

# Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu

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## PRESS STATEMENT

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The annual mutilation and death of young South Africans undergoing manhood initiation rituals requires urgent intervention.

The guardians of South African health and culture must find the means to work together to protect the sanctity of our traditional practices while avoiding what some in Pondoland describe as 'male genital mutilation'.

The cultural importance of manhood initiation rituals as educational institutions to prepare boys for the responsibilities of adult life should not be lost. We must protect these practices. But we must avoid placing too much focus on the physical and psychological ordeal.

My plea is for all stakeholders, and in particular the House of Traditional Leaders and the Department of Health, to draw on the skills of qualified medical practitioners to enhance our traditional circumcision practices.

Safe circumcision methods will create valuable opportunities for initiates to focus on learning - about themselves, their cultures and the human condition - and preparing to contribute to building a better society for all.

God bless you.

+ Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu