

## Human Rights Report Card 2018

LAUNCH OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT CARD

**On Monday, 23rd of March 2018 the Centre for Constitutional Rights (CFCR) in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) welcomed the audience to the launch of the Human Rights Report Card 2018 at the Townhouse Hotel in Cape Town. The Human Rights Report Card assesses and monitors the implementation of human rights in South Africa on an annual basis. The report was launched for the ninth time.**

After the opening remarks by Mrs. Christina Teichmann, KAS- Project Manager, the director of the CFR Mrs. Phephelaphi Dube presented the report by highlighting the key concerns of the CFR. The aim of the report is to offer a measurement of the realization of human rights in South Africa according to Section 7 of the South African constitution: "The State must respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights in the Bill of Rights". In the report all the human rights get a ranking depending on their realization, starting from A (Excellent) to E (Very poor). This ranking reflects the status quo of Human Rights in South Africa. It shows if they have improved, worsened or remained the same compared to the previous year.

The first human right presented by Mrs. Dube was *Equality*, the human right *Equality* is very much contested concerning freedom from unfair discrimination, gender equality, equality before the law and equality of outcomes. Compared to 2016 *Equality* remains on Level E, meaning the South African society remains highly unequal. In fact South Africa according to the Gini Index is one of the most unequal societies in the world.

The second right was *Human Dignity*, which is very difficult to measure, but the amount of complaints about racism show no improvement from 2016, the right is still on Level C. The right to *Life* is still critical in South Africa. While the average life expectancy has gone up and the infant mortality has gone down, there are still high rates of crime and murders (Level E). The right to *Freedom and Security of the Person* remains on Level D, since there is still only a weak institutional capacity of the State to protect and fulfil this right, as is evidenced by the increasing rates of reported violence.

The last presented right was the right to *Education*. In the last couple of years the right to *Education* has deteriorated since the quality of Education has dropped as can be seen when comparing the skills of South African scholars to scholars from other African countries. Hence the CFR now ranks *Education* at Level E with a worsening trend.

### Socio economic rights

The presentation of the Human Rights Report Card 2018 was followed by a panel discussion. The first panelist was Adv. Paul Hoffman of the Institute for Accountability in Southern Africa (IFAISA). In his speech he focused on socio- economic rights, namely the right to education, health care and access to adequate housing. For him the right to basic education does not start in primary school; it starts with Early Childhood Development (ECD). Therefore Adv. Hoffman opted for an emphasis on ECD in the South African National Development Plan 2030. Furthermore the schools need better and sufficient learning and teaching

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materials. Hoffman argued that it is beyond comprehension that the company Coca Cola is able to distribute its products all over the country in time but that it seems not possible for the Department of Education to supply schools in South Africa with the required school books in time.

The second area he focused on was health care. The South African health care system is set back by old infrastructures and no consistent standard of health care. The third right he spoke about was the right to access adequate housing. The lack of adequate housing for all South Africans partly results from the repercussions of the Apartheid era and partly due to lack of competence by the state. Adv. Hoffman criticized that the failure to deliver housing for the poor goes hand in hand with inadequate access to water and sanitation and is therefore directly linked to health care problems and the right to life.

**Political Participation**

The second panelist Elnari Potgieter, Project Leader South Africa Reconciliation Barometer (SARB), Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), covered the topic of political participation which for her is directly linked to democracy. Political participation can be divided into two aspects: can people participate - do they have sufficient education, income and employment - and do they want to participate - do they have the interest, advocacy and trust in the political system. In South Africa there are a number of factors which stop citizens from participating. Between 2011 and 2015, 55% of the population lived below the poverty line, furthermore only two out of ten South Africans feel confident about their political and economic power. In addition the trust in public institutions eroded over the last decade, only 26% of South Africans feel close to any political party.

**South Africa's international obligations**

The last panelist was Dr. Danny Titus, former Commissioner at the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). Dr. Titus spoke about South Africa's interna-

tional obligations. South Africa ratified several international human rights agreements, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and thereby has accepted the obligation to observe and integrate the rights and report them back. While Dr. Titus endorsed the government's progress in this respect, he criticized the disaggregation of available data. As a last point he stressed the importance of language and culture as a human right. Until today the South African state fails to promote multilingualism.

The event ended with an intensive Q & A session, moderated by Mrs. Zohra Dawood, director of the Center of Unity in Diversity (CUD), in which many issues were raised, especially concerning the rights of marginalized and minority groups in South Africa.



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**Impressum**

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