



**MEDIA STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
16 September 2026**

The Electoral Commission Certifies 136 790 Candidates to Contest 2026 Local Government Elections

The Electoral Commission is pleased to report that the evolving electoral process is progressing well with key Election Timetable activities on track or already accomplished.

The candidate nomination process closed on 28 August 2026 at 17H00. The process entailed two submission channels, submission of manual documents at the local Electoral Commission offices countrywide, and submission via the Online Candidate Nomination portal. The preponderant mode of nomination was the online at **84%** while the in-person submissions amounted to **16%**.

Candidate nomination processes

Following the cut-off date for the submission of candidate list and nomination of ward candidates, the Commission has successfully undertaken the following key critical steps towards the certification of candidates.

- On 4 September the Commission issued notices to **221** parties and independent candidates to submit additional details in respect of **1280** nominated candidates. The additional documents were copies of identification documents and completed

acceptance of nomination forms. Parties and independent candidates had until 7 September to submit the requested documents.

- On 9 September the Commission issued notices to parties and independent candidates in relation to **550** candidates that had either been nominated as independent candidates and again by a party or who had been nominated by more than one party. The notices implicated **203** political parties and **28** independents. The parties to whom notices were issued had until 11 September to exercise an election to retain the affected candidate on their lists of candidates or to replace them.

Publication of the final candidate lists

Following the conclusion of the statutory reviews which included, confirmation that all contestants had paid the applicable deposits, and that all candidates were properly nominated, **5 096** candidates have been disqualified. The Commission will later today publish the list of all candidates and political parties that will contest the elections on 4 November 2026.

An unprecedented **136 790** candidates have satisfied the statutory requirements to contest seats across the EIGHT (8) metropolitan municipalities, forty-four (44) district municipalities and two hundred and five (**205**) local municipalities throughout the country. Out of these **136 790** candidates, **98 219** are nominated by parties to represent wards and **38 571** to represent parties in the Proportional Representation (PR) election. A total of **621** candidates are independents nominated to represent wards.

There are cumulatively **10 526** seats to be contested across the board. To put these numbers into perspective, in a corresponding election in 2021, and with an almost similar number of available seats (**10 478**), there were **95 427** certified candidates, compared to **136 790** in 2026.

Contestation across municipalities

In terms of the Metros –**43 098** candidates will contest for council seats, 6 443 will contest for the District Municipal Council seats, and **87 249** candidates will contest for seats in Local Municipalities.

Contestation Levels	Political Candidates	Party	Independent Candidates	TOTAL
Metro	42 976		122	43 098
District	6 443		N/A	6 443
Local	86 750		499	87 249
Total	136 169		621	136 790

Top municipalities with the highest number of PR candidates

The high number of political parties contesting PR seats in some municipalities has implications on the design of ballot papers. For instance, a double column ballot paper is inevitable where there are more than **48** parties on the PR ballot. In the following municipalities, the parties will unavoidably be accommodated on a double column ballot paper.

- City of Johannesburg: **75** parties
- City of Tshwane: **70** parties,
- City of eThekweni: **69** parties
- City of Ekurhuleni: **67** parties
- City of Cape Town: **55** parties.

The other municipalities in the top **10** are Emfuleni at **41** parties, followed by Polokwane at **36** parties, Rustenburg at **36** parties, Nelson Mandela Bay at **37** parties, and Capricorn District at **36** parties.

In the case of Ward, a similar design of ballot papers will apply where there are more than 48 candidates. For example, ward 18 in the City of Johannesburg has **63** candidates.

Candidate Demographics

Candidates nominated by political parties are **99.5%**, with independent candidates making up the remaining **0.5%**. There is a broad representation across age categories with the 40-49 year range accounting for 31%. The 50-59 age range comes second with 24.3%, while 30-39 age range makes up 23.8%. The youth category aged between 18-39 account for 32% of the all the candidates. Meaning, despite this diversity, candidates in the youth age cohort remain underrepresented.

In terms of gender representation, male candidates constitute the majority at 85 263 (62%), while female candidates account for 51 527 (38%). Among PR candidates, women represent 44% and men 56%. In ward contests, men constitute 65% of candidates while women account for 35%.

Today's publication of the final list of candidates marks an important milestone in the election timetable. It provides political parties, independent candidates and the public with certainty regarding the contestants who will appear on the ballot paper for the 2026 Local Government Elections.

More fundamentally, from electoral operations perspective, the final list enables the Commission to commence with the printing of ballot papers soon after the ballot paper draw to be conducted during the signing of the Code of Conduct on 23 September 2026.

Issuance of Certificates to Qualified Candidates (25 September 2026)

In line with the Election Timetable, candidates will be issued certificates as confirmation of their candidature for 2026 LGE. These certificates will be issued on 25 September 2026. The Commission wishes to advise all political parties and independent candidates

that as in the previous elections, the issuance of Certificates to Candidates will be done as follows:

- (a) for independent candidates, the Commission will send certificates electronically to the candidates.
- (b) for political party candidates, the Commission will electronically transmit the certificates to each of the parties through their authorised Online Party Administrator (OPA). The OPAs are responsible for distributing the certificates using established party processes.

Upcoming Activities

Special Votes: 2 and 3 November 2026

On 21 September 2026, the Commission will open applications for Special Votes. The period of applications will close on 12 October 2026 at **17H00**.

Special votes are meant to ensure access to the vote by persons who would otherwise not be able to participate in elections on 4 November 2026. Special votes fall in two broad categories.

The first are home visit special votes, for persons who are unable to present physically at a voting station owing to physical condition. This category of voters if approved are visited at a place of confinement which must be in a voting district in which the voter is registered.

The second category of special votes relate to voters who can present physically at their voting station but can't vote at their voting station on voting day. This category of voters will, if approved, vote at their voting station on the two days preceding election day.

Voters who may be out of their voting districts on 04 November 2026, including those in essential services and media also qualify for special vote at the voting stations **where**

they are registered. Applications can be made at the IEC local offices across the country, via the Website (www.elections.org.za), or via SMS number 32249.

Electoral Code of Conduct

On **23 September 2026**, contesting political parties will sign the Electoral Code of Conduct, which promotes free, fair and peaceful campaigning and sets standards for responsible participation in the elections. For the first time, the Commission has promulgated an additional Code of Conduct on measures to Counter Disinformation (Disinformation Code). This initiative is aimed at strengthening measures to respond to false or misleading information and protect the integrity of the electoral process.

Election Preparation

In readiness for the 4 November voting day, the Commission has also made significant progress in the following key areas:

- 1. Recruitment and training:** Out of **23696** Presiding Officers and **29964** Deputy Presiding Officers being recruited, the Commission has to date recruited over 50%, and their training has commenced.
- 2. Voting Station Confirmation:** The Commission has secured **23696** voting stations countrywide. Out of these, **33** are mobile voting stations, **22668** are permanent, and **995** are temporary. These figures may slightly change as the Commission finalises lease agreements.

To ensure the voters' ease of familiarity with where to vote, the Commission has introduced the following innovation which the voters can use before leaving home to confirm the correctness of their voting station:

- The Sequence Number to facilitate ease of identification of the voters' names on the voters roll.

- An SMS number **(32810)** which voters can use to send an ID number and receive confirmation of their registration, details of their voting station, and their sequence number on voters roll.
- Contact Centre **(0800118000)** which voters can call to confirm their voting station details with the Agents in their preferred language and receive and their sequence number on voters roll.
- WhatsApp **(0600880000)** wherein the voter can through the **Am I registered** menu get confirmation of their voting station and receive their sequence number on voters roll.

3. Results system testing: The commission has engaged external independent auditors to validate key controls, processes, and functionality of the system used to collate and process results. This activity forms part of the overall assurance process to confirm compliance with governance and quality requirements.

The Commission will also invite contesting political parties to test the results system using their preferred experts. The parties will have access to the system from 5-12 October 2026.

Additionally, the Commission will implement the Quality Assurance Testing scheduled to commence on 17 September and will run for a period of three weeks.

The scope of this engagement includes:

- Functionality Testing
- Performance Testing
- Code Reviews

Call to Action

We encourage all qualified contestants to familiarise themselves with their obligations under the electoral legislation and the applicable Electoral Code of Conduct as the country moves towards Election Day on 4 November 2026.

The Commission remains committed to ensuring that the 2026 Local Government Elections are administered in a manner that is credible, transparent, inclusive and compliant with the law.

For media queries: Please contact Kate Bapela on 082 600 6386

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