



British
High Commission
Pretoria

Marking 21 years of the South African Constitution and 800 years since the signing of the Magna Carta

Wednesday 17 June 2015, 2pm to 4pm

Constitutional Court, Constitution Hill, Braamfontein, Johannesburg

Media Advisory: 11 June 2015

On Wednesday 17 June 2015, The Honourable Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa, Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng and Her Excellency, British High Commissioner to South Africa Mrs Judith Macgregor will host an event at the Constitutional Court to mark the 21st anniversary of South Africa as a constitutional democracy and the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta.

Speakers will include, amongst others Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng and Lady Justice McGowan of the British Royal Courts of Justice on the themes of democratic values, rule of law and human rights as enshrined by the respective documents – the South African Constitution and the Magna Carta.

To be accredited to cover this event, please contact:

Hooman Nouruzi

Head of Communications, British High Commission Pretoria

Hooman.nouruzi@fco.gov.uk

+27 (0) 83 252 8431

Lusanda D. Ntuli

Acting Director: Communications

Office of the Chief Justice

+27 (0) 83 603 5638

lnntuli@judiciary.org.za

Notes to editors

Magna Carta, democracy and human rights

The sealing of the Magna Carta on 15 June 1215 marked the first step on the UK's journey towards parliamentary democracy and respect for individual rights, a foundation for democratic values and for many of the rights and freedoms today. In sealing the Magna Carta on June 15, 1215, King John had to accept that his subjects were citizens for the first time, giving them rights, protections and security. As we approach the 800th anniversary of this event, we are reflecting on, and celebrating, our core values of fundamental rights and freedoms.

For more information on the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, please visit <http://magnacarta800th.com/>

South African Constitution

On 27 April 1994, The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993, came into force *“to create a new order in which all South Africans will be entitled to a common South African citizenship in a sovereign and democratic constitutional state in which there is equality between men and women and people of all races so that all citizens shall be able to enjoy and exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms”*. This laid the foundation for the final Constitution, which was signed into law by President Nelson Mandela in Sharpeville, in Vereeniging, on 10 December 1996.

The Constitution marked the dawn of a new South Africa, based on democratic principles, the protection of human rights and the rule of law. Never in the history of South Africa had all citizens of the country been afforded equal rights and freedoms which are protected by law. The Constitution of South Africa is the supreme law of the country, and any law or conduct which is inconsistent with the Constitution is invalid. Probably the most significant part of the Constitution, is the internationally renowned Chapter 2, containing the [bill of rights](#) which outlines the [civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights](#) of the people of South Africa.

For more information on the Constitution, please visit:

<http://www.constitutionalcourt.org.za/site/theconstitution/history.htm>