

## New laws in pipeline to align with Constitution – Minister

SA will be rolling out 'significant legislation' to bring the country's laws in line with the Constitution, Justice Minister Michael Masutha said on Wednesday. A report on the **IoL** site quotes Masutha as saying: 'In this regard, the department is spearheading what is known internally as the Renaissance Project **which aims to develop a new body of law to bring our legal system, which is based on Roman Dutch and English Law, fully in line with the values and spirit of our own Constitution.**' He was briefing journalists ahead of his budget vote debated in Parliament later. He cited the recently introduced Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill as an example of the type of legislation to be established. 'These crimes have, for a long time, divided our country,' said Masutha. 'In the age of social media, offensive remarks and other forms of communications travel far, fast and wide and can be severely injurious to the national well-being.'

*There are also plans to review legislation that dictates the expiry date for the prosecution of sexual offences,* Masutha said, according to a second **IoL** report. 'It has become necessary to review the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 which, among other things, prescribes the period within which the state can prosecute persons for allegations of particular categories of crime,' Masutha said during his budget vote speech. '**One of the categories in respect of which we intend to abolish the prescribed period of 20 years is sexual offences, femicide and all forms of gender-based violence.** The review will also introduce harsher sentences for these offences,' he is quoted as saying. The report notes SA has a high prevalence of sexual offences against women and children, and recently several women have been killed by their partners. Last year, the Gauteng High Court (Johannesburg) ruled in favour of eight alleged victims of billionaire stockbroker, Sidney Frankel, who claimed they had been abused by the philanthropist when they were still children. Frankel died of cancer three months before the ruling. The court set aside the prescription date for sexual offences to be investigated and prosecuted by the state.