

Cover Letter

31 October 2024

For The Attention of Advocate Richard Sizani and the Electoral Reform Consultation Panel

Submission for Consideration on Behalf of South Africans Abroad

Thank you for your acknowledgement of all South Africans outside the Republic. Your willingness to engage with those abroad is greatly appreciated.

The document below provides a fairly comprehensive but not exhaustive view of issues and areas of concern for South Africans abroad. It has been formulated with view to be available publicly for a variety of readers and therefore includes additional explanatory notes for those who may not understand the reason and background of the ERCP or its mandate as well as the inclusion of additional voting related issues.

Some of the information contained within this document falls outside the scope of the Electoral Reform Consultation Panel's mandate. These matters have been included for two reasons:

1. We believe it may help establish a more holistic understanding which may have some influence on your research, discussions and preparations of your recommendations.
2. It serves as a base for all concerned stakeholders to facilitate engagement and seek solutions for matters within your mandate and those that are not achieved through the ERCP.

The key areas for ERCP consideration are Chapters 5 & 6, with further research and discussion required for Chapters 4,5,6 and relevant survey results in Chapter 8.

Due to a limited timeframe since becoming aware of the ERCP and understanding of the ERCP's mandate, we have not been able to undertake a comprehensive research & public participation exercise on alternative electoral systems thus we are including mention of some of these systems in this document but with view to engage with the diaspora about the potential for significant electoral system reform and explore possibilities, advantages, disadvantages and implications thereof. This work will be undertaken for the duration of *Phase Three: public participation* in your schedule. The bulk of the document thus focusses on potential changes to be made within our current electoral framework.

We request that you kindly avail yourself and/or members of your panel to engage with South Africans abroad in at least three sessions and interim engagement during *Phase Three: Public participation and preparation of a consultation paper for the international conference 18 Nov 2024 - 03 Feb 2025*.

We also ask for you to provide us with a list of public participation opportunities taking place in South Africa that we may help publicise for maximum attendance.

Will all submissions be made available for wider public engagement? It would be helpful if we could gain insight into these submissions for maximum research & engagement in this process.

We look forward to engaging with you further on this journey.

Kind Regards

Hayley Reichert

Founder of Operation Watershed



Operation Watershed
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Electoral Reform Consultation Panel: Submission for Consideration on Behalf of South Africans Abroad

31 October 2024

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14/11/2024 Amended version re-submitted to the ERCP and published publicly. The main amendment concerning the ERCP is section 6.1.1.3 highlighting the halving of the value of overseas votes due to the new 2nd ballot. As the overseas voting survey ran until 00H30 on 31 October 2024, which was the deadline for the ERCP submission, a redacted version of the results was included. The survey responses have now been manually processed and the final detailed result included herein.

*Note to readers: VD = Voting District (voting stations)

This report was compiled by Hayley Reichert, founder of Operation Watershed

1. Introduction

Brief outline provided by Adv. Richard Sizani:

The conception of the Electoral Reform Consultation Panel (ERCP) arose out of the realization by the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs that there was a significant public desire for a fundamental review of the current electoral system when it undertook public hearings on the Electoral Amendment bill, in 2022. Several commissions in recent years have made recommendations to consider the prospects of electoral reform and thirty years into the democratic era there appears to be some appetite for a review of the electoral system.

Section 23 of the Electoral Amendment Act, 2023 provides that ERCP must, independently investigate, consult on, report on and make recommendations in respect of potential reforms of the electoral system for the election of the National Assembly and the election of the Provincial Legislatures, in respect of the elections to be held after the 2024 elections (that is, National and provincial elections in 2029).

The ERCP must, within 12 months of the date of the 2024 elections, submit a report to the Minister on the possible options for electoral reform for the election of the National Assembly and the election of the provincial legislatures which report must include:

- Reasons, potential advantages and disadvantages
- Legal and constitutional implications; and
- Financial implications, for each proposed electoral system or electoral reform identified by the ERCP

The panel must perform its functions, referred to in section 23(2)(a) of the amendment Act 2023, in a manner that enables Parliament to exercise its constitutional powers to determine the electoral system for the elections of the National Assembly and provincial legislatures in respect of the elections to be held after the 2024 elections.

The Panel must submit its report to the Minister of Home Affairs within 12 months, that is, by 31 May 2025. In turn the Minister must table it in Parliament within 30 days for Parliament's consideration. The panel may request a 6-month extension. When the ERCP looked at its terms of reference it concluded that its work to advise the National Assembly is not limited only to an electoral system that falls within our Constitutional framework. It is the prerogative of the National Assembly to choose an option that will either require or not require a constitutional amendment.

The ERCP recognizes that it may not be possible to investigate all potential electoral systems but may have to limit itself to those that are preferred in the National debates. This may be 3 to 5 options. In doing its work Section 23 directs the Panel to solicit views of all sectors of society and also conduct nationwide public hearings to listen to the views of all South Africans about their preferred electoral system.

2. Limitations of This Submission and the Overseas Voting Survey

- 2.1. The ERCP & its mandate was largely unknown to those abroad until early October 2024.
- 2.2. Lack of general knowledge of the current SA electoral system and alternative democratic and other electoral systems may limit respondents' capacity to provide suggestions.
- 2.3. Rush to engage those abroad without proper planning or research due to 31 October 2024 submission deadline resulted in the output of an imperfect survey.
- 2.4. Potential cognitive bias resulting in some respondents deeming certain questions to be 'leading' which may impact responses.
- 2.5. Limited interaction of one brief livestreamed educational webinar mid-October that was shared across overseas networks. Unfortunately, this did not garner sufficient views or engagement compared to the number of South Africans abroad.
- 2.6. Length of survey and the approximate 20–30-minute time allocation required to submit responses was deemed as 'off-putting' for many and resulted in fewer participants.
- 2.7. Due to respondents concerns of data-sharing and subsequent hesitation to submit their responses, the Overseas Voting Survey cannot be independently verified as respondents have been promised that their personal data will not be shared with any 3rd party organisation without their prior written consent. This decision was made to help promote trust of respondents to drive greater engagement and more submissions. **The time-stamped raw data of survey responses excluding personal contact details (name, mobile number, email address) is available on request for key stakeholders.**
- 2.8. **Data has been checked and there were 23 duplicate entries thus reducing the total submissions of 710 down to 687– I am satisfied the final number of respondents are from unique email addresses and to the best of my knowledge are all different individuals. The 23 duplicates have been manually merged on the raw data however the screengrabs showing percentage results and number of respondents reflected on many questions in the survey cannot be altered thus you may see discrepancies in the survey result section. I do not believe these duplicate entries to have significantly impact the results. The main possible reason for this is that more questions were added within the first few days of the survey being publicised and respondents were encouraged to return to the survey to fill in unanswered questions. A few opted to change their initial responses to some questions.**
- 2.9. This submission may not include all possible scenarios and considerations of alternative electoral systems or amendments to the existing system, and we strongly urge the panel to facilitate multiple engagement opportunities during the public participation period between for the purposes of delivering wider education and creating further opportunities for engagement and suggestions for consideration for those abroad, across different time zones.
- 2.10. **We request the allowance for consolidated re-submissions to be allowed within a window period at the end of the public participation period.**

3. Current South African Electoral System

- 3.1.** All South African citizens aged 18 and over are eligible to vote. The Constitution places all elections and referendums in the country in all three spheres of government under the control of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), established in terms of the IEC Act, 1996 (Act 51 of 1996).
- 3.2.** National and provincial elections are held once every five years. Local Government Elections are also held once every 5 years approximately 2 years after the National and Provincial election cycle.
- 3.3.** South Africa uses a combination of two kinds of electoral systems:
 - 3.3.1.** Constituency-based elections – voters in each local area (constituency) elect an individual candidate to represent them in Parliament. The person who wins the majority of votes in each constituency becomes an MP. The party with the majority of MPs forms government. In this kind of elections system, the individual MP holds the seat, not the political party he or she belongs to.
 - 3.3.2.** Proportional representation elections – voters in a large area vote for political parties. The political party chooses the people who will become its MPs. Each party is allocated a number of seats proportional to how many votes it got in the election.
- 3.4.** Before 1994, South Africa made use of constituency-based elections, but since then national and provincial elections have used proportional representation and party lists.
- 3.5.** Local government elections use a mixture of proportional representation and constituency-based elections.
- 3.6.** In August 2020, Cabinet approved the [Electoral Laws Amendment Bill of 2020](#), which amends the [Electoral Commission Act, 1996 \(Act 51 of 1996\)](#); the [Electoral Act, 1998 \(Act 73 of 1998\)](#) and the [Local Government Municipal Electoral Act, 2000 \(Act 27 of 2000\)](#). This resulted in the inclusion of independent candidates and the introduction of a new ballot paper ‘Ballot Paper 2 – Regional to National’ in the 2024 National and Provincial Elections.
- 3.7.** Before the election, each political party submits a list of candidates in a numbered order of preference. The seats of Parliament are allocated in proportion to the number of votes cast in the election. This means a party that won 10% of the votes gets 10% of the seats. If a party wins 20 seats, the first 20 people on its party list become MPs.

4. Alternative Electoral Systems

As previously explained, time and resource limitations mean that we were unable to conduct research and public participation on this element of our submission. The list of alternative electoral systems below may or may not be in line with our existing Constitution and we endeavour to explore these and others as part of our own public participation between November 2024 – January 2025. With this in mind, and further research on matters raised in other chapters within this document, it is imperative that we are allowed to resubmit final and consolidated suggestions at the end of the public participation period. The list is not exhaustive but highlights some electoral formats for consideration for the South African electoral landscape. **Disclaimer: These are merely listed for information purposes and do not necessarily reflect the leaning of support of any of these methods by South Africans Abroad.*

- 1. Plurality Voting 'First Past the Post'**
- 2. Instant Run-off**
- 3. Combination of Multiple Rounds and Final Run-Off**
- 4. Condorcet Method**
- 5. Schulze Method (beatpath/indirect)**
- 6. Ranked Pairs**
- 7. Majority Judgement**
- 8. Sortition**
- 9. Score Voting**
- 10. Copeland**
- 11. Star Voting**
- 12. MiniMax**
- 13. Kemeny Young**
- 14. Borda Count**
- 15. Random Ballot**

5. Influencing Factors for Consideration

5.1. Greater Inclusion of South Africans Abroad

Whilst numbers vary wildly and statistics are either non-existent or potentially inaccurate, it is generally accepted that there may be in excess of one million South Africans residing temporarily or permanently outside of the Republic. South Africans residing outside the Republic of South Africa must be recognised by the South African government as **'constituents of the tenth province'**. Candidates who may ordinarily reside either in or outside the Republic should be able to stand as an independent representative who represents the constituents of this tenth province.

The South African government must recognise the need for constituents of the tenth province to have better representation in the National Assembly, improved electoral power and better access to voting given that:

- The South African government has a duty of care for those with South African citizenship and permanent residence status regardless of the fact they may reside outside the Republic. (**With limitations of dual/multiple citizenship holders*)
- Constituents require ongoing service delivery through the Departments of Home Affairs, DIRCO, Transport & Police for civic services, drivers licencing, police clearance etc
- Constituents are actively involved in facilitating economic growth through key networks such as the many South African Chambers of Commerce.
- Constituents are actively involved in the enhancement of social development within South Africa mostly through civil society, educational and charitable endeavours.
- Constituents have significant capacity to act as brand ambassadors promoting travel and tourism to South Africa.
- The significant number of people with remarkable human capital potential for the betterment of our country.
- Given global changes in technology, travel, flexibility of working arrangements etc, it is important for the South African government to recognise South Africans may also wish to be 'global citizens' and should facilitate strong ties with these constituents. If South Africa allows and encourages global nomads to visit its shores, then the same should be encouraged for its citizens and permanent residents wishing to explore other shores.
- Not all South Africans are permanent constituents of the tenth province, some people are abroad on consignment, on contract (such as sports people) or furthering education. Many within this subcategory intend on returning to SA and should not be disadvantaged from securing their in-country future by being disenfranchised unnecessarily.

5.2. Proof of Citizenship and Identification

Currently the South African government does NOT deem SA passports to be proof of citizenship and deems them merely to be travel documents. Should the Constitutional Court approve the Supreme Court of Appeal's ruling in favour of the DA's Loss of Citizenship case,

government should amend the relevant legislation and allow for passports to be deemed as proof of citizenship. This is in light of the facts that those abroad face considerable challenges in obtaining civic documents such as passports and ID's AND that those outside the Republic mostly have no use for ID's thus a South African passport should suffice as evidence of citizenship for purposes including voter registration and casting of votes.

5.3. Protect IEC Funding

We believe the IEC has been underfunded approximately R250 million per year in recent years and there is significant risk of future underfunding. Part of the IEC's mandate is voter education however with limited funding to perform its primary functions, this key element does not receive sufficient focus. This results in an increasing burden on parties, independent candidates, civil society and other organisations, educational institutions and businesses needing to take on the role of delivering voter education. Civic and voter education is paramount to building a democracy-strengthening nation that actively participates in democracy and elections.

We believe the panel should make additional recommendations to government to ensure the future of funding of the IEC is protected and sufficient. This is vital to ensure the IEC can deliver on its mandate effectively and reduce risk of the IEC being compromised in its delivery of free and fair democratic elections.

5.4. Complexity of alternative electoral systems and the impact of voter education

Prior to any significant amendments to the existing electoral system OR a new system is adopted, great consideration must be made in recognition of the complexity thereof and of how the public will be educated on such changes. This consideration must be made with understanding of the current level of voter education and interaction. Whilst a different system may be fairer or more just in nature, will the issue of ensuring voters fully understand it create significant problems that could result in voter confusion, a reduction in voter turnout or increase in spoilt ballots, or cause a sway in results whether strategically or accidentally.

South Africa already has serious challenges with lack of capacity for voter education delivery. A new system will create more challenges in this regard – ultimately starting from scratch and needing to educate the 40-million strong electorate in just a few years before the first election would take place using a new system. We must ask for evidence of considerable benefit to implementing such a significant change.

5.5. Influence of ERCP on Local Government Elections and Ward Demarcation

As we understand, your mandate is to review potential electoral reform for the National and Provincial Elections however we need to understand the implications of only reviewing part of our electoral system. By this we mean there is no indication thus far that the ERCP's mandate includes reviewing local government elections. We feel if changes are to be made then both national and local elections should be reviewed at the same time in this process. We raise concerns that splitting the electoral system by means of keeping local government elections the same and only reviewing and potentially making changes to the national and

provincial elections may create confusion and potentially have a wider negative impact on our society. We require further clarification on this matter.

The framework used to decide municipal boundary delimitation by the Municipal Demarcation Board and the concerns that some municipalities use this for their own advantage to increase ward size thereby increasing the need for additional ward councillors must be given consideration in case of any potential negative impact in both the existing electoral system and against a backdrop of a potentially significantly different electoral system. We must ask what might the implications be? Could this unfairly benefit certain parties with potential to have more ward councillors in an area? Is there sufficient public participation and a process to review formulae used to determine demarcation and number of councillors?

5.6. Use of Technology

5.6.1. To reduce intimidation or inappropriate actions in VD's

Use of video livestream with independent observers to monitor activities within VD's. Raises issue of concerns around protecting secrecy of the voters but also raises the issue of improving accountability of IEC staff following rules correctly and thereby protecting the voters.

5.6.2. Use of Technology to promote and protect democracy

For purposes of voter education, registration and the actual voting process itself, the use of technology to 'gamify' these key areas could significantly enhance our democracy. This is based on increasing global trends of mobile phone, social media and digital gaming usage. This could also improve the engagement of young people which is vital to help ensure longevity of active citizenship through electoral means and could play a role in promoting and protecting our democracy for future generations.

5.6.3. Public Participation

A strong recommendation to government should include a set of minimum thresholds for public participation to show that a sufficient percentage and cross-section of the population is being engaged across all levels of government. This will facilitate ongoing civic education and engagement to help build a strong and engaged civil society that fosters and promotes democracy and accountability in South Africa.

6. Electoral Amendments for Consideration

The matters raised in this chapter are not exhaustive – other concerns raised in comments by individuals on the survey must be considered and further potential matters may be raised during the public participation phase that could require additions to this chapter.

The matters raised below assume that our current electoral system would largely remain in place without significant changes that may affect or prevent these suggestions from consideration or implementation.

6.1. Electoral System Reform Matters

6.1.1. Disenfranchisement of South Africans Abroad & its negative impact on SA

6.1.1.1. Currently South Africans abroad are **ONLY** issued with Ballot Paper 1 – National – during National and Provincial Elections. This results in those abroad being disenfranchised from voting for independent candidates due to the limitations of the recent Electoral Amendment Bill as only political parties appear on this ballot paper. A political party is not limited to regional/constituent representation therefore this element of the new Electoral Amendment Bill is illogical and unfair as those abroad are currently not recognised as constituents of any of the nine provinces nor are they recognised collectively to be constituents of their own ‘province’. They are also not afforded the opportunity to cast their vote for an independent candidate to represent them and there is no allowance for a South African abroad to stand as an independent candidate. As a result:

6.1.1.1.1. Revision of the Electoral Amendment Bill is required to accommodate those abroad being enfranchised to vote for independent candidates of their choice.

6.1.1.1.2. Formulation of fair and just criteria that must be met by individuals wishing to stand as independent candidates for this constituency.

6.1.1.1.3. Ballot Paper 2 should include independent candidates who may be ordinarily resident in or outside the Republic to stand for election as representatives of the constituents of the tenth province.

6.1.1.1.4. Amendments must therefore be made to ensure those abroad are issued with both Ballot Papers 1 (National – Parties only) and 2 (Regional to National – mix of parties and independent candidates).

6.1.1.1.5. This would further require amendments of the current Electoral Amendment Bill with regards to the formula for weighting and/or allocation of seats for votes accumulated on Ballot Paper 2 by voters from this region of overseas voters.

6.1.1.1.6. Similarly, a revision of formula is required for re-allocation in the event of vacated seats of such independent candidates.

6.1.1.1.7. Further government lobbying would be required for separate funding for any such representatives to travel to key locations for purposes of engaging with their constituency, lobbying for improved service delivery and undertake oversight visits of foreign missions, put forward proposals for government to review and make changes to the number and locations of foreign missions with view to creating improved access and review cost vs value of the foreign missions as well as

assessing the competence of departments within foreign missions etc, given the diverse geographical nature of this constituency.

6.1.1.2. Those abroad are not allowed to participate in Local Government Elections (LGE) on the basis we do not live in nor receive services from local municipalities. Consideration should be given to the possibility of expanding the LGE to include those abroad with means of electing 'ward councillors' and other 'municipal/district' representatives covering foreign regions where South Africans reside. This would significantly enhance other key departments such as DIRCO & Home Affairs. It would ultimately support the betterment of South Africa through improved bilateral relations and economic investment opportunities.

6.1.1.3. *****AMENDMENT/ADDITION:** National Assembly consists of 400 seats. Prior to 2024 all votes contributed equally towards the 400. In 2024 the seat allocation was split into 200 from Ballot 1 (National) and 200 from Ballot 2 (Regional to National) therefore halving the value of out-of-country votes and further disenfranchising voters abroad. This is another reason why those abroad should be allowed to vote on Ballot 2.

6.1.2. Allow Permanent Residents the Right to Vote

6.1.2.1. Those with valid South African Permanent Residency status should be allowed to vote, regardless of whether they reside in or outside the Republic. It is important to note many Permanent Residents contribute to society and the economy and therefore should have a say in how the country is governed.

6.1.2.2. In matters pertaining to dual citizenship where a foreign country does not allow dual nationality however a person does not wish to renounce their SA citizenship, further investigation is required as to whether or not that person would be deemed to have renounced citizenship or merely lost citizenship and subsequently does that person retain the right to permanent residency in SA? (This may differ depending on the foreign country – some may require confirmation of renouncement of SA citizenship – more research is required).

6.1.2.3. In matters historically and under current legislation regarding the retention letter requirement, where a person has unknowingly and/or unwillingly lost their SA citizenship but retains the right to Permanent Residency and with the potential change in legislation depending on the Constitutional Court case outcome (hearing set for 5 November 2024), there may be cases where a person is unable to apply for reinstatement of citizenship but still has vested interests in SA and wishes to vote.

6.1.3. Proof of Citizenship and Identification

6.1.3.1. Based on the assumption that the Constitutional Court ratifies the above-mentioned loss of citizenship case, legislative changes are required so that SA passports are deemed to be proof of citizenship. Thereafter the IEC should remove the compulsory double document verification requirement of both ID and SA Passport at point of voter registration – either document should suffice.

6.1.3.2. Similarly, those abroad should not be required to produce both documents when casting their votes – either ID or valid SA passport should suffice.

6.1.4. Overseas Voting Results

6.1.4.1. Every voting station is listed as a separate Voting District (VD), including foreign missions. VD's in South Africa have their results published individually however the out of country votes are not reported by foreign mission. They are counted as if they're from one VD. Those abroad have expressed a strong desire for the counting and reporting of the overseas votes to be in line with that of in-country results. We have been informed verbally that the reason behind this is to protect voters' secrecy in missions where there are extremely few voters however we have found one case of a VD in South Africa in the 2021 election where there were only 4 votes cast, all for the same party, therefore those working in, presiding over or monitoring that VD would potentially know the identity of those voters and who they voted for. Overseas voting and reporting of results must be brought in line with rules in SA. With provision to perhaps review this issue and create a new rule where VD's with less than a certain number of votes are not reported individually.

6.1.5. Accountability and Mechanism to vote politicians out.

6.1.5.1. We need a system that provides published KPI's for all national, provincial and locally elected representatives. Regular independent reviews should be undertaken for the public to gauge whether or not those in leadership are performing satisfactorily.

6.1.5.2. Many South Africans abroad would like to see our electoral system provide a way to vote out politicians who do not perform satisfactorily as a means to ensuring successful leadership and protecting the integrity and competency of our government. Opinions differ on how this would be implemented in a fair and reasonable way.

6.1.6. Greater Capacity for Direct Voting of the positions of President, Deputy President and all other representatives.

6.1.6.1. Two-thirds of survey respondents indicate they wish to have greater choice of direct voting.

6.1.6.2. More than three-quarters of survey respondents indicate the desire to directly vote for the positions of President and Deputy President.

6.1.7. Disenfranchisement due to introduction of Section24a within South Africa

6.1.7.1. Section 24A: A voter may vote outside of the voting district where registered on voting day but needs to notify the Electoral Commission before voting day during the period specified in the Election Timetable. Those who knew in advance that they would not be able to vote at their registered VD and who failed to submit the Section24a form within the window period would not be allowed to vote anywhere else other than their registered VD.

6.1.7.2. Allegedly the reason for this is to reduce risk of double voting and to assist IEC with logistics planning.

6.1.7.3. Due to delays in finalising the Electoral Amendment Act and pressure on the IEC, lack of voter education regarding this amendment resulted in many being unaware of the change and being turned away from voting.

6.1.7.4. A review should be undertaken given the ongoing lack of capacity for voter education. We are not aware of any polling done on this issue, but it should be considered to reduce risk of unnecessary disenfranchisement in future elections and to facilitate access to voting or, through use of technology, the ability to submit a Section24a within the week prior to or even on the day of voting at the VD. This would especially help those who may need to travel at short notice, such as in the case of an emergency.

6.1.8. Review of spoiled ballots

6.1.8.1. In 2024 there was a total number of 370,126 spoiled ballots out of the total 32,307,319 votes cast. This means 1.15% of the total votes cast were spoiled. Similarly, the 2019 figures were 440,319 spoiled ballots out of the total 34,733,181 cast which equates to 1.27 %

6.1.8.2. We believe that no significant exit polling currently takes place following elections thus it is difficult to assess the reasons behind the spoiled ballots. Mechanisms for such polling across a wide section of the voting population should be implemented to facilitate ways to reduce accidental spoiling of ballots.

6.1.8.3. In some instances, individuals may choose to spoil their ballot on purpose, in a form of protest. A box at the bottom of the list of candidates stating SPOILT BALLOT should be considered for inclusion to allow freedom of expression should someone wish to protest through their vote.

6.1.8.4. Differentiation of spoiled ballots should be included in vote results (listed as 'formal' and 'accidental' spoiled ballots).

6.1.8.5. Alternative means of voting such as electronic voting and greater awareness that voters may make use of a trusted companion to assist them to cast their vote may help reduce accidental spoiling of ballots and act as enhancements to the protection of an individual's capacity to cast their vote correctly and ensure their vote is counted.

6.2. Voter Registration Matters

6.2.1. Overseas Voter Registration

6.2.1.1. All foreign missions should allow for in-person voter registration to take place any time the Voters Roll is open and accepting registrations. Those wishing to register or amend their registration in-person must be allowed to make appointments to submit their voter registration application. In the lead up to the 2024 election there were a number of South Africans who experienced a variety of issues with the online portal, resulting in them needing to register in person however foreign missions had severely limited opening times for the purpose of voter registration – only one weekend was allowed at the end of January.

6.2.1.2. More overseas voter registration weekend drives for in-person registration should be made available. In 2014 there were two (one late 2013 and one early 2014) yet in the lead up to the 2024 election only one voter registration weekend was held at foreign missions. There were many who were unable to attend on the limited one weekend and were unable to register online due to technical issues with the registration portal therefore were disenfranchised and unable to vote.

6.2.1.3. Whilst the new online registration portal for those abroad was a significant and welcomed improvement, a full report of the online voter registration system for the 2024 Overseas Voter Registration period must be reviewed. There is a need for improvements to be made, given the numerous user issues that resulted in many giving up trying to register online. For example, due to ongoing frustrations expressed across multiple social media platforms, we were successful in engaging the IEC to create a temporary solution whereby a pop-up box appeared on a person's third attempt. This allowed for ID and passport documents to be manually verified and applicants to be manually added to the voters' roll. Technical issues must be managed to reduce disenfranchisement – a notable issue is that the system is designed to both upload and simultaneously verify the two required documents – this resulted in countless attempts and timeouts with many people simply giving up due to the hassle and therefore not able to vote.

6.2.1.4. Some were unable to resolve matters (such as bumps/creases/marks/shadows on their documents which were causing the online portal to reject their documents) or were awaiting manual verification right up to the Voters Roll closure and for unknown reasons were not showing on the Voters Roll or their changes/re-registration to a foreign mission was not reflected on the Voters Roll thereby resulting in some being turned away from foreign missions and denying them the opportunity to vote.

6.2.2. Automatic Voter Registration

6.2.2.1. More than three-quarters of survey respondents indicated that eligible voters should automatically be added to the Voter's Roll upon turning 18 years of age.

6.2.3. VEC10 form

6.2.3.1. There is still a significant lack of general knowledge of the VEC10 requirement.

6.2.3.2. Individuals needing to submit VEC10's were significantly happier with the extended duration of the window period starting from the day after the closure of the Voter's Roll and continued for a considerable number of weeks compared to previous elections where it was a 2-week window period. This helped those already registered but who'd missed the opportunity to use the online portal to re-register or those who had to make shorter notice international travel plans.

6.2.3.3. We want to ensure that regulations ensure the maximum VEC10 window period is implemented in all future elections.

6.2.4. Validity of the Voters Roll

6.2.4.1. Prior to an election, after the Voters Roll is closed, it is compared against the Population Register held by the Department of Home Affairs. Anyone deemed to not be a legitimate citizen as per the population register are cast off the Voters' Roll.

6.2.4.2. Due to widely publicised issues of fraudulently obtained documents, the population register of citizens and permanent residents is not as accurate as it should be. This could result in illegal voters swaying votes. Further investigations

into how to avoid this must be undertaken between the ERCP, IEC and Department of Home Affairs.

6.2.5. Poor Consular Services Abroad

- 6.2.5.1.** South Africans abroad face significant challenges in obtaining appointments to apply for relevant documentation and extremely unsatisfactory long wait times to obtain documents. Some may wait up to 6 months for an appointment and up to 12+ months to receive documents.
- 6.2.5.2.** Limited access to foreign missions adds complexity. In addition, 13 foreign missions have closed in recent years, and many are not located in key areas where there are high numbers of South Africans which makes their location often illogical.
- 6.2.5.3.** Significantly higher costs involved in applying for documents including costs such as the outsourced VFS £35 processing fee for passport renewals and travel costs often means South Africans avoid sorting out their documentation or they're simply unable to afford it.
- 6.2.5.4.** This results in many South Africans being unable to obtain their relevant ID and passport within a suitable time frame and at a reasonable cost ahead of a voter registration and election period. Even if they have submitted timeously, due to incompetencies within DHA, DIRCO and VFS it often means long delays and little to no communication where there are problems with applications. This results in South Africans abroad missing the Voter Registration deadline and/or not having documents to be able to cast their vote.
- 6.2.5.5.** A large scale and thorough review of foreign missions must be undertaken. Key areas of focus may include location of foreign missions, access to, services and quality of services provided, as well as the cost vs benefit of foreign missions in terms of their purpose to serve South Africans and foreign nationals, and to foster bilateral relations and drive economic investment in SA.

6.3. Access To Voting Matters

6.3.1. Limitation of Special Votes Abroad

- 6.3.1.1.** Currently voting outside the Republic takes place 10-14 days prior to election day in South Africa and is therefore deemed to be a special vote, in line with special votes cast within the Republic prior to the main election day.
- 6.3.1.2.** Voting abroad can only take place on the allocated 1-2 day(s) and voters must present themselves physically at their foreign missions. This causes serious limitations where voters are physically unable to travel to their foreign mission on the allocated day(s).
- 6.3.1.3.** Overseas special votes require in-person voting at foreign missions. There are no IEC officials travelling to nearby towns or people's homes to make casting their special vote more accessible, as is the case for special votes cast within SA. Reasonable consideration for geographical implications must be given and allowance should be made for collection of such votes.

6.3.1.4. Examples include:

6.3.1.4.1. those working offshore on oil rigs or seafarers or pilots who have severe limitations in being onshore at an allocated date – a captain of a ship could've obtained permission to leave his ship and travel to the nearest foreign mission on a set date his ship was due to be in port which was approximately 2 weeks prior to the overseas voting weekend in 2024 but there was no allowance for him to cast his vote.

6.3.1.4.2. those undergoing medical treatment or with disabilities, those with family responsibility (such as caring for elderly/young/disabled relatives) and difficult/impossible travel logistics and costs.

6.3.1.5. In light of the above, regulations should be amended to include the allowance of 'extra-special' votes as part of improving access to voting abroad.

6.3.2. Problems with Voting In-person at Foreign Missions Only

6.3.2.1. Some must travel across an entire country or multiple countries to their nearest foreign mission.

6.3.2.2. Opening hours and unable to take leave from work due to shift work and/or due to travel distance/logistics to be physically present at a foreign mission.

6.3.2.3. Some have to obtain visas to access the country in which their nearest foreign mission is located – this requires additional time off work and cost. E.g. Cyprus.

6.3.2.4. Cost to access in-person voting is significantly prohibitive unless voters are either within reasonable distance with suitable and affordable modes of transportation or wealthy enough to absorb the cost. Cost should not be a factor to prevent someone from accessing their right to vote, within reason.

6.3.2.5. Alternative methods that provide ease of access and limit the cost and logistics should be considered – this may include postal votes whereby votes are sent and received by recorded mail via foreign missions in relevant countries where this is possible (further research required on whether or not any international or country laws would prohibit this)

6.3.2.6. South Africans abroad have expressed a strong desire for electronic/online voting whereby voters can cast their votes either from the comfort of their own home or at a nearest foreign mission or temporary voting station abroad. (further research is required on a by-country basis regarding additional voting stations)

6.3.2.7. Those abroad have expressed a strong desire for more voting stations abroad in key areas where there are large numbers of South Africans within reasonable travel distance to a major town/city.

6.3.3. Foreign Mission Closures & potential threat of more closures

6.3.3.1. In recent years there have been 13 foreign mission closures. This causes further restrictions of access to voting abroad. For example, many across certain regions in America who previously travelled to Chicago were unable to travel to the remaining 3 USA foreign missions due to logistics of time off work, cost, distance and were thereby disenfranchised.

- 6.3.3.2.** Closure due to unforeseen circumstances such as areas of conflict in Israel and Syria meant that those foreign missions were not open for overseas voting. There is a significant number of citizens who were not afforded an alternative and reasonable solution and thereby denied the right to vote.
- 6.3.3.3.** Potential future budget cuts for DIRCO could result in more foreign mission closures which further hampers access to voting thus alternative options must be considered. Sourcing sustainable financing options to increase the number of foreign missions and contribute towards their net positive contribution to the country, could form part of the mandate and reasons for inclusion of representation of those abroad.

6.4. Election Delivery Matters

6.4.1. Planning and Implementation of Overseas Voting

- 6.4.1.1.** The President MUST declare the date of election at least a few weeks earlier than the State of The Nation Address (usually held early February).
- 6.4.1.2.** The overseas voting dates must also be confirmed much earlier.
- 6.4.1.3.** Additional voting dates for locations with high numbers of voters must be confirmed when the overseas dates are announced, not as a last minute 'add-on'
- 6.4.1.4.** Clarity of overseas dates and communication thereof is imperative – with the issue of certain countries weekends falling on Friday/Saturday (Middle East Region) and therefore foreign missions in those locations being open for voting on different dates to the rest of the world (Saturday/Sunday weekends).
- 6.4.1.5.** If one foreign mission allows multiple days of in-person voting, then the same should apply across all foreign missions. There should not be a discrepancy where those in some countries only have one day whereas those in London were given two days.
- 6.4.1.6.** Clarity of definition of terms 'and/or' was a problem in communicating overseas dates where many abroad including foreign mission staff wrongly assumed that all foreign missions were open on the Friday however Friday voting was only for certain foreign missions in the Middle East region. This resulted in voters travelling to cast their vote at other missions but being turned away, some unable to make the journey again the following day and were therefore disenfranchised. In London there was an initial resistance to allow votes to be cast on the Friday, but arrangements were made for voting to be allowed. The integrity of the votes cast on that day was jeopardised as party agents and independent observers were not informed timeously – some were able to make last minute changes to their plans to avail themselves for the remainder of the voting day however earlier in the day there was no party or observer representation. It was also decided to close the doors at 5pm which meant any potential voters who had received incorrect information may have been unable to vote if they arrived between 5-9pm (as voting was until 9pm).
- 6.4.1.7.** In locations where there are high numbers of in-person voters such as London, Dublin, The Hague, there are additional requirements as part of the planning process that may include obtaining approval from National Treasury due to certain costs involved in applying for permissions for road closures and

police/additional security presence. It is noted that a severe lack of lead time due to late date announcements and incompetence of DIRCO officials in submitting the relevant applications timeously caused significant stress and frustration for the relevant British departments involved in London. Operation Watershed played a role in applying pressure and driving resolution of these issues which should not have been the case.

6.5. Voter Education and Trust Matters

- 6.5.1.** Many South Africans abroad chose not to vote as they did not believe the physical votes would be kept secure and/or received and counted in South Africa.
- 6.5.2.** Many were unaware of the reasons behind the double envelope system with their details captured on the outer envelope. This has resulted in lack of trust that their vote is a secret and has caused some to not vote.
- 6.5.3.** Many have expressed frustration and lack of communication from their nearest foreign missions, unsure where to obtain relevant information for their particular foreign mission. The IEC must include a link on their homepage to a separate page with relevant information for overseas voters that lists all information regarding each foreign mission accordingly and timeously. Many foreign missions are difficult to contact and do not all update their websites or social media pages timeously. Some also made errors with regards to posting opening hours and dates.
- 6.5.4.** Many have expressed a desire for greater general voter education and engagement from political parties.
- 6.5.5.** Many have expressed a desire for more party agents and independent observers to be present at foreign missions during overseas voting.

7. Conclusion

This document serves to encompass as many options, scenarios, problems and potential solutions as possible with a limited knowledge on the subject matter and limited time available. Further research, engagement with relevant stakeholders and South Africans abroad and in SA is required to facilitate conversation around what issues can be included in the mandate of the ERCP and which falls outside its scope. Where matters do not fit within the ERCP mandate, it is hoped that the ERCP, IEC, DHA and other stakeholders will consider the matters raised and alternative routes to achieve satisfactory solutions.

Due to time constraints, it has not been possible to include all matters and suggestions raised in the overseas voting survey within this report – these will be highlighted to the ERCP and included in discussions during the public participation phase over the course of the next 3 months.

8. Overseas Voter Survey Report (updated version)

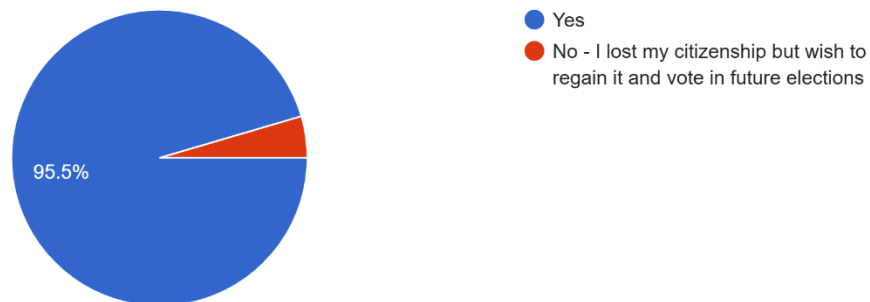
Below are the results of the independent unverified online survey held in October 2024 using Google Forms. **The results have been reduced from 710 submissions to 687 as duplications have been merged.** The raw data (excluding personal contact details) will be reviewed in greater detail during the public participation phase. There is a significant amount of repetition of key issues being raised across the numerous answers. ****Please note that number of respondents shown in screenshots capturing pie charts reflects the total number of original responses including duplicates – this cannot be edited/amended.**

Section 1 - Your opportunity to provide feedback on overseas voting in previous elections

Question 1:

Are you a valid South African citizen?

705 responses



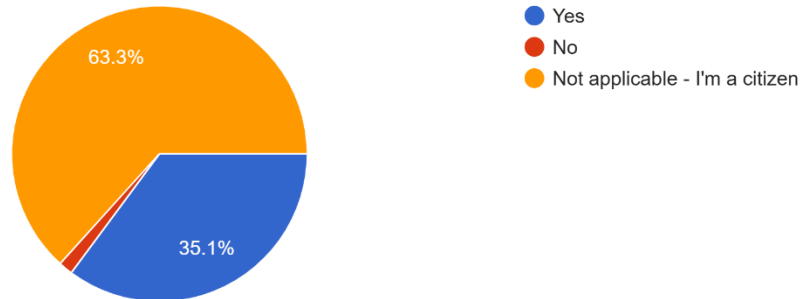
- **95.5%** said **yes**, confirming they are valid South African citizens.
- **4.5%** said **no**, indicating that they had lost their citizenship but wished to regain it and vote in future elections.

This shows that the vast majority of respondents are valid South African citizens, with a small but notable percentage seeking to restore their citizenship in order to participate in elections.

Question 2:

If you are a South African Permanent Resident would you like to be able to vote in future elections?

643 responses



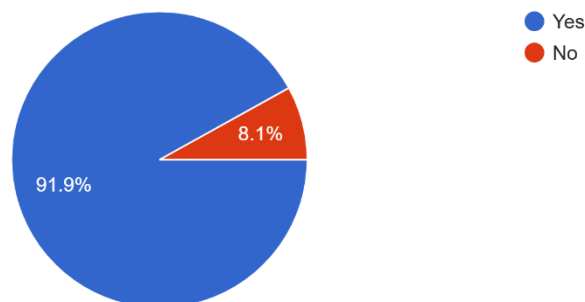
- **63.3%** said not applicable, as they are South African citizens and thus eligible to vote.
- **35.1%** said yes, expressing a desire for permanent residents to have the right to vote in future elections.
- **1.6%** said no, indicating they do not wish to vote as permanent residents.

A significant number of permanent residents expressed a desire for voting rights in the future. A small minority, however, did not share that sentiment.

Question 3:

Are you a registered South African voter? *Check your voter registration status here if you are unsure: <https://www.elections.org.za/pw/Voter/Voter-Information>

708 responses



- **91.9%** said **yes**, confirming they are registered to vote.
- **8.1%** said **no**, indicating they are not registered to vote.

The majority of respondents are registered voters, with a smaller proportion indicating they are not.

Question 4:

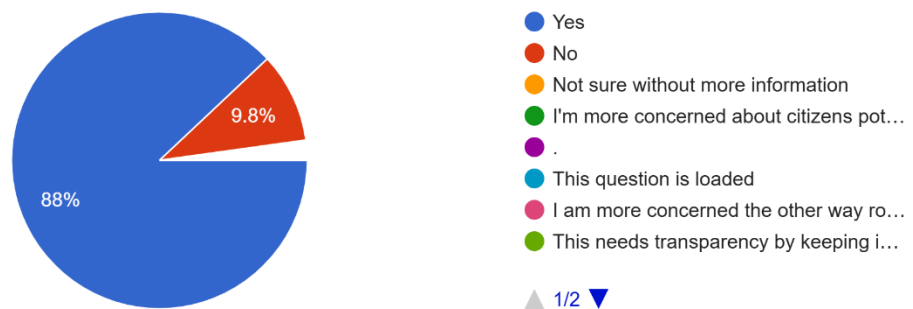
Ahead of an election, following the closure of the Voters Roll, the IEC compares the Voters Roll to the Population Register managed by the Department of Home Affairs. This often results in people being de-registered off the Voters Roll if they're not found to be listed as citizens on the Population Register.

This is understandable where people have been deemed by Home Affairs to have lost or renounced citizenship however, the possibility exists whereby illegal citizens (fraudulently obtained documents) could result in non-citizens being registered as citizens and voters. This means that the Population Register is not as accurate as it could be and therefore could result in non-citizens illegally voting.

Does this matter concern you and do you think more should be done by the Department of Home Affairs and the IEC to curb this problem?

Ahead of an election, following the closure of the Voters Roll, the IEC compares the Voters Roll to the Population Register managed by the Department...f Home Affairs and the IEC to curb this problem?

592 responses



When asked if this issue concerns them, **88%** of respondents answered yes, while **9.8%** said no. The remaining **2.2%** provided various comments, including:

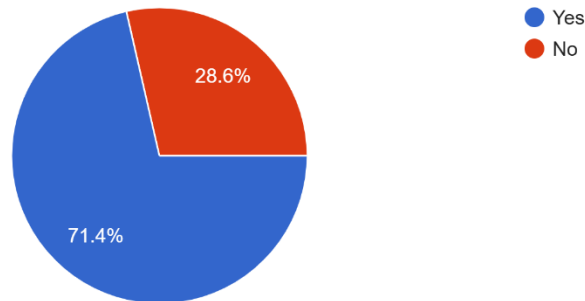
- **Concerns About Exclusion:** Some expressed worry that valid citizens might be removed from the voters roll due to errors.
- **Call for Transparency:** A desire for better communication and transparency from the government was noted.
- **Scepticism About Citizenship Loss:** Some questioned the criteria used to determine if someone has lost their citizenship.
- **Minimal Concern About Fraudulent Voting:** A few respondents considered the issue of illegal citizens voting as less significant compared to other fraudulent document issues.
- **Indifference or Lack of Knowledge:** Others indicated they were indifferent or lacked sufficient information to have a strong opinion.

Overall, while a significant majority are concerned about the potential for inaccuracies and fraudulent voting, there is a range of opinions on how serious the issue is and what actions should be taken

Question 5:

Did you register or amend your registration using the IEC's online registration portal for those abroad?

661 responses



- **71.4%** said yes, confirming they used the online portal to register or update their details.
- **28.6%** said no, indicating they did not use the online registration portal.

The majority of respondents took advantage of the online portal, though a significant number did not.

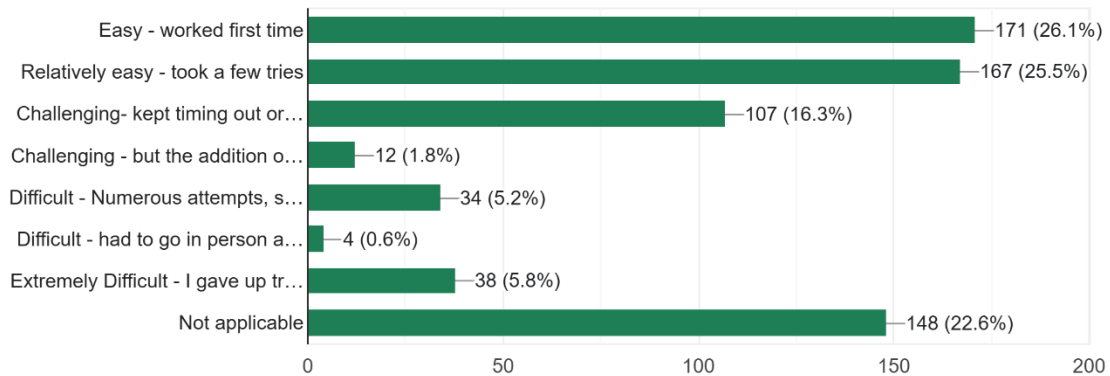
Question 6:

If you made use of the IEC's online registration portal for those abroad – what was your experience?

Options available for selection were:

- Easy - worked first time
- Relatively easy - took a few tries
- Challenging- kept timing out or rejecting my documents but I eventually managed after some hours
- Challenging - but the addition of the manual verification pop-up option certainly helped me
- Difficult - Numerous attempts, sought assistance via IEC and/or SA network groups
- Difficult - had to go in person as the system wouldn't work
- Extremely Difficult - I gave up trying and couldn't register or re-register in person either
- Not applicable

If you made use of the IEC's online registration portal for those abroad - what was your experience?
656 responses



Respondents' experiences were as follows:

- **26.1%** found it easy and were able to complete the process on the first attempt.
- **25.5%** found it relatively easy but required a few attempts to successfully register.
- **16.3%** found it challenging, experiencing issues like the system timing out or rejecting documents, but they eventually managed to register after several hours.
- **1.8%** found it challenging, but appreciated the manual verification pop-up option, which helped them complete the registration.
- **5.2%** found it difficult, requiring numerous attempts and assistance from the IEC or South African network groups to register.
- **0.6%** found it difficult and had to go in person to register because the system wouldn't work.
- **5.8%** found it extremely difficult, eventually giving up and not being able to register or re-register in person either.
- **22.6%** marked the question as not applicable, likely because they did not use the online portal.

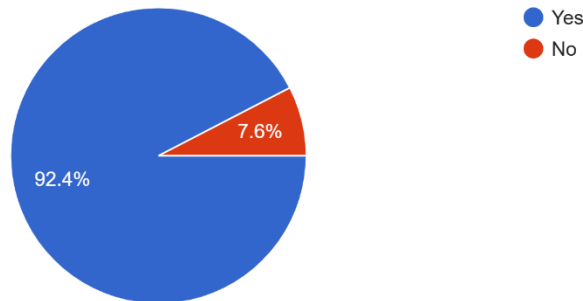
The majority of respondents had a relatively positive or at least manageable experience, though a significant number faced challenges or difficulties during the process.

Question 7:

In 2024 it was the first time that those abroad could make use of a separate online registration/re-registration portal. Do you think this was a big improvement in access to voter registration?

In 2024 it was the first time that those abroad could make use of a separate online registration/re-registration portal. Do you think this is a big improvement in access to voter registration?

646 responses



Out of the respondents, **92.4%** said yes, believing that the introduction of a separate online registration/re-registration portal for those abroad in 2024 was a big improvement in access to voter registration.

Meanwhile, **7.6%** said no, indicating they did not feel that the new portal represented a significant improvement.

The overwhelming majority saw this new feature as a positive change, enhancing accessibility for voters abroad.

Question 8:

Do you understand what a VEC10 form is and who is required to submit one?

605 responses



When asked about the VEC10 form, **51.4%** of respondents confirmed they understood what it is and who needs to submit it, while **46.6%** did not understand or were unsure. The remaining **2%** provided various comments, indicating a range of experiences and levels of understanding. Here's a breakdown of the key themes:

Some Understanding, but Issues with Submission: A few respondents knew what the VEC10 form was and why they needed to submit it, but faced technical issues, such as error messages preventing submission.

Uncertainty: Some respondents were unsure about the form’s purpose, with one person assuming they used it when applying to vote abroad, but they weren't fully clear.

General Confusion: For others, the VEC10 form was not clear at all, with respondents expressing that they didn’t know what the form was or didn't remember the specifics. One person vaguely recalled filling out something but didn’t know what it was called.

Indifference or Lack of Attention: A few respondents noted that they didn't pay much attention to the form because they either didn’t need to submit it or weren't concerned with the details.

Past Experience: Some respondents mentioned that they had dealt with similar forms in previous years or elections but didn't follow up on the VEC10 form in this instance.

Overall, while just over half of respondents understood what the form is, nearly half still lacked clarity or were uncertain about its purpose and who needs to submit it. The issue seems to stem from a combination of unclear communication and technical difficulties during the registration process.

Question 9:

If you submitted a VEC10 form - were you happy with both the ease of process and longer window period available (compared to previous elections that only had a 2-week window period to submit VEC10 forms)?

If you submitted a VEC10 form - were you happy with both the ease of process and longer window period available (compared to previous elections ...d a 2 week window period to submit VEC10 forms)?

604 responses



When asked about their satisfaction with the VEC10 form submission process, **59.6%** of the **604 respondents** said, "not applicable," likely because they either did not need to submit the form or were not involved in the process. Of those who did engage with the process: **33.9%** expressed satisfaction with the ease of the process and the longer submission window (compared to previous elections). **3.8%** were dissatisfied with the process, **2.7%** provided additional comments, reflecting a range of experiences and opinions:

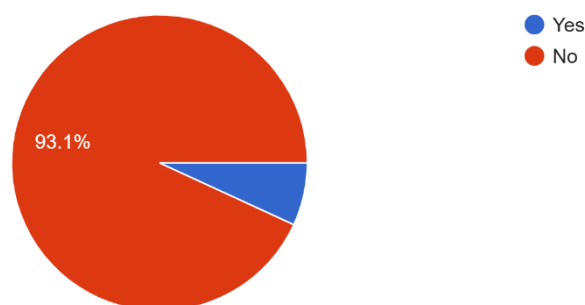
Key Comments and Themes:

- **Technical and Registration Issues:** Several respondents faced problems with the online system (e.g., website downtime, failed attempts, or being informed too late), which left them frustrated. One person mentioned the form was not processed.
- **Confusion About the Process:** Some respondents didn't know what the VEC10 form was, or were unsure whether they had submitted it, as the process was unclear, or they had registered long ago.
- **Lack of Promotion and Communication:** Some respondents felt that not enough was done to promote the VEC10 form or the registration process, particularly for those abroad. Technical issues, such as the website being down, also led to difficulties in registering.
- **Improvements, But Room for More:** A few respondents acknowledged that the process had improved with a longer window but still felt it was too short and that many potential voters could miss out if they didn't stay on top of deadlines.
- **Ineligibility or Lack of Completion:** Some respondents didn't submit the form because they were ineligible (e.g., permanent residents).

Overall, while there were improvements noted by some, particularly with the extended window, technical difficulties, lack of clarity, and communication issues made the process challenging for many.

Question 10:

Did you register or amend your registration in person at your nearest foreign mission in 2024?
656 responses



- **93.1%** said **no**, indicating they did not register or amend their registration in person at the mission.
- **6.9%** said **yes**, confirming they registered or amended their registration in person.

This shows that the vast majority did not use in-person registration, likely preferring the online portal or other methods.

Question 11:

If you went to your nearest foreign mission to register or re-register, what was your experience? (Tick all that apply)

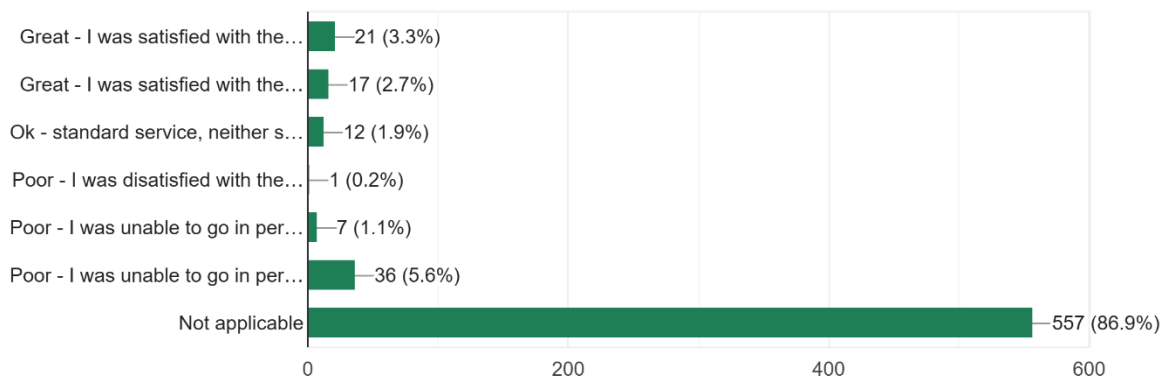
Options available for selection were:

- Great - I was satisfied with the registration weekend option & staff were friendly

- Great - I was satisfied with the staff assistance but feel there should've been more open days/weekends
- Ok - standard service, neither significantly positive or negative
- Poor - I was dissatisfied with the registration process and staff assistance
- Poor - I was unable to go in person due to limited opening times for registration
- Poor - I was unable to go in person due to distance and cost to travel there
- Not applicable

If you went to your nearest foreign mission to register or re-register, what was your experience? (tick all that apply)

641 responses



The breakdown of respondent's experiences was as follows:

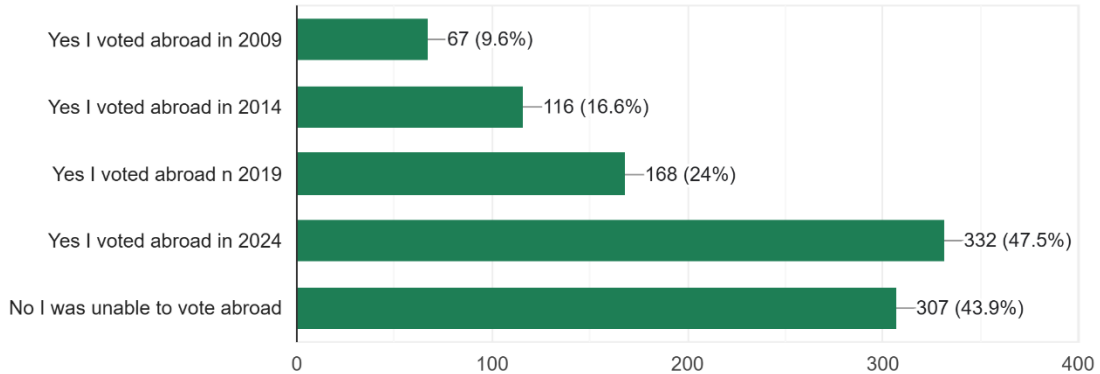
- **3.3%** said Great - I was satisfied with the registration weekend option & staff were friendly
- **2.7%** said Great – they were satisfied with the staff assistance but felt there should have been more open days or weekends for registration.
- **1.9%** said Ok – they received standard service, which was neither significantly positive nor negative.
- **0.2%** said Poor – dissatisfied with the registration process and staff assistance
- **1.1%** said Poor – unable to go in person due to limited opening times for registration
- **5.6%** said Poor - I was unable to go in person due to distance and cost to travel there
- **86.9%** marked the response as Not applicable, likely because they did not register in person.

A small number of respondents had positive or neutral experiences, but many either didn't register in person or encountered difficulties with distance, cost, or limited registration hours.

Question 12:

Have you voted abroad in the previous 4 general elections? (Select all that apply)

699 responses



Respondents' voting history in the previous four general elections:

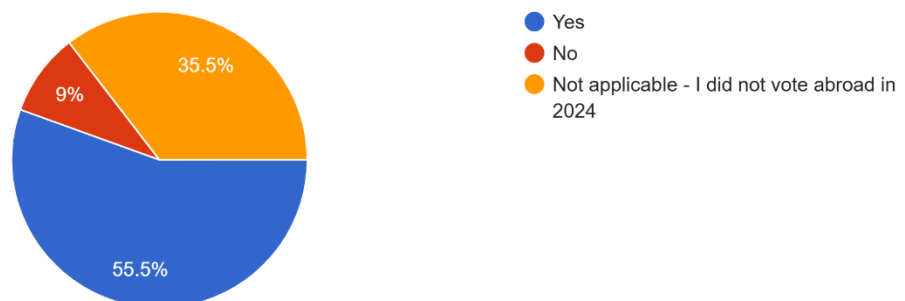
- **9.6%** voted abroad in **2009**.
- **16.6%** voted abroad in **2014**.
- **24%** voted abroad in **2019**.
- **47.4%** voted abroad in **2024**.
- **43.9%** reported being **unable to vote abroad**.

There was a notable increase in the percentage of respondents voting abroad in **2024**, reflecting a significant rise in out-of-country voter turnout compared to previous elections. This trend indicates growing engagement among South African voters living abroad.

Question 13:

Were you satisfied with the voting process on the day for the 2024 election?

708 responses



Respondent's satisfaction with the voting process on the day of the **2024 election**:

- **55.5%** said **yes**, indicating they were satisfied with the voting process.

- 9% said **no**, expressing dissatisfaction with the process.
- 35.5% marked **not applicable**, as they did not vote abroad in 2024.

The majority of those who participated were satisfied with their voting experience, while a smaller portion was not satisfied, and a significant number did not vote abroad at all.

Question 14:

If you voted in 2024 - which foreign mission did you cast your vote at?

457 responses

Country/City	Number of Respondents
London	317
Dublin	25
Canberra	8
Hague	8
Paris	6
New York	5
Dubai	4
Rome	4
Bern	3
Lisbon	3
Wellington (NZ)	3
Washington	3
Copenhagen	3
Stockholm	3
Toronto	3
Warsaw	3
Abu Dhabi	2
Berlin	2
Brussels	2
Kuwait	2
Oslo	2
Bangkok	1
Beijing	1
Chicago	1
Doha	1
Geneva	1
Hong Kong	1
Madrid	1
Munich	1
New Delhi	1
Ottawa	1
Prague	1
Rabat (Morocco)	1
Valencia	1
Vienna	1
Zurich	1
Other (some misread the question and gave incorrect answers such as which party they	48

voted for, or did not specify mission, only stated country where there is more than one mission in that country)	
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- The majority, 317 respondents, voted at the foreign mission in London.
- The survey successfully captured a diverse range of responses from various locations worldwide, reflecting a broad audience and a variety of concerns among South Africans abroad.

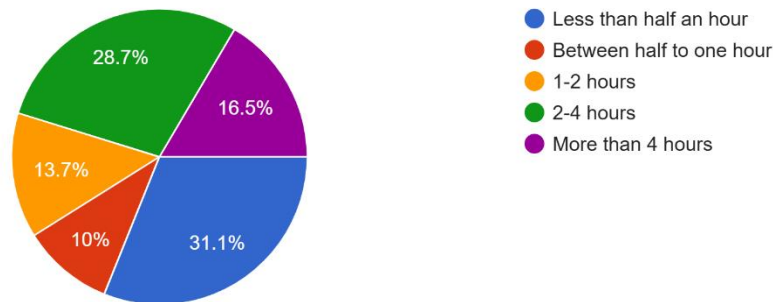
However, 48 respondents misread the question and only provided the name of their country (where there are more than one foreign mission) or the party they voted for, rather than specifying the voting location.

This feedback underscores the importance of clearer questions in future surveys and highlights the need for broader global engagement in upcoming consultations, particularly during the three-month public participation period of the Electoral Reform Consultation Panel.

Question 15:

How long did you queue to vote?

460 responses



- **31.1%** reported waiting **less than half an hour**.
- **10%** waited **between half to one hour**.
- **13.7%** queued for **1-2 hours**.
- **28.7%** experienced a wait of **2-4 hours**.
- **16.5%** said they waited **more than 4 hours**.

This distribution shows a significant number of voters faced longer wait times, with nearly half of respondents waiting two hours or more to cast their votes.

Question 16:

If you were unable to, or chose not to cast your vote abroad - what were the reasons? (Please choose all that apply) 373 responses. *This may have included responses from those who did vote but wished to express issues they faced in accessing voting

Many individuals who did not vote abroad cited key reasons, often selecting multiple factors. The main issues included:

- **Lack of Necessary Documentation:** Many lacked required IDs, such as South African passports or ID books.
- **Frustration with Registration:** Difficulties with online registration or an inability to register in person were common.
- **Missed Deadlines:** Some missed the voter registration and VEC10 form deadlines.
- **Distance and Travel Costs:** Long distances to polling locations and high travel expenses posed significant barriers.
- **Long Wait Times:** Many were reluctant to endure extensive queues.
- **Concerns About Voting Integrity:** Doubts about whether votes would be counted or kept secret affected their willingness to participate.

Overall, issues of accessibility, trust, and logistical challenges led to frustration and a sense of disenfranchisement among many voters. Personal circumstances, unclear information, and systemic problems also contributed to the difficulties faced by those living abroad.

If you were unable to, or chose not to cast your vote abroad - what were the reasons? (Please choose all that apply)

337 responses



Question 17:

What did it, or would it have, cost you to travel to cast your vote (please provide a detailed description and breakdown of travel including airfare, taxi, public transport, fuel & parking costs, accommodation, food such as having to eat at a restaurant due to overnight accommodation etc)

***Please include the relevant currency such as British Pounds, US Dollars or convert your estimate cost and state it as SA Rands**

After reviewing all individual responses, it was found that some had made text comments but had not provided monetary figures. Those were discounted, leaving 580 responses which included duplications. Of these, a few did not indicate currency – for these we have assumed the amount to be given in ZAR. Whilst voting out of country took part across 3 days (depending on which foreign mission), we took a standard exchange rate of each type of foreign currency based on the main voting day of 18 May 2024.

The inclusion of costs varies with some adding food costs due to full day or in many instances overnight travel & accommodation required which results in higher food spend than if they had more reasonable access to voting. Whilst some live close to or within reasonable distance to foreign missions, the majority of these respondents show significant cost incurred on pure travel alone (long distance bus, train, plane, car journeys). In a few instances it was possible to ascertain if the response was for more than one person (even if not indicated by the respondent) but in some instances it was not possible so this may have an inflationary impact on the results overview. Some included additional costs such as babysitting/pet services, but this was only a few respondents.

The cost of voting results are as follows:

1. 580 respondents total ZAR spend R2,558,933.55
2. **Average cost per voter ZAR R4,411.95**
3. Lowest cost £1.75 one-way bus ticket = ZAR 41 (person may have walked the return journey)
4. Highest cost actually spent in 2024 was estimated at R53,080.00
5. Highest estimate if a respondent who was unable to vote for this issue was ZAR 121,100.00 followed by second highest of R59,715.00
6. The median (middlemost figure) was ZAR R1,412.04
7. The mode (number that appears the most) was ZAR R1,148.00
8. **Approximately 40% of respondents spent between zero to R999.00 per person.**
9. **Almost half (48%) of respondents spent between R1,000.00 – R9,999.00 per person.**
10. **Over 10% of respondents spent in excess of R10,000.00 per person.**

Question 18:

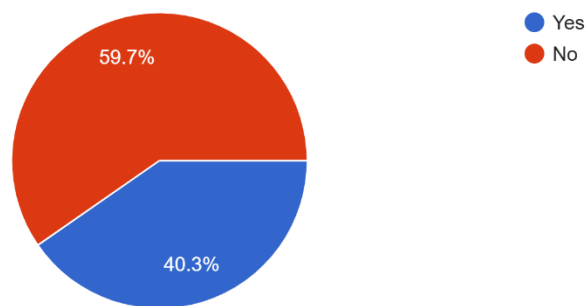
Due to the time required to courier the physical votes via diplomatic bags, overseas voting takes place typically 10-14 days before election day in South Africa. This is to ensure sufficient time for all votes to be received and counted. This means that overseas votes are deemed to be 'special votes', similar to the special vote process in South Africa for those who are unable to cast their vote on election day and eligible to vote in the allocated few days ahead of voting day.

The process for special votes is that you place your secret ballot into the first blank envelope and seal it. You then place your blank envelope into a second outer envelope which you are required to write your personal details on. Many think this means your vote is not a secret vote however it is designed to ensure your vote is indeed accounted for, in case of any misplaced or missing votes. At the end of voting at foreign missions, the number of envelopes is checked against the number of ballots issued and any discrepancies resolved before the votes are sealed in the diplomatic bags in front of IEC officials and any party agents or observers present. During the vote counting process - the outer envelope is removed before being sent to where the blank envelopes are opened and your votes counted separately so your vote remains a secret.

Prior to voting, were you aware of the above information?

Due to the time required to courier the physical votes via diplomatic bags, overseas voting takes place typically 10-14 days before election day in S...to voting, were you aware of the above information?

699 responses



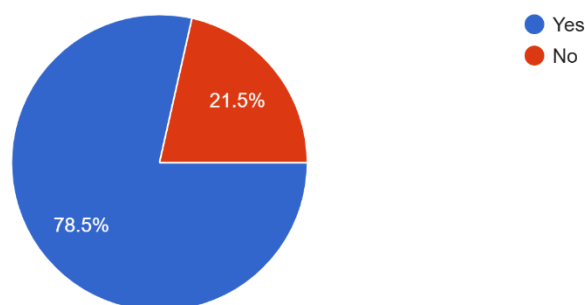
Awareness: Regarding prior awareness of this process, 59.7% of respondents said they were not aware, while 40.3% said they were.

This outlines the procedure and the general awareness of how overseas voting and special votes work and highlights the need for general voter education for overseas voters.

Question 19:

Based on the information given above and the use of individual ballot booths - do you believe that the IEC does their utmost to ensure your vote remains a secret?

685 responses



78.5% saying "yes" suggests most people trust that the IEC takes measures to ensure vote secrecy.

21.5% saying "no" indicates some level of doubt or concern about whether those measures are fully effective.

Question 20:

Did you experience any issues or were you turned away and unable to cast your vote? Please provide details -388 responses (including duplications)

Summary of responses:

There are a variety of frustrations, challenges, and barriers that voters faced in trying to cast their ballots. The question posed was too vague so many included broader frustrations that were not specific to issues experienced on the day. Some common themes from the feedback include:

1. Access and Registration Issues

- **Travel and Distance:** Many voters faced difficulties due to the location of voting stations or issues with travel, including long queues or limited transportation options.
- **Voter Registration Problems:** Several people reported issues with their registration not being recognized, sometimes due to technical glitches or not having the right documents.
- **ID Problems:** There were complaints about being turned away due to issues with ID, such as ID cards being blocked, outdated, or not accepted (especially older ID books). Some voters couldn't vote because their IDs were stolen or not properly updated in the system.
- **Inability to Vote Abroad:** Some respondents were frustrated by the inability to vote in provincial elections while abroad or encountered complications with the consulate services, including delays in receiving necessary documents for voting.

2. Queuing and Waiting Times

- **Long Queues:** A major issue was the long waiting times, with some voters having to wait for hours, causing frustration, especially if they had limited time due to flights or other commitments such as pre-booked return train trips and babysitters.
- **Lack of Priority for Time-Sensitive Voters:** Some voters highlighted that there was no priority queue for those in urgent situations, such as catching a flight.
- **Technical Delays:** In some locations, technical problems—like malfunctioning ID scanners—created bottlenecks, slowing down the process and causing unnecessary delays. This led to frustration, especially when people inside the polling station couldn't assist because they were unaware of the problems outside.

3. Poor Organization and Communication

- **Signage and Guidance:** Many voters struggled with unclear signage or incorrect directions to the voting stations. Some had to rely on the help of fellow voters to find the right location or entrance.
- **Lack of Staff or Observers:** Some mentioned that there weren't enough staff or observers at polling stations to assist with issues or ensure the process was running smoothly.

- **Rudeness from Officials:** A few respondents felt they were treated rudely by election staff, particularly when trying to navigate the process or when their concerns weren't taken seriously.
- **Unclear Process for Voting Abroad:** Some voters weren't aware they could vote from abroad or didn't know how to participate in the election process as foreign voters.

4. Disability and Health Issues

- **Inadequate Support for Disabled Voters:** Several individuals with disabilities reported being treated unfairly, such as being questioned about their need to use the disabled queue or not being given priority when standing in long lines. There were also complaints about the lack of respect or understanding for those with invisible disabilities.
- **Health-Related Accessibility:** Some individuals with health conditions expressed frustration at being expected to stand for long periods without appropriate accommodation, and they felt discriminated against when they were questioned or dismissed by election officials.

5. General Frustrations and Criticisms

- **Poor Preparedness of the IEC:** Several respondents pointed out that the IEC (or relevant electoral body) was not prepared for the scale of the election and lacked adequate measures to accommodate all voters, leading to unnecessary delays and frustration.
- **Communication Failures:** A recurring issue was the lack of clear communication, especially regarding voting procedures, times, and what documents were necessary. Some voters mentioned that they were unaware of the specific requirements until they arrived at the polling station.
- **Lack of Campaigns to Inform Voters:** There was a clear call for more outreach or reminders for citizens abroad or in different provinces about how, where, and when to vote.

Positive Experiences

Despite the many issues raised, some respondents shared that their voting experience was smooth. They praised:

- **Well-organized stations:** Where staff were friendly, helpful, and efficient.
- **Smooth Process for Some:** For most respondents, their voting experience was uneventful, which suggests that when everything runs as planned, the process can be relatively seamless.

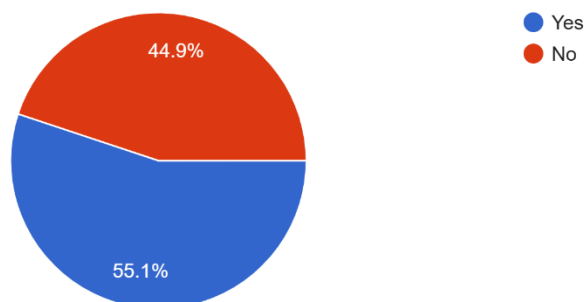
Conclusion:

The feedback indicates that while many voters successfully cast their ballots, a significant portion of respondents faced logistical, technical, or accessibility issues. The main frustrations stemmed from a lack of preparedness, technical failures, and inadequate support for voters with special needs or specific challenges. The overall sentiment seems to be that the electoral body, in this case, the IEC (or similar organization), needs to improve in certain areas to ensure a smoother, more equitable voting process for everyone.

Question 21:

Did you find communication from your nearest foreign mission regarding overseas online and in-person registration, VEC10 form details, voting requirements and overseas voting day details to be sufficient and clear?

Did you find communication from your nearest foreign mission regarding overseas online and in-person registration, VEC10 form details, voting re...seas voting day details to be sufficient and clear?
637 responses



44.9% of respondents felt that communication from their nearest foreign mission regarding **overseas registration** and **voting requirements** was insufficient or unclear, while **55.1%** felt that the communication was sufficient.

This discrepancy points to a need for more comprehensive and clear communication from foreign missions, especially for overseas voters who might already face challenges such as distance, time zones, and language barriers. To improve the process for future elections, missions could enhance their outreach efforts, streamline communication, and ensure voters are fully informed of all necessary steps—well in advance of election day. We aim to engage the IEC and foreign missions on this matter.

Question 22:

If you answered no to the above question regarding foreign mission communication about voting in 2024, please provide further details below.

Summary of Key Findings (265 responses including duplications):

- Poor Communication from Foreign Missions:** The lack of direct and clear communication from South African embassies led to a chaotic and frustrating experience for voters abroad.
- Reliance on Unofficial Channels:** Social media groups and activist efforts were critical in filling the information void left by embassies, but this reliance on informal sources is not a sustainable or reliable system.
- Website and Technical Failures:** Voters encountered difficulties navigating the embassies' websites and experienced technical problems with online registration.
- Last-Minute Changes and Confusion:** Frequent last-minute changes to voting dates, locations, and requirements added to the confusion and disruption for voters.

5. **Inadequate Assistance:** Voters were often unable to get help from their embassies, either due to unresponsive communication channels or lack of useful information.

6. **Disparities in Voting Accessibility:** The lack of local voting stations, especially in large countries, made voting inconvenient or even impossible for many voters.

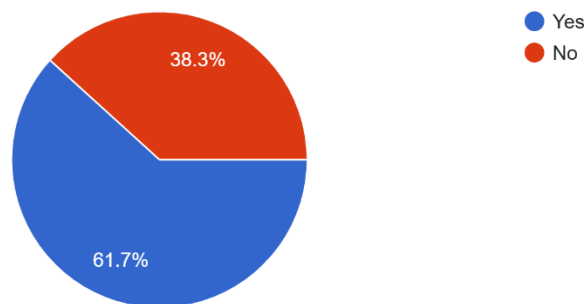
7. **Concerns About Data Privacy:** Voters expressed concerns about the handling and visibility of their personal data during the voting process.

8. **Overall Frustration:** Across the board, voters were frustrated with the system and felt that it was overly complicated, confusing, and poorly managed, with many turning to social media for support.

Question 23:

Did you find communication from the IEC regarding overseas online and in-person registration, VEC10 form details, voting requirements and overseas voting day details to be sufficient and clear?

648 responses



Sufficiency and Clarity of IEC Communication:

Based on the breakdown of the 648 responses (including duplications), it seems that the communication from the **IEC (Independent Electoral Commission)** regarding overseas voting details was **inconsistent** and **largely unclear** for a significant portion of respondents.

- **Yes (61.7%):** A majority of respondents (around 62%) felt that the IEC's communication was sufficient and clear enough for them to navigate the overseas voting process.
- **No (38.3%):** However, a substantial minority (about 38%) felt the communication was **insufficient** or **unclear**, which is still a significant concern when it comes to ensuring the smooth participation of overseas voters.

Question 24:

If you answered no above regarding the IEC's communication regarding overseas voting in 2024 please provide further details.

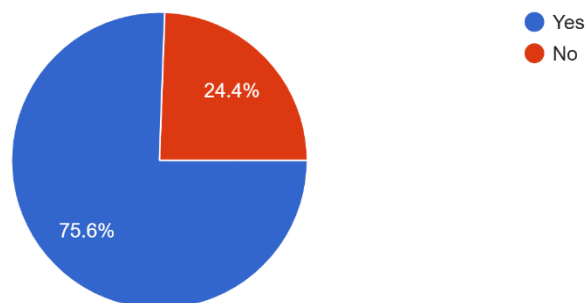
Key Issues based on 215 responses (including duplications):

- 1. Inconsistent and Delayed Communication:** Voters were confused by unclear or last-minute voting dates and had to rely on unofficial sources like social media or activists (e.g. Hayley Reichert) for information.
- 2. Frustrating Registration Process:** Voters faced issues with technical difficulties on the IEC website, broken links, and unclear instructions, leading to frustration with the online registration process.
- 3. Confusion About Voting Requirements:** A significant number of voters were unsure about which documents (passport or ID) were needed and often turned away at polling stations due to unclear guidelines.
- 4. Limited Voting Stations:** Voters had to travel long distances to reach voting stations, and some could not vote due to the lack of local stations.
- 5. Reliance on Social Media and Activists:** Many voters turned to social media groups and informal networks for critical information, highlighting the lack of proactive communication from official channels like the IEC and embassies.

We will endeavour to engage with the IEC to improve these matters in future elections.

Question 25:

Overall, do you believe that the IEC delivered a free and fair election in 2024?
655 responses



75.6% of respondents felt that the IEC (Independent Electoral Commission) delivered a free and fair election in 2024, while **24.4%** disagreed.

Given that the majority of voters expressed confidence in the process, it suggests that, for most, the election was seen as fair and transparent. However, the 24.4% who disagreed may reflect significant issues that affected their experience or perception of the election's fairness, such as communication problems, registration difficulties, or logistical challenges. These discrepancies should be considered when assessing the overall integrity of the election, as even a smaller percentage of dissatisfied voters can indicate areas for improvement.

It seems that while the election process was mostly seen as fair, there were clear challenges in certain aspects (such as communication and accessibility), which could have affected the experience for some voters.

Question 26:

If you answered no above and don't think the IEC delivered a free and fair election - please provide your reasons. 167 responses (including duplications)

The feedback about why some people felt the 2024 election was not free and fair reveals a number of recurring concerns, particularly around accessibility, communication, and the integrity of the voting process. While some people felt the IEC made efforts to ensure a smooth process, a significant number felt disenfranchised. Here are some key reasons cited:

Disenfranchisement due to limited Access to Voting Stations Abroad: Many respondents expressed frustration about insufficient polling stations in major cities and abroad. Overseas voters, in particular, struggled with the high costs and logistics of traveling to a single voting station in countries, such as the UK & Australia. This made voting practically inaccessible for many. In many cases, individuals had to travel long distances, incur significant costs, or take time off work, making it impractical to vote. The one-location system for many countries was seen as a barrier to voting for large numbers of South Africans living abroad. The lack of localised voting stations in places with significant South African populations (like the UK, Australia, and the US) was a major complaint. Some noted that postal ballots or online voting could have been viable solutions, but were not offered as options, leading to a sense of unfairness and disenfranchisement.

Poor Communication and Lack of Information: Confusion over documentation requirements (such as ID books AND passports) led to some voters being turned away after waiting for hours. Voters felt there was insufficient communication about what documents were needed or the registration process. Some respondents felt there was a lack of clarity about the process, especially for overseas voters. There were complaints about inadequate notice for the election and lack of clarity on whether certain forms of identification (like passports) would be accepted. Low voter turnout in certain areas seemed to stem from a lack of public education about the process, leading many to feel uninformed or disenfranchised.

Concerns Over Fraud and Integrity: Respondents expressed concerns that there were numerous reports of ballot boxes being tampered with or mismanaged at polling stations within South Africa. Some people felt that the election process was corrupt or subject to manipulation, citing stories of dumped or discarded ballots. The manual counting process was another source of scepticism, with some respondents suggesting that the process is prone to human error or even fraud. Others suggested that electronic voting or an online system could help mitigate these issues. Reports of fraudulent votes, miscounted ballots, and disorganization at voting stations led many to question whether their votes were counted correctly.

Trust Issues and Historical Scepticism: For many, there is an underlying mistrust of the IEC, stemming from past election irregularities and a general climate of corruption in South African politics. This lack of confidence in the process, combined with reported anomalies, contributed to a perception that the election was not entirely free and fair.

Challenges for Specific Groups: Some respondents mentioned accessibility challenges for disabled voters, parents with young children, or individuals with health conditions. Long waiting times, queues, and a lack of facilities for vulnerable voters were noted as obstacles to a fair voting experience. The process was also seen as exclusionary for those without ID books (including those in South Africa), which caused frustration for many people who could not timeously obtain the relevant forms of identification that were accepted.

Question 27:

Do you feel you had sufficient access of information via social media, mainstream media and political party websites to know which parties were participating on the national ballot?

641 responses



It seems like there were mixed feelings about the sufficiency and quality of information available to voters regarding the political parties participating in the national ballot, particularly when it comes to the overseas community. Here's a summary of the key points:

Yes (63%): Many respondents felt they had adequate information through social media, mainstream media, and party websites. Some pointed out that thanks to certain individual activists they were able to access more information than they otherwise would have. Those who actively searched for information generally felt they were able to track the major parties and their candidates.

No (31.2%): A significant portion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of available information, especially about smaller or lesser-known parties. Some felt that there were too many parties to keep track of and that it was overwhelming. A number of respondents noted that they had difficulty finding information from official channels, such as political party websites, and had to rely on social media or word of mouth.

Key Issues Highlighted:

Too Many Parties: The large number of political parties on the ballot made it difficult for voters to keep track of all options. Several respondents mentioned that they did minimal research and only knew about the major parties. Some acknowledged that while there was some information available, it was not comprehensive and did not provide enough clarity about all the parties on the ballot.

Limited Accessibility of Information: Some respondents noted that smaller parties or candidates had minimal online presence, which made it hard to find information about them. A few respondents felt that the process was poorly communicated in official channels, and that information came too late. One person mentioned they couldn't access information in China, which reflects the issue of accessibility for those living in countries with restrictions on foreign media. Respondents mentioned that much of the communication about candidates was only on social media, which may not have been accessible to everyone.

Reliance on social media and Informal Sources: Much of the information came from informal sources, like social media, and not from official party communications.

Lack of Voter Education for Overseas Voters: Those living abroad felt that there was insufficient voter education or official communication about the election process, candidates, and parties.

Question 28:

Would you like to see political parties giving more effort to engage South Africans abroad?

644 responses



The responses to the question about whether political parties should engage more with South Africans living abroad show a strong preference for increased engagement, though with some nuances. Here's a summary of the key points:

Yes (87.1%): A large majority of respondents felt that political parties should make more effort to engage with South Africans living abroad. Some respondents emphasized the importance of recognizing the role that the South African diaspora plays in the country's economy, especially through remittances and promoting South Africa as an attractive investment destination. Several respondents suggested making the voting process more accessible, such as simplifying registration or reducing bureaucratic hurdles like the need for multiple forms of identification. The general sentiment was that engagement should be more informed, substantive and targeted communication, based on facts and interviews rather than gimmicks or unnecessary outreach. Respondents wanted clear and helpful information, but without being bombarded by spammy or superficial content.

No (10.6%): A significant portion of respondents felt that political parties should primarily focus their efforts within South Africa, as the election is meant to benefit the country and its residents. This group understood that political parties have limited resources and that the needs of people living in South Africa should take priority. Some respondents believed that since they had chosen to live abroad, it was their responsibility to make the effort to stay informed and engaged with the political process. As long as they had access to voting and information online, additional engagement was not necessary. A few respondents noted that the number of South Africans living abroad is small in comparison to the domestic population, and thus it might not be cost-effective for parties to focus much of their resources on engaging expats and it could be seen as a disproportionate allocation of resources.

Other Responses: Some responses suggested that engagement should be done through practical engagement, structured, factual communication, such as interviews or well-organized campaigns, rather than gimmicky or excessive outreach. A few respondents expressed mixed feelings, acknowledging that while it would be nice for parties to engage more with the diaspora, they understood why it may not be a priority for parties given the relatively small number of voters abroad. Some individuals expressed the importance of moderation in outreach, avoiding overwhelming or "spamming" voters, which could backfire and alienate potential supporters.

Question 29:

If you have any positive comments, complaints or other issues regarding voting in previous elections abroad, please let us know which election year it was and provide further details below.

This feedback covers both positive experiences and challenges, which reflect a deep desire for improvement and access to voting for South Africans abroad. The following is based on 164 responses (including duplications).

Summary of Key Themes:

Positive Experiences:

- 1. Efficient and Friendly Process:** Many voters noted that the process was generally well-organized and smooth once inside the voting stations, with positive remarks about the friendliness and helpfulness of IEC staff. Specific locations, such as London, New York, Oslo, and Stockholm, received particular praise for good organization.
- 2. Helpful Communication:** Hayley Reichert and other activists in communicating voting details, were mentioned for efforts in keeping voters informed, especially through social media. Voters appreciated the clarity of instructions regarding registration and voting days.
- 3. Accommodations for Vulnerable Voters:** Some stations provided provisions for elderly voters and those with young children, such as allowing them to skip the queues.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- 1. Increase Voting Stations:** The most prominent concern was the lack of voting stations abroad, particularly in countries with large South African communities like the UK, Australia, and Canada. Voters called for more stations in cities like Manchester, Edinburgh, Perth and Vancouver to reduce the financial burden and long travel times.
- 2. Online and Postal Voting:** A significant number of voters advocated for online voting or postal voting to make the process more accessible, especially for those who can't afford the time or costs to travel to a polling station. Security concerns (e.g., biometric verification, cybersecurity) were acknowledged but still viewed as a necessary step for enhancing voter accessibility.
- 3. Addressing Long Queues:** Long wait times, particularly in London, were a recurring issue. Some voters suggested extending voting over multiple days (Friday to Sunday) or introducing staggered voting times to reduce queues and make the process more manageable.
- 4. Communication and Registration Challenges:** Several people mentioned difficulties with registration, either missing deadlines or facing technical issues during the process. Some suggested that the IEC should use more direct methods (e.g., email, website updates) to notify voters about registration dates and voting procedures.
- 5. Support for Disabled and Chronically Ill Voters:** Many voters suggested that additional support should be provided for disabled and chronically ill individuals, such as allowing them to vote without standing in long queues or offering alternative voting methods if they're unable to navigate travel into cities where the foreign missions are located.
- 6. Improving Voting Accessibility for South Africans in Remote Areas:** Voters in areas far from the main embassies or consulates expressed frustration over the cost and effort required to vote. The establishment of more voting stations, especially in regional areas, was strongly recommended.

7. Relaxing ID Requirements: Some voters raised concerns about the requirement for both an ID and a passport to vote. Many felt that a passport alone should be sufficient, as it is the primary form of identification for South Africans living abroad.

8. Clearer and Timelier Communication from the IEC: A few voters mentioned that the IEC could have done more to proactively communicate details about the voting process and deadlines, helping them avoid issues such as missing registration or being unable to change voting stations.

Discontent and Frustrations:

1. Travel and Financial Costs: The cost of traveling to a voting station was a significant barrier, with many voters pointing out the high financial burden of flying or traveling long distances, especially from remote areas. This made voting difficult for many who could not afford the trip.

2. Disenfranchisement Concerns: Some voters expressed dissatisfaction with being limited to a single ballot for national elections, while voters in South Africa had three ballots (two for national and one for provincial). This was seen as a form of partial disenfranchisement for those living abroad.

3. ID System and Technical Issues: Technical problems, such as malfunctioning ID scanners, caused delays and frustration for some voters. There were also issues with the registration process, with some voters having trouble applying or needing to reapply multiple times.

4. Lengthy Queues: Long queues, especially at major voting stations, were a common complaint. While the atmosphere was positive, the extended waiting times were considered a major deterrent for many voters, particularly those with young children, elderly family members, or health issues.

Additional Suggestions:

More Regular Engagement from Embassies: Voters suggested that embassies should play a more proactive role in engaging with citizens abroad, sending out reminders about registration, voting dates, and other necessary information via email or other communication channels.

Improvement in IEC Website and Technical Infrastructure: Some users mentioned difficulties navigating the IEC's website or dealing with technical issues at voting stations. Ensuring that the voting process is supported by robust technology and an easy-to-use platform could reduce delays and make the process smoother.

Conclusion:

The overall sentiment from South Africans abroad in the 2024 elections was mixed, with praise for the effort and organization by the IEC, but a clear desire for improvements in accessibility, communication, and infrastructure. Key areas for improvement include increasing the number of voting stations, offering online or postal voting, addressing long queues, and ensuring better accessibility for disabled or chronically ill voters.

Section 2 - Your opportunity to share your views and suggestions for future elections

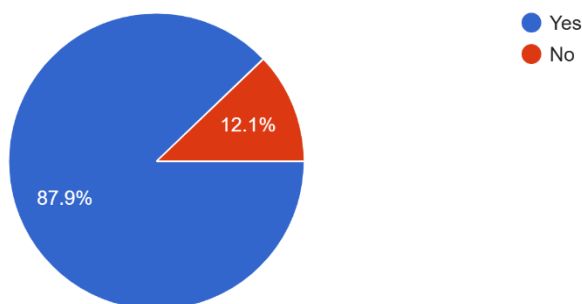
Question 30:

In South Africa election results are listed individually 'per voting district (VD)' (meaning per voting station) however despite all foreign missions equally being deemed to be separate voting districts, the votes are not kept separate and are all counted together with results issued as one lump total.

Allegedly this is done to protect voters from missions where there are only a handful or perhaps one or two votes cast as that would mean those acting as IEC officials (typically foreign mission staff) would know who voted for whichever party. However, we have evidence in a previous election where a voting district in SA had 4 votes all for the same party and the results were listed accordingly showing voting district X with 4 votes for the same party.

With the above in mind, would you prefer overseas vote results to be listed by foreign mission rather than one lump total?

In South Africa election results are listed individually 'per voting district (VD)' (meaning per voting station) however despite all foreign missions equal...ted by foreign mission rather than one lump total?
693 responses



A strong majority of 87.9% said yes, they would prefer all overseas voting stations to be reported individually whilst 12.1% said no. The preference for transparency is clear, but privacy concerns need to be addressed. With appropriate safeguards, the IEC could ensure both greater transparency and protection of voter anonymity, which would likely increase trust in the voting process for South Africans abroad. This could involve structural or procedural changes to ensure fairness and accountability while mitigating privacy risks.

Question 31:

If you responded no to the question above regarding overseas votes results issued by foreign mission- please provide a reason for your answer. 95 responses (including duplications)

Survey respondents who opposed reporting overseas voting results by individual mission raised several key concerns, primarily around balancing voter anonymity and transparency in the voting process. Here's a summary of their main points based on 95 responses:

1. **Anonymity and Privacy:** Reporting results by mission, especially in small voting stations, could risk identifying individual voters. This might discourage participation or expose voters to intimidation. Suggestions included aggregating votes from smaller missions to protect privacy.

2. **Relevance to the National Election:** Many felt that breaking down results by mission was unnecessary, as overseas votes contribute to the national total. The focus should be on overall participation rather than specific voting trends in each country or region. While some acknowledged the value of understanding voting trends, they believed the key focus should be on participation rates rather than detailed breakdowns by mission.

3. **Operational Efficiency:** Some respondents raised concerns about the added administrative burden on the IEC, particularly in missions with limited resources. They suggested that aggregating votes would be more efficient, allowing the IEC to focus on ensuring a fair and transparent process.

5. **Indifference:** Several respondents expressed indifference to how the results were reported, as long as the election process remained fair. The method of reporting was seen as less critical than the overall outcome.

6. **Representation and Voting Trends:** Though some saw value in knowing which regions supported which parties, they emphasized that, for national elections, the breakdown by mission was not essential since the vote contributes to the national total.

Suggestions for Balancing Privacy and Transparency:

Aggregated Reporting: Some suggested grouping smaller missions into regions to protect anonymity while still providing some insight into voting trends.

Clear Privacy Guidelines: A proposal was made to set a minimum vote threshold (e.g., 100 votes) for reporting by mission, ensuring privacy.

Simplification: A preference for a simplified approach, focusing on overall participation and engagement, was expressed.

Question 32:

Due to the new amendments in the Electoral Act, in 2024 there was an additional ballot paper introduced. It was also the first time that voters could vote for an independent candidate at national level however independent candidates were only listed on Ballot Paper 2, not Ballot Paper 1. South Africans abroad are only issued with Ballot Paper 1.

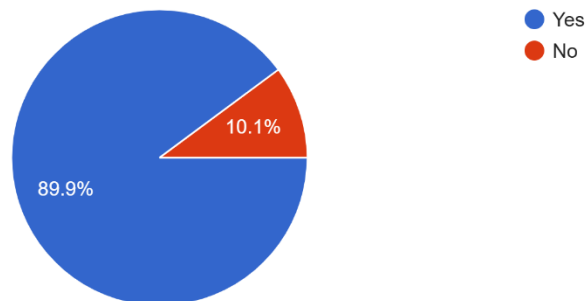
- **Ballot Paper 1 = National (parties only)**
- **Ballot Paper 2 = Provincial to National**
- **Ballot Paper 3 = Provincial**

The majority of those voting abroad also reside abroad (some voting abroad are there temporarily for work/travel/study). Those abroad are therefore not issued with ballot papers 2 and 3. However an issue has arisen where overseas voters are disenfranchised from voting for independent candidates.

Do you think this new system needs to be revised to allow overseas voters to also have the option to vote for an independent candidate rather than a party to represent them at national level?

Due to the new amendments in the Electoral Act, in 2024 there was an additional ballot paper introduced. It was also the first time that voters could vote for more than a party to represent them at national level?

691 responses



The new system introduced in 2024, which allows voters to vote for independent candidates at the national level (via Ballot Paper 2), has sparked concerns among overseas voters, particularly due to the fact that they are only issued Ballot Paper 1 (which lists only political parties). Overwhelming Majority in Favor of Change: 89.9% of respondents supported revising the system to allow overseas voters the option to vote for independent candidates, as opposed to just political parties at the national level. 10.1% were opposed to this change.

Question 33:

If you answered no to the above question regarding independent candidates, please provide a reason for your answer.

Respondents who opposed allowing overseas voters to vote for independent candidates at the national level raised several concerns, reflecting the complexities of the issue. Here are the main arguments they presented, based on 63 answers (including duplications):

1. Lack of Knowledge about Local Candidates: Many felt that overseas voters, especially those living abroad permanently, are out of touch with local candidates and the specifics of their platforms. This could make it difficult for them to make an informed decision about individual candidates, especially independent ones. Some respondents argued that voting for independent candidates requires detailed knowledge of the candidates' positions and performances, which most overseas voters would not have.

2. Disconnection from Local Politics: A recurring theme was that, since overseas voters no longer live in South Africa, they should not have as much influence on local elections. Respondents emphasized that voting for local candidates (independents) is a privilege that should be reserved for residents who are directly affected by local issues and policies. Some believed that living abroad inherently disconnects voters from the realities of local politics, which makes it unfair for them to vote for candidates at the local or provincial level.

3. Unnecessary Complexity: Several respondents argued that adding another ballot (Ballot Paper 2) for independent candidates would complicate the voting process. This would create logistical challenges and increase the burden on the already stretched electoral system, especially with the increased options available to voters. Some felt that the voting process should remain as simple as

possible, and that it would be more practical to focus on national party representation rather than the introduction of independent candidates for overseas voters.

4. Focus on Party Representation: Many respondents were satisfied with the existing system of voting for political parties and felt that the party system was sufficient for making national decisions. They argued that independent candidates, particularly at the national level, don't have enough influence to affect the overall outcome and that party-based voting provides more consistent and effective governance. There was a belief that the focus should remain on the political party's manifesto and direction, rather than individuals who may not have a significant chance to affect national policy.

5. Equality with Other South Africans: Some respondents felt that overseas voters should not have special privileges. They drew comparisons with other South Africans who may not be able to vote in provincial elections if they are not residing in their registered provinces. In this view, overseas voters should not be treated differently from those who are geographically unable to vote for local candidates.

6. Provincial Representation vs National: Several respondents argued that overseas voters should not have the right to vote for provincial representatives or local candidates, as they no longer reside in the relevant areas. They suggested that national elections (for parties only) were appropriate for those living abroad, but voting for local candidates should be limited to those who reside in South Africa.

7. Concerns About Political Impact: Some respondents believed that independent candidates would "water down" the overall electoral process, particularly if they did not have a realistic chance of gaining traction or making a difference. They argued that the political system in South Africa needs to be united under party structures rather than fractured by independent candidates who might not have sufficient support or resources.

8. Practicality and Transparency: A few respondents raised concerns about the practicality of overseas voters casting ballots for independent candidates. They feared it could lead to confusion or errors in the voting process, complicating what should be a straightforward election system. There were also worries about transparency and the ability to effectively monitor such a system.

Other Observations:

Property and Business Interests: While some respondents acknowledged that overseas voters who own property or businesses in South Africa might have a vested interest in local elections, they still believed that voting for independent candidates was unnecessary, given that the focus should be on broader national issues rather than specific local concerns.

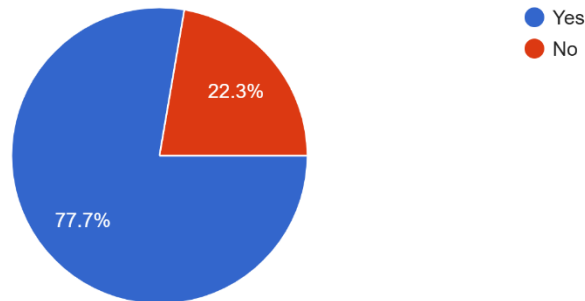
More Options Than Necessary: Several respondents felt there were already enough options for voters, and introducing independent candidates to the mix would only create confusion. Some emphasized that there should be fewer, more focused choices rather than an expanding array of options that could dilute the effectiveness of the vote.

Overall, opponents of allowing overseas voters to vote for independent candidates argue that it would complicate the voting process, potentially disenfranchise voters due to a lack of information, and undermine the focus on party-based representation. They also expressed concerns about fairness, suggesting that only South African residents should have a say in local elections, while those abroad should vote for national party representation alone.

Question 34:

Would you like to see an improved presence of independent observers and party agents at overseas voting stations?

677 responses

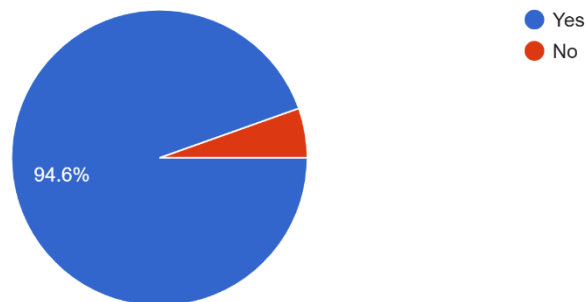


The majority of respondents (77.7%) believe that there should be an improved presence of independent observers and party agents at overseas voting stations. Only a small minority (22.3%) opposed the idea. Overall, this may indicate a strong desire to ensure the overseas voting process is as fair and transparent as possible.

Question 35:

Do you think there should be more voting stations abroad for easier access to in-person voting?

699 responses



Strong Support for More Voting Stations: 94.6% of respondents favoured the idea of having more voting stations abroad to make in-person voting easier. Only 5.4% were opposed to the idea.

Question 36:

If you voted yes above, wanting more voting stations - please tell us in which large town or city would you like to see a voting station made available? 582 responses including duplications

Many expressed the need for additional voting stations in various locations across numerous countries, highlighting the argument for online voting. Towns, Cities and countries listed were:

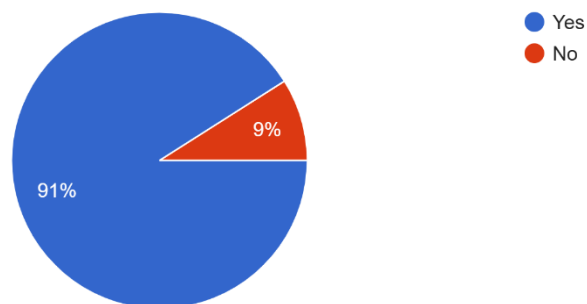
Australia	Sydney, Perth, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart, Melbourne, Canberra - one main city in each of the 9 provinces
Belgium	Genk, Hasselt,
Brazil	Petrolina
Canada	Ontario, Calgary, Alberta, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Montréal, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Toronto,
Cayman Islands	Grand Cayman
China	Beijing, others (further afield from current SA foreign missions - large country)
Cyprus	Paphos, Larnaca, Nicosia
England & British Crown Dependency's	Isle of Man (4,000+ South Africans), Guernsey, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Kent (county), Plymouth, York, Basingstoke, Bath, Swindon, Leeds, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, Northampton, Peterborough, Southampton, Cambridge, Oxford, Biggleswade, Bedford, Canterbury, Chelmsford, Colchester, Crawley, Crewe, Guildford and many other towns.
Finland	<i>(no specific town/city mentioned)</i>
France	Geuret, Lyon, Marseilles, Toulouse, Bordeaux,
Germany	Antwerp, Ghent, Brussels, Namur, Basel, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich, Köln, Flensburg, Strasbourg,
Ireland	Bray, Cork, Galway, Wexford, Co Meath, Sligo
Macedonia	<i>(no specific town/city mentioned)</i>
Madagascar	Fort Dauphin
Malta	<i>(no specific town/city mentioned)</i>
Netherlands	Den Bos, Utrecht, Eindhoven, Limburg,
New Zealand	Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, New Plymouth Taranaki
Northern Ireland	Belfast
Norway	Bergen, Bialystok, Kristiansand, Trondheim, Stavanger
Peru	Lima
Poland	Gdansk

Portugal	Algarve Portugal. Faro or Albufeira, Portimão, Aveiro, Lisbon, Leiria, Porto
Romania	Bucharest
Scotland	Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen,
Spain	Malaga, Mallorca, Barcelona, Valencia, Alicante
Sweden	Gothenburg, Uppsala, Västerås
Thailand	Bangkok, Phnom Penh
UAE	Muscat, Riyadh, Damman,
USA	Miami (Florida), Connecticut, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Charlotte (NC), Dallas, Detroit, Raleigh (NC), San Diego, California, Seattle, Oakland, Portland, Philadelphia, Stamford, others.
Wales	Cardiff, Swansea

Question 37:

Do you think online voting should be made available for those abroad?

701 responses

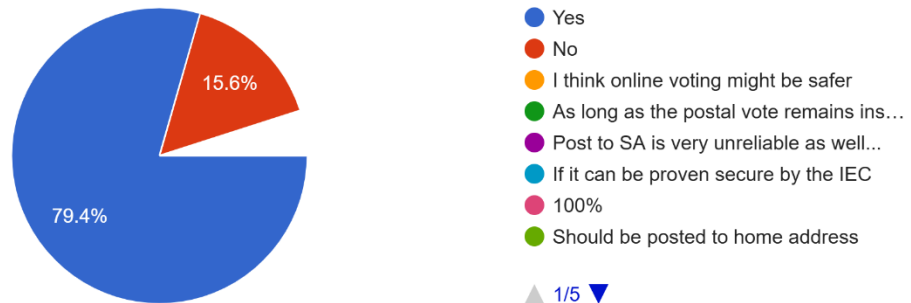


A resounding 91% of participants agree that online voting should be made available for citizens living abroad, while only 9% disagreed. This overwhelming majority suggests that many believe that the current barriers to voting for expatriates need to be addressed in the digital age.

Question 38:

Do you think postal votes for those abroad should be made available? (Where your vote would be posted with recorded delivery to your nearest foreign mission)

647 responses



A significant majority (79.4%) support the idea, with many expressing that postal voting could increase voter turnout for those who cannot access polling stations. However, there are several concerns about the reliability and security of postal services, especially in countries like South Africa, where trust in the postal system is low. Many respondents suggest online voting as a preferable alternative, as it is seen as safer, more efficient, and cost-effective. Others acknowledge that, while postal voting might not be ideal, it could still serve as a second-best option if secure and reliable processes are in place. Some are unsure about the logistics and potential for fraud, particularly with South African IDs being easily obtained abroad. The consensus seems to lean towards exploring online voting as the most secure and modern solution for overseas voters.

Question 39:

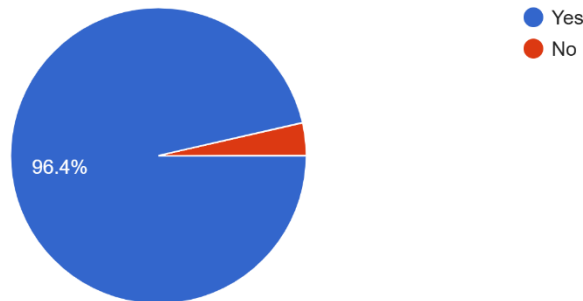
The IEC faces significant budget constraints with potential future budget cuts.

Delivering an election comes with significant logistical and financial requirements. Currently overseas voting at foreign missions includes needs such as IT & printing of stationery (boxes, banners, ballot books, envelopes, tablets etc), staffing and operational costs, multiple international visits by senior IEC staff to various foreign missions before and on the overseas voting days for training and overseeing purposes etc.

With this in mind, do you think the IEC should undertake a review of existing costs and logistics as well as research the potential initial and ongoing costs of establishing online voting to see if it will help reduce costs in the long run?

The IEC faces significant budget constraints with potential future budget cuts. Delivering an election comes with significant logistical and financial challenges. Do you think it would be sufficient if online voting was available but you could not vote at home and still had to travel to your nearest foreign mission (or additional voting station if available) to cast your online vote?

698 responses



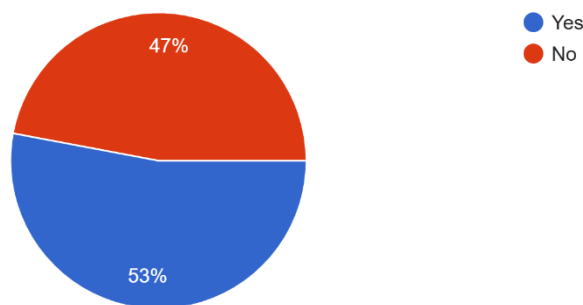
The overwhelming majority (96.4%) of respondents agree that the IEC should review its existing costs and logistics, as well as explore the feasibility of establishing online voting. This perspective aligns with the general sentiment that embracing technology might help streamline the election process and reduce reliance on costly physical infrastructure and international logistics. Only a small minority (3.6%) opposed the idea, possibly due to concerns over the security and reliability of online voting systems.

Question 40:

Do you think it would be sufficient if online voting was available, but you could not vote at home and still had to travel to your nearest foreign mission (or additional voting station if available) to cast your online vote?

Do you think it would be sufficient if online voting was available but you could not vote at home and still had to travel to your nearest foreign mission (or...oting station if available) to cast your online vote?

693 responses

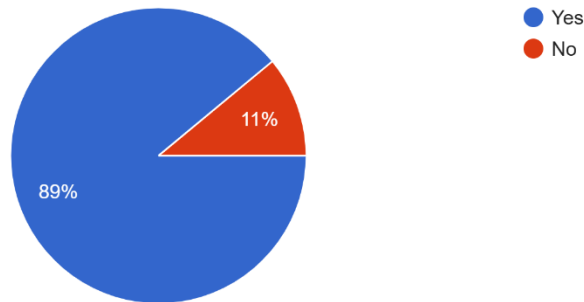


The responses to this question are fairly evenly split, with 53% agreeing that it would be sufficient to have online voting available but requiring voters to travel to a foreign mission (or additional voting station) to cast their vote, while 47% disagree. Those who said "no" might prefer a fully remote option, where they wouldn't have to travel at all. Overall, the results suggest that while many are open to online voting with some travel involved, a significant portion of voters would prefer a more fully remote option for maximum convenience.

Question 41:

Do you think the legislation and technology should be made available for you to securely cast your vote from the comfort of your own home?

700 responses

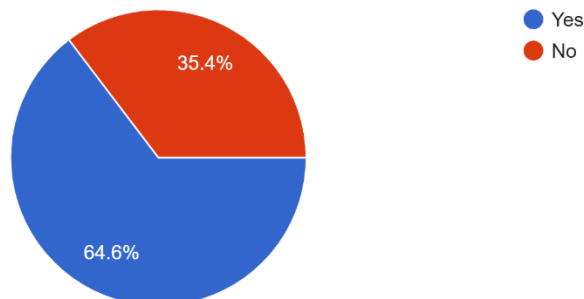


The overwhelming majority (89%) of respondents support the idea of being able to securely cast their vote from the comfort of their own home, with only 11% opposed. This strong preference indicates a clear desire for a more convenient and accessible voting system, where voters don't have to travel or rely on potentially unreliable postal services. The small minority (11%) who are against the idea might have concerns about the security of online voting or potential fraud, and may prefer more traditional voting methods, even with their logistical challenges. Overall, the results emphasize the importance of developing secure online voting systems and adapting legislation to enable this option for voters.

Question 41:

If legislative changes made online voting possible (including digital means to prove validity of each voter), do you trust that the IEC is capable of providing a secure online voting platform?

693 responses



The majority (64.6%) of respondents trust that the IEC would be capable of providing a secure online voting platform if legislative changes were made to allow for online voting, including digital means to verify voter validity. This suggests a relatively high level of confidence in the IEC's ability

to manage such a system, provided the necessary legal and technological infrastructure is put in place. However, a significant portion (35.4%) of respondents is sceptical or distrustful of the IEC’s ability to ensure security in an online voting system. These concerns may stem from worries about potential technical issues, fraud, or the IEC’s past experience with managing complex systems. This group might also be cautious about the risks associated with digital voting platforms, such as cyberattacks, hacking, or challenges related to ensuring voter anonymity and accuracy. Overall, while there is general support for online voting if implemented securely, there is also a notable level of caution, indicating that the IEC would need to address concerns around security, transparency, and reliability to gain full public confidence.

Question 42:

Currently for overseas registration and voting, the IEC requires those abroad to present both a valid South African ID book/smartcard AND a valid in-date South African passport.

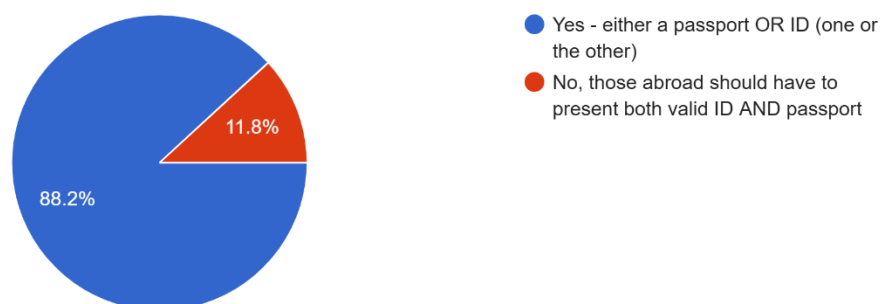
Many of you will be aware of the current ongoing loss of citizenship case. The Constitutional Court has set down a hearing date of 5 November 2024. The final outcome is likely to be issued in the months that follow. Currently SA government does not recognise a passport as proof of citizenship.

If the Constitutional Court approves the Supreme Court of Appeal's ruling regarding loss of citizenship, thereby allowing those who've lost their citizenship to be reinstated and apply for their ID's and passports AND giving consideration to the various consular services issues and long delays faced by those abroad when applying for home affairs documents such as ID & passports:

Do you think that going forward, all citizens should be allowed to use only one document as form of ID for voter registration and to cast their vote?

Currently for overseas registration and voting, the IEC requires those abroad to present both a valid South African ID book/smartcard AND a valid in-date ...f ID for voter registration and to cast their vote?

702 responses



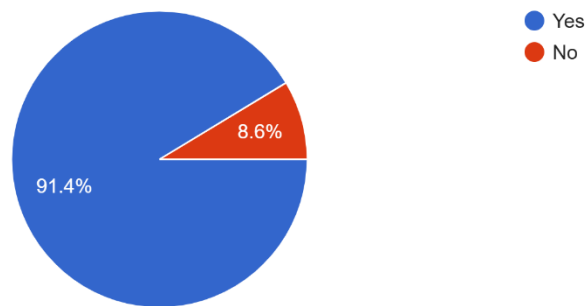
A clear majority (88.2%) of respondents agree that, going forward, all South African citizens should be allowed to use just one document—either a valid South African ID book/smartcard or a passport—as a form of ID for voter registration and voting. This suggests strong support for simplifying the process for overseas voters, particularly in light of ongoing issues such as long delays and challenges in obtaining South African documentation abroad. The 11.2% who disagree

may be concerned about the potential for fraud or the validity of using only one document, especially if there's uncertainty around citizenship status or the recognition of a passport as proof of citizenship. These concerns could be linked to the ongoing case regarding the loss of citizenship, where there is still legal ambiguity. Overall, the results suggest that simplifying the voter registration and voting process with one form of ID would make it more practical and inclusive for South Africans abroad, provided the necessary safeguards are in place to prevent misuse.

Question 43:

Is it important to you that more government funding is allocated to the IEC for the purposes of voter education and voter registration drives at grassroots level in South Africa?

695 responses

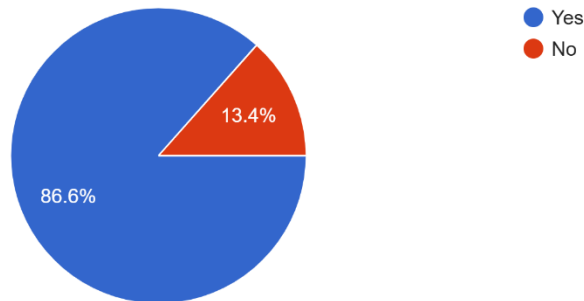


91.4% of respondents believe it is important for more government funding to be allocated to the IEC for voter education and voter registration drives at the grassroots level. This strong support reflects a widespread desire to improve civic engagement and ensure that all eligible voters, especially in underserved communities, have access to the information and resources needed to participate in elections. The 8.6% who disagreed may feel that the current level of funding is sufficient, or they might have concerns about the effective use of such funds or the impact of voter education campaigns. Further investigation will be needed to find out respondent's sentiment behind their response to this question. However, the overwhelming majority indicates strong support for increased investment in these areas.

Question 44:

Is it important to you that more government funding is allocated to the IEC for the purposes of voter education and voter registration drives for South Africans living abroad?

692 responses



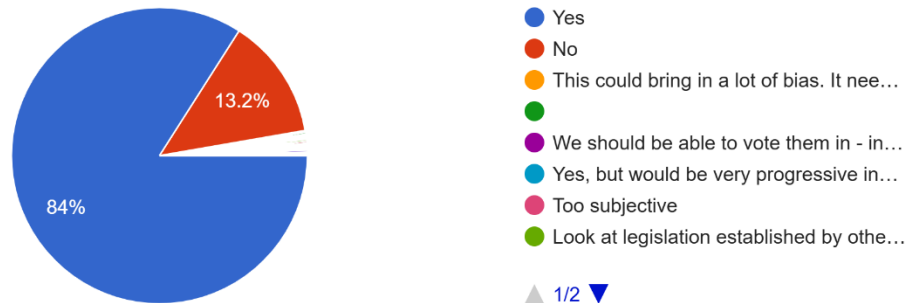
A strong majority of 86.6% of respondents agree that more government funding should be allocated to the IEC for voter education and registration drives targeting South Africans living abroad. This indicates a clear desire to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of the voting process for South Africans overseas, ensuring that they are well-informed and able to register to vote. Enhancing voter education and registration initiatives for the diaspora could help ensure greater participation in elections and strengthen the connection between South African citizens living abroad and the electoral process. The 13.4% who disagreed may feel that resources are better spent on other priorities, or that overseas voters already have sufficient information and resources to engage with the electoral process. However, the majority view underscores the importance of supporting and empowering South Africans living abroad to fully participate in their democratic rights. The result emphasizes a broad consensus for increasing government support to improve the electoral experience for South African citizens living abroad.

Question 45:

We are currently able to vote IN our political representatives and for those in parliament they have opportunities to hold votes of no confidence against their colleagues however currently ordinary citizens have no way to vote our politicians out during their term of office. Do you think there should be a system in place to allow South Africans to vote our representatives out inbetween elections if we feel they are not performing to a high standard?

We are currently able to vote IN our political representatives and for those in parliament they have opportunities to hold votes of no confidence against...e feel they are not performing to a high standard?

514 responses



The idea of allowing South Africans to vote out political representatives during their term of office—if they are not performing to a high standard—has sparked debate. A significant 84% agreed with this idea, while 13.2% disagreed, and some needed more information to form an opinion.

There are mixed views on how such a system might work. Some suggestions include:

- Looking at other countries' legislation for guidance.
- Reducing parliamentary terms to make representatives more accountable.
- Carefully considering the risks of bias and making sure the process is fair and not driven by personal grievances.
- Introducing regular reviews (e.g., every six months or annually) to evaluate performance, ensuring that complaints do not lead to constant instability.
- Clarifying the process for example, what would trigger the re-election and what timelines would be reasonable.
- Concern over the impact on the seriousness of voting—allowing voters to easily oust representatives could reduce the gravity of initial voting decisions.

Overall, while the concept has strong support, there are concerns about how to implement it fairly and effectively, balancing accountability with stability.

Question 46:

Based on your answer to the above question regarding voting politicians out inbetween elections - do you have any suggestions as to what this process should look like or any comments to add about why you believe it should or should not be possible to vote them out mid-term?

203 responses (including duplications)

The debate about whether citizens should have the power to vote politicians out of office mid-term is multifaceted, with arguments for and against the idea. Here's a summary of the key points and suggestions for structuring such a system:

Arguments for Mid-Term Removal

1. Enhanced Accountability: Politicians should be held accountable throughout their term, not just at the end. Performance metrics or KPIs could be established to evaluate their success, with mid-term reviews to assess whether they meet their promises or engage in corruption. Regular assessments could encourage responsiveness and discourage complacency.

2. Public Engagement and Transparency: Allowing voters to influence politicians' tenure would increase public engagement and make politicians more responsive to their constituents. Regular performance data could be made publicly available, and online platforms could facilitate petitions and votes, making the process more accessible.

3. Immediate Consequences for Corruption: Politicians caught in corruption or criminal behaviour should face immediate removal, aligning with the principle that public servants are held to a higher standard.

Challenges and Considerations

1. Risk of Political Instability: A major concern is the potential for political instability if mid-term removals are too easily triggered, leading to frequent elections or votes of no confidence that disrupt governance. Finding a balance between accountability and stability is crucial.

2. Abuse and Manipulation: The system could be abused for political manipulation, with powerful groups triggering removals for partisan reasons rather than genuine underperformance. Safeguards are needed to prevent such misuse.

3. Cost and Logistics: Implementing a mid-term removal process would be logistically complex and costly. Infrastructure would need to ensure secure, transparent, and efficient voting processes, such as online referendums or petitions.

4. Defining Underperformance: There could be disagreement over what constitutes underperformance. A fair, standardized method for assessing politicians' actions and addressing legitimate concerns (such as external economic crises) would be essential.

Suggested Process for Mid-Term Removal

1. Performance Reviews: Politicians would undergo annual or bi-annual performance reviews against KPIs set at the beginning of their term, covering areas like attendance, policy delivery, and public engagement.

2. Petitions and Thresholds: Citizens could initiate petitions if a politician fails to meet these KPIs, with a required number of verified signatures to trigger a vote of no confidence.

3. Public Vote of No Confidence: Once a petition threshold is met, a public vote could be held, possibly online, to decide if the politician should be removed from office. This vote would be overseen by an independent body.

4. Automatic Removal for Criminal Behaviour: Politicians involved in criminal activities should face automatic removal without needing a public vote, with legal processes determining the outcome.

5. Replacement and Transition: In case of removal, a special election or the next best candidate from the previous election could take over to ensure a smooth transition.

While mid-term removal of politicians could enhance accountability and responsiveness, it must be designed with careful consideration of potential drawbacks, such as political instability and

abuse. A clear, fair, and transparent process, supported by safeguards, could make this system an effective tool to hold elected officials accountable without undermining the stability of governance.

Question 47:

The South African electoral system is a closed-list proportional representation system. These lists are 'closed' which means they are chosen by the political parties and cannot be altered by voters. Do you believe voters should have a greater say in which individual candidates are chosen to be on the party lists?

The South African electoral system is a closed-list proportional representation system. These lists are 'closed' which means they are chosen by the political candidates are chosen to be on the party lists?

499 responses



The question of whether South African voters should have more influence in choosing individual candidates on party lists has sparked a mixed response. Here's a summary of the key views expressed:

Support for Voter Influence (67.5%)

Many respondents believe that voters should have a greater say in selecting candidates for party lists. Their main reasons may include Direct Accountability, Better Candidate Selection, Strengthening Democracy

Support for Party Control (28.5%)

A smaller group believes that political parties should retain control over selecting candidates, for reasons that may include Expertise in Candidate Selection, Unity and Discipline, Practical Concerns (complicate the process or result in unqualified candidates making it onto the list).

Alternative and Mixed Views (4%)

A small percentage of responses expressed uncertainty or offered alternative perspectives:

1. Lack of Political Engagement: Some people felt that South Africans might not be sufficiently engaged with politics to make informed decisions about candidates. This view reflects concern that, if the process were more open, it could lead to uninformed voting and potentially elect unsuitable candidates.

2. Party Membership Influence: A few responses noted that party members, not the general public, already have the opportunity to influence candidate selection. This suggests a belief that if voters feel strongly about the process, they should become more involved in their political party.

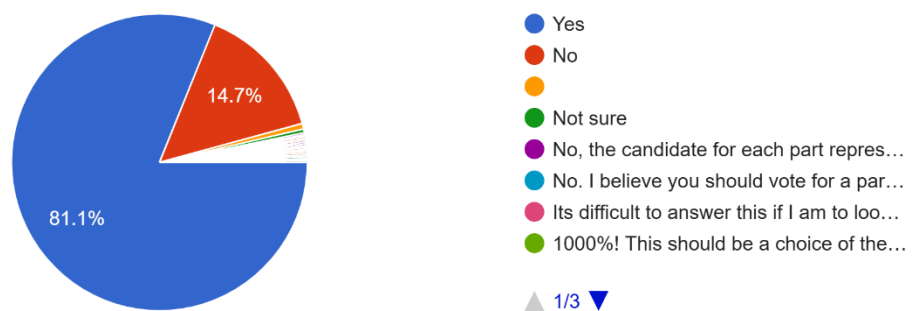
3. Candidate Qualification: There were opinions that only candidates with the appropriate qualifications should be selected, regardless of public opinion, arguing that professional standards should be prioritized over popular appeal.

The majority of respondents are in favour of giving voters more control over candidate selection for party lists, driven by a desire for greater accountability and transparency. However, concerns about practicality, political expertise, and the potential for increased polarization are also important considerations for many. The mixed responses highlight the complexity of balancing direct voter influence with the need for party unity and professionalism in candidate selection.

Question 48:

Do you believe the positions of President and Deputy President should be voted for directly by citizens?

498 responses



A significant 81.1% of respondents were in favour of a direct vote. However, there are also considerable concerns and nuances, with 14.7% opposed and the remainder offering various mixed opinions. A small percentage of respondents expressed mixed or uncertain views:

1. Complex Trade-offs: Some respondents find it difficult to choose because they see both pros and cons to direct elections. While they agree that direct elections could be beneficial in some ways, they are unsure about the potential negative consequences, such as increased polarization or the focus on individual candidates over party policies.

2. Concerns About Social Media Influence: With the rise of social media, some respondents worry that direct elections could lead to manipulative campaigns, particularly by populist figures or those with strong media influence. This could potentially destabilize the democratic process and lead to leaders who are more focused on media appeal than on good governance.

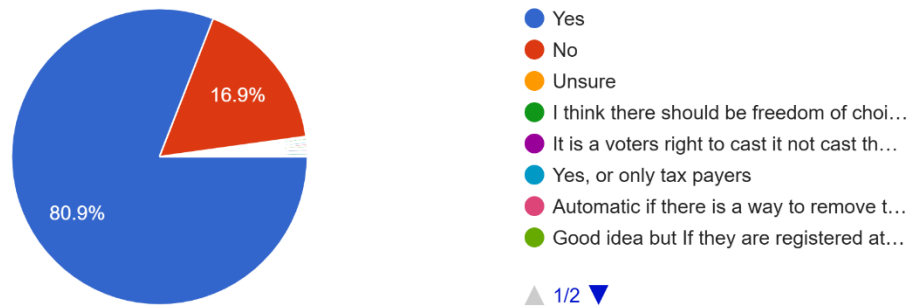
3. Need for Electoral System Reform: A few responses suggest that any changes to the system of electing the President and Deputy President would require broader electoral system reforms. Without such changes, directly electing these leaders could be problematic or inconsistent with South Africa's current governance structure.

Question 49:

There is currently an estimated 40 million estimated South African voters of which 26 million are registered. Voter registration is currently voluntary, and the individual must register themselves before the relevant election cut-off date. Do you think citizens should automatically be added to the voters roll upon turning 18 years old?

There is currently an estimated 40 million estimated South African voters of which 26 million are registered. Voter registration is currently voluntary... added to the voters roll upon turning 18 years old?

503 responses



This has sparked broad support, with 80.9% of respondents in favour. However, there are some concerns and alternative suggestions from the remaining 16.9% and others.

Mixed or Uncertain Views: A small percentage of responses were unsure about the idea, either because they felt the issue was too complex or they were unsure how it would work in practice.

1. Practical Challenges and Concerns: A few respondents mentioned that while they liked the idea in theory, they were unsure how it would be implemented effectively, given the need for a reliable residents' registry and accurate data management to avoid errors and fraud.

2. Electoral System Reforms Needed First: There were also concerns about broader electoral system reforms, particularly regarding the residents' registry. Some respondents argued that automatic registration would only be effective if the country's data management systems were strengthened, and corruption was addressed to ensure accurate voter rolls.

Question 50:

Do you have any other suggestions for overseas voting in future South African general elections? 174 responses including duplications.

1. Increase Access to Voting Stations: More Voting Locations - There is a strong demand for additional voting stations, particularly in countries or cities with large South African expatriate communities. For example, respondents suggested additional voting stations in cities like Melbourne, Perth, Sydney, and even within countries like the UK and Canada. Mobile Voting Stations - In larger countries, mobile voting stations could be set up to reach people in more remote areas or those unable to travel to a central embassy or consulate.

2. Postal Voting: Mail-in Ballots- Many respondents support the idea of postal voting, similar to what other countries do, to accommodate those who cannot travel long distances or cannot attend voting stations due to age, health, or financial reasons. Postal Service Efficiency - Ensuring the reliability and timeliness of postal voting is crucial. Some mentioned that other countries, like the US, have robust postal systems that support absentee voting effectively.

3. Online Voting:

Secure Online Voting: A substantial portion of respondents advocate for online voting, though with significant concerns regarding cybersecurity, privacy, and fraud. Some suggestions included:

- Issuing unique identity codes for each voter to ensure secure authentication.
- Exploring blockchain technology for transparency and fraud prevention.
- Limiting online voting to certain categories of voters (e.g., those unable to attend in person).

Concerns About Security: While many see online voting as a solution for accessibility, security concerns are a recurring theme, especially regarding identity theft, hacking, and vote tampering. However, respondents seem open to improvements in online infrastructure if adequate safeguards are in place.

4. Voter Education and Communication:

Better Communication: A lot of respondents emphasized the need for better communication about the voting process. This includes clearer and earlier communication about registration, election dates, locations, and voting requirements.

Regular Updates: Providing more consistent updates via email, social media, and even newsletters about the process and deadlines.

Voter Education in Schools: Some suggested starting voter education in high school to ensure young citizens are informed about the process when they turn 18.

5. Convenience and Flexibility on Voting Day

Longer Voting Periods: The additional day for voting in London in 2024 was appreciated, as it helped alleviate long queues. More flexible voting days could accommodate people with work or family commitments.

Childcare and Accessibility: Some respondents suggested having separate queues or childcare facilities for parents with young children to make voting easier for families.

6. Voter Registration and Automatic Updates

Automatic Registration: There were calls for automatic registration of all citizens upon turning 18 to guarantee that people don't miss the cut-off dates. Some suggested automatic registration through embassies or consulates when a South African relocates abroad.

Database Updates: Keeping track of South Africans living abroad and ensuring that voter rolls are accurate and up to date was mentioned several times. Voters should also be able to update their information more easily when they move locations.

7. Mandatory Voting and Accountability

Compulsory Voting: Some respondents suggested making voting mandatory, like in Australia, to ensure that everyone exercises their right. There were even suggestions for penalties or fines for non-voting, but this would require changes to the current legal framework.

Ensuring Free and Fair Elections: There were calls for greater scrutiny and transparency in the electoral process, including reducing corruption and fraud risks. Some respondents stressed the importance of trust in the election process, both in South Africa and abroad.

8. Support for Expats

Engage South Africans Abroad: A notable portion of the respondent's voiced frustration with the lack of engagement from the South African government towards its citizens abroad. Proposals included setting up more channels to reach out to South African expats, such as a dedicated liaison office or contact centre for citizens abroad.

Inclusive Voting for Expats: The idea that all citizens, regardless of where they live, should have an equal opportunity to vote in national and provincial elections was frequently raised.

9. General Suggestions

Celebrate the Voting Process: Some respondents reflected on the positive experiences of voting abroad, noting that it could be a celebration of South African heritage. In some locations, volunteers and community gatherings were part of the voting experience, creating a sense of belonging and connection.

Improved Facilities: Requests for better facilities at voting stations (e.g., food, drinks, and restroom facilities) were raised to make the experience more comfortable, especially during long queues.

The responses reveal a desire for greater inclusivity, transparency, and accessibility in the South African overseas voting system. While there is significant support for technological solutions like online voting, concerns about security and fraud need to be addressed. More polling stations, mail-in ballots, and better communication about the election process seem to be the most immediate improvements that could boost voter participation. Ultimately, any proposed changes would need to balance the need for security, convenience, and fairness.

References

We encourage readers to read through the links below and conduct your own research on everything encompassed within this document. Equipping yourself with wider understanding of the possibilities that lay before us will help ensure that final submissions to the ERCP are based on comprehensive knowledge of the pro's & cons, advantages & disadvantages which will assist the ERCP in ensuring only the most suitable options are put forward for consideration by government.

SA Electoral System Outline

<https://www.gov.za/about-sa/elections>

<https://www.gcis.gov.za/south-africa-yearbook-202122>

<https://www.elections.org.za/pw/elections/whats-new-in-the-2024-elections-electoral-amendment-act>

Alternative Electoral Systems

Plurality Voting 'First Past the Post' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First-past-the-post_voting

Instant Run-off https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant-runoff_voting

Combination of Multiple Rounds and Final Run-Off

<https://goodparty.org/blog/article/pros-cons-two-round-election-systems>

Condorcet Method https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Condorcet_method

Schulze Method (beatpath/indirect) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schulze_method

Ranked Pairs https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranked_pairs

9. **Majority Judgement** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majority_judgment

10. **Sortition** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sortition>

11. **Score Voting** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Score_voting

12. **Copeland** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copeland%27s_method

13. **Star Voting** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/STAR_voting

14. **MiniMax** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimax_Condorcet_method

15. **Kemeny Young** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kemeny%E2%80%93Young_method

16. **Borda Count** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borda_count

17. **Random Ballot** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Random_ballot

Electoral Amendment

Review of spoiled ballots

2024:

<https://results.elections.org.za/home/NPEPublicReports/1334/National%20Ballot/Spoilt%20Votes/National.pdf>

2019:

<https://results.elections.org.za/home/NPEPublicReports/699/Spoilt%20Votes/National.pdf>