

COMMISSION
FOR THE PROMOTION & PROTECTION
OF THE RIGHTS OF CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS
& LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES

Private Bag X 90 000, HOUGHTON, 2041
No. 158 Jan Smuts Avenue, 1st Floor, West Wing, Rosebank, Johannesburg
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EMBARGO : IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM : OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
TO : NEWS EDITORS / PR WIRES
DATE : 07 April 2011
SUBJECT : HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH ACTIVITY SUMMARY

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) is an institution established by the constitution of South Africa Act of 1996 to support constitutional democracy, amongst its objective the Commission is concerned with nation building, reconciliation and national unity among diverse cultural, religious and linguistic communities.

The Commission would therefore like to request the members of the media to afford us the space, to inform the South African Cultural, Religious and Language Communities on the progress made and interventions that the Commission executed during this month of human rights.

The human rights issues and situations that the Commission handled were as follows:

1. The school dress code vs human rights (such as the odwa case in Western Cape, Thabang in North west and Lujulile in KZN) of young learners at various schools across the Country ;
2. The launch of various CRL Community councils in Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Kwazulu and Limpopo;
3. The launch of the language report in Kwazulu Natal;
4. The Launch of the guidelines on Animal slaughtering in terms of the African culture and: Religion vs Municipality by laws;
5. The media briefing on the practice of Ukuthwala and the dialogue on witchcraft;
6. The fact finding missions on the sacred site in Kwazulu- Natal ;

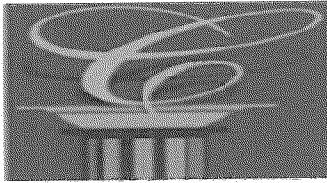
7. The research forums on the practice of initiation in various provinces ; and
8. The dress code in the workplace vs cultural and religious reasons
9. Graves issue: Recycling and the destruction of graves.

For media interviews, kindly liase with Ms Botle Letsebe @ 011 537 7625 / 079 238 1485. Email: BOTLE@crlcommission.org.za

Yours sincerely



Moreroa
Adv PS Moreroa
Chief Executive Officer
CRL Rights Commission



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EMBARGO : IMMEDIATE REALESE

FROM : OFFICE OF THE CEO. ADV. P.S. MOREROA

TO : NEWS EDITORS / PR WIRES

DATE : 19 APRIL 2011

SUBJECT : FREEDOM MONTH STATEMENT

Re: Freedom Month Statement

The CRL Rights Commission's theme for this month is **"WORKING TOGETHER TO FOSTER FREEDOM AND NATION BUILDING THROUGH CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY"**.

As the country enters its seventeenth year of democratic government based on the Constitution and the rule of law, it is important to reflect also on how well or bad we are doing as the country. As one of the institutions established solely to support and promote democracy, the Commission for the promotion and protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) can proudly indicate that South Africans though gradually, are generally beginning to embrace the cultural, religious and linguistic diversities that are characteristic of our society. With particular reference to Section 15 of the Constitution which provides for the freedom of religion, belief and opinion we have received some complaints particularly from the education sector directed on alleged discrimination based on religious exclusion particularly with regard to dreadlocks as dressed by Rastafarians and other African Traditional Healers practitioners.

These are the kind of freedoms that South Africa needs to foster in all community structures noting the historical political background from which we are coming, which did not respect nor observe human dignity, equality, freedom and social justice.

The Commission advocates for the promotion and protection of all constitutional freedoms in the Constitution particularly the Bill of Rights as they are established on the foundational values of our Constitution. Freedom is not only a right but also one of the values and pillars upon which fundamental rights are based. Section 1 of the Constitution provides that the Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values: human dignity, the achievement of equality, and the advancement of human rights and freedoms. In the matter of Pillay v MEC of Education in Kwazulu Natal the Court argued that 'Dignity and identity are inseparably linked as one's sense of self-worth is defined by one's identity. Cultural identity is one of the most important parts of a person's identity precisely because it flows from belonging to a community and not from personal choice or achievement. And belonging involves more than simple association; it includes participation and expression of the community's practices and traditions'. Citing this case is important to highlight the attitude of our law as adjudicated by our courts towards unfair discrimination. The fact of the case involved Ms Pillay who granted her daughter Sunali permission to pierce her nose and insert a small gold stud. When she returned to School after the holidays on 4 October 2004, Ms Pillay was informed that her daughter was not allowed to wear the nose stud as it was in contravention of the Code, then the matter was taken to court.

Lesson learnt from this case should be that our School Governing Bodies should ensure that the admission policies of schools must accommodate these inseparable freedoms to human dignity, otherwise any law or conduct inconsistent with the Constitution is invalid.

Let us celebrate this freedom month bearing in mind that, seventeen years ago, South Africa was a grossly unequal society in terms of human dignity, equality and freedom; and a consistent abusive state of fundamental human rights.

The CRL Rights Commission will be available to assist the advisory committee in the Minister's office in the development and attainment of African Languages in SA.

Issued by the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities.

For more information contact Botle Letsebe 011 537 7600 / 079 238 1485.

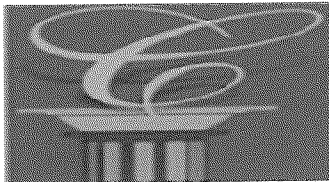
Yours sincerely;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P S Moreroa', with a large, dark scribble above it.

Adv. P S Moreroa

Chief Executive Officer

CRL Rights Commission



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FROM : OFFICE OF THE CEO. ADV. P.S. MOREROA

TO : NEWS EDITORS / PR WIRES

DATE : 19 APRIL 2011

SUBJECT : RESPONSE TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER BLADE NZIMANDE REGARDING LANGUAGE PRACTISE IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

The call by the Minister of Higher Education to make it compulsory for students to learn and study an African language as a prerequisite to completing their undergraduate studies is almost long overdue; particularly noting that South Africa is in its eighteenth year of a democratic and constitutional order. Our constitutional dispensation amongst others puts linguistic freedom and expression at the core of fundamental rights in an open democratic society such as ours. The Commission for the promotion and protection of the rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) advocates for the promotion of historically diminished and diminishing linguistic heritages and therefore supports Minister Blade Nzimande's call.

The CRL Rights Commission takes the call broadly to include our homes and basic education level as strategic points at which African languages should be entrenched right through secondary education and beyond. This is the approach that elevated English and Afrikaans to levels where they are today. Writing in the Star Opinion and Analysis on 13 April 2011, *Martin Lafon a researcher at the Centre for Research on the Politics of Language at the University of Pretoria* acknowledges that the Minister's proposal 'should first apply at the primary and secondary levels. Children, and this is as true of white children as it is of black ones, learn languages naturally

by being exposed to them – in the family primarily, but also in the social environment'. From formal school implementation of the promotion of African languages, other organs of state such as municipalities should take into account the languages used in their jurisdiction and communicate in those languages when offering services to the communities.

That step would be giving Section 30 of the Constitution a practical meaning that 'everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice; and Section 31 that 'persons belonging to a cultural, religious and linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language. Resources should be made available at basic level so that all children access languages of their choice including African languages, so that they don't meet up with their languages at tertiary level.

The CRL Rights Commission will be available to assist the advisory committee in the Minister's office in the development and attainment of African Languages in SA.

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For more information contact Botle Letsebe 011 537 7600 / 079 238 1485.

Yours sincerely;



Adv. P S Moreroa

Chief Executive Officer

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