



PARLIAMENT
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04 June 2026

Mr Sy Mamabolo
Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)
Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)
Election House
Riverside Office Park
1303 Heuwel Avenue
Centurion
Pretoria

Dear Mr Mamabolo,

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED ANC COLLUSION WITH RUSSIA IN ELECTORAL INTERFERENCE

I am writing to you to request a formal investigation by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) into Secretary General of the African National Congress (ANC), Mr Fikile Mbalula, and his advisor, Mr Bongani Mbindwane, following several allegations¹ of secret meetings held with entities and individuals representing the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) in Johannesburg in 2024 to develop and execute targeted disinformation operations, smear campaigns, and deliberate electoral interference against South African opposition parties.

Various investigative reports from both local and international journalists have revealed that a Russian company by the name of 'Politology', which is led by the SVR, allegedly colluded with Mr Mbalula and Mr Mbindwane to mislead the South African public and severely undermine the freedom and fairness of South African democracy, in what can only be referred to as an attack on the nation's sovereignty by a foreign power aided and abetted by domestic allies within the ANC. The reports outlining these allegations are footnoted in this letter for your reference.

Leaked documents from the SVR indicate that collusion between the Russian Federation and the ANC is what was behind the forging of fraudulent written correspondence from then Democratic Alliance (DA) Federal Council Chairperson, Helen Zille, ahead of the 2024 National and Provincial Elections. The fraudulent letter, which details patently false and fabricated plans to remove the ANC from power from within a coalition government, was circulated widely on social media by means of a coordinated cyber disinformation campaign.

¹ <https://forbiddenstories.org/russian-influence-south-africa-namibia-madagascar/>

Further reports reveal that Politology had planned a similar cyber disinformation² campaign levelled against then DA Federal Leader, John Steenhuisen, in which a fabricated event to celebrate Mr Steenhuisen's birthday would include fictitious branded merchandise with racist messaging and slogans over a distortion of the DA's party logo. It is also alleged that entire websites³ were created and launched to target the DA with damaging messaging and fabricated information to distort the public's image of the party and its representatives.

A 2024 study by the Institute for Security Studies identified a coordinated network producing nearly 80 000 anti-DA social media publications during the election period of that year. It is alleged that some of the participants received payments from Russian individuals⁴. This was further corroborated by international reporting in Europe⁵.

All of these reports indicate that the disinformation operations, smear campaigns, and deliberate electoral interference were launched specifically to suppress the support and performance of the DA in the 2024 National and Provincial Elections. Some of them even date back to 2019⁶.

Electoral Act 73 of 1998 and Electoral Code of Conduct

Section 87 of Electoral Act 73 of 1998 prohibits undue influence on voters, the spreading of false information intended to influence the outcome of an election, and any conduct that undermines free and fair elections. The Electoral Code of Conduct enclosed in the Act also states that parties and/or candidates may not publish false or defamatory allegations in connection with an election, and prohibits the misrepresentation of parties, candidates, or their symbols. In addition, Section 96 of the Electoral Code of Conduct makes breaches of the Electoral Act, or the Code of Conduct, enforceable by law and allows complaints to escalate to the Electoral Court if necessary.

Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020

Section 16 of the Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020 also deals with malicious communications, especially the distribution of false data messages intended to cause harm, including unlawful interference with data or systems.

Negligence on the part of the DIRCO Executive

On 4 March 2026, I asked the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), Thandi Moraka, in a parliamentary questions session whether she would démarche the ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of South Africa given these damning

² <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-03-16-mbalulas-covert-meetings-and-manoeuvres-of-russian-influence-agents-in-sa-namibia-and-madagascar/>

³ <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/debunking/new-russian-leak-details-alleged-anc-links-anti-da-campaign-dumballiance-site-20260323-0911>

⁴ <https://www.news24.com/southafrica/debunking/leaked-documents-show-russian-plans-to-target-sas-democratic-alliance-20260217-0347>

⁵ <https://www.france24.com/en/video/20260214-secret-documents-reveal-russia-s-cross-continental-disinformation-campaign>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/08/documents-suggest-russian-plan-to-sway-south-africa-election>

allegations of electoral interference in our country's democracy. Deputy Minister Moraka denied any wrongdoing on the part of the Russian Embassy and dismissed the claims as farcical.

This demonstrated to the Republic that the executive in this portfolio has no appetite to safeguard the sovereignty of our democracy and mete out consequences to foreign governments which seek to undermine it. This development is one of many in a deeply worrying trend of diplomatic conduct by the Presidency and DIRCO which selectively enact South Africa's foreign policy through the distorted lens of the ANC's worldview, amounting to a problematic overstep of the party into the realm of the state.

It is pertinent to note that both the DIRCO minister and both deputies are from the ANC, along with other ANC members of the executive which have openly supported an approach to international affairs rooted not in constitutional principle, but maligned party-political ideology.

Political conflicts of interest

Given the ANC's close historical and financial ties to the Russian Federation, Deputy Minister Moraka and the greater ministry's response also highlights a clear conflict of interest between individuals serving as Ministers and tasked with protecting the integrity of our democratic architecture as per their oath of office, and ANC members required to protect the financial interests, political ambitions, and existential stability of their organisation.

This situation creates an untenable environment where party-political interests through international alliances gravely overshadow the executive responsibility of ministers to safeguard the democratic future of South Africa as a whole. There is mounting evidence of the Russian Federation's targeted attack on democracies around the world to suppress liberal democratic parties and support those that are pro-Russian.

Mr Mamabolo, the allegations outlined above are incriminating and pose a very real existential threat to South Africa's fledgling democracy and the institutions which protect it. The IEC is one such institution. It is clear that the Executive will not intervene in this matter. It is now incumbent on the IEC and/or other Chapter 9 institutions to uphold the Constitution of the Republic and urgently act to shield our democracy from nefarious international actors.

Democratic South Africa was birthed from the sustained fight against such a system which legislatively manipulated suffrage and mischaracterised those who fought for freedom. We cannot allow our democracy to be captured by the very same forces which now seem to attack from within the ANC itself, with the alleged help of ANC-aligned international actors such as Russia.

As such, I would like to formally request that the IEC commence a full-scale investigation into these allegations and disclose, in the public interest, both its findings and efforts to remediate the situation to protect free and fair elections as per its mandate. I would also request that the IEC disclose to the public any legal action or sanction required against any entities or individuals implicated in the allegations outlined above.

This work is crucial to the existential integrity of South Africa's democracy and is thus a matter that implicates each and every citizen's right to freedom and fairness when choosing the

government of their country. Any act of interference in our country's democratic architecture strikes at the very heart of the fight for freedom for which tens of thousands of citizens gave their lives when fighting against the apartheid regime. If the ANC itself is now the biggest threat to South African democracy, it is incumbent on the very system for which they once so fervently fought, to root it out. I trust that the IEC will take up this request and treat it with the utmost seriousness that it requires.

I look forward to your favourable response.

Yours sincerely,

Ryan Smith
Democratic Alliance Spokesperson on International Relations and Cooperation