

# GENERAL ELECTIONS - MAY 2019: VIEWS OF THE ROBERT MANGALISO SOBUKWE TRUST

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May 8, 2019 must, for Pete's sake, deliver a safe and peaceful people-powered provincial and national elections, whose outcome adds a new fillip to South Africa's constitutional democracy and thereby making the newly elected political elite accountable and answerable to their constituencies.

In the first place, institutional pillars such as the provincial legislatures and national assembly are expected to up their game in their sixth five year term since 1994 and produce quality debates, measurable by values and standards that are goal oriented. Pure and simple.

The contested 820 seats, all told, for the nine provincial legislatures, the National Council of Provinces and the National Parliament, are in honourable custody of the wishes and anxieties of all the citizens of the Republic of South Africa.

Those who do not make it will have to accept that the rules of elections offer outcomes where choices are limited. Better luck next time.

This mandate must be carried out diligently without the slightest intention to ruin, without malevolence or gimmickry. Political skulduggery must be seen to be shoved off from happening in these august democratic institutions.

Leading to elections day, the RMS Trust conjures up an enabling environment for freedom of choice in which the electorate exercise their constitutionally guaranteed rights to vote without threats of violence or hindrance in any form.

The Independent Electoral Commission, a Chapter Nine institution, has provided astute leadership and prudent management with a plan to adhere to the strictures of the electoral law. The IEC has pledged not to kowtow to the influence and manipulation of whichever political party. The RMS Trust supports these noble intentions.

Like everyone else, the expectation of the Sobukwe Trust are that South Africa will have a free and fair elections on 8 May 2019.

Such a happenstance will be a proud mark of the growing maturity of democracy in our beloved land.

Our iconic figure, Robert Sobukwe, was a contrarian who disturbed the even tenor of apartheid colonialism and risked life and limb so that oppression and exploitation must come to an end.

He reckoned that the rule of law would be better observed in a country where power lies in the constitution, and not in the hands of a "captured" tiny few in control of the parliament, as it was during unadulterated settler-colonialism.

As Pan Africanists - a school of thought that loves Africa and it's people, and venerates the human race - we are not oblivious to the prevalent social construct of race in South Africa and the grave danger of destabilization that a polarized society may come to be.

Some of the contesting political parties, both infantile 'left' and extreme right wing, have used dog-whistle politics to appeal to race and the bigoted mentality of herds in the run up to elections. This style is antiquated and useless. The enfranchised citizen has the freedom of choice, known between them and their God.

We advocate an unfettered sense of belonging for all those whose allegiance is to Africa, to a democratic South Africa as we have come to know it, and we equally pledge to work for One Azania, One Nation, One People. We value an egalitarian society.

A continuing national dialogue of civil society discussing affairs of the state, held side by side with the execution of policies favored by the majority of the electorate, is an assured value addition to the democratic system of checks and balances, transparency and accountability.

To this end, the RMS Trust has joined hands with a vast array of diverse foundations of national icons seeking to protect and preserve the gains of the 1994 democratic dispensation. While we have our own colours nailed to the mast, because of who we are politically, we however consciously place the African people above all sectarian interests.

We hold that democracy should not slip away from the vital hands of the populace and fade into alienation. The political elite voted into public office are the servants of the people, not the other way round.

This people-powered method of courageous national conversation is to us a building block and necessary safeguard for stability and peace, participatory democracy, sustainable economic development, and a bright future for all.

Ends.//

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