

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

South Africa Monthly Briefing September 2026

South Africa Summary 30 September 2026

The Electoral Court dismisses the African National Congress' (ANC) case to compel the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) to accept candidate lists for six municipalities that the ANC failed to submit before the IEC's submission deadline ahead of the local government elections (LGE), indicating that the party will have an even worse election than initially forecast. The ANC's difficult upcoming election is highlighted by the latest poll released by the France-based market research firm, Ipsos, which indicates that seven of South Africa's eight metros will not produce a single majority party. Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) reveals that the country's economy contracted by 0.2% of GDP (year-on-year) in the second quarter (Q2) of 2026. South Africa is witnessing a rise in mass shootings.

ANC destined for an even worse election after failing to submit all candidate lists

The **African National Congress (ANC)** is set to experience an even worse outcome in the upcoming 4 November local government elections (LGE) than initially expected after the party fumbled its candidate submissions. The party [failed](#) to submit complete ward and proportional representation (PR) candidate lists for six municipalities before the **Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC)** deadline, impacting 181 candidates.

The impacted municipalities are the **Sunday River Valley** local municipality, the **Inquza Hill** local municipality, **Walter Sisulu** local municipality, and **Port St Johns** local municipality, all of which are in the **Eastern Cape Province**; the **uMshwati** local municipality in **KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province**; and **Mangaung Metro** in the **Free State Province**. Notably, the ANC failed to submit both the ward and PR lists for the Port St Johns and Inquza Hill elections, whereas it only failed to submit the PR lists for the remaining four municipal elections.

ANC officials sought to deflect the blame for this administrative failure by blaming the IEC's online systems, claiming that they were [impacted](#) by a "system glitch" and that the party was repeatedly logged off the system. The party also argued that the IEC's process, under which lists must be uploaded and then finally submitted by clicking the submit button, was confusing and rigid; according to the ANC, uploading the lists should count as a final submission. These claims formed the basis of the party's challenge to the **Electoral Court** to force the IEC to accept its outstanding candidate lists. However, in its filings, the IEC provided records showing that no such glitch occurred; in fact, the IEC painted a picture of a deeply disorganised operation at the ANC's headquarters, noting that as of 26 August – two days before the deadline – the ANC [had not uploaded](#) and submitted the vast majority of its electoral lists and that the party was [still uploading](#) lists five minutes before the deadline of 17:00pm (SAST) on 28 August. This would not have left enough time for the party to complete the confirmation checks and make the necessary final submissions of the lists.

Unsurprisingly, on 16 September, the Electoral Court [dismissed](#) the ANC's case against the IEC, finding no evidence that any external factor hindered the ANC. The party has [declared](#) that it will take the matter to the constitutional court. However, it is unlikely that the constitutional court will overrule the Electoral Court's ruling. Furthermore, time to pursue such challenges is limited as the IEC is expected to [begin printing](#) ballot papers in the first week of October. As such, the status quo is expected to remain.

This will be a severe blow to the party given that the four Eastern Cape municipalities are in the party's political strongholds. In the 2024 general election, the party received over 60% of the votes

cast in those municipalities, winning over 78% and 82% in Inquba Hill and Port St Johns respectively, two municipalities where the party will now not even appear on the ballot at all. The party is also likely to lose its majorities in Walter Sisulu and Sundays River as it will be limited to contesting only ward councillor elections. This will mark a major shift in Eastern Cape politics as it has opened a path for smaller opposition parties to take over these municipalities; the **Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)** and the **uMkhonto we Sizwe Party (MKP)** are the most likely beneficiaries of this development.

Similarly, the ANC is now assured to lose its majority in Mangaung Metro (which includes the city of **Bloemfontein**). The party's support had already fallen to around 51% in the city and was expected to fall further in the upcoming elections. Now the ANC will only be contesting the ward elections and, at best, will win 40 seats, in the highly unlikely event that the party retains all the wards it won in the 2021 LGEs. The ANC also faces obliteration in uMshwati; the MKP party is currently focused on sweeping nearly all the wards in that municipality, meaning that the ANC was relying on its PR list to retain a presence on that council.

The ANC's failure to meet the electoral list submission deadline has exposed the deeper dysfunction within the party ahead of the election. Not only did the party fail to submit all its lists, but several of those which were submitted also had [incorrect details](#), including candidate ID numbers. Party officials also did not allow themselves enough time to authenticate the party lists and rushed to submit the lists as they were received from regional party structures. As a consequence of this, dozens of mayoral candidates that were approved by the ANC's **National Executive Committee (NEC)** [were excluded](#) from the lists in favour of individuals supported by local factions. The most significant of these was the exclusion of former presidency director-general and party stalwart, **Frank Chikane**, who was meant to be the ANC's mayoral candidate in **Johannesburg**. However, the ANC's regional leadership in Johannesburg left him off their list so that the party's Johannesburg leader, **Loyiso Masuku**, could be the party's candidate.

Such poor organisation, factional fighting, and ill-discipline does not bode well for the ANC's LGE campaign. The party was already facing its toughest election yet amid declining support in urban areas and its collapse in KZN in the face of the MKP. As it stands, the party is unlikely to be able to replicate its past strategy of a late campaign surge driving party unity and voter turnout.

Voter poll underscores competitive metro elections

The **France**-headquartered global market research firm **Ipsos**' [latest poll](#), released on 4 September, further highlighted the ANC's impending election difficulties. Ipsos expects the ANC's support to fall steeply in all eight metros compared with the 2021 LGE. The party is not expected to win over 40% in any of the metros and could even see its support in eThekweni fall to 10%. Ipsos' poll shows party support in the eight metros as follows:

- **Buffalo City** (Eastern Cape): ANC-29%, **Democratic Alliance (DA)** -33%, EFF-27%;
- **Cape Town (Western Cape Province)**: ANC-26%, DA-46%, EFF 11%;
- **Ekurhuleni (Gauteng Province)**: ANC-24%, DA-21%, MKP-18%;
- **eThekweni** (Kwa-Zulu Natal): ANC-10%, DA 17%, MKP-55%;
- **Johannesburg** (Gauteng): ANC-31%, DA-28%, **ActionSA**-14%;
- **Mangaung** (Free State): ANC-32%, DA-36%, EFF 17%
- **Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB)** (Eastern Cape): ANC-37%, DA-37%, EFF-8%;
- **Tshwane** (Gauteng): ANC-22%, DA-31%, ActionSA-11%;

It should be noted that, as with all such surveys, the Ipsos poll at best represents a snapshot in time and is not necessarily predictive of the final election result. However, it does confirm that these will be the most competitive municipal elections to date. Underscoring this fact is that the DA is at risk of losing its majority in its metro stronghold of Cape Town. The party would remain in control of the city via a coalition but this would be a severely embarrassing outcome, especially for the new DA leader,

Cape Town Mayor **Geordin Hill-Lewis**. However, any pain incurred in Cape Town would be countered by the party's anticipated strong performances in Mangaung, Tshwane, and NMB.

It is clear that South Africa's largest cities will continue to be governed by political coalitions, and that the real winners of the LGE may be the country's small and mid-sized parties such as the EFF, ActionSA and the **Vryheidsfront Plus (VF Plus)** who will be able to play the role of kingmaker in these metros.

Economy contracts in second quarter

Among the issues that will be at the forefront of voters' minds on 4 November will be the feeling of economic strain and financial distress in the country. South Africa's economy [shrank](#) by 0.2% of GDP (year-on-year) in the second quarter (Q2) of 2026. **Statistics South Africa (StatsSA)** reported this decrease was driven by contractions in the manufacturing, trade and mining sectors and the increased costs of imports.

The rising import costs were largely a factor of higher energy costs caused by the ongoing conflict in the **Persian Gulf**. South Africa imports the bulk of its fuel and natural gas and is thus very exposed to fluctuations in global energy markets. The war in **Iran** has led to a sharp increase in energy prices across the world, which has led to higher costs across South Africa's economy given the central role fuel plays in most economic sectors. It is likely that the country will fail to meet the 1.6% GDP growth target set by the finance ministry for 2026. In fact, it is possible that South Africa will fall short of the aggregate economists' forecast of 1.2% GDP growth.

This is a serious concern given that South Africa is in desperate need of strong economic growth in order to address the country's unemployment crisis. The country's current growth levels are insufficient to even absorb new entrants in the job market, let alone meaningfully reduce unemployment.

Concerns over rising mass shootings

South Africa's crime and insecurity challenges will also be of concern to voters. Among the many rising crime concerns is the growing incidence of mass shootings in the country. The latest of these took place at a house party in Cape Town's **Lwandle** area, where gunmen [killed](#) ten people on the night of 26/27 September. A few hours earlier, armed gunmen opened fire on patrons at a tavern in the **Wedela** township, located in the **Merafong City Local Municipality** (Gauteng), [killing 18 people](#).

Such mass shootings are increasingly regular in the country; the **Switzerland**-headquartered **Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime (GI-TOC)** estimates that at least 196 people have died in 41 mass shootings in South Africa in 2026 alone. These attacks are connected to organised crime syndicates in the country, particularly trafficking, illegal mining, extortion and protection rackets.

These events are also a function of the proliferation of firearms, including automatic and semi-automatic weapons in the country. Mass shootings such as these are only really viable using such firearms. As such, unless authorities can effectively combat both the rising tide of organised crime and the illicit weapons trade in the country, such attacks will continue to occur with increasing frequency.

Planner

30 Sep 2026 (South Africa) March & March countrywide demonstrations 12-15 Oct 2026 Johannesburg (South Africa) The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) national congress; 4 Nov 2026 (South Africa) Local government elections; 25 Jan 2026 Pretoria (South Africa) Final Madlanga Commission report due;
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Chronology

29 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *Daily Maverick*. South Africa summons **United States (US)** ambassador **Leo Brent Bozell** after his criticism of the South African government over the last two weeks;

29 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *Polity*. **South African Reserve Bank (SARB)** (central bank) quarterly bulletin notes that foreign direct investment inflows increased to R49.8 billion (\$3.03 billion) in the second quarter, up from R20.3 billion (\$1.23 billion) in the previous quarter, due to a local telecommunications company receiving debt funding from a non-resident parent company;

26 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *Reuters*. Foreign minister **Ronald Lamola** says South Africa remains open to talks with the **United States (US)** over disputes including rules on **Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE)** and ownership for foreign investors, despite being surprised by last week's US visa restrictions;

23 Sep 2026 **Pretoria (South Africa)** *SABC News*. The **South African Reserve Bank (SARB)** (central bank) **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** increases the repo rate by 25 basis points to 7.25%;

23 Sep 2026 **Pretoria (South Africa)** *CNBC Africa*. **Statistics South Africa (StatsSA)** reports that annual headline inflation was 4.4% in August, up from 4.3% in July;

22 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *EWN*. Suspended deputy national police commissioner **Shadrack Sibiya** is arrested and charged with five charges, including sexual assault;

22 Sep 2026 **Durban (South Africa)** *Al Jazeera*. Armed gunmen kill 11 people in a mass shooting at a house in Durban's **KwaMakutha** township;

22 Sep 2026 **Washington, D.C. (United States)** *CBS News*. The **United States (US) State Department** announces that the US government plans to welcome 17,500 additional White Afrikaners from South Africa as refugees to the US over the next 12 months;

21 Sep 2026 **Durban (South Africa)** *News24*. Investigators execute a search and seizure warrant at the home of suspended police minister **Senzo Mchunu** in **KwaZulu-Natal Province**, during which they confiscate his phones and other electronic devices;

20 Sep 2026 **Pretoria (South Africa)** *SA News*. President **Cyril Ramaphosa** extends the deadline for the **Madlanga Commission's** final report from 16 November to 25 January;

20 Sep 2026 **Pretoria (South Africa)** *Daily Maverick*. The **Vryheidsfront Plus (VF Plus)** political party defends its decision to nominate **Bill Harrington**, who previously served 14 years in prison for his role in the **Apartheid**-era killing of an **African National Congress (ANC)** activist, as its **Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB)** mayoral candidate;

18 Sep 2026 **Ekurhuleni (South Africa)** *Daily Maverick*. The **City of Ekurhuleni** dismisses **Ekurhuleni Metro Police Department (EMPD)** deputy chief **Julius Mkhwanazi**, who is accused of multiple counts of corruption;

17 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *EWN*. The constitutional court finds that the 2023 **Public Procurement Bill** was invalid due to **Parliament's** failure to adequately conduct a public participation process;

15 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *Daily Maverick*. The **Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu)** national congress collapses amid infighting and is rescheduled for 12 October;

15 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *News24*. Deputy president **Paul Mashatile** releases a statement assuring the public that he is recovering from a 'minor medical procedure' in response to speculation about his health following a prolonged public absence;

15 Sep 2026 **Pretoria (South Africa)** *CNBC Africa*. The **National Treasury** announces that it had signed a \$1 billion loan agreement with the **New Development Bank** (also known as the **BRICS Bank**) to finance infrastructure upgrades;

15 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *ENCA*. National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) **Andy Mothibi** orders the withdrawal of charges against suspended National Police commissioner **Fannie Masemola** following a review of the **National Prosecuting Authority's (NPA) Independent Directorate Against Corruption's (IDAC)** case against Masemola;

15 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *Daily Maverick*. Superintendent **Elmarie de Beer**, the head of the **Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD)** internal affairs, testifies before the **Madlanga Commission** that a number of units in the JMPD are compromised by corrupt and criminal officers;

12 Sep 2026 **New Delhi (India)** *The Presidency*. President **Cyril Ramaphosa** attends the **BRICS Leaders' Summit** in New Delhi;

11 Sep 2026 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Al Jazeera*. Nigeria's parliament bans its members from making official visits to **South Africa** in protest of xenophobic violence in the country;

10 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *CNBC Africa*. The state-owned ports and railways firm **Transnet** reports its first annual profit in four years following the sale of a stake in its **Durban** container terminal;

10 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *Mining Weekly*. **Statistics South Africa (StatsSA)** reports that mining production fell by 7.5% year-on-year in July due to decreased output in the platinum group metals (PGMs), coal, and iron ore sectors;

7 Sep 2026 **Pretoria (South Africa)** *News24*. Former **National Assembly** speaker and defence minister **Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula** gives testimony in her ongoing corruption trial, denying that she solicited and accepted bribe payments when she was defence minister;

7 Sep 2026 **Cape Town (South Africa)** *EWN*. The **Electoral Laws Amendment Bill** is tabled before **Parliament**;

7 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *News24*. The **Patriotic Alliance (PA)** political party claims it will not challenge the **Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC)** over the PA's failure to submit candidate lists for the **Newcastle Local Municipality** and the **Ugu District Municipality**, both of which are in **KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province**;

5 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *EWN*. The **Build One South Africa (BOSA)** political party launches its local elections manifesto;

2 Sep 2026 **Pretoria (South Africa)** *Moneyweb*. **National Treasury** confirms that Germany's **KfW Development Bank** and the **Agence Française de Développement (AFD)** (French development agency) have committed a combined EUR 300m (\$342m) to support South Africa's **Metro Trading Services Reform** programme;

2 Sep 2026 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *Daily Maverick*. The **South African Police Service (SAPS)** fires the criminally charged **Crime Intelligence** deputy head Major General **Feroz Khan** after he fails to appear before a disciplinary committee.

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