



t +27 21 556 5502

a P.O. Box 50110
West Beach
Cape Town 7441

e info@forsa.org.za
www.forsa.org.za

To: The President
Mr Cyril Ramaphosa

Per e-mail:

Cc'd to:

Cc: The Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

Per mail:

Cc: The Minister of Health
Dr Zweli Mkhize

Per e-mail:

10 February 2021

Dear President Ramaphosa,

**RE: RELIGIOUS / CONSCIENTIOUS CONCERN REGARDING THE USE OF
(HISTORICAL) ABORTION-DERIVED FETAL CELL LINES IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OR PRODUCTION OF CERTAIN COVID-19 VACCINES**

1. As you are aware, *Freedom of Religion South Africa NPC (FOR SA)* is a legal advocacy organisation working to protect and promote the constitutional right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion in South Africa.

2. In the matter of COVID-19 and the impact of the regulations on the religious community of South Africa, FOR SA has been mandated by religious leaders and organisations representing between 15.5 million and 18.5 million people from a cross-spectrum of churches, denominations and faith groups, to engage with Government and make submissions on their behalf (as we have been doing since mid-March 2020 when the national state of disaster was first declared).
3. We now write to you with regard to the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme across the country, and in particular to bring to your attention a concern shared by various members of the faith community of South Africa and that may make them reluctant to take the vaccine.
4. The concern relates to the use of (historical) abortion-derived fetal cell lines in the development, production and/or testing of certain of the vaccines. Many people of faith, who typically are “pro-life”, have a religious / conscientious concern regarding taking any vaccine developed or produced from abortion-derived cell lines. As a result, they may well – on this basis – object to taking the vaccines developed from such cell lines (whether on a voluntary basis, or if imposed for e.g. by their employer).
5. In this regard, we understand – based on factual, scientific research put out by the [Charlotte Lozier Institute](#) - that both the AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines used (historical) abortion-derived fetal cell lines in the development / production of the vaccine, whereas other vaccines (including for e.g. Pfizer / BioNTech, and Moderna) did not use such cell lines.
6. In view of the foregoing, ***we appeal to Government to – in its deliberations regarding, and implementation of, the roll-out of the vaccine programme (and in particular which vaccines to procure) – have regard to the religious / conscientious convictions and beliefs of millions of South Africans, whose conscience, religion and belief are protected by s 15 of the Constitution as a fundamental human right.***
7. We believe that, if presented with a choice (including, therefore, vaccines that were not developed or produced with (historical) abortion-derived fetal cell lines), many

more South Africans – who are currently resistant to taking vaccines because of their religious / conscientious concerns – would potentially be willing to take the vaccine.

We trust that our letter will receive your favourable consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Adv Nadene L. Badenhorst

Legal Counsel, *FOR SA*