

FreeFACTS

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The current political landscape

South Africa is due to hold municipal elections in October. It remains to be seen whether they will be postponed, giving the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, but at the time of writing, they are on track to be held as scheduled.

But what does the current political landscape tell us about what to expect in October?

Opinion polling by the IRR, conducted towards the end of last year shows that the vote share of the African National Congress (ANC) has slipped just below 50%. However, opposition parties shouldn't get too excited – only 14.3% of those polled said they would vote for the Democratic Alliance (DA) and 13.8% for the Economic Freedom Fighters.

Some may be surprised at the ANC's stubborn grip on the 50% mark but the party has proved fairly resilient in recent years.

Unsurprisingly, the poll showed differences among race groups. A majority of black respondents said they would vote for the ANC, while the DA was the favourite amongst Coloured and white South Africans. A plurality of Indian respondents also said they would vote for the DA.

There were also differences in political support when looking at the income and educational levels of people, or whether they were unemployed, or working in the formal or informal sector.

Recent by-election results also show the ANC's resilience. Between the beginning of the lockdown and the end of April this year 131 municipal by-elections were held. The ANC defended over 100 seats and lost only three, while winning 12 that had previously been held by the opposition. By contrast the DA defended 22 and lost 11, while picking up only one held by another party. The EFF failed to win any by-elections.

But the unknown factor will be those who do not vote and whether they can be persuaded to come to the polls. In 2019 over 20 million South Africans who were eligible to vote did not do so. If they decide to use their ballot it could be a game changer for this country.

— **Marius Roodt**

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The IRR is an advocacy group that fights for your right to make decisions about your life, family and business, free from unnecessary government, political, and bureaucratic interference. FreeFACTS publishes evidence that communities are better off when individuals are free to make decisions about how they want to live, be educated, work, access healthcare, think, speak, own property, and protect their communities. If you agree with the issues we stand for, welcome to the team. There are millions of people just like you who are tired of South African politicians, activists, and commentators attempting to rein in your freedom to decide. Take control and make sure your voice is heard by becoming a friend of the IRR.

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The current political landscape

By-election results between March 2020 and April 2021				
11 November 2020				
	Seats won	Seats lost	Seats retained	Net gain/loss
ANCA ^a	5	2	65	3
DA ^b	1	8	15	-7
IFP ^c	1	0	4	1
FF+ ^d	1	0	0	1
PA ^e	1	0	0	1
Al-Jama ah	1	0	0	1
GOOD	1	0	0	1
9 December 2020				
	Seats won	Seats lost	Seats retained	Net gain/loss
ANC	5	1	12	4
DA	0	2	6	-2
BRA ^f	0	3	0	-3
Land	1	0	0	1
21 April 2021				
	Seats won	Seats lost	Seats retained	Net gain/loss
ANC	2	0	10	2
DA	0	1	1	-1
IFP	0	1	1	-1

Source: Independent Elections Commission

a African National Congress

b Democratic Alliance

c Inkatha Freedom Party

d Freedom Front Plus

e Patriotic Alliance

f Better Residents Association (formerly Bushbuckridge Residents Association)

Political party support by race, 2020					
	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
ANC	49.4%	59.0%	22.1%	12.7%	6.3%
DA	14.3%	4.4%	55.1%	34.0%	50.8%
EFF	13.8%	17.2%	1.0%	0.0%	1.9%
IFP	3.9%	4.8%	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%
FF+	1.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	10.2%
Other parties	2.3%	1.2%	3.4%	21.0%	3.0%
Not going to vote	4.8%	3.8%	5.3%	7.7%	11.8%
Refused to say/other	10.5%	9.6%	12.6%	24.5%	14.9%

Source: IRR opinion poll, 2020

The current political landscape

Support for parties by age group, employment status, and income, 2020			
By age group	ANC	DA	EFF
16 - 24	50.5%	9.6%	19.1%
25 - 34	44.8%	12.7%	18.2%
35 - 49	49.3%	14.6%	14.1%
50+	54.0%	18.1%	5.2%
By employment status	ANC	DA	EFF
Unemployed and looking for work	52.9%	8.0%	16.7%
Unemployed and not looking for work	58.2%	2.9%	8.0%
Employed, informal sector	49.9%	7.5%	24.6%
Employed, formal sector	43.4%	19.7%	13.8%
By educational qualification	ANC	DA	EFF
Primary and lower	67.4%	6.0%	9.3%
Grade 8 to 10	55.8%	12.4%	12.0%
Grade 11 to 12	49.1%	12.6%	14.9%
University degree	31.6%	24.2%	13.7%
By income	ANC	DA	EFF
No income	47.0%	10.8%	16.5%
R1 - R500	54.8%	4.9%	11.5%
R501 - R1000	57.1%	5.0%	19.7%
R1001 - R2000	62.6%	12.2%	9.4%
R2001 - R5000	56.8%	11.3%	15.9%
R5001 - R10000	49.9%	16.8%	14.8%
R10001 - R15000	31.2%	23.7%	21.4%
R15001 - R25000	39.6%	24.2%	10.4%
R25001 - R40000	22.9%	29.5%	12.9%
R40000+	11.8%	53.0%	0.0%

Source: IRR opinion poll, 2020

