COUNTRY GUIDE



AFRICA

South Africa.

South Africa's Constitutional Court discussed ubuntu at length in S v Makwanyane (1995). The Nonprofit Organisations Act 1997 aims to create an environment in which nonprofit organisations can flourish, and the tax authority gives approved public benefit organisations tax treatment. A government youth agency runs a National Youth Service Programme.

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER
Limited

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS
None found

GIVING AND SERVICE
4 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

LIMITED

The Constitution provides that no one may be refused emergency medical treatment (section 27(3)). No statute was found in the sources reviewed that imposes a general duty on private persons to rescue a stranger, and It was not possible to open case law on omissions, so this is not a conclusion that none exists.

Chapter 2: Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) (South African Government)

Are people who help protected?

NONE FOUND

No statute was found in the sources reviewed that specifically protects good-faith helpers from liability. This does not prove none exists.

How the government promotes giving and service

Ubuntu in S v Makwanyane (1995)

In this Constitutional Court judgment (Case No. CCT/3/94, June 6, 1995), Langa J wrote that the dominant theme of ubuntu is that the life of another person is at least as valuable as one's own (paragraph 225), and Mokgoro J described ubuntu as humaneness and group solidarity, compassion and respect (paragraph 308). The case concerned the death penalty; ubuntu was one strand of reasoning.

CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA (CONCOURT COLLECTIONS)

Nonprofit Organisations Act 71 of 1997

Its long title says it provides for an environment in which nonprofit organisations can flourish and sets an administrative and regulatory framework for them.

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT (GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, DECEMBER 3, 1997)

Public Benefit Organisation tax rules

SARS says approved public benefit organisations carry out public benefit activities with altruistic or philanthropic intent, may be exempt from tax on certain receipts under section 10(1)(cN), and may obtain additional approval to issue tax-deductible donation receipts (section 18A).

SOUTH AFRICAN REVENUE SERVICE (SARS)

National Youth Service Programme

The National Youth Development Agency describes the programme as a government initiative to engage young people in community service, build social

cohesion, and help them gain skills. It also states the agency's aim to increase youth volunteering.

NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NYDA)

Ways to give and volunteer

South Africa has a large nonprofit sector, and many local services are run by faith-based and community groups. The one thing to know first: check that a nonprofit is registered with the government before you give.

Check a charity before you give

The official registrar of nonprofit organizations, where you can confirm a group is registered and whether it files its reports.

Nonprofit Organisations (NPO) Directorate, Department of Social Development

Give your time

Red Cross South Africa
The national Red Cross society, which offers volunteer roles in disaster response and community health.

United Nations Volunteers
The UN's volunteer program, with international and national volunteer assignments.

Give money, blood or a donation

South African National Blood Service (SANBS)
The national blood service, with information on donating blood and finding a clinic.

Organ Donor Foundation
A national nonprofit that runs the organ donor registration program.

FoodForward SA
A food bank organization that redistributes surplus food to charities across the country.

In an emergency or a crisis

SADAG Suicide Crisis Line: 0800 567 567
A free 24-hour suicide crisis helpline run by the South African Depression and Anxiety Group; an SMS and a general mental health line (0800 21 22 23, 8am to 8pm) are also on its site.

South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)
A mental health organization that runs helplines and crisis support.

Before you act

- **Fake charities and fake donation requests by phone, SMS and social media are common, so verify the registration number on the NPO Directorate site and pay only into an account in the organization's name.**
- **Be careful with groups that ask for cash on the street or door to door.**
- **Foreign visitors volunteering in South Africa should check visa rules, since volunteering can require a proper visa.**

This list does not cover every local group, religious services or political causes, and it is not a recommendation of any one charity. Checked 2026-10-28. Listing an organization is not an endorsement, and none of them has endorsed this site. Some official sites block automatic checks, so a link may need a second try.

One thing worth knowing

The country's highest court named ubuntu, a concept of shared humanity, as a value in a landmark constitutional judgment.

What this does not mean

Ubuntu appears in this judgment as reasoning, and This guide did not verify that it creates any enforceable duty to help others. Paragraph numbers are from the official PDF consulted. Not legal advice. This is a plain-language summary of public sources, not legal advice, and it does not rank countries. No government named here has endorsed this site. Not reviewed by a lawyer. Statutes were read in public sources and may have changed. Last checked October 26, 2026.

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