

FreeFACTS

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Polls point to coalition government next year

It has now become something of a cliché to talk about next year's national election as the most important since 1994, but the fact of the matter is that it may be so.

It could be the first election in post-apartheid South Africa where the ANC loses its majority. While it is possible that opposition parties could manage to cobble together a coalition which could form a majority it is more likely that the ANC will continue governing with the support of one or more smaller parties.

This edition of *FreeFACTS* looks at a number of recent polls, as well as some trends in municipal by-elections.

All four of the polls presented here show that the ANC is likely to drop below 50% in next year's election. This will mean that a coalition government is necessary at national level, and will most likely also be necessary in a number of provinces, particularly Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

However, for those that are not ANC supporters, it must not be assumed that it is a foregone conclusion that the governing party will fail to win a majority. It is still some time before the next election and there is still much the ANC could do to regain support it has lost.

In addition, the ANC 'brand' still remains strong and many of its supporters who have said they will vote for another party come election time, may not be able to bring themselves to turn away from the ANC at the ballot box.

This can be seen from the by-election analysis provided in this edition, which shows the large number of wards which the ANC has retained in by-elections. Voters are not – yet – abandoning the party en masse.

In the final analysis South Africa is on the brink of truly entering an era of competitive multiparty politics but reports of the death of the ANC have been greatly exaggerated. The party will still be in power in the majority of our provinces next year and will almost certainly still be ensconced in the Union Buildings. But things are changing. Quickly.

— Marius Roodt

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Politics

Social Research Foundation Poll

	On 66% turnout	On 56% turnout
ANC	45%	46%
DA	31%	31%
EFF	9%	10%
Others	15%	13%

Source: Social Research Foundation, available at: <https://srfreports.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Report-45-State-of-play-October-2023.pdf>. Accessed 15 November 2023

Note: This poll was conducted in October 2023 and had 1 412 respondents, with a margin of error of 5%.

Brenthurst Foundation poll

	High turnout scenario	Low turnout scenario
ANC	43%	45%
DA	25%	27%
EFF	16%	15%
Others	16%	13%

Source: Brenthurst Foundation, https://www.thebrenthurstfoundation.org/downloads/tbf_survey_coalitions_v5-october-2023.pdf, accessed 15 November 2023

Note: The poll was conducted in September and October 2023 and had 1 500 respondents. It had a margin of error of 3%.

IPSOS poll

ANC	43%
DA	20%
EFF	18%
Others	19%

Source: PSOS, available at: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-za/possible-political-party-choices-2024-election>. Accessed on 15 November 2023

Note: The poll was conducted in June and July 2023 and had 3 600 respondents, with a margin of error of 0,65%.

IRR poll

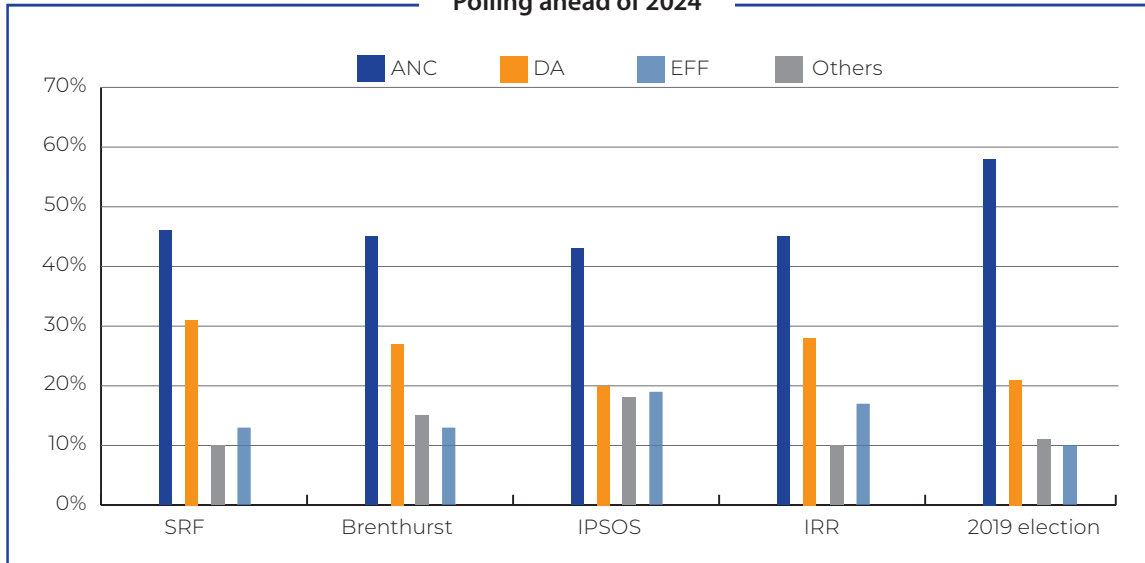
ANC	45%
DA	28%
EFF	10%
Others	17%

Source: IRR polling data

Note: This poll was held November 2023 and had 604 respondents. The margin of error was 6%.

Politics

Polling ahead of 2024



By-elections since the 2021 local government election

	Hold	Gain	Loss	Net
ANC	89	7	24	-17
IFP	12	12	2	10
NFP	1	1	0	1
African United Movement	0	1	1	0
Independent	0	2	3	-1
DA	36	4	5	-1
EFF	1	10	0	10
PA	0	4	1	3
KGP	0	0	1	-1
Al Jama-ah	0	0	1	-1
FF+	0	1	1	0
TSSA	1	0	0	0
CRFA	1	0	0	0
GOOD	0	0	3	-3

Source: Source: Independent Electoral Commission

Note: Note: This table looks at by-elections since the 2021 local government elections. Hold refers to seats successfully defended, a gain is a seat that was won off another party in a by-elections, while a loss is a seat that another party gained in a by-election. Net is the difference between seats gained and lost. For example, the ANC has successfully defended 86 seats since the 2021 local government election, has gained seven off other parties, and lost 23, giving it a net loss of 17 seats.