



## SABC DETAILED ANALYSIS

20240527\_2024 Elections / SABC News' election coverage plan.en

Broadcast: SABC-Sendung | Analyzed: 2026-05-25 10:15

Version 3.0-detail | Universal 3.0-detail | Konverter 3.4 (2026-05-20) | Standard: Broadcasting Act s. 6

### OVERALL SCORE

**3.9/10**

*Slight imbalance*

0 = balanced, 10 = strongly biased/manipulative

## POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Classification based on Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2024

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES 2024) is an academic survey of 609 political scientists in 31 countries. Each party is rated on a scale from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right).

| Party    | EFF         | MK          | ANC           | IFP          | DA           | ActionSA     | PA           | FF+          |
|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| CHES     | 1.50        | 3.50        | 4.50          | 6.00         | 6.50         | 6.50         | 7.00         | 8.00         |
| Spectrum | <i>Left</i> | <i>Left</i> | <i>Center</i> | <i>Right</i> | <i>Right</i> | <i>Right</i> | <i>Right</i> | <i>Right</i> |

The overall tendency is presented on a 0–10 scale (0 = strongly left-favoring, 5 = balanced, 10 = strongly right-favoring). The calculation is based on the difference in average favoritism of left vs. right parties (grouping per CHES 2024).

### TENDENCY (L – R)

**4.5 / 10**

*Balanced*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 — [chesdata.eu](https://chesdata.eu) | [Jolly et al., Electoral Studies, 2022](#) | Thresholds: [Pew Research Center](#)

This section provides political context and does not contribute to the overall score.



## POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

At the time of this broadcast (29 May 2024 election period), South Africa was approaching a watershed election in which the ANC faced the prospect of losing its 30-year parliamentary majority for the first time since 1994. The broadcast takes place on Day 1 of special voting (27 May 2024), two days before the main election day. The GNU coalition described in the political landscape above had not yet been formed — this broadcast captures the pre-election moment. The ANC held government as the incumbent party under President Cyril Ramaphosa. The main opposition parties were the DA (21.8%), MK (14.6%), EFF (9.5%), IFP (4.3%), and PA (2.3%).

| Party    | CHES L-R | Seats (post-election) | Government/Opposition    | Core Position                            |
|----------|----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|
| EFF      | 1.5      | 39                    | Opposition               | Far-left: expropriation, nationalisation |
| MK       | 3.0      | 58                    | Opposition               | Left-populist, Zuma personality cult     |
| ANC      | 4.0      | 159                   | Government (GNU lead)    | Centre-left, incumbent                   |
| DA       | 6.0      | 87                    | Government (GNU partner) | Centre-right, free market                |
| IFP      | 6.5      | 17                    | Government (GNU partner) | Right-wing, Zulu nationalist             |
| PA       | 7.0      | 9                     | Government (GNU partner) | Right-wing populist                      |
| FF+      | 8.0      | 6                     | Government (GNU partner) | Right-wing, Afrikaner interest           |
| ActionSA | 6.5      | 6                     | Opposition               | Centre-right, anti-immigration           |

The 2024 election represented the most competitive electoral contest in South Africa's democratic history, with the ANC polling below 50% for the first time. The rise of Jacob Zuma's MK party in KwaZulu-Natal created a direct threat to both ANC and IFP support bases. Load shedding (rolling blackouts) had been the dominant policy failure attributed to ANC governance, though a two-month reprieve before election day complicated the electoral calculus. The question of whether South Africa would require a coalition government — and what form that coalition would take — was the central political uncertainty of the moment.

The SABC is South Africa's public broadcaster, mandated under the Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999 and its own charter to provide impartial, fair, and balanced coverage of elections and public affairs. The SABC has a history of political capture during the Hlengiwe Mkhonto era (2012–2016), during which editorial independence was systematically compromised in favour of ANC-aligned narratives. Post-capture reforms have sought to restore independence, but the broadcaster's structural proximity to the state — including government funding — means questions of editorial independence remain live and legally relevant.



## CHAPTER 1 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

### Party Representation Accuracy

| Party         | Score (-5..+5) | Broadcast Representation vs. Party Programme Position  |
|---------------|----------------|--|
| ANC           | -1             | 09:57 "yesterday we heard from the head of state... as he gave his last message... to the country before we go to the polls" — Programme position: ANC as governing party seeking re-election on service delivery record — Representation: Ramaphosa's pre-election address is discussed sympathetically, framed as legitimate incumbency privilege ("sin of incumbency") rather than examined critically as electioneering on state time; mild positive framing |
| DA            | 0              | Not mentioned by name — Programme position: centre-right, free market, GNU partner — Representation: absent from discussion  |
| MK (uMkhonto) | -1             | 17:17 "I know that perhaps people would be looking out for how MK is doing and it makes sense because it's being led by someone who had just led the governing party" — Programme position: left-populist opposition, anti-establishment — Representation: framed neutrally as a "surprise performer" curiosity; no engagement with MK's substantive policy positions or Zuma's legal controversies  |
| EFF           | 0              | Not mentioned by name — Programme position: far-left, expropriation — Representation: absent   |
| IFP           | 0              | Not mentioned — absent   |
| PA            | 0              | Not mentioned — absent   |
| FF+           | 0              | Not mentioned — absent   |
| ActionSA      | 0              | Not mentioned — absent   |

#### Score Legend:

+5 = Party programme positions correctly and fully represented

0 = Party/topic not in broadcast

-5 = Party programme positions actively distorted or misrepresented

### Party Bias Summary

- Most Accurate Representation: MK (Score -1) — mentioned briefly and neutrally
- Strongest Distortion: ANC (Score -1) — Ramaphosa's pre-election address treated as legitimate incumbency exercise without critical scrutiny of the blurred line between state communication and party campaigning
- Average Deviation from 0: 0.25
- Conclusion: The broadcast's party-political bias is mild rather than severe, primarily because most parties are simply absent from discussion. The ANC receives the most substantive treatment, and that treatment is gently favourable — the political editor's framing of Ramaphosa's address as a normal exercise of incumbency privilege ("sin of incumbency") normalises what could equally be characterised as the misuse of state platforms for electoral advantage. No opposition party receives substantive policy engagement.



## CHAPTER 2 — BROADCAST INFORMATION AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

### Broadcast Data

- Title: SABC Election Coverage — Results Operations Centre, Midrand (Day 1, Special Voting)
- Date (from context): 27 May 2024 (Day 1 of special voting, two days before 29 May 2024 main election)
- Estimated Length: Approximately 18–19 minutes (transcript runs to approximately 18:39)
- Presenter/Reporter: Ayanda Dlamini (reporter at IEC Results Operations Centre, Midrand)
- Interviewees: Zandile (surname not given in transcript) — SABC Political Editor

| Actors                      | Function               | Party/Affiliation         | Political Spectrum                      |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Ayanda Dlamini              | SABC Reporter / Anchor | SABC (public broadcaster) | Institutional — no declared affiliation |
| Zandile [surname not given] | SABC Political Editor  | SABC (public broadcaster) | Institutional — no declared affiliation |

### Main Topic

Two SABC journalists conduct a pre-election scene-setting discussion from the IEC Results Operations Centre, covering election logistics, voter turnout trends, the significance of the 2024 election, and the SABC's own role as public broadcaster.

### World-Knowledge Context

The 2024 South African general election was widely described as the most consequential since the end of apartheid in 1994. For the first time, the ANC was polling below 50%, raising the prospect of coalition government. Key issues included: the ANC's governance record (load shedding, unemployment, crime, corruption); the rise of Jacob Zuma's MK party as a spoiler in KwaZulu-Natal; the EFF's continued radical left presence; the DA's positioning as the primary opposition; and the historic introduction of independent candidates following a Constitutional Court ruling. Voter turnout had been declining since 2009, and the 2021 local government elections recorded a historic low of approximately 45%. International observers and domestic civil society were closely monitoring the election for procedural integrity.



## CHAPTER 3 — 15 CRITERIA: DETAILED ANALYSIS

### Hard Facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically verifiable

#### 1. EXPERT SELECTION

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**Expert 1:** Zandile [surname not given] — SABC Political Editor

Timestamp: 02:00

Statement: "our responsibility and as the public broadcaster was basically to facilitate that by taking parties out there showing their manifestos and then giving South Africans their own opportunity to say what is it that they want"

Classification: SABC employee assessing SABC's own performance and role; institutional insider with direct interest in positive self-presentation

Missing Counter-Voice: An independent media analyst, academic, or civil society representative who could assess SABC's actual coverage record, including historical bias patterns

#### Source Depth Check:

**(a) FUNDING:** SABC is funded through a combination of government appropriation, licence fees, and commercial advertising. Government funding creates a structural dependency on the state that is directly relevant to editorial independence assessments.

Conflict of interest: An SABC employee assessing SABC's own impartiality has an obvious institutional interest in presenting the broadcaster favourably.

**(b) MANDATE:** The SABC's mandate under the Broadcasting Act is to provide impartial public interest broadcasting. However, an employee of the institution cannot credibly serve as an independent assessor of whether that mandate is being fulfilled.

D1 Conflict of Interest: -2 — SABC employee assessing SABC performance; direct institutional interest in positive framing

D2 Personal Risk: -1 — No personal risk in making positive statements about employer; mild career incentive toward favourable self-assessment

D3 Subject Competence: +1 — Genuine expertise in South African electoral politics and broadcasting; competent on factual electoral matters

D4 Opinion Consistency: 0 — No prior statements available for comparison in transcript

D5 Emotionalisation vs. Data: 0 — Mix of analytical observation and atmospheric commentary; neither strongly data-driven nor strongly emotional

D6 Source Level: 0 — Secondary source; no primary research cited

**TOTAL: -2 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW (structurally compromised on self-assessment; competent on electoral facts)**

**(c) PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE:** The broadcast presents Zandile as a neutral political expert. In reality, on the specific question of SABC's own role and performance, she is an institutional insider with a direct interest in positive self-presentation. This is not disclosed to viewers. → Technique No. 2 (Source Selection bias)

*Missing Expert Groups:*

- Independent electoral analyst (e.g., EISA, IJR, academic political scientist)
- Opposition party representative



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- Civil society/media freedom organisation (e.g., SOS Coalition, Right2Know)

#### Source Credibility Overview:

| Source  | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | D5 | D6 | Total | Signal        |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|---------------|
| Zandile [surname not given] — SABC Political Editor | -2 | -1 | +1 | 0  | 0  | 0  | -2    | <b>YELLOW</b> |

#### Summary (Matrix Result):

- Zandile [SABC Political Editor]: **YELLOW** — Competent on electoral facts; structurally compromised as self-assessor of SABC performance; conflict of interest not disclosed to viewers



## 2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

### Source 1: SABC Political Editor (self-referential)

#### Timestamp

01:41 — Statement: "the sabc's role is incredibly important of course we broadcast to millions of people"

- (a) **Funding and governance:** SABC is state-funded; government appropriation creates structural dependency
- (b) **Structural conflict of interest:** The broadcaster assessing its own importance and impartiality is a textbook conflict of interest; no independent voice is brought in to verify or challenge this self-assessment
- (c) **Missing counter-source:** An independent media analyst, academic, or civil society representative (e.g., SOS Coalition, Media Monitoring Africa) would have provided an external perspective on SABC's actual coverage record

### Source 2: IEC (cited indirectly)

#### Timestamp

01:20 — Statement: "we know according to the IEC that 1.6 million people have applied for special vote"

- (a) **Funding:** IEC is an independent constitutional body funded by the state
- (b) **Structural conflict of interest:** Minimal — IEC is constitutionally independent; the figure cited is a factual administrative statistic
- (c) **Missing counter-source:** No IEC official is actually interviewed; the figure is cited second-hand by a journalist

### Source 3: President Ramaphosa's pre-election address (cited indirectly)

#### Timestamp

09:57 — Statement: "yesterday we heard from the head of state... as he gave his last message... to the country before we go to the polls"

- (a) **Funding:** State resources used for address
- (b) **Structural conflict of interest:** An incumbent president's pre-election address is a primary ANC campaign communication; treating it as a neutral "head of state" communication without critical framing is a source selection bias
- (c) **Missing counter-source:** No opposition response to Ramaphosa's address is cited or sought

#### Rumour Check (Penalty Points):

No explicit rumour markers ("allegedly," "sources say," "reportedly") identified in the transcript. No penalty points applied.

*Summary: The broadcast draws on only two substantive sources — an SABC insider and an indirectly cited IEC statistic. The absence of any external, independent, or opposition sources is the dominant source selection failure. The self-referential structure of the broadcast (SABC journalists discussing SABC's role) is itself a source selection problem of the first order.*



### 3. AIRTIME DISTRIBUTION

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Estimated speaking time:

- Ayanda Dlamini (SABC Reporter/Anchor): approximately 7 minutes (37%)
- Zandile (SABC Political Editor): approximately 10 minutes (53%)
- Music/transitions: approximately 1.5 minutes (8%)
- Opposition parties: 0 minutes (0%)
- ANC/Government: referenced but not given direct airtime — 0 minutes direct
- Civil society/independent analysts: 0 minutes (0%)

*Summary: The broadcast is a two-person SABC internal conversation. No external voices receive any airtime whatsoever. While the 53/37 split between the two SABC journalists is not itself problematic, the complete absence of any external voice — from any political party, civil society organisation, or independent analyst — is a significant structural imbalance. The score of 3 reflects the internal balance between the two journalists (reasonable) offset by the total exclusion of all external perspectives.*



#### 4. SELECTIVE OMISSION

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##### Omission 1: Coalition government scenarios

###### Context

The central political question of the 2024 election — whether the ANC would fall below 50% and what coalition arrangements might follow — is entirely absent from the discussion.

Relevant at: Throughout the broadcast, particularly 04:00–18:39

###### Effect

Viewers are given no framework for understanding the most consequential possible outcome of the election; the broadcast implicitly treats the election as a normal competitive exercise rather than a potential constitutional inflection point.

##### Omission 2: ANC governance failures beyond load shedding

###### Context

The ANC's five-year governance record included not only load shedding but also record unemployment (32%+), one of the world's highest murder rates, ongoing state capture prosecutions, and the Phala Phala scandal involving President Ramaphosa himself.

Relevant at: 17:59 — "load shedding so remember when they all launched their manifestos one of the things they kept speaking about was load shedding but I think we've we haven't had that for the past close to two months now"

###### Effect

Reducing the ANC's accountability question to a single issue (load shedding) that has temporarily improved creates a misleadingly positive picture of the incumbent's record.

##### Omission 3: Zuma's legal disqualification and MK's constitutional controversies

###### Context

Jacob Zuma was disqualified from standing as a parliamentary candidate due to his criminal conviction; MK's formation and its relationship to ANC internal politics involved significant legal and constitutional controversy.

Relevant at: 17:17 — "I know that perhaps people would be looking out for how MK is doing and it makes sense because it's being led by someone who had just led the governing party"

###### Effect

Describing Zuma only as "someone who had just led the governing party" without any reference to his criminal conviction, disqualification, or the constitutional controversies surrounding MK presents a materially incomplete picture.

*Summary: The broadcast's omissions are systematic rather than incidental — they consistently remove information that would complicate the picture of a smoothly functioning democratic process and a broadly legitimate incumbent government. The most significant omission is the complete absence of any discussion of coalition government scenarios, which was the defining political question of the election.*

#### Missing Voices

- Independent electoral analyst/academic: Would have provided evidence-based assessment of electoral trends, coalition scenarios, and comparative democratic analysis
- Opposition party spokesperson (DA/EFF/MK): Would have provided substantive policy contrast and accountability framing for the ANC's governance record



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- Civil society/electoral observer (OSCE equivalent, EISA): Would have provided independent assessment of procedural integrity and special voting accessibility
- Voter from a marginalised community: Would have grounded the discussion in lived experience of service delivery failures and electoral participation barriers
- IEC official: Would have provided authoritative procedural information beyond what the journalists themselves speculate about
- Constitutional law expert: Would have contextualised the independent candidates ruling and its democratic significance
- Journalist/media analyst: Would have provided independent assessment of SABC's own coverage record and independence — rather than the broadcaster assessing itself



## 5. NUMERICAL MANIPULATION

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Complete figures include: absolute value, proportion (%) and trend

### Finding 1:

**Timestamp** 01:20

Figure: "1.6 million people have applied for special vote"

Dimensions: (a) Absolute value — provided ✓; (b) Proportion — not provided (1.6 million of approximately 27.6 million registered voters = approximately 5.8%); (c) Trend — not provided (comparison with previous elections not given)

**Missing context**

The figure is presented as significant ("it's not a small number") without the proportional context that would allow viewers to assess whether 5.8% of registered voters applying for special votes is high, low, or typical.

**Effect**

Mild — the omission of proportional context is not clearly directional in terms of bias; it simply leaves the figure less analytically useful than it could be.

### Finding 2:

**Timestamp** 08:54

Figure: "we about 45% so that that that that is not good news at all"

Dimensions: (a) Absolute value — provided ✓; (b) Proportion — provided (45% turnout) ✓; (c) Trend — partially provided (described as "very bad" relative to national elections, but no historical series given)

**Missing context**

The 45% figure for the 2021 local government elections is accurate; the claim that national elections typically produce higher turnout is correct but no specific figures are given for comparison.

**Effect**

Minimal — the analytical point being made is broadly accurate.

*Summary: No significant numerical manipulation is identified. The broadcast makes limited use of statistics, and where figures are cited, they are broadly accurate. The minor omission of proportional context for the 1.6 million special vote figure is noted but does not constitute deliberate manipulation.*



## 6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

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### Finding 1:

#### Timestamp

17:17

#### Quote

"I know that perhaps people would be looking out for how MK is doing and it makes sense because it's being led by someone who had just led the governing party"

Technique: Zuma is described only by his former role ("someone who had just led the governing party") without naming him or referencing his criminal conviction. This is the inverse of guilt by association — it is a form of sanitisation by omission rather than discrediting by association.

#### Effect

Mild positive framing of MK by avoiding any reference to the controversies surrounding its leader.

*No explicit guilt-by-association technique is deployed in this broadcast. The score of 1 reflects the inverse pattern — sanitisation of MK/Zuma by omission of negative associations rather than discrediting of any party by negative association.*

*Summary: Guilt by association is not a significant technique in this broadcast. The more notable pattern is the opposite — the avoidance of negative associations where they would be factually relevant (Zuma's criminal record, MK's constitutional controversies).*



## 7. TIMING

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### Finding 1:

Position: 01:41 (early — approximately 9% into broadcast)

Content: "the sabc's role is incredibly important of course we broadcast to millions of people on any other day it's going to be no exception this week with the world quite frankly watching how South Africa is going to decide"

Timing Effect: Establishing the SABC's importance and global visibility early in the broadcast primes viewers to receive subsequent SABC self-assessment positively; it functions as a credibility-building opener that pre-empts critical scrutiny of the broadcaster's own performance.

### Finding 2:

Position: 17:59 (late — approximately 95% into broadcast)

Content: "load shedding so remember when they all launched their manifestos one of the things they kept speaking about was load shedding but I think we've we haven't had that for the past close to two months now so and then because it's no longer there it's not really being spoken about a lot more"

Timing Effect: The only substantive reference to ANC governance failures is placed at the very end of the broadcast and is immediately minimised ("it's no longer there"). Placing this acknowledgement late and framing it as a resolved issue reduces its salience and impact.

*Summary: Timing manipulation is present but not severe. The most notable pattern is the early establishment of SABC self-importance and the late, minimised treatment of the ANC's primary governance liability. Neither constitutes extreme manipulation, but both serve to shape the overall impression of the broadcast in directions favourable to the incumbent and to the broadcaster itself.*



## 8. SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

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Outrage = bias. Selective outrage amplifies the finding. Score = outrage level (0–5) + selectivity (0–5)

*Methodological Principle (v2.2): Before each assessment, the triggering event must be documented. A reaction can only be assessed as selective if comparable triggers from other positions produced no analogous reaction.*

### Finding 1:

#### Timestamp

10:23

Triggering event: Discussion of President Ramaphosa's pre-election address at the Union Buildings

Reaction: "yes he spoke as the head of state but of course as he was mentioning the achievements somehow in the minds of the people he would say he was hoping that as I'm saying this people will know that this is me who's been doing this"

#### Comparison

No comparable discussion of opposition parties using state-adjacent platforms or media access for electoral advantage — no analogous trigger event present in broadcast

Asymmetry: The political editor acknowledges the blurred line between Ramaphosa's state role and party role but frames it as normal and universal ("I guess all those parties should they be able to get that vote on the 29th of May I can tell you similar thing will be happening") — this normalisation is applied only to the incumbent; no opposition party is given equivalent treatment because no opposition party is discussed.

Outrage Level: 0/5 — No outrage expressed; the opposite (normalisation)

Selectivity: 1/5 — Mild asymmetry in that the incumbent's use of state platform is normalised while no equivalent scrutiny is applied to opposition parties (though this is partly because opposition parties are simply absent from the discussion)

*Summary: Selective outrage is not a significant technique in this broadcast. The more notable pattern is the normalisation of the incumbent's use of state communication platforms for electoral purposes, without any equivalent scrutiny of opposition behaviour — though the absence of opposition discussion makes a full asymmetry assessment difficult to establish.*



| 9. SELECTIVE OMISSION — OVERALL PICTURE |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 7/10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1                                       | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10   |

| Finding 1:   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Timestamp</b>   | Throughout broadcast (00:00–18:39)   |
| Missing Perspective/Fact: Coalition government scenarios and their implications<br>Relevance: The 2024 election was widely projected to produce a hung parliament requiring coalition negotiations; this was the defining political question of the moment |  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Viewers receive no framework for understanding the most likely and most consequential electoral outcome; the broadcast implicitly presents the election as a binary contest rather than a multi-party negotiation scenario |

| Finding 2:   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Timestamp</b>   | 17:17  |
| Missing Perspective/Fact: Jacob Zuma's criminal conviction and disqualification from parliamentary candidacy<br>Relevance: Zuma's legal status was directly relevant to understanding MK's electoral significance and the constitutional questions surrounding the party |  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Describing Zuma only as "someone who had just led the governing party" presents a materially incomplete picture that is misleading by omission |

| Finding 3:  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Timestamp</b>  | Throughout broadcast  |
| Missing Perspective/Fact: Any voice from outside the SABC — no opposition parties, no civil society, no independent analysts, no voters, no IEC officials<br>Relevance: A broadcast purporting to provide election coverage should include perspectives from the political actors and stakeholders whose contest is being covered |   |
| <b>Impact</b>   | The broadcast is structurally self-referential — two SABC journalists discussing the SABC's role and their own observations, with no external validation or challenge; this is a fundamental completeness failure |

*Summary: The broadcast's completeness failures are structural and systematic. The most significant is the complete absence of any external voice — the broadcast is entirely self-referential, with two SABC journalists providing all content. This is compounded by the omission of the election's central political question (coalition government) and the sanitisation of MK's leader by omitting his criminal record.*

*Share of covered perspectives*

*Inverted: original value measures coverage (higher = better). Shown as deviation (higher = larger gaps).*

**[A] The SABC's own editorial independence and its history of political capture:** is the broadcaster genuinely impartial?

**[B] The ANC's governance record:** what has and has not been delivered in five years?

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**[C] Opposition parties' substantive policy alternatives:** what are they offering?

[D] The significance of the MK party and Zuma's legal controversies for electoral integrity

[E] The EFF's policy platform and its electoral trajectory

[F] Voter suppression concerns and the accessibility of special voting

[G] The role of independent candidates and what their introduction means for democracy

[H] Civil society and electoral observer perspectives on the integrity of the process

[I] The declining voter turnout trend and its structural causes

[J] The potential for coalition government and what that would mean for governance

### Assessment: Was Each Perspective Addressed?

#### **[A] ADDRESSED — PARTIALLY**

Timestamp: 01:41 — Quote: "the sabc's role is incredibly important of course we broadcast to millions of people"

— Assessment: The SABC's role is discussed but only in self-congratulatory terms; the broadcaster's history of political capture and ongoing independence questions are not raised.

#### **[B] ADDRESSED — SUPERFICIALLY**

Timestamp: 17:59 — Quote: "load shedding so remember when they all launched their manifestos one of the things they kept speaking about was load shedding but I think we've we haven't had that for the past close to two months now" — Assessment: The ANC's governance record is reduced to a single issue (load shedding) and that issue is immediately minimised by noting its recent absence; no broader accountability discussion.

#### **[C] OMITTED**

No timestamp available — No opposition party policy positions are discussed at any point in the broadcast.

#### **[D] ADDRESSED — SUPERFICIALLY**

Timestamp: 17:17 — Quote: "I know that perhaps people would be looking out for how MK is doing and it makes sense because it's being led by someone who had just led the governing party" — Assessment: MK is mentioned as an electoral curiosity; Zuma's legal controversies, his disqualification from standing for parliament, and the party's substantive positions are entirely absent.

#### **[E] OMITTED**

No timestamp available — The EFF is not mentioned at any point.

#### **[F] ADDRESSED — PARTIALLY**

Timestamp: 00:16 — Quote: "1.6 million people have applied for special vote and presumably they've been granted that access" — Assessment: Special voting numbers are cited but accessibility concerns, logistical challenges, or any reported irregularities are not examined.

#### **[G] ADDRESSED — PARTIALLY**

Timestamp: 06:51 — Quote: "we even have added a new element of the independence right so we have 11 independent candidates contesting for the very first time" — Assessment: Independent candidates are mentioned but their significance is treated as a curiosity rather than a substantive democratic development.

#### **[H] OMITTED**

No timestamp available — No civil society organisations, electoral observers, or independent analysts are referenced.

#### **[I] ADDRESSED**

Timestamp: 08:01 — Quote: "the IEC has in the past said that you know we are seeing what seems to be a steady decline in the people who typically would be eligible to vote and those who actually pitch up on voting day"



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— Assessment: Turnout decline is acknowledged and discussed with some analytical depth; this is one of the stronger substantive moments in the broadcast.

#### [J] OMITTED

No timestamp available — The possibility of coalition government — the central political question of the election — is not discussed at any point.

#### Completeness Score: 3/10

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**Reasoning:** The broadcast is primarily a logistical and atmospheric scene-setter rather than a substantive political analysis. Of ten relevant perspectives, only two (voter turnout trends and special voting logistics) receive meaningful treatment. The most politically significant questions — coalition government, opposition policy platforms, ANC accountability, electoral integrity concerns — are either absent or treated superficially. The broadcast's self-referential focus on the SABC's own role further displaces substantive political content.



## Soft Facts — 6 qualitative techniques

### 10. FRAMING

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#### Finding 1:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Timestamp</b>       | 01:41  |
| <b>Quote</b>           | <i>"the sabc's role is incredibly important of course we broadcast to millions of people on any other day it's going to be no exception this week with the world quite frankly watching how South Africa is going to decide"</i> |
| <b>Manipulation</b>    | The election is framed as a global spectacle in which the SABC plays a central, heroic role; this self-aggrandising frame positions the broadcaster as a protagonist rather than a neutral facilitator                           |
| <b>Why problematic</b> | Framing the SABC as the primary lens through which the world watches South Africa elevates the broadcaster's own importance and pre-empts critical scrutiny of its editorial choices   |

#### Finding 2:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Timestamp</b>       | 03:00   |
| <b>Quote</b>           | <i>"ours has been to facilitate that process take those parties and lay them out there to the public to see those who had been given the opportunity did they do what was expected of them if they did did they do enough"</i>          |
| <b>Manipulation</b>    | The SABC's role is framed as neutral facilitation — a "laying out" of parties for public assessment; this framing obscures the editorial choices involved in which parties receive coverage, how much, and in what framing              |
| <b>Why problematic</b> | The "neutral facilitator" frame is itself a political choice; it presents the broadcaster as a transparent conduit rather than an active editorial agent, which is factually inaccurate and shields the broadcaster from accountability |

#### Finding 3:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Timestamp</b>       | 04:33  |
| <b>Quote</b>           | <i>"despite the fact that we've got 30 years of this democracy there's still so much ahead to learn about how this democracy actually functions"</i>   |
| <b>Manipulation</b>    | South African democracy is framed as a learning process — young, developing, still finding its way; this frame is broadly accurate but functions to contextualise any democratic shortcomings (including the ANC's governance failures) as growing pains rather than systemic failures |
| <b>Why problematic</b> | The "maturing democracy" frame implicitly excuses incumbent failures by attributing them to democratic inexperience rather than policy choices or corruption   |



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*Summary: The dominant frame of the broadcast is the SABC as a neutral, world-class facilitator of a maturing democracy. This frame serves two functions simultaneously: it elevates the broadcaster's self-image and it contextualises the incumbent's governance record as part of a normal developmental trajectory rather than a subject for accountability.*



|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |             |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| <b>11. WORD CHOICE AND TERMINOLOGY</b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | <b>4/10</b> |
| 1                                      | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10          |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Finding 1:</b>      |   |
| <b>Timestamp</b>       | 02:00   |
| <b>Quote</b>           | <i>"our world class Studio here at the rock"</i>  |
| <b>Manipulation</b>    | "World class" is a self-promotional descriptor applied to the SABC's own facilities; it is an evaluative claim presented as a factual description   |
| <b>Why problematic</b> | Neutral alternative would be: "our studio here at the SABC"; the "world class" descriptor is promotional language that would not be applied to a competitor's facilities and signals the broadcast's self-congratulatory register |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Finding 2:</b>      |   |
| <b>Timestamp</b>       | 12:04   |
| <b>Quote</b>           | <i>"I think the Americans call it sin of incumbency indeed exactly that's what he was doing because he carries those certain privileges"</i>  |
| <b>Manipulation</b>    | The phrase "sin of incumbency" is used to describe Ramaphosa's use of state platforms for electoral messaging; the word "sin" is immediately neutralised by "privileges" — the framing acknowledges the ethical problem but immediately normalises it |
| <b>Why problematic</b> | Neutral alternative would be: "the use of state communication platforms for electoral purposes"; the "sin of incumbency" framing acknowledges the problem rhetorically while simultaneously excusing it as a universal political practice             |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Finding 3:</b>      |   |
| <b>Timestamp</b>       | 17:17   |
| <b>Quote</b>           | <i>"it's being led by someone who had just led the governing party"</i>   |
| <b>Manipulation</b>    | Zuma is referred to only as "someone who had just led the governing party" — he is not named, his criminal conviction is not mentioned, and his disqualification from parliamentary candidacy is not referenced   |
| <b>Why problematic</b> | Neutral and complete alternative would be: "Jacob Zuma, the former ANC president who was convicted of contempt of court and disqualified from standing as a parliamentary candidate"; the sanitised description creates a materially misleading impression of MK's leader |

*Summary: Word choice in this broadcast is characterised by self-promotional language about the SABC, normalising language about the incumbent's electoral behaviour, and sanitising language about MK's leader. None of these choices is extreme, but they collectively produce a mild but consistent directional bias.*



## 12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

2/10

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*Methodological Principle (v2.2): Before each assessment, the triggering event must be documented. An intervention can only be assessed as asymmetric if comparable triggers from other guests produced no analogous intervention.*

### Finding 1:

**Timestamp** 10:05

Triggering event: Zandile's discussion of Ramaphosa's pre-election address and the "sin of incumbency"

**Quote (Anchor)** "yeah no absolutely so I guess it's all love and fair and War some people might say"

**Comparison** No comparable trigger event from opposition parties — no opposition party is discussed in sufficient depth to generate a comparable moderation moment

Asymmetry: The anchor accepts the "sin of incumbency" framing without challenge or follow-up question; however, since no opposition party receives equivalent treatment, a full asymmetry assessment cannot be established. The absence of challenge is noted.

*Note: The broadcast is a two-person SABC internal conversation rather than a traditional interview with external guests. The moderation dynamic is collegial rather than adversarial by design. Asymmetry in the traditional sense (harder questions to one guest than another) is structurally absent because there is only one guest and she is a colleague. The score of 2 reflects the absence of any challenging follow-up questions to the political editor's self-assessments of SABC performance, rather than a traditional moderation asymmetry.*

*Summary: Moderation behaviour is collegial throughout, which is appropriate for a scene-setting conversation between colleagues but inappropriate for a broadcast that presents itself as political analysis. The absence of any challenging questions — particularly about SABC's own editorial independence and the ANC's governance record — is the primary moderation concern.*



### 13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

3/10

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#### Asymmetry 1:

To Zandile (SABC Political Editor), 02:18: "let's talk about the preparation though I think a lot of people of course have come to expect a certain standard from the sabc not only in so far as the nature of our coverage but what we choose to focus on during the election" — Soft — invites self-assessment and self-promotion; no critical dimension  
To Zandile (SABC Political Editor), 10:05: "was that to you a message from a head of state or a message from a head of state who happens to also lead a certain political party and has a parting word to say before the 29th of May" — Moderately probing — this is the sharpest question in the broadcast; it raises the legitimate question of whether Ramaphosa's address was state communication or party campaigning

#### Comparison

The one genuinely probing question in the broadcast is directed at the incumbent president's behaviour (via the political editor), which is appropriate. However, no equivalently probing questions are asked about opposition parties, SABC's own independence record, or the political editor's potential institutional biases.

#### Asymmetry 2:

To Zandile, 16:32: "I wonder if any of that is crystallizing for you yet" — Soft — open-ended invitation for reflection; no critical dimension  
No comparable probing question about opposition parties, coalition scenarios, or governance failures is asked at any point in the broadcast.

*Summary: Question asymmetry is present but limited by the broadcast's self-referential structure. The one probing question (about Ramaphosa's address) is the broadcast's strongest moment of critical journalism; its impact is immediately diluted by the political editor's normalising response, which the anchor accepts without follow-up.*



|                          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |             |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| <b>14. FALSE BALANCE</b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | <b>2/10</b> |
| 1                        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10          |

#### Finding 1:

Timestamp 03:00

Construct: "take those parties and lay them out there to the public to see those who had been given the opportunity did they do what was expected of them... and then of course there are those who want to wrestle power from them so they also had their own saying to the public"

#### Analysis

The broadcast claims to have provided balanced coverage of both governing and opposition parties during the election campaign period. This claim of balance is not tested, verified, or challenged within the broadcast itself. The claim functions as a false balance assertion — presenting the SABC as having been equally fair to all parties without any evidence being offered.

#### Why problematic

A broadcaster asserting its own balance is not evidence of balance; the assertion substitutes for the demonstration.

*Summary: False balance is not a dominant technique in this broadcast. The more significant issue is the absence of balance rather than the artificial construction of it. The one instance identified is the broadcaster's unchallenged self-assertion of having provided balanced election coverage.*



## 15. AGENDA-SETTING

6/10

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### Finding 1:

Agenda element set: The SABC as a world-class, impartial public broadcaster fulfilling its democratic mandate

#### Timestamp

01:41 — Evidence: "the sabc's role is incredibly important of course we broadcast to millions of people... that's why we thought we should bring into our world class Studio"

Alternative agenda: SABC's history of political capture, ongoing questions about editorial independence, the Motsoeneng era, and whether the broadcaster's coverage of the 2024 election has been genuinely impartial — none of this reaches the agenda

### Finding 2:

Agenda element set: The 2024 election as a normal, well-functioning democratic exercise

#### Timestamp

04:33 — Evidence: "despite the fact that we've got 30 years of this democracy there's still so much ahead to learn about how this democracy actually functions"

Alternative agenda: The specific democratic integrity concerns of the 2024 election — MK's constitutional controversies, the IEC's handling of Zuma's disqualification, concerns about electoral violence in KwaZulu-Natal, and the potential for disputed results — none of these reach the agenda

### Finding 3:

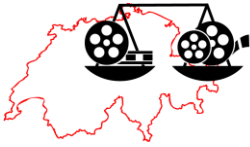
Agenda element set: Voter turnout as the primary measure of democratic health

#### Timestamp

08:01 — Evidence: "we are seeing what seems to be a steady decline in the people who typically would be eligible to vote and those who actually pitch up on voting day"

Alternative agenda: Structural barriers to participation (voter registration failures, accessibility of polling stations, disenfranchisement of specific communities) are not discussed; turnout decline is treated as a cultural/attitudinal phenomenon rather than a structural one

*Summary: The broadcast's agenda-setting function is its most significant bias vector. By treating the SABC as a neutral world-class broadcaster, the election as a normal democratic exercise, and turnout as a cultural rather than structural issue, the broadcast systematically excludes the most challenging questions about South African democracy and the broadcaster's own role within it.*



## CHAPTER 4 — OVERALL EVALUATION

### Results

- HARD FACTS SCORE (Average Criteria 1–9): 4.0 / 10
- SOFT FACTS SCORE (Average Criteria 10–15): 3.7 / 10

### Dominant Techniques

- 1. Selective Omission / Completeness (Score 7):** The broadcast's most significant bias vector is structural — the complete absence of any external voice, the omission of coalition government scenarios, and the sanitisation of MK's leader by omitting his criminal record. These omissions are not random; they consistently remove information that would complicate the picture of a smoothly functioning democratic process and a broadly legitimate incumbent.
- 2. Agenda-Setting (Score 6):** The broadcast systematically treats the SABC as a neutral world-class broadcaster, the election as a normal democratic exercise, and voter turnout decline as a cultural phenomenon — all of which exclude the most challenging questions about South African democracy and the broadcaster's own editorial independence. The agenda is set in ways that serve both the broadcaster's institutional self-interest and the incumbent government's electoral interests.
- 3. Expert and Source Selection (Score 6 each):** The exclusive use of an SABC insider as the broadcast's sole analytical voice — assessing both the election and the SABC's own performance — is a fundamental source selection failure. The undisclosed conflict of interest (an employee assessing her employer's impartiality) is the broadcast's most clear-cut methodological problem.

### Core Messages of the Broadcast

**\*\*MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE):** \*\* "The 2024 election is a normal, well-functioning democratic exercise in which South Africans will make their choice through an established and legitimate process."

**Technique:** Framing, Agenda-Setting — Evidence: 04:33, 15:44

**\*\*MESSAGE 2 (INSTITUTIONAL):** \*\* "The SABC is a world-class, impartial public broadcaster that has faithfully fulfilled its democratic mandate by giving all parties a fair platform."

**Technique:** Expert Selection, Source Selection, False Balance — Evidence: 01:41, 02:00, 03:00

**\*\*MESSAGE 3 (POLITICAL):** \*\* "The incumbent president's use of state communication platforms before the election is a normal exercise of incumbency privilege, not a misuse of state resources."

**Technique:** Framing, Word Choice, Moderation Behaviour — Evidence: 10:23, 12:04

### Manipulation Level Classification

Reasoning: The broadcast scores 3.8/10, placing it in the "slight tendency" category. The bias is primarily structural rather than active — it operates through omission, self-referential framing, and the absence of external voices rather than through overt advocacy or deliberate distortion. The broadcast does not actively campaign for the ANC or attack opposition parties; rather, it creates a favourable environment for the incumbent by treating the election as a normal democratic exercise, normalising the president's use of state platforms, and excluding the governance accountability questions that would be most damaging to the ANC. Under Broadcasting Act s. 6, the primary concern is not active distortion but the failure to provide the diversity of perspectives and the critical scrutiny that the public broadcaster's mandate requires.

### CONCLUSION

This SABC election broadcast presents as a neutral, procedural scene-setter but contains a consistent pattern of structural bias operating primarily through omission and self-referential framing. The broadcast's most significant failing under Broadcasting Act s. 6 is its complete reliance on internal SABC voices — two journalists assessing their own broadcaster's performance and the election's significance — without any external, independent, or opposition perspective. The incumbent president's pre-election address is normalised as a legitimate exercise of incumbency privilege without critical scrutiny; the ANC's governance record is reduced to a single issue (load shedding) that is immediately minimised; and MK's leader is described in terms that omit his criminal conviction and disqualification



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from parliamentary candidacy. The broadcast does not meet the standard of impartiality and diversity of perspective required by Broadcasting Act s. 6 and BCCSA Code Clauses 16 and 18, though the degree of non-compliance is moderate rather than severe, and the bias operates through structural choices rather than active editorial distortion.



## OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

### Individual Scores — All 15 Criteria

| No. | Criterion                            | Score | Rating                |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1   | EXPERT SELECTION                     | 6/10  | Significant imbalance |
| 2   | SOURCE SELECTION                     | 6/10  | Significant imbalance |
| 3   | AIRTIME DISTRIBUTION                 | 3/10  | Slight imbalance      |
| 4   | SELECTIVE OMISSION                   | 7/10  | Pronounced imbalance  |
| 5   | NUMERICAL MANIPULATION               | 2/10  | Unremarkable          |
| 6   | GUILT BY ASSOCIATION                 | 1/10  | Unremarkable          |
| 7   | TIMING                               | 3/10  | Slight imbalance      |
| 8   | SELECTIVE OUTRAGE                    | 1/10  | Unremarkable          |
| 9   | SELECTIVE OMISSION — OVERALL PICTURE | 7/10  | Pronounced imbalance  |
| 10  | FRAMING                              | 5/10  | Significant imbalance |
| 11  | WORD CHOICE AND TERMINOLOGY          | 4/10  | Slight imbalance      |
| 12  | MODERATION BEHAVIOUR                 | 2/10  | Unremarkable          |
| 13  | QUESTION ASYMMETRY                   | 3/10  | Slight imbalance      |
| 14  | FALSE BALANCE                        | 2/10  | Unremarkable          |
| 15  | AGENDA-SETTING                       | 6/10  | Significant imbalance |

#### HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

**4.0/10**

*Slight imbalance*

#### SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

**3.7/10**

*Slight imbalance*

#### OVERALL SCORE

**3.9/10**

*Slight imbalance*

*Average of Hardfacts and Softfacts*



## KEY — Score Definitions

### Individual Scores per Criterion (0–10)

|            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
| <b>0</b>   | <b>No finding</b>                      | No relevant anomaly detected.  |
| <b>1–2</b> | <b>Weak finding</b>                    | Minor anomaly without substantial impact on balance.                             |
| <b>3–4</b> | <b>Slight to moderate finding</b>      | Recognizable tendency; low to moderate impact relevance.                         |
| <b>5</b>   | <b>Moderate finding with impact</b>    | Relevant imbalance affecting the audience's opinion-forming potential.           |
| <b>6</b>   | <b>Significant finding (threshold)</b> | Scores of 6 and above are classified as 'significant findings.'                  |
| <b>7</b>   | <b>Significant finding</b>             | Clear, well-documented imbalance with distinct impact relevance.                 |
| <b>8–9</b> | <b>Severe finding</b>                  | Pronounced imbalance; multiple documented individual findings in this criterion. |
| <b>10</b>  | <b>Maximum severity</b>                | Systematic, pervasive imbalance in this criterion.                               |

### Aggregated Deviation Index — Interpretation Ranges

|                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| <b>0.0 – 2.5</b> | <b>Unremarkable</b>   | No significant patterns detected; broadcast meets the impartiality standard.     |
| <b>2.6 – 4.0</b> | <b>Slight imbalance</b>   | Isolated anomalies; statistically visible but within tolerance range.            |
| <b>4.1 – 6.0</b> | <b>Significant imbalance</b>  | Multiple significant findings; relevant impairment of perspective diversity.     |
| <b>6.1 – 8.0</b> | <b>Serious deviation from the impartiality standard. High degree of deviation</b> | Pronounced, cross-broadcast patterns; high impact relevance.                     |
| <b>8.1 – 10</b>  | <b>Fundamental systemic one-sidedness. Very high bias degree</b>                  | Maximum severity across nearly all criteria; systematically one-sided reporting. |

### Party-Political Bias (-5 to +5)

|                 |                               |   |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>-5 to -3</b> | <b>Strongly disadvantaged</b> | Party is significantly underrepresented in framing, airtime, or presentation. |
| <b>-2 to -1</b> | <b>Slightly disadvantaged</b> | Recognizable but minor disadvantage.  |
| <b>0</b>        | <b>Neutral</b>                | No detectable favoritism or disadvantage.                                     |
| <b>+1 to +2</b> | <b>Slightly favored</b>       | Recognizable but minor favoritism.  |
| <b>+3 to +5</b> | <b>Strongly favored</b>       | Party is significantly overrepresented in framing, airtime, or presentation.  |



## CHAPTER 5 — LEGAL CLASSIFICATION (Broadcasting Act s. 6)

### Assessment under Broadcasting Act s. 6

Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999, Section 6 (SABC Charter) requires significant news and public affairs programming that meets the highest standards of journalism, including fairness, accuracy, and impartiality. BCCSA Code Clause 16 requires news to be reported truthfully, accurately and fairly, in the correct context and in a balanced manner. Clause 18 requires opposing views to be presented on controversial issues of public importance.

#### Violation 1:

Standard: Broadcasting Act s. 6 / BCCSA Code Clause 18 (opposing views on controversial issues)

Facts: The broadcast discusses the 2024 general election — unambiguously a controversial issue of public importance — without presenting any opposing views from any political party, civil society organisation, or independent analyst. The entire broadcast consists of two SABC journalists discussing the election and the broadcaster's own role.

Evidence: Timestamp 00:00–18:39 — the complete absence of any external voice throughout the entire broadcast

Assessment: Clause 18 requires that "opposing views" be presented on controversial issues of public importance. An election broadcast that presents no views from any political party — governing or opposition — fails this requirement on its face. The violation is structural rather than incidental.

#### Violation 2:

Standard: Broadcasting Act s. 6 / BCCSA Code Clause 16 (correct context, balanced manner)

Facts: The description of Jacob Zuma as "someone who had just led the governing party" at 17:17, without any reference to his criminal conviction for contempt of court or his disqualification from standing as a parliamentary candidate, omits context that is directly relevant to understanding MK's electoral significance and the constitutional questions surrounding the party.

Evidence: Timestamp 17:17 — "I know that perhaps people would be looking out for how MK is doing and it makes sense because it's being led by someone who had just led the governing party"

Assessment: Reporting that omits material context — specifically, a party leader's criminal conviction and legal disqualification — does not meet the standard of reporting "in the correct context" required by Clause 16. The omission is not trivial; Zuma's legal status was one of the most significant electoral controversies of the 2024 election.

#### Violation 3:

Standard: Broadcasting Act s. 6 (impartiality, highest standards of journalism)

Facts: The broadcast presents an SABC employee assessing the SABC's own impartiality and performance without disclosing the conflict of interest, without seeking any external validation, and without any critical scrutiny of the broadcaster's own editorial record.

Evidence: Timestamp 02:18 — "let's talk about the preparation though I think a lot of people of course have come to expect a certain standard from the sabc not only in so far as the nature of our coverage but what we choose to focus on during the election" — followed by unchallenged self-assessment by the political editor

Assessment: A public broadcaster that uses its own airtime to have its own employees assess its own impartiality — without external scrutiny, without disclosure of the conflict of interest, and without any independent voice — does not meet the standard of impartiality required by s. 6. This is particularly significant given the SABC's documented history of political capture during the Motsoeneng era.

### Overall Assessment under Broadcasting Act s. 6

This broadcast does not meet the full standard of impartiality, balance, and contextual accuracy required by Broadcasting Act s. 6 and BCCSA Code Clauses 16 and 18. The primary violations are structural: the complete absence of external voices on a controversial issue of public importance (Clause 18); the omission of material context



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regarding a major party leader's criminal record (Clause 16); and the use of public airtime for unchallenged institutional self-promotion by the broadcaster itself (s. 6 impartiality standard). The violations are moderate in severity — the broadcast does not actively distort facts or campaign for a specific party — but they are systematic in character, consistently operating in directions that favour the incumbent government and the broadcaster's own institutional interests. A formal complaint to the BCCSA would have reasonable prospects of success on the Clause 18 ground (absence of opposing views) and the Clause 16 ground (omission of material context regarding Zuma's legal status).



## CHAPTER 6 — Source Depth Check

### Organisation 1: SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation) — cited as own expert

**1. FUNDING:** SABC is funded through a combination of government appropriation (approximately 30–40% of revenue), television licence fees, and commercial advertising. Government appropriation creates a structural financial dependency on the state.

Conflict of interest: A state-funded broadcaster assessing its own impartiality on election coverage has a direct institutional interest in presenting itself favourably; negative self-assessment could affect government funding relationships and political goodwill.

**2. MANDATE:** The SABC's mandate under the Broadcasting Act is to provide impartial, fair, and balanced public interest broadcasting. This mandate is compatible with neutral assessment of electoral processes but is structurally incompatible with self-assessment of the broadcaster's own impartiality — an institution cannot credibly serve as its own independent auditor.

**3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** The SABC has a direct institutional interest in being perceived as impartial and world-class; negative assessments of its own performance could affect its licence, its funding, and its political relationships. The political editor has a personal career interest in presenting her employer favourably. Neither conflict is disclosed in the broadcast.

**4. CREDIBILITY MATRIX (Source Traffic Light, 6D -2/+2):**

D1 Conflict of Interest: -2 — Direct institutional and personal interest in positive self-assessment

D2 Personal Risk: -1 — No personal risk in positive self-assessment; mild career incentive toward favourable framing

D3 Subject Competence: +1 — Genuine expertise in South African electoral politics; competent on factual electoral matters

D4 Opinion Consistency: 0 — No prior statements available for comparison

D5 Emotionalisation vs. Data: +1 — Broadly analytical in register; limited emotional appeals

D6 Source Level: 0 — Secondary source; no primary research cited

**TOTAL: -1 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW — Competent on electoral facts; structurally compromised as self-assessor of institutional performance; conflict of interest not disclosed**

**5. COUNTER-VOICE:** Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), the SOS Coalition, Right2Know Campaign, and academic media scholars (e.g., at Wits Journalism or Rhodes University) would provide independent assessments of SABC's actual coverage record. None are cited or referenced in the broadcast.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: The SABC's self-description as "world class" and its political editor's self-assessment of the broadcaster's impartiality are social attributions, not factual qualifications. They must be treated as claims requiring independent verification, not as established facts. The broadcast presents them as established facts.*

*Analysis completed under Version 3.0-detail methodology. All findings are based exclusively on the provided transcript. Timestamps are approximate, derived from the transcript's own timestamp markers. All direct quotations are reproduced in the original language of the broadcast (English). This analysis is prepared for compliance assessment purposes under Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999, Section 6, and BCCSA Code Clauses 16 and 18.*

### Legal and Methodological Notes

**No factual determination**

The results presented do not constitute factual determinations about individual persons, editorial teams, or broadcasts. They are the product of a standardized operationalization, not a finding of individual responsibility.

**No legal judgment**

The aggregated deviation index does not replace a legal assessment under Broadcasting Act s. 6. The determination of whether a specific broadcast violates legal requirements is exclusively the responsibility of the competent authorities (in particular BCCSA).



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**No proof of  
causation**

Statistical correlations are not to be interpreted as proof of causal relationships or editorial intent. Deviation values may be influenced by topic selection, news environment, political controversy, or format logic.

**No judgment of  
intent**

The analysis measures observable structural characteristics of broadcasts. A score of 7 means a significant imbalance was detected — not that the editorial team intended it. The methodology makes no claims about motives or strategic objectives.

**Heuristic  
comparison tool**

The index serves comparative pattern recognition across thousands of broadcasts, not precise metric measurement of individual segments. Threshold values serve heuristic orientation, not sharp legal qualification.



## APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL BROADCASTING LAW

### South Africa — Legal Framework for Broadcasting Impartiality

#### Primary Legislation

##### Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999 (as amended)

The Broadcasting Act establishes the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a public broadcaster and defines its Charter obligations.

Section 6 — Charter of the Corporation:

The SABC Charter mandates that the public broadcaster must:

- Provide programming that reflects South African attitudes, opinions, ideas, values and artistic creativity
- Offer a plurality of views and a variety of news, information and analysis
- Provide significant news and public affairs programming that meets the highest standards of journalism, including fairness, accuracy, and impartiality

Section 10 — Editorial Independence:

The SABC's news and current affairs programming must be independent from government or political party influence. The Board must ensure editorial policies that safeguard journalistic integrity.

##### ICASA Act 13 of 2000

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) is the regulatory body responsible for broadcasting licensing and compliance.

##### Electronic Communications Act 36 of 2005

Provides the overarching regulatory framework for electronic communications, including broadcasting standards.

##### BCCSA Broadcasting Code of Conduct

The Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) enforces the Free-to-Air Broadcasting Code of Conduct, which includes:

Clause 16 — News:

- News must be reported truthfully, accurately and fairly
- News must be presented in the correct context and in a balanced manner
- Only verified facts may be presented as facts; opinions must be clearly identified as such

Clause 17 — Comment:

- Comment must be clearly distinguished from fact
- Comment must be an honest expression of opinion and must be presented fairly

Clause 18 — Controversial Issues of Public Importance:

- When a programme deals with a controversial issue of public importance, opposing views must be presented, either within the same programme or in a follow-up programme within a reasonable time
- This requirement applies to all broadcasting services

Clause 20 — Elections:

- During election periods, broadcasters must ensure equitable treatment of all political parties
- ICASA issues specific election broadcasting regulations

#### Regulatory / Complaints Bodies

| Body | Role | Binding? |
|------|------|----------|
|------|------|----------|

**President:** Schläpfer, David - **Contact:** [kontakt@SVFAB.ch](mailto:kontakt@SVFAB.ch) - **Address:** SVFAB, Postfach, CH-8021 Zurich 1



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|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| ICASA (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa) | Licensing, spectrum, compliance enforcement   | Yes — can fine, revoke licences                |
| BCCSA (Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa)   | Content complaints (bias, fairness, accuracy) | Yes — can reprimand, fine, require corrections |
| SABC Board   | Internal editorial oversight                  | Internal                                       |
| Parliament Portfolio Committee on Communications             | Political oversight of SABC                   | Indirect                                       |

### Notable Enforcement

- May 2024: ICASA fined SABC R500,000 for refusing to broadcast the Democratic Alliance's election advertisement showing a burning South African flag, ruling that SABC violated the right to free political communication.
- 2016: Western Cape High Court ordered removal of COO Hlaudi Motsoeneng for systematic censorship and political interference at SABC.
- 2017: Labour Court ruled that dismissal of the "SABC 8" journalists (who protested censorship of protest footage) was unlawful.

### Equivalent to Other Countries

| Country | Law                        | South African Equivalent                        |
|---------|----------------------------|---|
| CH      | Art. 4 RTVG                | Broadcasting Act s. 6 (SABC Charter)            |
| SE      | Radio- och TV-lagen 5 kap. | BCCSA Code Cl. 16-18                            |
| DE      | MStV §26                   | ICASA Act + BCCSA Code                          |
| NO      | NRK-vedtektene §6          | Broadcasting Act s. 10 (Editorial Independence) |



## APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC REFERENCES

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### SVFAB Working Papers

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- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Systematic AI-Assisted Analysis of Public Broadcaster Impartiality: A Scalable Methodological Framework for Measuring Structural Bias in Public Service Media. [SSRN 6688478](#)
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This analysis exposes the system – factual, precise, without polemics. Procedures, personnel, powers, costs, statistics, legal recourse. And the constitutional review showing: the UBI system meets none of the three fundamental criteria – it is not proportionate, not separated by powers, not market-based.

The authority supposed to protect citizens primarily protects the system it should be overseeing.

Essential reading for anyone considering a complaint – and for anyone who wants to understand why genuine media oversight in Switzerland is still pending.