



Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the  
Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities.

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**News Editor/Reporter**

**MEDIA STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE CRL RIGHTS COMMISSION WITH RESPECT TO THE CULTURAL  
INTOLERANCE AND RACISM EXPRESSED TOWARDS SOME BLACK AFRICAN LEARNERS IN SOME  
SCHOOLS: 01 SEPTEMBER T 2016**

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) has noted with dismay the treatment meted out by some schools through their codes of conduct against some black African learners because of their hair, cultural identity, language and beliefs.

The rules, policies and practices of those schools directly violates section 9 and 10 of the South African Constitution of 1996 in that they discriminated against the pupils on the basis of their race, culture, religion and language; and disrespected their dignity. Furthermore, they indirectly violated section 31 of the Constitution in that by prohibiting pupils from clean shaving their heads they would be denied the right to practice their religion and culture. For example pupils whose religious and cultural beliefs are that they cleanly shave their heads during bereavement at home will be denied their right to observe their rite of passage. Similarly, policies of that nature are likely to negatively affect the religious rights of Rastafarian pupils if forced to shorten their hair.

The Commission found that this whole treatment was totally unacceptable, particularly because these students had not done anything wrong but were living within their culture through their hair expression and in some instances by speaking their mother tongue with their peers. All pupils, regardless of their race, culture, religion and language, must be allowed to enjoy their rights, identity and heritage.

These incidences made the nation aware that we are still miles away from realising a totally inclusive nation bound by common vision, values and in pursuit of social cohesion.

As we all know the essence of culture is the embracing of one's community values, beliefs, a sense of being or identity. Denial to live out these is tantamount to depriving a person's meaningful existence.

The Chairperson of the CRL Rights Commission, Mrs Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva urges all South Africans to be tolerant and respect each other's culture, religion and languages.

She further implores all South African to work together to expose every vestiges of racism, cultural, religious and linguistic intolerance or cultural dominance of one group by another.

The CRL Rights Commission avails itself to assist schools and all the relevant stakeholders in developing policies that are inclusive, embracing diversity and supporting all cultural groups.

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