

Table B. Chronology of Important Events

South Africa Table of Contents

Period	Description
EARLY HISTORY	
ca. 50,000 B.C.	Date of archaeological remains of Homo sapiens in southern Africa.
ca. 25,000 B.C.	Earliest rock art paintings in southern Africa.
ca. 14,000 B.C.	Earliest archaeological evidence of San hunter-gatherers.
ca. 500 B.C.	Earliest archaeological evidence of sheep and cattle herding.
ca. A.D. 300	Archaeological evidence of Iron-Age settlements south of the Limpopo River.
FIFTEENTH CENTURY	
1488	Portuguese navigator Bartholomeu Dias rounds Cape of Good Hope. Khoisan-speaking herdsmen and hunters establish trade with Europeans.
1497	Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama arrives at Cape of Good Hope en route to India.
SIXTEENTH CENTURY	Portuguese ships land at Table Bay; Bantu-speaking farmers and herdsmen establish trade with Europeans.
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY	
1652	First permanent Dutch settlement at Cape of Good Hope.
1658	Dutch import slaves from Angola and West Africa.
1659	Khoikhoi revolt against Dutch encroachment.
1663	European settlement at Saldanha Bay.
1673-77	Warfare between Khoikhoi and Dutch.
1688	French Huguenots begin to settle at Cape.
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	
1713	Smallpox epidemic devastates Khoikhoi.
1779-81	Frontier warfare; Afrikaners defeat Xhosa.
1793	Frontier warfare: Xhosa defeat Afrikaners.
1795	Britain seizes control of the Cape.
1799	First of a series of Xhosa-British wars.
NINETEENTH CENTURY	
ca. 1800	Drought- and famine-produced upheaval in Natal.
1803-06	Dutch Batavian Republic controls Cape.
1806	Britain regains control over Cape.
1807	Britain ends its slave trade; British missionaries arrive in southern Africa.
1809	Pass laws enacted.
1810	Shaka defeats Buthelezi chiefdom.
1814	London Convention; Dutch formally cede Cape to British.

1815	Afrikaner rebellion against British rule at Slachters Nek.
1816	Shaka assumes control over Zulu.
1817-28	<i>Mfecane</i> (or crushing); Zulu expansion, decade of upheaval.
1819	British defeat of Xhosa; expulsion of Africans between Great Fish and Keiskama rivers.
1824	First white settlement at Port Natal.
1828	Shaka assassinated, succeeded by Dingane.
	Mpondo repulse Zulu attacks; Zulu power wanes.
1828-34	Consolidation of Swazi kingdom under Sobhuza I, Sotho under Moshoeshoe I, Ndebele under Mzilikazi.
1834-35	British and colonial forces defeat Xhosa.
1834-38	Emancipation of slaves in Cape Colony after Britain abolishes slavery in its possessions.
1836-40	Great Trek begins: 6,000 Afrikaners migrate eastward from Cape Colony.
1838	Battle of Blood River on December 16 avenges Afrikaner deaths earlier that year.
1839	Voortrekker Republic of Natalia established.
1843	Britain annexes Natalia, renamed Natal.
1850	Last surviving San rock artists killed.
1852	Sand River Convention; Britain recognizes Transvaal as the independent Afrikaner South African Republic.
1854	Bloemfontein Convention; Britain recognizes Orange Free State as independent Afrikaner republic.
1856-57	Xhosa cattle sacrifices lead to famine.
1867	Diamonds discovered in Orange Free State and Kimberley.
1868	Britain annexes Sotho territory of Basutoland.
1870	Death of Sotho King Moshoeshoe I.
1872	Introduction of pass laws to control labor force in Kimberley diamond mines.
1873	Diamond diggers exceed 50,000.
1877	Britain annexes South African Republic, renamed Transvaal. Xhosa-Mfengu warfare.
1878	Britain claims Walvis Bay.
1879	Zulu defeat invading British force; British and colonial forces destroy Zulu army at Isandhlwana. Griqualand East annexed to Cape Colony.
1880	First Anglo-Boer War erupts. Cecil Rhodes establishes De Beers Consolidated Mines.
1881	Pretoria Convention recognizes Transvaal independence.
1883	Paul Kruger president of South African Republic.
1885	Cape-to-Kimberley railroad completed.
1886	Gold discovered at Witwatersrand; Johannesburg established.
1890	Rhodes prime minister of Cape Colony.
1891	German headquarters established in South-West Africa.
1892	Property qualifications reduce coloured voters in Cape.

1894	Cape Colony annexes Mpondo territory.
1895-96	Unsuccessful Jameson Raid against Afrikaner dominance in Transvaal.
1897	Part of Zululand incorporated into British colony of Natal; King Solomon ka Dinizulu exiled.
1897-98	Rinderpest epidemic decimates livestock.
1899	South African (Anglo-Boer) War.
TWENTIETH CENTURY	
1900	Britain claims Transvaal (South African Republic).
1902 May	British victory; Peace Treaty of Vereeniging ends South African War.
1905-06	Last Zulu uprising against British.
1907	White miners strike against Chinese labor.
1909	British Parliament enacts the South Africa Act, proposed constitution of Union of South Africa.
1910	Self-governing Union of South Africa established within British Commonwealth.
1911	Legislation reserves skilled jobs for whites.
1912	Land Bank established to assist white farmers. South African Native National Congress (later African National Congress--ANC) formed.
1913	Natives Land Act limits black ownership to reserves.
1913-14	Campaign of civil disobedience led by Indian human rights activist Mohandas Gandhi.
1914	Government foils coup plot by Afrikaner military officers. South Africa invades German South-West Africa, Germans surrender.
1914-19	South Africa supports Allies in World War I.
1918	Founding of Afrikaner Broederbond.
1920	South Africa receives League of Nations mandate to administer former German colony, South-West Africa.
1921	Communist Party of South Africa established (later--after 1953--the South African Communist Party).
1922	Army quells miners' strike, killing 214.
1923	Natives Urban Areas Act authorizes segregation in urban areas. South African Indian Congress established. South African Native National Congress becomes African National Congress (ANC).
1925	Afrikaans recognized as South Africa's official language.
1927	Segregation compulsory in twenty-six urban areas.
1929	National Party wins national elections.
1931	Britain's Statute of Westminster affirms autonomy of South African parliament.
1934	South African parliament enacts Status of Union Act claiming full sovereignty for South Africa.
1936	Black voting rights revoked in Cape; black land ownership expanded, but still restricted to 13 percent of land.
1939	Ossewabrandwag (Ox-wagon Guard) Afrikaner paramilitary group

	established.
1939-45	South Africa supports Allies in World War II.
1943	ANC Youth League formed. United Party wins general elections.
1946	Army quells gold mine strikes.
1947	South Africa rejects United Nations (UN) oversight in South-West Africa.
1948 May	National Party (NP) election victory based on racial issues.
August	Government ends military training for blacks.
1949 January	Asian-Zulu clashes in Durban and Rand area.
May	South Africa rejects UN concern over treatment of Indians.
June	Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act.
December	Opening of Voortrekker Monument.
1950 April	South Africa severs judicial appeals channels to British Privy Council.
May	Population Registration Act authorizes racial classification.
June	Suppression of Communism Act bans anti-apartheid activities. Communist Party of South Africa disbands (reemerges in 1953 as South African Communist Party).
July	International Court of Justice supports League of Nations oversight in South-West Africa. Group Areas Act authorizes residential segregation.
August	South African Air Force assists UN in Korean war effort, flies 10,000 missions in three years. NP election victory in South-West Africa.
December	South Africa rejects UN criticism of apartheid, reasserts claim to South-West Africa. Black political organizations unite to oppose apartheid.
1951 February	Britain blocks incorporation of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland into South Africa.
May	Separate Representation of Voters Act separates voting lists for whites, coloureds.
November	United States-South Africa military agreement under Mutual Defense Assistance Act.
December	ANC leaders petition for direct parliamentary representation, end to apartheid. UN calls for South-West African independence. South Africa suspends participation in UN General Assembly.
1952 March	South African Supreme Court invalidates removal of coloureds from voting lists.
June	Passive resistance campaign by ANC and South African Indian Congress; 8,000 arrested.
November	Interracial violence flares. Black Defiance Campaign leaders convicted of "statutory communism."
1953 October	Reservation of Separate Amenities Act strengthens apartheid in public places. Bantu Education Act limits black education. Communist Party of South Africa reactivated as South African Communist Party (SACP).
1954 August	South Africa proclaims South-West Africa a province.
1955 February	International condemnation of forcible resettlement of Sophiatown (most residents moved to area later named Soweto).
April	South Africa quits United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) after protests over apartheid.

June	Congress of the People adopts Freedom Charter based on UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights; signers later charged with high treason.
1956 February	South Africa expels Soviet diplomats.
March	Tomlinson Commission recommends formation of Bantustans in reserved areas.
May	Industrial Conciliation Act reserves most skilled jobs for whites.
December	Police arrest 156 for signing Freedom Charter.
1957 September	Forty die in Sotho-Zulu violence.
1958 April	Parliamentary elections increase NP majority.
1959 April	Pan-Africanist Congress established.
June	Racial violence erupts in Durban, lasts several months.
November	Queen Elizabeth II appoints Charles Swart governor general of South Africa.
1960 February	British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's "Winds of Change" speech.
March	Sharpeville protests over pass laws; at least sixty-seven deaths, several thousand arrested.
1961 January	UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld visits South Africa, expresses racial concerns.
March	Pretoria court acquits twenty-eight activists, including ANC leaders Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu.
May	Republic of South Africa established on May 31, quits Commonwealth. Month-long police raids, 8,000 arrested.
June	ANC establishes military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation); PAC establishes armed wing Poqo (blacks only).
November	UN General Assembly refuses to recognize South Africa.
December	ANC leader Albert Luthuli receives Nobel Peace Prize. Nelson Mandela announces campaign of sabotage against government buildings.
1962 November	UN General Assembly calls for sanctions against South Africa. Nelson Mandela sentenced to five years in prison for inciting unrest, travelling abroad without a passport.
1963 May	Military wings of ANC, PAC banned.
	Newly established Organization of African Unity (OAU) charter condemns apartheid.
August	UN voluntary embargo on arms shipments to South Africa. Libya joins Algeria and Egypt, prohibits South African overflights.
October	Rivonia trial of ANC activists begins.
1964 January	Odendaal Commission recommends apartheid in South-West Africa.
March	OAU funds liberation fighters in southern Africa.
June	Eight ANC activists, including Nelson Mandela, sentenced to life in prison in Rivonia trial.
1966 June	Government snubs visiting United States Senator Robert Kennedy.
September	Prime minister Verwoerd assassinated, succeeded by John Vorster. Bechuanaland independence from Britain as Botswana.
October	Basutoland independence from Britain as Lesotho. UN General Assembly terminates South Africa's mandate to administer South-West Africa.

1967 May	Last British-appointed governor general and first president, Charles Swart, steps down.
September	Malawi first black African state to establish diplomatic ties to South Africa.
December	World's first heart transplant operation performed by South African surgeon, Dr. Christian Barnard, at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town.
1968 September	Swaziland independence from Britain.
1969 May	Pan-Africanist Congress founder Robert Sobukwe released after nine years in prison.
October	Herstigte (Reconstituted) National Party established by white extremist wing of NP.
December	International Monetary Fund agrees to \$35-an-ounce "floor" for South African gold.
1970 February	Black Homelands Citizenship Bill authorizes withdrawal of South African citizenship from blacks.
May	International Olympic Committee (IOC) refuses recognition of South Africa (participation suspended since 1964).
1971 December	Zulu Prince Goodwill Zwelithini installed as king.
1972	Black People's Convention founded to coordinate black consciousness movement role in politics. Afrikaner intellectuals protest against apartheid.
1973 November	Sixteen Arab countries implement OAU embargo against oil to South Africa.
1974	NP increases parliamentary majority in April elections. Coup in Portugal signals impending independence for colonies in Africa. UN General Assembly rejects South African participation.
1975 May	First television transmissions in South Africa.
November	Reports of white South Africans killed in fighting in Angola.
1976 June	Worst racial violence in history in Soweto; 575 reported dead.
August	Turnhalle Constitutional Conference sets Namibian (South-West African) independence December 1978 (subsequently postponed repeatedly until March 1990).
1977 January	Government acknowledges 2,000 South African troops in Angola.
March	US corporations adopt Sullivan Principles to counter effects of apartheid.
September	Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko dies in police detention; thousands attend funeral.
November	UN mandatory embargo against arms shipments to South Africa. Pretoria adopts Total Strategy to counter internal and external threats.
1978	Ministry of Information scandal leads to Vorster resignation; succeeded by P. W. Botha.
1979	Government recognizes black labor unions.
1980 June	Largest conventional military assault since World War II on South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) bases in Angola.
1981 February	Asian, coloured populations win representation on President's Council.
1982 February	Labor activist Neil Aggett first white to die in police custody.
March	NP expels extremist wing; Andries Treurnicht forms Conservative Party of South Africa.
1983 September	Parliament approves multiracial representation, excluding blacks.

November	New constitution approved by whites-only referendum.
1984	Extension of UN sanctions barring military purchases from South Africa.
March	Koeberg nuclear power station operational after 1982 sabotage. Nkomati Accord nonaggression pact with Mozambique.
May	South Africa, Mozambique, Portugal agreement to build Cahora Bassa dam in Mozambique.
August	Elections for tricameral parliament; escalating township unrest.
September	P. W. Botha named state president. Implementation of 1983 constitution establishing tricameral parliament.
October	Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu awarded Nobel Peace Prize.
1985 June	United States ban on computer, nuclear exports to South Africa for security forces. South African commando attacks on ANC in Botswana. First in a series of nationwide states of emergency.
July	Britain blocks Commonwealth sanctions.
1986 January	President Botha opens Parliament with reference to "outdated concept of apartheid." Parliament repeals Pass Laws, Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act.
May	Military attacks on ANC in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
October	US Congress passes Comprehensive Antiapartheid Act (CAAA) over presidential veto. Mozambican President Samora Machel killed in plane crash in South Africa. Lesotho Highlands Water Project undertaken to provide water to South Africa. Dutch Reformed Church synod declares apartheid an error.
November	United States bans direct US-South Africa air travel.
1987	United States bans new investments, bank loans to South Africa. National (white) elections name Conservative Party as parliamentary opposition. Mineworkers strike by 250,000.
1988 December	Angola-Namibia Accords signed in New York.
1989 January	Botha suffers stroke, Frederik W. (F. W.) de Klerk succeeds him as NP leader in February; as state president in August.
February	Democratic Party established as alternative to ANC. UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) prepares for Namibian elections.
July	President Botha, ANC leader Nelson Mandela meet for first talks in person.
September	White, coloureds, Indians vote in parliamentary elections.
October	Walter Sisulu and other activists released after 25 years in prison.
November	Last South African troops withdraw from Namibia.
1990 February	Mandela released on February 11, after twenty-seven years in prison.
March	Violent antigovernment demonstrations in Ciskei, Bophuthatswana.
April	ANC exiles begin return to South Africa.
July	First official meeting of Mandela and de Klerk.
August	ANC declares end of armed struggle.
October	Parliament repeals Reservation of Separate Amenities Act.
1991 June	Repeal of Population Registration Act, Land Acts, Group Areas Act; and release of political prisoners.
July	Most sanctions under US CAAA lifted. "Inkathagate" revelations of government funding for IFP. Nelson Mandela elected ANC president. IOC

	readmits South Africa.
September	National Peace Accord agreement.
December	Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) begins on December 20.
1992 January	Most European sanctions lifted; UN General Assembly ends restrictions on cultural, academic exchanges.
March	Whites support political reforms in referendum.
April	Arms manufacturing company, Denel, formed out of portion of Armaments Corporation of South Africa (Armcor) and subsidiaries.
June	Kenyan president Moi visits, signals end of African boycott. ANC withdraws from Codesa because of IFP attack on Boipatong and sub-rosa support for IFP by police. Negotiations suspended.
July	Mandela charges government with state terrorism before UN and OAU; fact-finding visit by UN envoy Cyrus Vance; arrival of UN observers.
September	Ciskei Defence Force fires on ANC protesters; at least 29 deaths, 200 injured.
1993 March	Government proclaims nuclear weapons dismantled. Constitutional negotiations resume.
April	SACP leader Chris Hani murdered by white radical. Death of ANC president Tambo.
June	White radicals storm constitutional negotiations.
July	President de Klerk, ANC leader Mandela visit US, jointly receive Liberty Medal. IFP, conservatives withdraw from constitutional negotiations.
August	Political violence surges. US citizen Amy Biehl killed in township unrest. ANC acknowledges human rights' abuses in Angola, Tanzania.
September	De Klerk, Mandela visit United States. Joint mission of ANC and South African Defence Forces (SADF) to United States to discuss military reorganization.
October	Most UN sanctions lifted. Two whites sentenced to death for Hani murder.
November	US CAAA repealed. Interim constitution signed by nineteen political parties, provides for 5-year Government of National Unity.
December	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa ratified on December 22. Transitional Executive Council (TEC) established.
	De Klerk, Mandela receive Nobel Peace prize.
1994 January	National Peacekeeping Force (NPKF) mobilized, disbanded in May. PAC suspends armed struggle, agrees to participate in national elections.
February	South Africa formally relinquishes Walvis Bay to Namibia.
March	TEC assumes control over Bophuthatswana after deaths in pre-election violence, and over Ciskei after police mutiny. Zulu demonstration erupts into violence at ANC headquarters (Shell House), Johannesburg; eight demonstrators killed. State of emergency in Natal, KwaZulu. Goldstone Commission report forces senior police suspensions.
April	First democratic national elections held April 26-29 (April 27 first day of nationwide voting). Interim constitution implemented for five-year transition period on April 27. Violence subsides.
May	Legislators elect Mandela president. Government announces Reconstruction and Development Programme. UN Security Council lifts arms embargo.
	South Africa joins Organization of African Unity, rejoins British

June	Commonwealth of Nations, resumes participation in United Nations. British Military Advisory and Training Team assists military integration. Government proposes Truth and Reconciliation Commission to consider amnesty, compensation for human rights violations under apartheid.
July	French president François Mitterrand first foreign head of state to visit. Resignation of Minister of Finance Derek Keys. South African Operation Mercy shipments to Rwanda. Mandela's first state visit (Mozambique).
August	Mandela speech marking 100 days in office interrupted by labor unrest.
September	New Air Force Headquarters opened in Pretoria. British Prime Minister's first address to South African parliament since 1960. Violent protests by coloureds against government racial bias.
October	President Mandela on state visit to United States, addresses joint session of Congress. South African officials accept salary cuts to help fund development.
November	Soweto forgives US\$400 million unpaid rent, utility fees. South Africa hosts first conference in Africa on implementing Convention on Chemical Weapons.
December	ANC conference reelects Mandela as president. South African Ambassador Franklin Sonn arrives in Washington.
1995 January	Death of Joe Slovo, minister of housing, former SACP leader.
February	Constitutional Court sworn in by President Mandela. Mandela disavows reelection plans in 1999.
March	Winnie Mandela dismissed as deputy minister for arts, culture, science, and technology. Unification of two-tier exchange rate; financial rand abolished. Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) province renamed Gauteng (Place of Gold).
June	Mandela claims responsibility for March 1994 Shell House shootings of IFP demonstrators. Constitutional Court abolishes death penalty.
August	South Africa agrees to lease oil storage space to Iran.
November	Archbishop Desmond Tutu named chair of Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Mandela denounces Nigeria's execution of human rights activists, including Ken Sarowiwa.
1996 January	Mandela initiates urgent peace talks in KwaZulu-Natal aimed at ending political violence and resuming IFP participation in Constitutional Assembly.
April	First public hearing of Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in East London, April 15. White extremists sentenced to prison for 1994 bombings intended to derail national elections.
May	Parliament approves draft final constitution. Constitutional Assembly Chair Cyril Ramaphosa resigns from parliament to join private sector.
June	NP quits Government of National Unity to become official parliamentary opposition. Nearly 28,000 striking platinum mineworkers fired for defying court order to return to work.
September	Former police colonel implicates former government and security officials in wide-ranging atrocities, illegal acts under apartheid.
October	Former senior military officials (including a former minister of defense) acquitted of charges related to murders of antiapartheid activists.
November	Free State provincial premier and Executive Committee resign following allegations of corruption and nepotism.

December	President Mandela signs legislation approving final constitution, to be implemented in stages by 1999. South Africa announces plans to sever diplomatic ties with Republic of China (Taiwan) and to recognize People's Republic of China (Beijing), 1997.
1997 January	Five former policemen apply for amnesty before Truth and Reconciliation Commission for 1977 killing of Steve Biko.
February	South Africa's first offshore oil field, south of Mossel Bay, begins production.
March	South African Navy celebrates seventy-fifth anniversary in joint naval exercises with Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay. Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, in Zaire, urges rebel-government cease-fire.

South Africa Table of Contents

Source: *U.S. Library of Congress*