
TO: EDITORS/REPORTERS

17 APRIL 2023

**MEDIA INVITE TO THE NATIONAL CUSTOMARY INITIATION INDABA HOSTED BY THE
CRL RIGHTS COMMISSION ON 24- 26 APRIL 2023 AT BIRCHWOOD HOTEL,
EKURHULENI, GAUTENG**

The CRL Rights Commission invites members of the media to the National Customary Initiation Indaba on 24 -26 April 2023 which aims to address the high rates of deaths and other challenges at initiation schools.

Over the last few years, this ancient rite of initiation, a practice considered sacred by many South Africans have seen a lot of challenges. Notably, most of these resulted from the increasing number of deaths of young men, those who suffered penal amputations, as well as those who had injuries experienced from certain initiation schools. Consequently, views and counterviews have also been expressed about this cultural practice of Initiation/Ulwaluko/Koma/Lebollo.

Through its investigation in 2017, the CRL Rights Commission found that at that time in Gauteng, some criminal elements had crept into this traditional practice of initiation. Although it may be argued that this practice is being done as per Sections 30 and 31 of the South Africa Constitution of 1996, under the Bill of Rights. Importantly, from its investigation, the Commission noted that in some instances this right was practiced in such a way that violates the rights of others. In particular, this was largely due to instances of abductions or even where young boys were taken away without their parental concern and the use of violence.

The Commission further found that some of the activities were in clear violation of the Children's' Act 38 of 2005, the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013, the Traditional Leadership and Governance Act 41 of 2003, the National Health Act 61 of 2003, as well as some municipal by-laws. In spite of several positive efforts undertaken by many institutions, the country has continued to be flooded by reports of young men who in the quest of practicing their culture, yet come back in black bags – dead, amputated, or even injured. It has been for these challenges that the Commission undertook its investigation in order to get accurate facts about the extent of the challenges, the causes and also determine

remedies. Therefore, the forthcoming National Initiation Indaba aims to come up with possible solutions that can help to:

- (a) eradicate a high number of death rates during the initiation season.
- (b) create a conducive environment of acceptable norms and standards that should prevail during the initiation season without compromising the lives of the young men.
- (c) prevent illegal and botched circumcisions and illegal schools contributing to the high death rate in some regions.
- (d) determine interventions/strategies that can assist the victims of botched circumcisions to regain their dignity.
- (e) learn the best practice models from other provinces that can help to curb high death rates.
- (f) assess the progress made since the promulgation of the Customary Initiation Act 2021 in alleviating death rates.

This forthcoming Initiation Indaba will come up with an action plan that can contribute to other intervention measures and thereby collectively provide guidance on how to save lives at Initiation schools.

Amongst others, these are some of the stakeholders that are invited to the Indaba.

National and Provincial Houses of Traditional and Khoi-Leaders, National Department of COGTA, COGTA Portfolio Committee Members, some of the Chapter Nine Institutions, Initiation Principals, NPA, Initiation Caregivers, Initiation Traditional Surgeons, Traditional Health Practitioners, Department of Traditional Affairs, other government departments, some parents who lost their children at the initiation schools.

Date: 24- 26 April 2023

Time: Monday: 14:00-17:00, Tuesday: 09:00-17, Wednesday 09:00-13:00

Venue: Birchwood Hotel and Conference in Gauteng.

Please RSVP by 19 April 2023.

For any further enquiry, you can contact Mpiyakhe Mkholo @ 0836594974 – Mpiyakhem@crlcommission.org.za or Beverley Mukhavhuli @ 066 282 6067 – beverley@crlcommission.org.za

Issued by the CRL Rights Commission

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