

Press Release

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South African Institute of Race Relations
The power of ideas

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Government poisoned by a toxic mix of policies

South Africa's system of government is poisoned by a "toxic mix of affirmative action, cadre deployment, and impunity", according to the IRR (Institute of Race Relations).

In the latest edition of its *@Liberty* policy bulletin, the IRR says that the "lack of capacity" in the public service we so often hear about is a "euphemism". People often "lack capacity because they don't need it to get or keep a job. Filling a racial quota or supporting the right party – or the right faction within it – are often more important."

Citing a report on public health facilities commissioned by the Department of Health, the IRR adds that some of the most damning indictments of the Government's performance in healthcare and other areas come from official quarters. Among other things, this report found that the country's public health facilities scored only 50% on infection prevention and control, while the availability of essential drugs in clinics was found to be a "77% failure".

The IRR notes: "Hospitals and clinics don't run themselves. They are run by people. When things go wrong it is often not simply the result of happenstance or bad luck. It is a result of decisions made or actions taken – or not taken – by those people. So it is a logical inference that there is often something wrong with the criteria according to which appointments in these facilities are made.

"Whether the finger should point mainly at affirmative action, or at cadre deployment, or at the impunity that goes with lack of accountability is impossible to determine. The point is that the mix is toxic," the IRR says.

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