

ANNUAL ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

1 APRIL 2020 – 31 MARCH 2021





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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADVOCOMM	Advocacy and Communications
CSO	Civil society organisation
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
DOJCD	Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
ESR	Health care, food, water and social security rights
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
OHCHR-ROSA	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights - Regional Office for Southern Africa
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000
PAJA	Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000
PEPUDA	Promotion of Equality and Elimination of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAHRC ACT	South African Human Rights Commission Act, 2013
SAPS	South African Police Service
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TAR	Trends Analysis Report
UN	United Nations

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The South African Human Rights Commission (the Commission/SAHRC) presents this seventh annual Advocacy and Communications Report (AdvoComm) for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. Through this report, the Commission seeks to provide a reflection of efforts by the Commission to advance the promotion of awareness and education of human rights during the period under review. The reflection of interventions and programs by the Commission took place during a period of fluidity and great anxiety globally and in South Africa on account of challenges posed by the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The period commenced with serious impact to both planning and implementation, requiring adaptation to respond to heightened need in a strictly controlled environment where the very fabric of the everyday external environment had been drastically changed. The changes in South Africa and globally to law, socialisation and cultural practice underwent had dire consequences for health, mortality and the economy. The pandemic accelerated the Commission's need to reflect on, reposition its activities and implement new technologically driven initiatives to enable the organisation to continue the important work of sustaining rights awareness and promoting respect for human rights.

The report provides an overview of the nature, scope, and extent of the key highlights of advocacy and communication interventions

and approaches undertaken by the Commission during the last year to promote human rights. The period also coincided with a milestone 25 year celebration of the Commission's existence. This historic moment was intended to be marked with great aplomb, given South Africa's history and the Commission's journey in the country, regionally and internationally to become a globally acclaimed National Human Rights Institution. While the plans to commemorate its 25 years of operation were adapted, stakeholders participated throughout the country through online interventions and roadshows to support the Commission in marking its birthday. This support, and robust interaction through unconventional means, has been the source of great insight and tremendous value to the Commission to continue conversations about human rights, critically introspect and forge partnerships with supporters of human rights beyond contact based engagements.

In contrast to previous years, this report may not provide exact numbers of people reached and instead makes broad reference to the extent of the reach of the Commission's advocacy and communications interventions. This is mainly due to the adjusted approach and format employed as a result of unforeseen circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACTIVITIES REFLECT PROMOTION AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND INCLUDES KEY STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS



**To influence policy,
legislation or
service delivery**



**The establishment
and empowerment
of community
human rights
champions**



**The commemoration
of the commission's
25th anniversary**



**The production of
educational material**



**The creative usage
of a broad range
of communication
related tools**

This report seeks to share information and is broadly intended for a wide readership of persons interested in and working to promote human rights. The Commission hopes that the report may serve as a resource to potentially inform and mobilise efforts by organs of state, other statutory bodies, civil society formations, human rights champions and defenders, academia, the media and the general public in their respective efforts to promote the observance of human rights.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission is established in terms of section 181 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; as an independent state institution supporting constitutional democracy. The Commission's mandate is to:



PROMOTE

respect for human rights and a culture of human rights



PROTECT

the development and attainment of human rights



MONITOR AND ASSESS

the observance of human rights

It is a responsibility held jointly with all organs of state in the country.

The Constitution vests in the Commission the power to investigate and report on the observance of human rights; take steps to secure appropriate redress where human rights have been

violated; carry out research and educate on human rights, as vital dimensions to promoting and advocating respect for human rights.

These powers are regulated by the South African Human Rights Commission Act 40 of 2013 (SAHRC Act). Other national legislation entrench specific responsibilities for the Commission in respect of rights they seek to promote and protect. The Commission is through such legislation, also responsible for discharging responsibilities as mandated by the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 (PEPUDA); as well as the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA).

Commissioners provide strategic direction and oversight to the Commission, whilst the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as supported by a senior management team; provides guidance, leadership and oversees the overall performance of the administration. The Commission's head office is located in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, with offices situated in the central business districts in each of the nine provinces, to facilitate local access to the Commission. The Commission is accountable to Parliament and periodically reports on performance and activities in fulfilment of its mandate.

As a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), the Commission must comply with the United Nations (UN) Principles Relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (also referred to as the Paris Principles)¹. The Paris Principles serve to guide the nature and functioning of an NHRI, and provide that national human rights institutions should:



Monitor any situation of violation of human rights



Advise the government, Parliament and any other competent body on specific violations



Educate and inform on issues of human rights



Use quasi-judicial powers to obtain redress where rights have been violated

¹ Adopted by the UN General Assembly through resolution A/RES/48/134 on 20 December 1993

The strategic priorities for the promotion mandate require the Commission to educate, raise awareness, foster understanding, develop and manage information, build public consensus and commitment to human rights, the values of the Constitution and the role and activities of the Commission. Thus the Commission prioritises and advances advocacy and communications activities which endeavour to:



Deepen outreach in rural and peri-urban communities



Maximise reach to vulnerable and marginalised communities



Strengthen stakeholder relations and foster strategic partnerships



Strengthen links with the media



Enhance the overall visibility of the Commission

Whilst the promotion mandate cuts across all of the work of the Commission, execution of the promotion and advocacy program is mainly vested in the Advocacy and Communications Unit (AdvoComm); which co-ordinates all advocacy and communications activities conducted across the Commission. Commissioners conduct activities in accordance with key human rights focus areas they oversee; whilst programmatic interventions are implemented through the provincial offices.



CONTEXTUAL APPROACH TO ADVOCACY

The Commission broadly defines advocacy as human rights-based approaches and people-driven activities aimed at informing people to effectively realise their rights. Advocacy involves empowering communities to understand and participate effectively in various activities of life by facilitating rights literacy, knowledge, skills and the ability to take opportunities to safeguard from unfair practices that impact on the full enjoyment of, and access to their basic human rights².

The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training³ provides for the right to know, seek and provide information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Commission subscribes to the assertion that human rights education and knowledge of rights is essential for the promotion of universal respect for, and observance of all other rights. In South Africa, it is critical that communities have the knowledge and information to be able to assert their rights with confidence, including with a view to preventing a recurrence of the injustices of the past, as well the prevailing conditions that impact on access to, and the full enjoyment of human rights.

It is clear to the Commission that it is only when people know and understand their rights that they are able to exercise agency effectively, including when their rights are under threat or have been violated. Deepening an understanding and awareness of rights at community level and in local authorities is vital to participation in decision making processes that affects lives and to accessing justice. The Commission employs various methods

and approaches in response to particular needs and in general to raise awareness, educate the public about their rights and to advocate for change. In addition, the Commission continually assesses and refines its outreach strategies to strengthen and improve sensitisation and empowerment of communities in asserting and claiming their rights.

The identification of key issues to inform interventions relies on an analysis of statistics of the complaints received by the Commission; concerns reported in media, topical issues in the public domain; independent research reports in terms of the extent, prevalence and intensity of human rights concerns or needs; observations from its monitoring engagements, as well as the nature of requests received from various stakeholders.

In the 2020/2021 period the Commission planned to undertake specific activities through advocacy and communications with the objective to:

- Influence policy, legislation and service delivery;
- Empower communities and the public through the identification of human rights champions to proactively engage with human rights issues;
- Commemorate the SAHRC 25 year anniversary;
- Implement the National Schools Moot Court Competition;
- Develop and produce human rights educational materials and;
- Utilise media platforms to raise awareness and increase visibility.



² SAHRC Advocacy & Communications Strategy, 2016

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/UNDHREducationTraining> adopted by UN Res 66/137 on 19 Dec 2011

The Commission achieved and exceeded its planned promotion mandate targets during the period under review. Regrettably however, the National Schools Moot Court Competition, a flagship project which seeks to heighten critical rights awareness and articulation in high schools learners, was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

In summary the Commission:

- Conducted **121 provincial engagements and interventions from a planned 63**;
- Established and empowered human rights champions in **82 communities exceeding the total 45 champions it had aimed to reach**;
- Commemorated **the Commission's 25 year anniversary** through a series of events;
- Developed and distributed the Equality Toolkit and its Monitoring Plan as part of educational materials;
- Successfully utilized a wide range of media platforms, as reflected more fully in section 3 of this report.

121

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82

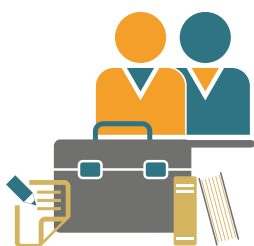
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OUTREACH DURING COVID-19

On 15 March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa, declared a National State of Disaster, in terms of the Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002. On 17 March, government established the National Coronavirus Command Council to lead the nation's plan to contain the spread and mitigate the negative impact of the coronavirus. On 26 March, the government instituted a national lockdown which restricted travel and personal movement, as well as the closure of schools to enable authorities to better combat the pandemic and attempt to curb the continuous spread of COVID-19 amongst the population.

The Commission's advocacy interventions generally follow the traditional approach of teaching, training and facilitating information in-person (physically) and directly with audiences, whilst the communications activities mainly entail engagement with the media. The National State of Disaster/the lockdown, thus adversely impacted stakeholder engagements and public gatherings traditionally carried out by AdvoComm, as events in the conventional format were suspended in compliance with the Regulations Governing the National State of Disaster (Regulations).

Despite the lockdown, the Commission made the strategic choice to request **designation as an essential service**, as the suspension of freedoms warranted greater attention by a national human rights body. The Commission was thus able to continue operating, through remote working arrangements and migration to online information, communication and technology (ICT) services and facilities. In addition to media engagements, the Commission prioritised the development and dissemination of key messages in all the official languages for transmission through community radio; as well usage of digital platforms whereby the Commission hosted virtual webinars.

The Commission's monitoring of the observance of human rights during the national lockdown highlighted a number of concerns. Among the major concerns was the lack of compliance with the Regulations by large sectors of society, particularly within high density areas such as informal settlements and some townships. A number of factors potentially underlie non-compliance, including a lack of full awareness and appreciation of COVID-19, its transmissibility, social prevention measures, existing challenges in accessing water and sanitation, in adequate living structures, and circumspection about the impact of COVID-19; mistrust among sections of society about the state's approach to addressing the COVID-19 health crisis and concerns around excessive use of force, employment, attendance to funerals and religious events and need for social support. As these factors became apparent, and the number of COVID-19 infections increased, the Commission intervened to support and strengthen the public messaging around social prevention to slow and mitigate the rapid spread of the disease.

As an independent entity, the Commission designed and published key messages in an effort to educate, sensitise and inform society. The messages sought to reinforce the preventative messages in support of efforts by the state. The messages explained why restrictions on certain freedoms such as movement are necessary, and brought attention to the objective of such restrictions for the protection of society as a whole. The justifications and limitations were simplified for ease of consumption across diverse groups and included explanations which made reference to permissible levels of limitations to rights in efforts to explain proportionality and the exclusion of complete restrictions of rights in terms of law. They conveyed the need for protection of human rights standards and the reciprocal



Western Cape staff conducting awareness session on 7441 FM community radio





obligations for compliance on the public, urging people to cooperate with the authorities and provided resources for access to assistance where clarity was needed or rights violated.

The key messages were packaged in the form of **Frequently Asked Questions** and, with the assistance of the Pan-South African Language Board, were translated into the **official languages**. Dissemination of the messages took place through existing relationships with community radio stations in the provinces and through the Commission's website.

In addition to responding to media enquiries, the provincial offices initiated and requested slots on **community radio** for direct engagements about human rights in general and in the context of government's Risk Adjusted Strategy to the State of National Disaster. These conversations allowed wide reach, and for general rights information to be disseminated while addressing specific issues at the same time to the local listeners. The community media engagements promoted and encouraged conversation about the effects of the lockdown primarily with regard to the most vulnerable persons in the country, and also highlighted the scourge of gender-based violence against women

and children, as well as allegations of violence by army personnel deployed in communities during the lockdown.

The intensified community media focus complimented the Commission's engagements with mainstream media through press statements, consistently pronouncing on various issues and calls on the state to correct actions that are inconsistent with human rights, and further proposed solutions based on human rights principles.

The pandemic accelerated the need for the Commission to reflect on, and reposition its activities and implement new technologically driven initiatives. One such innovative tool was the production of a five part **podcast series** reflecting on the work of the Commission in the Gauteng province⁴. The advantage of podcasts is that the content is available for a long period of time, whenever a user wishes to access such information and can be accessed, listened to, downloaded and shared through multiple platforms including popular platforms such as Apple, Spotify and *iono.fm*, a local hosting platform. In addition, the podcasts can be further distributed to community radio stations as a conduit for raising awareness of rights, and the work of the Commission.

⁴ The most populous and diversely populated province in South Africa

ENGAGEMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS TO INFLUENCE POLICY, LEGISLATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The Commission engages with state entities as responsible authorities for the realisation of rights with the objective of influencing policy, legislation and service delivery toward this end. The engagements are not prescribed to any particular format and may take the form of meetings, presentations and roundtable discussions on issues of mutual interest and concern. The Commission has sought to focus largely on formal strategic stakeholder engagements for the purposes of its evaluation and reporting on the value of such engagements.

In 2020-2021 the Commission shifted its focus to **high level strategic engagements** with identified state institutions to gain insight into their policy and implementation responses to human rights norms, standards and existing needs. Since the Commission is also an organ of state, it is required in law, that the Commission engages such public bodies with a view to cooperation and collaboration to take forward the protection of human rights. Many such engagements sought therefore to explore non-adversarial means by which organs of state could support, collaborate and cooperate with each other to realise positive change in the lived realities of communities.

For the period under review, the Commission conducted **121 interventions to influence policy, legislation and service delivery**. The number of interventions exceeded the planned 63 interventions on account of both need and opportunity to intervene in the areas of policy, legislation and service delivery occasioned by the pandemic.



5 **Mlungwana & Others v S and Another CCT 32/18; [2018] ZACC 45**

The Gauteng provincial office focused on law enforcement agencies such as the South African Police Services (SAPS), the Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Policing Departments (JMPD and EMPD respectively). The need for this intervention was informed by reports of alleged excessive use of force by law enforcement officers to community protests actions. Through the engagement, the Commission learnt of the challenges that law enforcement officers face while performing their duties, and noted the need for multi-sectoral engagements to be employed with the different law enforcement agencies.

Law enforcement officers were sensitised to recent precedent setting judgements⁵ on the Regulation of Gatherings Act 205 of 1993, which provide that **written notice is no longer required for demonstrations and the convenor is not obliged to seek approval for the intended gathering**, which most officers generally seemed either unaware of, or not to be in agreement with. The Commission also heard that the interventions were misdirected and should be with elected political office bearers, as the latter often placed ill-informed pressure and expectations on the metro policing departments to police protest actions, yet were unaware of policy changes in protest-related legislation.

The interventions provided additional benefits that now inform future interventions with policing bodies in the province to be further advanced by the Commission in the 2021-2022 period. Both the Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni Metro Police Department officers requested continual training on efficient public policing to control and stabilise protests generally, land occupations and effecting evictions. The police in turn requested sessions to equip them with the relevant tools to identify and appropriately respond to cases of trafficking in persons.

The Western Cape provincial office facilitated an engagement between the Swartland municipality and the community leaders from the Morreesburg Action Group. The community leaders complained that the local municipality sold electricity to the community at an escalated price and argued that residents preferred to buy electricity directly from Eskom. The municipality explained that this was standard governance practice and encouraged the affected community members to apply for subsidies meant for the indigent to determine whether they qualified for monthly rebates in electricity and water bills.

The municipality further committed to publicizing the subsidy criteria so that qualifying residents are able to make use of the opportunity.

These interventions demonstrate the need for direct engagement with communities by service delivery agencies and local authorities around basic services such as electricity. The lack of engagement is often the source of frustrations for communities and finds expression through protest which could easily be overcome through the provision of access to information and public participation.

The Western Cape provincial office also responded to an invitation by the Ceres community leaders to mediate a stalemate with the local municipality following a spate of violent service delivery protests where the community closed all roads into and out of the town. Through these interventions, the provincial office noted a general lack of awareness by communities on the processes to engage directly with the local municipality. Communities indicated that a pervasive sense of helplessness and unwarranted speculation are some of the reasons why they resorted to protests.

The Commission stressed the importance for **government officials and service delivery bodies to engage meaningfully, effectively consult with, and regularly communicate information to communities in a form that is accessible to them to ensure that people are fully informed.** In addition, the Commission committed to conduct awareness sessions for communities on active citizenry, public participation, processes to access information, including on the development and implementation of integrated development plans, service delivery and budget implementation plans and to lodge complaints.

The Free State, Mpumalanga and North West offices held meetings with the provincial leadership of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA) and South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to address the spike in complaints lodged with the respective Commission's offices relating to failure by municipalities to provide basic services access to sufficient water, quality of water, sanitation, refuse removal and sewerage spillages. The Commission has consistently over the years noted the trends and prioritised these concerns⁶ on account of their systemic nature and untold adverse impacts on communities. Parties committed to holding follow up engagements and exploring the viability of capacity building sessions to local levels of government on good governance, planning and delivery, accountability and consequence management in the 2021/2022 year.

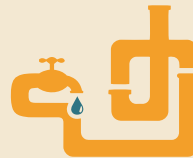
Meetings held with provincial leadership to address failure to provide basic services



Access to sufficient water



Quality of water



Sanitation



Refuse removal



Sewerage spillages

An important strategic engagement by the KwaZulu-Natal provincial office took the form of a presentation to the Provincial Legislature's Standing Committee on Quality of Life in an effort to **sensitize policy makers on key human rights issues for the purposes of strengthening oversight by the Legislature.** The presentation provided a broad overview of key human rights concerns in the province including COVID-19 and its impact on human rights. The provincial office further engaged with the Centre for Economic Governance and Accountability and sought to explore a strategy designed to add value in processes relating to budgeting and human rights in the wake of continued violations to basic rights; widespread corruption, and wasteful expenditure of public funds.

⁶ <https://www.sahrc.org.za/imndex.php/publications>

INTER-PROVINCIAL ROADSHOWS

The combined factors of the urban location of the Commission's provincial offices and the lack of satellite offices in outlying areas continue to present challenges to accessibility and extent of the Commission's reach to rural communities in particular. In addition, the Commission noted that communities located **on the borders of provinces** are also often neglected on account of their distant location from most towns and cities. The Commission re-adjusted its format of public outreach in November 2020 in response to the easing of restrictions on movement by embarking on inter-provincial roadshows with a view of reaching communities located close to provincial borders.

The lockdown and restrictions on movement associated with it meant that communication and engagement took place largely through mobile and online mechanisms. In South Africa, large numbers of people do not have access to online platforms such as the internet, and basic services such as access to electricity are not guaranteed for many. Since large numbers of people have no access to, or are not able to afford data or to able use commonly accepted technology, the physical outreach exercises presented a viable means through which to reach communities located on the borders of provinces.

The Commission ordinarily conducts roadshows as a means to improve access to justice by taking its services directly to the people through a series of outreach activities running over a number of days and following a designated travel route. **The inter-provincial roadshows mainly targeted rural areas that are geographically located in one province, but are in close physical proximity to another province's facilities.** Due to their location, the majority of such areas experience unique challenges in accessing services, and are often disproportionately affected in terms of the nature, quality and frequency of access to services.

The over-arching threats of entrenched inequality, deepening poverty and unemployment continue to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of key groups in such communities particularly women, children, older persons, non-nationals, farm workers, inmates in places of detention and persons living with disabilities; making them more susceptible to human rights violations than others. The roadshows thus focused on these vulnerable groups, who often have the least access to human rights information and services.

The provincial offices worked together as three clusters in managing the logistics of the roadshows, as Gauteng, North West and Limpopo; KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Free State and Mpumalanga; and the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Western Cape clusters respectively. Each cluster identified the focal areas for intervention based on the commonality of the borders of the three provinces and the particular challenges affecting those communities.



Gauteng provincial office manager and staff conducting a site inspection at Brits Hospital



North West, Gauteng and Limpopo provincial managers and staff conducting a site inspection at Brits Water Treatment Plant



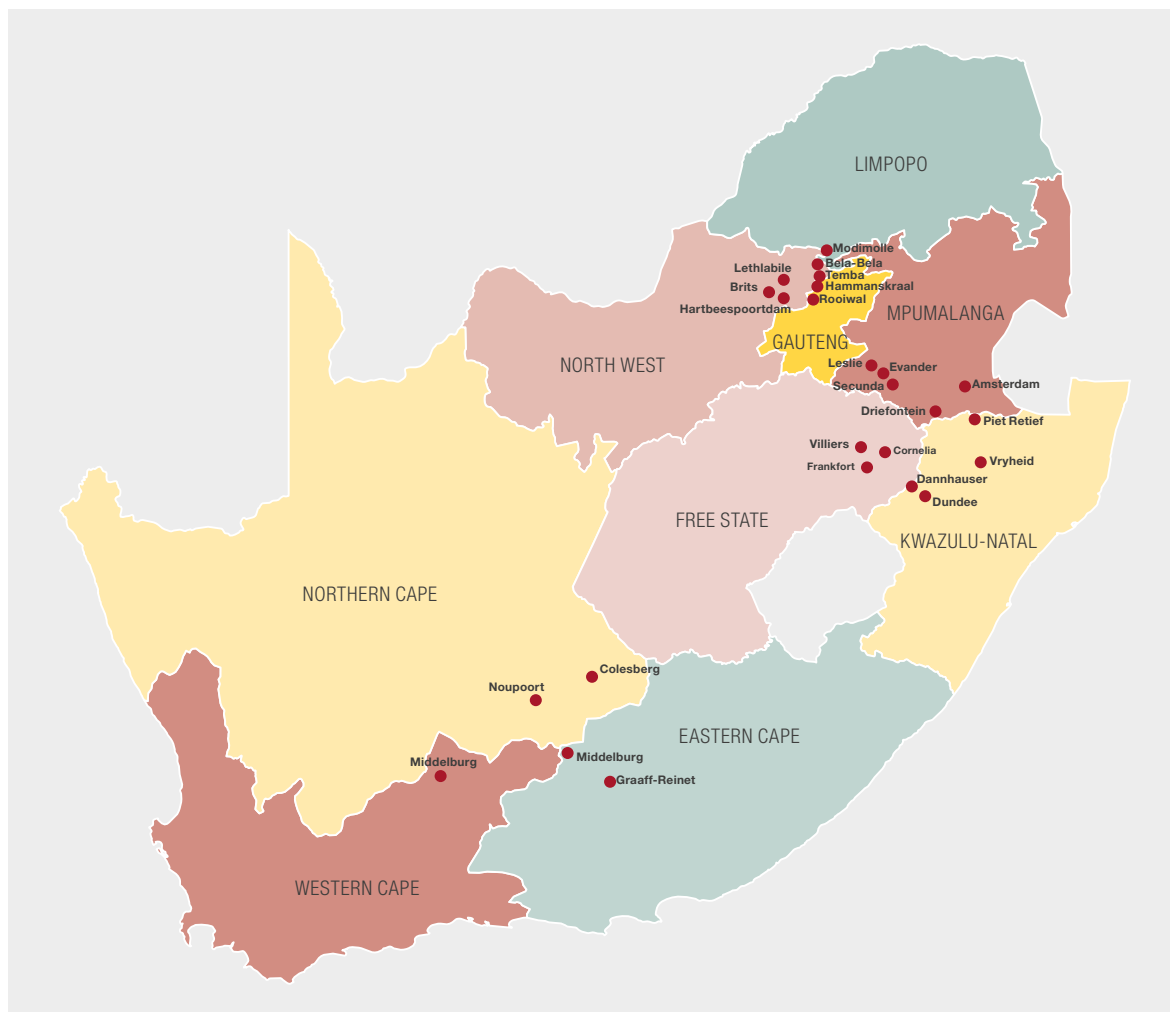
SAHRC on an inter-provincial roadshow



SAHRC visit to Emmanuel Children's Home in Middleburg, Eastern Cape

THE INTERPROVINCIAL ROADSHOWS WERE UNDERTAKEN FROM 28 NOVEMBER TO 6 DECEMBER 2020 AND COVERED THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Graaff-Reinet and Middelburg (Eastern Cape), Colesburg, Noupoot (Northern Cape) and Beaufort West (Western Cape);
- Dannhauser, Dundee and Vryheid (KwaZulu-Natal), Frankfort, Villiers and Cornelia (Free State) and Piet Retief, Driefontein, Amsterdam, Secunda, Evander and Leslie (Mpumalanga);
- Rooiwal, Hammanskraal, Temba (Gauteng Province), Bela Bela, Modimolle (Limpopo), Brits, Hartbeespoortdam and Lethlabile (North West).



The roadshows consisted of a **combination of interlinked activities** comprising of the Commission's three mandate areas of promotion, protection and monitoring of human rights. The activities included community information sessions, targeted engagements including with the media, distribution of educational and promotional materials in shopping malls and at taxi ranks, monitoring of places of detention, schools and health facilities through site visits and inspections⁷ as well as setting up help desks for the receipt and where possible, on the spot resolution of complaints. All monitoring activities were

either preceded or concluded with information sessions with community representatives.

Through the roadshows, the Commission **responded to specific systemic issues and trends, the majority of which were common in nature across the regions**. Common concerns ranged from the inadequate and sometimes complete lack of access to basic services such as water and sanitation, electricity, roads, health care services and housing which impact negatively on the quality of life of communities across the country.

⁷ The monitoring activities will be reported on separately in the Annual State of Human Rights Report as part of the monitoring mandate output.



Outreach visit to the Association of Persons with Disabilities (APD) in Beaufort West



Eastern, Northern and Western Cape Advocacy Officers being interviewed at Radio Gamkaland in the Karoo

The Gauteng provincial office cluster conducted a follow-up inspection of the Rooiwal Wastewater Treatment Plant in Hammanskraal⁸ in order to gauge the progress made by the Tshwane Metro to remediate the treatment plant. The main challenge is that the plant does not have enough capacity to clean the water that flows into the community taps for consumption. This results in communities, hospitals and schools receiving unsuitable and contaminated water for human consumption.

The North West provincial office cluster also conducted a site inspection on the upgrading of the Brits Water Treatment Plan, which is at 62% completion. In both the Gauteng and North West inspections, the Commission recommended that the respective Tshwane Metro and Madibeng municipalities take clear steps to increase capacity of the treatment plants; purification of the source of the contaminated water, increase the number of commissioned water delivery trucks and, publicize the trucking system schedule to ensure all communities are aware of delivery times and places to receive adequate water as intermediate remedial actions.

The inter-provincial roadshows provided an opportunity for the staff of the each of the nine provincial offices to collaborate,

learn from each other and share experiences in the field. The KZN cluster noted and shared a possible best practice from Dannhauser Clinic in Dannhauser Local Municipality that other rural clinics could consider as a mechanism for the delivery of chronic medication to patients. All patients on chronic medication in this municipality have the option to either have their medication delivered by a community health worker, or to collect their medication at designated pick up points. The arrangement curbs overcrowding and shortens queues at the relatively small clinic. In addition, the community health workers also monitor and keep track of users' frequency in taking medication to minimise patients defaulting on their treatment, and ensure that users adhere to their appointments for HIV quarterly mandatory blood tests.

The roadshows provided a learning opportunity for the Commission on managing and mitigating risks as it involved physical movement across different provinces, with high risks of potential exposure of staff members and stakeholders to infections. The Commission attempted to the best of its ability, to balance the health and safety of its staff and stakeholders as against ensuring continued awareness and protection of rights, particularly during a pandemic.

⁸ The history of this long running matter was reported on at length in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Annual AdvoComm Reports

ESTABLISHMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF COMMUNITY HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMPIONS

The Commission's broad mandate requires that it engages with a wide spectrum of stakeholders who are critical in giving effect to its mandate. This duty to engage stakeholders with common objectives is entrenched in section 13 of the SAHRC Act. The Commission seeks to have a presence in the different parts of the 9 provinces, and thus sought to establish a network of **community based human rights champions** (champions) as a means of strengthening access to justice. The champions in turn contribute to empowering communities to more easily access and realise their human rights, and to deepen an understanding of human rights, as over a period of time, levels of awareness increase through a multiplier effect.

The role of the champions is to complement the work of the Commission in the execution of its mandate by serving as a link between the Commission and communities throughout the country. The champions are trained and expected to monitor human rights developments and or matters of concern in their communities; report violations to the Commission for assessment and handling; disseminate information; assist in conducting awareness initiatives and confer with the Commission for the purposes of providing human rights support to communities.

The relationship with selected champions is regulated by a Code of Conduct and is premised on the legitimacy and standing of the individual in their community or community based organisation, their ability to influence, willingness and necessity of involvement. In support of an expansive reach and range of interest, champions may also perform functions on behalf of other organisations or entities with a vested interest in human rights while they participate in the work of the Commission.



The criteria for consideration in the selection of champions are based on:

- i) Willingness and availability to serve as a champion;
- ii) Interest in human rights or experience conducting basic human rights related work;
- iii) Ability to communicate in at least one local language of the community;
- iv) Credibility and standing within the community;
- v) Willingness to travel within the community;
- vi) Age – champions must be 18 years or older; and
- vii) Consent to the terms regulating the relationship between the Commission and the Champion.

Each of the 9 provincial offices identified champions in at least five communities in the respective province. The Commission sought to identify and train at least 45 community based champions at the commencement of the project. However, both need and interest resulted in the identification and training of champions in 82 communities or local municipalities, surpassing initial projected estimates.

The Commission entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Community Advice Offices of South Africa (CAOSA), as the national coordinating body of the community advice office sector. CAOSA has a complement of 311 community based advice offices throughout the country. Through the MOU, all CAOSA advice offices as a whole form part of the champions. In this way, the Commission is able to achieve its broad objectives of increased visibility, access and reach in a more efficient manner. The benefits of the partnership are proving beneficial to both parties, as the North West provincial office assisted CAOSA in the implementation of a project promoting access to justice for victims and survivors of gender based violence.



The Commission conducted practical **capacity building workshops and training sessions** for the champions on basic human rights, the powers and functions of the Commission, and their roles and responsibilities to enhance their understanding and empower them on interacting with human rights issues. Champions include Paralegals; Early Childhood Development Care Workers; Community Development Workers; Community Health Care Workers; the Clergy / Religious Leaders; Traditional Leaders; Ward Committees and Community Policing Forum members. The provincial offices attribute the high subscription of champions to the good working relationship with stakeholders, the increasing mutual interest of community based structures and leaders to deepen protection of human rights and the abiding high level of need in many communities in the country.

The positive contribution of champions is already evident as provincial offices have confirmed receiving detailed information on specific service delivery issues from the champions on behalf of the communities. For example, the champions in the Endumeni municipality in KwaZulu-Natal brought to the fore the

community's concerns of unwarranted deductions from prepaid electricity payments, where half of the amount on a token was being allocated to clearing outstanding arrears. The Commission tasked the champions with identifying the prevalence of the issue and provided guidance on how to engage the municipality, which resulted in the successful resolution of the matter for all affected persons.

The model of engaging champions on a voluntary basis may not however be ideal or optimal in the South African context. Champions cited challenges relating to resources and costs in particular as prohibitive to their activities such as the cost of phone calls made on behalf of complainants, data costs for the emailing of complaint forms, travel, and refreshments while performing community based activities. The Commission has attempted to mitigate these challenges by allocating limited funds for projects that involve champions, and exploring how free platforms may be better utilised to support interaction in more cost effective ways.

25 YEAR ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

The Commission commemorated the **25th anniversary of its existence on 2 October 2020**. This follows its inauguration on 2 October 1995 as a Chapter 9 institution, with a specific constitutional and statutory mandate to promote, protect and monitor human rights in the Republic. The Commission had planned on formally commemorating this key milestone through a series of public commemorative events that would have culminated in a grand finale event on 2 October 2020. However, the myriad of challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Commission to revise the plans and reposition its activities through new technologically driven initiatives, such as webinars.



NAHRI guests attending SAHRC 25th anniversary event



SAHRC staff screening participants to the event



SAHRC CEO, Adv Tsello Thipanyane giving opening remarks at the 25 year event at Constitution Hill on 10 December 2020



The Minister of Justice & Correctional Services, Mr Ronald Lamola giving the keynote address at the 25th anniversary commemorative event



SAHRC Chairperson Adv Bongani Majola in discussions with the Minister of Justice & Correctional Services, Mr Ronald Lamola



Participants at the 25th anniversary event



WEBINARS

Webinars held by the Commission provided the opportunity for interactive engagements hosted and conducted online/virtually/ over the internet using video conferencing software. With the pandemic, webinars quickly became the norm for real time live engagements with audiences, irrespective of their location in the country. While participation in person is traditionally dictated by the costs associated with travel, webinars allowed the Commission to greatly expand participation to attendees and presenters across the globe without the associated expense of travel.

In conferences, seminars, workshops or meetings, participants could pose questions which expert presenters would either answer directly or in the chat function on a range of key issues. Individuals were able to participate in the discussions using various platforms including social media; with the option of going back to listen to the recordings. The Commission resorted to webinars as a primary means to engage in conversation with selected groups of stakeholders during a time of relative physical isolation.

The Commission hosted the following **5 webinars** as part of the program for its 25 year commemoration:

- a) **“COVID-19: Protecting Your Rights,”** was held on 30 April 2020 in partnership with the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper. In line with the topic, the conversation around the protection of rights took place in the context of COVID-19. In particular critical questions around respect for human rights and innovative means to promote human rights in the time of COVID-19 were explored, with many stakeholders demonstrating a strong leaning toward using technology more than conventionally done in South Africa to increase protections and awareness. Key issues which generated interest during the webinar were invariably linked to impacts being experienced on account of the limitations to rights occasioned by the state of national disaster. Limitations to rights resulted in animated discussions more especially since government response was fluid and limitations were imposed without many clear guidelines or precedents to guide policy makers on account of the scale and novel nature of the disaster. Rights which emerged as causing heightened vulnerability on account of limitations included the right to education, housing, freedom, dignity and security of person.



- b) A five-day international virtual summit under the theme “**Together, Apart: Towards Collective Youth Activism**”, in partnership with Breaking Down Borders South Africa (BDBSA) was held from 25 - 29 May 2020, in commemoration of Africa Day/ Month. BDBA is a pan-African youth movement in thirty African states inspired by the vision of enabling African youth to connect, share and develop skills collectively. The summit covered topics on youth activism for disaster response, the impact of COVID-19 on youth livelihoods, women and girls, youth wellbeing and mental health. Three research associates represented the Commission as panelists in the summit, which reached approximately 300 participants from 50 states across the world.



- c) “**Looking Back at Protecting the Rights of the Youth**” in commemoration of national youth day took place on 16 June. Among the panelists was Mr. Barney Mokgatle, one of the stalwarts who organised the 1976 student protests for the removal of Afrikaans as a medium for instruction in education. The webinar focused on the student struggle of 1976, their hopes and aspirations for education in South Africa and the continued need for improvement of the quality and standard of education to African children.

- d) “**Reflecting on 25 Years of the Commission**” was held on 22 July, in partnership with the *Daily Maverick* media platform. The webinar made for an invigorating discussion as the participants who were mostly civil society stakeholders, posed frank, hard hitting comments and questions; which provided insight into how the Commission is viewed, how much about it is known, and what it could do to strengthen its work and efforts even more in the future. Whilst the participants acknowledged the Commission’s achievements, they in turn made practical proposals on how the Commission can overcome the myriad of challenges it faces so as to be able to strengthen its mandate and fulfill its role as a national human rights institution.



- e) “**Impact of COVID-19 on the girl child**” took place on 31 August. Grade 12 learners from Nova Pioneer School in Ormonde and Realogile School in Alexandra spoke on how the pandemic had negatively impacted their rights as children and access to education. The prohibitive cost of data was a hindrance to some and uncertainties on whether they would be able to complete the syllabus in time for the matric exams were constant worries on their minds. The participants commended the Commission in its monitoring of the observance of health and safety protocols in schools⁹ and further implored upon the Commission continue advocating for the equitable provision of learning resources in schools to ensure that all children can enjoy their right to education.

COMMEMORATION OF INAUGURATION ON 2 OCTOBER 2020

The Commission formally marked the day that the Commission was inaugurated through a virtual **commemorative and celebratory online event on 2 October 2020**. The Commission determined that a virtual format would be safe, cost effective, timely and practical, given the circumstances and its objective to engage participants from across the globe at the same time.

The event was attended by approximately 190 external participants, with representation across the broad range of sectors that the Commission interacts with. This included Parliament, government departments, Chapter 9 institutions, business, academic / tertiary institutions, the media, civil society organisations, former Commissioners and the general public.



North West Advocacy Officer marking the SAHRC 25 year anniversary

The Commission's Chair, Advocate Bongani Majola attributed the achievement of the 25 year milestone to the strong foundation laid by the former Commissioners and staff members. The Chair shared with participants the pride taken by the Commission in being recognised as one of the significant players among national human rights institutions at regional and global levels respectively. He indicated that the **SAHRC enjoys 'A' status accreditation which makes it eligible to appear before United Nations human rights bodies** and thereby take the promotion and protection of human rights forward in the global arena. The exercise of its voting rights in the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions was also cited as an important power within the collective body of NHRIs in the world with regard to human rights concerns in South Africa, which also plague the region and the world. Advocate Majola commended supporters of the SAHRC and the continued collaborations and roles played by different stakeholders in the execution of its mandate.

The Chair cited recent achievements by the SAHRC in promoting and protecting human rights by highlighting key developments and projects such as:

- The designation of the SAHRC as a lead institution in the National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) and presentation to the UN Committee against Torture in 2019;
- The successful partnership between the SAHRC, the Center for Human Rights, key government departments and private business in the implementation of the National Schools Moot Court Competition in 2019 which resulted in South Africa being crowned the global champions for the next two years;
- Expanded reach and visibility in the media and in rural areas;
- The SAHRC conference on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and its impact on human rights in March 2020; and
- Interventions in the Constitutional Court matters on John Qwelane and Bongani Masuku, whose rulings will define and clarify what is considered hate speech in terms of the Constitution and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA).

COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS ON 10 DECEMBER 2020

The Commission continued the 25th anniversary celebration program through a multi-stakeholder collaborative event held on the key historic date of 10 December 2020. The 10th of December is **International Human Rights Day** and marks the coming into force of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); as the first key global instrument providing for the universal protection of fundamental human rights and recognition of the inherent dignity, equality and inalienability of rights for all human beings. The day also marks the signing into law of the Constitution of South Africa in 1996.



SAHRC CEO, Adv Tsello Thipanyane showing solidarity with the UN global theme of IHRD on 10 December 2020

The Commission partnered with the Department of Justice & Constitutional Development (DOJ&CD), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights-Regional Office for Southern Africa (OHCHR-ROSA), Constitution Hill and the Project Justice Trust in jointly celebrating the day with a range of messages. The 2020 International Human Rights Day was commemorated under the international theme **“Recover Better- Stand Up For Human Rights”**, in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on human rights.

The event took a hybrid format that combined virtual participation and limited physical presence of only 50 key participants, at Constitution Hill in Braamfontein. Hosting the event at the Constitution Hill had symbolic value as it houses the Constitutional Court and the location is the site of the prison where political activists were held during the apartheid era. The juxtaposed location of the prison site and the country's highest court epitomises the struggle for human rights and signifies re-birth from an unjust oppressive past to one which is based on democratic values, human rights and respect for the rule of law.

Key messages made reference to the impact of COVID-19. The pandemic had deepened the fissures of inequality and exposed societal ills such as the scourge of gender based violence that had continued unabated. The fiscal purse had become constrained in limiting social spending due to corruption and slowed down the progress and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The event resulted in overarching recommendations in the context of COVID-19 requiring that:

- The Commission be the first responder to human rights violations, in partnership with civil society in holding government accountable in the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights
- The State must ensure that the inequality gap is reduced, work to eradicate unfair discrimination in all its forms and manifestations and strengthen the role of oversight mechanisms in strengthening human rights
- Every individual must contribute to the collective efforts of attainment and achievement of human rights by standing up for human rights so as to inculcate a culture of human rights.

As part of the day's events the Commission and its partners also supported the Project Justice Trust in launching a commemorative monograph on the late Chief Justice Ismail Mahomed as the country's first black Chief Justice. The monograph consists of key jurisprudence, essays and tributes in his honour by fellow eminent jurists; reflects on some of the challenges besetting the country and highlights the concept of *ubuntu* and solidarity in the collective shaping of a substantive equal society.

COMMEMORATION OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY/MONTH

The month of March is designated as **national Human Rights Month, and national Human Rights Day is officially commemorated on 21 March**. This is a pivotal date in the history of the country, and commemorates the sacrifices made in the struggle for equality and the attainment of democracy in South Africa in honour of people who were killed and wounded when police opened fire against protestors of unjust apartheid laws at Sharpeville in 1960.

21 March was officially declared and promulgated as national Human Rights Day following South Africa's rebirth as a constitutional democracy. This day is intended for national reflection on the significance and values of the human rights contained in our Constitution. The South African Constitution enshrines the rights of all people and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. Human Rights Day affords the nation an opportunity to critically reflect on, and celebrate, the progress that the country has made in the promotion, protection and realisation of human rights.

March is a significant month for the Commission as it co-hosts, participates in, and supports various activities organised by other partners and stakeholders, including the official national and provincial state events.

The Commission participated in the planning and commemoration of Human Rights Day, led by the Department of Sport, Arts & Culture, supported by the Department of Justice & Constitutional Development (DOJCD), and the Government Communication & Information Service (GCIS). The day was commemorated under the theme **“The Year of Charlotte Maxeke¹⁰: Promoting and Protecting Human Rights in the age of COVID-19.”** The President addressed the nation and the Commission's Chair gave a pre-recorded message of support to the national virtual event.

The Commission is a member of the Forum for Institutions Supporting Constitutional Democracy (FISD), a collaborative body of Chapter 9 and 10 institutions. It participated in a seminar organised by the Public Protector on **“The convergent role of Chapter 9 Institutions in the protection of human rights”** on 25 March. The Commission used the opportunity to showcase its work, add its voice to the challenges faced by Chapter 9 institutions, and to encourage greater collaboration and unity between the institutions for effective synergy in their respective mandates.

Collaborative partnerships with other rights bodies assist in part to mitigate challenges to accessibility, but also strengthen relationships and expertise within the context of limited resources;

10 Renowned liberation struggle stalwart, iconic human rights campaigner and trailblazer as the first black female to graduate with a university degree in South Africa



thereby multiplying the reach and impact of efforts. The provincial offices also conducted and participated in a range of outreach interventions in the form of information sessions, workshops and dialogues to educate and create awareness on human rights. Participation by the Commission extends to it lending support and responding to other stakeholder requests and invitations, whilst maintaining its independence and autonomy.

The Limpopo provincial office developed and facilitated the distribution of a pre-recorded human rights day message from the SAHRC Chair that focused on the particular human rights issues in the Limpopo province. The clip was distributed to community radio stations in the province, with Sekhukhune FM and Radio Turf hosting the provincial staff who fielded a range of questions from the call in sessions to the stations on the issues topical to the province.

The Gauteng provincial office launched its 2020/2021 State of Human Rights Report virtually, entitled ***“Towards Ensuring the Right to Adequate Housing through the Upgrading of Informal Settlements”*** on 23 March 2021. As a province with high demand for housing and large numbers of people locating to the province annually, access to housing was a necessary focus.

The report focused on the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) projects that the three metros in Gauteng (Cities of Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg and Tshwane) had committed to in the 2020/2021 financial year. The report provided a critical assessment of the plans developed, budgets allocated and adjusted, steps taken and money spent by the 3 Metros under the UISP. The report measured the commitment of the Metros to public participation and to related human rights including greater access to water and sanitation, electricity, a safe and healthy environment and greater dignity for residents of informal settlements. The report has set a baseline for future monitoring of the specific listed projects and the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme generally.

In an effort to achieve wider coverage, the Commission secured the participation of and coverage by the community radio stations from the metros analysed in the report in the launch, to ensure affected communities could receive the information contained in the report through the local community radio stations. This ensured that access to the information was not limited to those who have Wi-Fi and data. In addition, launching the report on a virtual platform provided the opportunity for archiving and storing of information which can be viewed and reviewed at a later stage.

COMMEMORATION OF KEY HUMAN RIGHTS CALENDAR DAYS

As an NHRI within the global human rights family, the Commission identifies national, regional and international human rights days which are widely celebrated or commemorated. The commemorations serve as a platform for broader engagement in raising awareness on a particular issue, topic or focus area and events in history as sources of human rights violations. Particular sectors also leverage on the marking of a dedicated day to place the spotlight on the issues, and the Commission sustains key messaging for wider awareness, and unifies action to prevent a recurrence of events in history or possible violations, thereby ensuring future protections and reforms.

The Commission marked key calendar human rights days¹¹ mainly through mass communication methods such as press statements, opinion pieces and radio interviews. In limited cases,

provincial offices also hosted public gatherings in marking human rights days, but only after 20 November 2020 when the lockdown regulations were eased.

Each provincial office identified the calendar day to be commemorated. The choices were informed by national historical events, which related to issues of significance in a particular province. The issues are determined by taking into account a range of province specific factors such as the extent and nature of complaints in the province, the provincial demographics, the nature of requests received from various stakeholders; research of systemic human rights abuses and developments requiring attention for the protection of human rights. The Commission hosted the following key human rights calendar days:

WORLD AIDS DAY

(1 December),

was observed by the Mpumalanga provincial office and sought to raise awareness with civil society representatives on the Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic, the rights of people living with HIV and highlighted the need to reduce the spread of HIV infections. The rationale for the intervention was based on concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic would deflect impact on persons with HIV/AIDs and the burden on healthcare occasioned by COVID-19 could compromise the provision of health care services and medication to persons with HIV/Aids.



parent support programmes for parents of children with disabilities as well as a day care and vocational training workshop. These services align with the SAHRC objective of a holistic approach to disability and comprehensive protection for persons with disabilities.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM FOR NO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM
for no violence against women and children

(25 November – 10 December), is an ongoing multi-sectoral campaign that seeks to discourage violence against women and children and to encourage vocal activism about violence against women and child abuse. In particular, given the dynamics in the province which has large numbers of women who work on farms and who live in informal settlements, the Western Cape provincial office participated in a three day men's multi-stakeholder boot camp in Hout Bay that was organised by CESVI and the Nyanga SAPS, as a build up to the launch of the 16 Days Campaign to expand messaging beyond women.

The camp afforded the participants with a platform to confront their fears and speak openly about domestic violence. Participants found it refreshing to listen to other men talking frankly about the root cause of domestic violence, with some even admitting that they needed help, which the Commission on Gender Equality and Department of Social Development immediately provided through counselling sessions. The sessions built confidence to both identify wrongdoing and the confidence to remedy and change behaviour.

The Western Cape provincial office also participated in the opening of a new child friendly victims support room by the SAPS Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences unit of the SAPS in Murraysburg; as well as the launch of a new shelter for victims and survivors of abuse in Laingsburg along the Garden Route. Such new developments indicate a holistic approach for substantive access to justice for survivors of gender based violence and aligns to the SAHRC objective to promote and protect the rights of women and children.

WORLD WATER DAY

(22 March),

was commemorated by the Eastern Cape provincial office, through a dialogue to raise awareness about the importance of water as the lifeblood of human existence. The Eastern Cape has a high poverty index and continues to experience challenges in the provision of access to safe water and sanitation. These challenges are particularly pronounced in rural and informal communities, and in schools in such areas.

The Research unit's senior researchers participated as panellists in an international colloquium under the theme of "Valuing Water." COVID-19 highlighted the intrinsic link between the right to water, health, and the fault lines in many countries where communities do not have access to sufficient water for drinking or hygiene purposes. The Commission continues advocating for a multi-pronged approach to improve water availability, water quality, and universal equitable access to safe, and affordable drinking water as required by the Sustainable Development Goals.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

(3 December),

was collectively commemorated by the Western, Eastern and Northern Cape provinces as part of that cluster's inter-provincial roadshow. The event was held at the Association of Persons with Disabilities in Beaufort West to promote awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and their right to equality. The visit to the facility afforded the Commission an opportunity to observe, network and share ideas on best practices on the range of services that the facility offers. The services include awareness and educational programmes for persons with disabilities, individual and family counselling services, and direct support groups for persons living with disabilities,

¹¹ As per the schedule of calendar events recognised by the SAHRC

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH TO PREVENTING AND COMBATING CORRUPTION

The Commission concluded the commemoration of its 25th anniversary by hosting a virtual conference in collaboration with the Public Protector, from 29-31 March on corruption as a key human rights issue under the theme **“Human Rights Approach to Preventing, and Combating Corruption”**. The conference was graced by the Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mr John Jeffery, who gave the keynote address. Some of the participants included Chapter 9/10 bodies such as the Auditor General, the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) and the Public Service Commission, government departments, business chambers, civil society organisations, and the general public.

The first day provided an overview of corruption and its impact on human rights, as speakers provided perspectives on service delivery and audit findings, the criminal justice system, business community and whistle blowers. On the second day the OHCHR-ROSA provided international best practices and standards for a human rights approach in tackling corruption. On the final day participants reflected on the current anti-corruption mechanisms by looking at the effectiveness of the Protected Disclosures Act, 26 of 2000 in protecting whistle blowers, and the role of the proposed anti-corruption body and its relationship with other statutory and constitutional bodies and civil society in working towards an effective corruption free community.

The conference further discussed how the ongoing **Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture in South Africa** (the Zondo Commission), established in 2018, has exposed how endemic corruption is, and its direct impact limiting the ability of the state to deliver basic services to society, and to advance development especially with respect to disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. The ongoing

pandemic and relaxation of procurement processes by National Treasury further exposed fraudulent and corrupt activities in the procurement of COVID-19 related goods and services, including excessive pricing by private companies of personal protective equipment (PPEs) as well as the theft, selling and / or distribution of food parcels intended for families without income during the lockdown. Consequently, the country has suffered huge financial loss through the siphoning of state revenue or public coffers.

The conference explored how best to address and respond to these challenges, including sustaining the momentum of the Zondo Commission and the need for public vigilance and participation in other anti-corruption initiatives.

Among the key resolutions that the Commission will take forward are:

- Establishing a section 11 Advisory Committee that will interact with key stakeholders including the proposed Anti-Corruption Body that the President announced during the State of the Nation Address on 11 February 2021;
- Enhanced protection of whistle blowers and,
- Strategic engagements with key relevant government departments and agencies for a coordinated approach.

The Commission hopes that the outcomes of the conference will inform an integrated approach by the Commission and other stakeholders in identifying measures to be implemented to address the scourge of corruption, and its consequent implications for the realisation of human rights.

Each of the events that the Commission hosted in commemoration of the 25 year anniversary provided an opportunity for the Commission in particular, and the country in general, to reflect on the state of human rights in the country, evaluate the extent of the progress made in establishing a culture of human rights and propose solutions to overcome the challenges that continue to be encountered so as to strengthen the nation's democracy.

Mail & Guardian

Free Live Webinar

CORRUPTION: VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Impact and way forward

Monday 5 October 2020
from 12 - 1 pm

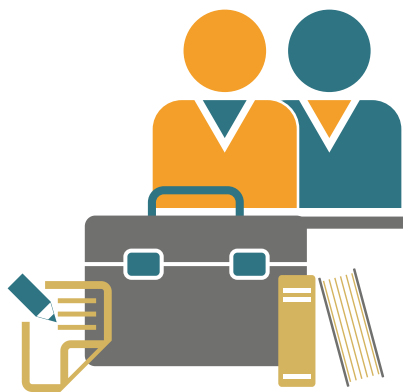
TO REGISTER EMAIL WANL@MG.CO.ZA
OR VISIT WWW.MG.CO.ZA/WEBINARS

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EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

The development and production of educational material on human rights is one of the primary tools through which awareness raising on existing human rights matters and new developments, gaps in awareness and training methodologies are enriched. A continued strategic focus on equality by the Commission is informed by abiding structural and related inequalities in the country. One manifestation of the prevalence of inequality is the inordinately high number of equality-related complaints lodged with the Commission. The Commission's 2018/2019 Trends Analysis Report and the 2017/2018 Equality Report noted that the highest category of complaints that the Commission receives were based on Section 9 of the Constitution; with race, hate speech, social origin (migrants), sexual orientation and disability featuring amongst the highest categories of equality related complaints received by the Commission.



As the country's NHRI, the Commission is often looked to as a resource by community based organisations, activists and other stakeholders. To this end the Commission developed an **Equality Toolkit, together with its Monitoring Plan**. The Equality Toolkit (the Toolkit) serves as a generic resource containing a range of equality related information for referencing by stakeholders.

The stakeholders include human rights champions/ambassadors, civil society or community based organisations, schools, community radio personnel, equality court clerks and other stakeholders who specifically seek such information. It is also meant for usage by persons required to undergo sensitisation in respect of the right to equality as determined by court judgments and any other alternative dispute resolution agreements.

The Toolkit provides readily usable material for awareness interventions, while allowing for consistent outreach and communications messaging of the right to equality. The Monitoring Plan aims to assist the Commission in monitoring the implementation and measuring the extent to which the Toolkit is meeting its objectives. The documents were also distributed to the Commission's provincial offices for usage in 2021/2022, key stakeholders and the print ready digital version was published on the Commission's website, thus enabling wider dissemination through free downloads and sharing on various social media platforms. The Toolkit is one of the resources that community human rights champions will be trained on during 2021/2022.

3

Media and Communications

In fulfilment of its promotions mandate, the Commission communicates through print, broadcast, online and social media, to a broader public audience. The key strategic outcome for the Commission's media and communications activities is for increased reach and visibility. The Commission further prioritises the use of community broadcast media, to increase penetration within communities, deepen understanding of human rights, and raise awareness of the Commission and its mandate.



OVERVIEW OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

As a result of the National State of Disaster which has been referred to earlier, the greatest focus of the nation, and specifically that of the media, was on the pandemic during the 2020/2021 year. The pandemic impacted on key deliverables, statistics, outcomes and methodologies in communicating and promoting human rights.

The Commission received and responded to **181** media interviews or queries, which were conducted across print, digital and broadcast media at international, national and provincial level; released **122 media statements**, published **8 opinion pieces** in mainstream media and on its website; published **14** internal **Pfanelo** newsletters and conducted **1 dialogue** with the media industry at provincial office level. The Commission's online and social media activities consisted of **363** items published on the **SAHRC website**, **261 posts on Facebook** and **392 posts on Twitter** as well as **38** videos broadcast on the Commission's YouTube channel.

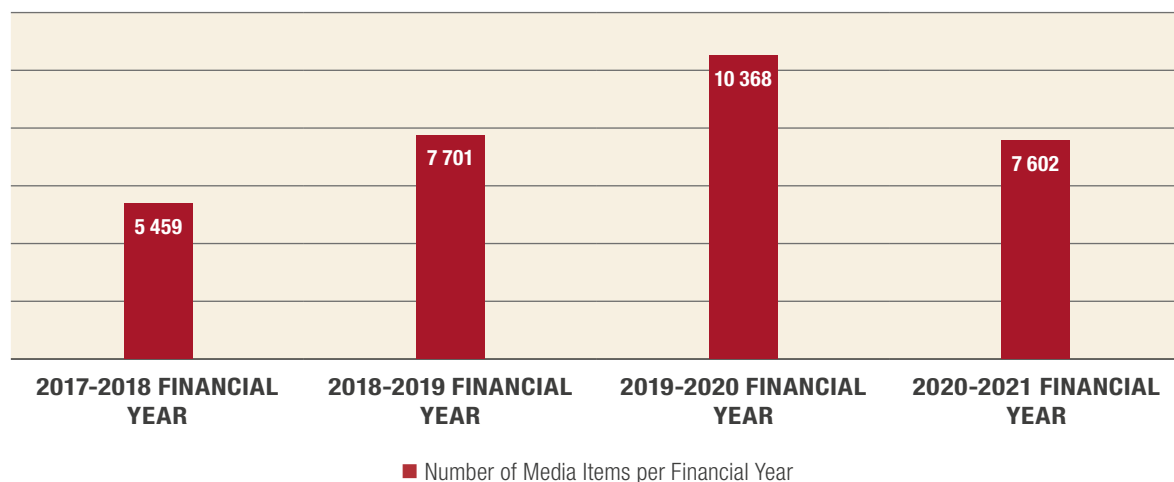
The table below provides a statistical summary of communications activities:

Media & Communications Activities	Number of items
Media Articles	7602
Advocacy Messages on Twitter	392
Media Queries & Interviews	181
Web Uploads	363
Advocacy Messages on Facebook	261
Media Statements	122
YouTube Videos	38
SAHRC Events Branded	18
Intranet Uploads	7
Pfanelo SAHRC Newsletter	14
Opinion Pieces	8
Provincial Press Engagements	1
Media Briefings	0

MEDIA ITEMS

Reportage during 2020/2021 focused largely on COVID-19, and as result reporting on the work of the Commission decreased by **26.7%** as compared to the preceding financial year. Media items featuring the Commission decreased to **7 602** in the 2020/2021 financial year, from 10 368 in the previous financial year and consisted of items published, broadcast, or communicated electronically on the work of the Commission on human rights as reflected in the table below:

NUMBER OF MEDIA ITEMS PER FINANCIAL YEAR



AUDIENCE REACHED

Despite the decrease in the total number of individual media items covering the Commission, the Commission's audience increased to **8 689 168 295** during the 2020/2021 financial year, an increase of **9.2%** in audience reach. This increase may be attributable to the generally wider number of people accessing media through online platforms.

How is the Commission's Audience Measured?

The measurement of various audiences by print, broadcast and online media is complex as each medium uses different methodologies to measure audience information. The Commission utilises the services of an independent external service provider that measures the Commission's media presence through daily, weekly and monthly media monitoring. The service provider does not measure or create audience figures but sources such information from various industry bodies such as the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), and the Internet Advertising Bureau of South Africa. These bodies provide the approximate reach of particular media which takes into account factors such as the number of estimated readers and listeners, and the number of copies of print media produced for circulation by an entity.

Where media owners are not members of these bodies, the audience figures are sourced from the media owners directly in the following manner:

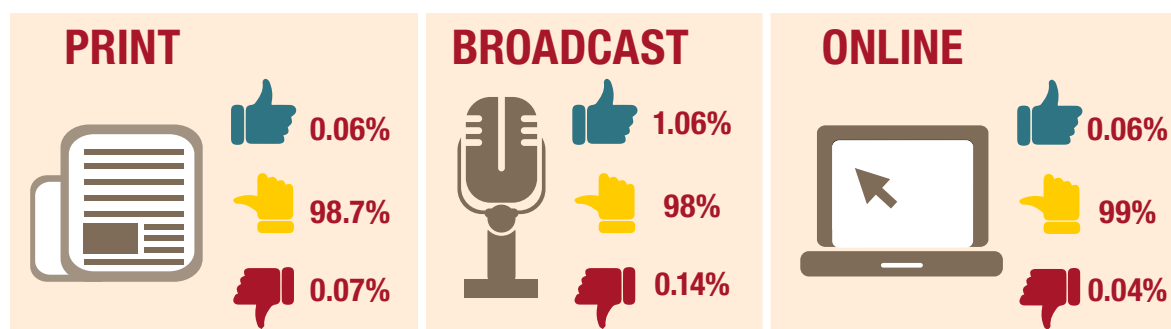
- a) **Circulation (Print)**, this is generally the number of hard copies printed for circulation of a particular newspaper or magazine, and most major publications are independently audited by the ABC.
- b) **Readership (Print)**, this figure is usually a much bigger number than the number of printed hard copies and estimates that more people read a single hard copy; with the assumption that though there may be one copy of a particular newspaper, for instance up to 10 or more people may read that particular copy.
- c) **Listenership/Viewership (Broadcast)**, measures include listenership in the last day, week or month for a particular broadcast channel. The Commission's media monitoring service provider uses a monthly figure.
- d) **Daily Unique Browser (Online media)**, the service provider uses website visitor figures measured for the online media industry wherein cookies are embedded on member sites which makes visitor numbers very accurate.

Table: Media Coverage of the Commission in 2020/2021:

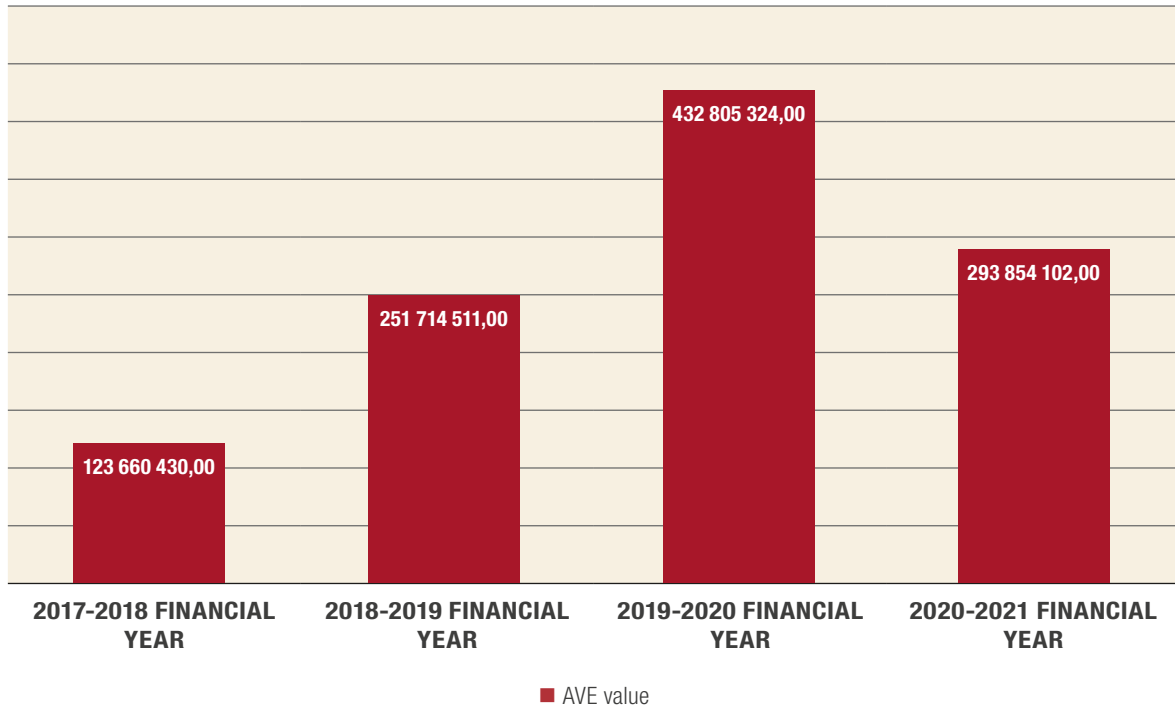
Volume, Audience, Value and Sentiment of Coverage of the Commission 2020/2021						
Media Type	Number of Items	Audience Reached	AVE	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Print	1643	485 304 765	R 65 528 113.85	0.06%	98.7%	0.07%
Broadcast	1417	1 418 160 728	R 51 148 261.10	1.06%	98%	0.14%
Online	4545	6 785 702 803	R 177 177 727.26	0.06%	99%	0.04%

During the period under review the Commission's media reach and visibility through strategic communications on human rights comprised **7 602** media items published, broadcast, or communicated electronically on the work of the Commission. The Average Value Equivalent (AVE) of the total media coverage of the Commission; reached an audience of **8 689 168 295** across print, broadcast and online media, and amounted to

R 293 854 102 which was less than that of the previous financial year's AVE of **R 432 805 324.60**. This amount reflects the total cost the Commission would have paid if it had purchased the media space. However as the Commission had fewer individual media items for the 2020/2021 financial year, the reduction in AVE is justified.



GROWTH OF THE AVE VALUE PER FINANCIAL YEAR



MEDIA BRIEFINGS

The Commission did not hold any media briefings or press conferences for 2020/ 2021, due to the suspension of public events as part of the national lockdown restrictions.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

The Commission conducted **181** media interviews and/or media queries across all 9 Provincial Offices and at National Office during the period under review. This represents **65%** fewer interviews, as the number of interviews and media queries decreased from 518 in the 2019/2020 financial year. Despite this, the Commission had **7602** media items published, broadcast, or communicated electronically. The Commission has been doing fewer interviews over the last three financial years, yet the Commission's media presence has grown.

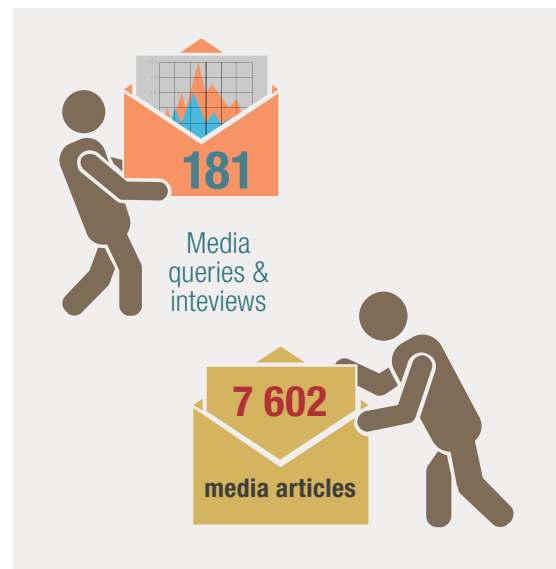
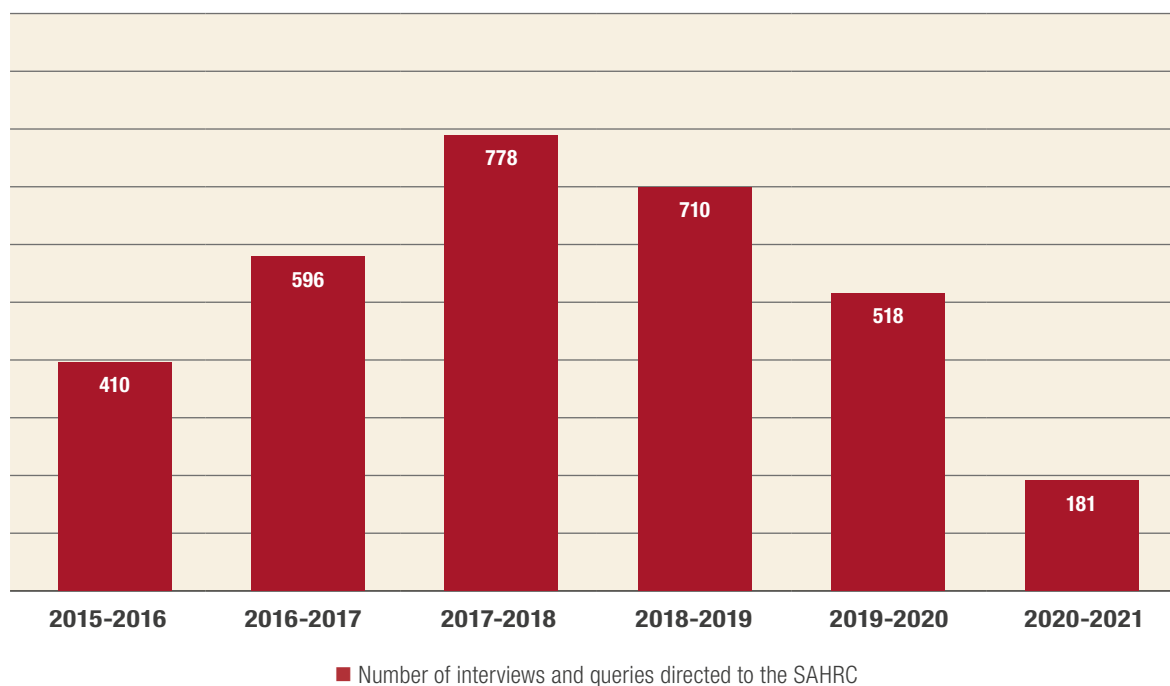


Table: Year-on-Year Volume of Media Queries and Interviews:

2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
410	596	778	710	518	181

NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS AND QUERIES DIRECTED TO THE SAHRC



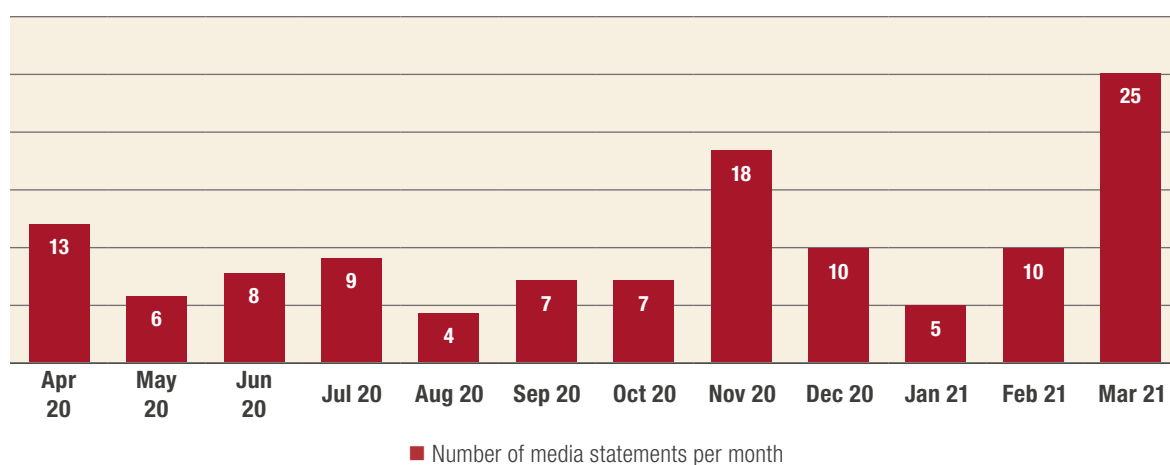
MEDIA STATEMENTS

The SAHRC released **122** media statements during the 2020/2021 financial year as follows:

Table: Number of media statements

Apr 2020	May 2020	Jun 2020	Jul 2020	Aug 2020	Sep 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021
13	6	8	9	4	7	7	18	10	5	10	25

NUMBER OF MEDIA STATEMENTS PER MONTH

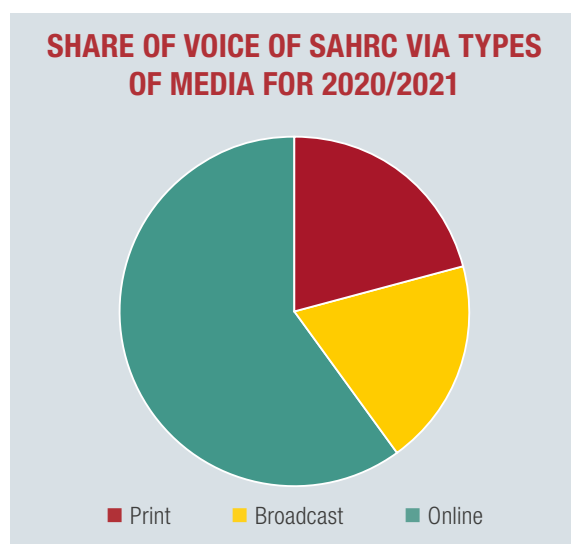


MEDIA COVERAGE BY MEDIUM: PRINT, BROADCAST, ONLINE

The Commission's coverage continues to shift towards online and broadcast media. During 2020/2021, print media articles accounted for **21%** of media coverage of the Commission, while online media accounted for **60%** and broadcast media **19%**.

Share of Commission's medium of coverage:

Print	1643
Broadcast	1417
Online	4545



PRINT MEDIA

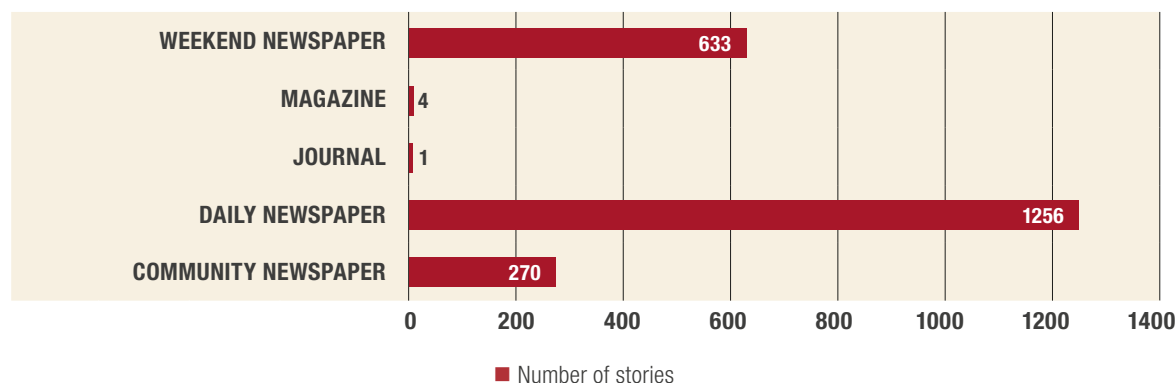
Coverage of the Commission was carried across all types of print media including daily and weekly newspapers, community newspapers, journals and magazines. In line with global trends and the rise of online platforms, coverage in print media has been reduced over the years. The reduction is noted from 41% in the 2017/2018 financial year to 29% in 2018/2019, to 21% in 2019/2020 and remained at **21%** in the 2020/2021 financial year. The decline in print media is taking place globally, although the latest statistics may possibly suggest a plateauing of the trend.

Coverage of the Commission in print media during the 2020/2021 period accounted for **1642** items, appearing in **208** different publications across all provinces and reached a combined audience of **607 063 820** and an AVE value of **R 65 528 113.85**

Table: Type of print media and Number of Stories

Print Media Type	Number of Stories
Community Newspaper	270
Daily Newspaper	1256
Journal	1
Magazine	47
Weekend Newspaper	633

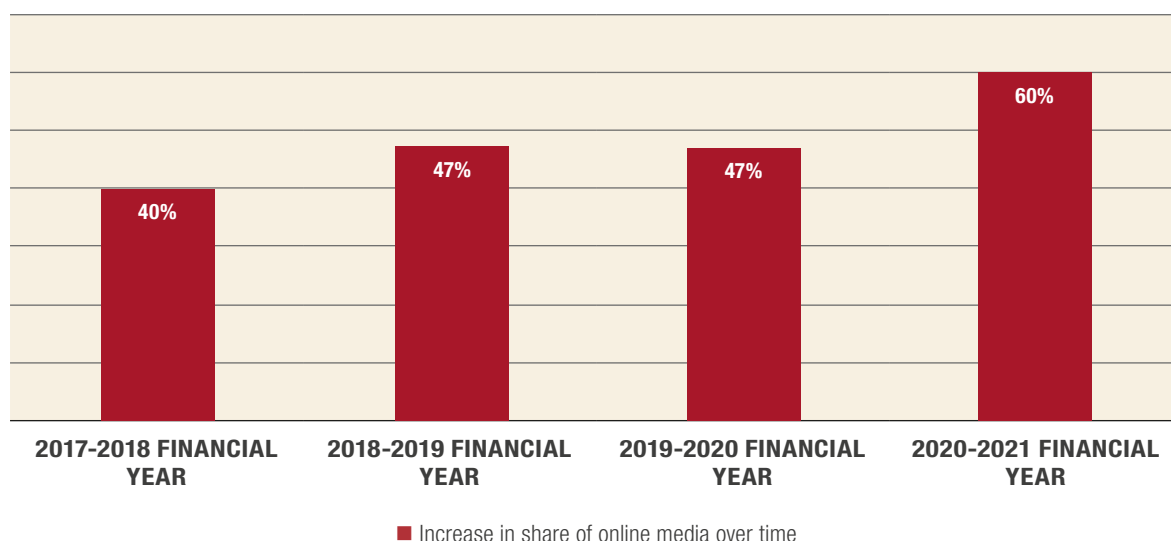
NUMBER OF STORIES



ONLINE MEDIA

The greatest impact of online news platforms is the presentation of the Commission to a wider global audience. Online coverage of the Commission was carried on several credible news websites during the 2020/2021 financial year accounted for **4545 individual** news items, marking a decrease of **34%** from the 4883 items in the previous financial year. Online news items during 2020/2021 reached a combined audience of **6 785 702 803**, and a total AVE value of **R 177 177 727.10**. The percentage of online news coverage, in comparison to total media coverage, for the Commission increased to **60%** for the 2020/2021 financial year.

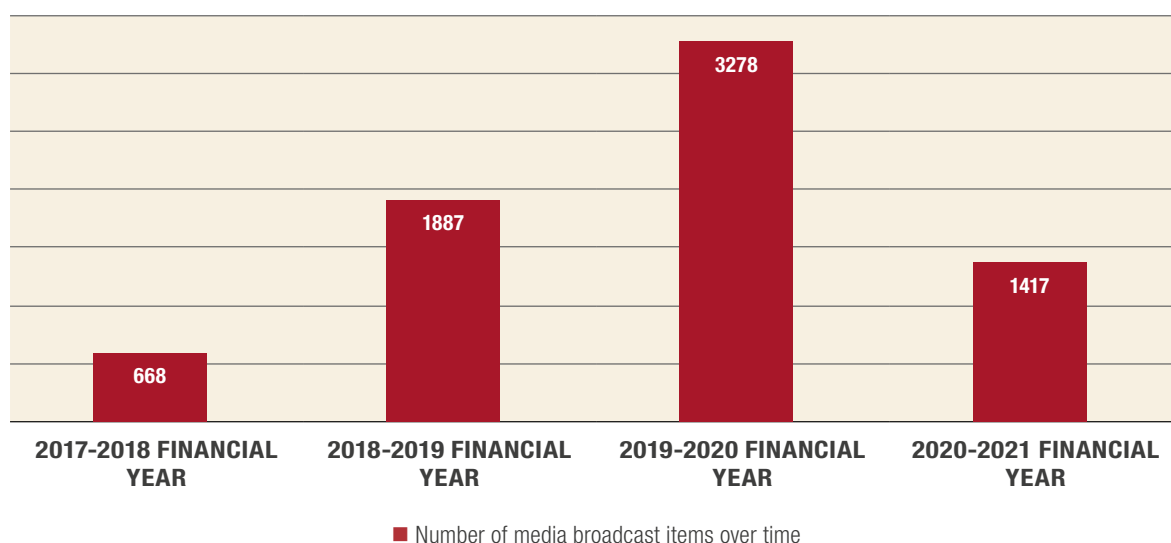
INCREASE IN SHARE OF ONLINE MEDIA OVER TIME



BROADCAST MEDIA – RADIO AND TELEVISION

Broadcast media coverage of the Commission accounted for **1417** news items, as opposed to 3278 news items from the previous financial year, representing a decrease of **19%** for the 2020/2021 financial year. The decline is attributed to the move toward online media as well as the fact that COVID-19 was the biggest story in the 2020/2021 financial year. The Commission's broadcast media presence reached a combined radio and television audience of **1 418 160 728** and generated an **AVE** of **R 55 273 170** for the period under review.

NUMBER OF MEDIA BROADCAST ITEMS OVER TIME



BROADCAST MEDIA – RADIO COVERAGE OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission has appeared a total of **1 082** times on radio, through interviews, sound bites and mentions. The Commission managed to reach a total audience of **610 507 876** and generate an AVE of **R 28 514 395.50** through the radio medium. The table below illustrates all of the radio stations - constituted of community, public and commercial radio stations - on which the SAHRC has conducted interviews or received coverage of its activities during the 2020/2021 financial year.



Table: Some of the key radio stations that interviewed the Commission during 2020/2021:

Radio Station	Number of Appearances	Radio Station	Number of Appearances	Radio Station	Number of Appearances
RSG	104	PhalaPhala FM	8	Classic FM	2
SAFM	100	Sekhukhune FM	8	Eden FM	2
Cape Talk	91	Tru FM	8	Gagasi 99.5 FM	2
702	68	Ekurhuleni FM	7	Kingfisher FM	2
Power FM	63	Radio NFM	7	Maluti FM	2
Pretoria FM	48	Channel Islam Radio (Cii Radio)	5	Massive Metro	2
Voice of the Cape	35	Fine Music Radio	5	Radio KC	2
Smile FM	30	Impact Radio	5	Radio Khwezi	2
HEART FM	27	Algoa FM	4	Rise FM	2
SABC News	27	Bok Radio	4	VCR 90.6 FM	2
Kaya FM 95.9	25	Capricorn FM	4	Wild Coast FM 98.6 MHz	2
Good Hope FM	23	Lichvaal Stereo 92.6 FM	4	Bush Radio	1
Radio 786	23	Luister FM	4	Caledon FM	1
Radio Zibonele	20	Magic 828 AM	4	DYR 105.1 FM	1
Lotus FM	19	Radio Riverside	4	East Coast Radio	1
Radio 2000	18	Overvaal Stereo	4	Eldos FM	1
Ligwalagwala FM	16	PE FM	4	Energy FM	1
Motsweding FM	15	Radio Disa	4	Heartbeat FM	1
OFM	15	Radio Islam	4	Turf Radio	8
Ikwewezi FM	13	Radio Namakwaland	4	Hot 91.9 FM	1
Lesedi FM	13	Radio Rosestad	4	IFM 97.9 FM	1
Radio Tygerberg	13	Valley FM	4	Intokozo FM	1
Ukhozi FM	13	Whale Coast FM	4	Life & Style Radio	1
CCFM	12	Bay FM 107.9	3	LM Radio	1
Groot FM 90.5	12	Chai FM	3	Moletji FM	1
Thobela FM	11	Jozi FM	3	Radio Overberg	1
Channel Africa	10	Mix 93.8 FM	3	Radio Pulpit	1
Metro FM	10	Radio Al-Ansaar	3	Radio Teamaneng	1
Jacaranda FM	9	Radio Helderberg	3	Salaamedia	1
Munghana Lonene	9	You FM	3	Waterberg Stereo 104.9FM	1
Umhlobo Wenene	9	947	2	YFM	1
5FM	8				
KFM	8				

COMMUNITY RADIO



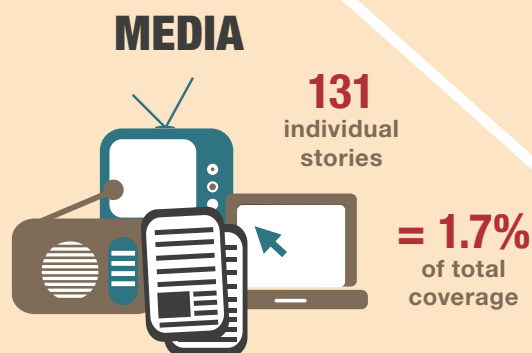
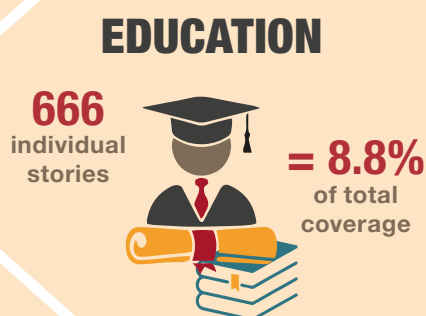
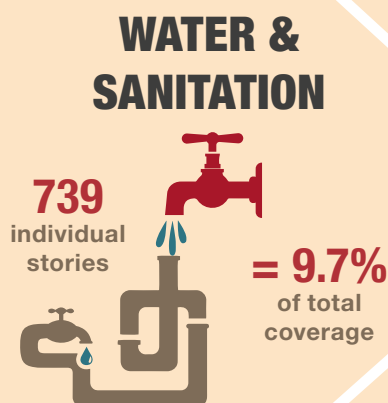
Pursuant to its strategic goal of broadening its reach to communities, for 2020/2021, the Commission reached **126** community radio stations, with a total radio audience of **29 029 219** and an AVE of **R 485 807.69**.

Given the limitations of COVID-19, the Commission's provincial offices focused on mass communication through the medium of community radio, which significantly improved the Commission's reach into rural and far-flung communities. The Commission has further prioritised communication in all the official languages of the Republic as a reflection the country's diversity. Staff in the provincial offices are able to conduct human rights education in the respective dominant languages of each province. In addition, the Commission's current linguistic capacity covers all the eleven official languages as delivered by Commissioners and staff. The Commission also makes every effort to provide translation services where required.

The Commission's provincial offices continue to progressively strengthen relationships with national and provincial commercial and community radio stations. Provincial office staff regularly conduct interviews on a range of human rights on community radio stations and significantly contribute to the Commission's increased visibility in the local media.

English remains the dominant language of mainstream media coverage of the Commission and of human rights in South Africa. This is attributable to the fact that mainstream media has an advanced digital infrastructure and value chain that includes digital and online portals on which stories are given different forms such as radio station websites, podcasts, Facebook posts and tweets than the community media sector. Mainstream media's digital advantage allows for more accurate monitoring of coverage through online media monitoring which is predominantly produced in English.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MEDIA COVERAGE



As indicated earlier, **COVID-19** dominated the media as the leading issue in the 2020/2021 financial year. **COVID-19** related human rights news issues dominated media items the Commission, with a total of **1 982 COVID-19** related news stories. Media items based on COVID-19 as a category, constituted **26%** of all the Commission's coverage.

Equality attracted the second highest amount of news coverage, constituting **1860** individual news stories. This amounts to **24.5%** of the total amount of the Commission's news coverage for the period under review. **Race**, as a subcategory of **Equality**, constituted a total of **1 179** stories, amounting to **63.4%** of all Equality stories and **15.5%** of all media coverage of the Commission.

Next in line in terms of prevalence was the category of the right to **Water and Sanitation**, with **739** individual stories and, constituting **9.7%** of the Commission's total coverage. This category of news was of high interest following the Gauteng Provincial office's release of the **Investigative Report into Pollution of the Vaal River**, as well as the inter-provincial roadshows that covered the Rooiwal and Brits Wastewater Treatment Plants for Hammanskraal and Madibeng respectively¹².

The fourth category was **Education** which attracted **666** individual stories, and constituted **8.8 %** of the Commission's total coverage for the period under review. The fifth most prevalent issue related to news items concerning the Commission was **Hate Speech** as part of Freedom of Expression. This category accounted for **472** individual news items, constituting **6.2%** of the Commission's total coverage for the 2020/2021 financial year.

South Africa, the Commission and the human rights sector experienced the loss of notable human rights stalwarts. The passing away of the Commission's Deputy Chairperson, Advocate Priscilla Jana elicited **65** individual news mentions as well as former Commissioners Dr Danny Titus and Mr. Tom Manthata respectively also generated a further **35** mentions and their immense contribution to human rights. The Commission also paid homage to Professor Christof Heyns, who served at the level of the United Nations, and the key role he played in the promotion and protection of human rights through projects such as the National Schools Moot Court Competition. The loss of one of the Commission's Provincial Advocacy Officer, Reverend Julian Masimila, was also respectfully noted by the Northern Cape community media. The Commission's media statements and resultant obituaries led to **131** individual media stories, constituting **1.7%** of the media coverage received by the organisation.

¹² Ibid

COVID-19

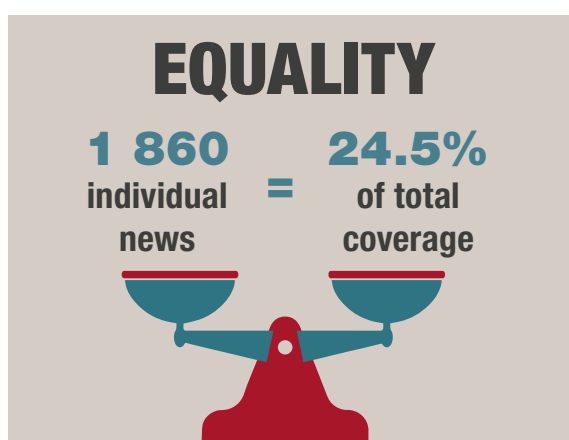
The Commission noted that a range of human rights issues arose in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on South Africa, and featured prominently in the media on the exercise of its monitoring and protection mandate in ensuring that human rights were respected throughout the pandemic. The Commission was concerned with the readiness of schools to re-open, and sprang into action to monitor schools' access to water and adequate sanitation, technical resources and the observance of health protocols to ensure the safety of learners and educators. The evictions in Strandfontein and Lawley during the lockdown also drew massive media attention, with the Commission instituting litigation against the City of Cape Town to prevent the unlawful and inhumane evictions of persons during the height of the lockdown. The allegations of undue brutality by some members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in enforcing the lockdown also drew considerable media coverage.

Table: Coverage of COVID-19 and key human rights issues

Sub-category	Total Number of Stories
COVID-19 – Education	559
COVID-19 – Evictions Cape Town	530
COVID-19 – Socio-economic Rights - Social Security	171
COVID-19 – Evictions – Strandfontein	122
COVID-19 – Freedom and Security of Person - Abuse of civilians by SAPS/SANDF members	73
COVID-19	62
COVID-19 – Right to Food	45
COVID-19 – Evictions – Lawley	45
COVID 19 – Equality – Race	44
COVID-19 – Healthcare	44
COVID-19 – Equality – Religion - Mosque Raid	39
COVID-19 – Call to Observe Human Rights	36
COVID-19 – Vaccine	36
COVID-19 – Corruption	34
COVID-19 – Freedom of Movement	23
COVID-19 – Equality – Gender - Gender Based Violence	21
COVID-19 – SAHRC Essential Service	17
COVID-19 – Equality – Race - Relief Funds	13
COVID-19 – Evictions	13
COVID-19 – School Readiness	13
COVID-19 – Migration	12
COVID-19 – Children's Rights - Girl Child	5
COVID-19 – Persons with Disabilities	5
COVID-19 – Migration – Beitbridge	3
COVID-19 – Prisoner's Rights	3
COVID-19 – Refugees - Cape Town	3
COVID-19 – Xenophobia	3
COVID-19 – Monitoring	2
COVID-19 – Equality – Custom	2
COVID-19 – Smokers' Rights	2
COVID-19 - Older Persons	1
COVID-19 - Right to Privacy	1

EQUALITY - RACE

The Commission's 2019/2020 Annual Trends Analysis Reports reflects that violations to the right to equality is most reported to the Commission, and is consistently high on the number of news items the Commission engages about in the media. Race in particular, remains the most frequent and significant issue the Commission comments on in the media. However, for the 2020/2021 period, the issue of equality was eclipsed by the COVID-19 pandemic; and thus became the second most prevalent matter that drew media attention in relation to the Commission. Media stories related to the right to Equality, as a broader category, accounted for **1 860** individual items, accounting for **24.5 %** of all the media items covered on the Commission, for the period under review.



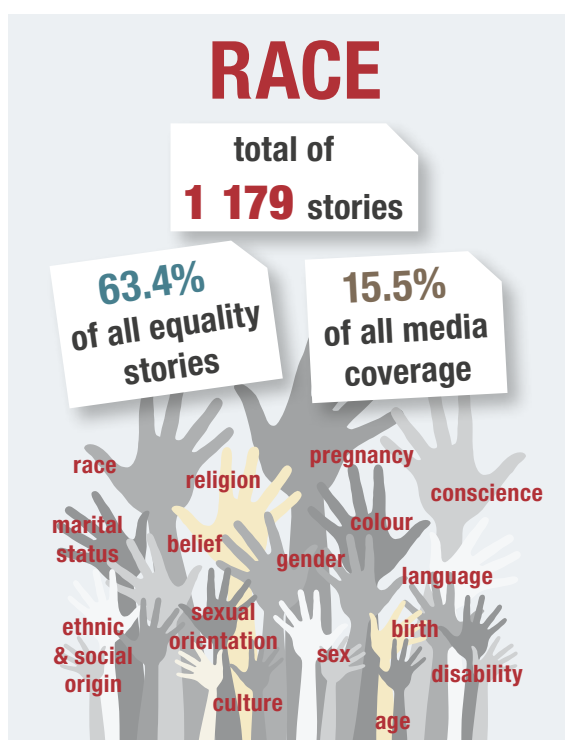
The Brackenfell protests, in the Western Cape featured prominently. This followed an allegedly racially segregated private event for matric learners at Brackenfell High School and resulted in racially fuelled protests and confrontations around the school. The Commission intervened, calling for calm during the protests and investigating the alleged incident.

Another issue that featured prominently and led to protests was an advertisement released by retailer Clicks Stores, which seemed to feature black women's hair as dry and unhealthy, whereas the hair of the white counterparts was advertised as luscious and healthy. The Commission met with the management of the retailer, which retailer has since apologised and committed to undergoing racial sensitivity training.

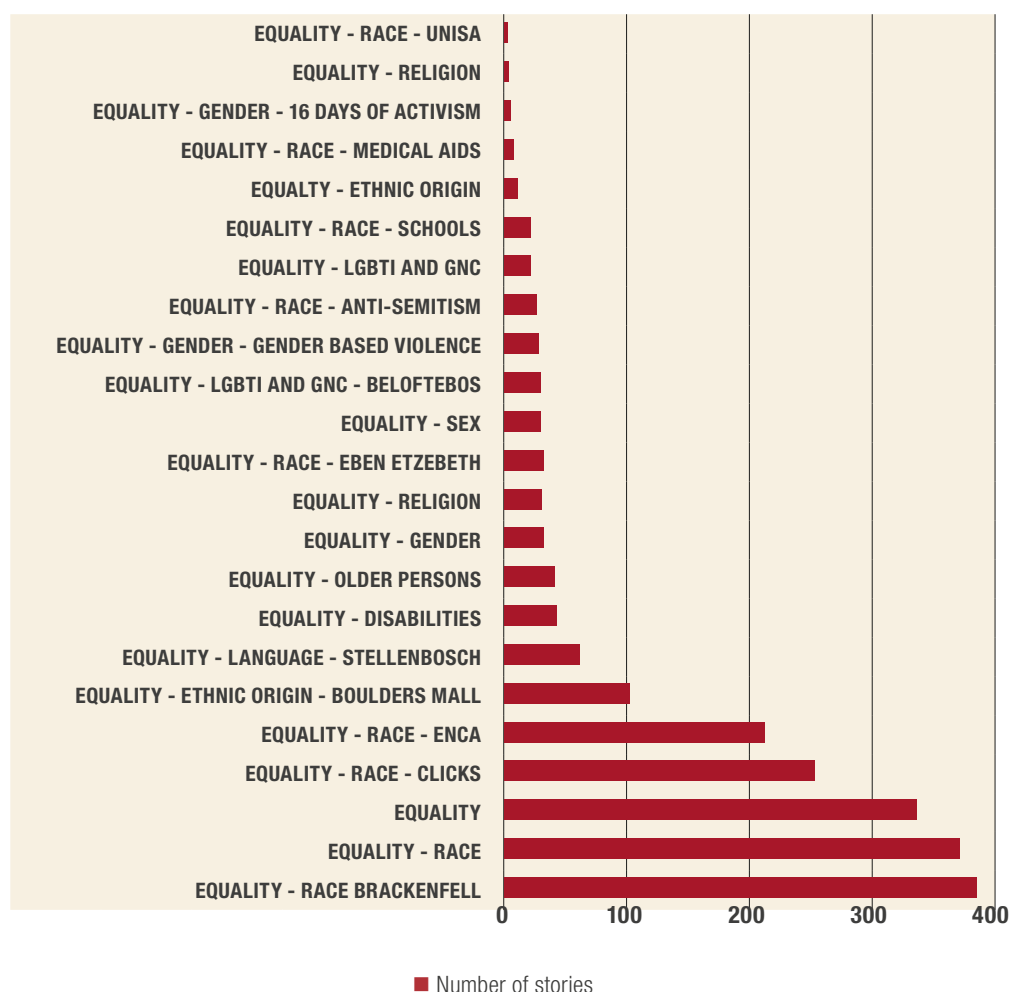
The Constitution provides for the protected grounds for equality and prohibits unfair discrimination. Section 9 of the Constitution lists the following: race, age, gender, disability, sex, religion, pregnancy, conscience, marital status, belief, ethnic and social origin, culture, colour, language, birth and sexual orientation. Of the protected equality grounds, race constituted a total of **1 179** stories, amounting to **63.4%** of all equality stories and **15.5%** of all media coverage of the Commission.

Table: The top twenty list of the most prevalent equality media items:

Sub-category	Total Number of Stories
Equality – Race – Brackenfell	351
Equality – Race	336
Equality	305
Equality – Race – Clicks	228
Equality – Race – ENCA	192
Equality – Ethnic Origin – Boulders Mall	91
Equality – Language – Stellenbosch	55
Equality – Disabilities	36
Equality – Older Persons	35
Equality – Gender	28
Equality – Religion	28
Equality – Race – Eben Etzebeth	27
Equality – Sex	25
Equality – LGBTI and GNC – Beloftebos	24
Equality – Gender – Gender Based Violence	23
Equality – Race – Anti-Semitism	21
Equality – LGBTI and GNC	19
Equality – Race – Schools	18
Equality – Ethnic Origin	8
Equality – Race – Medical Aids	5
Equality – Gender – 16 Days of Activism	3
Equality – Religion	1
Equality – Race – UNISA	1



TOTAL NUMBER OF STORIES



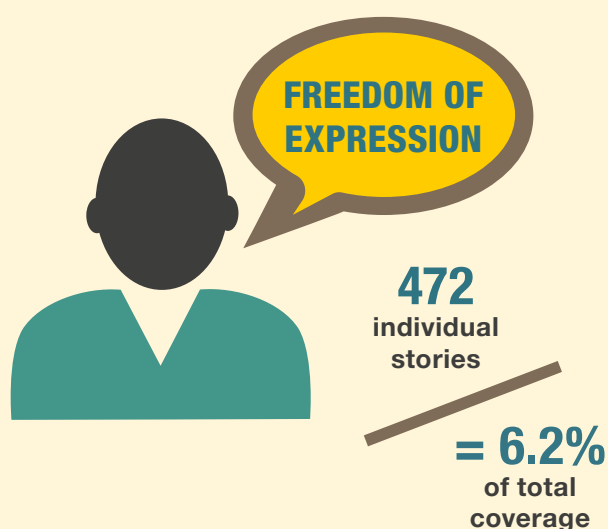
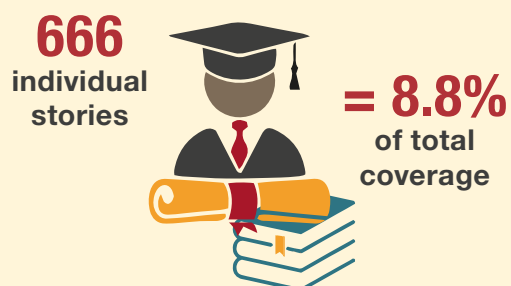
WATER AND SANITATION

The water and sanitation crisis in the Vaal, Hammanskraal and the Hartbeespoort area continued to feature prominently from the previous year into the 2020/2021 financial year¹³. The release of related investigative reports as well as inter-provincial roadshows by the Gauteng Provincial Office drew massive media attention to the issues. Water and sanitation stories amounted to **739** individual stories, constituting **9.7%** of the Commission's total coverage within the 2020/2021 financial year.

Sub-category	Total Number of Stories
Water and Sanitation	501
Water and Sanitation - Vaal	127
Water and Sanitation - Hammanskraal	70
Water and Sanitation - Pit Latrines	36
Water and Sanitation - Hartbeespoort Dam	5

¹³ Ibid

EDUCATION



EDUCATION

A range of issues related to education featured prominently, including the Commission's interventions around school readiness for returning learners during the **COVID-19** pandemic; to the Fees Must Fall Protests and solidarity marches at the beginning of the academic year, particularly at the University of the Witwatersrand. Education as a category attracted **666** individual stories, constituting **8.8%** of the Commission's total coverage, for the 2020/2021 financial year.

HATE SPEECH AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The majority of hate speech complaints brought to the Commission are of a racial nature and all too often draw massive media attention due to their emotive nature. **Freedom of Expression** (Hate Speech specifically) was the fifth most prevalent issue related to news items concerning the Commission. The Jon Qwelane matter which the Commission took on appeal featured prominently when it was heard in the Constitutional Court. Incidences of hate speech, such as utterances by politicians, continue to elicit significant media coverage as the awaited judgement on the Qwelane matter is seminal to the definition of what constitutes hate speech. This category accounted for **472** individual news items, constituting **6.2%** of the Commission's total coverage, for the 2020/2021 financial year.

Table: Hate speech matters directed at the Commission:

Sub-category	Total Number of Stories
Freedom of Expression - Hate Speech	310
Freedom of Expression - Hate Speech - Jon Qwelane	100
Freedom of Expression	24
Freedom of Expression - Old Flag	17
Freedom of Expression - Freedom of the Press	12
Freedom of Expression - Hate Speech - Tony Ehrenreich	5
Freedom of Expression - Hate Speech - Zindzi Mandela	4

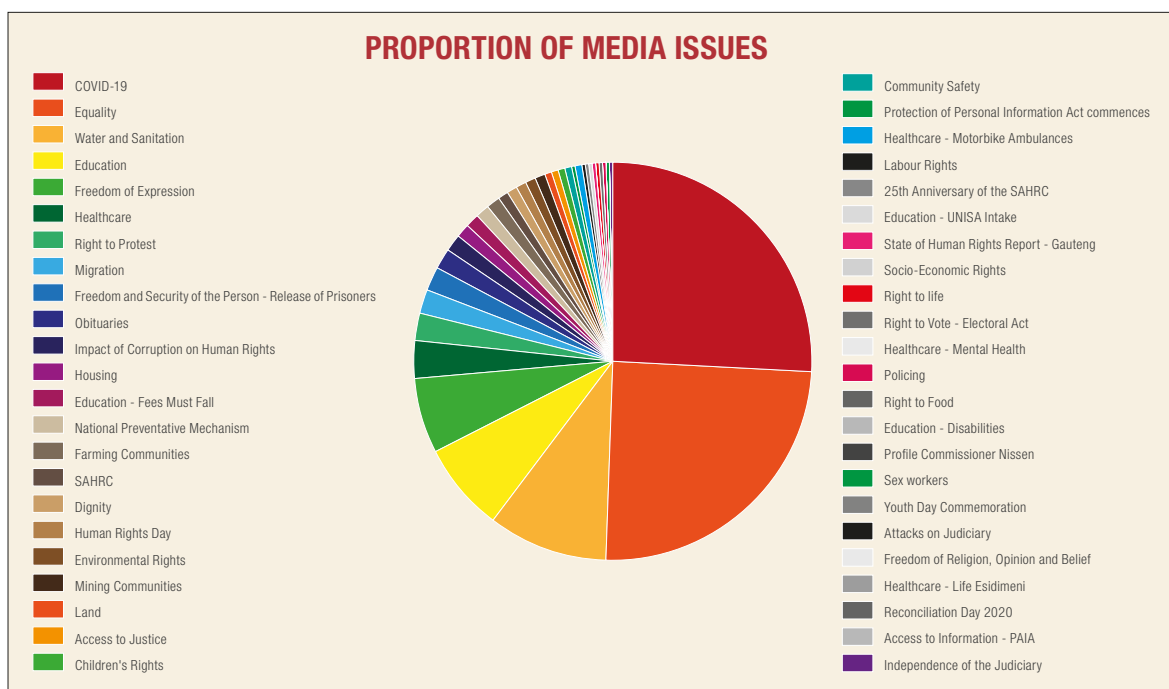
OVERALL MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE COMMISSION

The top five broad themes of COVID-19, equality, water and sanitation, education and freedom of expression (hate speech specifically) attracted the most media coverage and constituted more than a third of the Commission's total media coverage at **73.7%**. All other rights and themes cumulatively constitute **26.3%** of the remaining coverage of the Commission for period under review.

As aforementioned, the Commission saw **7 602** media items published, broadcast, or communicated electronically in the 2020/2021 financial year. The items are thematically categorised as set out in Chapter Two of the Constitution- the Bill of Rights and include the focus areas of the Commissioners.

Table: The most prevalent media items:

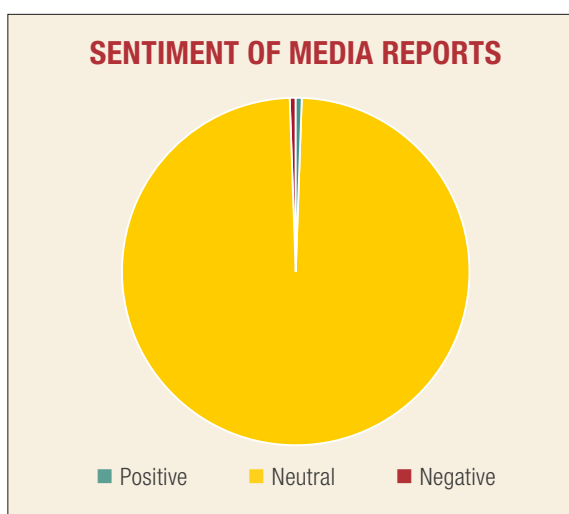
Issue	Total Number of Stories	Issue	Total Number of Stories
COVID-19	1982	Community Safety	35
Equality	1860	Protection of Personal Information Act commences	32
Water and Sanitation	739	Healthcare - Motorbike Ambulances	28
Education	548	Labour Rights	24
Freedom of Expression	472	25th Anniversary of the SAHRC	21
Healthcare	237	Education - UNISA Intake	21
Right to Protest	159	State of Human Rights Report - Gauteng	19
Migration	151	Socio-Economic Rights	18
Freedom and Security of the Person - Release of Prisoners	145	Right to life	14
Obituaries	131	Right to Vote - Electoral Act	14
Impact of Corruption on Human Rights	97	Healthcare - Mental Health	9
Housing	93	Policing	9
Education - Fees Must Fall	92	Right to Food	7
National Preventative Mechanism	88	Education - Disabilities	5
Farming Communities	80	Profile Commissioner Nissen	5
SAHRC	64	Sex workers	5
Dignity	63	Youth Day Commemoration	5
Human Rights Day	61	Attacks on Judiciary	3
Environmental Rights	60	Freedom of Religion, Opinion and Belief	3
Mining Communities	57	Healthcare - Life Esidimeni	2
Land	46	Reconciliation Day 2020	2
Access to Justice	45	Access to Information - PAIA	1
Children's Rights	43	Independence of the Judiciary	1



MEDIA SENTIMENT

The Commission monitors sentiment in order to gauge how the media understands and reports on human rights and its work. Sentiment is measured through qualitative analysis by an independent external service provider and is based on the 'common person's' understanding of the article and the overall perceptions gleaned from the articles.

Positive news coverage amounted to **53** items, translating to **0.7%** coverage of the Commission, **7519** items translating to **98.9%** was neutral, and 30 items translating to **0.4%** was negative, during 2020/2021 as shown below:



Negative coverage of the Commission during 2020/2021 was driven by **30** media stories which largely relate to the Commission's call for learners to return to school, during the pandemic. The Commission made these calls based on the need not to leave

any learner behind as most learners, particularly those from poorer communities do not have access to digital technology and data for online learning, are dependent on school nutrition programmes to access food and to safeguard them from possible abuse. The call by the Commission was made in response to the factors unique to South Africa, but also having consulted with the education sector, and engaged with recommendations from the World Health Organisation and international practise. The negative sentiment, although not unexpected because of the general levels of awareness and uncertainty about the COVID-19 pandemic could be attributed to the perception that the Commission had been reckless to advocate for the reopening of schools in the face of the ongoing pandemic and absence of unequivocal information regarding the vulnerability of children to the infection.

The Commission is mindful that coverage does not always have to be overwhelmingly positive to advance awareness and encourage discussion about human rights. It is to this extent that the Commission welcomes both positive and negative criticism about its work and the state of human rights.

The majority of media reports notably entailed neutral coverage as reporting which was neither positive nor negative and reports focussed on the mandate, work and issues covered by the Commission. Positive coverage of Commission was driven by **53** news items which related to the Commission's 25th Anniversary events during the period between 2 October and 10 December respectively; the Commission's monitoring interventions in schools to ensure the safe return of learners during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the reports on water and sanitation concerns arising out of the pollution of the **Vaal River** and access to clean water in **Hammanskraal**.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Engaging through social media as a widely used means of communication is a crucial part of the Commission's strategic imperative to inform and educate on human rights, and to build a culture of human rights. The use of social media platforms provides the Commission exposure and enables the wider dissemination of key positions, messages, information and context regarding human rights to a wide audience.

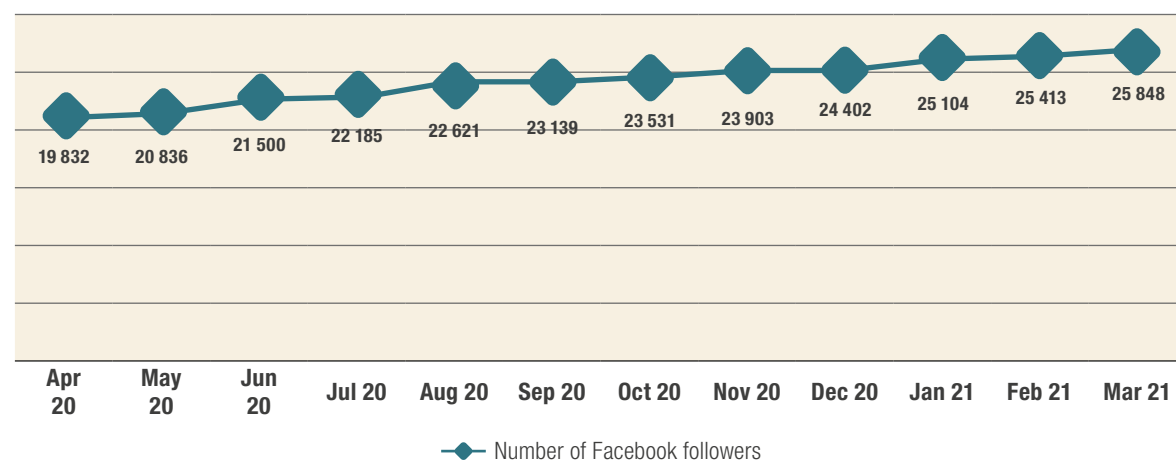
During the 2020/2021 period under review, the Commission's social media activity comprised **261** posts on Facebook and **392** posts on Twitter. The Commission increased its Twitter following from 66 446 at the end of the 2019/2020 year to **79 452** at the end of the 2020/2021 financial year, marking a **19.57%** increase. The Commission's Facebook following also increased from 19 000 at the end of the 2019/2020 year to **25 848** at the end of the 2020/2021 financial year, marking a **36%** increase.

Table: Social Media Growth for 2020/2021 Financial Year:

Facebook

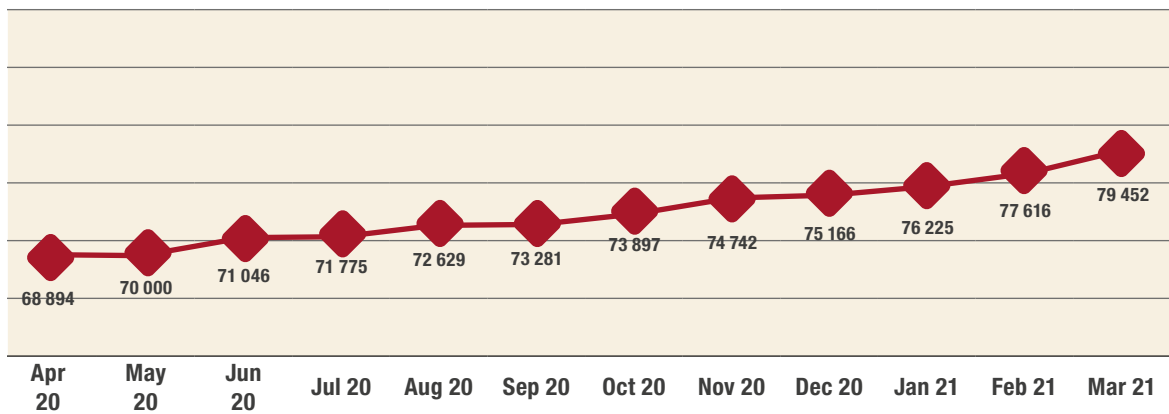
	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Number of Facebook followers	19 832	20 836	21 500	22 185	22 623	23 139	23 531	23 903	24 403	25 104	25 413	25 848
Number of Twitter followers	68 894	70 000	71 046	71 775	72 629	73 281	73 897	74 742	75 166	76 225	77 616	79 452

NUMBER OF FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS



Twitter

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Number of Twitter followers	68 894	70 000	71 046	71 775	72 629	73 281	73 897	74 742	75 166	76 225	77 616	79 452

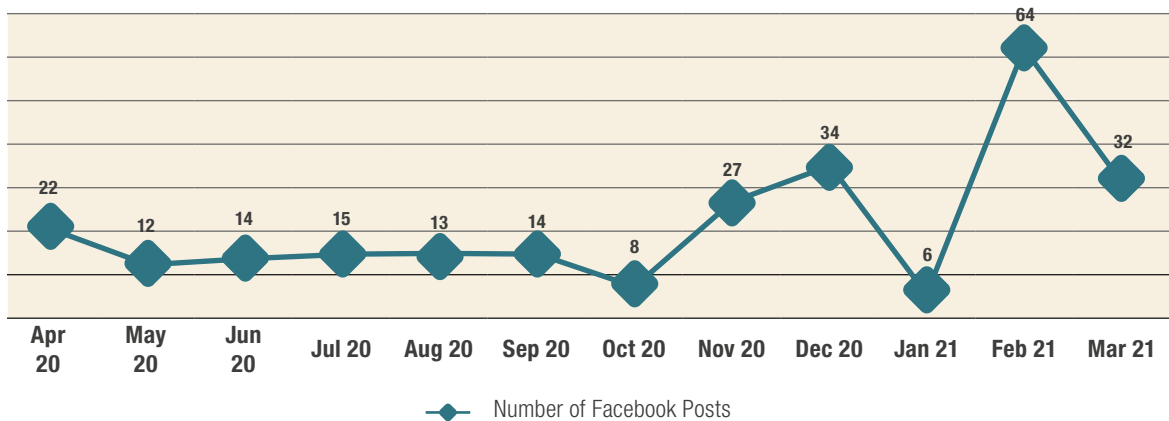


Social media posts per month

Facebook:

	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21
Facebook Posts	22	12	14	15	13	14	8	27	34	6	64	32

NUMBER OF FACEBOOK POSTS



Twitter:

	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21
Twitter Posts	31	23	18	24	19	24	13	42	49	6	77	66

NUMBER OF TWITTER POSTS

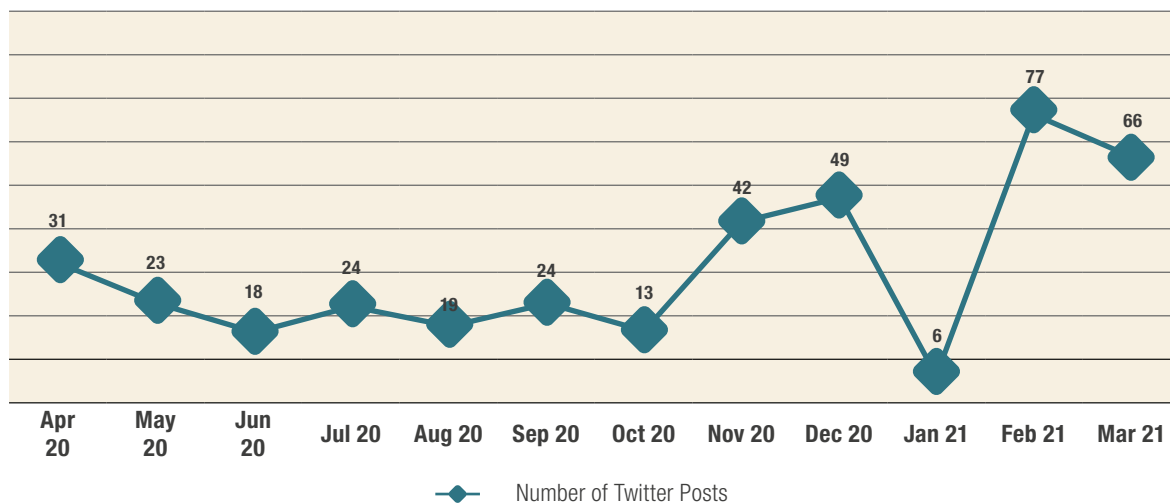
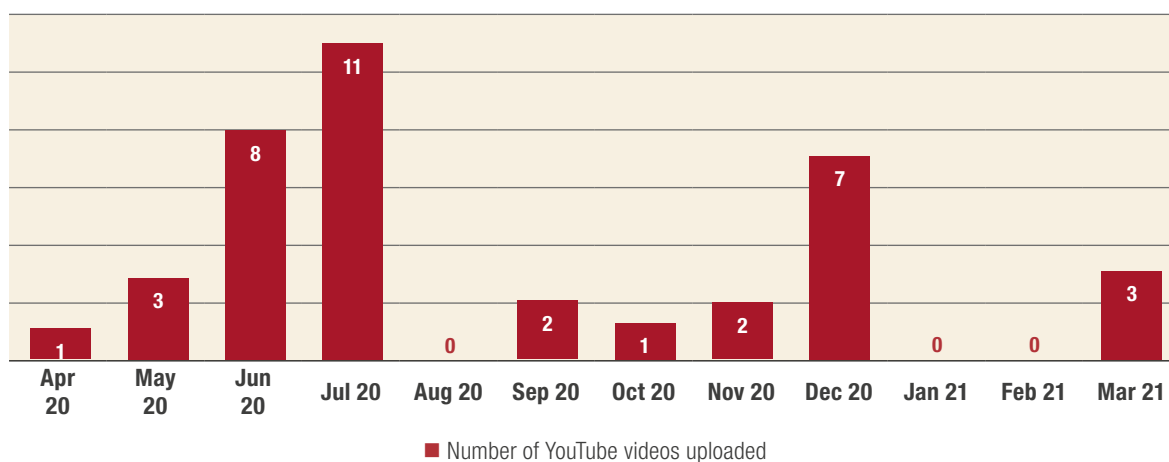


Table: Number of SAHRC YouTube Uploads:

	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21
You Tube Uploads	1	3	8	11	0	2	1	2	7	0	0	3

NUMBER OF YOUTUBE VIDEOS UPLOADED



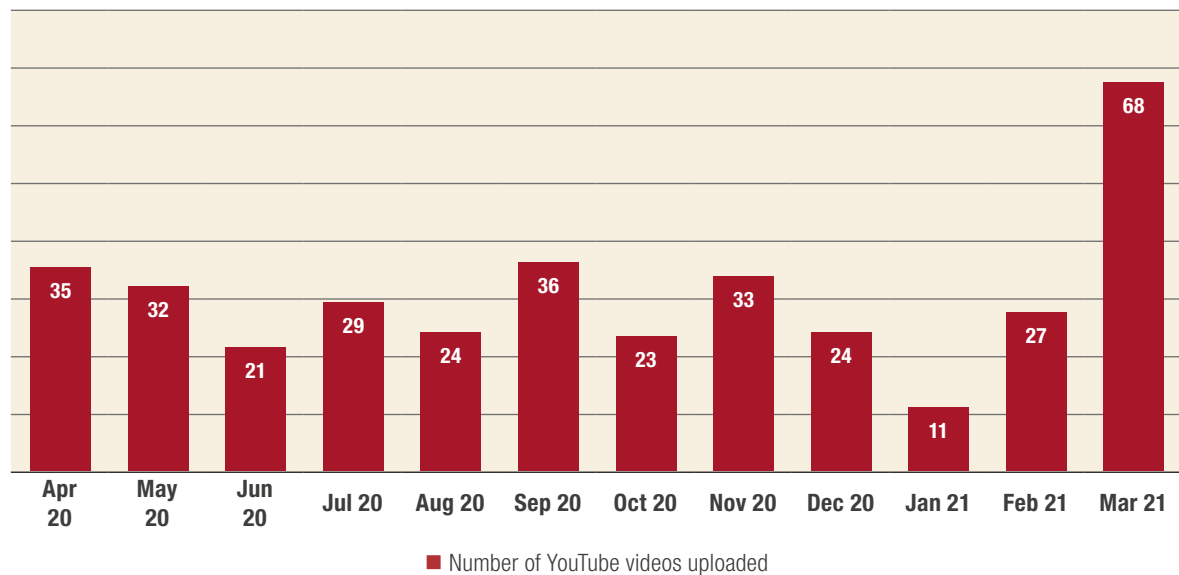
SAHRC WEBSITE

During the 2020/2021 financial year, the Commission's website (www.sahrc.org.za) was regularly uploaded with a total of **363** uploads for the year. The high number of web-uploads reflects the continued high number of activities, reports and human rights products produced and undertaken by the Commission, all of which were communicated via, and published on the website.

Table: Number of Web Uploads:

	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21
Total number of web uploads	35	32	21	29	24	36	23	33	24	11	27	68

TOTAL NUMBER OF WEBSITE UPLOADS



OPINION PIECES

During the 2020/2021 financial year, the Commission authored 8 opinion pieces which were published in daily and weekly newspapers and online publications.

Table: Opinion pieces authored and published:

Date	Headline	Publication	Readership	Online Link If Available
21 March 2021	Corruption is a human rights issue	Business Day (Human Rights Edition)	15 000	https://issuu.com/sundaytimesza/docs/humanrights_2021
18 August 2020	25 Years On, Press Freedom is Essential for the SAHRC	Mail and Guardian (Press Freedom Edition)	427 000	http://fusion.ornico.co.za/Attachments/2020/08/14/2020_08_14_4920957.pdf
8 March 2021	To Vaccinate or Not to Vaccinate – A Human Rights Question	Mail and Guardian	549 839	https://mg.co.za/opinion/2021-03-08-to-vaccinate-or-not-to-vaccinate-a-human-rights-question/
21 March 2021	Corruption continues to erode human rights	Independent on Saturday, Saturday Insider	14 857	No Link available
21 April 2020	SA needs an independent monitoring framework to implement rights of persons with disabilities	City Press	1 540 018	https://www.news24.com/citypress/voices/sa-needs-an-independent-monitoring-framework-to-implement-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-20200401
4 May 2020	Introducing South Africa's mechanism for the prevention of torture	Mail and Guardian	4 269 813	https://mg.co.za/article/2020-05-04-introducing-south-africas-mechanism-for-the-prevention-of-torture-and-degrading-treatment-or-punishment/
22 September 2020	Vet all school employees now to stop sexual abuse	Mail and Guardian	4 269 813	https://mg.co.za/opinion/2020-09-22-vet-all-school-employees-now-to-stop-sexual-abuse/
4 October 2020	25 years of the SA Human Rights Commission – working towards a society that the country's people have struggled for	Daily Maverick	3 377 795	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-10-04-twenty-five-years-of-the-sa-human-rights-commission-working-towards-a-society-that-the-countrys-people-have-struggled-for/

The 2020/2021 Annual AdvoComm report illustrates that the Commission achieved its targets as set out in its Annual Performance Plan, despite the challenges and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission significantly adapted and adjusted its conventional outreach format of direct physical engagements, and instead relied on intensified information dissemination through technology based settings and platforms. Through the hybrid webinars and virtual events, the Commission stayed engaged and connected with its broad range of stakeholders.

The Commission extended its presence, engaged with key communities and provided direct access to services to often marginalised communities in previously unreached rural areas by conducting the inter-provincial roadshows. Communities were able to lodge complaints, which points towards a general indication that complainants' levels of awareness of their rights is improving. The Commission supported communities' access to justice through the establishment and empowerment of community human rights champions across the country. The Commission notes the benefits derived to date and is continuing with the project in 2021/2022.

The Commission continues to maintain its overall visibility, raising its profile across the country through varied mediums of communication, as reflected in the media items reporting on the work of the Commission. Much of this coverage were interventions, engagements and work on the ground by the Commission. The commemorative events marking the Commission's 25th anniversary show that 25 years on, the Commission still has a crucial role to play in supporting constitutional democracy.

Despite the Commission's best efforts, injustices continue to manifest as equality related violations remain the highest number of complaints lodged with the Commission and inequality is most starkly reflected by the lack of access to basic socio-economic rights. The context of systemic, structural and historical inequality, endemic poverty and increasing unemployment requires that the Commission continues executing its promotion mandate in building awareness, knowledge and understanding of human rights, so as to entrench a culture of human rights in the Republic.

*This report is dedicated to the memory of
the late Northern Cape Advocacy Officer,
Reverend Julian Timothy Masimila.*





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