

South African Human Rights Commission Act 40 of 2013¹

[ASSENTED TO 20 JANUARY 2014]

[DATE OF COMMENCEMENT: 5 SEPTEMBER 2014]

(English text signed by the President)

published in

GG 37253 of 22 January 2014

commencement

(see s. 25 of this Act)

provisions	date	refer to
whole Act	5 September 2014	Proc R63 in GG 37977 of 5 September 2014

as amended

by	with effect from	refer to
Determination of Remuneration of Office-bearers of Independent Constitutional Institutions Laws Amendment Act 22 of 2014	1 April 2019	s. 18 of Act 22 of 2014 ; Proc R19 in GG 42338 of 29 March 2019
Judicial Matters Amendment Act 15 of 2023	3 April 2024	s. 35 (1) of Act 15 of 2023

ACT

To provide for the composition, powers, functions and functioning of the South African Human Rights Commission; to provide for the repeal of the Human Rights Commission Act, 1994; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

Preamble

SINCE sections 181 (1) (b) and 184 read with item 20 of Schedule 6 to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, provide that the South African Human Rights Commission, established in terms of section 115 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993), continues to function in terms of the legislation applicable to it; and for the conferring of certain powers on and the assignment of certain functions to the Commission;

AND SINCE the Constitution provides that the South African Human Rights Commission must-

- promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights;
- promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights;
- monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Republic; and
- annually require relevant organs of state to provide it with information on the measures that they have taken towards the realisation of the rights in the Bill of Rights concerning housing, health care, food, water, social security, education and the environment;

AND SINCE the Constitution provides that the South African Human Rights Commission-

- has the powers, as regulated by national legislation, necessary to perform its functions, including the power to investigate and to report on the observance of human rights; to take steps to secure appropriate redress where human rights have been violated; to carry out research; and to educate; and
- has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation,

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA therefore enacts, as follows:-

- ¹ This Act has been updated to include all available historical commencement details

1 Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates-

'**Chairperson**' means the chairperson of the Commission referred to in section 6 (1);

'**chief executive officer**' means the chief executive officer referred to in section 19 (1);

'**Commission**' means the South African Human Rights Commission referred to in sections 181 (1) (b) and 184 of the Constitution;

'**commissioner**' means a commissioner referred to in section 5 (1);

'**committee**' means a committee established under section 11;

'**Constitution**' means the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;

'**Deputy Chairperson**' means the deputy chairperson of the Commission referred to in section 6 (1);

'**human rights**' means the human rights contained in Chapter 2 of the Constitution;

'**Independent Commission**' means the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office-bearers established by [section 2](#) of the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office-bearers Act, 1997 ([Act 92 of 1997](#));

[Definition of 'Independent Commission' inserted by [s. 16](#) of [Act 22 of 2014](#) (wef 1 April 2019).]

'**investigation**' means an investigation contemplated in section 15;

'**member of staff**' means the chief executive officer and any person appointed in terms of section 19 (3) (a);

'**Minister**'² means the Cabinet member responsible for the administration of justice;

'**organ of state**' means an organ of state as defined in section 239 of the Constitution;

'**premises**' includes land, any building or structure, or any vehicle, conveyance, ship, boat, vessel, aircraft or container;

'**private dwelling**' means any part of any building or structure which is occupied as a residence or any part of any building or structure or outdoor living area which is accessory to, and used wholly or principally for, the purposes of residence;

'**Public Finance Management Act**' means the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 ([Act 1 of 1999](#)); and

'**warrant**' means a search warrant or an entry and search warrant, as the case may be, issued in terms of section 16 (5).

² The administration and the powers or functions entrusted by legislation transferred to the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development (Proc 199 in GG 51368 of 11 October 2024)

2 Objects of Commission

The objects of the Commission are-

- (a) to promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights;
- (b) to promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights; and
- (c) to monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Republic.

3 Seat of Commission

(1) The seat of the Commission must be in the province of Gauteng.

(2) The Commission may establish such offices as it may consider necessary to enable it to exercise its powers and to perform its functions conferred on or assigned to it by the Constitution, this Act or any other law.

4 Independence and impartiality

(1) A commissioner as well as a member of staff-

- (a) must serve impartially and independently and exercise or perform his or her powers and functions in good faith and without fear, favour, bias or prejudice and subject only to the Constitution and the law;
- (b) may not use the position or privileges of a commissioner or a member of staff for private gain or to benefit another person improperly; and
- (c) may not act in any manner that compromises the credibility, impartiality, independence or integrity of the Commission.

(2) All organs of state must afford the Commission such assistance as may be reasonably required for the protection of the independence, impartiality and dignity of the Commission and in pursuit of its objects.

(3) No organ of state and no member or employee of an organ of state nor any other person may interfere with, hinder or obstruct the Commission, any commissioner, a member of staff or a person appointed under section 11 (1) or 19 (5) in the exercise or performance of its or his or her powers and functions.

(4) No commissioner or member of staff may conduct an investigation or render assistance with regard thereto in respect of a matter in which he or she has any pecuniary or any other interest which might preclude him or her from exercising or performing his or her powers and functions in a fair, unbiased and proper manner.

(5) If any commissioner or member of staff fails to disclose an interest contemplated in subsection (4) and conducts or renders assistance with regard to an investigation, while having an interest so contemplated in the matter being investigated, the Commission may take such steps as it deems necessary to ensure a fair, unbiased and proper investigation.

(6) In the interest of transparency and accountability, a commissioner must, in the manner determined by the Commission, annually disclose his or her financial interests and any other interests determined by the Commission, which information must be accessible to the public.

(7) A commissioner or a member of staff who contravenes or fails to comply with subsection (1) (b) or (4) is guilty of misconduct.

5 Composition of Commission

(1) (a) The Commission consists of eight commissioners, who must-

- (i) be South African citizens and fit and proper persons to hold office of the Commission, as contemplated in section 193 (1) of the Constitution;
- (ii) have a record of commitment to the promotion of respect for human rights and a culture of human rights;
- (iii) be persons with applicable knowledge or experience with regard to matters connected with the objects of the Commission; and
- (iv) be appointed by the President in accordance with section 193 (4) and (5) of the Constitution.

(b) Subject to paragraph (a), any person is eligible to be appointed as a commissioner, except-

- (i) anyone who is appointed by, or is in the service of, the state and receives remuneration for that appointment or service;
- (ii) unrehabilitated insolvents;
- (iii) anyone declared to be of unsound mind by a court of the Republic;

- (iv) anyone who, after this section took effect, is convicted of an offence and sentenced to more than 12 months' imprisonment without the option of a fine, either in the Republic, or outside the Republic if the conduct constituting the offence would have been an offence in the Republic; or
- (v) anyone who is an office-bearer or a staff member of a political party, a member of the National Assembly, a permanent delegate to the National Council of Provinces, a member of a provincial legislature or a member of a municipal council or who is on a candidate list for any of those positions.

(2) The commissioners referred to in subsection (1) may, on the recommendation of the National Assembly, be appointed as full-time or part-time commissioners and hold office for such fixed term as the National Assembly may determine at the time of such appointment, but not exceeding seven years: Provided that not fewer than six commissioners are appointed on a full-time basis and not more than two commissioners are appointed on a part-time basis.

(3) The President may, on the recommendation of the National Assembly, appoint a part-time commissioner as a full-time commissioner for the unexpired portion of that part-time commissioner's term of office if a vacancy in the office of a full-time commissioner occurs.

(4) Any person whose term of office as a commissioner has expired, may be reappointed for one additional term.

(5) (a) A commissioner may resign from office by submitting at least three calendar months' written notice thereof to the National Assembly, unless the National Assembly by resolution allows a shorter period in a specific case.

(b) A commissioner is regarded as having resigned if that commissioner-

- (i) accepts nomination for the National Assembly, the National Council of Provinces, a provincial legislature or a municipal council; or
- (ii) is elected or appointed as an office-bearer of a political party.

(c) The Commission must take appropriate steps, where necessary, against a commissioner-

- (i) who fails to give notice in terms of paragraph (a); or
- (ii) who gives such notice, but fails to comply with the prescribed period referred to in that paragraph,

for the recovery of any remuneration and allowances, if any, that were paid to that commissioner in the case of-

- (aa) subparagraph (i), for the three months immediately preceding the date on which his or her resignation took effect; and
- (bb) subparagraph (ii), for the period that was less than the prescribed period referred to in paragraph (a).

(6) A commissioner may be removed from office in accordance with section 194 (1) and (2) of the Constitution.

(7) The President may suspend a commissioner from office in accordance with section 194 (3) (a) of the Constitution.

(8) The President must remove a commissioner from office in accordance with section 194 (3) (b) of the Constitution.

6 Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Commission

(1) The President must, on the recommendation of the National Assembly, appoint a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, respectively.

(2) Whenever the Chairperson is absent or for any reason unable to exercise or perform the powers and functions vested in the office of the Chairperson, or whenever the office of Chairperson is vacant, the Deputy Chairperson may exercise all the powers and must perform all the functions of the Chairperson.

(3) (a) Whenever both the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson are absent or for any reason unable to exercise or perform the powers and functions vested in the office of Chairperson, or whenever both offices are vacant, the remaining commissioners must from their number elect an acting Chairperson.

(b) Any commissioner acting as Chairperson of the Commission by virtue of the provisions of paragraph (a) may, while so acting, exercise all the powers and must, while so acting, perform all the functions of the Chairperson.

7 Powers and functions of Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and other commissioners

(1) The Chairperson is vested with all the powers and functions conferred on or assigned to him or her by the Commission, this Act or any other law.

(2) The Deputy Chairperson and any other commissioner are vested with all the powers and functions conferred on or assigned to him or her by the Commission or delegated to him or her by the Chairperson.

(3) The Chairperson is, for the purposes of exercising the powers and performing the functions conferred on or assigned to him or her by the Commission, this Act or any other law, accountable to the Commission.

(4) The Deputy Chairperson and any other commissioner are, for the purposes of exercising the powers and performing the functions-

- (a) conferred on or assigned to him or her by the Commission, accountable to the Commission; or
- (b) delegated to him or her by the Chairperson, accountable to the Chairperson.

(5) The Chairperson is, for the purposes of the Public Finance Management Act, the executive authority of the Commission.

8 Vacancies in Commission

(1) A vacancy in the Commission occurs-

- (a) when a commissioner's term of office expires;
- (b) when a commissioner dies;
- (c) when a commissioner is removed from office in accordance with section 194 of the Constitution; or
- (d) when a commissioner's resignation, submitted in accordance with section 5 (5) (a) or as contemplated in section 5 (5) (b), takes effect.

(2) A vacancy in the Commission does not affect the validity of the proceedings or decisions of the Commission.

(3) (a) The Commission must, as soon as a vacancy occurs, in writing inform the National Assembly of such vacancy.

(b) A vacancy in the Commission must, as soon as practicable after the National Assembly becomes aware thereof, be filled in accordance with section 193 (4) and (5) of the Constitution.

9 Salary, allowances and benefits of commissioners

- (1) The full-time and part-time commissioners are entitled to such salary, allowances and benefits-
 - (a) as determined by the President, from time to time, by notice in the *Gazette*, after taking into consideration the recommendations of the Independent Commission; and
 - (b) approved by the National Assembly in terms of subsection (5).
- (2) The salary of the commissioners may not be reduced, nor may the allowances and benefits be adversely altered, during their term of office.
- (3) The Independent Commission shall, when investigating or considering the salary, allowances and benefits of commissioners, consult with the Minister and the Cabinet member responsible for finance.
- (4) A notice in terms of subsection (1) (a) or any provision thereof may commence with effect from a date specified in the notice, which date may not be more than one year before the date of publication of the notice.
- (5) (a) A notice issued under subsection (1) (a) shall be submitted to the National Assembly for approval before publication thereof.
 - (b) The National Assembly shall, by resolution-
 - (i) approve the notice, whether in whole or in part; or
 - (ii) disapprove the notice.

[S. 9 substituted by [s. 17](#) of [Act 22 of 2014](#) (wef 1 April 2019).]

10 Meetings of Commission

- (1) The meetings of the Commission must be held at the times and places determined by the Commission: Provided that the chief executive officer must, in the absence of the Chairperson, convene the first meeting of the Commission.
- (2) If the Chairperson is absent from a meeting of the Commission, the Deputy Chairperson acts as chairperson, and if both the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are absent from a meeting of the Commission, the commissioners present must elect one from among their number to preside at that meeting.
- (3) The quorum for any meeting of the Commission is a majority of the total number of commissioners.
- (4) The decision of the majority of the commissioners present at a meeting thereof is the decision of the Commission and in the event of an equality of votes concerning any matter, the commissioner presiding has a casting vote in addition to his or her deliberative vote.
- (5) The Commission must-
 - (a) determine its own procedure: Provided that due regard must be given to the principles of transparency, openness and public participation; and
 - (b) cause minutes to be kept of its proceedings.
- (6) The Commission may from time to time by notice in the *Gazette* make known the particulars of the procedure which it has determined in terms of subsection (5) (a).

11 Committees of Commission

- (1) The Commission may establish one or more committees consisting of one or more commissioners designated by the Commission and one or more other persons, if any, whom the Commission may appoint for that purpose and for the period determined by it for the purposes of advising the Commission, or make recommendations to it, in respect of the matter for which the committee has been established.
- (2) The Commission may extend the period of an appointment made by it under subsection (1) or withdraw such appointment during the period referred to in that subsection.
- (3) The Commission must designate a chairperson, who must be a commissioner, for every committee and, if it deems it necessary, a deputy chairperson, who must also be a commissioner.
- (4) Subject to the directions of the Commission, a committee-
 - (a) may exercise such powers of the Commission as the Commission may confer on it; and
 - (b) must perform such functions of the Commission as the Commission may assign to it,and must follow such procedure during such exercising of powers and performance of functions as the Commission may direct.
- (5) On completion of the functions assigned to it in terms of subsection (4), a committee must submit a written report thereon, including recommendations, if any, for consideration by the Commission.
- (6) The Commission may at any time dissolve any committee.

12 Conferment of powers and assignment of functions

- (1) The Commission may, in writing, confer the exercise of any of its powers or assign the performance of any of its functions to-
 - (a) a commissioner;
 - (b) a member of staff; or
 - (c) a committee of the Commission.
- (2) A conferment or assignment in terms of subsection (1)-
 - (a) is subject to such conditions and directions as the Commission may impose; and
 - (b) does not divest the Commission of responsibility for the exercise of the power or the performance of the function.
- (3) The Commission may confirm, vary or revoke any decision taken in consequence of a conferment or assignment in terms of this section, but no variation or revocation of a decision may detract from any rights that may have accrued as a result of the decision.

13 Powers and functions of Commission

- (1) In addition to any other powers and functions conferred on or assigned to it by section 184 (1), (2) and (3) of the

Constitution, this Act or any other law and in order to achieve its objects-

- (a) the Commission is competent and is obliged to-
 - (i) make recommendations to organs of state at all levels of government where it considers such action advisable for the adoption of progressive measures for the promotion of human rights within the framework of the Constitution and the law, as well as appropriate measures for the further observance of such rights;
 - (ii) undertake such studies for reporting on or relating to human rights as it considers advisable in the performance of its functions or to further the objects of the Commission; and
 - (iii) request any organ of state to supply it with information on any legislative or executive measures adopted by it relating to human rights; and
- (b) the Commission-
 - (i) must develop, conduct or manage information programmes and education programmes to foster public understanding and awareness of Chapter 2 of the Constitution, this Act and the role and activities of the Commission;
 - (ii) must as far as is practicable maintain close liaison with institutions, bodies or authorities with similar objectives to the Commission in order to foster common policies and practices and to promote co-operation in relation to the handling of complaints in cases of overlapping jurisdiction or other appropriate instances;
 - (iii) must liaise and interact with any organisation which actively promotes respect for human rights and other sectors of civil society to further the objects of the Commission;
 - (iv) may consider such recommendations, suggestions and requests concerning the promotion of respect for human rights as it may receive from any source;
 - (v) must review government policies relating to human rights and may make recommendations;
 - (vi) must monitor the implementation of, and compliance with, international and regional conventions and treaties, international and regional covenants and international and regional charters relating to the objects of the Commission;
 - (vii) must prepare and submit reports to the National Assembly pertaining to any such convention, treaty, covenant or charter relating to the objects of the Commission; and
 - (viii) must carry out or cause to be carried out such studies concerning human rights as may be referred to it by the President, and the Commission must include in a report referred to in section 18 (1) a report setting out the results of each study together with such recommendations in relation thereto as it considers appropriate.

(2) (a) The Commission may recommend to Parliament or any other legislature the adoption of new legislation which will promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights.

(b) If the Commission is of the opinion that any proposed legislation might be contrary to Chapter 2 of the Constitution or to norms of international human rights law which form part of South African law or to other relevant norms of international law, it must immediately report that fact to the relevant legislature.

(3) The Commission is competent-

- (a) to investigate on its own initiative or on receipt of a complaint, any alleged violation of human rights, and if, after due investigation, the Commission is of the opinion that there is substance in any complaint made to it, it must, in so far as it is able to do so, assist the complainant and other persons adversely affected thereby, to secure redress, and where it is necessary for that purpose to do so, it may arrange for or provide financial assistance to enable proceedings to be taken to a competent court for the necessary relief or may direct a complainant to an appropriate forum; and
- (b) to bring proceedings in a competent court or tribunal in its own name, or on behalf of a person or a group or class of persons.

(4) All organs of state must afford the Commission such assistance as may be reasonably required for the effective exercising of its powers and performance of its functions.

14 Mediation, conciliation or negotiation by Commission

The Commission may, by mediation, conciliation or negotiation endeavour-

- (a) to resolve any dispute; or
- (b) to rectify any act or omission,

emanating from or constituting a violation of or threat to any human right.

15 Investigations by Commission

(1) Pursuant to the provisions of section 13 (3) the Commission may, in order to enable it to exercise its powers and perform its functions-

- (a) conduct or cause to be conducted any investigation that is necessary for that purpose;
- (b) through a commissioner, or any member of staff duly authorised by a commissioner, require from any person such particulars and information as may be reasonably necessary in connection with any investigation;
- (c) require any person by notice in writing under the hand of a commissioner, addressed and delivered by a member of staff or a sheriff, in relation to an investigation, to appear before it at a time and place specified in such notice and to produce to it all articles or documents in the possession or custody or under the control of any such person and which may be necessary in connection with that investigation: Provided that such notice must contain the reasons why such person's presence is needed and why any such article or document should be produced; and
- (d) through a commissioner, administer an oath to or take an affirmation from any person referred to in paragraph (c), or any person present at the place referred to in that paragraph, irrespective of whether or not such person has been required under the said paragraph to appear before it, and question him or her under oath or affirmation in connection with any matter which may be necessary in connection with that investigation.

(2) (a) Any person questioned under subsection (1) must, subject to the provisions of paragraph (b) and subsections (3) and (4)-

- (i) be competent and compelled to answer all questions put to him or her regarding any fact or matter connected with the investigation of the Commission notwithstanding that the answer may incriminate him or her; and

- (ii) be compelled to produce to the Commission any article or document in his or her possession or custody or under his or her control which may be necessary in connection with that investigation.
- (b) A person referred to in paragraph (a) is only competent and compelled to answer a question or compelled to produce any article or document contemplated in that paragraph if-
 - (i) the Commission issues an order to that effect;
 - [Sub-para. (i) substituted by s. 30 of Act 15 of 2023 (wef 3 April 2024).]
 - (ii) the Commission is satisfied that to require such information from such person is reasonable, necessary and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on freedom and equality; and
 - (iii) in the Commission's judgement, such person has refused or is likely to refuse to answer a question or to produce any article or document on the basis of his or her privilege against self-incrimination.

(3) (a) Any incriminating answer or information obtained or incriminating evidence directly or indirectly derived from a questioning in terms of subsection (1) is not admissible as evidence against the person concerned in criminal proceedings in a court of law or before any body or institution established by or under any law, except in criminal proceedings where the person stands trial on a charge of perjury or a charge contemplated in section 22 (b) of this Act or in [section 319 \(3\)](#) of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1955 ([Act 56 of 1955](#)).

(b) Subject to the provisions of subsection (2) (a) (i), the law regarding privilege as applicable to a witness summoned to give evidence in a criminal case in a court of law applies in relation to the questioning of a person in terms of subsection (1).

(4) Any person appearing before the Commission by virtue of the provisions of subsection (1) (c) and (d) may be assisted at such examination by a legal representative and is entitled to peruse such of the documents referred to in subsection (1) (c) or any other relevant documents.

(5) If it appears to the Commission during the course of an investigation that any person is being implicated in the matter being investigated, the Commission must afford such person an opportunity to be heard in connection therewith by way of the giving of evidence or the making of submissions and such person or his or her legal representative is entitled, through the Commission, to question other witnesses, determined by the Commission, who have appeared before the Commission in terms of this section.

(6) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the procedure to be followed in conducting an investigation must be determined by the Commission with due regard to the circumstances of each case.

(7) The Commission must make known publicly the particulars of the procedure which it has determined in terms of subsection (6).

(8) If it is in the interests of justice or if harm to any person might otherwise ensue, the Commission or a commissioner may direct that any person or category of persons or all persons the presence of whom is not desirable may not be present at the proceedings during the investigation or any part thereof.

(9) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any law, no person may disclose to any other person the contents of any document in the possession of a commissioner or a member of staff or the record of evidence given before the Commission during an investigation, unless the Commission determines otherwise.

16 Entering and search of premises and attachment and removal of articles

(1) Any commissioner, or any member of staff or a police officer authorised thereto by a commissioner, may, subject to the provisions of this section, for the purposes of exercising the powers and performing the functions mentioned in section 13 or conducting an investigation, search any person or enter and search any premises on or in which anything connected with an investigation is or is suspected to be.

(2) The entry and search of any person or premises under this section must be conducted with strict regard to decency and order, including the protection of a person's right to-

- (a) respect for and protection of his or her dignity;
- (b) freedom and security; and
- (c) his or her personal privacy.

(3) A commissioner or member of staff or police officer contemplated in subsection (1) may, subject to the provisions of this section-

- (a) inspect and search the person or premises referred to in that subsection, and there make such enquiries as he or she may deem necessary;
- (b) examine any article or document found on the person or on or in the premises;
- (c) request information regarding such article or document from the owner or person in control of the premises or from any person in whose possession or control that article or document is, or who may reasonably be expected to have the necessary information;
- (d) make copies of or take extracts from any book or document found on the person or on or in the premises;
- (e) request from any person whom he or she suspects of having the necessary information, an explanation regarding that article or document;
- (f) attach anything on the person or on or in the premises which in his or her opinion has a bearing on the investigation concerned; and
- (g) if he or she wishes to retain anything contemplated in paragraph (f) for further examination or for safe custody, against the issue of a receipt, remove it from the person or premises: Provided that any article that has been so removed, must be returned as soon as possible after the purpose for such removal has been accomplished: Provided further that if there is no person present to receive the receipt when it is issued, it must be affixed to a prominent place on the premises.

(4) Any person from whom information is required in terms of subsection (3) (a), (c) and (e) may be assisted at such enquiry by a legal representative, and must at the commencement of such enquiry be so informed.

(5) (a) The person referred to in subsection (1) may only be searched or the premises referred to in the said subsection may only be entered and searched, by virtue of a search warrant or an entry and search warrant issued by a magistrate, or judge of a High Court, if it appears to such magistrate or judge from information on oath that there are reasonable grounds for believing that any article or document, which has a bearing on the investigation concerned, is in the possession or under the control of any person or on or in any premises within such magistrate's or judge's area of jurisdiction and cannot reasonably be obtained in any other manner.

(b) The functions referred to in subsection (3) may only be performed by virtue of a warrant issued by a magistrate, or judge of a High Court, if it appears to such magistrate or judge from information on oath that there are reasonable grounds for believing that an article or document referred to in paragraph (a) is in the possession or under the control of any person or on or in any premises within such magistrate's or judge's area of jurisdiction.

(c) A warrant must authorise any commissioner or any member of staff or a police officer to perform the functions referred to in subsection (3) and must to that end authorise such person to search any person or to enter and search any premises identified in the warrant.

(d) A warrant must be executed by day, unless the person issuing the warrant in writing authorises the execution thereof by night at times which are reasonable in the circumstances.

(e) A warrant may be issued on any day and is of force until-

- (i) it is executed; or
- (ii) it is cancelled by the person who issued it or, if such person is not available, by any person with like authority; or
- (iii) the expiry of one month from the day of its issue; or
- (iv) the purpose for the issuing of the warrant has lapsed,

whichever may occur first.

(f) A person executing a warrant under this section must, at the commencement of such execution, hand the person referred to in the warrant or the owner or the person in control of the premises, if such a person is present, a copy of the warrant: Provided that if such person is not present, he or she must affix a copy of the warrant to the premises at a prominent and visible place.

(g) A person executing a warrant under this section or an entry or search under subsection (6) must, at the commencement of such execution, identify himself or herself and if that person requires authorisation to execute a warrant under this section, the particulars of such authorisation must also be furnished.

(6) Subject to the provisions of subsections (2), (4), (5) (g), (7) and (8), any commissioner, or any member of staff or a police officer upon request by a commissioner, may, without a warrant, enter and search any premises, other than a private dwelling, for the purposes of attaching and removing, if necessary, any article or document-

- (a) if the person or persons who may consent to the entering and search for an attachment and removal of an article or document consents or consent to such entering, search, attachment and removal of the article or document concerned; or
- (b) if he or she, on reasonable grounds, believes-
 - (i) that a warrant will be issued to him or her if he or she applies for such warrant; and
 - (ii) that the delay in obtaining such a warrant would defeat the object of the entry and search.

(7) An entry and search in terms of subsection (6) must be executed by day unless the execution thereof by night is justifiable and necessary.

(8) A person who may lawfully under this section enter and search any premises may use such force as may be reasonably necessary to overcome any resistance against such entry and search of the premises, including the breaking of any door or window of such premises: Provided that such person must first audibly demand admission to the premises and notify the purpose for which he or she seeks to enter and search such premises.

(9) If during the execution of a warrant in terms of subsection (5) or a search in terms of subsection (6), a person claims that an article or document found on the person or on or in the premises concerned contains privileged information and refuses the inspection or removal of such article or document, the person executing the warrant or search must, if he or she is of the opinion that the article or document contains information that has a bearing on the investigation and that such information is necessary for the investigation, request the registrar of the High Court which has jurisdiction or his or her delegate, to attach and remove that article or document for safe custody until a court of law has made a ruling on the question whether the information concerned is privileged or not.

17 Compensation for expenses

Any person appearing before the Commission in terms of section 15 (1) (c) who is not in the public service, is entitled to receive from monies appropriated by law for such purpose, as witness fees, an amount equal to the amount which he or she would have received as witness fees had he or she been summoned to attend criminal proceedings in the High Court held at the place mentioned in the written notice in question.

18 Reports by Commission

(1) The Commission must report to the National Assembly at least once every year on its activities, the performance of its functions and the achievement of its objectives.

(2) In addition to the report contemplated in subsection (1), the Commission must, as soon as possible, submit to the National Assembly reports on the findings in respect of functions and investigations of a serious nature which were performed or conducted by it: Provided that the Commission may, at any time, submit a report to the National Assembly if it deems it necessary.

(3) The Commission may, subject to the provisions of subsection (5), in the manner it deems fit, in writing, make known to any person, the head of the organisation or institution, or the executive authority of any national or provincial department, any finding, point of view or recommendation in respect of a matter investigated by it.

(4) If the Commission makes any finding or recommendation in respect of a matter investigated by it known to the head of the organisation or institution or the executive authority of any national or provincial department concerned, the head of the organisation or institution or the executive authority of any national or provincial department concerned must within 60 days after becoming aware of such finding or recommendation respond in writing to the Commission, indicating whether his or her organisation, institution or department intends taking any steps to give effect to such finding or recommendation, if any such steps are required.

(5) The findings of an investigation by the Commission must, when it deems it fit but as soon as possible, be made available to the complainant and any person implicated thereby.

19 Staff of Commission

(1) The Commission must appoint a suitably qualified and experienced person as chief executive officer of the Commission

for the purpose of assisting the Commission in the performance of its financial, administrative and clerical functions.

(2) The chief executive officer-

- (a) is appointed on such terms and conditions and receives such remuneration, allowances and other employment benefits as the Commission may determine; and
- (b) must enter into a performance agreement with the Commission on acceptance of the appointment.

(3) The chief executive officer-

- (a) must, subject to the approval of the Commission and the provisions of subsection (4), appoint such staff as may be reasonably necessary to assist him or her with the work incidental to the performance by the Commission of its functions;
- (b) is the head of the administration of the Commission;
- (c) is responsible for-
 - (i) the management of the affairs and operations of the Commission;
 - (ii) the formation and development of an efficient administration;
 - (iii) the organisation and management of, and administrative control over, all the members of staff appointed in terms of paragraph (a) and all the persons contemplated in subsection (5);
 - (iv) the maintenance of discipline in respect of the members of staff; and
 - (v) the carrying out of the decisions of the Commission, and is for those purposes accountable to the Commission and must report thereon to the Commission as often as may be required by the Commission; and
- (d) may exercise the powers and must perform the functions which the Commission may from time to time confer upon or assign to him or her in order to achieve the objects of the Commission, and is for those purposes accountable to the Commission.

(4) The other members of staff contemplated in subsection (3) (a) are appointed on such terms and conditions and receive such remuneration, allowances and other employment benefits as the chief executive officer may, subject to the approval of the Commission, determine.

(5) The Commission may in the exercise of its powers or the performance of its functions by or under the Constitution, this Act or any other law, for specific projects, enter into contracts for the services of persons having technical or specialised knowledge of any matter relating to the work of the Commission, and determine the remuneration, including reimbursement for travelling, subsistence and other expenses, of such persons.

(6) A member of staff must exercise his or her powers and perform his or her functions-

- (a) conferred upon him or her by or under this Act or any other law; and
- (b) conferred upon or assigned to him or her by the Commission or the chief executive officer, as the case may be,

subject to the general or special directions and instructions that the Commission may, from time to time, issue to him or her.

20 Accountability

The chief executive officer is, in accordance with section 36 of the Public Finance Management Act, the accounting officer of the Commission and is charged with the responsibilities referred to in that Act.

21 Legal proceedings against Commission

(1) The Commission is a juristic person.

(2) The State Liability Act, 1957 ([Act 20 of 1957](#)), applies with the necessary changes, in respect of the Commission, and in such application a reference in that Act to 'the Minister of the department concerned' must be construed as a reference to the Chairperson.

(3) No-

- (a) commissioner;
- (b) member of staff;
- (c) person contemplated in section 19 (5); or
- (d) member of any committee, not being a commissioner,

is liable in respect of anything reflected in any report, finding, point of view or recommendation made or expressed in good faith and submitted to the National Assembly or made known in terms of this Act.

22 Offences and penalties

A person who-

- (a) without just cause refuses or fails to comply with a notice under section 15 (1) (c) or refuses to take the oath or to make an affirmation at the request of the Commission in terms of section 15 (1) (d) or refuses to answer any question put to him or her under section 15 (1) (d) or refuses or fails to furnish particulars or information required from him or her under that section;
- (b) after having been sworn or having made an affirmation contemplated in section 15 (1) (d) gives false evidence before the Commission on any matter, knowing such evidence to be false or not knowing or believing it to be true;
- (c) wilfully interrupts the proceedings at an investigation or misbehaves himself or herself in any manner in the place where such investigation is being held;
- (d) in connection with any investigation does anything which, if such investigation were proceedings in a court of law, would have constituted contempt of court;
- (e) anticipates any findings of the Commission regarding an investigation in a manner calculated to influence its proceedings or such findings;
- (f) does anything calculated improperly to influence the Commission in respect of any matter being or to be considered by the Commission in connection with an investigation;
- (g) contravenes any provision of section 4 (3) or 15 (9);
- (h) fails to afford the Commission the necessary assistance referred to in section 4 (2) or 13 (4); or

(i) acts contrary to the authority of a warrant or, without being authorised thereto under section 16, enters or searches any premises or attaches any article or document or performs any act contemplated in section 16 (3), is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months.

23 Regulations

(1) The Minister may, after the Commission has made a recommendation, make regulations regarding the following matters in relation to the members of staff:

- (a) (i) The requirements for discharge and disciplinary steps; and
- (ii) the procedure and manner of and criteria for evaluation, and the conditions or requirements for the purposes of promotion;
- (b) the powers, duties, conduct and discipline;
- (c) the creation of posts on the establishment of the Commission;
- (d) the training of members of staff, including financial assistance for such training;
- (e) a code of conduct to be complied with by members of staff;
- (f) subject to section 21, the legal liability of any member of staff in respect of any act done in terms of this Act or any other law and the legal liability emanating from the use of official transport;
- (g) the circumstances under which and the conditions and manner in which a member of staff may be found to be guilty of misconduct, or to be suffering from continued ill-health, or of incapacity to carry out his or her duties of office efficiently;
- (h) the procedure for dealing with complaints and grievances of members of staff and the manner in which and time when or period wherein and person to whom documents in connection with requests and communications of such members of staff must be submitted;
- (i) the membership or conditions of membership of a particular pension fund and the contributions to and the rights, privileges and obligations of members of staff or their dependants with regard to such a pension fund;
- (j) the membership or conditions of membership of a particular medical aid scheme or medical aid society and the manner in and the conditions on which membership fees and other monies which are payable or owing by or in respect of members of staff or their dependants, to a medical aid scheme or medical aid society, may be recovered from the salaries of such members of staff and paid to such medical aid scheme or medical aid society;
- (k) the contributions to and the rights, privileges and obligations of members of staff or their dependants with regard to such a medical aid scheme or medical aid society; and
- (l) in general, any matter, other than a matter relating to the regulation of the terms and conditions of service of members of staff, which is not in conflict with the Constitution or this Act and which the Minister considers reasonably necessary or expedient to prescribe in order to achieve an efficient administration.

(2) Any regulation made under this section-

- (a) relating to state expenditure, must be made in consultation with the Minister of Finance; and
- (b) must, after publication thereof in the *Gazette*, be submitted to the National Assembly.

24 Repeal of law and transitional arrangements

(1) The Human Rights Commission Act, 1994 ([Act 54 of 1994](#)), is hereby repealed.

(2) Any person who, immediately before the commencement of this Act, has been appointed to a post in or additional to the fixed establishment of the South African Human Rights Commission or is otherwise dealt with in terms of the Human Rights Commission Act, 1994, is deemed to have been so appointed or dealt with under the corresponding provisions of this Act.

(3) Anything done, including any regulation made or instruction issued or other administrative measure taken or any contract entered into or any obligation incurred under the Human Rights Commission Act, 1994, which could be done under this Act and which was in force immediately before the commencement of this Act, is deemed to have been so done, issued, taken, entered into or incurred, as the case may be, under this Act until amended, withdrawn or repealed under this Act.

(4) Any reference in any law to the Human Rights Commission Act, 1994, must, unless the context otherwise indicates or if clearly inappropriate, be construed as a reference to this Act, or to the corresponding provision thereof, as the case may be.

25 Short title and commencement

This Act is called the South African Human Rights Commission Act, 2013, and comes into operation on a date fixed by the President by proclamation in the *Gazette*.
