



# The ANC after the Local Government Elections of 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2016

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### **Election Results in Municipals lost by the ANC in 2016**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>ANC 2014 National</b>	<b>ANC 2016 Municipal</b>	<b>DA 2014 National</b>	<b>DA 2016 Municipal</b>	<b>EFF 2014 National</b>	<b>EFF 2016 Municipal</b>
<b>Cape Town</b>	32.41%	24.4%	59.31%	<b>66.6%</b>	2.72%	3.2%
<b>Johannesburg</b>	52.28%	<b>44.6%</b>	32.37%	38.4%	10.13%	11.1%
<b>Nelson Mandela Bay (Port Elizabeth)</b>	48.81%	40.9%	40.80%	<b>46.7%</b>	4.15%	5.1%
<b>Tshwane (Pretoria)</b>	49.31%	41.2%	33.75%	<b>43.1%</b>	11.51%	11.7%

In Pretoria, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth the DA formed minority coalitions with smaller parties which are tolerated by the EFF (Economic Freedom Fighters). By refusing to cooperate either with the DA or the ANC the EFF is pursuing a long term strategy with a view on the national elections in 2019. The EFF wants to keep its hands clean and does not want to be associated with possible failures in delivering basic services. Like this it can continue its policy of total opposition to the ANC and with its more radical programme than that of the ANC the party wants to present itself as an attractive alternative to the ANC.

Despite having dominated the media and parliament during the last year the EFF’s support increased only slightly from 6.4% in the national elections 2014 to 8.2% nationwide in the local government elections 2016. The surprising success of 2014 when the party took part for the first time in elections could not be repeated.

The success of the DA illustrated by taking over some of the key municipalities was not a magical breakthrough but was hard won by incremental gains. From 16.7% in 2009 the DA could increase its share of votes to 27% in 2016, still only half of what the ANC got in 2016 nationwide (54,5%). About 20% of the South African population are either “white”, “coloured” or Indian; but the DA received more than this threshold, explicitly 27%. Roughly one million blacks deserted the liberation party ANC and voted DA which is claimed by the ANC to be the party of the “whites”. The Secretary General of the ANC denounced the gains of the DA as “re-colonialization” starting from Cape Town along the coast to Port Elizabeth and to the centre in Pretoria. What he does not want to see is that the new (black) leader of the DA, Mmusi Maimane, is a genuine national leader who is competent and convincing. He is more and more admired by many blacks for successfully leading a so called “white” party.

The educated black middle class is dissatisfied with the obvious corruption in the ANC and the government style of President Zuma. The “schism between rural and urban support for the ANC” became very clear in these elections as “‘clever blacks’ turned their backs on the party”<sup>1</sup>. The simple struggle rhetoric of the ANC is not convincing for the new black educated middle class and those in

<sup>1</sup> Max du Preez: *The post-post-apartheid era has started*, 10.08.2016

formal employment. The ANC was caught in its own rhetoric: by seeking support in rural areas with slogans from the past the party at the same time lost urban voters who do not believe that the party has the ability to govern urban centres and to run a modern economy.

The downward trend of the ANC is obvious but not really “disastrous”. The party still got more than half of the entire votes (54.5%). Its share of votes always declined in local government elections relative to the preceding national elections. The change from 2014 to 2016 was minus 7.7%. A similar decline happened already in 2000 when the percentage of votes decreased from 66.4% (1999 national elections) to 59.4%. During local government elections the ANC always had problems to mobilize its supporters. At the next national elections in 2019 the trend could be stopped if the ANC is able to get its entire voter potential to the polling stations.

### Elections Results for main parties in South Africa 2009-2016

Party	National Parliament 2009	Local government 2011	National Parliament 2014	Local Government 2016
ANC	65.9%	63.6%	62.1%	54.5%
DA	16.6%	21.9%	22.2%	27.0%
EFF	Not participating	Not participating	6.4%	8.2%

Before the elections commentators had dubbed them to be a referendum on President Zuma. The mixed result, losing three metros but still having the majority of the voters behind the ANC, was not a clear verdict against President Zuma, but a very worrying one. In Zimbabwe where only one third of the population are urbanized President Mugabe can clinch on to power despite his failed economic policies. In South Africa, however, already two thirds of the population lives in urban centers. If the urban trend against the ANC continues then the party is bound to lose the next election in 2019. The main stumbling block for urban voters is President Zuma with his many scandals and the government style which he symbolizes.

There are now strong signs that President Zuma is overestimating his powers. After the election a special unit of the prosecution, the Hawks, resumed investigation of Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan. **He has to appear in court on charges of fraud for authorizing a pension payout. This is basically a labour dispute and many similar cases in the public sector were not prosecuted because of their controversial nature.** One cannot imagine that the investigation was done without the tacit consent of the President and one has to come to the conclusion that Zuma tries to get rid of his Finance Minister.

“Stupid! It’s the economy!” this well-known exclamation from election time in the USA could be changed to “Stupid! It’s the money!” to describe the situation in South Africa. Political systems are directed by power, formerly by physical force, today by money. If check and balances are not in place money finds its own ways and solutions which are not necessarily for the benefit of the entire nation. It is not surprising that present battles in South Africa are about the control of its finances; in the first place about the Ministry of Finances which has been in open conflict with many state companies over their management and spending plans. The tight reign of the new Finance Minister over state finances has helped South Africa to retain its credit rating but at the same time meant also tight control over state enterprises which are a main source of patronage benefits.

The monthly business confidence index of the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry is at a 30-year low and the chamber claims that investors have been nervous about the government’s



commitment to sound economic policies since President Zuma tried to change the Minister of Finance. The chamber fears that the confidence will not recover as long as concerns around Finance Minister Gordhan continue<sup>2</sup>. Anglo Ashanti chairman Siphon Pityana who previously had held many senior positions in government described President Zuma as “sponsor-in-chief of corruption” and reiterates his call for the president to step aside. Pityana is the chairman of a Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution to which also belong former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel and former Public Enterprises Minister Barbara Hogan. In an open letter the new civil society coalition calls on President Zuma to resign.

In such a situation the reactions of the two potential successors of President Zuma are of interest: Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa and Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. So far both seem to have been afraid to be caught on the wrong foot and kept quiet. But now Ramaphosa has come out in support of the Finance Minister: “As a member of the National Executive, I lend my support to Minister Gordhan as he faces charges brought against him by the National Prosecuting Authority”.<sup>3</sup> This public statement is a slap in the face of the President.

Dlamini-Zuma, ex-wife of President Zuma, is still keeping quiet. She held several ministerial positions before in 2012 she was elected chairperson of the AU. South Africa had difficulties to get her elected against francophone Africa and the organization needed three ballots. Because of that it came as a surprise that she did not stand for a second term. The AU still has not agreed on a successor. Her move away from the AU is seen as her strong intention to run for the presidency of the ANC and to become the first female state president of South Africa. She has President Zuma’s support who hopes that once in power she would protect him from prosecution. Her candidacy could run into trouble because as scandals around President Zuma are mounting up her surname and close relationship to the president could count against her. She would be an easy target for the opposition.

The ANC is divided and confused but the centre with President Zuma is still holding. During Nelson Mandela’s time decisions could easily be done at the centre but now power has also shifted to the provinces. That makes it very difficult for the open and hidden opposition in the ANC. A palace coup is not easily organized. The solid support for the President is coming from the so called Premier League provinces: Free State, Northwest and Mpumalanga. Also the ANC Youth league, the Women League, and the Veteran’s Organization are firmly behind the President.

The shock of the election defeat so far has only led to a limited discussion in the ANC about its leadership. The Finance Minister’s prosecution seems to be a turning point and forces ANC members to take side. And more and more of them are willing to do this in public. But the power still rests with the President and he is not the person who would easily step aside as long as he believes to have the majority in the party behind him, no matter the outcome of his actions on the economy or the cohesion in the party.

The most likely scenario, therefore, is that President Zuma stays in power at least up to the elective conference of the ANC at the end of 2017. If he is not re-elected then there would be two centres of power: the new president of the ANC and State President Zuma. The confusion that exists already now in the ANC would become even more disturbing and this would make it even more difficult to govern the country in a determined manner. If Zuma’s successor at the helm of the party is strong enough he or she might be able to force Zuma into retirement before national elections in 2019 and get him- or herself elected State President by the ANC majority in parliament. A second term for

<sup>2</sup> Wiseman Khuzwayo: *Business confidence at 30-year low* in Business Report, 06.10.2016

<sup>3</sup> *Cyril throws in lot with Pravin*, Sunday Times, 16.10.2016

Zuma as State President is prohibited under the constitution. Some Zuma supporters discuss already a “Putin” solution. Zuma gets re-elected as party president and stays as strongman in the background after a willing Zuma follower becomes State President after the national elections 2019. This would be a worst case scenario for South Africa.