

# Press Release

## For immediate release

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South African Institute of Race Relations  
*The power of ideas*

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### **ANC rejuvenation slows and declines, EFF growth remains high - IRR's latest election poll**

#### **Statement by Gareth van Onselen, Head of Politics and Governance at the IRR**

The banner headline findings in the first set of results from the IRR's February 2019 Election Poll into the electoral landscape are that the ANC currently stands on 54.7% nationally, down 1.3 percentage points from December (56%); the DA currently stands on 21.8% nationally, up 3.1 percentage points from December (18%); and EFF currently stands on 12.2% nationally, up 1.2 percentage points from December (11%).

In Gauteng, the ANC is well below a majority, with EFF growth remaining high, while in the Western Cape, the DA majority is on a knife edge, with smaller parties showing some growth.

This the IRR's third poll on the electoral landscape – the first was conducted in September 2018, followed by a “snap poll” in December.

The latest poll was in the field between 12 and 26 February 2019. The sample was fully demographically representative and comprised only registered voters. A total of 1,611 respondents were questioned. The national margin of error is 3.3%.

Supplementing this were two fully demographically representative sub-samples for Gauteng (sample size: 502 registered voters) and the Western Cape (sample size: 405 registered voters). The margin of error for the Gauteng sub-sample was 3.8%, and for the Western Cape sub-sample, 5.9%. The confidence level is 95%. The poll was conducted telephonically.

Below is a summary of national Voting Intention (that is, party political support), as well as Voting Intention in Gauteng and the Western Cape and various turnout scenarios nationally and provincially.

The report – see link below – also contains the IRR's full analysis of the findings, as well as a full explanation of the methodology.

It is important to note that **this poll is not a prediction**. It is a snapshot in time, in this case of the electoral market between 12 and 26 February 2019.

The banner headline findings of the IRR's 2019 February Election Poll are:

### **1. NATIONAL BALLOT: ANC rejuvenation slows and declines, EFF growth remains high**

- The ANC currently stands on 54.7% nationally, down 1.3 percentage points from December (56%). That is down 7.4 percentage points from the 62.1% it secured in 2014. On a 71% turnout scenario, support for the party increases to 55%.
- The DA currently stands on 21.8% nationally, up 3.1 percentage points from December (18%). That is down 0.4 percentage points from the 22.2% it secured in 2014. On a 71% turnout scenario, support for the party increases to 24%.

- The EFF currently stands on 12.2% nationally, up 1.2 percentage points from December (11%). That is up 5.9 percentage points from the 6.3% it secured in 2014. On a 71% turnout scenario, support for the party decreases to 11%.

## **2. GAUTENG PROVINCIAL BALLOT: ANC well below a majority, EFF growth remains high**

- The ANC currently stands on 41.6%, down 12 percentage points from the 53.6% it secured on the provincial ballot in 2014. On a 69.5% turnout scenario, support for the party increases to 47%.
- The DA currently stands on 32.4%, up 1.6 percentage points from the 30.8% it secured on the provincial ballot in 2014. On a 69.5% turnout scenario, support for the party increases to 36%.
- The EFF currently stands on 18.2%, up 7.9 percentage points from the 10.3% it secured on the provincial ballot in 2014. On a 69.5% turnout scenario, support for the party drops to 11%.

## **3. WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL BALLOT: DA majority on a knife edge; some growth for smaller parties**

- The DA currently stands on 50.1%, down 9.3 percentage points from the 59.4% it secured on the provincial ballot in 2014. On a 74.7% turnout scenario, support for the party increases to 54%.
- The ANC currently stands at 33.9%, up 1 percentage point from the 32.9% it secured on the provincial ballot in 2014. On a 74.7% turnout scenario, support for the party drops to 30%.
- Support for the ACDP currently stands at 3.5% and at 2.8% for the FF+, both up from the 1% and 0.6% they secured respectively on the provincial ballot in 2014. The results for both parties do fall within the margin of error and should be treated with caution.

## **4. PARTY SUPPORT BY RACE: The DA's support base remains most racially diverse**

- A breakdown of the ANC's support base (54.7%) by race, shows that it comprises: 96.2% black voters, 1.1% white voters, 2.2% Coloured voters and 0.5% Indian voters.
- A breakdown of the DA's support base (21.8%) by race, shows that it comprises: 27.3% black voters, 36.0% white voters, 28.0% Coloured voters and 8.6% Indian voters.
- A breakdown of the EFF's support base (12.2%) by race, shows that it comprises: 98.1% black voters, 0.4% white voters, 1.3% Coloured voters and 0.1% Indian voters.
- 68% of all black voters indicated they would vote ANC, compared to 16% for the EFF and 8% for the DA.
- 71% of all white voters indicated they would vote DA, compared to 5% for the ANC and 0% for the EFF.
- 67% of all Coloured voters indicated they would vote DA, compared to 13% for the ANC and 2% for the EFF.
- 72% of Indian voters indicated they would vote DA, compared to 10% for the ANC and 1% for the EFF.

## **ANALYSIS**

- The ANC's general decline from 2014 (as of February, it is down 7.4 percentage points from the last election) can be almost exclusively attributed to the EFF. The ANC and the EFF are locked in a battle for between 5% and 10% of alienated black ANC voters. Where those voters end up on 8 May will go some way towards determining the fate of these two parties. It is clear those 5% to 10% of alienated black ANC voters are fluid and have, to one degree or another, shifted between the ANC and EFF over the past five months.
- Initially, and on the back of Jacob Zuma's disastrous electoral impact, they had shifted almost entirely to the EFF. In September, the party was on 13%. The ANC managed to claw some of that support back in the last two months of 2018, reducing the EFF to 11% in December and increasing its own standing to 56% that month. As things stand, on the back of much bad news

over the past two months (Bosasa and Stage 4 load-shedding among them), some of those voters have started to shift back to the EFF, at the ANC's expense.

- As of February, the ANC thus looks like it will battle to reach its internal national election target of 60%. However, it is still possible, with a good campaign over the coming two months, to once again win back some of those alienated but fluid voters it has lost to the EFF.
- The EFF appears to be the only opposition party able to make direct and significant inroads into the ANC's support.
- The backbone of the EFF's national support is to be found in Gauteng, and that same national trend is at its most profound in this province, where the EFF currently stands at 18.2% on the provincial ballot and the ANC on 41.6%. That is a not just a huge gap to make up before 8 May, if the ANC wishes to win the province with an outright majority, but represents a massive 12 percentage point decline from the 53.6% the party secured on the provincial ballot in 2014.
- The DA is currently on 21.8%, suggesting it is slowly managing to recover some lost ground (it was on 18% in December), but the party's internal national election target of 27% is looking far off as of February.
- The DA remains relatively stable and its support, it would seem, is locked in a band of between 20% and 24%. Its greatest challenge is the Western Cape which, together with Gauteng, comprised 62.4% of all DA support in 2014. The party's decline in that province (the DA is currently on 50.1% on the provincial ballot) has meant the DA's primary challenge is getting its base to turn out, rather than to grow in new markets. Its ability to invigorate its supporters in the Western Cape will be one of the key differences between it being able to grow nationally, albeit marginally, and staying relatively stable at around 22%.
- By contrast, the DA seems set for some small growth in Gauteng.
- The situation in Gauteng is intriguingly balanced, as of February. Even on a lower turnout scenario, the ANC fails to get to 50%. All three big parties – the ANC, DA and EFF – appear to be able to form a majority coalition: The ANC and the EFF; the EFF and the DA; and even the ANC and the DA.

- The ANC has more longstanding problems in Gauteng than the EFF, however. The ANC's vote share in Gauteng has remained relatively unchanged ever since 1994, at around 2.5m votes. Faced now with both discontent and apathy, the party's historical inability to grow its share of the electoral pool means it is disproportionately affected by a change in voting intention towards it, in that province. Thus, its challenge, like the DA's in the Western Cape, is not only to win back and reinvigorate its base (primarily from the EFF), but to try and grow beyond that. As things stand, the latter seems unlikely.
- The situation in the Western Cape is equally finely balanced. The DA has, to a degree, been suffering a torture by a thousand cuts. In the wake of its internal incoherence and infighting over the last two years, it appears the number of voters it has systematically consolidated under its banner from other smaller parties over the last two decades have returned to those parties. As a result, although within the margin of error, both the ACDP and FF+ have a good showing on the Western Cape provincial ballot. Likewise, the advent of the Good Movement, which, although only polling at 2.5% on the provincial ballot, could, together with parties like the ACDP and FF+, be the difference between the DA being able to retain its majority or not.

The IRR will undertake a full political survey every quarter. The next such full quarterly survey will be conducted in April 2019. The IRR's intention is to publish the results in the week before the 8 May 2019 election.

The full report can be found at <https://irr.org.za/reports/criterion-report/the-criterion-report-vol-2-no-1>

**Ends**