



EFF STATEMENT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE REVIEW PANEL BY IEC TO ASSESS IF THE CONDITIONS ARE CONDUCIVE FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

Thursday, 20 May 2021

The EFF notes the decision by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to establish a review, which will assess if the current conditions allow for a Free and Fair elections. We also note the appointment of the former Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa, Dikgang Moseneke, as the chair of this review.

The EFF has been the only political organization consistent in its call to value the preservation of life over cheap electoral politics. Over and above the assessment of fairness, we believe that the Independent Electoral Commission should also consider the risk that a nationwide election will pose on the lives of South Africans.

Although the establishment of the review is a progressive step in the right direction, we are concerned about it being limited to electoral fairness. During elections, South Africans come out in their numbers, and stand in very long lines to make their mark. It cannot be a coincidence that in India, after holding nationwide elections, there was a spike in the number of Covid-19 cases, which led to many deaths.

South Africa is also beginning to see an exponential increase in Covid-19 cases, as we enter the notorious third wave. Election campaigning is filled with a lot of face to face interaction, particularly in a country like ours. It would be an injustice to prevent political organizations from hosting rallies and door to door campaigns, as our constituencies do not have access to the technical resources required for virtual interaction.

It is also unlikely that South Africa will meet its vaccination targets before the election date. There are still many cases of frontline workers and health professionals who, themselves, have not been vaccinated, whilst those close to the ruling party are jumping lines to get vaccinated. This means that the lives of ordinary South Africans, who constitute the majority, will remain in grave danger.

Cyril Ramaphosa, instead of reflecting on the Indian case study, and allowing himself to be guided by science and data, goes and declares an election date, like the fanatic he is. His failure to show leadership, when the moment called for him to, has now led to IEC taking it up on itself to establish a review to look into this matter. In effect, putting the cart before the horse, by running an assessment after the decision has been taken. Any sensible and uncaptured leader would know that before you make the decision, you assess.

Nevertheless, we record the remedial decision taken by IEC, in the absence of leadership and direction from the governing party, to interrogate the impact of running these elections this year. We hope that the former Deputy Chief Justice will consult thoroughly with different stakeholders. The outcome of this review must be embedded in the constitutional principles of fairness and freedom.

We hope that this review is not another attempt to legitimize the premature and already standing decision not to postpone the elections. The EFF will be making submissions to the review panel. Our approach to it, though engaging, will remain cautionary.

As someone who once served on the apex court, we hope that Justice Moseneke will suppress political expediency, and empower truth and justice. More importantly, we hope that the lives of South Africans will be protected. No single election can ever be more important than life.

Furthermore, the EFF reiterates its call for synchronized Local Government and National Elections as the only feasible avenue, to ensure that service delivery is the priority instead of a permanent state of election campaigns.

Synchronized elections is the only measure that will allow political parties to focus on their mandate of service delivery, without interruption of constant electoral processes.

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