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Media Contact: Thuthukani Ndebele Tel: 011-482-7221 E-mail: thuthukani@sairr.org.za

A fifth of the country's households headed by over 60s

Almost 21% of all households in South Africa are headed by older persons (those over 60 years of age). The Eastern Cape has the highest proportion of such households, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Over 60s increasingly have to provide care and support in households because families have become disjointed. Mr Thuthukani Ndebele, a researcher at the Institute, said the out-migration of working-age people in rural provinces, poverty, and HIV/AIDS partly contribute to this trend.

The data is sourced from Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) and the Institute for Futures Research.

Gauteng has the lowest proportion of households headed by over 60s. Stats SA credits this to the high in-migration of young people in the province.

Households headed by over 60s, 2010

<i>Province</i>	<i>Households headed by over 60s</i>	<i>Total number of households</i>	<i>Proportion of households headed by over 60s</i>
Eastern Cape	486,213	1,781,000	27.3%
Free State	170,805	885,000	19.3%
Gauteng	578,388	3,684,000	15.7%
KwaZulu-Natal	572,232	2,712,000	21.1%
Limpopo	302,498	1,394,000	21.7%
Mpumalanga	175,595	1,015,000	17.3%
North West	225,860	982,000	23.0%
Northern Cape	76,800	320,000	24.0%
Western Cape	337,040	1,532,000	22.0%
South Africa	2,925,000	14,304,000	20.5%

Source: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), *Social profile of vulnerable groups in South Africa, 2002-2010*, Report No 03-19-00, 15 December 2011, Table 2.8, p13, Table 5.1, p93, Table 5.2 p94

'The proportion of old people in the country is increasing whereas the proportions of children and young people are declining. This shift is attributable in part to lower fertility rates (fewer children being born), decreasing mortality, and increasing life expectancy (people surviving longer),' said Mr Ndebele.

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