

Press statement

23 May 2024

Call to uphold the integrity of the elections

We, the undersigned organisations reaffirm our unwavering commitment to free, fair and peaceful national and provincial elections next week in South Africa.

We call on all sectors of society to pledge to uphold the integrity of the upcoming elections.

In particular, we appeal to independent candidates, and political parties - whether contesting or not - to help ensure the success of the elections. This can be done by ensuring that their members abide by the rule of law, including recent judgements by the Constitutional Court.

Parties and independent candidates who are contesting must adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct. The code prohibits violence and intimidation and prevents signatories from abusing positions of power or privilege to influence the electoral outcomes.

Elections are meant to be fiercely contested. However, this should not result in spurious disputes over the electoral results simply to cause chaos or to further political party agendas. We demand that political parties and independent candidates at all times put the interests of the country first.

Our appeal to the South African electorate is to go out and vote. Employers must give employees who are working on election day time off to exercise their democratic right to vote. We acknowledge the numbers of South Africans living abroad who cast their ballots several days ago. We look forward to seeing large numbers of voters participating in the special voting process on 27-28 May. We also hope to see all other registered voters going to the over 23 000 voting stations set up across the country on 29 May 2024.

Community leaders and organisers have an important role to play in this period. Voters must in no way be prevented from casting their ballots due to protest action that some may be planning. We understand the right of communities to raise their issues, but at the same time, communities must stand together to ensure that the right to vote is respected. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of South Africa should be alerted if voting is disrupted.

We thank all South Africans who have responded to the call to become election observers. They give meaning to our call for the 30th year of freedom to be marked as the 'Year of the Active Citizen'. Through the Election Watch observer campaign, we recommit to conducting electoral oversight work that is politically non-partisan. We will continue building our collective capacity to observe elections leading to the 2026 and 2029 elections.

Members of the public who may not have registered as observers are encouraged to use social media to share their voting day experiences. (Use #ElectionWatch in posts so that we can track your reports.) Beware of fake news, misinformation and any potential attempts to incite violence.

Our call to members of the media is to continue playing the important role of ensuring accurate and fair coverage of the elections.

The IEC has successfully run six provincial and national government elections since 1994. We appeal to the IEC to make certain that the integrity and professionalism that they have consistently demonstrated be maintained.

As the country marks 30 years of democracy, we acknowledge the strides made in transforming South Africa from its apartheid past to a constitutional democracy. We must, however, also recognise that our democracy has been eroded through state capture, corruption, and malfeasance.

Voters will now, once again, have the ultimate say in the future trajectory of the country. This determination could potentially result in an eventuality where coalition governance at national or provincial levels may need to be considered.

If this is the case, coalitions must be built on policies and principles that will take the country forward. It cannot simply be about political parties squabbling for positions, as has been demonstrated in several municipalities over the last few years. We demand that all coalition agreements be made publicly available so that political parties who may be coming into office can be held to account on what they agree to.

By this time next week, South African voters would hopefully have joined billions of people across some 60 countries participating in some form of elections in 2024. Our country has time and again demonstrated its ability to successfully navigate critical political moments. This time round, the moment calls for us to - even as we express different political choices - unite on a common commitment: ensuring the success of the 2024 elections.

Signed by:

Active Citizens Movement

Ahmed Kathrada Foundation

Auwal Socio-Economic Research Institute NPC

Business Unity South Africa

Campaign for Free Expression

Cape Town Ulama Board

Centre for Good Governance and Social Justice NPC

Congress of Business and Economics

Corruption Watch

Council of African Independent Churches

Defend our Democracy

Dialogue for Action

Direct Democracy South Africa

Educators For Humanity

Federation of Unions of South Africa

Freedom Under Law

Fridays For Future South Africa

Inclusive Society Institute

Institute for African Alternatives

Institute for Security Studies

Isiziba Community Based Organizations of South Africa

Johannesburg Against Injustice

Krishna Rabilal Foundation

Legal Resources Centre

LenzPolitics

Linali

Ma'engere Film Productions

Masibuyisane

Mediate Works (PTY) LTD

Moral Regeneration Movement - Mamusa

Moselatshedimosho Mining Community Education and Training Centre

MSA Union (Muslim Students' Association Union)

Msunduzi Association of Residents Ratepayers and Civics

Ntwane Community Development Forum

Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse

People's Keep Fit Club

Privilege Foundation

Progressive Tamil Movement

Public Affairs Research Institute

Right2Know Campaign

Rivonia Circle

SDCEA/ACM Durban Coalition

Sham ul Islam Masjid

Shito-Ryu Karatedo Institute

Solidarity

SOS Support Public Broadcasting Coalition

South Africa First Forum

South African Conversations

South African Federation of Trade Unions

South African Hindu Maha Sabha

South African Informal Traders Forum

South African Tamil Federation

SoWeVote

Strategic Dialogue Group

Support Group for Survivors of State Capture at the South African Revenue Service

Synergy Works Consulting

SynNovation Solutions (Pty) Ltd

Teddy Bear Foundation for Abused Children

The Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation

The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa

The Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa

The Peace Centre

Vulindlela Youth Development Institute South Africa

Wattville Community Action Network

Women's Assembly Movement

YMCA South Africa

#StandUpSA

#UniteBehind

#YouthArise

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