

# Press Release



SOUTH AFRICAN  
INSTITUTE OF  
RACE RELATIONS

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

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## Mortality keeps rising even as births decline

The number of births for every death in 2011 was less than half of what it was in 1985, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations in its latest *South Africa Survey*, published last week in Johannesburg.

In 1985, there were 1 060 000 births and 259 000 deaths in South Africa. In 2011 there were about the same number of births as in 1985, yet more than double the number of deaths (599 000). Births reached a peak in 1996 and have since decreased, and are expected to continue to decrease in number.

Meanwhile, deaths as a percentage of births will be over 70% by 2025, up from 24% in 1985, the *Survey* reports.

According to the data, sourced from Statistics South Africa, deaths as a proportion of the population increased from 0.8% in 1997 to 1.2% in 2008. Furthermore, the Institute for Futures Research projects a mortality rate increase of 17% between 2010 and 2040.

Meanwhile, the birth rate decreased from 26.1 births per 1 000 people in 2001 to 21.0 in 2011. The Actuarial Society of South Africa forecasts that it will have dropped to 18 by 2025.

Mr Thuthukani Ndebele of the research department at the Institute said that the increased death rate shows the negative effects of HIV/AIDS, while the declining birth rate reflects an international trend resulting from improved education, living standards, and access to contraception.

'Deaths are edging closer to births at a rapid rate, ultimately leading to slowed population growth,' Ndebele said.

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