



**12 March 2024**

**Press statement.**

---

### **Political parties must be called out for casting doubt on SA's electoral processes**

Defend our Democracy calls on political parties to refrain from casting unwarranted doubt on the country's 2024 electoral processes and on the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of South Africa.

In doing so, they risk discrediting the elections before it has even kicked off.

Defend our Democracy launched its civil society election observation campaign in November last year. The Election Watch campaign aims to get civil society organisations in South Africa to collectively observe and pronounce on the integrity of the electoral processes. The campaign is politically non-partisan.

In it within this context, that we have noted with growing concern the statements of some political parties in a lead up to the elections.

### **Undermining of the IEC must be condemned**

Certain comments made on MK Party platforms particularly, have been extremely worrying and must be condemned.

These include threats against the IEC, the discrediting of its integrity and an allusion to violence if the party's electoral expectations are not met.

At an MK event recently, a pastor addressing the crowd threatened to "close SA for good" if MK did not receive a two thirds majority. The pastor stated, "We want to say to the IEC you better do it the right way or we are coming for you."

Some of these comments, in light of the inciting narratives that drove the July 2021 violence, are rather alarming, and could potentially be legally challenged.

### **DA and ANC narratives a cause for concern**

Parties should also be aware that spinning dangerous narratives around the elections potentially being "captured" or meddled with by "foreign" actors does little to bolster public trust in democratic processes.

Without providing evidence publicly, President Cyril Ramaphosa recently warned ANC members of foreign interference in the vote. This prompted the IEC to reassure the electorate that the manual voting and counting processes in South Africa limited the scope for meddling but added that it is fortifying its systems.



The DA's letter to the USA's Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, asking for foreign assistance for domestic observation work and voter education is similarly unhelpful in this climate. The same can be said for the ANC's retort that it would consider bringing its own "friends" to observe the elections.

While supportive of domestic and foreign observation, Defend our Democracy implores political parties not to use the issue of observation work to play global politics.

Political parties have every right to constructively critique the IEC. They also have the right to take matters concerning the conduct of other parties to the Electoral Court. Registered political parties can raise their concerns directly with the IEC at its party liaison committee meetings. Political parties must not however, resort to fearmongering tactics ahead of the elections.

Parties would do well to: let the IEC do its job; conduct voter education work amongst their constituencies; leave civil society to do its own election observation and awareness campaigns; and to stop peddling narratives or undertaking action that does more harm than good for democracy.

---

Issued by Defend Our Democracy

For media enquiries contact

Andries Sibanyoni

Communication Officer

Mobile: 071 037 6138

Email: [andries@defendourdemocracy.co.za](mailto:andries@defendourdemocracy.co.za)