
CIVIL RIGHTS CHARTER

Get your voice back!



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Minorities such as Afrikaners and Afrikaans-speaking people are increasingly withdrawing from public debate and actions. Some have “emigrated” inwardly in the sense that they continue living in South Africa, but concentrate only on their own economic survival, mentally isolated from the communities in which they find themselves. Others take this withdrawal even further by physically emigrating to other countries.

This withdrawal has resulted in minorities proverbially having lost their public voice. An absent or inaudible voice is naturally quite simply ignored in decision-making processes. The current absence of minorities’ voices does not only hold negative consequences for the minorities themselves, but also for the country as a whole.

In this context, it had become crucially important that minorities developed a new charter, in terms of which they could reclaim their

voice and constructively take part in public life and public debate.

The Civil Rights Charter, as contained in this document, attempts to provide guidelines through which minorities can reclaim their voice. It is the result of public participation. In April 2006, AfriForum – the civil rights initiative established by the Solidarity Movement – invited members of the public by means of newspaper advertisements, media reports and emails to the public to submit proposals regarding the content of this charter. The reaction was overwhelming. Just as people provided input in 1955 for drawing up the ANC’s Freedom Charter, so people from a variety of sectors in society assailed AfriForum with suggestions for this charter.

AfriForum is proud of the contents of this charter, but does not take exclusive ownership. Also make it your own and that of the organisations to which you belong. Let us use it to reclaim our voice, to the benefit of everyone!

Kallie Kriel

CEO: AFRIFORUM

“An absent or inaudible voice is naturally quite simply ignored in decision-making processes.”

We – the compilers and supporters of this charter – exercise the deliberate choice to meaningfully and permanently exist freely, safely and prosperously as Afrikaners, with our deeply-rooted foundation at the southern tip of Africa.

We know no other home. This right to a meaningful existence extends to all communities and we are pleased to cooperate in seeking a better future for all. In exercising this choice of continued existence, we are inspired by the same universal values of freedom, equality and justice for all.

FOR THIS VERY REASON, WE OFFER A DEMOCRATIC PLEA FOR:

- The expansion and preservation of civil, minority, human and constitutional rights;
- The establishing of self-reliant and self-respecting communities;
- The attainment of settlements in furtherance of peaceful coexistence and tolerance between communities;
- The establishing and nurturing of mutual recognition and respect; and
- The quest for a balance between economic development, the environment and globalisation.

WE THEREFORE DECLARE FOR ALL TO KNOW:

- That South Africa belongs to all communities and individuals that legally reside therein;
- That no government can claim the status of a complete democracy if such government cannot or will not reach a balance between the rights and interest of the majority and those of minority communities; and
- That no moral justification can exist for racially motivated policies that reduce any grouping to second-class citizens in the country of their birth.

We therefore adopt this Civil Rights Charter and commit ourselves to leave no stone unturned in our quest for the attainment of the realistic

dream and vision set out in this document, for the benefit of all the citizens of South Africa.

CIVIL RIGHTS FOR ALL!

Our vision does not ask for special treatment for any community, but strongly demands that the basic civil rights that communities and individuals have at their disposal according to international declarations and the Constitution of South Africa be honoured.

In our demand for our civil rights we are inspired by the republican tradition that is based on the democratic participation by and accord of the citizenry, rather than a mentality of slavish submission.

We further enthusiastically take note of the most recent developments of the notion of human rights worldwide, in terms of which cultural freedom and minority rights are seen as an intrinsic component of human rights, beside the classic individual and socio-economic rights that developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In our advocacy for civil rights we place at least as much emphasis on the internationally recognised rights of national minorities as on individual human rights. We are committed to the continuous monitoring of that status of civil rights in South Africa and to take appropriate action when these rights are violated.

CULTURAL FREEDOM AND MINORITY RIGHTS FOR ALL NATIONAL MINORITIES!

We invoke internationally recognised principles of cultural freedom and minority rights, as contained in a series of international conventions and declarations. These principles are not dependent on the policies or goodwill of governments or authorities, but are rights that enjoy widespread international recognition.



IN THE LIGHT OF THESE CONVENTIONS AND DECLARATIONS WE WILL WORK UNCEASINGLY FOR, AMONGST OTHER THINGS, THE FOLLOWING:

- Equal rights and responsibilities for the entire population, including the members of minority communities;
- Participation and decision-making powers for minorities on all levels of government regarding matters that affect them directly. In a true democracy, minorities are not permanently subjected to decision-making by the majority;
- Free participation by members of minority communities in economic activity. The state cannot in a discriminatory manner implement policies that exclude minorities from free economic participation;
- Mother tongue education to the highest levels, including the existence of single-medium institutions. No government may, under the guise of access, infringe on the right to mother tongue education;
- Language rights. Free usage of minority languages must be possible in both the private and the public domain;
- The right of minorities to operate institutions and organisations. No government may, under the guise of population representation, render the existence of minority institutions impossible;
- The right of minorities and other citizens to feel at home as first-class citizens in the country of their birth. No government may passively sit by as thousands of citizens leave the country because they feel like second-class citizens;
- Free association. Association with a national minority is entirely voluntary and no person may be put at a disadvantage because of such a choice;
- Freedom of religion and the right of communities to practise their religion in accordance with their own cultural customs;
- Free participation by minorities in public life,

sports teams and other activities, based on merit;

- The right of minorities to derive, like the rest of the population, fair benefit from the taxes that they pay and to enjoy participation in decisions regarding the utilisation of such taxation; and
- The principle that issues affecting national minorities are matters of legitimate international interest and not simply the domestic affairs of the governments in question.

WE SHALL CONTINUOUSLY POINT OUT TO THE STATE ITS OBLIGATION, IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL DECLARATIONS, TO:

- Protect and promote the cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities in order to foster amicable relations between population groups and to promote peace, democracy, justice and stability; and
- Create circumstances and mechanisms for effective involvement of national minorities in public life and economic activities.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS MUST MATERIALISE IN PRACTICE!

We associate ourselves with the declaration in the Preamble to the Constitution of South Africa (1996) that "... South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in diversity..." as well as the values and rights contained therein, including human dignity, equality, human rights and freedoms.

- Firstly, we recognise that the constitutional rights of citizens will merely remain only paper rights if the grand symbolic gestures and pronouncements emanating from the Constitution are not consistent with the realities experienced daily by citizens, including minorities.

The growing gap between the grand promises of the Constitution and government, and what materialises in practice, is fed by among other things the fact that constitutional rights are out of reach of ordinary citizens, due to the high costs associated with enforcing it in the courts.

For this reason, we are committed to do everything possible to ensure that the rights contained in the Constitution are actualised, adhered to and promoted in practice. We shall oppose any attempt to undermine the rights contained in the Constitution and to subject them to racially-motivated political agendas that are carried out in the name of transformation.

- Secondly, we are increasingly becoming aware of the fact that, in the midst of changing power relationships and new realities, the Constitution has specific deficiencies with regard to the rights and interests of South African minorities..

We are not single-minded about these deficiencies and operate within the realities of our existing environment. We therefore demand for ourselves and others all the rights and duties contained in the Constitution.

WE WILL STRIVE IN PARTICULAR FOR THE REALISATION OF THE FOLLOWING CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS:

- The promotion and protection of multilingualism [Section 6];
- The right to equality [Section 9]. We reject any attempt to, without exception, subject individuals and in particular members of minority communities to unequal treatment under the guise of equality, since inventive methods can be found to accomplish equality without creating new forms of inequality;
- The right to protection of human dignity [Section 10]. We shall endeavour to protect the human dignity of all and oppose, among other things, violation of human dignity through the practice of racial classification by the authorities and other institutions, for which no legal basis exists;
- The right to security [Section 12]. We demand that government eradicates violent crime on farms, in rural settlements, towns and cities;
- The right to freedom of religion [Section 15];
- The right to freedom of expression [Section 16];
- The right to freedom of association [Section 18];
- The right to fair labour relations [Section 23];
- Rights relating to the protection of the environment [Section 24];
- Property rights [Section 25];
- The right of children and individuals to social assistance [Sections 27 and 28]. We regard it as unethical and unconstitutional to use race as a criterion in the allocation of social subsidies, particularly in view of the fact that poverty increasingly knows no colour;
- The right to education, including the right to education in the official language of one's choice and the right to single medium schools [Section 29];
- The right of each person to use the language of their own choice and to take part in their own choice of cultural life [Section 30];
- The rights of the members of cultural, religious and language communities [Section 31];
- The right to just administrative action [Section 33];
- The enforcement by the courts of rights as contained in the Bill of Rights as contained in Chapter 2 [Section 38];
- The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Language Communities [Section 185]. We shall endeavour to ensure that this Commission serves the purpose for which it had been established and does not degenerate into a vehicle servicing different



- agendas; and
- The right to self-determination [Section 235].

In the spirit of the republican tradition, we believe in government with limited and clearly circumscribed powers, and in a vigorous and active civil society. We reject an excessive civil dependence on the state and believe that people should build their own future through their own efforts and initiative. For this reason, we campaign for the creation of self-reliant and self-respecting communities as the building blocks for a successful Africa.

SELF-RELIANT AND SELF-RESPECTING COMMUNITIES MUST BE ESTABLISHED!

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PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND TOLERANCE MUST BE ACHIEVED THROUGH AGREEMENTS!

We believe and are driven by the conviction that the continued existence and progress of no community can be based on committing injustices against others. This is a recipe for polarisation and intolerance. It is for this reason that we strive for a political dispensation in where – in the midst of changing power

relationships and new realities – agreements (settlements) must continuously be sought for the conflicting interests of communities.

We are inspired by the fact that in the spirit of the quest for win-win solutions, it is achievable to develop a formula that will promote peaceful coexistence and tolerance between communities. We are deeply concerned about the fact that such a quest for win-win solutions does not exist at present and that the interests of the majority are currently furthered, under the guise of democracy and transformation, at the expense of minorities.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION AND RESPECT MUST BE ESTABLISHED AND FOSTERED!

Win-win solutions can be achieved if mutual recognition and respect exists between the majority and minority communities. We therefore strive for a dispensation in which the existence of diversity is not only recognised, but also respected. Criminalising the history of a community and disregarding place names, monuments and museums that stand pivotal to the heritage of a community are acts of disparagement and disrespect. the environment are merely theoretical.

BALANCE MUST BE FOUND BETWEEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THE ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBALISATION!

We acknowledge the material basis of our own existence and that of other communities and realise that civil rights mean

little to those who have no food. We therefore strive for a new free-market economy school of thought – one that rejects both socialism and market fundamentalism. The one results in starvation and misery; the other in serfdom.

We show solidarity with all who are hungry and cannot provide their children with a decent existence and education. We strive for a dispensation that can realise democracy and equal rights in the economic field as well. We therefore oppose large-scale government intervention in the economy, but we also oppose the culture that has elevated profit-seeking to the be-all and end-all of the private sector and in

terms of which the interests of employees and the environment are merely theoretical.

We welcome the access to the rest of the world that globalisation has afforded us. We are aware of the fact that an attempt to seclude ourselves from the rest of the world will result in stagnation and demise.

Nevertheless, we know that our communal self-reliance and local economic development is vital in combating the negative effects of globalisation.

We therefore strive for a balance to be found between economic development, the environment and globalisation.

AN APPEAL!

We appeal to all to join us, in the spirit of friendship, in our search for ways in which a middle-course may be found between the rights and interests of the majority and those of the minority. We consider this Civil Rights Charter and the actions emanating therefrom as a vital contribution to the creation of a foundation for future peaceful coexistence.

**WE WILL CONTINUE TO LABOUR ON THIS VISION FOR THE FUTURE
AND THESE IDEALS UNTIL THEY ARE REALISED!**





JOIN TODAY!

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