
EDITORS/REPORTERS

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**THE CRL RIGHTS COMMISSION WELCOMES ANC'S CLARIFICATION ON RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM AND SELF-REGULATION**

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) welcomes the African National Congress (ANC) media statement of 13 October 2026 reaffirming the constitutional right to freedom of religion and clarifying that the accountability framework under discussion in the religious sector is premised on self-regulation rather than state regulation.

The Commission notes that self-regulation locates the responsibility for adjudicating misconduct within the religious fraternity itself. The ANC clarification is consistent with the Commission's longstanding position.

The Commission has consistently stated throughout public consultations and stakeholder engagements that the sector itself should develop and implement the accountability mechanisms. This principle informed the establishment of the Section 22 Ad Hoc Committee for the Christian sector and continues to guide engagement with religious communities.

While the framework provides for the autonomy and independence of religious organisations, it seeks to:

- strengthen accountability,
- promote ethical leadership,
- protect congregants from abuse and exploitation, and
- preserve public confidence in religious institutions.

Consistent with this constitutional position, the Commission does not interfere in matters of theology, doctrine, or legitimate religious practice.

The Commission welcomes public statements by President Cyril Ramaphosa and other stakeholders reaffirming that the issue at hand relates to self-regulation rather than state control

of religion. These clarifications help to correct misconceptions and ensure that public debate remains grounded in constitutional principles and factual accuracy.

As a Chapter 9 institution established under Chapter 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the CRL Rights Commission exercises its powers independently, impartially and without fear, favour or prejudice. It derives its authority from the Constitution and the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities Act, 19 of 2002. It does not align with or advance the interests of any political party. Thus, its determinations arise from lawful processes, research, investigations, stakeholder engagements and objective assessments conducted in accordance with statutory and constitutional obligations.

The Commission's interventions have been driven by its responsibility to protect human dignity, safeguard vulnerable persons from exploitation and abuse, promote accountability and advance rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution.

The Commission calls upon religious leaders, faith-based organisations, civil society and members of the public to continue constructive engagement on religious freedom, accountability and protection of rights, informed by accurate information and constitutional values.

The Commission remains committed to protecting religious freedom, advancing human dignity, strengthening accountability and safeguarding constitutional rights of all cultural, religious and linguistic communities.

Issued by the CRL Rights Commission

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Ends.