



SABC DETAILED ANALYSIS

20260212_SONA 2026 / SA on a clear path to stabilising national debt : President Ramaphosa.en

Broadcast: SABC-Sendung | Analyzed: 2026-05-25 10:35

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

OVERALL SCORE

5.8/10

Significant 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)

3.2 / 10

Left-favoring

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 — 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

South Africa is governed by the Government of National Unity (GNU), a broad coalition formed after the ANC lost its 30-year parliamentary majority in the May 2024 general elections. The GNU is led by President Cyril Ramaphosa (ANC) and includes the DA, IFP, PA, FF+, UDM, Rise Mzansi, Al Jama-ah, PAC, and GOOD, collectively holding 287 of 400 National Assembly seats. The main opposition outside the GNU consists of MK (58 seats, Jacob Zuma), EFF (39 seats, Julius Malema), ActionSA (6 seats), and ACDP (3 seats).

Party	CHES L-R (est.)	Seats	Gov/Opposition	Core Position
EFF	1.5	39	Opposition	Far-left: land expropriation, nationalisation
PAC	2.0	1	GNU	Left-wing Pan-Africanist
MK	3.0	58	Opposition	Left-populist, Zuma personality cult
ANC	4.0	159	GNU (lead)	Centre-left, broad church
UDM	4.5	3	GNU	Centre-left, rural base
Rise Mzansi	4.5	2	GNU	Centre-left progressive
GOOD	4.5	1	GNU	Centre-left progressive
Al Jama-ah	4.0	2	GNU	Left economics, socially conservative
DA	6.0	87	GNU	Centre-right, free market, liberal
ActionSA	6.5	6	Opposition	Centre-right, anti-immigration
IFP	6.5	17	GNU	Right-wing, Zulu nationalist
PA	7.0	9	GNU	Right-wing populist
ACDP	7.5	3	Opposition	Right-wing Christian conservative
FF+	8.0	6	GNU	Right-wing, Afrikaner interest

The ANC–DA coalition creates constant internal tension between centre-left redistributive priorities and centre-right market-liberal preferences, making every policy announcement a potential flashpoint. MK and EFF represent a radical populist opposition that challenges the GNU's legitimacy from the left, particularly on land reform and state ownership. The legacy of state capture under Zuma-era ANC governance remains a live political wound, with accountability processes ongoing. Crime, water infrastructure failure, and unemployment are the three most electorally explosive domestic issues entering 2026.

The SABC is South Africa's public broadcaster, mandated under the Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999 and its own charter to provide significant news and public affairs programming meeting the highest standards of journalism, including fairness, accuracy, and impartiality. The BCCSA Code Clauses 16 and 18 require truthful, accurate, fair, contextually correct, and balanced reporting, with opposing views presented on controversial matters of public importance. The SABC's history of political capture during the Motsoeneng era (2012–2016) means its editorial independence remains a live institutional question, and any coverage that systematically favours the governing ANC or the GNU coalition is subject to heightened scrutiny.



CHAPTER 1 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Preliminary Note on Broadcast Type: This broadcast is a live, unedited transmission of President Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address (SONA) delivered to a joint sitting of Parliament. The SABC's editorial role in this specific broadcast is primarily that of a transmission vehicle rather than an editorial producer. The SONA is a constitutionally mandated address (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, s. 42(5) and s. 84(2)(a)), and its live broadcast is a public service obligation. Accordingly, the bias analysis below assesses (a) the accuracy of party-political positions as represented within the speech itself, and (b) what the SABC's choice to broadcast this content without contextualisation, opposition response, or analytical framing implies for balance obligations.

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Broadcast Representation vs. Programme Position
ANC	+2	13:01 "Our economy is growing again and this growth is gathering pace" — Programme position: centre-left, inclusive growth, redistribution — Represented broadly correctly but exclusively through the President's self-assessment; no independent verification offered. Framing is promotional rather than analytical.
DA	0	Not mentioned by name. DA's core positions (fiscal discipline, market liberalism, anti-corruption) are partially echoed in the speech's economic reform language but without attribution. DA's role as GNU partner is implicitly acknowledged at 17:55 ("government of national unity") but not named. Score 0 = not independently represented.
MK	-2	Not mentioned. MK's core positions (anti-GNU, Zuma rehabilitation, radical economic transformation) are entirely absent. The speech's framing of state capture as a past problem to be overcome (17:11 "the work we have done to rebuild key institutions from state capture") implicitly delegitimises MK's political base without naming it.
EFF	-1	Not mentioned. EFF's core positions (land expropriation without compensation, nationalisation) are absent. Land reform is referenced only obliquely through District 6 restitution (82:19) and BEE review (70:09), framed within constitutional property rights — directly contrary to EFF's expropriation-without-compensation position, which is not acknowledged.
IFP	0	Not mentioned by name. Traditional and Khoisan leadership institutions referenced at 41:26 ("cooperation between municipalities and traditional and khoisan leadership institutions") — partially consistent with IFP's traditional values position but not attributed.
PA	-1	Not mentioned by name. Immigration policy at 87:05 ("illegal immigration continues to pose a risk") echoes PA's anti-immigration position but is framed within a human rights caveat (89:01 "we will not tolerate violence and acts of lawlessness directed at foreign nationals") — partially consistent, partially contradictory to PA's harder line.
FF+	0	Not mentioned. Afrikaner interest positions entirely absent.
ActionSA	0	Not mentioned.

Party Bias Summary

- Most Accurate Representation: ANC (Score +2) — the speech is the ANC President's own address; its positions are represented as stated, though without independent verification.
- Strongest Distortion: MK (Score -2) — implicitly delegitimised through state capture framing without being named or given any representational space.



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- Average Deviation from 0: 0.75
- Conclusion: The broadcast is structurally biased toward the ANC/GNU coalition by virtue of being an uncontextualised, uninterrupted transmission of the President's address. Opposition parties — particularly MK and EFF, representing 24.1% of parliamentary seats — receive zero direct representation. The SABC's failure to provide pre- or post-broadcast opposition responses or analytical framing means that the broadcast functions as a platform for ANC-led GNU messaging without the balance required under BCCSA Clause 18.



CHAPTER 2 — BROADCAST INFORMATION AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

Broadcast Data

- Title: State of the Nation Address (SONA) 2026 — President Cyril Ramaphosa
- Date: February 2026 (inferred from content: "metric class of 2025," "31st of March of 2026," "this year 2026")
- Estimated Length: Approximately 102 minutes (transcript runs from 00:07 to approximately 102:42)
- Presenter/Reporter: SABC transmission; no named anchor or reporter identified in transcript. The Speaker of the National Assembly opens proceedings at 00:07.
- Persons Interviewed/Speaking:

Actors	Function	Party/Affiliation	Political Spectrum
Cyril Ramaphosa	President of the Republic	ANC	Centre-left
Speaker of the National Assembly	Constitutional officer	Neutral/institutional	N/A
Mam Sophie De Bruin	1956 Women's March stalwart	ANC-aligned struggle history	Historical/symbolic
Mayor Jordan Hill Lewis	Mayor of Cape Town	DA	Centre-right
Deputy Chief Justice Dunston Blambo	Judiciary	Apolitical	N/A
Chairperson, National House of Traditional Leaders	Traditional leadership	Apolitical/institutional	N/A
Former President Khalema Matante	Former head of state	ANC	Centre-left
Former Chairperson NCP Amos Masando	Former parliamentary officer	ANC	Centre-left

Main Topic

President Ramaphosa's constitutionally mandated annual State of the Nation Address to a joint sitting of Parliament, outlining the GNU's achievements over the past year and its legislative and policy priorities for 2026 across crime, water, economy, education, health, and foreign policy.

World-View Context

The SONA is a constitutionally embedded political ritual that simultaneously functions as a government accountability mechanism, a policy announcement platform, and a campaign communication tool. In South Africa's current political environment, the 2026 SONA is delivered against the backdrop of the GNU's first full year in operation, ongoing MK and EFF opposition pressure, a global economic environment disrupted by US tariff policy (referenced obliquely at 10:05 "trade is used as an instrument of coercion"), and acute domestic crises in water infrastructure, crime, and unemployment. The speech must be understood as a political document authored by the ANC President, not as neutral journalism — yet the SABC's broadcast of it without contextualisation treats it as if it were authoritative public information rather than partisan political communication.



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: President Cyril Ramaphosa

Timestamp	00:14–102:42
Statement	"Our economy is growing again and this growth is gathering pace. While we have experienced four consecutive quarters of GDP growth, we know that it has to grow much higher and much faster to meet our social and economic challenges." (13:01–13:28)
Classification	Head of state and ANC party leader; simultaneously the subject of accountability and the sole expert voice in the broadcast.

Missing countervoice: Independent economist, opposition finance spokesperson, or Reserve Bank analyst.

Source Depth Check:

(a) FUNDING: Ramaphosa is funded by the South African state as President and by the ANC as party leader. Structural interest: maximum incentive to present government performance positively in a constitutionally mandated address that also functions as political communication.

(b) MANDATE: The SONA mandate is explicitly to report on the state of the nation — inherently a government self-assessment, not a neutral expert assessment. Incompatible with neutral expert status.

- D1 Conflict of Interest: -2 — Maximum conflict: President assessing his own government's performance.
- D2 Personal Risk: -2 — No personal risk from positive self-assessment; significant political risk from negative assessment.
- D3 Subject Competence: +1 — Has access to government data and briefings; but data is pre-selected and unverified.
- D4 Opinion Consistency: 0 — Consistent with previous SONA addresses; no independent baseline for comparison.
- D5 Emotionalisation vs. Data: 0 — Mix of data claims and rhetorical appeals; data not independently sourced.
- D6 Source Level: -1 — Secondary at best; government-produced statistics, not primary research.

TOTAL: -4 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW

(c) PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE: The broadcast frames Ramaphosa's statements as authoritative public information rather than as political communication from a partisan actor. This is Technique No. 2 (Source Selection) — a structurally partisan source is presented as if neutral.

Expert 2: Auditor General (quoted by Ramaphosa)

Timestamp	39:48
Statement	"Local government is characterized by inefficient accountability, failing service delivery, poor financial management and governance, weak institutional capability, and widespread instability."
Classification	The Auditor General is an independent constitutional institution (Constitution s. 188). However, the quote is selected and deployed by the President to support his own narrative of local government failure requiring national intervention — a politically convenient framing.

Missing countervoice: The Auditor General's full report context; whether the report also criticises national government's role in local government dysfunction.



Source Depth Check:

(a) FUNDING: Constitutionally independent; funded by Parliament, not the executive. Structurally more independent than the President.

(b) MANDATE: Auditing and reporting on public finances — compatible with neutral assessment.

D1 Conflict of Interest: +2 — Constitutionally independent; no structural interest in favouring the executive.

D2 Personal Risk: +1 — Auditor General faces institutional pressure but has constitutional protection.

D3 Subject Competence: +2 — Direct mandate and expertise in local government financial performance.

D4 Opinion Consistency: +1 — Consistent with previous AG reports on local government.

D5 Emotionalisation vs. Data: +2 — Data-based, audit-grounded.

D6 Source Level: +2 — Primary source (audit reports).

TOTAL: +10 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: GREEN

(c) PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE: The quote is selectively deployed by the President. The AG's report may contain findings critical of national government's role that are not quoted. The selective use of a credible source to support a partisan argument is itself a manipulation technique.

Missing Expert Groups: Independent economists; opposition party finance spokespersons; civil society organisations (Corruption Watch, Equal Education, Section27).

Source Credibility Overview:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Signal
President Cyril Ramaphosa	-2	-2	+1	0	0	-1	-4	YELLOW
Auditor General (quoted by Ramaphosa)	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2	+10	GREEN

Summary (Matrix Result):

- Ramaphosa: YELLOW (-4) — Maximum conflict of interest; sole expert voice in broadcast.
- Auditor General (as quoted): GREEN (+10) — Credible source, but selectively deployed by a partisan actor.



2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: Government statistics (GDP growth, budget surplus, inflation, JSE performance)

Timestamp

13:14–14:33

Statement

"While we have experienced four consecutive quarters of GDP growth... We have achieved two consecutive primary budget surpluses. Our credit rating has improved. Interest rates are coming down and inflation is at its lowest level in 20 years."

(a) Funding and governance: Government-produced statistics (National Treasury, Stats SA). Structurally aligned with the executive's interest in positive presentation.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: The government selects which statistics to present and in what order. Unfavourable statistics (e.g., unemployment rate, Gini coefficient, absolute poverty numbers) are either omitted or contextualised minimally.

(c) Missing counterpoint source: Independent economic research (Bureau for Economic Research, Intellidex, Moody's/S&P rating agency reports) would provide independent verification.

Source 2: Investment Conference commitments

Timestamp

67:33

Statement

"Over the South African investment conferences we were able to raise 1.5 trillion rand in investment commitments to date. Over 600 billion that was committed has flowed into projects."

(a) Funding: Government-organised investment conferences; commitments are self-reported by participating companies and government.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: The gap between "commitments" (1.5 trillion) and "flowed into projects" (600 billion) — a 60% non-delivery rate — is presented without critical framing.

(c) Missing counterpoint: Independent investment tracking (e.g., UNCTAD, World Bank FDI data) would contextualise whether these figures represent genuine new investment or reclassification of existing activity.

Rumour Check (Penalty Points): No unattributed rumour-style claims identified. All claims are attributed to the President as government policy statements. No penalty points applied.

Summary: All sources in the broadcast are either government-produced statistics or the President's own assertions. No independent, third-party, or opposition sources are cited. This produces a structurally one-sided source base that fails the diversity requirement of BCCSA Clause 16.



3. AIRTIME DISTRIBUTION								8/10	
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Estimated speaking time:

- President Ramaphosa (ANC/GNU): approximately 100 minutes (98%)
- Speaker of the National Assembly (institutional): approximately 1.5 minutes (1.5%)
- Other voices (applause, interjections): approximately 0.5 minutes (0.5%)
- Opposition parties: 0 minutes (0%)
- Independent experts/civil society: 0 minutes (0%)
- Affected communities: 0 minutes (0%)

Summary: The airtime distribution is structurally absolute — 98% of broadcast time is occupied by the ANC President's uninterrupted address. This is inherent to the SONA format, but the SABC's decision to broadcast without pre- or post-address contextualisation, opposition response, or analytical framing means the broadcast as a whole provides zero airtime to any perspective other than the governing party's. This is the most extreme possible airtime asymmetry and represents a fundamental failure of balance obligations under BCCSA Clause 18, mitigated only by the constitutional necessity of broadcasting the SONA itself.



4. SELECTIVE OMISSION

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Omission 1: Unemployment rate

Context

The President references job creation extensively (15:39 "we have created over 2.5 million opportunities through the presidential employment stimulus") but does not state the current unemployment rate. South Africa's official unemployment rate (Q3 2024: approximately 32.1%; expanded definition: approximately 42.6%) is the most politically damaging economic statistic for the ANC.

Relevant at: 16:29 — "the rate of unemployment must come down"

Effect

The omission of the actual unemployment figure while claiming progress creates a false impression of economic recovery without the most critical benchmark.

Omission 2: MK and EFF opposition response

Context

The SONA is constitutionally mandated, but the SABC's broadcast contains no opposition response, no MK or EFF perspective, and no acknowledgement that 24.1% of parliamentary seats are held by parties that reject the GNU's legitimacy.

Relevant at: 17:55 — "the government of national unity has shown that it is possible for South Africans to come together from across the political spectrum"

Effect

The claim that the GNU represents cross-spectrum unity is broadcast without any counterpoint from the parties that explicitly reject this framing.

Omission 3: Load shedding return risk / Eskom financial position

Context

The President claims "we have brought an end to load shedding" (14:44) without acknowledging Eskom's ongoing financial distress, the risk of load shedding returning, or the cost of electricity increases to consumers.

Relevant at: 14:44 — "We have brought an end to load shedding and built a more dynamic and resilient energy system"

Effect

A partial truth is presented as a complete achievement, omitting the structural fragility of the energy system.

Summary: The most politically damaging statistics and perspectives for the ANC/GNU are systematically absent from the broadcast. This is partly inherent to the SONA format but is compounded by the SABC's failure to provide any contextualising framework.

Missing Voices

- Independent economist (e.g., Bureau for Economic Research, Stellenbosch University): Would have provided independent verification or challenge to GDP growth, unemployment, and budget surplus claims.
- MK party spokesperson: Would have provided the counter-narrative on state capture framing and GNU legitimacy.
- EFF spokesperson: Would have challenged the BEE review framing and absence of land expropriation without compensation.



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- DA spokesperson: Would have provided market-liberal perspective on spending commitments and fiscal sustainability.
- Residents of Gauteng water-affected areas: Would have provided ground-level assessment of water crisis severity beyond the President's framing.
- Western Cape Premier (DA): Would have provided perspective on SANDF deployment announcement affecting their province.
- Independent anti-corruption researcher (e.g., Corruption Watch, Accountability Now): Would have assessed the adequacy of anti-corruption measures announced.
- Agricultural sector representative (independent): Would have assessed the foot-and-mouth disease response and cattle vaccination plan independently.



5. NUMERICAL MANIPULATION

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

Finding 1: GDP growth claim

Timestamp 13:14

Figure: "We have experienced four consecutive quarters of GDP growth"

Dimensions: (a) Absolute value — not stated (growth rate not given); (b) Proportion — not stated (growth rate relative to population growth, inflation, or peer economies not given); (c) Trend — stated as positive but without baseline.

Missing context	South Africa's GDP growth rate (approximately 0.6% in 2024) is below population growth (approximately 1.4%), meaning per capita GDP is declining. This critical context is entirely absent.
Effect	"Four consecutive quarters of GDP growth" sounds like strong recovery; the actual growth rate, below population growth, tells a different story.

Finding 2: Investment conference commitments

Timestamp 67:33

Figure: "1.5 trillion rand in investment commitments... over 600 billion that was committed has flowed into projects"

Dimensions: (a) Absolute value — stated (1.5 trillion committed, 600 billion flowed); (b) Proportion — not stated (600 billion is 40% of commitments — a 60% non-delivery rate); (c) Trend — not stated (whether the flow rate is improving or declining).

Missing context	The 60% gap between commitments and actual investment is presented as a success story rather than as evidence of significant non-delivery.
Effect	The large absolute number (1.5 trillion) creates an impression of massive investment success; the 60% non-delivery rate is invisible.

Finding 3: Matric pass rate

Timestamp 74:01

Figure: "The metric class of 2025 achieved an 88% pass rate... the highest pass rate in our history"

Dimensions: (a) Absolute value — stated (88%); (b) Proportion — partially stated (2/3 of bachelor passes from disadvantaged communities at 16:15); (c) Trend — stated as record high.

Missing context	The matric pass rate has been subject to ongoing debate about whether it reflects genuine learning improvement or changes in examination standards. The dropout rate before matric (acknowledged at 74:40 "we must also address the high dropout rate") means the 88% applies to a self-selected cohort, not the full age cohort.
Effect	88% sounds like near-universal success; the actual proportion of the age cohort achieving matric is significantly lower.



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Summary: Economic and social statistics are consistently presented in their most favourable absolute form, without the proportional or trend context that would allow accurate assessment. The GDP growth claim is the most significant manipulation, as it omits the per-capita decline.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION									2/10
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Association 1: State capture and organised crime

Timestamp 17:11 and 22:44

Quote

*"The work we have done to rebuild key institutions from state capture is showing results." /
"Organised crime is now the most immediate threat to our democracy, our society and our economic development."*

Technique: State capture (associated with Zuma/MK era) and organised crime are rhetorically linked as threats being overcome by the current government. This implicitly associates the MK political base with criminality without naming them.

Effect

Listeners familiar with the political landscape will associate "state capture" with Zuma/MK; the framing positions the GNU as the solution to a problem associated with the opposition.

No persons are labelled as "conspiracy theorists" or subjected to guilt-by-association attacks in the traditional sense. The association technique is subtle and structural rather than explicit.

Summary (Category Assignment): No individual is subjected to explicit guilt-by-association labelling. The structural association between "state capture" and the MK/Zuma political base is implicit and politically loaded but falls short of the explicit discrediting technique. Score is low accordingly.



7. TIMING

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Finding 1: Historical framing at opening

Position: 02:00–09:10 (opening)

Content: Extended narrative of the 1956 Women's March, 1976 Soweto Uprising, and 1996 Constitution — all ANC-associated struggle history milestones.

Timing Effect: The speech opens with 9 minutes of emotionally resonant struggle history before any policy content. This primes the audience to receive subsequent policy claims within a framework of ANC-led liberation and progress, making critical assessment psychologically harder. The historical framing establishes the ANC as the inheritor of South Africa's moral arc before any accountability claims are made.

Finding 2: Economic achievements before challenges

Position: 12:50–19:25

Content: Economic achievements (GDP growth, budget surplus, credit rating, JSE performance, load shedding end) are presented at 12:50–18:57 before challenges are acknowledged at 19:06 ("we must be honest about the challenges that we still face").

Timing Effect: The positive economic narrative is established first and at greater length (approximately 6 minutes) than the challenge acknowledgement (approximately 1.5 minutes). The challenges section functions as a brief qualification of an overwhelmingly positive economic narrative.

Finding 3: Closing with unity and aspiration

Position: 98:20–102:42 (closing)

Content: "Our nation has reached what many people are saying is a turning point... We are leaving behind an era of decline and turning towards an era of prosperity and growth."

Timing Effect: The speech closes with aspirational unity messaging that reinforces the positive framing established at the opening, creating a narrative arc from struggle history through current challenges to future hope — a classic political communication structure that leaves the audience with optimism rather than critical assessment.

Summary: The speech's structure follows a deliberate political communication arc: historical legitimacy → economic achievement → challenge acknowledgement → policy solutions → aspirational close. This is standard political rhetoric but, when broadcast without contextualisation, functions as a complete persuasive narrative rather than accountable public information.



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 at other positions produced no analogous reaction.

Finding 1: Organised crime framing

Timestamp 22:44

Triggering event: The President characterises organised crime as "the most immediate threat to our democracy."
Reaction: Strong rhetorical emphasis; SANDF deployment announcement; multiple policy responses outlined.

Comparison

Corruption within the ANC-aligned municipal system (27:12 "rampant corruption in the subs and some metro police departments") receives a more measured response — task teams and vetting rather than military deployment.

Asymmetry: The response to gang violence (military deployment) is significantly stronger than the response to institutional corruption (administrative processes), despite both being characterised as serious threats. This asymmetry may reflect political calculation — gang violence is externally attributable; municipal corruption implicates ANC-aligned officials.

Finding 2: Immigration framing

Timestamp 87:05

Triggering event: "Illegal immigration continues to pose a risk to our security, our stability, and economic progress."
Reaction: Strong enforcement language; 10,000 additional labour inspectors; border technology.

Comparison

At 89:01, the President immediately qualifies: "we will not tolerate violence and acts of lawlessness directed at foreign nationals." The qualification is present but receives less rhetorical emphasis than the enforcement language.

Asymmetry: Partially present but not strongly selective; both enforcement and rights protection are addressed, though with different rhetorical weight.

Outrage Degree: 2/5

Selectivity: 1/5

Summary: Selective outrage is not a dominant technique in this broadcast. The most notable asymmetry is the stronger response to gang violence (military deployment) versus institutional corruption (administrative processes), which may reflect political rather than security logic. The score is low because the speech is a policy address rather than a commentary programme, and outrage is not the primary rhetorical mode.



9. SELECTIVE OMISSION — OVERALL PICTURE

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Finding 1: Unemployment rate omitted

Timestamp 16:29 — "the rate of unemployment must come down"

Missing perspective/fact: The actual unemployment rate (approximately 32.1% official; approximately 42.6% expanded) is never stated.

Relevance: South Africa has one of the world's highest unemployment rates; it is the central economic challenge. Claiming progress without stating the baseline is a fundamental omission.

Effect The audience cannot assess whether "progress" is meaningful without knowing the starting point and current position.

Finding 2: Eskom financial position and load shedding risk omitted

Timestamp 14:44 — "We have brought an end to load shedding"

Missing perspective/fact: Eskom's ongoing debt (approximately R400 billion), the risk of load shedding returning, and the cost of electricity tariff increases to consumers are entirely absent.

Relevance: The claim of ending load shedding is the ANC's most significant electoral achievement claim; its fragility is politically critical information.

Effect A conditional achievement is presented as a permanent one.

Finding 3: Land reform — EFF/MK position entirely absent

Timestamp 70:09 — "We are undertaking a review to refine, realign and strengthen our broad-based black economic empowerment framework"

Missing perspective/fact: The EFF's demand for land expropriation without compensation and the MK party's radical economic transformation platform are entirely absent from the broadcast.

Relevance: These positions represent 24.1% of parliamentary seats and a significant portion of the electorate's economic aspirations.

Effect The BEE review is presented as the only legitimate transformation framework, without acknowledgement of more radical alternatives that have significant democratic support.

Summary: The broadcast systematically omits the most politically damaging statistics for the ANC/GNU (unemployment rate, Eskom debt, load shedding risk) and the most significant opposition policy alternatives (EFF/MK economic transformation positions). This produces a fundamentally incomplete picture of the state of the nation.

Share of covered perspectives

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

[A] ANC/GNU government perspective — achievements and plans as stated by the President

[B] DA perspective — market-liberal critique of spending commitments; fiscal sustainability concerns

[C] MK perspective — rejection of GNU legitimacy; Zuma-era counter-narrative on state capture

[D] EFF perspective — critique of insufficient land reform; demand for nationalisation; rejection of BEE as inadequate



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[E] Civil society/NGO perspective — independent assessment of service delivery failures, particularly water and crime

[F] Economic analyst perspective — independent verification of GDP growth claims, unemployment figures, budget surplus claims

[G] Opposition-governed municipality perspective — Western Cape/DA-governed areas' experience of national government policy

[H] Affected community perspective — residents experiencing water outages, gang violence, unemployment

[I] International/diplomatic perspective — independent assessment of South Africa's foreign policy positions, particularly Gaza and DRC withdrawal

[J] Whistleblower/anti-corruption civil society perspective — independent assessment of anti-corruption progress claims

Assessment: Was Each Perspective Addressed?

[A] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 13:01–102:42 — Quote: "Our economy is growing again and this growth is gathering pace" — Assessment: Comprehensively addressed; the entire broadcast is the ANC/GNU government perspective.

[B] OMITTED

Timestamp: N/A — No DA spokesperson, no market-liberal critique of spending commitments or fiscal sustainability concerns presented. The DA's role in the GNU is mentioned only implicitly at 17:55.

[C] OMITTED

Timestamp: N/A — MK's counter-narrative entirely absent. State capture is framed as a past problem being resolved (17:11) without any acknowledgement of MK's contestation of this framing.

[D] OMITTED

Timestamp: N/A — EFF's land expropriation position not acknowledged. BEE review at 70:09 is framed within constitutional property rights, directly contrary to EFF's position, without acknowledgement.

[E] OMITTED

Timestamp: N/A — No independent civil society voice on service delivery. The Auditor General is quoted at 39:48 ("local government is characterized by inefficient accountability") but this is used selectively to support the President's narrative rather than as independent accountability.

[F] OMITTED

Timestamp: N/A — No independent economic analyst verifies or challenges the GDP growth claims (13:14), budget surplus claims (13:29), or unemployment trajectory claims (16:29). All economic data is presented by the President without independent verification.

[G] OMITTED

Timestamp: N/A — No perspective from DA-governed Western Cape municipalities, despite the President announcing SANDF deployment to the Western Cape (23:51) — a decision with significant implications for the DA-governed province.

[H] PARTIALLY ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 31:53 — Quote: "the frustrations that our people are feeling over inadequate unreliable access to basic services such as water" — Assessment: Acknowledged rhetorically by the President but no actual community member speaks; the perspective is mediated entirely through the President's framing.

[I] OMITTED



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Timestamp: N/A — No independent diplomatic or international law perspective on South Africa's Gaza position (97:57 "we cannot consider ourselves free as long as the people of Palestine...suffer occupation, oppression and war") or DRC troop withdrawal (97:39).

[J] OMITTED

Timestamp: N/A — No independent anti-corruption civil society voice to assess the President's anti-corruption claims (29:30–31:24). Whistleblower protection bill announced (30:05) without independent assessment of its adequacy.

Completeness Score: 2/10

Reasoning: Only one of ten relevant perspectives (the ANC/GNU government perspective) is substantively addressed. Community voices are acknowledged rhetorically but not independently represented. The Auditor General is quoted selectively. All other perspectives — opposition parties, independent economists, civil society, affected communities, international analysts — are entirely absent. This is structurally inevitable given the broadcast format (live SONA transmission) but the SABC's failure to provide any contextualising framework before or after the address means the broadcast as a whole scores extremely low on completeness.



Soft Facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING

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Finding 1: "Turning point" narrative

Timestamp	98:20
Quote	<i>"Our nation has reached what many people are saying is a turning point. We are leaving behind an era of decline and turning towards an era of prosperity and growth."</i>
Manipulation	The phrase "what many people are saying" is a classic appeal to unnamed authority. The "turning point" frame positions the current moment as a historical inflection — a claim that requires independent verification but is presented as self-evident.
Why problematic	The framing pre-empts critical assessment by positioning any scepticism as resistance to an objectively positive historical moment. It also obscures that "many people" is an unattributed claim.

Finding 2: State capture as resolved past

Timestamp	17:11
Quote	<i>"The work we have done to rebuild key institutions from state capture is showing results."</i>
Manipulation	State capture is framed as a past problem being resolved, not as an ongoing structural risk. The Zondo Commission's findings implicated the ANC itself, not just individual actors — this institutional dimension is entirely absent.
Why problematic	Framing state capture as a past problem to be overcome, rather than a structural risk requiring ongoing vigilance, serves the ANC's political interest in moving past accountability and is presented without any independent assessment.

Finding 3: GNU as cross-spectrum unity

Timestamp	17:55
Quote	<i>"The government of national unity, you will love this, has shown that it is possible for South Africans to come together from across the political spectrum to work on a common agenda for growth and progress."</i>
Manipulation	The GNU is framed as representing "the political spectrum" — a claim that is factually inaccurate, as MK (14.6%) and EFF (9.5%) are explicitly excluded. The parenthetical "you will love this" signals awareness of the claim's political valence.
Why problematic	Presenting a coalition that excludes 24.1% of parliamentary representation as cross-spectrum unity is a significant misrepresentation that goes unchallenged in the broadcast.



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Summary: The dominant frame of the broadcast is one of managed progress — challenges acknowledged but being overcome, institutions being rebuilt, the nation at a turning point. This frame serves the ANC/GNU's political communication interest and is presented without any counterframe.



11. WORD CHOICE AND TERMINOLOGY									5/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Finding 1: "Organised crime is now the most immediate threat to our democracy"	
Timestamp	22:44
Quote	<i>"Organised crime is now the most immediate threat to our democracy, our society and our economic development."</i>
Manipulation	Elevating organised crime above other threats (state capture, corruption, unemployment, inequality) through superlative framing ("most immediate threat") sets a political agenda that prioritises security responses over accountability responses.
Why problematic	Neutral alternative would be: "Organised crime is among the most serious challenges facing South Africa." The superlative framing justifies military deployment and security-state expansion without acknowledging trade-offs.

Finding 2: "We will not be bullied by any other country in the world"	
Timestamp	95:39
Quote	<i>"We will not be bullied by any other country in the world."</i>
Manipulation	"Bullied" is emotionally loaded language that frames South Africa's relationship with the United States (implied by the tariff reference at 10:05) as one of victimisation and resistance. This is political framing, not diplomatic language.
Why problematic	Neutral alternative: "We will assert our sovereignty in our international relations." The "bullied" framing appeals to nationalist sentiment and positions any foreign pressure as illegitimate aggression.

Finding 3: "We cannot consider ourselves free as long as the people of Palestine...suffer occupation, oppression and war"	
Timestamp	97:57
Quote	<i>"We cannot consider ourselves free as long as the people of Palestine, of Cuba, of Sudan and Western Sahara and elsewhere suffer occupation, oppression and war."</i>
Manipulation	The grouping of Palestine, Cuba, Sudan, and Western Sahara as equivalent cases of "occupation, oppression and war" is a political framing that reflects ANC foreign policy ideology. Cuba's inclusion alongside Palestine is particularly ideologically loaded.
Why problematic	This is a political position presented as a moral self-evident truth. The broadcast provides no counterpoint to this framing, which is contested by significant portions of the South African political spectrum (particularly the DA).

Summary: Word choice throughout the speech reflects ANC political communication strategy — security threats are maximised, foreign policy positions are presented as moral imperatives, and the GNU's achievements are framed in aspirational language. The SABC's uncontextualised broadcast amplifies these linguistic choices without critical distance.



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12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

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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 at other guests produced no analogous intervention.

Finding 1: Speaker's order call

Timestamp 32:41

Triggering event: Audience noise during the President's address.

Quote (Speaker) "Order honorable members. Can we please lessen our voices so that members can hear the message."

Comparison No comparable intervention at any other point; the Speaker's role is to maintain order, not to challenge the President's content.

Asymmetry: Not applicable — this is a procedural intervention, not an editorial one.

Note on Moderation: This broadcast is a live transmission of a parliamentary address, not a studio interview or panel discussion. There is no moderator in the journalistic sense. The SABC's editorial role is limited to the decision to broadcast and the framing provided (or not provided) around the broadcast. The absence of any journalistic moderation — no anchor questions, no fact-checking interruptions, no opposition response — is itself the primary moderation behaviour finding.

Summary: No journalistic moderation is present in this broadcast. The SABC functions as a passive transmission vehicle. The absence of moderation is not a neutral editorial choice — it is a decision to broadcast political communication without journalistic mediation, which has significant implications for balance obligations.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

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Note on Format: This is a parliamentary address, not an interview. No questions are posed by journalists. However, the structural equivalent of question asymmetry exists in the form of the SABC's decision to broadcast the President's address without any subsequent questioning, opposition response, or analytical challenge — while the same SABC would typically subject opposition politicians to journalistic questioning in news coverage.

Asymmetry 1:

To President Ramaphosa (ANC), 00:14–102:42: [No questions posed] — Effectively: zero scrutiny
To MK/EFF opposition: [Not present in broadcast] — Effectively: zero airtime

Comparison

The structural asymmetry is absolute. The governing party's leader speaks for 100 minutes without challenge; the opposition is entirely absent. In a balanced broadcast environment, the SABC would provide equivalent scrutiny to the President's claims through post-address analysis or opposition response.

Asymmetry 2:

To President Ramaphosa on economic claims (13:14): [No challenge to GDP growth rate, unemployment figures, or investment delivery gap]
To hypothetical opposition spokesperson: [Would face journalistic challenge on policy alternatives, funding sources, feasibility]

Comparison

The asymmetry between the scrutiny applied to government claims and the scrutiny that would be applied to opposition claims in a standard news context is stark.

Summary: The absence of any questioning is the defining feature of this broadcast's question asymmetry. The SABC's decision to broadcast without journalistic challenge creates a structural advantage for the governing party that would not be extended to opposition parties in equivalent coverage.



14. FALSE BALANCE

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Finding 1: Challenge acknowledgement as balance

Timestamp

19:06

Construct: "Despite this progress, we must be honest about the challenges that we still face. Although we are moving forward, we must not claim any easy victories. We are still far from where we need to be."

Analysis

The President's acknowledgement of challenges within his own address is not balance — it is a rhetorical device (*praeteritio*/concession) that inoculates against criticism while maintaining the positive overall frame. The SABC's broadcast of this self-critical passage does not constitute balanced coverage; it is the governing party managing its own narrative.

Summary: False balance is not a dominant technique in this broadcast. The broadcast does not attempt to create artificial equivalence between positions — it simply presents one position without counterpoint. The score is low because false balance requires the presence of at least two positions being artificially equated; here, only one position is present.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

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Finding 1: GNU legitimacy as given

Agenda element set: The GNU is presented as the legitimate, cross-spectrum government of South Africa.

Timestamp

17:55 — "The government of national unity has shown that it is possible for South Africans to come together from across the political spectrum"

Alternative agenda: The GNU's exclusion of MK (14.6%) and EFF (9.5%); the ongoing contestation of its legitimacy by parties representing nearly a quarter of voters.

Finding 2: Economic growth as the primary metric of progress

Agenda element set: GDP growth, budget surplus, credit rating, and JSE performance are treated as the primary indicators of national wellbeing.

Timestamp

13:01–14:33 — Extended economic metrics section.

Alternative agenda: Gini coefficient (inequality), absolute poverty headcount, per-capita income, food security — metrics on which South Africa's performance is significantly worse.

Finding 3: Constitutional property rights as the framework for land reform

Agenda element set: Land reform is implicitly framed within constitutional property rights (District 6 restitution, BEE review) — the ANC/DA consensus position.

Timestamp

82:19 and 70:09

Alternative agenda: Land expropriation without compensation (EFF/MK position); the constitutional amendment debate; the actual pace of land redistribution since 1994.

Summary: The broadcast's agenda is set entirely by the President's speech, which in turn reflects the ANC/GNU's political priorities. The most significant agenda-setting effect is the treatment of GDP growth as the primary national progress metric, which systematically marginalises inequality and poverty measures on which South Africa performs poorly.



CHAPTER 4 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

- HARD FACTS SCORE (Average Criteria 1–9): 6.2 / 10
- SOFT FACTS SCORE (Average Criteria 10–15): 5.3 / 10

Dominant Techniques

The 3 strongest techniques in this broadcast:

- 1. Airtime Distribution (Score 8):** The absolute monopoly of broadcast time by the ANC President — 98% of airtime — is the single most powerful bias mechanism in this broadcast. No opposition voice, no independent expert, and no affected community member receives any airtime, making this the most structurally one-sided broadcast format possible within a public service broadcasting context.
- 2. Selective Omission / Completeness (Score 8 each):** The systematic absence of the unemployment rate, Eskom's financial fragility, and EFF/MK policy alternatives means that the broadcast presents a fundamentally incomplete picture of the state of the nation. The omissions are not random — they consistently exclude information that would be politically damaging to the ANC/GNU.
- 3. Agenda-Setting (Score 8):** The treatment of GDP growth as the primary national progress metric, GNU legitimacy as self-evident, and constitutional property rights as the only legitimate land reform framework sets an agenda that systematically marginalises the perspectives of the 24.1% of voters represented by MK and EFF, as well as the inequality and poverty metrics on which South Africa performs worst.

Core Messages of the Broadcast

****MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE):** ** "South Africa is at a turning point — the GNU's first year has produced measurable economic and institutional progress, and 2026 will be the year of transformative change."

Technique: Positive framing + selective statistics + aspirational close — Evidence: 13:01, 98:20, 101:43

****MESSAGE 2 (PERSONAL):** ** "President Ramaphosa is a competent, constitutionally grounded leader who acknowledges challenges honestly while delivering results."

Technique: Concession rhetoric + historical legitimacy framing + personal anecdotes (Ethiopia visit, District 6, Gillani floods) — Evidence: 19:06, 43:46, 59:14

****MESSAGE 3 (SOCIETAL):** ** "South Africa's strength comes from its constitutional values, its diversity, and its people — and the GNU represents the realisation of these values in government."

Technique: Constitutional framing + struggle history invocation + unity narrative — Evidence: 10:24, 17:55, 100:48

Manipulation Degree Classification

Reasoning: The overall score of 5.8 places this broadcast at the upper boundary of "clear one-sidedness." The primary driver is not active manipulation of facts — the President's statements are his own and are not fabricated — but rather the SABC's editorial decision to broadcast a constitutionally mandated political address without any of the contextualising, balancing, or analytical framing that Broadcasting Act s. 6 and BCCSA Clause 18 require. The broadcast is not propaganda in the active sense; it is a failure of editorial responsibility in the passive sense. The SABC has treated a political communication event as if it were neutral public information, which under s. 6 of the Broadcasting Act constitutes a failure to meet the highest standards of journalism, including impartiality.

CONCLUSION

This SABC broadcast of the 2026 State of the Nation Address is a constitutionally necessary public service broadcast that nonetheless fails to meet the balance and impartiality standards required by Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999, Section 6, and BCCSA Code Clauses 16 and 18. The broadcast provides 98% of airtime to the ANC President's uninterrupted political communication, with zero airtime for opposition parties representing 24.1% of parliamentary seats, zero independent expert verification of economic claims, and zero community voice from those most affected by the policies discussed. The systematic omission of the unemployment rate, Eskom's financial fragility, and EFF/MK policy alternatives produces a fundamentally incomplete picture of the state of the nation. While the SONA format inherently



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limits balance within the address itself, the SABC's failure to provide pre- or post-broadcast contextualisation, opposition response, or analytical framing — as is standard practice in comparable public broadcasters internationally — means that the broadcast as a whole fails its public service mandate. A court assessing this broadcast under Broadcasting Act s. 6 would likely find that the SABC's editorial choices, while individually defensible as transmission of a constitutional event, collectively produce a broadcast that does not meet the statutory requirement for impartiality and that systematically advantages the governing ANC/GNU coalition over opposition parties and independent perspectives.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual Scores — All 15 Criteria

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

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

6.2/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality standard. High degree of deviation

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

5.3/10

Significant imbalance

OVERALL SCORE

5.8/10

Significant imbalance

Average of Hardfacts and Softfacts



KEY — Score Definitions

Individual Scores per Criterion (0–10)

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

Aggregated Deviation Index — Interpretation Ranges

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

Party-Political Bias (-5 to +5)

-5 to -3	Strongly disadvantaged	Party is significantly underrepresented in framing, airtime, or presentation.
-2 to -1	Slightly disadvantaged	Recognizable but minor disadvantage.
0	Neutral	No detectable favoritism or disadvantage.
+1 to +2	Slightly favored	Recognizable but minor favoritism.
+3 to +5	Strongly favored	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: BCCSA Code Clause 18 — Opposing views on controversial issues of public importance

Offence: The broadcast presents the President's policy positions on multiple controversial issues of public importance — SANDF deployment to the Western Cape, immigration enforcement, land reform framework, Gaza/Palestine foreign policy, NHI preparation — without any opposing view from any political party, civil society organisation, or independent expert.

Evidence: Timestamp 23:51 — "I will be deploying the South African National Defence Force to support the police... in the Western Cape and in KZN to deal with gang violence and illegal mining." — This is a constitutionally significant announcement (requiring parliamentary notification under s. 201(3) of the Constitution) broadcast without any opposition response, legal expert commentary, or DA/Western Cape government perspective.

Assessment: The SANDF deployment announcement alone, broadcast without any opposing view, constitutes a prima facie violation of Clause 18. The same applies to the immigration enforcement measures (87:05), the NHI preparation announcement (83:54), and the Gaza/Palestine foreign policy statement (97:57) — all of which are controversial issues of public importance on which significant opposing views exist and are not represented.

Violation 2:

Standard: Broadcasting Act s. 6 — Highest standards of journalism, including accuracy and impartiality

Offence: Economic statistics are presented without independent verification and without the contextual information necessary for accurate assessment. Specifically, the GDP growth claim (13:14) is presented without the per-capita growth rate; the investment conference delivery gap (67:33) is presented without the 60% non-delivery rate; and the matric pass rate (74:01) is presented without the age-cohort dropout context.

Evidence: Timestamp 13:14 — "While we have experienced four consecutive quarters of GDP growth" — presented without the growth rate figure, without comparison to population growth, and without independent economic verification.

Assessment: Broadcasting Act s. 6 requires accuracy. Presenting economic statistics in their most favourable form, without the contextual information necessary for accurate public understanding, falls below the statutory accuracy standard. The SABC's failure to provide any independent economic analysis before or after the broadcast compounds this violation.

Violation 3:

Standard: Broadcasting Act s. 6 — Impartiality; BCCSA Code Clause 16 — Balanced manner

Offence: The broadcast provides 98% of airtime to the ANC President without any balancing content from opposition parties, independent experts, or affected communities. Parties representing 24.1% of parliamentary seats (MK, EFF) receive zero representation.

Evidence: Timestamp 17:55 — "The government of national unity has shown that it is possible for South Africans to come together from across the political spectrum" — broadcast without any counterpoint from MK or EFF, which explicitly reject this characterisation.

Assessment: Impartiality under Broadcasting Act s. 6 does not require that every broadcast be internally balanced — the SONA is a constitutionally mandated event that must be broadcast. However, impartiality requires that the SABC's overall treatment of the event be balanced. The absence of any pre- or post-broadcast opposition response, analytical framing, or independent expert commentary means that the broadcast as a whole fails the impartiality standard.



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Overall Assessment under Broadcasting Act s. 6

The SABC's broadcast of the 2026 State of the Nation Address is a constitutionally necessary public service event that nonetheless, in its editorial execution, falls below the standards required by Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999, Section 6, and BCCSA Code Clauses 16 and 18. The violations identified are not violations of the decision to broadcast the SONA — that decision is both legally required and editorially appropriate — but of the SABC's failure to provide the contextualising, balancing, and analytical framework that transforms a political communication event into journalism meeting the highest standards of fairness, accuracy, and impartiality. A regulatory body assessing this broadcast would likely find that the SABC has met its obligation to broadcast the SONA but has failed its obligation to ensure that the broadcast, taken as a whole, meets the statutory standards of balance and impartiality. The appropriate remedy would be a requirement that future SONA broadcasts be accompanied by structured opposition response segments, independent economic analysis, and civil society commentary — as is standard practice in comparable public broadcasters in the United Kingdom (BBC), Germany (ARD/ZDF), and Australia (ABC).



CHAPTER 6 — Source Depth Check

Source 1: Government Statistics (Stats SA / National Treasury)

- 1. FUNDING:** Funded by the South African state. National Treasury is a department of the executive. Stats SA is a constitutionally independent statistics authority (Statistics Act 6 of 1999) but its data is selected and presented by the executive.
- 2. MANDATE:** Stats SA's mandate is compatible with neutral statistical reporting. National Treasury's mandate includes fiscal management — compatible with neutral reporting but subject to political direction on what to emphasise.
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** The executive has a structural interest in presenting economic statistics favourably. The selection of which statistics to cite (GDP growth, budget surplus) and which to omit (unemployment rate, Gini coefficient) reflects this interest.
- 4. CREDIBILITY MATRIX:**
 - D1 Conflict of Interest: -1 (Stats SA independent; Treasury executive-aligned)
 - D2 Personal Risk: +1 (Stats SA officials face institutional risk for inaccuracy)
 - D3 Subject Competence: +2 (direct mandate and expertise)
 - D4 Opinion Consistency: +1 (consistent methodology)
 - D5 Emotionalisation vs. Data: +2 (data-based)
 - D6 Source Level: +1 (primary data, but selectively presented)
 - TOTAL: +6 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: GREEN (for the underlying data; YELLOW for the selective presentation)**
- 5. COUNTERVOICE:** Bureau for Economic Research (Stellenbosch University), Intellidex, or UNCTAD would provide independent economic assessment. Not cited.

Source 2: Auditor General of South Africa

- 1. FUNDING:** Funded by Parliament; constitutionally independent (Constitution s. 188).
- 2. MANDATE:** Auditing and reporting on public finances — fully compatible with neutral assessment.
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** No structural conflict of interest in the assessment itself. However, the selective quotation by the President introduces a conflict at the point of use.
- 4. CREDIBILITY MATRIX:**
 - D1 Conflict of Interest: +2 (constitutionally independent)
 - D2 Personal Risk: +1 (constitutional protection but institutional pressure)
 - D3 Subject Competence: +2 (direct mandate)
 - D4 Opinion Consistency: +2 (consistent with previous reports)
 - D5 Emotionalisation vs. Data: +2 (audit-based)
 - D6 Source Level: +2 (primary audit reports)
 - TOTAL: +11 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: GREEN**
- 5. COUNTERVOICE:** The AG's full report, including any findings critical of national government's role in local government dysfunction, is not cited. The selective quotation of a credible source to support a partisan argument is itself a manipulation technique, even when the underlying source is credible.

IMPORTANT NOTE: "Recognised" is not a factual qualification. It is a social attribution that must itself be examined. The Auditor General is recognised as credible because of constitutional independence and audit methodology — these are verifiable criteria. Government statistics are recognised as authoritative because of institutional mandate — but their selective presentation by a partisan actor reduces their effective credibility in this context.



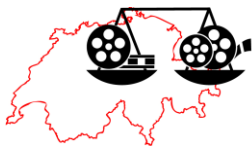
Analysis prepared in accordance with Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999, Section 6; BCCSA Code Clauses 16 and 18; and the methodological principles of Version 3.0-detail (K11+K8: Document triggering event — asymmetry only demonstrable with comparable trigger without analogous reaction at other guests/positions).

Source Credibility Overview:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Signal
Government Statistics (Stats SA / National Treasury)	-1	+1	+2	+1	+2	+1	+6	GREEN
Auditor General of South Africa	+2	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+11	GREEN

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).
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 - **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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You think you see the world. In Wirklichkeit siehst du den Rahmen, den jemand um sie gelegt hat. Framing ist die älteste und eleganteste Manipulationstechnik der world. Sie verändert nicht die Fakten – sie verändert, was wir aus den Fakten machen. Wie wir fühlen. Was wir glauben. Wie wir entscheiden. Und sie funktioniert – weil wir alle mitmachen. Täglich. Unbewusst. Auch du. Dieses Buch ist kein trockenes Lehrbuch. Es ist ein Übungsbuch – spielerisch, direkt, voller Beispiele aus dem echten Leben. Du lernst nicht nur, wie andere dich framen. Du lernst, wie du selbst framest – und wie du es bewusst und fair einsetzen kannst.

Because whoever understands framing sees the world more clearly. Hears news differently. Conducts conversations more confidently. And no longer so easily accepts a frame chosen by someone else.



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With many exercises and concrete examples from politics, media and everyday life – and the occasional smile.

Framing with style. Because the frame changes everything.



The SRG collects 1.56 billion francs per year – compulsorily, from every household. Those who feel unfairly treated can file a complaint. There is even an authority for this: the UBI, the Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television.

But: It is not independent. It has no sanctioning power. And it decides in 99.6% of all cases: nothing.

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.