

11 die in bungled circumcisions and manhood tests in South Africa

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At least 11 young men have died during tough rites of passage ceremonies in South Africa in recent weeks which include often bungled circumcisions by traditional medics.

Dozens die every year and scores of others lose genitals when local surgeons perform the circumcisions, the government said on Thursday.

The rites of passage ceremonies start around late May. Teenagers from certain ethnic groups spend about a month in secluded bush or [mountain regions](#) as part of their initiation to manhood.

This includes a circumcision as well as lessons on masculine courage and discipline.

Many die from infection, exhaustion and dehydration, while hundreds are hospitalised, according to official figures.

Over 100 died last year, Traditional Affairs Minister Obed Bapela said in a statement on Thursday, although this was a huge drop from 2010 when 419 youths died.

It was not immediately clear how many had died this year as a direct result of their [circumcision](#).

"We call for the countdown to zero fatalities in initiation schools," said Bapela, adding that only qualified and registered traditional surgeons

should perform the circumcisions, and only at approved facilities.

Dozens of people are currently being investigated in relation to last year's deaths, according to prosecutors.

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