



Press Statement

6 August 2026

Defend Our Democracy Urges South Africans to Register to Vote Before the Official Proclamation of the 2026 Local Government Elections on Friday, 7 August 2026.

“Mzansi, it’s your Last Chance to register! Secure Your Vote, Your Voice, Your Democracy”

For millions of South Africans, the time left before the proclamation is not just a bureaucratic formality; it’s the last chance to secure a voice in decisions that shape how people actually live daily: refuse collection, water, roads, and local accountability.

In less than 24 hours, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Hon. Velenkosini Hlabisa, will officially proclaim the date of the 2026 Local Government Elections, and South Africa's voters' roll will close automatically at midnight on Friday, 7th August 2026.

Defend Our Democracy is calling on all eligible South Africans to urgently register online before the proclamation deadline on Friday, 7th August 2026, in order to be able to vote in the upcoming 4th November local government elections.

Active participation is the cornerstone of a strong democracy, and registering ensures that every citizen’s voice is heard. In this instance, there is no grace period, no appeal, and no exception. Anyone who has not registered, or who has moved and not updated their address, will be locked out, not only from registering, but from casting a ballot in the ward where they actually live.

Local government elections are won and lost at ward level, where boundaries shift and small margins decide who governs a community. A voter registered at an old address, or not registered at all, is a voter effectively erased from local democracy for the next five years. Ward demarcations may also have shifted since the last elections, hence we urge all eligible voters to visit the [IEC Voter’s Portal](#) to verify their details, check, and if necessary, update the ward where they are registered to vote. Every citizen who verified their details or registered before proclamation protects not just their own vote, but the integrity of the roll their community will be governed by.

Defend Our Democracy commends the IEC and CoGTA for the clarity of their communication that has been forthcoming in these final weeks, and we call on all South Africans to now shift their attention to the next task: showing up on 4 November to make that registration count.

Beyond Proclamation Day - Join DOD’s Election Watch Campaign

Meaningful participation can bring about change. It starts with the vote, but it cannot end there. Defend Our Democracy is calling on South Africans from far and wide to go beyond the call to vote by becoming election observers as part of the Election Watch campaign. By volunteering to be election observers, citizens will Watch, Record and Report, helping to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process, ensuring that our elections remain transparent, honest, free, fair, and credible.

Our campaign tagline says it plainly: Mzansi, you're the boss! That means civic engagement and participation at a number of levels within society.

1. Register and verify your details: online registration remains open until proclamation on Friday, 7th August.



2. *Observe*: join structures like our Election Watch Campaign as a trained citizen observer, so the process itself stays honest and visible, in your own community.
3. *Hold to account between elections*: attend ward committee and community meetings, track whether councillors deliver on what they promised, measure municipalities against their constitutional obligations.
4. *Organise collectively*: join or support the community and civil society structures already doing this work.

Together, we can uphold the values of accountability, fairness, and inclusivity that lie at the heart of our Constitution.

Defend Our Democracy stands ready to work alongside communities across the country to ensure that the 2026 elections reflect the will of the people.

[Register today to join #TheWatch and become an Election Observer](#)

#ElectionWatch2026 | #JoinTheWatch | #ObserveTheVote | #DefendOurDemocracy

Issued by Defend Our Democracy

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