



Press statement

31 October 2021

Vote on November 1, start accountability work from November 2

On the eve of local government elections, the Defend our Democracy campaign reiterates its call to all South Africans who are eligible to vote, to do so on November 1.

Municipal government elections are important, because its impact is felt directly at a community level.

Over 300 political parties and close to 100 000 candidates, including independent candidates - will be standing for this year's elections, giving voters a diverse range of options.

We encourage voters to support candidates and the party that they think can best root out corruption at a local level, and that will champion efficient service delivery.

The poor state of municipalities has come under the spotlight – the Auditor General's June 2021 report indicates that only 27 out of 257 municipalities received clean audits. The recent loadshedding, 'load reduction' in certain areas, lack of water provision in various communities, aging municipal infrastructure, corruption and billing issues form part of an array of challenges that local government will have to deal with over the next five years.

Earlier this month, the campaign visited several localities in Limpopo province, where despite nearby dams, reservoirs or drought relief funding, communities still do not have access to water. In one area, community members indicated that they only receive water from the municipality via water trucks if they have a funeral or function at home! To the contrary, mines and farms in surrounding areas reportedly have access to water. It cannot take close to 30 years under a democratic dispensation for people to have basic water provision.

As citizens, we have a responsibility post elections to hold elected officials within our localities accountable. We must demand access to information and budgets about infrastructure development projects in our municipalities, and hold legislatures accountable for work that is not done, or for monies not accounted for.

In a lead up to Anti-Corruption Day on 9th December, the Defend our Democracy campaign will be asking civic organisations and community groups to come out in their numbers to demand accountable and transparent governance.

As voters head to the polls, we urge all political parties and their supporters to conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies our democratic values. There is no room in this democracy for electoral violence, political killings and disruptions to the voting process. Members of the public can play an important role by reporting online incitement to violence or other forms of digital disinformation and fake news on election day and beyond by visiting the real411.org website, a partnership between the IEC and Media Monitoring Africa.

Post elections, as possibilities for coalition governments emerge, parties are urged to put service delivery and the interests of the public at the forefront of their decision-making. At the end of the day, the electorate wants clean and efficient governance, irrespective of who is in power.



We wish the IEC and all elections observers well on Monday and over the next week as vote counting gets underway. We trust that you will execute your duties in a manner that is truly non-partisan, and professional.

Once again, to the South African public, the Defend our Democracy campaign urges you to exercise your democratic right. Cast your ballot. Every vote does count.

Issued by the Defend our Democracy campaign

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