

Government engages the Khoisan community

Government has encouraged the Khoisan community to participate in shaping legislation as Parliament considers the Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Bill.



Image: [SANews on Facebook](#)

The Presidency recently engaged with a few members of the Khoisan community who camped on the South Lawns of the Union Buildings, Pretoria.

During the engagement the Presidency updated the group on progress made by government in response to demands that the group first presented in December 2017.

“The group is also opposed to the land reform process based on its belief that the Khoi and San communities are the owners of South Africa’s land and that Africans and whites have no claim to land ownership,” the Presidency said.

The Presidency said on legislative issues regarding land reform, the group has been advised to participate in the transparent public participation processes on land reform that are unfolding under the auspices of Parliament.

"Regarding the demand to remove the word "coloured", the group was informed that such removal could not be effected without following a public consultation process.

"Accordingly, it was proposed to the group that Cabinet could be approached to consider amending relevant government forms to include the name KhoiSan as part of the classification of communities in South Africa but without removing the word "coloured" at this stage," the Presidency said.

The Presidency said Cabinet could be requested also to approve a public participation process on the word "coloured".

This process could provide direction on the future of this terminology or discourse.

"Ultimately, government has advised the group that government works closely with the National Khoi-San Council and that a meeting was held with the Council in Bloemfontein on 17 November 2018 in to discuss matters of concern to the the Khoi and San communities. This will make it easier for government to interface with Khoisan leaders through a single, unified and legitimate structure," the Presidency said.

On the promotion and recognition of the Khoi and San languages, the group was advised that government has, through the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), made the following strides among others:

- A Khoekhoegowab Dictionary Glossarium has been developed and 500 copies of this dictionary have been distributed;
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by PANSALB with the National Arts Council on further development and research on the language and culture of Khoisan communities;
- A Memorandum of Agreement was signed with Namibia on a working relationship to develop, protect and train educators who will be able to educate children on the language and culture of the Khoisan communities;
- An Indigenous People's Conference was held in 2017, attended by 300 delegates from South Africa, Namibia and Botswana as the three countries that are home to KhoiSan communities.
- A workshop has been planned by PANSALB with the Khoisan communities to further enhance the research work and getting more involved in providing information and taking part in the research on languages and culture.

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