

The Friday Paper

with **The Continent**

SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNALISM | 30 OCTOBER 2026 | ISSUE 4

No water, no vote: Are dry taps
the biggest election issue?



Go forth and vote

Dear readers,

This week, in my pocket of Johannesburg, Ward 58, the second-largest ward in the metro, Mayor Dada Morero came to speak with residents. I travelled to the meeting with my cousin, an ANC volunteer. On the way we fetched a community activist who's been campaigning for Rise Mzansi. And when we sat in the pews of the once NG Kerk in the Nana Memorial Complex in Crosby, we were joined by people from across the ward who want their streets lit, safe drinking water, intact roads, but mostly, who wanted to be heard. It does not take party loyalty to get us here. Jozi's Ward 58 is not unique. Across the country people are headed into this election wanting their rights to be assured.

People are queuing for water, water is contaminated, and there is little understanding of the frustration of living in this reality. Politicians are struggling to comprehend the frustrations adequately.

The best interests of our communities do not wear any one party's colours. They wear the fears and hopes, the anguish and despair, and the commitment of millions of South Africans.

But there are also real impediments to ensuring the best outcome is won

fairly in this election. Again in Ward 58 this week, the fascists masquerading as migration law enforcement spread the rumour that Aziz Ally, Rise Mzansi's candidate in the ward, was Somali. Ally is a well-known, well-loved activist. And very much South African. But what does such disinformation achieve? Who does it actually benefit?

When the DA candidate in the area, Yola Minnaar, (whose koeksisters, I can attest, are some of the best on this side of the N1) said her home was petrol bombed by unknown assailants, the dangers of local government are once more pronounced. Threats to candidates cannot be understated when just this week another DA candidate in the Free State was assassinated.

The strength of our democracy lies in our ability to find the commonalities across our differences.

When I caught Mayor Morero briefly outside the hall on Tuesday night I told him I did not envy him. He could see through my mischief. But few of us would actually want the job of fixing our spaces so that they are better for us. Still, those who have promised to do so must be held accountable.

Go forth and vote, Mzansi.

Yours,
Khadija

Quote Unquote



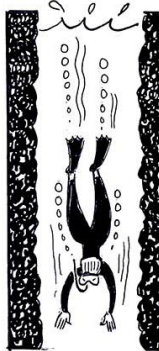
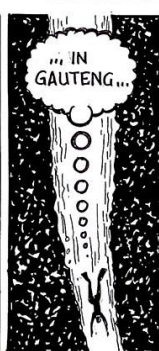
Graphic: Yemsrach Yetneberk

**‘Water is life. Without it, normal
human life is not possible.’**

**Justice Kate O'Regan, *Mazibuko v City of Johannesburg*,
Constitutional Court, 2009**

DEEP DIVE WITH Helen Zille

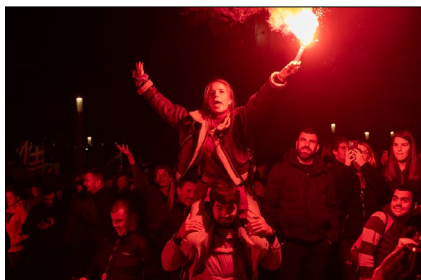
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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW

People power triumph in Brazil and Serbia

Popular power took two important wins in Brazil and Serbia. Brazil saw a dramatic comeback from Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva against his far-right opponent, Flávio Bolsonaro. During the first round of the election, Lula narrowly lost to Bolsonaro, but managed to overturn the first-round loss. An increased voter turnout was a major factor in Lula's victory, allies have said. In Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic conceded defeat to the student-led protest movement, bringing a new era to the country. Hours after the polls closed on 25



Students of politics: Student-led protests have ushered in a new era in Serbia. Photo: Milos Milanovic/AFP

October, the results were announced with Serbia's leaderless anti-corruption coalition, the Student List, defeating the group led by Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party by a comfortable margin.

Ramaphosa launches shiny plan for local government

Just two weeks before the elections, President Cyril Ramaphosa unveiled the White Paper on Local Government in Boksburg on 22 October 2026, a revision of the 1998 White Paper, to allow for "practical reform and visible implementation". Ramaphosa said citizens need councils that lead with integrity, provide oversight and put residents ahead of personal interests. The document calls to improve coalition and minority governance to ensure coalition instability is prevented.

Water woes and flooding plague KwaMhlanga

For residents of KwaMhlanga in the Thembisile Hani Municipality of Mpumalanga, access to clean water remains a huge issue before the municipal elections. Speaking to *SABC News*, residents said the water supply only comes once a week and is often dirty. With the contamination crisis in parts of Tshwane, residents are increasingly concerned about their health. Another concern is storm water drainage. Drains haven't been properly serviced, which is a problem during the flooding season. Residents say they want the incoming administration to address these concerns.

Illegal mining damage in chrome-rich village in North-West

Residents of the chrome-rich Bapong village in the North West province have told *Eyewitness News* that they were offered around R100,000 by an illegal-mining syndicate to give up their homes. Late in 2025, an illegal-mining operation arrived in the village, bring-

ing in heavy, sophisticated machinery. Residents complained that digging and excavations threatened the structure of their homes. While the SANDF and police have taken charge to prevent the syndicate from returning, a trail of destruction has been left behind.

Limpopo water crisis blamed for deaths of 38 cattle in Mankotsana

With water quality a worry around the country, the death of more than 30 cattle might be another crisis unfolding in Limpopo. In Mankotsana Village, under the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality in the Sekhukhune District, 38 cattle died after allegedly drinking water from a communal watering point. Limpopo MEC for agriculture and rural development Basikopo Rodgers Makamu told *The Citizen* that water intoxication couldn't be ruled out. In other parts of Limpopo, residents



The bell tolls: Drinking water could be to blame for the deaths of 38 cattle. Photo: Lepelle Nkumpi Local Municipality

in Musina have threatened to stay away from the polls if their years-long water supply troubles are not rectified.

Old flood damage still disrupts water supply in N Cape

For residents of Warrenton under the Magareng Municipality in the Northern Cape, the severe floods from three years ago, in February 2023, continue to affect the town to this day. The main water supply pipe and extraction infrastructure located along the Vaal River were

damaged, and residents facing sporadic water supply have been forced to rely on water tankers since then, despite commitments from the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs to fix the issues.

Was Free State DA councillor's murder political violence?

The Democratic Alliance (DA)'s Thulani Mbana was shot outside his home in Zamdela, near Sasolburg in the Free State, on 26 October. Mbana was the DA's Ward 14 candidate in the Metsimaholo Local Municipality, as well as the DA's Metsimaholo council caucus leader, and he served as an MMC for

spatial planning and human settlements. There have been growing concerns about political violence around the country ahead of the elections. However, the South African Police Service has cautioned against linking Mbana's death to political killing before the investigations are completed.

Waterworks upgrade delayed while residents suffer in Eastern Cape

A short-term intervention worth R22-million for the Fort Beaufort water treatment works was supposed to be completed in June 2026, yet remains unfinished, while Kwa-Maqoma residents in the Eastern Cape have to cope without water in their taps for weeks on end. *Ground-Up* reported that while water supply was restored this week, the municipality is continuing with rationing demand, which exceeds the treat-



Over a barrel: Fort Beaufort's waterworks is not ready. Photo: Mkhusele Sizani/Ground Up

ment works' capacity. For residents, prolonged water outages, locked toilets and sewage flowing through the streets have become a part of their daily life.

Big shake-ups loom at Numsa

The National Union of Mineworkers, South Africa's largest trade union, is facing a leadership crisis. During a meeting of the union's central committee, general secretary Irvin Jim, president Andrew Chirwa and other national office-bearers were relieved of their powers. The union's congress is set to

take place on 30 November. The leaders have been accused of abandoning their duties by cancelling and failing to attend meetings. In a press briefing, Jim accused the committee of gross misconduct and said the office-bearers would remain until they were removed at the congress.

We live in the same country.

Let's read from the same page.



The Friday Paper

Elections 101

How Voting Works

WHEN AND WHERE

Wednesday 4 November 2026

Voting stations are open from 7am to 9pm.

SPECIAL VOTES:

**Monday 2 & Tuesday 3
November 2026**

8am to 5pm, at home or at your voting station.

(Only for voters whose applications were approved; applications closed on 12 October 2026).

CHECK WHERE YOU'RE REGISTERED

Do this before the day. You'll need your ID number.

SMS your **ID number** to **32810 (R1)**

elections.org.za or the IEC app

Call **0800 11 8000**

WhatsApp **060 088 0000**

WHO CAN VOTE

You can vote if you are:

- A South African citizen
- 18 or older
- Registered on the voters' roll

You cannot vote if you are not a citizen. That includes asylum seekers, refugees, permanent residents and other foreign nationals.

You may have seen posts claiming that asylum seekers can now vote. They can't. The IEC says asylum status does not give anyone the right to vote, and a recent court ruling on the asylum system has not changed that.

Seen a claim like this? Don't forward it. Report it to Real411 at real411.org.za.

BRING YOUR ID



Green barcoded ID book/ Smart ID card

Valid temporary ID certificate

YOUR BALLOTS

IN A METRO (there are 8 metros):
2 ballots

- Ward ballot: your ward councillor
- Party ballot: vote for a party for your council

IN A LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (there are 205): 3 ballots

- Ward ballot: your ward councillor
- Party ballot: your local council
- Party ballot: your district council

YOU ARE NOT VOTING FOR A MAYOR

After the results, your new council meets and chooses who runs your municipality, including the mayor. Your vote decides who sits on that council.

Local government in crisis, in five numbers

Why Wednesday's vote matters, according to new research from the Gauteng City-Region Observatory.

22%

of Gauteng residents are satisfied with local government. This is down from 26% in the previous survey. In the province's three metros, satisfaction has fallen sharply since 2017/18.

Johannesburg has had

11

Executive mayors in a single decade (2014 to 2024)

Excluding Ekurhuleni, no coalition-led metro has seen a mayor complete a full term since 2016.

18 → 78

Recorded attacks on local officials across South Africa, from 2020 to the peak in 2023. Most were contract killings, usually over councillor positions or to silence whistle-blowers. Deaths rose from three to 40.

Gauteng's voter turnout in the 2016 local elections was

58%

About 3.6 million people voted in 2016



Gauteng's 2021 local elections voter turnout was

43%

About 2.6 million people voted in 2021, the lowest turnout of any election since 1994.

30 years

Is how long the researchers say this crisis has been building. It falls hardest on townships, informal settlements and inner cities: wealthier residents can go off-grid, petition or sue, while poorer communities depend on the municipality for the basics.

In 2021, fewer than half of Gauteng's registered voters voted. On Wednesday, you decide who sits on your council.

Source: Thembari Mkhize, Shannon Whitaker and Rashid Seedat, "Local government in crisis: Insights from municipalities in Gauteng, South Africa", GCRO Occasional Paper No. 25 (October 2026). Satisfaction figures from the GCRO Quality of Life Survey 7 (2023/24). Political violence figures and the mayoral count are from sources cited in the paper

Our turn to eat

One braai stand, half the neighbourhood

Thameenah Daniels

The weather is starting to clear up and we are making our way into yet another Dezemba, festive season and glorious South African summer. There's no better time to talk about one of our country's greatest love languages: shisanyama, or as we know it, a good old braai.

I hate to brag but I like to think of myself as somewhat of a braai master. As the eldest child, I was the first to get roped into helping my dad. Around the braai, I was prepping the meat, keeping an eye on the fire, or making sure everything came together. Somewhere along the way, what started as helping out turned into a bit of an obsession. I developed a real affinity for starting a proper fire (strictly in a braai stand, nowhere else, of course).

My favourite braais to date have to be my Uncle Mustak's legendary ones. For starters, there's almost always someone you've never met before, thanks to his habit of bringing the whole neighbourhood together for braai day. There's a new face, a new conversation and, of course, plenty of meat on

the grill. One of the stars of his braai is picanha, a popular Brazilian cut of beef, also known as the sirloin cap. It's become a staple on his grill, alongside the usual South African favourites of boerewors and chops. And honestly, it's a game-changer.

There's just something about that beautifully grilled cut of beef that takes an already lekker braai to a whole new level.

The fire gets going, the meat goes on, and before you know it, five hours have passed

But it's not just the meat that makes his braais so memorable. It's his routine. I think he's onto something, and it might just be my new favourite way to braai.

In South Africa, we all know how a typical braai goes. You arrive hungry, the fire gets going, the meat goes on, and before you know it, five hours have passed. It's dark outside, everyone's been hovering around the braai stand, and you're absolutely starving. By the time the meat finally comes off, you're ready to devour just about anything in sight.

Uncle Mustak, however, has a solu-

tion. He starts with the steak. As soon as it's ready, he takes it off the grill, slices it up and starts feeding the hungry crowd while the rest of the meat continues cooking. No waiting until the very end, no standing around with your stomach growling. Just freshly braaiied steak, sliced and served as you go.

The first time I saw this happen, I was genuinely amazed. It's such a simple idea that changes the entire braai experience. By the time the rest of the meat is ready, everyone's had a little taste of the action. The anticipation is built, and your mouth is watering all over again, ready to tuck into the main event with gusto.

Consider this your sign to stop making everyone wait for the entire braai to finish. A little steak starter goes a long way.

Now, you can't have a proper braai without a few good salads. And in our family, my mom's potato salad is the star of the show. It has this delicious sweetness that balances everything out perfectly. I haven't found another potato salad that comes close. It's one of those recipes that people keep coming back for, and there's always someone asking for seconds.

I promise you, once you've tried my mom's recipe, you'll never make your potato salad any other way! ●

Nau-Sheen's potato salad recipe

Ingredients

1 bag baby potatoes, unpeeled and halved (quarter any larger ones)
 2 onions (1 red onion and 1 regular/yellow onion), sliced into medium-thin rings
 Butter & olive oil (for frying)
 Balsamic vinegar
 1 tbsp apricot jam (used in place of brown sugar for a sweet-and-sour tang)
 ¾ to 1 cup mayonnaise
 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
 1 splash lemon juice
 Salt & black pepper (to taste)
 2 tbsp fresh dill, washed, dried, and finely snipped/shredded
 Coarse salt (for finishing, to preference)

Method

Boil the potatoes. Place the unpeeled, halved baby potatoes into a pot of water. Boil until tender but firm and cooked through so

they are soft, but not so soft that they break apart. Drain well and set aside.

Caramelize the onions. Heat a splash of olive oil and a blob of butter in a pan over medium heat. Add the onions and fry until softened and golden. Stir in the balsamic vinegar and jam to create a sweet-and-sour glaze. Remove from heat.

Make the dressing and combine. In a mixing bowl, combine the mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, salt, and black pepper. Add the warm, drained potatoes to the dressing and gently toss until evenly coated.

Assemble and finish. Transfer the dressed potatoes to a serving dish. Spoon the caramelised balsamic onions over the top of the potatoes. Scatter the finely snipped fresh dill generously over the dish. Finish with a sprinkle of coarse salt to taste. Serve warm or chilled.

ELECTIONS

Waiting at Dukathole



Brutalist architecture? The taxi rank at Dukathole is little more than a steel scaffold. There's nowhere for waiting passengers to sit, and there's no shade. All photos: Delwyn Verasamy.

The taxi rank in this Germiston settlement has no roof and no seats. Its councillor says it will be fixed – after the election. TEBADI MMOTLA reports.

It's Friday morning, and it is already scorching in Dukathole, an informal settlement in Germiston, east of Johannesburg. Howard Thobela, 76, holds his walking stick and limps towards a blue taxi. There is nowhere to wait in the shade: the rank is a frame of welded steel poles, with no roof against the sun, rain or cold, and not a single seat. "It breaks my heart. The government doesn't care about us," Thobela says.

Residents have been asking the City of Ekurhuleni and their local ANC

councillor, Ntuthuzelo Mpambani, to fix the rank for years. Now, days before the local government elections, it has become a political fight. Some residents say the councillor told them it would only be fixed after the vote, and that when another party's candidate began repairing it for free, he called the police to stop the work. Mpambani says they are bitter ANC members who lost out on the candidate lists.

In the meantime, people suffer under the rank's conditions every day.



Mellow yellow: Taxi drivers say their vehicles also suffer sun damage.

‘Our taxis are exposed to the sun. On the other hand, the municipality wants roadworthy taxis’

Themba Hlathi, 50, has lived in Dukathole for 30 years. He takes a taxi twice a day to buy sweets and chips, which he sells at a nearby school, and without shelter every trip is a risk. “When I get dropped at the taxi rank, my mealie meal gets wet,” he says. “Sometimes my goods get damaged to the point where I have to throw them away and go and buy another one.”

Mazwi Mtshali, a taxi driver for 17 years, says passengers sometimes blame drivers for the conditions. “We can’t keep them in the taxis, especially during rush hour. The customers then complain that we are treating them hor-

ribly, and that is not our intention.”

The rank is hard on the vehicles too. “Our taxis are exposed to the sun,” he says. “On the other hand, the municipality wants roadworthy taxis.”

Dukathole has been waiting a long time. Germiston itself is known as KwaDukathole, a name that goes back to one of the East Rand’s early black locations, badly overcrowded by the 1940s, according to historians Philip Bonner and Noor Nieftagodien. Its Good Hope section was established in 1995, when the municipality moved about 700 families there from Bedfordview, and residents marched to the



*Under one roof:
(Clockwise
from top left)
Dukathole
resident Lucky
Moshapo,
NFP member
Kenneth
Mthethwa
and the area's
ANC councillor
Ntuthuzelo
Mpambani are
united, at least,
in their view
that the rank
must improve.*

city's offices as recently as 2024 to demand water, toilets and electricity.

Lucky Moshapo, 46, has lived here since 1998. He says the councillor told residents the rank would be fixed only after the elections.

"If we wait until after the elections, what will happen if [Mpanbeni] loses?" he asks.

Moshapo, who supports the ANC, says the party has failed Dukathole. When residents asked Kenneth Mthethwa, the National Freedom Party's (NFP) councillor candidate for the ward, to fix the rank, he agreed. But once the work

had started, Moshapo and others allege, the ANC councillor called the police, and the repairs stopped.

"Why can't the councillor let the people who want to fix the taxi rank fix it?" he says.

Mpambani rejects the claims. "They are lying to you, calling themselves the community," he says. "They are bitter members of the ANC."

He says the delay was caused by a lack of funding, and that the Department of Roads and Transport has since allocated a budget and appointed a contractor, with work due to begin on



Waiting, waiting, waiting: There is much contradictory information regarding the repairs, and no start date, as far as the City of Ekurhuleni is concerned.

15 November. Moving faster, he argues, would look like electioneering: “That’s why it will look like I am campaigning using the taxi rank.”

He says he supported Mthethwa’s offer, but told him to follow proper procedure, because the rank is municipal property.

Mthethwa, who uses the rank himself, says he only stepped in because the community asked.

“We are not fighting the municipality or the councillor. We just want to help the community.”

The City of Ekurhuleni tells a more cautious story. In a written response, it said the rank has been identified for refurbishment in the 2026/27 financial year, and that a consultant has assessed

its condition. Money is available, it said, but the cost will only be known once designs are finalised. It gave no start date.

The city also said community members had removed roof sheets and carried out welding without its approval, “resulting in the current structure being left without a roof”, and warned that unsupervised work could endanger commuters. It has asked the consultant to recommend interim measures.

None of this has put a roof over the rank. “We need the taxi rank. It is the only transport facility we have,” says Thembeke Spogter, 44.

The election is on 4 November. The councillor says the builders will arrive 11 days later. The city has not said when. ●

ELECTIONS

'Come back after the vote'

For years, the taps in parts of Ward 58 in Johannesburg have run and stopped, run and stopped. A week before the elections, residents filled a hall to tell the mayor what that is like, and to ask for one thing more. By Khadija Patel.

The mayor was late. Dada Morero had been campaigning in Soweto, and so the people of Ward 58 waited for him at Nana Memorial Hall on Foyle Avenue in Crosby: close to a hundred of them, with the questions they had sent in through the community WhatsApp group. One resident held up a placard: "My mother gets angry when there's no water." The humour was as dry as the taps.

The meeting had been billed as the mayor's visit to the ward, called by the ANC ward councillor, Ricky Kishore Nair. What residents wanted was simpler, and harder: someone to tell them when the water would come back, and whether it would stay.

A man who has lived in the area for more than 30 years went first. In the upper streets of Crosby, he said, the water has been unreliable for almost six years. Some days there is none. Some weeks it comes back for a few hours, then goes.

Then came the details that never make the news. Alarms set for 2AM to

fill buckets before the pressure drops. Exams rescheduled at a school with no usable toilets. Clean water running down the road from a leak that has been reported, and reported again, while Joburg Water trucks park nearby.

They have heard promises before. Five years ago, a mayor stood at the reservoir



Good news wanted: Close to 100 residents of Johannesburg's Ward 58 attended a meeting with mayor Dada Morero.

and told them it would be fixed. A year ago, they marched to Morero's offices in Braamfontein, and the city sent a task team to oversee a new pipeline from the Crosby reservoir. The taps still stop.

Scarcity breeds comparison. Last

September, after protests in Westbury and Coronationville turned violent, the mayor announced that the city would cut supply to other areas to refill the reservoirs that feed them. Crosby residents believe Westbury has been spared the cuts ever since.

“Why can’t you do the same for us?” one asked. Randhir Singh, Johannesburg Water’s senior manager for operations, denied there and then that any area was being prioritised. But the question underneath stayed in the room: does a community have to take to the streets before the water comes?

To his credit, Singh did not pretend. As spring turns to summer and the rain holds off, demand climbs. The system that feeds the area needs about 2,500 megalitres a day to stay in balance, he said, and has been getting between 1,800 and 2,300. So the utility holds water back at peak hours and at night, and the higher streets are the first to run dry. Relief, he said, depends on a new reservoir and pump station due next year.

In the meanwhile the city has built something. In April, Morero launched the new Brixton Reservoir and Water Tower on Caroline Street. Despite the expectations heaped on it, it hasn’t actually relieved the water supply challenge. What’s more, for the people who live around it, it has also brought sand, still being dumped on the site six months

later. The dust gets into food and homes; some people have fallen ill, and children are kept indoors. Singh said the contractor would be held accountable.

The night before, Morero had told Sizwe Mpofo-Walsh, who also writes for this paper, on his YouTube show that the city was not in crisis. “It’s a crisis when



Comparisons: Ward 58 residents suggested that protests in Westbury stopped their water woes. Photo: Roberta Ciuccio/AFP

the entire Johannesburg wakes up, and there’s no water anywhere,” he said, blaming consumption rather than leaks.

Morero had another engagement at 7PM. But the hall was seething. People had not received the responses they expected. He stepped out to explain his absence at his next engagement. There were still hands raised.

Every election, residents said, the officials come, the hall fills, the promises are made. And then they are gone. Come back after the vote, the residents asked. Come back after 4 November. Morero was headed back into the hall when I left. ●

ELECTIONS



A mesh: Family spokesperson Lehlabile Makwana says her family feels the double burden of disability and a lack of access to water. All photos: Lucas Ledwaba

The dam is full. The taps are dry

Fewer Limpopo households have piped water today than in 2002, and half the province's water authorities are failing. Ahead of 4 November, residents say they're tired of politicians who promise water and can't explain how they'll deliver it. LUCAS LEDWABA reports.

When municipal water tankers roll down Limpopo's village streets, residents scramble to the road carrying an assortment of containers to fill up their rations for the week. It is a familiar, high-stakes ritual that brings brief cheer to rural residents facing a daily struggle for clean, potable water.

But for the Makwana family in Sick-

line village near Mankweng in the Polokwane Municipality, the roar of the water truck is a source of frustration.

Three adults and a teenage boy in this family of nine are visually impaired. They can only hear the heavy vehicle approaching, leaving the task of lining up for water to the six minor children in the household.

If the water tanker arrives while the little ones are away at school, the family misses out entirely on the free supply. They are then forced to shoulder the heavy financial burden of spending up to R500 to fill their JoJo tank – and this expense takes a devastating toll on a household income derived solely from state disability and child support grants.

Lehlabile Makwana, the family's second-eldest daughter, says they pleaded with the local ward councillor to remedy the situation and were advised to buy a JoJo tank that could be filled on the property.

The family pooled R2,000 together and purchased the tank. But it has brought a whole new set of problems.

The tank has never been filled as promised because it sits too far from the fence for the water tanker's hoses to reach it.

Makwana says they are still trying to scrape together money to erect a steel stand, noting that placing the tank closer to the boundary line risks outright theft.

Makwana says she will not vote in the upcoming local government elections.

"We don't matter to anyone. It's as if living with a disability is a curse and we are outcasts. Our lives don't matter," she says.

The family lives in a sparsely furnished two-bedroom RDP house, relying on a municipal-built pit toilet located at the eastern corner of their yard. Their plight mirrors a broader provincial crisis.

Provision of clean drinking water remains the single biggest challenge facing residents across Limpopo ahead of the election.



Clean drinking water remains the single biggest challenge facing residents across Limpopo

The sight of young and old struggling up sandy streets pushing wheelbarrows carrying water is a regular occurrence. Where municipalities have failed to supply water, independent suppliers have stepped in, many of them drawing water from state facilities and selling it back, at a profit, to residents with nowhere else to turn. But in a province characterised by high levels of poverty, many are left to rely on the state's irregular water

tanker supply. In some areas residents report incidents where they go for weeks without the water tanker service.

While political parties frequently exploit the issue to woo voters, they rarely explain precisely how they intend to fix it.

The numbers bear this out. In 2002, 73.8% of Limpopo households had access to piped or tap water. By 2023, that had fallen to 64.2%, the steepest decline of any province, and Statistics South Africa's latest household survey, for 2025, recorded a further drop.

Where the taps do run, the water is often unsafe. In the Department of Water and Sanitation's last full Blue Drop assessment of drinking-water quality, five of Limpopo's 10 water services authorities, and 26 of its 84 water supply systems, were in a critical state. Not one system earned a Blue Drop certificate. In Capricorn District, which supplies villages in Blouberg, Molemole and Lepelle-Nkumpi, the score fell from 71.9% in 2014 to 38.1%, against the 95% required. The waterworks at Mogwadi scored 4.75%.

The water that does reach the pipes is also leaking away. The Auditor-General found that 10 Limpopo municipalities lost water worth R1.29 billion in 2024/25, and that in Ba-Phalaborwa,

failing sewage works sent untreated sewage into the Kruger National Park.

Yet Limpopo's residents are the most trusting in the country: in last year's household survey, 92.3% said their drinking water was safe. It is a measure, perhaps, of how rarely anyone tells them otherwise.



Parties frequently exploit the issue to woo voters, but rarely explain how they intend to fix it

In Greater Giyani, the problem is not a shortage of water. In March, the Middle Letaba Dam, now officially the N'wamanungu Dam, rose above full capacity for the first time in its history. Yet the more than 30 villages it should serve have gone without a proper supply for over two decades.

"The water is there, but the challenge is it is not getting to the people," says Shirami Shirinda, a human rights lawyer and farmer who has lived in Bungeni, a village under the Collins Chabane Municipality, for more than



Strained systems: “We can’t blame God, and we can’t blame apartheid. We should have maintained the infrastructure,” says human rights lawyer, farmer and Limpopo resident Shirami Shirinda.

60 years. When the dam filled, he says, people celebrated, then went home and “found that they are smelling because they can’t bathe.”

Shirinda notes that the area enjoyed a reliable water supply under the former Gazankulu homeland administration and during the early years of post-1994 democracy. Gradually, however, the communal taps went dry. Like others with means, he drilled a borehole and installed tanks, but the groundwater is undrinkable.

This forces him and his neighbours to buy water from local retailers or independent suppliers, while less fortunate residents rely on erratic municipal tankers. Shirinda warns that voters are placing blind faith in politicians

who lack the technical competency required for public service delivery.

“The challenge is infrastructure, [and] also the personnel. We don’t have engineers who know how to clean water, or who know which better pipes to use, because if we get the wrong pipe, water will get lost on the way,” he says.

Shirinda adds that rapid population growth and unmanaged new settlements have strained systems built decades ago.

“So we can’t blame God, and we can’t blame apartheid. We should have maintained the infrastructure. People have been there for 30 years,” he says, adding that citizens must use the ballot box to hold non-performing leaders accountable. — *Mukurukuru Media* ●

ELECTIONS

MKP at a local level is playing a smart game

KwaZulu-Natal has more than 100 parties contesting wards. The IFP and ANC used to dominate here, but it's the newcomer, MKP, leading in the polls. Its key has been its work on the ground, especially in rural municipalities. And that could hand it municipal-level dominion.

Niren Tolsi

The 2026 elections in KwaZulu-Natal are framed as a referendum on the ANC's decay, a harbinger for national trends. If, as forecast, Jacob Zuma and his uMkhonto weSizwe Party win several municipalities in KZN, their governance record is likely to influence the right-wing, anti-rule-of-law sentiment surging in South Africa.

In 2024, MKP decimated the ANC's majority with 45% of votes in the KZN, despite existing for just a year. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) got 18% and the ANC 17%, rattling the traditional powers.

Polling in eThekweni predicts an MKP majority, though only Ipsos has suggested an outright 55% win.

Paul Berkowitz of *The South Africa Brief* notes the IFP, ANC and DA could coalesce to keep MKP out, though local dynamics may cause members to buck national instructions in smaller municipalities. And the MKP can also convince small parties "to join the gravy train".



Face off: Polls suggest it will be a battle between Jacob Zuma's party and all the rest in KwaZulu-Natal on 4 November.

There are 111 parties contesting wards in KZN, with 104 independent candidates who have formed a loose

support network also running in wards.

Many of the smallest parties, such as the 1860 Party, with its focus on the “Indian vote”, use ethnic minority paranoia and disaffection to succeed at the polls.

And MKP, with its ethno-chauvinistic politics, has a similar appeal. Its bedfellow, the anti-immigrant vigilante group March and March, has mobilised support among the unemployed and disenfranchised in KZN.

Other parties, such as the Service Delivery Party, hang their campaigning on the electorate’s bugbears: unemployment, roads, interrupted water and electricity supply and the lack of sewage and waste removal. And some, like God’s Justice and Employment Party, appear ready to consult higher powers.

Berkowitz predicts the independent candidates are “likely to be annihilated”. In that scenario, MKP will have more chances of power, particularly in rural municipalities in northern KZN. And here the party at a local level is doing things differently from the party at a provincial and national level. At those levels, Zuma has centralised his imperial powers to do as he wishes with regard to appointments, sackings and policy positions.

Zuma’s recent sacking of secretary-general Sibonelo Nomvalo has brought the head count in that position to eight in three years.

While Zuma’s leadership circle is made up of Zulu nationalists, kleptocrats, self-aggrandisers, disillusioned ANC politicians, people with criminal records, cultural traditionalists who hold anti-democratic beliefs and other regressive inclinations, things change at a local level.

In broken towns, community activists disillusioned by service delivery failures



Driving down: The Inkatha Freedom Party received 18% of the vote in KwaZulu-Natal in the 2024 elections.

have joined MKP as a practical vehicle for local change.

Haroon Mahomeddy is one such activist who, for decades, has worked in various organisations for the betterment of the KwaDukuza Municipality where he lives. The last public position Mahomeddy, who is a proportional representation (PR) councillor candidate for the MKP, held was as chairperson of the Concerned Citizens Group, which fought unsuccessfully to stop the town’s sports facilities from being sold at a knock-down price by the ANC-run munic-

pality to businessman Vivian Reddy to build a shopping mall.

Mahomedy says he joined the MKP because it “felt like one of the few vehicles for change in how the town is run”.

Mahomedy says he is unconcerned about the antics of leaders at national level, which “doesn’t trickle down to where I am” and believes there are

“many committed community builders” in the MKP.

If the MKP wins municipalities in KZN, how it governs over the next five years will test whether demagoguery and the authoritarian “Big Man” template can deliver solutions – or begin to signal the end of such appeal among the electorate. ●

Slice of life: Bruntville and Town View

In 2023, courtesy of a Taco Kuiper Grant, I spent time investigating the conditions and political sentiments of people living in the Mooi River townships of Bruntville and Town View. These two areas are where almost all the people who looted trucks on the N3 near the tollgate during the July 2021 riots live.

People I spoke with always stated that they never set fire to the trucks, but rather outsiders would come to the township and inform them when such a conflagration was being planned.

One unemployed youth, who had been born after the fall of apartheid and had never had a job, told me that he had to do it: “How can I not take something when my mother is going hungry every day?”

During apartheid Bruntville suffered two massacres perpetrated by Inkatha supporters. Hundreds died. The people who live there believe

they have suffered for a free South Africa, but nothing has changed in their lives after 30 years.

Alcohol and drug abuse remain rife in this township where the majority sat idle every day – leading to violence against women and children, house break-ins, thefts and other social ills.

People stated that they never set fire to the trucks, but rather outsiders would come

On a Sunday, community members were lining up behind a tanker to get water. The solar-powered geysers on the roofs of RDP homes had not worked since installation, residents said. The roads were gravelly and broken with rubbish piled up high.

At a church, attended only by gogos and girls, a grandmother told me that the big problem they faced as a community was “all these progressive laws: We can’t discipline our children, which is why they drink and take drugs, beat us up and steal from us”. ●

INTERVIEW



Looking back: Justice Madlanga says the Constitution is – and should be – a living document.

‘For the sake of the nation’

Long before he chaired the inquiry into political interference in the police, Justice Mbuyiseli Madlanga herded goats, left the bench because a judge’s salary couldn’t feed his family, and was talked back to it three words at a time. **SIZWE MPOFU-WALSH** asks him about dignity, the Constitution and what today’s leaders could still learn from Oliver Tambo.

Talk us through your early life and the influence of your parents.

Some of the earliest things I remember are being a goat and cattle herder, even before I went to school. My father had quite an influence on me, both at home and at school. He was a great teacher and a very good English teacher.

My mother too was a great parent, instilling values and disciplining us in a quiet manner. If she had warned you about something and you did not heed her, she would remind you when something went wrong. Being firmly grounded is part of what she taught me.

Where did your passion for the law emerge?

In my matric year, I received a letter from my father asking whether I would want to do law and become a judge one day. That was looking far ahead, because you could never dream of becoming a judge in apartheid South Africa. I decided there and then that I was studying law.

You left the bench to return to the bar. How difficult was that decision?

I had acted for four terms at the Constitutional Court, and it was during that stint that I decided to resign. [But]

I felt, in a sense, that I was failing the nation. I informed Arthur Chaskalson, then president of the Constitutional Court. He tried hard to talk me out of it. But I had a young family and could not support them on a judge's salary. I said: "Arthur, what will I do?" Once I explained, he accepted my situation.

What brought you back to the bench?

I was a member of the Judicial Service Commission as a nominee of Advocates for Transformation. In that capacity, I used to meet Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng. The first time we met, he said: "For the sake of the nation, please come back to the bench."

I was not sure I wanted to do that. But whenever we met, he would say the same thing. Eventually, he would no longer say the whole thing, just:

"For the sake." I knew what he meant. It got my mind working, and in the end I decided to go back.

You also played a role at the International Court of Justice during that period, where you argued an important case for South Africa.

It's one of the briefs that I consider to be important in my legal career. This was about the wall between Israel and Palestinian territory. Yes, [I prevailed at the court] with a number of others on our side.

That was looking far ahead, because you could never dream of becoming a judge in apartheid South Africa

Is there a judgement that stands out when you look back?

[*Daniels v*] *Scribante* ranks up there. It is a relatively simple judgement, but it touches on human dignity. That has been at the centre of my own judicial philosophy. Someone says: "This house is on your land, but I want to make modest improvements with my own resources." Any listener would think the response should be yes. Strangely, it was no. I felt the answer had to be the one I gave in the judgement.

Some people blame the country's failures on the Constitution...

Having taken an oath, which I think I still have to stand by even after retirement, I doubt I could ever want to throw it out or criticise it the way some people do. But as a living document, it must be responsive to what people on



Relatable: Oliver Tambo (left) and Nelson Mandela in their law firm office. Photo: Universal Images Group

the ground think and feel. We must listen closely and hear what they say should be done to improve the constitutional norms.

How do you reflect on Oliver Tambo's legacy as a lawyer?

The significance of Tambo and Mandela's practice was that they represented people whose plight they understood and could relate to. Those people could tell their stories comfortably, knowing they would be understood.

They played a significant role in advancing their clients' rights in South Africa's racial justice system.

Our leaders must look at who Tambo was, at the values and principles

he stood for, and see what they can draw from that. Even drawing a percentage would contribute a great deal to the quality of leadership in our country.

Have you thought about documenting your life?

People have said I must write my memoirs, even when I was still on the Constitutional Court bench. I would say: "Who's going to read that?" This year, people have insisted again, and about three have offered to assist me with the writing. Maybe the seed has been planted, but whether or not it has germinated, I will see down the line. ●

WORDS

A dictionary of local government

On 4 November you will vote for the people who run your water, roads and rubbish collection. But local government comes with its own language, from ward ballots and party lists to hung councils and mayoral committees. Here are 30 words to help you vote, follow the count and keep an eye on what happens next.

Coalition agreement: An agreement setting out how parties will govern together. It may cover political positions, spending priorities and how disagreements will be handled. Ask whether the agreement is written down, whether you can read it, and what the parties have promised one another.

Coalition government: When two or more parties agree to work together to govern a municipality. They may combine their seats to elect a mayor, appoint political leaders and pass budgets. Parties that opposed one another during the campaign may end up governing together.

Disinformation: False or misleading information spread deliberately to deceive people. During elections, it can include fake candidate statements, invented results, altered photographs and false claims about voting. Misinformation is different: people may share something false without knowing it is wrong. Ahead of the 2026 local government elections, the IEC introduced the Electoral Code of Conduct

on Countering Disinformation, which sets out what parties and candidates may and may not do, online and offline, until the results are declared. Always check the source before sharing a claim.

District council ballot: A third ballot given to voters in local municipalities outside the metros. It is used to choose a political party for representation on the district council. This is why some South Africans receive three ballots while others receive two.

Electoral Code of Conduct: The rules political parties and candidates must follow during elections. They prohibit behaviour such as voter intimidation, bribery and certain forms of false campaigning. Parties have the right to campaign, but not to threaten people or stop others from exercising their rights.

First council meeting: The first formal sitting of the newly elected council after the results are declared, when councillors begin choosing the leadership that will run the munic-

ipality. It is often the first real test of whether parties have agreed on who will govern.

Hung council: A council where no single party has won more than half the seats. Parties then need to negotiate, or win support from others, to elect leaders and make important decisions.

Independent candidate: Someone standing for election without belonging to a political party. In municipal elections, independent candidates can contest ward seats. They must follow the same election rules and, if elected, carry the same responsibilities as other councillors.

Majority: When a party or group controls more than half the seats in a council. In a council of 100 seats, at least 51 are needed for an outright majority. The party with the most seats does not necessarily have a majority.

Manifesto: A political party's list of promises about what it plans to do if elected. A manifesto tells you what a party stands for, but it is not proof that the promises can be kept. Ask how much they will cost, where the money will come from and when they will be delivered.

Mayor: The political leader chosen by councillors to lead the municipality. Voters do not elect the mayor directly in South African local elections. A party can win the most seats but still lose the

mayor's office if other parties combine to support someone else.

Mayoral committee: In municipalities with an executive mayor, the councillors the mayor appoints to oversee areas such as finance, infrastructure and transport. These posts are often negotiated between coalition partners, and they matter because the people in them shape the priorities and oversight of municipal services. Not every municipality uses this system.

Municipal powers: The things a municipality is legally allowed and expected to do. These include many local services, such as refuse collection, roads and town planning. Responsibility for water, electricity, housing

A manifesto tells you what a party stands for, but it is not proof that the promises can be kept

and policing can be shared with other spheres of government. A politician promising something outside a municipality's powers should explain how it will happen.

Party list: The list of candidates a political party submits to the IEC for proportional representation seats. The order of names helps decide who gets into council. So when you vote for a party, you are also helping to elect people whose names may be less familiar.

Political party funding: The money and other support parties receive to run their activities and campaigns. Some donations must be declared publicly



Alphabet soup: This handy A-Z election guide helps voters take the “jar” out of “jargon”.

Photo: Guillem Sartorio/AFP

to the IEC under political-funding laws. Knowing who funds a party helps voters and journalists ask whether donors have an interest in government decisions.

Proportional representation (PR)

ballot: The ballot used to vote for a political party. These votes help decide how seats are shared among parties in the municipal council. In a metro, voters receive a ward ballot and a PR ballot.

Provisional results: Results released while counting, capturing and checking are still under way. They are not the final outcome. Early figures may come from only some voting districts, so a party leading on screen has not necessarily won the municipality.

Results capturing: This refers to the process of entering each voting station’s results into the IEC’s electronic system. Votes are counted first, then the numbers are captured and checked. A result appearing late on the dashboard does not necessarily mean people were still voting or counting late.

Results slip: The official record of the votes counted at a voting station, showing how many votes each candidate or party received. A copy is displayed at the station, so people can compare the local count with the results the IEC publishes.

Seat allocation: Working out how many councillors each party will

have once the votes are counted. Ward wins and proportional representation calculations together decide the final make-up of the council, so a party's share of the vote and its share of seats are not always the same.

Speaker: The councillor elected to chair council meetings and make sure council business follows the rules, giving every councillor a chance to take part. The post can become an important part of coalition negotiations.

Special vote: A vote cast before election day by someone whose application has been approved by the IEC. Special votes help registered voters who cannot get to a voting station on the day.

Spoilt ballot: A ballot that cannot be counted for any candidate or party because it does not meet the rules for a valid vote, for example when the voter's choice cannot be worked out. It does not necessarily mean someone deliberately rejected the candidates.

Vote share: The percentage of valid votes a party or candidate receives. If a party wins 3,000 of 10,000 valid votes, its vote share is 30%. Municipal elections use more than one ballot, so always check which vote a percentage refers to.

Voter turnout: The percentage of registered voters who actually vote. If 1,000 people are registered and 400 vote, turnout is 40%. A party's share can rise even when fewer people vote,

so turnout matters when you compare elections.

Voters' roll: The official list of people registered to vote. Turning 18 does not put you on the roll automatically: you must register as a voter, and your registration must be linked to the right voting district. Check your details with the IEC before election day (www.elections.co.za).

Voting district: A smaller area the IEC uses to organise voting. Every registered voter belongs to a voting district with its own voting station. It is not the same as a ward: one ward can contain several voting districts.

Ward: A smaller area within a municipality. Every ward elects one councillor. Your ward decides which candidates appear on your ward ballot and who will represent your neighbourhood in council.

Ward ballot: The ballot paper used to choose your ward councillor. You vote for a person, not just a party, and the candidate with the most votes wins the seat.

Ward candidate: Someone standing to represent a particular ward, either for a political party or as an independent candidate. The candidate with the most votes wins. Ask what they know about your community and how they plan to represent it. ●

This dictionary was compiled by Athandiwe Saba in partnership with the South African National Editors Forum (Sanef).

ELECTIONS



Not a loser: Lula referred to digital platforms as “outside interference”. Photo: Nelson Almeida/AFP

Who is steering the vote?

Brazil has re-elected Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in an election that was fought on the platforms as much as at the polls. South Africa votes next week, on the same apps. KHADIJA PATEL on the lies circulating before 4 November, who they serve, and what you can do about them.

On Sunday night in São Paulo, minutes after he won Brazil’s presidential runoff, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva did not begin with his opponent. He began with the platforms. “This election was an election in which we had to overcome outside interference through digital platforms, which we will have to regulate,” he told supporters. He went further, describing tech companies that

make enormous profits, pay little tax in Brazil and try to influence how Brazilians vote. Meta, which owns WhatsApp and Instagram, has denied interfering, and blamed “technical failures” for the restrictions on Lula’s own accounts during the campaign.

It is not a uniquely Brazilian problem.

In South Africa, undue political influence arrives on the same phone, in the



Scapagoating: Xenophobia is a symptom of inequality, aided by disinformation. Photo: Rajesh Jantilal/AFP

same family group, usually forwarded by someone we love.

In the past few weeks, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has received hundreds of complaints about election-related disinformation, most of it on social media. The commission's chair has warned that this election's version may be smaller and sharper than before: not grand national hoaxes, but "ward-specific deceptions", driven by generative AI and aimed at the streets where people actually live.

One of them may already have reached you. After the Constitutional Court ordered the Department of Home Affairs in July to reopen the asylum system, posts began claiming that asylum seekers were being registered to vote,

to swing the elections. It isn't true. Only South African citizens who are 18 or older and registered on the voters' roll can vote. Asylum status gives no one that right, and the court ruling changed nothing about who votes. Home Affairs has called the claims a co-ordinated disinformation campaign and said it would refer it to the IEC.

That rumour didn't land by accident. It landed because it was built on something real.

Xenophobia in this country is not an aberration but a symptom. South Africa is unfair in a specific and traceable way, and the people paying for that unfairness are the jobless, the badly housed, the ones whose taps run dry. When someone tells them that foreigners are

stealing their jobs, their houses and now their vote, they are preying on existing grievances. Good disinformation never invents a grievance. It borrows one, and points it at the wrong target.

The target has also been South African Muslims. Monitoring data from the Campaign On Digital Ethics (Code), presented at a webinar convened by the Center for Islamic Research in Africa, showed a spike in Islamophobic posts between 22 June and 6 July, at the height of the March and March mobilisation against foreign nationals. The scholar Hatem Bazian, who has spent years documenting how anti-Muslim campaigns are organised, puts the question like this: trace the funding. Where are the posts coming from, and who is paying for them?

South Africa has not been as proactive as Brazil in our response to social media platforms.

Earlier in October, the IEC signed a partnership with Google, Meta, Microsoft and TikTok, along with the non-profit Moxii Africa, to keep election information trustworthy. It is a sensible arrangement, and a revealing one. The companies agree to co-operate “in good faith” and to prioritise the commission’s complaints. But they keep the right to apply their own policies, and they don’t have to share confidential information about who is spreading what. The IEC’s chief electoral officer, Sy Mamabolo, makes the case for working with the platforms: “A technically flawless elec-

tion can still lose public trust if citizens are overwhelmed by disinformation.”

He is right. But notice the gaps. The commission’s Disinformation Code, gazetted in September, binds political parties, candidates and anyone acting on their behalf. It is far less clear on anonymous networks with no proven link to a party, which is exactly what is exploited.

None of this means the vote isn’t safe. Ballots are counted at every voting station, in front of party agents, and each station posts its own results slip. What disinformation attacks is not the count. It is trust: whether you believe your

Trace the funding. Where are the posts coming from, and who is paying for them?

vote matters, whether you believe your neighbour has the same right to be here as you do, whether you turn up at all.

So here is the part that belongs to us. The most effective defence is still the oldest one: don’t forward what you can’t check. Ask who sent it, whether you can find it anywhere else, and why it makes you so angry so fast. If it’s about the election, check it with the IEC. If you think it’s false, report it to Real411, at real411.org.za or on its app, in any of the eleven official languages. Real411 assesses every complaint independently, and the IEC can take it to the platforms, to the Electoral Court, or to the public.

Lula said Brazil refused to be anyone’s backyard. South Africa can make the same choice, one forward at a time. ●

FICTION

Extract from *The Shipikisha Club*
by Mubanga Kalimamukwento (Jacana: 2026)

Truth or consequences

When Ms. Pichi first called Ntashé, explaining the need for her testimony and the quest for justice in the name of her father, of course, Ntashé had agreed without hesitation. In her mind at that moment was a memory of Father from a couple of years before, when he'd returned from work bearing a commotion of flowers, a bottle of Baileys, and a gift wrapped so expertly it must have taken him hours to finish. "Happy birthday, Wandí," she could still hear him saying, as clearly as her mother's kissed teeth, and the echo of her mother's footsteps slap-slapping away while her father

stood there holding the gifts. This is the mother of Ntashé's mind, fourteen years in the making, who takes beautiful things, like fathers and flowers, and curdles them with the sound of her voice. So, "Of course," Ntashé had told the lawyer. "Anything for my father."

In the days following that call, her resolve had hardened under the relentless bullying of her classmates, who had turned Killer's Daughter into a substitute for her name. At some point, while brewing in the silent rage

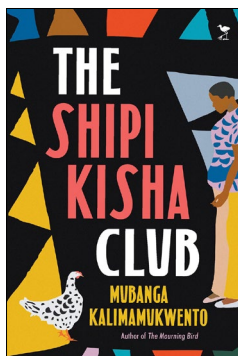
of this repetitive humiliation, Ntashé decided her mother hadn't just taken her father's life, she'd taken hers too.

After Uncle Happy's testimony, just when it's starting to verge on boring with all the cycling around a single day when what they should be saying is

that a man's life was taken, her father's snuffed out like an unwanted fire, she finally hears Ms. Pichi say, "We call to the stand Ntashé Penda, My Lady."

In mental practice runs of this moment, she fancied herself again on the stage, unafraid of everyone's attention. But now, her heartbeat makes her deaf to even the loudest of sounds. In

the witness box, which feels like a belt wrapped around her body, her hands start to shake as she takes the Bible from the interpreter. She barely hears her own response to the first question, assuming English because that is the language that puppets her thoughts. She blinks rapidly, trying to unblur the room, breathing like she's on the tail end of a race, but "Yes," Ntashé swears to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but.



READERS

We hear you

Last week, we asked what you thought. Here is what you told us, and what we did about it.

How you're feeling

Thank you to everyone who answered our first reader survey. Some of you are hopeful about this election. Some of you are still making up your minds. And at least one of you is simply fed up. We suspect you are not alone.

Not everyone who answered felt sure of what they're voting for, and not everyone knew who their ward councillor is. So this week we've included a step-by-step guide to election day (page 9) and a dictionary of local government (pages 29 to 32), so nobody walks into the voting booth guessing.

What you want more of

Good news. You asked for it more than once. "There has to be some good news," one reader wrote. We hear you, and we will make sure to bring you joy in this newspaper.

Your neighbourhood. One Joburger asked us to feature the city's different areas, "the unfamiliar familiar". This week, we went to a community meet-

ing in Ward 58 (pages 17 to 18).

Follow the money.

One of you wants to know who funds political parties, and how cities spend, borrow and owe. Start with "Political party funding" in our dictionary; there is more to come.

Something useful in every story.

One reader told us their friends and family are short of time, and that practical help would give them a reason to read. Look out for what you can do, from checking your registration to reporting a false claim to Real411. Climate change came up too. Keep it coming.

And the winner is...

Congratulations to Mark Schaerer from Brixton, who wins a copy of *Johannesburg's Mayors: 140 Years of Making and Breaking the City* (Jacana).

This week's giveaway: [Tell us who you are](#) for a chance to win *The Shipikisha Club* (Jacana), from the extract on page 40. Entries close on Tuesday 3 November at 8am.

If someone forwarded you this paper, thank them. Then pass it on to someone who votes on Wednesday.



The Big Picture



Dance: The ANC organised an ingoma in Actonville before the elections. Photo: Emmanuel Croset/AFP

‘Something new has to come out of the unknown like ants coming out of the earth for their nuptial. And no matter how many swallows come in devour the flying ants, no amount of destruction will overshadow the event of spring.’ — Njabulo S Ndebele, Fools, Raven Press (1983)

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