

TO EDITORS/REPORTERS

15 APRIL 2025

**MEDIA STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE CRL RIGHTS COMMISSION LAUNCHING A
PEER REVIEW MECHANISM SECTION 22 COMMITTEE FOR THE CHRISTIAN
SECTOR**

In 2017, the CRL Rights Commission released a report on the Commercialisation of Religion and the abuse of People's belief systems with findings and recommendations. One of the recommendations in the report relates to the need to establish a "peer review council" meant to deal with the challenges of abuses perpetrated by some religious leaders.

Today, the CRL Rights Commission held a press conference at which it presented a framework to establish a peer review council. To give effect to this process, the Commission, in line with its Mandate, stated in Section 22. (1)(a) of the CRL Act 19 of 2002 may establish one or more committees consisting of members only or members and staff, or other persons, to assist it in the performance of its functions. Thus, the Commission has established a Section 22 Committee which is led by Prof Musa Xulu to undertake all the preparatory work towards the establishment of the peer review council.

This process will be guided, among others, by the following legislative frameworks, namely.

- Section 15 (1) of the Bill of Rights, which states that everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion
- Section 31(1) - Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or 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 to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.

- Section 31(2) says the rights in subsection (1) may not be exercised in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.
- Section 22 of the South African Constitution further stipulates that every citizen has the right to choose their trade, occupation or profession freely. The practice of trade, occupation or profession may be regulated by law.
- Section 22, (1)(a) of the CRL Act says that the Commission may establish one or more committees consisting of members only or members and staff, or other persons, to assist the Commission in the performance of its functions

The Section 22 Committee shall:

- Come up with mechanisms to deal with issues in the religious sector, especially promoting and protecting the rights of the Christian believer while ensuring that religious freedom is maintained in line with the constitution.
- Undertake provincial and national consultations with religious leaders in the Christian sector
- Develop strategies to deal with and curb spiritual transgressions.
- Make recommendations for a legal and/or legislated framework to promote peer review mechanisms in the religious sector.
- Encourage collaborative and cooperative relationships within the Christian religious sector.
- Conduct extensive research to assess the scale and impact of abuse of people's beliefs and harmful religious practices in eroding the religious rights of Christian believers, especially where monitoring is slack or absent.

Issued by the CRL Rights Commission.

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