



Metro drama update

SOUTH AFRICA

Recent developments indicating a possible and impending termination of the relationship between the ANC and the EFF in municipalities they govern together have reignited an interest in the (in)stability of metros (though it is taking the ANC some time given the drama that is likely to follow). In addition, the DA is preparing to table a motion to dissolve the City of Johannesburg council. In this note, we provide an update on the latest political developments across metros in the country. Generally, metros have enjoyed a period of political stability in recent months (though the same cannot quite be said for service delivery), despite isolated events which have threatened the incumbency of some leaders. Removing the EFF however will leave four major metros in the lurch – though the ANC seems to think the impending dysfunction outweighs the risk of being associated with the EFF (a risky gamble). While attention is presently shifting towards metros as they get caught up in 2024 electioneering, we expect attention to shift away from them once parties start publishing their manifestos.

Metro latest

The latest revelations suggest that the relationship between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in Gauteng will be terminated following the recommendations of a report to the ANC's national executive committee (NEC) by the party's head of political education David Makhura. The report cast several aspersions on the character and integrity of the EFF. The report also noted that the EFF is using coalitions with the ANC to demonstrate its ability to govern. This is important for the ANC which, as it also acknowledges, contests the same voter base as the EFF. The ANC can ill-afford to give the EFF an opportunity to prove its capabilities to govern ahead of an election in which the ANC's support is expected to decline. The latest developments therefore indicate that it is only a matter of time before the ANC officially cuts ties with the EFF. This would send several Gauteng municipalities, not just metros, into a tailspin. The termination of the relationship would be devastating for the ANC Gauteng leadership which supported the establishment of the relationship.

Partly, the reclamation of several Gauteng municipalities by the ANC through the partnership with the EFF was meant to prevent the ANC from losing ground which could result in the party losing power in Gauteng next year. The ANC in Gauteng therefore stands to lose significantly should the relationship be terminated. The party is also reportedly looking to cut ties with another partner, the Patriotic Alliance (PA), following the latter's recent strong comments in support of Israel as the ANC has long held a pro-Palestine position in the Israel-Palestine conflict. The PA stated that it is willing to lose power rather than change its stance. Panyaza Lesufi, ANC Gauteng Chairperson and one of the main architects behind the ANC-EFF coalitions in Gauteng, cautioned ANC coalition partners against supporting Israel.

6 NOVEMBER 2023

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KRUTHAM 2024 BASELINE

ANC 47 [57.5] (strong up risk)

DA 25 [20.8] (downside risk)

EFF 12 [10.8] (downside risk)

ACSA 4 [-] (balanced risk)

IFP 5 [3.4] (balanced risk)

Proto 5 [-] (downside risk)

Other 3 [7.6] (Upside risk)

Turnout -8 to -10pp

Note we have reinforced the upside risks we see for ANC though not changed the numerical forecast yet

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Table 1: Summary of prevailing conditions in metros

Metro	Current government	Governing party/coalition seats share	Without the EFF	Total number of seats in council	Risks
Ekurhuleni	ANC-EFF and smaller parties	130 (58%)	99 (44%)	224	EFF-ANC Gauteng fallout
Johannesburg	ANC-EFF and smaller parties	140 (52%)	111 (41%)	270	EFF-ANC Gauteng fallout; DA council dissolution
Tshwane	DA-led coalition (Multi-party Charter for SA)	109 (51%)	N/A	214	Potential by-election losses; wage dispute
Nelson Mandela Bay	ANC-EFF and smaller parties	64 (53%)	56 (47%)	120	National Alliance infighting
eThekweni	ANC-EFF and smaller parties	126+ (57%+)	102+ (46%)	222	EFF-ANC Gauteng fallout spillover
Mangaung	ANC	51 (51%)	N/A	101	By-election losses
Buffalo City	ANC	61 (61%)	N/A	100	Mayor educational issues
Cape Town	DA	134 (58)	N/A	231	None for now; PA growth in the future

City of Ekurhuleni

While the metro has been relatively "stable" for months, the ANC's discontent with the coalition arrangement has been evident. As such, the ANC in the metro will welcome the reconsideration of the ANC-EFF partnership by the national leadership.

The City of Ekurhuleni has been in a state of uncertainty for months now. Firstly, the ANC missed several swearing in ceremonies for members of the mayoral committee (MECs) appointed by mayor Sivuyile Ngodwana after the bloc led by the ANC and EFF assumed power in March/April. The reason behind this was the ANC's unhappiness about being given less critical portfolios in the committee which it shares 50/50 with the EFF. The cracks in the relationship were laid bare when council whip and ANC acting regional chairperson Jongizwe Dlabathi wrote to the provincial and national leadership of the ANC to register his concerns about the desirability and usefulness of the coalition for the ANC. Thereafter, the two parties traded several insults and accusations of sabotage. The ANC Ekurhuleni leadership has never been keen on an EFF-ANC relationship. The arrangement was imposed by the provincial leadership of the ANC which shares a cordial relationship with the national leadership of the EFF.

Ekurhuleni will likely be among the first victims of the termination of the relationship between the EFF and ANC. Its council has 224 seats. The governing coalition occupies 130 of these. As it stands the coalition is composed of the ANC (86 seats), the EFF (31), the PA (4) and the Super

Seven (9). The Super Seven grouping of minority parties is composed of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the Independent Ratepayers Association of South Africa (IRASA), the African Independent Congress (AIC), the Independent Citizen Movement (ICM), the African Transformation Movement (ATM), the Congress of the People (Cope) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM) who all have one seat each except the AIC which has three seats and occupies the mayorship.

Then there is the formerly Democratic Alliance (DA)-led bloc which has a total of 93 seats. The bloc is composed of the DA (65), ActionSA (15), the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) (2), the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) (8), and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) (3). The National Freedom Party (NFP), whose position is unclear, has one seat.

Without the EFF and PA, the ANC-led block will remain with 95 seats which is far from the required 113 to constitute a majority governing coalition. The outcome of the termination of the governing coalition will most likely be the formation of a minority government led by the DA and its erstwhile coalition partners. We say this because the EFF would likely vote for a DA bloc candidate to spite the ANC. However, the DA has stated clearly that it is unwilling to participate in unstable governments. With a minority government looking likely, Ekurhuleni therefore seems to be in for even more instability unless the relationship between the EFF and ANC can be saved. We must remember that the DA has stated unequivocally that it is unwilling to work with the PA and the EFF.

City of Johannesburg

While the relationship between the EFF and the ANC breaks down, the DA is set to table a motion to dissolve council.

In the City of Johannesburg, another ANC-EFF and minority parties arrangement governs. Kabelo Gwamanda of Al Jama-ah remains the mayor, despite some turbulence shortly after his election in May. Out of a total of 270 seats, the ANC-led bloc has 140. The ANC accounts for 90 of these (down from 91), the EFF 29, the PA 9 (up from 8) Al Jama-ah 3, the AIC 2, the African Heart Congress (AHC) 1, the African People's Convention (APC) 1, the ATM 1, Cope 1, GOOD 1, the PAC 1 and the UDM 1. The erstwhile DA-led bloc has 130 seats in council. The DA has 71, ActionSA 44, the IFP 7, the FF+ 4, the ACDP 3, and the United Independent Movement (UIM) 1.

Political stability in the metro has improved to some extent since May. This has in the main been due to the significant majority that the ANC-led bloc has in council. It has also been a result of some level of disagreement in the formerly DA-led bloc. In August, ActionSA withdrew its motion of no confidence against Gwamanda following the DA's refusal to support the motion. ActionSA also had the intention of removing council speaker, Colleen Makhubele and the party's plan seemed to depend on the PA crossing the floor. The DA remains firm in its refusal to work with the PA, which it considers unreliable.

The metro's political stability will once again be tested when the DA tables its motion to dissolve council this month. This motion is due to be tabled to the programming committee on 17 November. After refusing to support the ActionSA motion, the DA stated that dissolving council to allow for city wide by-elections would be more effective than forming a coalition government that can be removed at any time. We do not see this motion succeeding as

it is unlikely to muster the two thirds majority required. The biggest threat to the Johannesburg metro's stability is therefore the fallout between the ANC and the EFF.

Whereas the DA has refused to work with the EFF, the EFF can aid the removal of the ANC and thereafter the installation of a DA-aligned leadership to retaliate against the ANC. This would be a very unstable path towards reclaiming power for the DA-led bloc and governing would be equally difficult as it would need the support of the EFF. However, the alternative is a minority government which would be equally unstable. Johannesburg thus looks set to be plunged into instability once more.

City of Tshwane

The labour dispute in the city has taken a political turn, threatening the relationship between the DA and ActionSA.

Politically, Tshwane is the most stable of the three Gauteng metros. This is because the DA-led governing coalition has a majority in council. Out of a total of 214 seats, the DA-led bloc occupies 109. Within the bloc, the DA occupies 69 seats, ActionSA 19, the FF+ 17, the ACDP 2, the IFP 1, and the Defenders of the People (DOP) 1. The DOP joined the coalition in October. Apart from the DOP, all governing coalition members are part of the Multi-party Charter for SA. The DA's Cilliers Brink remains the mayor, a position to which he was elected in March. The formerly ANC-led bloc has 106 seats. The ANC accounts for 75 of these seats and the EFF 23. The AIC, the ATM, Cope, GOOD, the PA, the PAC, and the Republican Conference of Tshwane all have one seat each. We must mention that the PA has in some cases voted with the DA-led bloc, despite the DA's well-documented unwillingness to work with it.

The biggest challenge in Tshwane is the ongoing labour dispute over the 5.4% wage increase. The DA's handling of this dispute sparked a public spat between itself and ActionSA which tabled a motion, which it later withdrew, to compel Brink to negotiate with labour unions. While this was significant, ActionSA generally concedes to the DA's demands. As such, it was no surprise that the motion was withdrawn. Tshwane therefore remains relatively stable.

Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality

National Alliance internal contestations are spilling over into the metro, whose mayor has become a somewhat controversial figure.

The Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality remains under the control of the ANC-led coalition which includes the EFF with eight seats, the National Alliance (NA) with three, the PA with two, and the AIC, the PAC, and the UDM all with one seat each. With the ANC's 48 seats, the governing coalition has a total of 64 seats in the 120-seat council. The DA-led bloc has 56 seats. The DA accounts for 48, GOOD and the Abantu Integrity Movement have one each, and the ACDP, the FF+ and the DOP two each.

Gary van Niekerk of the NA, who was elected in May, remains the mayor. His mayorship has been mired in controversy. In October, he and a fellow NA councillor, John Mitchell, were expelled from the party by a rival faction. This meant they effectively ceased being councillors and the NA had to replace them within 35 days after their seats were declared vacant. The now suspended city manager declared the vacancies on 9 October. Van Niekerk and Mitchell approached the High Court in Gqeberha, which granted them

an interdict against the declaration of the vacancies on 18 October. This means that the pair will remain councillors until at least next year when the case relating to the leadership of the NA is decided. The metro effectively had no mayor for nine days. This is why the ACDP argued that van Niekerk should face disciplinary processes for "misrepresenting" himself as the mayor during this period.

Leadership contestations were at the centre of the pair's "expulsion" from the NA. It is therefore clear that the NA's internal contestations are spilling over into the metro and van Niekerk's mayorship has attracted negative attention since his occupation of the position. However, we do not see the ANC-led coalition pulling the plug on him just yet. Van Niekerk is also under investigation for fraud relating to his time as council speaker.

eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality

In addition to the administrative issues that plague the city, the ANC-EFF "fallout" in Gauteng may offset the political stability the city has enjoyed for some months.

While the eThekweni metro faces numerous governance challenges, it remains relatively politically stable. The ANC-led coalition remains in power and the party's Mxolisi Kaunda is one of only two metro mayors who remain in office after being elected in 2021. In addition to the ANC (95 seats), the ANC-led bloc is composed of the EFF (24 seats), the AIC (2) and a plethora of smaller parties all of which have one seat each, including the National Freedom Party (NFP) which occupies the deputy mayorship, the ATM, the African Democratic Change and African People First. While the exact number of seats in the bloc is difficult to establish as parties change positions regularly, these are north of 126. A coalition needs to have 112 seats to hold a majority in the 222-seat council. The coalition's seats were bolstered by the EFF which "joined" towards the end of last year when the Abantu Batho Congress (ABC) was booted out.

The DA-led bloc has about 88 seats. The DA has 58 seats after recently losing a seat to the ANC, the IFP 17, ActionSA 4, the FF+, the UIM, and KZN Independence all have one seat each, while the ACDP, the ABC and the Active Citizens Coalition all have two seats each. It is important to indicate that this is not a coalition per se but rather a grouping of parties that have in the past voted with one another or taken similar positions. The parties that would undoubtedly form part of a DA-led coalition in the city are ActionSA, the FF+, the IFP and the ACDP.

Given the numbers, the eThekweni metro remains stable for now. The biggest risk is the potential spillover effect that could result from the fallout between the ANC and EFF in Gauteng. We note that already, following its disruptive behaviour during a recent council meeting, the EFF in eThekweni has received a tongue lashing from the ANC's provincial leadership.

Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality

With the ANC re-establishing its control over the metro, Mangaung is now set for greater political stability.

The Mangaung metro is now stable as the ANC has managed to restore its majority in the municipality. Back in April, the metro descended into chaos as unhappy ANC councillors supported the election of Papi Mokoena of the DA-aligned Afrikan Alliance of Social Democrats as mayor. The DA's Maryke Davies was also elected speaker in a similar fashion. The Bloemfontein High

Court granted the ANC an urgent interdict that set aside Mokoena's election and the party expelled the councillors involved. It replaced the proportional representation councillors while by-elections were held to replace the expelled ward councillors. The ANC retained all four wards concerned in July. The party occupies 51 seats in the 101-seat council.

After acting in the position from April when Mokoena was removed, the ANC's Gregory Nthatsi was finally elected permanent mayor in October. In September the ANC also removed Davies from the speaker's position. Manguang is thus firmly controlled by the ANC and the main threat to its majority is by-elections, should any of its councillors vacate a seat. However, council is dominated by ANC-leaning parties, and we would expect it to be able to form a governing coalition with them.

Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality

The ANC's overwhelming majority means that power can only change hands among ANC leaders.

Buffalo City is firmly controlled by the ANC which occupies 61 of the 100 council seats. The metro has largely stayed out of the headlines. However, in March the ANC recalled its mayor Xola Pakati, citing service delivery concerns. He was subsequently replaced by his deputy Princess Faku who is among hundreds of students at the University of Fort Hare who did not graduate in October as their subject of study is under a Special Investigating Unit (SIU) probe. In October, it was reported that Faku was taking the university to court for the delay which dates back to May.

City of Cape Town

The DA's majority has enabled the municipality to stay out of the drama that has characterised many coalition-governed metros.

The City of Cape Town remains firmly under the control of the DA. The metro has 231 council seats, 134 of which are occupied by the party. The DA's Geordin Hill-Lewis remains one of two metro mayors who have remained in power since 2021. While the DA's position currently does not appear to be under any threat, the PA's growth is notable. Add to this the presence of the Cape Coloured Congress and the DA's dominance in the city could be thoroughly tested. The 2024 elections will provide a preview of what the future holds for the city, in which the DA's electoral performance fluctuates.

Conclusion

Gauteng metros carry the highest risk of potential political leadership change, followed by Nelson Mandela Bay and eThekweni. This is despite the ANC going all out to ensure that it elects sustainable leadership in these metros. As next year's elections approach, there is a substantial risk of instability in coalition-governed metros as parties seek either to ensure that their status in metros does not disadvantage them or to use them to campaign. We have already seen the ANC in Ekurhuleni realising that its current power sharing agreement with the EFF puts it at a disadvantage ahead of next year. However, after manifestos are published, we expect parties to shift their attention away from metros to the elections. This coupled with a potential for coalitions at national and provincial levels after the elections will ensure a period of stability in metros. Nonetheless, metros have been more politically stable over the past few months as motions of no confidence have been less frequent. Much of this is due to the steps taken

by the ANC to cement its control (with coalition partners) over many metros. It is also in part a product of the DA losing its appetite for these motions as the party believes they produce governments which are always vulnerable to removal.

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