

INFORMATION SHEET 2

Invictus

- a **2009** film directed by **Clint Eastwood**, starring **Morgan Freeman** and **Matt Damon**
- a look at the life of Nelson Mandela after the fall of **apartheid in South Africa**, during his term as president, when he campaigned to host **the 1995 Rugby World Cup event** as an opportunity to unite his countrymen

Nelson Mandela (18 July 1918 – 5 December 2013)

- a South African **anti-apartheid revolutionary, political leader, and philanthropist** who served as **President of South Africa** from 1994 to 1999
- Mandela's government focused on **dismantling the legacy of apartheid** by tackling institutionalised racism and fostering racial reconciliation
- ideologically an African **nationalist and socialist**
- served as **President of the African National Congress (ANC)** party from 1991 to 1997

Apartheid (South African English: /ə'pɑ:rtaid/);

- a system of institutionalised **racial segregation** that existed in South Africa from 1948 until the early 1990s
- characterised by an authoritarian political culture based on *'baasskap'* (or white supremacy), which encouraged **state repression of Black African, Coloured, and Asian South Africans** for the benefit of the nation's minority white population
- was delineated into **petty apartheid** (the segregation of public facilities and social events), and **grand apartheid** (housing and employment opportunities by race)
- the economic legacy and social effects of apartheid continue to the present day

South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa (RSA)



- motto: *"Unity in Diversity"*
- is **the southernmost country in Africa**
- **the 25th-largest country in the world** by land area
- the world's 24th-most populous nation with **over 57 million people**,
- about **80 percent** of South Africans are **of Sub-Saharan African ancestry**
- the remaining population consists of Africa's largest communities of **European (White), Asian (Indian), and multiracial (Coloured) ancestry**
- a multi-ethnic society encompassing **a wide variety of cultures, languages, and religions**
- **11 official languages**, which is the fourth highest number in the world
- two of these languages are of European origin:
 - **Afrikaans** developed from Dutch and serves as the first language of most coloured and white South Africans;
 - **English** reflects the legacy of British colonialism, and is commonly used in public and commercial life, though it is fourth-ranked as a spoken first language

Themes in the movie

- forgiveness, inspiration, social prejudice, racism, statesmanship (not just politics)

The story

- The film tells a story about a talented politician dealing with a particular difficult moment in his country. Freeman's Mandela is continually surprising his advisors and security personnel with his indefatigability (never getting tired) – as he charges out of his house for his pre-dawn (before sunrise) constitutionals (walking for exercise) at the beginning of marathon workdays – as well as with his emphasis on reconciliation (making harmony with your opponents or enemies) rather than recrimination in dealing with white South Africans.

Background

- The title of the film – Latin for unconquered – is drawn from **the poem “Invictus” by the 19th century poet William Ernest Henley**, which in the film, Mandela gives to the Springboks' captain for inspiration.
- In reality, Mandela did find inspiration in the poem while in prison but instead gave the Springboks' captain a passage from a 1910 speech called The Man in the Arena by US president Teddy Roosevelt.

Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.