

FreeFACTS

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South Africa's moderate majority – more dominant than you think

Many in South Africa would have you believe that the country is on the brink of a race war. Divisive politicians, some journalists, activists, and others, continually claim that race is at the core of South Africa's problems and that racism has worsened since the end of apartheid. But this couldn't be further from the truth.

We at the IRR have been releasing what we call our 'Hope' reports, on the state of race relations in South Africa at regular intervals for a number of years. Our latest report, is entitled *Unite the Middle*, and its findings match those of the various reports that have come before it. This edition of *FreeFacts* provides you with the key findings.

Race relations are in a far better state that you would expect, given the history of our country and the continued emphasis put on race by many of our politicians. And South Africans are generally united across race lines on the major issues of the day.

Despite the rhetoric of the last 18 months, the issue of land reform is low down on the list of what South Africans (including black South Africans) think the priorities of the government should be. South Africans are fairly united in what they believe the government should focus on, and the answers are not surprising. South Africans believe that the government should focus on creating jobs, reducing corruption and fighting crime, and improving education.

Our research shows that there is a large majority of moderate South Africans who want to work together and want the same things for themselves and their children. And if you are a Friend of the IRR then you are a member of the moderate 80% of South Africans who want to work with others and build a prosperous, free society. Your support helps us push the ideas which will help create a society with opportunity for all, and where your right to make decisions about you and your family is protected.

— **Marius Roodt**

JOIN US

The IRR is an advocacy group that fights for your right to make decisions about your life, family and business, free from unnecessary government, political, and bureaucratic interference. FreeFACTS publishes evidence that communities are better off when individuals are free to make decisions about how they want to live, be educated, work, access healthcare, think, speak, own property, and protect their communities. If you agree with the issues we stand for, welcome to the team. There are millions of people just like you who are tired of South African politicians, activists, and commentators attempting to rein in your freedom to decide. Take control and make sure your voice is heard by becoming a friend of the IRR.

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Reasons for Hope 2019

Table 1, 2018 IRR field survey

<i>The top priority for the Government (from list supplied by the interviewer)</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Coloured</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>White</i>
Creating more jobs	26%	27%	32%	19%	13%
Fighting corruption	14%	10%	19%	31%	34%
Improving education	11%	10%	9%	19%	18%
Fighting crime	10%	9%	18%	0%	11%
Building more RDP housing	10%	11%	10%	6%	1%
Fighting drugs, drug abuse	9%	11%	3%	6%	0%
Fighting illegal immigration	7%	8%	0%	0%	4%
Improving healthcare	4%	4%	3%	12%	5%
Speeding up service delivery	3%	3%	5%	0%	3%
Fighting racism	2%	2%	0%	6%	5%
Speeding up land reform	2%	2%	0%	0%	4%
Speeding up affirmative action	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%

Nearly a quarter of South Africans believe that creating more jobs should be the priority for the government. It is telling that 27% of black respondents and 32% of coloured respondents identified this as what they believed the government should focus on, as these are the two communities most affected by joblessness. Fighting crime and corruption, and improving the state of education, were also identified as government priorities by the survey's respondents. At the same time, only two percent of respondents said that fighting racism should be a government priority. The same proportion identified speeding up land reform as a government priority, while only one percent of respondents said that the acceleration of affirmative action should be prioritised.

Table 2, 2018 IRR field survey

<i>How best to improve people's lives</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Coloured</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>White</i>
More jobs and better education	59%	57%	65%	62%	72%
Better delivery of services such as electricity, water, sanitation	24%	24%	31%	25%	24%
More black economic empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action in employment (AA) policies	8%	9%	0%	12%	0%
More land reform	8%	9%	5%	0%	2%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%

There was a similar result when people were asked about the best way to improve people's lives. Only a small minority thought that accelerating black economic empowerment and affirmative action policies would be the best tool to improve the lives of South Africans. A far higher proportion of respondents felt that higher levels of employment and improved education would be the best way to make the lives of South Africans better. This can only happen in an environment in the absence of high economic growth, which is unlikely without serious economic and other reforms.

Reasons for Hope 2019

Table 3, 2018 IRR field survey

<i>Who do you think should be appointed to jobs in South Africa?</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Coloured</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>White</i>
Only blacks for a long time ahead	10%	13%	0%	6%	1%
Only blacks till demographically representative	7%	9%	1%	0%	0%
Appointments should be made on merit, with special training for the disadvantaged	58%	55%	67%	69%	68%
All appointments should be made on merit alone, without such training	22%	20%	31%	25%	28%

This table shows that most South Africans believe that appointments should be made on merit, although most respondents agreed that previously disadvantaged people should receive special training.

Table 4, 2018 IRR field survey

<i>Sports teams should be selected on merit, not quotas</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Coloured</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>White</i>
Yes	83%	82%	81%	75%	96%
No	15%	17%	16%	25%	3%

This table shows that a large majority of South Africans do not think quotas should have a place in how our national sports teams are selected. This is a finding that has held true across the vast majority of our polls. Although an argument could be made for the use of quotas or targets at the lower level of sports, there is no need for it at national level.

Table 5, 2018 IRR field survey

<i>Would you prefer your child's teachers to be:</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Coloured</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>White</i>
The same race as you	15%	18%	5%	6%	7%
Doesn't matter as long as teacher is good	84%	81%	95%	94%	92%

This table also shows how South Africans are increasingly moving away from race. A solid majority of South Africans, across all race groups, do not think the race of their child's school teacher matters.

Table 6, 2018 IRR field survey

<i>Different races need each other for progress, there should be full opportunities for all</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Coloured</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>White</i>
Agree	88%	86%	96%	100%	98%
Disagree	10%	12%	4%	0%	1%

This is perhaps the most heartening of all the findings from our latest Hope report. Nearly 90% of all respondents believe that South Africa can only succeed with contributions from all of the country's various race groups. This shows that most South Africans believe in a country which belongs to all who live in it, and that the only way to a prosperous future is through cooperation between all South Africans. This is the moderate majority of South Africans, the 80% of people who are in broad agreement on the big issues facing the country, and know that they can only succeed if other South Africans also succeed.