

Despite being the wealthiest province, Gauteng Province reports the highest crime rates and is widely perceived as being the most protest- and corruption-prone province, with rapidly deteriorating public infrastructure. Similarly, KwaZulu-Natal Province, which hosts South Africa's largest port, is considered a higher threat for civil unrest and political instability. By contrast, Western Cape Province provides higher security levels, infrastructure – reliability, and lower levels of corruption.

Outlook

The overall security, political and business environment is likely to remain stable. South Africa's institutional framework remains functional, the business climate is generally favorable, and infrastructure remains the most developed on the continent. However, despite better governance under the incumbent administration – including improved electricity provision and reduced administrative backlog – the security environment is unlikely to improve.

Triggers

- A government takeover by a far-left or ethno-nationalist party.
- Large-scale or multi-city protests lasting more than 24 hours, especially if linked to inflation, undocumented migrants, or corruption.
- Large-scale or multi-city incidents of looting, rioting, and arson.

Security

3.75 - High

Levels of criminal activity in South Africa are among the highest on the continent and are unlikely to diminish in the coming years. Violent crime including robbery, carjacking, sexual assault and murder affects even more affluent neighborhoods of the country's main urban centers.

Although killings and gang activity tend to be concentrated in the economically challenged suburbs of the country's main cities, the use of firearms during robberies is ubiquitous and even incidents of petty theft can quickly escalate to violence. Opportunistic criminal activity typically increases during electricity outages.

Civil and labor unrest occur on a near-daily basis nationwide, especially in urban areas. Protests often escalate into violence, causing major disruption to travel and local services. Some protest movements appear seasonally, such as student movements at the start of the school year.

Terrorist groups are known to use South Africa for logistics, recruitment and financing, although they have not recently carried out attacks in the country.

Civil Unrest

 4.00

Current situation

Smaller protests labelled "service delivery protests" are primarily driven by long-standing socio-economic grievances. They likely occur daily in or around lower-income communities in both rural and urban areas. Less predictable and more spontaneous, they likely involve road blockages, acts of minor arson, and minor scuffles with security services. They may disrupt travel along major highways, although debris and crowds can usually be cleared within hours.

Larger protests over political, societal, or employment issues are often organized by political parties, civil society movements, or South Africa's highly influential trade unions. Better organized and capable of mobilizing thousands of participants, they likely occur monthly in large urban areas, mostly near government buildings or university campuses. These events tend to be well policed, although peripheral acts of violence occasionally occur.

Recent years have seen recurring waves of xenophobic violence, particularly in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Eastern Cape. Vigilante groups and minor political parties have blamed foreign nationals for issues such as crime, unemployment, and pressure on public services. Incidents are typically directed at foreign nationals active in the informal economy and are usually confined to informal trading areas. The threat to other nationalities and residents of higher-income areas remains limited.

Triggers:

- The absence of or the deterioration of public services, power and water outages, education or security services in lower-income areas.
- Highly mediatized criminal incidents involving either sexual assault, gang violence, corruption scandals or foreign nationals.
- Attempts at regulating the minibus "taxi" industry, nationwide but especially in the Western Cape Province.
- Flair ups in the Israel-Palestine conflict are likely to lead to demonstrations near US diplomatic missions or government buildings, notably in Cape Town.
- Succession challenges for the Zulu monarchy and political infighting amongst the African National Congress (ANC), especially in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng Provinces.

Background

Most of South Africa's civil unrest tends to be motivated by socio-economic drivers. Affected areas are typically contained to "townships", informal settlements, and lower-income suburbs surrounding dense cities and rural towns alike; however, protests may spillover onto important transit routes. Participants are typically aggrieved residents. Protest methods include road blockages, the stoning of passing vehicles and clashes with security forces, who often resort to heavy-handed tactics to quell the unrest.

The most dangerous form of protests is likely labor-related. Some labor groups, notably large trade-unions, are highly active and frequently instigate multi-sector protests and strike actions involving hundreds of thousands of participants. Sectors most susceptible to disruptive industrial action include manufacturing, electricity, transport, construction, and mining. Strike action can often be disruptive and result in extensive property damage. Deadly violence cannot be excluded, especially during events organized by the minibus taxi industry leaders.

In general, the risk of political civil unrest is particularly elevated in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces, where it tends to follow ethnic lines. There, infighting among members of the local royal families, political disagreements, and judicial affairs have often caused tensions to rise. Unrest is most often concentrated in the peripheries of large urban areas. Deadly violence, while exceptional, is not uncommon, including riots, pillages, and rogue acts of vigilantism from local communities.

The threat of a generalized wave of deadly civil unrest, akin to deadly riots in July 2021, remains credible. South Africa's profound socio-economic inequalities are likely to incentivize populations in lower-income areas to take advantage of civil unrest to riot and loot stores. Industrial areas and shopping malls would likely be the primary targets, although an increase in residential burglaries cannot be excluded. Security services would likely be unable to contain such mobs, while acts of vigilantism by residents or business owners could lead to casualties.

Crime

 4.00

Levels of criminal activity in South Africa are amongst the highest on the continent and violent crime, including robbery, carjacking, sexual assault and murder, is pervasive.

Violent crime is ubiquitous in South Africa, with criminals having relatively easy access to weapons, including guns and rifles. Criminal behavior appears to be shifting from traditional robberies and assaults towards more lucrative and dangerous cash-in-transit robberies and kidnaps for ransom. These are likely concentrated along highways near petrol stations, tourist locations, shopping areas, or hotels. Most common crimes in South Africa include muggings and carjackings, often committed by groups of several criminals. Although most incidents are relatively minor, criminals are routinely armed and have often proved quick to resort to violence if resisted or challenged.

The threat is present nationwide, especially in large urban areas; rural towns, nature reserves and remote locations are also affected. Criminal activity is likely highest in low-income suburbs, "townships" and informal camps.

Credit card fraud and the circulation of counterfeit currency are further concerns. Using ATMs in quiet areas and after bank business hours is not advised, as criminals often loiter in the area and rob those withdrawing money, or steal account information under the guise of providing assistance. There have also been reports of ATMs retaining cards, with criminals returning later to retrieve them from the machine, as well as cases, usually at night, of explosives being used to steal money directly from the machines.

Vehicular crime, including carjackings is likely concentrated along major avenues in urban areas and highways in rural areas. Border areas near Eswatini, Mozambique and Zimbabwe may see higher rates due to transnational crime. A common tactic has seen several criminals in a vehicle blocking cars waiting at gates when entering or leaving offices and residences, cutting off escape options. Criminals also frequently target vehicles in stationary traffic or waiting at junctions, reaching through windows or opening doors to grab valuables or rob occupants. The most dangerous vehicular crime involves violent robberies from cash-in-transit vehicles, often involving automatic firearms, have become particularly common in recent years and pose a significant incidental risk to vehicles and pedestrians in the vicinity.

All demographics are susceptible to being affected by crime, though variables such as location, gender, profession, and appearance may increase exposure. Foreign nationals remain highly vulnerable due to their perceived wealth, limited knowledge, and lack of situational awareness. Planned power outages provide criminals with windows of opportunity for robberies and other malevolent activities, as blackouts can adversely affect security protocols, including alarm systems and electronic fences.

Sexual assaults are common in South Africa, and although foreigners are not specifically targeted, a number of cases involving expatriates have been reported, with the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS exacerbating the risk. Kidnapping involving dating apps have also been reported.

Kidnapping

3.25

Kidnapping is posing a growing concern nationwide, now affecting foreign travelers specifically. Tourists and short-term recreational and/or business travelers also face the threat of express kidnapping, which involves the short-term abduction of a victim while they are robbed of their possessions and forced to withdraw money from ATMs. The threat is particularly elevated in remote, rural areas surrounding nature and game reserves.

Ordinary kidnaps for ransom (K&R) remain a threat, albeit less likely to affect foreigners. Perpetrators are often transnational criminal syndicates and are usually motivated by financial gain. Typical targets include local business owners or rival merchants of South and East Asian descent or from other Southern African countries. There are reports of human trafficking affecting the East African diaspora especially.

The threat of kidnapping is most elevated for persons in urban centers, more specifically, in the municipal districts of Johannesburg, Pretoria (Tshwane), and Cape Town. Kidnappings have taken place in suburbs where Indian or East Asian communities are based, or targeted individuals' business premises. Victims are usually released unharmed and relatively quickly after ransoms are paid.

Terrorism

2.50

South Africa's status as a regional economic hub makes it a potentially attractive target for transnational terrorist groups. While extremists have not yet gained a solid foothold in the country, there are concerns about the potential for self-radicalized individuals to carry out attacks. Additionally, terrorist groups are believed to have used the country for recruitment, financing and logistical purposes to carry out attacks in other countries. Experts have labeled South Africa as a regional node for jihadist financing. Its robust and open financial system facilitates the transfer of funds to terrorist groups operating notably in Africa. Some ZAR 6.3 billion (then-USD 342 million) was reportedly wired from South Africa to countries like Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria, and Bangladesh through mobile money transfers between 2020-2021.

Foreign governments have issued several travel alerts to their nationals in recent years about the potential for attacks in South Africa, including in areas popular with tourists and expatriates. The South African government has typically downplayed these threats, none of which have resulted in any significant attacks. Nonetheless, there have been growing concerns over the Islamic State group's online propaganda and the potential for self-radicalized individuals to carry out attacks in the country. In response to these concerns, the South African government has emphasized its intelligence-driven capacity to deal with threats to national security, including terrorism.

Armed Conflict

1.50

South Africa maintains generally cordial relations with its neighbors and other countries in the region and is one of the main economic and political actors on the continent. The country's armed forces have increasingly been involved in peacekeeping and security cooperation operations on the continent in recent years but there are currently no potential flashpoints that could lead to internal or external conflict in the foreseeable future. Border disputes with Eswatini and Lesotho are ongoing, but unlikely to result into armed conflict in the foreseeable future.

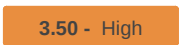
Security Services

 3.00

The capabilities and responsiveness of security services in South Africa are generally poor, though are adequate in some parts of the country. Although South Africa has several different security forces, the civil police (South African Police Service, SAPS) are likely to be the most relevant for foreign nationals and local staff. In early 2026, due to perceived spike in criminal violence, authorities announced the deployment of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to criminal and illegal mining hotspots in several provinces, in support of SAPS.

Police officers are typically able to speak English, though no other international languages. Police response to emergency calls may be slow or absent, especially during power cuts which could disrupt communications; South African police rely on private security organizations to conduct petty crime investigations. Incidents of police harassment or inappropriate detention of foreigners are rare, but can occur. Due to poor pay and few resources, police officers could solicit bribes. In South Africa, foreign nationals should not always rely on security forces but should instead liaise with their diplomatic mission.

Infrastructure

 3.50 - High

There are minor concerns over aviation safety.

South Africa's road network is generally in good condition, but dangerous driving by some local road users and pervasive criminal activity pose significant threats to overland travel.

South Africa's seaports are considered some of the most inefficient in the world.

Fuel shortages and service delivery disruption tend to primarily affect the lower-income areas surrounding the major urban centers, with the provision of utilities and communications networks in central and business districts being generally reliable.

After experiencing near-continuous power cuts – called load shedding – from 2007, the situation cautiously improved from 2024. This is mostly due to the country's aging infrastructure, with planned maintenance and unplanned breakdowns regularly dropping the maximum supply of energy below its demand. The severity and duration of breakdowns were accentuated by criminal sabotage and corruption, hampering rehabilitation efforts and the construction of newer power plants. At their highest, outages lasted up to 9-hours a day.

Ground Transport

 3.50

South Africa's road infrastructure is generally good and well-maintained, with paved roads linking all major towns and cities in the country. However, the risks associated with overland travel are severe, with pervasive vehicular criminal activity, erratic driving by many local road users and poor vehicle maintenance standards. These contribute to frequent fatal road traffic collisions.

Armed criminals frequently target motorists and public transport users along highways in remote areas, particularly at night near the borders with Eswatini, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Assaults have been known to use debris to block the road or drop rocks from bridges to force drivers to stop. Criminals also stage vehicular breakdowns or accidents and flag down passing motorists for assistance before robbing the unsuspecting driver of any valuables or hijacking the vehicle.

Local Buses

 Unrated

Buses

Intercity buses are available between most major cities. Private intercity coach buses in South Africa have a good track record; however, minibus taxis are not recommended. Private intercity coach buses have a good safety record. Petty theft and other criminal activities pose a moderate threat to travelers on private coach buses, but a high threat on minibus taxis.

City buses are available in most urban centers. City buses in South Africa have an average safety record. Petty theft and other criminal activities pose a moderate threat to travelers. Do not use minibus taxis, also known as Kombis (16-seaters), as they are often targeted for robberies and drivers are known for their dangerous driving.

Mass Transit

● Unrated

Metro systems are available in most major cities in South Africa. Accidents and derailments occur due to mechanical problems, inattentive train operators, or weather. The metro systems often do not run on time. Metrorail trains in the Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal, and Gauteng provinces have average delays of 30 minutes. Personal safety onboard trains or at train stations is generally fair, but users are advised not to travel in the evenings. Metrorail suburban trains in Cape Town and Johannesburg are less reliable and are less safe. Securing personal items onboard metro trains is important, as theft is an especially common problem during peak hours. In recent years, Metrorail trains in Cape Town have experienced routine arson attacks while stationed overnight, leading to protracted delays.

Taxis

● Unrated

Taxis and Ride-Sharing Services

Taxis are readily available in all major cities in South Africa. Taxis are readily available at official stands outside airports, train or bus stations, and at organized queues in downtown areas; it is not safe to hail a cab on the street. Official regulated taxis are metered and come in a variety of colors depending on the provider and city. Overcharging is commonly perpetrated against taxi passengers, especially foreign nationals, passengers are advised to agree on the cost of the journey, any conditions on multiple passengers, and availability of receipts, if necessary, before entering the vehicle. Taxis arranged in advance by upscale hotels or trusted business associates are generally safer than those hailed on the street. Many privately-owned cabs are in poor condition; beware of hiring one solely due to low rates.

Ride-sharing services or vehicles ordered through online apps are available in most major cities in South Africa. Substantial tensions between traditional taxi services and app-based ride-sharing services occasionally lead to violence or vandalism that poses a threat to patrons of app-based ride-sharing services, particularly in Johannesburg. Sexual assault poses a moderate threat to ride-sharing passengers, especially women. Minibuses and informal taxi systems are available in cities in South Africa but have a poor safety record due to poor maintenance and reckless driving behavior.

Train Travel

● Unrated

Train Safety

Trains in the South Africa have a moderate recent safety record. Derailments and rail accidents involving passenger trains occasionally occur. Incidents of petty theft are common on trains in South Africa. Rail stations in South Africa are generally safe; however, petty crime poses a high threat at rail stations. Security services have adequate capabilities at most major railway stations. The long-distance service such as Shosholoza Meyl, the rapid rail Gautrain in Gauteng Province, and other luxury services such as Blue Train and Rovos Rail are generally safe and reliable. However, criminal incidents do sometimes occur on these trains, presenting a threat to travelers.

Reliability and Availability

South Africa has an extensive intercity passenger rail network with frequent service. Rail travel is available between all major cities and many smaller cities and towns.

International Rail Travel

South Africa has international rail connections with multiple countries, including Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Connections between South Africa and neighboring countries are subject to border controls, and passengers may be required to present passports, travel permits, and pass through customs before crossing.

Vehicles and Roads

● Unrated

Road safety conditions in South Africa are generally adequate. Traffic in South Africa drives on the left. Roads in cities are generally paved and well-maintained, and in rural areas are generally unpaved and poorly maintained. The road network connecting provincial cities is in good condition. Drivers generally follow traffic laws. Police lightly enforce traffic laws. Serious traffic accidents are common. Malfunctioning street lighting or traffic lights are common during power outages. Heavy traffic congestion is pervasive in major cities, particularly in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Ensure familiarity with local laws and driving practices. Keep doors and windows locked, and valuables out of sight, as thieves may target parked vehicles as well as those trapped in slow moving traffic or at stop signals. Park in well-lit, populated areas or secure facilities.

Foreigners planning to drive in South Africa must have an International Driving Permit (IDP) and a valid foreign driving license from their home country. Car rentals are available in most major cities. Consider road and weather conditions in your choice of vehicle.

International Road Travel

South Africa has international road connections with multiple countries. Connections between South Africa and neighboring countries are subject to border controls, and passengers may be required to present.

Cyber

● 3.00

Geostrategic Concerns

South Africa presents a moderate cyber risk. It is not a primary target of sustained state campaigns, but its position as a major African financial, telecommunications, and cloud hub, and as a producer of critical minerals, creates intelligence value. Government, defense, mining, energy, telecommunications, finance, and research are plausible targets. Chinese state-linked actors pose an espionage concern for research and telecommunications, while North Korean-linked activity is primarily financially motivated. Limited public attribution obscures the scale of state-linked activity. Espionage and data theft are more likely than destructive attacks.

Internet access is broadly open, and nationwide shutdowns or systematic blocking are not routine. Authorities nevertheless possess targeted surveillance capabilities. The Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-Related Information Act (RICA) permits interception and access to communications data through service providers, subject to judicial authorization, and requires subscriber registration. Court rulings have required stronger safeguards, but reform remains incomplete. Routine commercial activity faces limited censorship risk; journalists, activists, political figures, and organizations handling sensitive state matters face greater monitoring exposure.

The Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) governs personal-data protection, while the Cybercrimes Act covers offenses including unauthorized access, fraud, and extortion. The National Cybersecurity Hub, under the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, serves as the national Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT). Cyber coordination responsibility remains divided among intelligence, police, regulatory, and sector bodies. Skills shortages and uneven security maturity weaken implementation, particularly in

municipalities, public services, and smaller businesses. Banking, telecommunications, and major cloud infrastructure are comparatively resilient, but legacy systems and physical network failures can magnify disruption.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is high-volume and primarily financially motivated. Phishing, business email compromise (BEC), account takeover, payment diversion, identity theft, online scams, ransomware, and data extortion are the main business exposures. South Africa is both a target and an origin point for transnational fraud, reflecting its large digital economy and extensive connectivity.

Law-enforcement capability is comparatively developed through the South African Police Service, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, the National Cybersecurity Hub, and international cooperation. Underreporting, limited specialist capacity, case backlogs, and cross-border criminal networks constrain deterrence. For foreign operators in South Africa, account compromise, fraudulent payment requests, identity theft, and mobile-enabled scams are more probable than state-directed device targeting.

Maritime

2.50

Port overview

South Africa has eight ports along its Pacific and Indian ocean coasts. The most significant South African ports are Cape Town, Durban, Mossel Bay, Gqeberha (or Port Elizabeth), Richards Bay, and Saldanha Bay. The Port of Durban is the main container port on South Africa's coastline, handling approximately 60 percent of the country's container traffic. Cape Town is the second biggest port, and serves as a hub for cargo transport to South America and Asia. Additionally, the Port of Cape Town is the first port of call for all international cruise liners in South Africa. South Africa's ports often operate below their overall capacity, mostly due to constraints relating to equipment handling and storage capacity. As such, congestion and shipping delays are common in the ports of Cape Town, Durban and Gqeberha. Other security concerns for ports include adverse weather conditions, equipment failures, and infrastructural challenges.

Ferries

Ferry travel is uncommon in, to, or from South Africa, other than touristic ferries in areas such as Knysna or between Cape Town and Robben Island. Inland water travel is generally considered safe in South Africa. Main security threats are related to adverse weather events, which could lead to flooding. South Africa inland waters strategy ensures waterways are generally safe for public use.

Maritime threats

The shipping industry may be impacted by South Africa's propensity for poor weather conditions, particularly strong winds and turbulent tides. Additionally, navigational hazards may stem from rocky outcrops. Main affected areas include Cape Agulhas and the Wild Coast, where several shipwrecks have occurred. Other hazards include heightened shipping traffic around South Africa's coastline and at anchorages due to ports not having the operational capacity to handle demand. Additionally, oil spills are a fairly common occurrence, mostly caused by oil bunkering in deeper waters.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUUF) and smuggling pose a threat in South Africa's maritime space. Threats are mainly posed by international criminal syndicates, often linked to IUUF, which may increase the threat of violence and smuggling in South Africa's ports and coast. Indeed, South Africa's ports are used to smuggle drugs and trafficked persons. Vessels involved are unlikely to use automatic identification systems (AIS), thereby potentially posing a navigational hazard. Smugglers may also attempt to conceal contraband aboard vessels berthed at South African ports.

Civil unrest stemming from objections to offshore oil operations in South Africa, particularly in the West Coast and Wild Coast, may prevent large offshore drilling operations from commencing. Such protests are largely staged by environmental and community activist groups.

Piracy is not a significant threat in South Africa, though the country is lacking in a national maritime security strategy to ensure the security of the coastline. Piracy threats originating from neighboring Mozambique have been somewhat mitigated by South African National Defence Force (SANDF) anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean. Opportunistic thefts may take place at anchorages and ports throughout South Africa.

Air Travel

 2.00

Air travel in South African is generally considered safe, with international airports in the country being served by a number of major international airlines, including British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, Emirates and KLM. The national air carrier is South African Airways and is considered safe for use for international and domestic flights, although its precarious financial position has had an impact on reliability, leading to periodic flight cancelations and the suspension of some services.

Cape Town International Airport (CPT) is located 22 km (14 miles) southeast of the city center, while Durban's King Shaka International Airport (DUR) is located around 35 km (22 miles) north of the city and Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport (JNB) around 24km (15 miles) east. There are a number of options for airport transfer to the city center at all three facilities; busses serve inbound and outbound flights, major hotels operate courtesy busses and taxis are widely available.

While hotel busses and official taxis are generally safe, the extent of the country's vehicular crime levels makes a pre-arranged private escort through a trusted provider a preferred option for business travelers. When taking a taxi from the airport, travelers often have to deal with attempts at fare manipulation, longer routes and other scams. There have been particular concerns regarding armed robberies whilst in transit from Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport (JNB) after a number of incidents in which travelers were robbed after being followed from the airport.

Utilities

 3.50

Fuel shortages and the disruption of water occur intermittently in cities and major towns; power cuts may occur on short notice, also compromising water distribution and sewage treatment. Essential services, businesses, and hotel accommodations will rely on alternative energy sources – mostly petrol generators and solar panels – and provide continuous electrical power.

The reliable provision of utilities remains elusive in many of the impoverished townships surrounding South Africa's urban centers, with inadequate service delivery and lack of basic sanitation infrastructure often triggering unruly protest action by aggrieved residents.

Mobile and landline communications infrastructure is well developed, offering broad and reliable coverage in most areas, especially urban centers. Internet access in cities is easy through both private access and internet cafés.

Electricity

 Unrated

Electricity in South Africa is supplied at 230 V, 50 Hz. South Africa uses Type C, M, and N plugs.

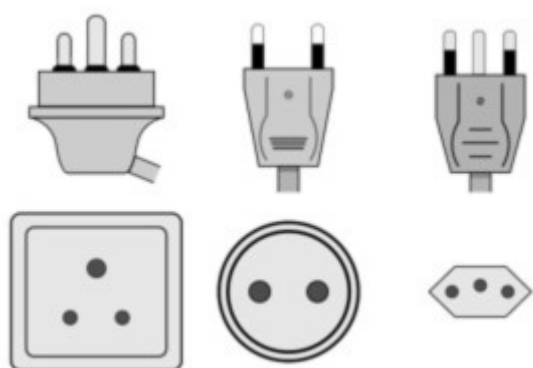
Foreigners visiting South Africa may need to bring a step-down converter, which are not readily available in the country. Plug adapters are available, however, and can be found in most large household and hardware stores.

Many personal-use portable electric devices, such as hair dryers, shavers, and small radios, among others, are quite cheap in South Africa when paying with USD, GBP, or Euros. It may be better to purchase these types of devices in South Africa rather than bring a 110 V device with a step-down converter. Some US devices do not function effectively in South Africa due to the difference in Hertz output in South Africa. (Most US devices function on 60 Hz, while the South African electricity network functions on 50 Hz).

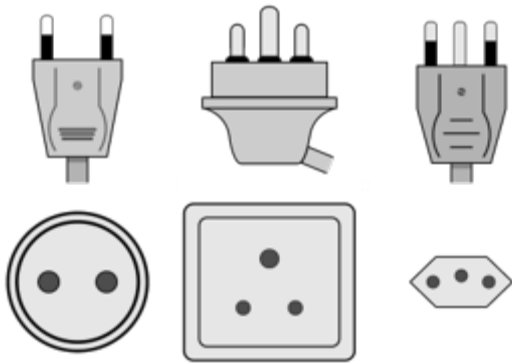
Load shedding requires switching off parts of South Africa's electric grid in a planned and controlled manner due to insufficient capacity or to avoid a countrywide blackout. The higher the stage, the more electricity needs to be saved and the longer the blackouts last for.

- Stage-1 load shedding: Allows for up to 1,000MW of electricity to be removed from the power grid, leading to power supply cuts in the impacted area three times over a four-day period for two hours at a time, or three times over an eight-day period for four hours at a time.
- Stage-2 load shedding: Allows for up to 2,000MW of electricity to be removed from the power grid, leading to power supply cuts in the impacted area six times over a four-day period for two hours at a time, or six times over an eight-day period for four hours at a time.
- Stage-3 load shedding: Allows for up to 3,000MW of electricity to be removed from the power grid, leading to power supply cuts in the impacted area nine times over a four-day period for two hours at a time, or nine times over an eight-day period for four hours at a time.
- Stage-4 load shedding: Allows for up to 4,000MW to be removed from the power grid, leading to power supply cuts in the impacted area 12 times over a four-day period for two hours at a time, or 12 times over an eight-day period for four hours at a time.
- Stage-5 load shedding: Allows for up to 5,000MW to be removed from the power grid, leading to power supply cuts in the impacted area 15 times over a four-day period for two hours at a time, or 15 times over an eight-day period for four hours at a time.
- Stage-6 load shedding: Allows for up to 6,000MW to be removed from the power grid, leading to power supply cuts in the impacted area 18 times over a four-day period for four hours at a time.
- Stage-7 load shedding: Allows for up to 7,000MW to be removed from the power grid, leading to power supply cuts in the impacted area for ten hours per day.
- Stage-8 load shedding: Allows for up to 8,000MW to be removed from the power grid, leading to power supply cuts in the impacted for twelve hours per day.

UNKNOWN



Types de prises



Internet and Telecommunications

● Unrated

Internet service in South Africa is readily available in most public and private accommodations, and internet cafes. Internet activity is considered private and secure in most areas - see Information Security advice sheet.

Environment

2.50 - Moderate

South Africa has a generally temperate climate, with temperatures and conditions influenced by the high altitude of the interior plateau and the surrounding oceans on three sides of the country. Many parts of South Africa experience heavy rainfall during the summer season, which runs mid-October-mid-February and brings a significant risk of flooding in some low-lying areas. Unlike much of the country, the Western Cape receives a majority of its rainfall in winter. Wildfires pose a hazard in dry regions such as the area around Cape Town. Droughts are a common occurrence in parts of the country and can spark significant water crises.

Man-Made Hazards

● 3.00

Man-made catastrophes are an increasing threat in South Africa, largely stemming from the deterioration of its infrastructure. A recent high-profile dam burst caused a deadly landslide, raising questions around the rest of the country's man-made structures. In addition, illegal mining in disregarded mineshafts near urban centers has led to fears that this might disrupt the structural integrity of buildings. While no large-scale catastrophe has yet occurred, the risk is likely elevated in certain areas of Gauteng and Mpumalanga.

Seismic

● 2.50

South Africa experiences low-to-moderate earthquakes. Human-induced tremors caused by deep-level gold and platinum mining across the interior, including Gauteng, North West, and Free State provinces, are felt regularly. The tremors generally have not caused significant damage or casualties.

Storm Systems

● 2.75

Many parts of South Africa experience heavy rain during the summer season, which runs mid-October-mid-February. Flooding is a major concern in several parts of the country following torrential rainfall, due to inadequate drainage systems. Low-lying areas are particularly vulnerable to inundation and landslides. In the north, torrential downpours and thunderstorms are common December and March.

Tropical systems from the southern Indian Ocean can affect eastern South Africa; however, they typically weaken quickly after transiting Mozambique. The southwestern Indian Ocean cyclone season runs November-April. Infrastructure and transportation networks in South Africa are generally poor and can struggle to withstand the effects of major tropical systems.

Natural Hazards

2.75

South Africa has a generally temperate climate, with temperatures and conditions influenced by the altitude and location relative to the surrounding oceans. Coastal areas tend to be warmer and receive more sunshine, while the weather is cooler in central plateau provinces such as Gauteng and Free State.

Generally, the south-western, southern, and eastern coastal areas receive significant rainfall during the winter. Forecast models indicate that the eastern coastal areas are likely to receive above-normal rainfall during winter and early spring. Below-normal rainfall is likely for the south-western and southern coastal areas during late winter and early spring. Minimum and maximum temperatures are forecast to be above normal for most of South Africa during this period.

Wildfires pose a significant concern in drier regions of the country during the summer months. Droughts can spark water crises in major cities, including Cape Town.

Forecast models indicate that favorable rainfall conditions over the eastern coastal areas and eastern interior during spring (September-November) are likely to boost surface runoff into dams and reservoirs, possibly improving water storage capacity. However, intense rainfall may overwhelm stormwater and sewage systems, resulting in flash floods and flooding in areas prone to floods, including low-lying bridges.

Significant areas are expected to receive below-normal rainfall in early summer, particularly in the central interior and far northeast. Minimum and maximum temperatures are likely to be above normal for most of South Africa during spring and early summer. This may place additional pressure on water availability, hygiene, and sanitation.

Air Quality

Unrated

Air pollution routinely exceeds recommended thresholds in urban areas. Individuals with asthma or chronic cardiorespiratory conditions should consult with a healthcare provider and carry necessary medications. On days when air quality is particularly poor, affected individuals should take personal precautions to reduce respiratory stress.

Health and Medical

3.25 - Moderate

HIV/AIDS remains a major public health concern in South Africa, with nearly a fifth of the population living with the virus. Malaria is not present in much of the country but is a seasonal concern in some areas. Vaccines before travel are also required, for example, for yellow fever. The standard of medical facilities in South Africa varies. Private healthcare facilities in the main cities offer good standards of medical care, and most pharmacies are well-stocked. Tap water is not considered safe for drinking unless otherwise directed.

Disease and Health Threats

3.25

Diseases of High Risk

- **Tuberculosis:** Transmitted through respiratory droplets released by coughing or sneezing. Individuals planning an extended stay should consider obtaining a PPD skin test to reference future suspected infections. Symptoms commonly include chest pain, a bad

cough lasting three weeks or longer, and coughing up blood and/or sputum. Some people also experience chills, weight loss, fever, weakness, night sweats, and loss of appetite.

- **Traveler's Diarrhea:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. This is the most common illness in travelers. People who become ill by an infectious agent that causes traveler's diarrhea most often experience nausea, vomiting, fever, bloody stools, and/or the urge to constantly pass stools despite an empty gastrointestinal tract.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Within two to four weeks of HIV infection, many people, but not all, experience influenza-like illness, including fever, swollen glands, sore throat, rash, fatigue, muscle and joint pains, and headache. These symptoms, also called acute retroviral syndrome (ARS), can last from days to weeks. Without treatment, the infection can lead to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).
- **Hepatitis A:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Hepatitis A does not always cause symptoms. If they occur, symptoms appear two to six weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice.

Diseases of Moderate Risk

- **Malaria:** Transmitted through mosquito bites. Symptoms of malaria most commonly include fever, chills, headaches and body aches, nausea and vomiting, and general malaise. These symptoms usually develop 10-28 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. However, there are reports of symptoms beginning as early as seven days to as late as one year. Preventative medications (prophylaxis) are available. The risk of infection is low and exists year-round only in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga provinces; risk is increased along the border areas with Mozambique and Zimbabwe and in Kruger National Park.
- **Cholera:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Raw fish and shellfish from contaminated waters are likely to be infected. Most people infected with cholera have no symptoms or only mild diarrhea. However, approximately one in 10 infected patients develops severe cholera, which causes symptoms including profuse, watery diarrhea, vomiting, rapid heart rate, low blood pressure, muscle cramps, restlessness, or irritability. Symptoms typically appear two to three days after exposure.
- **African Tick-Bite Fever:** Transmitted through tick bites. The symptoms usually develop within two weeks after a tick bite. Symptoms include fever, headache, and muscle soreness. Some individuals will develop a red sore with a dark center at the site of the tick bite. Risk exists year-round, primarily in rural areas; however, the risk is highest from November to April.
- **Hepatitis B:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids and effectively prevented with vaccination. An unexpected medical or dental emergency may place the unvaccinated traveler at risk. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Symptoms include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice.
- **Schistosomiasis:** Transmitted via small parasite larvae through exposure to contaminated freshwater bodies. Symptoms include an itchy rash, fever, muscle soreness, and cough. Without treatment, schistosomiasis can persist for years, causing abdominal pain, blood in the urine, problems passing urine, blood in the stool, and an enlarged liver. Swim only in chlorinated pools.
- **Typhoid Fever:** Transmitted by contaminated milk, water, and food. Raw fish and shellfish from contaminated waters may be infected. Symptoms of typhoid fever usually include fever, abdominal pain or discomfort, chills and body aches, weakness, and loss of appetite.
- **Rabies:** Transmitted through the saliva of infected wild or domesticated mammals, usually by a bite or scratch. Do not approach unknown animals. Wild and domestic animals pose a threat.

- **Leptospirosis:** Transmitted through exposure or ingestion of water contaminated with the urine of infected animals. Flooding poses an additional risk of contracting leptospirosis. Initial symptoms of leptospirosis typically develop two days to four weeks after exposure. Such symptoms include headache, fever, muscle aches, chills, diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. Those who may be at high risk can take an antibiotic prophylaxis.

Diseases of Low Risk

- **Hepatitis E:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Symptoms appear two to eight weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, joint pain, and jaundice.
- **Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever:** Transmitted through the bite of an infected tick or exposure to contaminated blood or tissue from infected animals or humans. Prevention of tick bites is essential. Symptoms appear one to nine days after exposure and include fever, neck pain, eyes sensitive to light, severe headache, nausea, confused or aggressive behavior, abdominal pain, and bleeding into the skin, mouth, and internal organs. There is no vaccination to prevent CCHF infection. The risk of infection exists year-round nationwide; however, the risk is highest from November to April. Rare cases of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever have been reported in travelers visiting farms and rural areas of South Africa. It remains an occupational disease in animal health workers, farmers, and hunters.
- **Rift Valley Fever:** Transmitted through the bite of a mosquito, contact with infected animals, or ingesting contaminated livestock products - primarily unpasteurized milk. Most cases are asymptomatic or mild, causing influenza-like illness two to six days after exposure. However, a small percentage of people develop severe disease, including hemorrhagic fever, encephalitis, ocular diseases, coma, seizures, and death.
- **Avian Influenza (H5N1):** Transmitted through direct contact with poultry, birds, and bird droppings. Symptoms of human H5N1 are usually severe, including high fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The risk of human infection from avian influenza H5N1 is generally low, but it is greater for individuals with frequent, close contact with wild birds and/or live or recently dead poultry.

Health Requirements

● Unrated

Yellow Fever: Vaccination Required

South Africa is not considered at risk for **yellow fever**. Nevertheless, vaccination is **required** upon arrival for all travelers aged one year or over who have visited or transited for more than 12 hours through an airport in a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission. Single-dose, full-strength yellow fever vaccine is valid for life.

Countries with a risk of yellow fever virus transmission include:

African Region: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, and Uganda.

American Region: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

Health Recommendations

● Unrated

Recommended Immunizations for Travel to South Africa

Travelers should ensure that they have routine vaccination courses and boosters. You should visit a healthcare professional at least four to six weeks before the trip. Routine vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and the annual flu vaccine. Travelers should consider obtaining COVID-19 vaccination where available, even if the destination country does not require it.

- **Cholera:** Unless contraindicated, it is recommended for individuals staying in endemic areas or where there are current outbreaks. Cholera vaccine is not a substitute for thorough hand washing with soap and water, observing good personal hygiene, and taking food and water precautions. Three WHO pre-qualified oral cholera vaccines (OCV) exist: Dukoral, Shanchol, and Euvichol. All of these require two doses for full protection.
- **Hepatitis A:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Two doses, administered at least six months apart, are required for long-lasting protection. It is recommended that all susceptible people traveling for any purpose, frequency, or duration to countries with high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity be vaccinated or receive immune globulin before departure. A booster is recommended for partially vaccinated travelers.
- **Hepatitis B:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Widely used formulations require three doses administered over the course of six to 18 months, depending on the recipient's age and vaccination history. Booster doses after a complete series are usually not required to maintain immunity. If exposed before finalizing the full series, individuals may receive a special booster within 24 hours for short-term protection.
- **Rabies:** Unless contraindicated, the WHO and CDC recommend vaccination for individuals who will be performing occupational or recreational activities that increase the risk for exposure to potentially rabid animals, such as animal handlers, field biologists, cavers, missionaries, veterinarians, and some laboratory workers. It is also recommended for travelers who might have difficulty getting prompt access to safe post-exposure prophylaxis. South Africa has reported rabies in domestic and wild animals, thus most travelers are at risk. Bats are likely to carry bat rabies.
- **Typhoid Fever:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated, especially those staying with friends or relatives in endemic areas or visiting smaller cities or rural areas. Widely used formulations require between two and four doses, depending on the formulation and the recipient's vaccination history. Booster vaccination is required every two or five years depending on the formulation. The last dose should be taken at least one week before travel.

Medical Facilities and Services

● 3.00

The standard of medical facilities in South Africa varies; private healthcare facilities in big cities (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban) are of high quality. However, public care, especially in rural or peri-urban are generally of low standard; many regional hospitals only provide basic remote areas, and air evacuation to a major city is sometimes the only option in an emergency. Medical evacuation can be very expensive. Hospitals usually require advance payment or proof of adequate insurance before admitting patients. Ambulance services are available but may be slow to respond, especially in rural areas.

Medications and Pharmacy

● Unrated

Pharmacies across South Africa are readily available. Supply of most medicines needed by travelers is high. Prior to traveling confirm the status of your "over the counter" medicines with accredited foreign government offices of South Africa in your country. Always carry your prescription medication in its original packaging, along with your doctor's prescription and any other relevant documentation.

Mental Health

● 2.75

Mental health service availability is limited, and conditions are moderately managed.

Food and Water Safety

● 3.00

Drinking water may be unsafe in South Africa, especially in rural areas. Use only bottled, boiled, or otherwise purified water for drinking and cooking. Do not use ice cubes made from unpurified water sources. Eat only thoroughly cooked food served hot or fruits and vegetables that you have cleaned and peeled; avoid salads. Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products, or use powdered or canned milk and cured cheeses. Avoid street vendors and unregulated food establishments.

Political

3.00 - Moderate

South Africa is a relatively stable democracy with strong legal institutions and fairly business-friendly policies. However, its political spectrum remains divided along ethnic and geographic lines, with parties and charismatic personalities catering to a highly divided electorate. Its highly centralized political system relies heavily on proportional representation. This has led to a recent reliance on coalition governments that, at national, provincial and municipal level, have proven fragile or have repeatedly failed.

Corruption remains widespread in South Africa despite the existence of an excellent anti-corruption regulatory framework, although anti-corruption efforts have been increasing. The country's judiciary remains largely independent and has repeatedly held the executive to account, albeit with limited success.

Corruption

● 3.00

Despite multiple laws aimed at limiting corruption, South Africa is widely perceived to be one of the most corrupt countries in Southern Africa. While levels of corruption may vary between provinces, bribery is pervasive at all levels of government. Public servants, including police officers, openly expect bribes, especially from foreigners. This racket, which can involve coercion and use of force, severely hinders business operations and constitutes a mild danger to travelers.

Though South Africa's corruption levels were already high prior to the advent of democracy, there is a perception that the phenomena greatly accelerated after the arrival of the ANC. Former President Jacob Zuma and President Cyril Ramaphosa are both implicated in a series of trials over "State capture," a complex network of patrons through which ANC officials continue to siphon public funds to support their own private ventures.

In September 2025, KwaZulu-Natal Police Commissioner alleged that criminal syndicates have infiltrated South Africa's police and justice systems, with claims of interference by high-ranking politicians and police officials. This may have considerably limited South Africa's capacity to finance solutions to long-standing issues of load shedding, economic inequalities, the ongoing housing crisis, and poor levels of public healthcare.

Government Stability

● 3.00

South Africa is a bi-cameral parliamentary representative Republic, where the President is elected from within the lower chamber. Parliament is elected through a closed party list election, whose compensatory system ensures strict proportional representation of parties. The country has remained relatively stable since the end of apartheid, with elections being considered credible and largely unopposed. Despite its proportional system theoretically fostering multiparty politics, South Africa's politics have been entirely dominated by the African National Congress (ANC) for the larger parts of the past three decades.

Although the ANC continues to be the largest political movement in the country, its credibility and legitimacy have been increasingly questioned in recent years. Opposition parties have made electoral inroads amid corruption scandals, an inability to address long-running socio-economic grievances, and a general lack of good governance. The main reason appears to be the close links between the ANC and its private sector allies, with the executive continuously handing lucrative public contracts to an increasingly wealthy class of “tenderpreneurs.”

These inroads culminated in the ANC losing its absolute majority in Parliament and forcing a coalition with former opposition parties, including the Democratic Alliance (DA), in a new government of national unity or “GNU.” Despite some conflicting political differences, recurrent scandals, and continued economic struggles, the GNU has provided stability. It has proven relatively successful in ensuring some basic achievements: stabilizing the currency and inflation, momentarily stopping the energy crisis, and reducing some administrative delays.

Electoral defeats are also the result of strong divisions within the ANC between those pursuing a more moderate reform agenda and those aiming for an ethno-racial redistribution of land, wealth, or employment opportunities. The latter faction has seen several high-profile members of the party break out from the ANC. The latest breakaway include former President Zuma, who leads the uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MKP). The MKP has won strongest support in the majority-Zulu KwaZulu-Natal Province. Their populist or national rhetoric appeals to certain voter bases and could disrupt South Africa’s political stability should they progress any further.

Outside of the national government, however, coalitions have not been as successful. The experience at a municipal level has resulted in increased instability in large urban areas, with parties squabbling over portfolios rather than solving pressing issues – such as water cuts, deteriorating transport infrastructure, rising crime, and load shedding. The recent success of the GNU at a national level may result in greater stability for coalitions at a provincial and municipal level, notably for those including the ANC and the DA. However, this also threatens to strengthen more radical opposition parties, including the MKP and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Possible future coalitions where the ANC would ally with either party could result in the worsening of governance and the implementation of policies such as nationalizations, land expropriations, and a rapprochement with authoritarian regimes.

Rule of Law

 2.50

South Africa’s judiciary is largely independent and has clashed with the executive on a number of occasions over laws and policies.

South African authorities give high priority to protecting foreign travelers and tourism police are deployed in popular areas of major towns and cities. However, the South African Police Service (SAPS) has serious manpower problems, which inhibit its ability to provide comprehensive deterrence and respond to crime. A lack of marked police vehicles and uniformed officers to patrol city streets emboldens criminals to act with apparent impunity in some areas. However, the police presence is on the rise and many affluent areas employ armed private security companies to deter and respond to incidents before the arrival of police. Increased security force coordination nationwide in recent years has also led to an improvement in response times to serious incidents in some areas.

Sanctions

 1.50

Some individuals in South Africa are currently subject to targeted financial sanctions imposed by the US Department of the Treasury on members of a significant corruption network, including the Gupta family and Salim Essa, for their involvement in corruption activities. Additional sanctions may be implemented on short notice due to the worsening relationship between both countries over crime and opposing diplomatic positions.

Legal

Unrated

Visitors to South Africa are subject to local laws, which may not mirror, either in whole or in part, those of their home country. Those deemed to be in violation, even unknowingly, may be fined, detained, imprisoned, or temporarily or permanently expelled. South Africa allows

mandatory sentencing for murder, rape, drug dealing, firearms smuggling, and human trafficking for sexual purposes. Home country consular officers are not typically systematically informed of a detention but are permitted to provide support services at the request of their detained citizens. When there is no treaty in force, notification and access depend on whether the two countries have direct or indirect diplomatic relations. Consular officers cannot interfere with local judicial proceedings, nor provide legal advice or representation at trial, and are unable to pay legal fees or fines with government funds. The status of dual nationals will be determined by local officials, with all attendant ramifications for access and support.

Emergency Contacts

● Unrated

Emergency Contacts

Ambulance 10177

Fire 10111

Police 10111

Embassies and Consulates

● Unrated

British High Commission

Address 255 Hill Street, Arcadia 0002, Pretoria

Phone +27 12 421 7500, +27 21 405 2400

Email <http://www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-pretoria>

Web site <https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-pretoria>

United States Embassy

Address 877 Pretorius Street, Arcadia, Pretoria

Phone +27 12 431 4000

Fax +27 12 342 2299

Web site <https://za.usembassy.gov/>

United States Consulate in Cape Town

Address 2 Reddam Avenue, Westlake 7945

Phone +27 (21) 702-7300

Fax +27 (21) 702-7493

Email ACSCapeTown@state.gov

Website <https://za.usembassy.gov/>

United States Consulate in Durban

Address 303 Dr. Pixley KaSeme Street, 31st Floor, Delta Towers, Durban, 4001

Phone +27 31 305 7600

Emergencies +27 79 111 1445

Fax +27 31 305 7691
Email ACSDurban@state.gov
Website <https://za.usembassy.gov/>

United States Consulate in Johannesburg

Address 1 Sandton Drive, Sandhurst
Phone +27 11 290 3000
Fax +27 11 884 0396
Email acsjohannesburg@state.gov
Website <https://za.usembassy.gov/>

Canadian High Commission

Address 1103 Arcadia Street, (Corner Arcadia and Hilda Streets), Hatfield, Pretoria
Phone +27 12 422 3000
Email pret@international.gc.ca
Web site <https://www.Canada.ca/Canada-And-South-Africa>

Canadian Honorary Consul in Cape Town

Address 12 2nd Avenue, Boston, Bellville, Cape Town, 7530
Email cape-town@international.gc.ca
Web site <https://www.Canada.ca/Canada-And-South-Africa>

Austrian Embassy

Address 454 A Fehrsen Street (entrance in William St), Brooklyn, Pretoria 0181
Phone +27 12 452 9155
Fax +27 12 460 1151
Web site <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/austrian-embassy-pretoria/>

German Embassy

Address 201 Florence Ribeiro Avenue, Groenkloof Ext 11, Pretoria 0181
Phone +27 12 427 8900
Fax +27 78 608 0950
Web site <https://southafrica.diplo.de/sa-en>

German Consulate in Cape Town

Address Roeland Park, 4 Stirling Street, Zonnebloem 7925, Cape Town
Phone +27 21 405 3000
Fax +27 78 608 0950
Email <https://southafrica.diplo.de/sa-en/home-kontakt-channel?preSelectedId=736418>

Web site <https://southafrica.diplo.de/sa-en>

Australian High Commission

Address 292 Orient Street, Arcadia, Pretoria 0083

Phone +27 12 423 6000

Fax +27 12 342 8442

Email consular.pretoria@dfat.gov.au

Web site <https://southafrica.embassy.gov.au/>

Delegation of the European Union

Address 134 Muckleneuk Street, Nieuw Muckleneuk, Pretoria 0181

Fax +27 12 452 5200, +27 12 460- 9923

Email DELEGATION-S-AFRICA@eeas.europa.eu

Web site https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/south-africa_en?s=120

French Embassy

Address 250 Melk Street, Nieuw Muckleneuk, Pretoria 0181

Phone +27 12 425 1600

Fax +27 12 425 1609

Email <https://za.ambafrance.org/Contact-the-French-Embassy>

Web site <https://za.ambafrance.org/>

French Consulate in Johannesburg

Address Rosebank Corner Building, 3rd floor , 191 Jan Smuts Avenue - Parktown North

Phone + 27 11 778 5600

Emergencies +27 82 467 2588

Email info.johannesburg-fslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Web site <https://johannesburg.consulfrance.org/>

French Consulate in Cape Town

Address 78 Queen Victoria Street, Gardens, 8001 Cape Town

Phone +27 21 423 1575

Emergencies +27 21 488 5094, +27 83 460 4360

Email consulat.le-cap-fslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Web site <https://lecap.consulfrance.org/-English->

Entry/Exit

Unrated

Travelers can obtain specific information about visas and other entry-exit requirements at: <https://entry-exit.crisis24horizon.com>.

HIV Testing Requirement: Not required.

Pre-Departure

● Unrated

- Travelers should undertake a pre-travel security brief on the threats and operating environment in South Africa and should have undertaken annual travel security and bribery and corruption training.
- Travelers should have adequate travel insurance in place to enable rapid medical treatment or emergency extraction from South Africa and should ensure that detailed contingency options, business continuity, crisis management and evacuation plans are in place should the situation in country deteriorate significantly.
- Civil unrest occurs frequently in South Africa. Travelers should conduct research into the current situation in the country and, if the travel dates coincide with planned elections, anniversaries or significant dates, additional measures may need to be taken.
- Travelers should provide friends and family with a copy of their travel itinerary, make a copy of important travel and identification documents, and if applicable, obtain their visa prior to arrival. Travelers should also have information on their meeting host, accommodation, relevant embassies and trusted local contacts easily accessible.

On Arrival

● Unrated

- Travelers should plan their landing and departure times during daylight hours.
- Travelers should have a meet and greet procedure in place, proceed through arrivals in a timely manner, and depart with a vetted driver as soon as practicably possible. There have been incidents involving foreigners being followed from OR Tambo International Airport (JNB) in Johannesburg to their destinations by car and then robbed, often at gunpoint. There have also been instances of carjackings and kidnappings along the N2 highway leading to and from Cape Town Airport (CPT).
- Travelers should carry a copy of their travel documents at all times.

In Transit

● Unrated

- Travelers should use vetted transport providers in low-profile vehicles, and dependent on task, location and itinerary, security trained drivers may also be required. Travel should be pre-booked as much as possible, in order that safe routes may be identified. Travelers should phone ahead to the destinations before departure and should not detour from planned itinerary.
- Travelers should only travel with minimal non-essential valuable items, and valuables should not be displayed publicly.
- Travelers should vary routes and times and should minimize road travel after dark.
- Travelers should power laptops, tablets, mobile phones, and other business or travel-critical appliances regularly. Travelers should download available warning apps covering planned or unplanned power outages and monitor announcements from the utility provider.

At Your Hotel

● Unrated

- Travelers should stay at reputable hotels with good standards of international-level security and should avoid hotels that have scheduled high-profile conferences during their stay. Hotels should be located in areas of town that have not previously witnessed demonstrations and are not marred by ethnic or political tensions.

-
- Secure transportation should be available between the hotel and airports. The hotel should have emergency power generators, in good working condition, with adequate access to a fuel supply and emergency communications.
 - On arrival at the hotel, ensure the driver stays on site until your check-in has been confirmed.
 - Travelers should favor rooms between floors 2 and 6, and as far as possible from the main entrance and principal public areas. Rooms with access from a side balcony or fire escape should be avoided.
 - Travelers should always lock the door (and any connecting doors) to their room and use the chain or spy hole when receiving a visitor. Do not open the door to your hotel room, especially late at night, until you have confirmed the visitor's identity and meet strangers in the lobby, not in your room.

In the Street

● Unrated

- Travelers should avoid leaving the hotel alone after dark.
- Travelers should be aware of the national culture and behavioral expectations. Travelers should maintain a low profile, not become involved in local political issues and avoid discussing politically sensitive topics in public. Travelers should observe any curfews or orders issued by local authorities and heed any other advice.
- Travelers should avoid sensitive areas, and during periods of heightened tension, symbolic places such police stations, government buildings, fast food restaurants, and banks and locations of previous protests. Travelers should avoid any demonstrations, protests and rallies, which may attract security forces and present a dynamic and volatile environment. There are frequent student protests at university campuses and their surrounding areas across South Africa, some of which have turned violent.
- Travelers should be aware of their location and surroundings, avoiding high-crime areas and walking through dimly lit streets after dark. Travelers should know routes and carry a map if necessary, but keep it concealed. There are high levels of crime in the Berea and Hillbrow districts of Johannesburg and around the Rotunda bus terminus in the city's Central Business District.
- Travelers should avoid overt displays of wealth, dress discreetly and appropriately to the environment, not display money, jewelry or valuables and maintain a low profile.
- Travelers should settle small bills with cash, and have a spare credit card available. Travelers should use only small denominations of the local currency, and keep large amounts of cash and cards in a separate place on their person. The contents of wallets and purses should be reduced, particularly cards which may denote affiliations, memberships and accounts. Financial and identity theft crimes, including debit/credit card and advance-fee fraud, are common.
- Travelers should only carry out cash withdrawals from ATMs during daylight hours and from machines in banks and secured shopping centers as far as possible.
- Travelers should ensure that their mobile phone is carried with sufficient battery life and programmed with appropriate emergency numbers. Travelers should also carry an ID card or passport and emergency medical information.
- In crowded situations, travelers should be aware of jostling as this may be used as a ploy by pick-pockets. Travelers should also be aware of

people loitering, and attackers who may first pass their victim to attack from behind.

- Travelers should ignore verbal bait from passers-by, not get into any arguments and avoid eye contact with strangers.

Culture

Unrated

Standard Hours of Operation

Business: Monday-Friday, 0900-1700

Government: Monday-Friday, 0900-1700

Banking: Monday-Friday, 0900-1530

Business attire is generally semi-formal. Men should wear a coat, suit jacket, or a blazer and a tie, a button-down shirt, suit pants, and dress shoes. For women, a skirt or pants suit and blouse with dress shoes is appropriate.

Appointments are best scheduled Monday-Friday between 1000-1600. Arriving on time to meetings or social engagements is a common practice, but local counterparts may arrive late. Informal or personal discussions are common. Scheduled meetings will typically run longer than expected. If a meeting includes dining out, the host offers to pay. Alcohol taken during lunch and dinner meetings is considered normal.

English is commonly used for business purposes. Attempts by visitors to use phrases in the native languages are well received but not expected. Ensure you know your counterpart's correct native language first. Business cards are widely used. Always use Mr., Mrs./Ms. or a local honorific/title until the host indicates that using first names is appropriate. Addressing the host according to their official title is seen as a sign of respect. When beginning the meeting, shake hands with everyone; female counterparts may engage with a nod and smile instead, especially in rural areas.

Gestures

Unrated

Business cards are widely used; when in use, they are presented with both hands. Upon receipt, study the business card carefully as a sign of respect.

When beginning the meeting, shake hands with everyone; female counterparts may engage with a nod and smile instead, especially in rural areas. When departing the meeting, shake hands or nod again.

Avoid using the following gestures or habits, as they are deemed offensive or insulting:

- Placing your thumb between your forefinger and second finger and pointing it at someone

Religions

Unrated

Protestant 36.6%, Roman Catholic 7.1%, Muslim 1.5%, other Christian 36%, other 2.3%, unspecified 1.4%, none 15.1%.

Ethnicities

Unrated

Black African 80.2%, white 8.4%, mixed 8.8%, Indian/Asian 2.5%

Significant Dates

Unrated

2026 Significant Dates

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 16	Isra and Mi'raj
Feb. 15	Maha Shivaratri
March 4	Holi
March 15	Laylatul Qadr
March 20	Eid al-Fitr (tentative)
March 21	Human Rights Day
April 3	Good Friday
April 4	Holy Saturday
April 6	Family Day (Easter Monday)
April 27	Freedom Day
May 1	Workers' Day
May 10	Mother's Day
May 14	Ascension Day
May 24	Pentecost
May 27	Eid al-Adha (tentative)
June 16	Youth Day
June 16	Muharram
June 21	Fathers Day
July 18	Nelson Mandela Day
Aug. 9	National Women's Day
Aug. 25	Milad un Nabi (Mawild)
Aug. 28	Raksha Bandhan
Sept. 4	Krishna Janmashtami
Sept. 14	Ganesh Chaturthi
Sept. 24	Heritage Day
Oct. 11-19	Navaratri
Oct. 20	Dussehra
Nov. 1	All Saint's Day
Dec. 16	Day of Reconciliation
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 26	Day of Goodwill
Dec. 31	New Year's Eve

Financial

Unrated

Financial systems can differ considerably by jurisdiction. Acceptance of cash, debit, and credit cards also varies across the country. Some locations may only accept cash due to the absence of card-processing machines. Banks or legal money changers typically offer the official exchange rates. While the import and export of both local and foreign currency are authorized, sums should not exceed the amount declared upon arrival.

Currency

● Unrated

Currency Name/Code

The official currency of South Africa is the rand (ZAR). One rand is made up of 100 cents. Other currencies accepted for transactions include US dollar, euro, and pound sterling.

Currency Convertibility

Banks or legal money-changers generally offer currency exchange services in South Africa. Larger banks may offer the best exchange rates, on average. South Africa forbids foreigners from exiting with local currency greater than ZAR 5,000.

Credit Card

● Unrated

Major credit cards are widely accepted in South Africa, except in some rural and remote areas.

Taxes and Tipping

● Unrated

It is customary to tip hotel personnel, wait staff in restaurants, and taxi drivers. A 10-percent tip is standard, with up to 15 percent for very good and friendly service.

Bank and ATM

● Unrated

ATM Availability

Automated teller machines offering 24-hour service are widely available in all cities, shopping malls, and most petrol stations. Always choose a machine located in a secure, well-lit area, preferably within hotels or banks.

Bank Availability

Banks are generally open Monday through Friday 0900-1530 and Saturday 0830-1100 (some banks are open until 1200 or 1300). Cash advances on major credit cards issued by foreign banks are permitted.

LGBTQ Security

3.00 - Moderate

The overall threat environment is moderate for LGBTQ individuals in South Africa. South Africa has some of the most rigid legal protections for LGBTQ individuals in the region and is often advertised as the most gay-friendly country on the African continent. The country hosts a relatively conservative society with opinions on members of the LGBTQ community being mixed, with communities in urban areas likely to be more tolerant than in rural areas. Despite having some tolerant communities, violent crimes and discrimination targeting LGBTQ individuals in South Africa are common.

LGBTQ Legal Environment

● 2.00

The legal environment in South Africa poses a low threat as there are extensive legal protections in place for LGBTQ individuals. Same-sex sexual acts, marriages and civil unions, and adoptions are legal. Section 9(3) of the constitution prohibits discrimination based on “sexual orientation” and “gender” but does not explicitly mention protections for gender identity or expression. However, the Constitutional Court has previously ruled that the Constitution’s sexual orientation protections apply to transgender individuals as well. In May 2024, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed into law the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Act, which includes violent crimes motivated by a victim’s “sexual orientation,” “gender identity,” “gender expression,” and “sex characteristics” as aggravating factors under hate crime provisions. LGBTQ individuals are also protected from non-violent crimes under the legislation’s hate speech and incitement to hatred provisions, with penalties of up to five years imprisonment, a fine, or both. Individuals are allowed to change their gender to “male” or “female,” though medical treatment or surgery is required to do so, and applications need to be accompanied by a report from a qualifying medical practitioner. There are no non-binary gender markers available on legal documentation, though public officials have attempted to change this in the past. Most recently, in April 2023, the Department of Home Affairs published a draft of the National Identification and Registration Bill for public comment, which seeks to provide legal recognition for non-binary individuals on identity documents. However, the bill has not yet been approved. Conversion therapy remains legal; however, public officials have been advocating to end conversion therapy for minors in recent years.

LGBTQ Enforcement

● 3.00

The enforcement of LGBTQ-related laws in South Africa poses a moderate threat. Despite extensive legal protections, authorities are inconsistent in enforcing laws, and members of the LGBTQ community remain vulnerable to harassment, discrimination, and violence. To further enforce anti-discrimination provisions in the constitution, the Department of Basic Education drafted an inclusive education policy in 2022 aimed at creating a safer environment for LGBTQ individuals in schools across the country, including the use of gender-specific pronouns, adapting the curriculum to be more sensitive to LGBTQ issues, and establishing unisex bathrooms. As of early 2025, it is unclear whether the policy has been implemented, and LGBTQ advocacy groups report that LGBTQ individuals continue to face discrimination and harassment from both teachers and other students in schools across the country, with some instances of LGBTQ youth committing suicide due to “queerphobic bullying.” Although the law promotes equal protection regardless of sexual orientation or gender, the policy has not yet caught up to entrenching this practice in the public environment. Anecdotal reports of official mistreatment or discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity are common. In 2023, LGBTQ organizations reported that transgender individuals are often discriminated against or humiliated by officials or medical staff at public hospitals and government offices. Although the law allows transgender individuals to change their legal gender marker, because of these institutional barriers that make it difficult to have gender-affirming surgery or apply for legal gender recognition, many transgender individuals are unable to obtain accurate identity documents. According to a 2023 Human Rights Report, anti-LGBTQ sentiment is widespread among police, who often harass, ridicule, and assault LGBTQ individuals who report abuse. Crime in general is underreported and under-prosecuted in the country, including anti-LGBTQ crimes, which authorities are reportedly less likely to prosecute. Enforcement of LGBTQ-related laws is higher in urban centers than in rural areas, likely reflective of intolerant attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals in those areas.

LGBTQ Social Environment

● 3.00

The social environment in South Africa poses a moderate threat as societal acceptance of LGBTQ individuals is mixed, with communities in urban areas likely to be more tolerant than in rural areas. Surveys conducted in recent years suggest South Africa is one of the most LGBTQ-accepting societies on the continent, with tourism initiatives boasting South Africa to be Africa’s most gay-friendly country. In 2024, South Africa was also elected to host Africa’s first WorldPride event in 2028. Many LGBTQ events are held across the country every year but are more commonly concentrated in major urban centers. However, human rights organizations report that LGBTQ individuals in townships and rural areas continue to be subjected to hate crimes, violence, and targeted killings. In February 2025, Imam Muhsin Hendricks, a prominent advocate for South Africa’s LGBTQ Muslim community and the first openly LGBTQ imam in the world, was killed by gunmen in a township of Gqeberha in what is alleged to be a hate crime. LGBTQ individuals are also targeted for extortion and assault through dating apps such as Grindr. In September 2023, authorities reported that they had arrested a group of individuals linked to 85 cases where LGBTQ individuals

were targeted for abduction and robbery through the app. Human rights organizations also reported in 2023 that a syndicate called “Grindr Gang” operated in Durban and was responsible for the death of one LGBTQ individual and the assault of 13 others. Civil society organizations report that LGBTQ individuals, including children, are vulnerable to sexual, emotional, and physical abuse from their families, who often seek advice from traditional healers to help “identify the source of the curse.” In a 2022 survey conducted by Access-Chapter 2, it was found that 50 percent of LGBTQ respondents had been forced by their families to convert, and another 43 percent said that their parents, families, and communities had intervened through religious representatives. According to a 2023 Human Rights Report, black lesbians and transgender individuals, especially in rural areas, were particularly vulnerable to conversion therapy practices, such as “corrective rape” and other forms of assault. A 2023 Global Project Against Hate and Extremism (GPAHE) study reported that, although most social media platforms have reduced or banned anti-LGBTQ content, there is still an “astonishing” amount of disinformation circulating online about the LGBTQ community and conversion therapy in South Africa. While societal tolerance has improved in major cities and tourist destinations in recent years, advocacy groups report that LGBTQ individuals should remain cautious when visiting traditional communities or traveling through rural areas where communities may be less accepting of LGBTQ culture.

Active Alerts

No Alerts

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