

Beautiful News: Why South Africa's greatest strength is in the rights of its people

By [Michael Hathorn](#), issued by [Ginkgo Agency](#)

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Human Rights Day is an opportunity to remember who we are, where we come from, and celebrate the plethora of extraordinary South Africans who are driving change from the bottom up.



It's Human Rights Day. And South Africa is simmering. Elections are around the corner. Load shedding is back – with a vengeance. Cape Town dodged Day Zero; other places [haven't been so fortunate](#). Corruption, disaster, and crime cycle through the headlines with relentless vigour. This is a pivotal moment. So where do we turn? The promise of our everyday citizens.

This day offers a brief respite – time to reflect, remember, and to look forward. Human Rights Day commemorates 21 March 1960, the day of the Sharpeville massacre. We've come a long way since then. For all of its issues, South Africa is alive. Apartheid ended only 25 years ago. Today our community consists of a rich, vital tapestry of people, languages and cultures. This is a country that is still emerging, still finding its identity – but there's abundant cause for optimism in the diversity and strength of its people.

The upside of uncertainty

We're not alone in grappling with change. This is a period of global flux and instability. Climate change continues to accelerate as extreme weather events wreak havoc everywhere from [California](#) to [India](#). Terrorist attacks have turned safe spaces into areas of danger, with yet another tragedy last week in Christchurch. Economic and political turmoil continue to erode trust in our established leaders. These are existential threats unique to this generation, and they're defining life for communities everywhere on the planet.

But there's a flipside to this precarious moment. An uncertain future means that tomorrow is up for grabs. Around the world,

people fighting for human rights are driving change from the bottom up. From [Nadia Murad](#), the Iraqi woman who survived capture by ISIS and went on to help other survivors of abuse and human trafficking in efforts that were recognised with the Nobel Peace Prize, to [Luo Xixi](#), the software engineer who brought the #MeToo movement to China. Courageous individuals are realising and harnessing the power of collective effort.

The world is being shaped by ordinary people taking a stand for what they believe in. Protecting human rights means fighting to preserve freedom and justice. Change comes from determination and the courage to take action. And people everywhere are doing just that.

Never too small to make a difference

This pattern holds true in South Africa. But how are our voices being heard? When calls for change are shouted from above, with political speeches on traditional platforms, they are met by a nation exposed to rhetoric fatigue. Real progress is made in the doing, not the talking. And there is a place where the deeds and actions of ordinary South Africans are being seen.

[Beautiful News](#) is a content platform that shares one positive South African story every day of the year, giving reach and voice to stories that uphold the ideals of human rights. The short films are a daily reminder that this country is full of everyday heroes – people making an impact at all levels of society.

Take this story: [Nonhlanhla Joye](#) went from being diagnosed with cancer to designing an innovative method for farming out of plastic packets that is creating jobs, fighting hunger, and helping the environment. And [Nosimphiwo Peni](#), an Eastern Cape doctor who turned away from big city opportunity to open Cradock's only 24-hour clinic – by herself. [Imtiaz Sooliman](#), the founder of Africa's largest disaster relief organisation, Gift of the Givers, has provided vital intervention in the world's most pressing crisis areas, from Syria and Haiti to Somalia and Nepal. These are dedicated, committed individuals who are working with the people around them to make the world a better place.

Positive stories change lives

To date Beautiful News has released over [850 short films](#) – all telling a unique, positive story about South Africa. The number of stories is a significant achievement for the people of this country, because it's easy to forget how many reasons we have for hope. With this daily reflection of a nation's potential, and infinite promise for the future, it's little wonder that a forward-thinking brand like Mercedes-Benz has stepped up as a patron.

What this means is that the efforts of people like Joye, Peni, and Sooliman are remarkable not just because they are exceptional individuals, but because their work reflects a broader trend. People are leading from the ground up, and coming together to create positive change. Because leadership doesn't have to mean having the loudest voice. It means helping those around you in whatever way you can.

We celebrate Human Rights Day to recognise and protect the ideals of humanity, freedom, justice, and peace. The people taking up and driving these causes aren't on pedestals or stages. They're in homes, streets, and hospital wards, making sacrifices for their communities. Sharing their stories satisfies a basic human need to connect and empathise. Stories help us understand who we are and our place in the world. They connect us, bind us, and draw us together. For a nation that's still constructing its identity, positive stories can have a massive impact – and that's worth keeping in mind today.

Beautiful News continues to release one uplifting short film a day. To see or submit a story to Beautiful News, visit www.beautifulnews.co.za, email hello@beautifulnews.co.za or join the conversation with #BeautifulNews and #MyBeautifulSA.

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About Beautiful News

South Africans are a vibrant, innovative, resourceful and warm-hearted people. A truth we often overlook. Beautiful News celebrates the extraordinary fabric of human nature that binds our nation by releasing one positive story every day at 4:14pm – the moment in time Nelson Mandela walked out of prison. Beautiful News' founder, photographer and filmmaker Adrian Steirn, previously created the 21 ICONS series, which profiled the iconic individuals who led the nation's journey to democracy and helped to unite its communities. Beautiful News is produced by Ginkgo Agency and made possible by Mercedes-Benz South Africa.

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