



**YOUR X IS YOUR SAY**

## **FIRST DAY OF SPECIAL VOTING SUMMARY**

6 MAY 2019

Tshwane (National Results Operations Centre) – The Electoral Commission is satisfied overall with the first day of special voting for the 2019 National and Provincial Elections.

Special voting was undertaken throughout the country at both voting stations and through home visits. Where special voting was not completed today, activities will continue tomorrow.

Reports showed that with the exception of a handful of minor incidents, special voting proceeded as planned.

“As a test run of our planning and preparations today was a very solid and encouraging start. It has given us the opportunity to put our plans, systems and logistics to the test and see where we may need to focus attention on Wednesday,” explained Chief Electoral Officer Sy Mamabolo.

Among the incidents which marred the first day were reports of voting stations in Ginsberg, outside King William’s Town, and Idutywa in the Eastern Cape where election staff and voters were prevented from conducting voting due to community unrest.

The matter has been reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS) to investigate. It is a criminal offence to interfere with the duties of election officials and/or to prevent voters from voting.

Police have warned that any disruptions to the elections will not be tolerated and an increased police presence is planned for areas where protest and civil unrest is anticipated.

The Commission again appeals to all communities to support and defend democracy by voting and protecting the electoral process.

In another incident, a pack of three unused, unassembled ballot boxes was discovered on the side of a road in Tzaneen, Limpopo. The Electoral Commission has investigated the incident and found that it was lost off the back of a vehicle during transport to a voting station.

“Fortunately there is no risk to the elections as the boxes were unused and there are many safeguards to protect the integrity of the elections. However, such incidents are highly regrettable as they serve to undermine the faith of the public and stakeholders in the process,” Mr Mamabolo said.

The crucial importance of transporting all election material safely and securely before, during and after the elections has been stressed to all election officials and an internal case of negligence and bring the IEC into disrepute is being investigated against the official concerned. The official has been suspended pending the outcome.

Other incidents reported included pens which did not write effectively – especially early in the morning when it was cooler and they were first used. This sparked calls on social media for voters to bring their own pens – and not to trust the IEC “pencils” which could be erased.

“This is another form of disinformation and fake news. We use black pens to mark ballot papers and the ballots are then inserted by the voter into sealed ballot boxes. All of this – and the ultimate removal and counting of cast ballots – is done in front of party agents and observers so there is no chance for ballots to be interfered with,” explained Mr Mamabolo.

Other social media posts questioned the ineffectiveness of the indelible ink and other claiming voters with fake nails would be forced to remove their nails or not be allowed to vote.

“Unfortunately these are recurring themes of disinformation which have cropped up around each election. It is not true that you can’t vote with fake nails. The indelible ink is effective and it is one of a number of safeguards to protect the integrity of the results.”

The Electoral Commission reminds voters that it is a criminal offence to vote twice or to vote when not registered which, if convicted can earn a person up to 10 years in jail.

“There are many safeguards but the best guarantee of integrity is for everyone to be vigilant and to make sure each and every step of the process is followed according to the law,” Mr Mamabolo said.

ENDS

#### **ISSUED BY THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

*Ensuring free and fair elections*

**For media queries please contact Kate Bapela on 082 600-6386**

**For media interviews with Electoral Commission officials please email requests to [spokesperson@elections.org.za](mailto:spokesperson@elections.org.za)**

**Also find the IEC on -**

- **Facebook: [www.facebook.com/IECSouthAfrica](http://www.facebook.com/IECSouthAfrica)**
- **Twitter: [@IECSouthAfrica](https://twitter.com/IECSouthAfrica)**
- **You Tube: [www.youtube.com/user/IECSouthAfrica](http://www.youtube.com/user/IECSouthAfrica)**
- **Contact Centre: 0800 11 8000**
- **Join the conversation: [#SAElections2019](https://twitter.com/SAElections2019) [#Xse2019](https://twitter.com/Xse2019)**