

## **Elections in southern Africa**

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### **South Africa**

South Africa will go to the polls on April 22 in the country's fourth democratic elections since the end of apartheid.

23 million South Africans, the largest number ever, are registered to vote. South Africans outside of the country who register by 27 March will be able to vote in embassies/high commissions in countries where they are.

It is anticipated there could be a record number of parties contesting the elections. The African National Congress (ANC) the oldest liberation movement on the continent which got 70% of the vote at the last election is widely expected to win. The main focus is whether they retain their share of the vote.

The ANC is supported by the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU) and the South African Communist party (SACP) in what is termed the tripartite alliance. There is a new party, Congress of the People (COPE) formed largely by people who have left the ANC and there is speculation as to how it will do. The Democratic Alliance (DA) was the second largest party last time with 12% of vote and Inkatha Freedom party third with 7%.

### **Malawi**

Malawi will hold its presidential and parliamentary elections on 19 May.

There is uncertainty whether the former President, Bakili Muluzi, who announced his candidature as leader of the second largest party in parliament, the United Democratic Front (UDF) is eligible to stand as he has served two consecutive terms previously and the constitution limits presidents to two terms. The Government is alleging corruption against him and charges may be brought.

The current President Bingu wa Mutharika is standing again. He was the candidate of the UDF at the last election, but broke away to form his own party the Democratic Progressive Party. He does not have a parliamentary majority.

The largest party in parliament is the Malawi Congress Party( MCP) and its candidate is John Tembo. The MCP was the party of the former "life" President Hastings Kamuzu Banda who made Malawi a one party state. He lost the multi party elections of 1994 and died in 1997.

A number of members of parliament elected in 2004 were elected as independents and a number of those elected as a party candidates act as independent. It is unlikely that whoever wins the Presidency will have a parliamentary majority.