

## **2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **Political Parties Contesting the 2019 Elections**



*Residents cast their votes during the Nquthu by-election at Springlake High School on May 24, 2017 in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. (Photo by Gallo Images / The Times / Thuli Dlamini)*

The IEC announced that a record 48 political parties have successfully registered to contest the 2019 general elections. Most have been formed recently, suggesting that many see an opportunity to capitalise on voter uncertainty after the Zuma years. Noteworthy, too, is the number of religious parties — with churches hoping to turn congregant numbers into political power. In the first of a two-part series, we take a brief look at the parties appearing on the ballot sheet in May.

#### **African Christian Democratic Party**

Launched in 1993, one of the ACDP's unique claims to fame is that it was the only party to reject the South African Constitution — on the basis that it enshrined the right to abortion. Supports a return to “biblical principles”, including the imposition of the death penalty. Led by Dr Kenneth Meshoe, the ACDP received just over 104,000 votes nationally in the 2014 elections, giving it three seats in the National Assembly.

#### **African Congress of Democrats**

No information is available. Confusingly, there is a Namibian opposition party of the same name; and the South African Congress of Democrats was an anti-apartheid organisation run by radical white lefties.

### **African Content Movement**

The ACM was launched in December 2018 by former SABC chief operations officer Hlaudi Motsoeneng. As per the party's name, which refers to Motsoeneng's policy of promoting local content at the SABC, the party will have a special focus on protecting creative artists. The ACM already has two seats in Gauteng municipalities because councillors from the Randfontein People's Party joined ACM.

### **African Covenant**

Launched in March 2018 by Dr Convy Baloyi, a "born-again child of God". The party abbreviates to ACO, pronounced "Ah-Kho", and is campaigning on conservative religious principles. It wants to preserve marriage as an institution uniting "one man and one woman", and end abortion. The ACO also proposes the return of the death penalty for crimes including murder (which, in ACO's view, includes the medical practice of carrying out abortions).

### **African Democratic Change**

ADeC (yes, that is their typographical preference) was originally launched in December 2017 by Makhosi Khoza after she left the ANC, but Khoza resigned from the party four months later. It is now helmed by apartheid-era unionist and former ANC MP Dr Moses Mayekiso. A non-racial party built on "the philosophy of Ubuntu", ADeC believes land expropriation should be funded with reparations from the nations which colonised South Africa.

### **African Independent Congress**

Launched in 2005, the AIC had an unexpectedly strong showing in the 2014 national elections of around 97,000 votes — which some cynics attributed to a party name and logo very similar to the ANC's. Its founding issue was unhappiness over the incorporation of Matatiele into the Eastern Cape from KwaZulu Natal: an issue it has yet to resolve. The party was reported to be almost broke and leaderless in January 2019, but clearly scraped together the cash to register for the 2019 elections.

### **African National Congress**

Led by president Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa's ruling party, the 107-year old ANC, won just over 62% of the vote — almost 11.5 million votes — in 2014.

### **African People's Convention**

Formed in 2007 when leader Themba Godi left the PAC, the APC won one seat in the National Assembly in 2014, taken up by Godi. As chairperson of Parliament's Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa), Godi has enjoyed an outsized profile over the past 12 years. He is the only non-ANC MP chairing a parliamentary committee and in the past has faced accusations of going easy on the ANC due to his old PAC links.

### **African Renaissance Unity**

Founded in 2018 by Bryce Mthimkhulu, the King of the amaHlubi nation in KwaZulu-Natal, the ARU's leaders are all traditional chiefs. The stated motivation for the party's launching was the dissatisfaction among traditional leaders about the potential loss or weakening of their powers. Mthimkhulu was previously taken to court by the government — unsuccessfully — to try to force him to stop calling himself the King of amaHlubi.

### **African Security Congress**

A party founded in 2017 by security guards lobbying for greater rights for members of the private security industry, but unaffiliated with the industry body PSIRA. ASC president Teboho Motlounq has previously called for security guards to be directly employed by the state and granted status on a par with the South African Police Service (SAPS), as the party says that they do similar work to police and are exploited by the private sector.

### **African Transformation Movement**

Best known for its most high-profile member, businessman Mzwanele Manyi, the ATM (don't laugh) was founded in 2018 by the South African Council of Messianic Churches in Christ and is led by Vuyolwethu Zungula. It supports traditional leadership structures, the reintroduction of capital punishment and land expropriation without compensation. Church figures linked to the ATM have been alleged to be close allies of former president Jacob Zuma. Other than Manyi, the party has succeeded in drawing defections from DA and EFF provincial leadership structures, so don't write them off too quickly.

### **Afrikan Alliance of Social Democrats**

The AASD is led by the former ANC mayor of Mangaung, Pappie Mokoena, who was acquitted of theft and money-laundering charges in 2011. Although little information is available about the AASD, more is known about Mokoena, who with his brother reportedly heads Bloemfontein Correctional Contracts, the private entity which runs Mangaung prison — a facility described recently as “marred by irregularities and allegations of abuse and torture”.

### **Agang South Africa**

Agang was formed in 2013 by Dr Mamphela Ramphele, who left the party in 2014 just after Agang had won two seats in the National Assembly in that year's elections. Since then, the sole visible Agang representative has been Andries Tlouamma, well known for his bizarre/colourful remarks in Parliament — including a recent suggestion that load shedding should take place “only at Jacob Zuma's house”.

### **Al Jama-ah**

Founded in 2007, Al Jama-ah is an Islamic party which has yet to win seats in the National Assembly, but has nine councillors at the municipal level. Led by Ganief Hendricks, the party has lobbied mainly on issues relating to Islamic practice, including the Muslim Marriages Act and the labelling of halaal foodstuffs.

### **Alliance for Transformation for All**

The ATA was launched in 2018 by taxi associations to provide a voice for those in the taxi industry, but says it will also uphold the rights of small businesses in general. Given the extremely negative perceptions of the taxi industry nationally, it may struggle to win votes outside its industry — but the ATA says it aims to represent taxi associations, hawkers, churches and young people.

### **Azanian People's Organisation**

Azapo is one of the oldest organisations contesting the 2019 elections, having been formed in 1978. The black consciousness party, led by president Strike Thokoane, is running on a platform of strict immigration controls, but also aims to “make Azania gun-free”. Azapo's high watermark in democratic South Africa was the appointment of its former president Mosibudi Mangena as Minister of Science and Technology in 2004, but in the 2014 elections the party came about 10,000 votes shy of a single seat in the National Assembly.

### **Better Residents Association**

The BRA was formerly known as the Bushbuckridge Residents Association, founded in 2011 by disgruntled ANC members to tackle the problem of poor service delivery in the Bushbuckridge municipality in Mpumalanga. President Delta Mokoena and 10 other members were charged with kidnapping and assault in 2018 after allegedly participating in vigilante violence.

### **Black First Land First**

Arguably the most controversial party contesting the 2019 elections, Andile Mngxitama's BLF faces a legal challenge over its election registration due to its explicit prohibition of white members. BLF supports radical economic transformation and a society in which “black people must come first in all areas of life”. In the past, BLF has vocally supported the Gupta

family and is presently calling for the return of former Eskom CEO Brian Molefe to solve South Africa's electricity crisis.

### **Capitalist Party of South Africa**

The newly-established ZACP distinguishes itself with a logo consisting of a purple cow. Formed by a hierarchy-free leadership collective including former YFM CEO Kanthan Pillay, its policies can be summarised as "smaller government, more guns". Its solution to the problem of gender violence in South Africa is for women to buy guns.

### **Christian Political Movement**

An Eastern-Cape based religious party, the CPM is led by New Life Family Bible Church leader Brian Mahlati. It aims to "protect the interests of the Church", and its logo references Psalm 33:12: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance".

### **Compatriots of South Africa**

Founded in 2018 by president Cheslin Felix, the party claims 34,000 members across the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Western Cape and is focusing its campaigning on disaffected "brown" South Africans. Felix has hit out at both the ANC and the DA for prioritising the rights of black and white South Africans, respectively, over those of "bruin mense". It may be the only party contesting the 2019 elections with a husband-and-wife leadership team: Felix's wife Lucia is the party's vice president.

### **Congress of the People**

Formed in 2008 after party president Mosiuoa Lekota left the ANC in protest over the ousting of former president Thabo Mbeki, Cope's support has dwindled at the ballot box from more than 1.3 million votes in 2009 to just over 123,000 votes in 2014. The party's three MPs have maintained a vocal presence on the national stage in their commitment to non-racial constitutionalism, though Lekota has recently raised eyebrows through unexpected expressions of support for racist singer Steve Hofmeyr and alt-right group AfriForum.

### **Democratic Alliance**

South Africa's largest opposition party, the DA is led by Mmusi Maimane and grew out of what was the Democratic Party, founded in 1989. The DA won just over four million votes nationally in 2014, or 89 seats.



### **Democratic Liberal Congress**

Durban-based party founded in 2016 by Patrick Pillay, a former Minority Front councillor who describes himself as having been “tutored, groomed and nurtured politically” by late Minority Front leader Amichand Rajbansi. The DLC is opposed to land expropriation without compensation, affirmative action and “any type of quotas”. The party is in favour of cutting red tape for business, a new social grant for widows and austerity measures for all spheres of government.

### **Economic Emancipation Forum**

Established in 2013, but formally launched as a political party in 2017, EcoForum favours the hashtag “#SABackToGod”. Its leader, BJ Langa — whose preferred titles are “Apostle” and “Confidante” — claims he was “born to be King”. EcoForum wants to lead a national “moral regeneration” — where have we heard that before? — and calls for greater state assistance for black-owned businesses, support for Israel and the decolonisation of the justice system. The party has lobbied hard for the financial rights of pensioners in the former Bophuthatswana homeland.

### **Economic Freedom Fighters**

The EFF is South Africa’s second-largest opposition party, after the DA. Launched by Julius Malema in 2013, the party went on to win just over 6% of the vote nationally in 2014.

### **Forum 4 Service Delivery**

The F4SD distinguishes itself from the crowd through its overtly xenophobic policies, calling for all foreign nationals to leave the country immediately and not come back for 10 years. Founded in 2015 by president Mbahare Kekana, the F4SD wants South Africans to see “any qualification less than PhD as a non-achievement”. They aim to scrap provinces, distribute expropriated land directly to the people without involving the state, and issue R200,000 vouchers to “deserving” citizens to build houses to their own designs.

### **Free Democrats**

The Free Democrats is predominantly a single-issue political party, and that issue is health care. The party is against the government’s proposed National Health Insurance and believes that all South Africans should be eligible for private health care away from state hospitals. In its vision, each citizen would have a medical aid “administered by the medical aid industry” and funded by a payroll deduction. Though this party sounds like something dreamed up at a boozy dinner by medical aid bosses, it is ostensibly led by Cape Town-based neurologist Dr Johan Reid, who was previously accused of sexual harassment and found guilty of seven counts of unprofessional conduct by the Health Professions Council.

### **Front Nasionaal/Front National**

They're back! Despite taking a drubbing in the 2014 elections — winning just over 5,000 votes — the right-wing FN is returning to contest 2019's polls. Prominent Afrikaner activist Dan Roodt appears to have exited the leadership team, with Daniel Lotter now at the helm. The FN wants a separate Afrikaner homeland and the implementation of Christian-nationalist principles. The party was responsible for a 2017 boycott of Spur restaurants after the steakhouse chain banned a white man for behaving aggressively towards a black woman. The boycott [reportedly cost Spur millions](#), suggesting either that Afrikaner separatists are disproportionately fond of surf 'n turf or that FN's support base is larger now than previously was the case.

## **Good**

The Good Party is former Cape Town Mayor Patricia de Lille's latest political home after her public divorce from the DA. For the purposes of Good campaigning, De Lille is now officially the chummy "Aunty Pat". Other high-profile party leaders include former DA councillor Brett Herron and singer Alistair Izobell. Good is opposed to amending the Constitution to allow land expropriation without compensation, but big on tackling spatial apartheid in South African cities. It is one of the only parties contesting the 2019 elections to make environmental issues, and climate change, a key policy pillar.

## **Independent Civic Organisation of South Africa**

Drive through the dorpiess of the rural Western Cape and you'll count as many Icosa posters as you will of the larger parties. Founded in 2006 by former ANC politician Truman Prince, Icosa brands itself mainly as a political home for "coloured" South Africans. It won just over 14,000 votes nationally in 2014. The party had a taste of political power in the Kannaland municipality in the Karoo, which the DA said in 2016 had left the municipality more than R37-million in debt and on the verge of collapse in terms of the supply of water and electricity.

## **Inkatha Freedom Party**

It's easy to forget what a behemoth the IFP used to be on the local political scene. As of the 2014 elections it was still the fourth-largest party nationally, but reduced to less than half a million votes. Leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, age 90, is set to step down after the 2019 elections, but is one of just two politicians whose face will have appeared on every national ballot sheet since 1994. (The other is ACDP leader Kenneth Meshoe.) The IFP wants a debate on the death penalty, an end to e-tolls and subsidised public transport for job-seekers. Though Buthelezi is long overdue his pension, the party has had two of the most dynamic young MPs in the fifth Parliament: Liezl van der Merwe and Mkhuleko Hlengwa.

## **International Revelation Congress**

The Limpopo-based IRC was founded in 2013 by Thinawanga Mammba, but is contesting elections nationally for the first time in 2019. Despite a name reminiscent of an evangelical church, the word “God” appears only twice in its 31-page manifesto. The IRC is socially conservative — it supports the right to discipline children and is against same-sex marriage — and wants to harness the expertise of retired professionals from the former homelands to run government systems. It endorses community-level schemes of economic upliftment and wants to replace BEE with economic empowerment based on poverty rather than race.

### **Land Party**

The Land Party was formed in February 2019 by the organisers of 2018 protests in the township of Zwelihle, outside Hermanus in the Western Cape. Leader Gcobani Ndzongana, formerly of the EFF, is a charismatic figure with a knack for galvanising the youth. The party states that it borrows its positions from the best of socialism, communism and capitalism with a particular nod to China when it comes to economic policies. The ideological balance seems tilted in the direction of capitalism. Again, the party’s manifesto contradicts its name: It actually wants to strengthen private property rights, along with abolishing exchange control regulations, minimum wage and BEE. Quirky touches include the suggestion that police stations be built out of glass, because “the people must SEE that the police is working”.

### **Minority Front**

Minority Front founder Amichand Rajbansi was a larger-than-life figure on the South African political scene, known as the “Bengal Tiger”. Rajbansi is sadly no more, but his shadow hangs heavily over the MF, which has lobbied to change the name of all manner of infrastructure around Durban to honour him. In 2014 the party won just over 22,000 votes, too few for a single MP, but in 2019 aims to restore the “Indian voice” to the seat of legislative power. It wants affirmative action to change to benefit minority racial groups and is opposed to land expropriation without compensation.

### **National Freedom Party**

The National Freedom Party is easily one of the more mysterious South African political parties, because for some time it has been unclear who’s running it. Its ostensible president is Zanele kaMagwaza-Msibi, one of just three female party leaders in the country. But kaMagwaza-Msibi has been virtually invisible in public since falling ill in 2014, despite still holding the title of Deputy Minister of Science and Technology. The NFP was founded as a breakaway faction of the IFP and performed relatively strongly in the 2014 elections, winning six parliamentary seats. Since then, kaMagwaza-Msibi’s ill health and internal fighting have weakened the party. Its 2019 manifesto has not been published on its website. Unusually for this climate, however, the NFP has come out strongly against xenophobia.

### **National Peoples Ambassadors**

The NPA — not to be confused with the National Prosecuting Authority — calls itself a “radical, left, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movement with an internationalist outlook”, formed in 2015. Its principles are EFF-lite: Like the Fighters, it wants nationalisation of banks and mines, but its rhetoric is more embracing, including the dictum that “the land belongs to everyone who lives in it”. The party would probably be unimpressed with the EFF comparison — in 2016 its general secretary Andile Hlatshwayo lay charges of high treason against Julius Malema, on the grounds that Malema’s parliamentary behaviour was in conflict with the spirit of Ubuntu.

### **National People’s Front**

The NAPF has swapped around the initials of rival party the National Freedom Party (NFP) in what some might suspect is a sneaky attempt to win some of its rival’s votes. After all, party leader Bheki Gumbi founded the NAPF after leaving the NFP — where he served as national deputy chairperson — in 2018. They are running on a platform of stronger border controls and “first priority” for South Africans over foreign nationals, and have promised to “fast forward” land expropriation if voted into power. The party’s Twitter account announced in March 2019: “Africa will unite the day we abolish the Roman laws”.

### **Pan Africanist Congress of Azania**

The PAC is one of the granddaddy political parties contesting the 2019 polls, having been formed in 1959 by a group led by Robert Sobukwe. The PAC was pushing for land redistribution before the EFF Fighters were in nappies, but like a number of other older parties, its influence has declined considerably in recent years. In 2014 it won just one seat in Parliament. The party has taken in-fighting to new levels: its current president is either Narius Moloto or Mzwanele Nyontsho, depending which faction you talk to, and its sole MP — former party leader Luthando Mbinda — was the subject of an attempted ejection from Parliament by his own party, via the courts. Moloto seems to be on top of the internal power struggle for now, and says his party is on track for at least 50 parliamentary seats after the May elections.

### **Patriotic Alliance**

Ex-con-turned-businessman-and-self-help-writer Gayton McKenzie is the man behind the Patriotic Alliance, formed in 2013. In 2014 the party won just over 13,000 votes nationally, but despite that poor showing has since played a prominent role in the politics of Nelson Mandela Bay, flip-flopping between the EFF and the DA over the ousting of former mayor Athol Trollip. Although it campaigned hard to win “coloured” votes in previous elections — making its appeal to this demographic with the “too black under apartheid, too white under the ANC” line — it has said that the party is open to voters of all races. The PA does not seem to have published its 2019 manifesto online yet.

### **People’s Revolutionary Movement**

Launched in 2016 in KwaZulu-Natal, the PRM is led by president Nhlanhla Buthelezi — who has previously used his Twitter account to describe the EFF’s Julius Malema as “a whites’ surrogate” and the EFF as a “white-formed party”. The PRM has received most of its media attention thus far as a result of its vocal homophobia: It has denounced “those who promote Sodom and Gomorrah in the land of our kings and queens”. It is also against abortion, prostitution, and foreign nationals. When it comes to the latter group its policies are quite detailed, including penalising landlords who let premises to foreign nationals over South Africans. It wants poor South Africans charged a maximum of R100 a month for electricity and water, and rich South Africans taxed more punitively.

### **Power of Africans Unity**

The Power of Africans Unity party has been around since 2016, with former UDM member Julius Nsingwane as its president. Nsingwane has been known to wear T-shirts featuring his own face, but insists PAU is not a “one-man party”. Exactly what it is, however, is hard to say — the party’s website is down, its Facebook account has not been updated for a year and there is little trace of any other online presence. We do know that the PAU joined demonstrations calling for the removal of former president Jacob Zuma, and that its logo features a slightly ominous eagle (not that the Daily Maverick is one to throw stones in that regard).

### **Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party**

The SRWP is the political party arm of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa). Although it hoped to win the support of the workers, it was almost immediately dealt a blow in 2018 when Zwelinzima Vavi’s South African Federation of Trade Unions (Saftu) said the federation would not support the party. As you would expect from a union-backed party, the SRWP champions socialism, opposes privatisation, and says that the ANC and DA’s support for the unbundling of Eskom amounts to both parties “plotting slavery wages”. Its approach to the 2019 elections is somewhat conflicted: The SRWP is against the “bourgeois electoral system” on principle, but will participate in order to meet the “strategic and revolutionary objectives” of the party.

### **South African Maintenance and Estate Beneficiaries Association**

Sameba, led by president Makgorometse Gift Makhaba, contested the 2014 national elections as well, but appears to have won so few votes that it is not listed in the official IEC results for that year. It recently (unsuccessfully) contested a by-election in Limpopo, but that’s about as much as we can tell you. Fun fact: Sameba is also the name of one of the most significant cathedrals in Tbilisi, Georgia.

### **South African National Congress of Traditional Authorities**

Sancota launched in February 2019 on a platform of traditional African values and protecting the power of traditional leaders. The man behind the party is reportedly Themba Sigudla, a former ally of Deputy President David Mabuza before things turned sour between the two men. The party's president is Chief Mantjolo Mnisi, and Sancota has been busy trying to attract other traditional leaders — including expressing support for the release from prison of amaThembu King Buyelekhaya Dalindyebo. City Press reported in February that the party had already drawn the defections of at least 18 ANC councillors.

### **United Democratic Movement**

Bantu Holomisa's UDM fared slightly better in the 2014 national elections than it had in 2009, but the overall trajectory for the party has not been positive — except in the Eastern Cape, which has always been Holomisa's power base. With four seats in the National Assembly, Holomisa remains by far the most prominent UDM figure, though in the fifth Parliament his protégé Nqabayomzi Kwankwa has won some approving attention. The UDM remains a non-racial centre-left party; it voted in favour of expropriation without compensation, but stresses in its manifesto that it “certainly did not vote for free-for-all land grabs and evictions”. The UDM's coalition with the DA in Nelson Mandela Bay dissolved into chaos in 2018 amid a dispute over alleged impropriety by UDM councillor Mongameli Bobani, causing public mudslinging between Holomisa and DA leader Mmusi Maimane.

### **Vryheidsfront Plus/Freedom Front Plus**

The FF+ dates back to 1994 and is led by Pieter Groenewald. It is the only South African party to field a parliamentary caucus consisting entirely of white men, in the form of its four MPs. But of late the FF+ has started to branch out, now touting itself as a party not just for Afrikaner separatists but for other minority groups in South Africa. Its selection of Peter Marais as the party's Western Cape Premier was a clear sign that the FF+ hopes to attract “coloured” voters in the province, where it has been busily campaigning in rural areas. It continues to lobby hard for the protection of Afrikaans, farmers and gun-owners and has been outspoken in its opposition to land expropriation without compensation.

### **Women Forward**

WF started as an activist movement in 2007, and has Struggle royalty behind it in the form of its president, former government employee and gender activist Nana Ngobese-Nxumalo, granddaughter of Albert Luthuli. The party has previously said that its strongest support is in Limpopo, due to its focus on rural development and female unemployment. It contested the elections in 2009, but won only about 5,000 votes. On this occasion, it is aiming for a modest two parliamentary seats. WF wants to see more women at the highest political levels and points out there has never been a female finance minister or auditor-general. Ngobese-Nxumalo recently called for the castration of rapists — if an execution is not an option.

## Reference:

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