South Africa Starts Voting amid Corruption, Unemployment

JOHANNESBURG - South Africans have voted in presidential and parliamentary elections amid charges of corruption and unemployment.

Wednesday's vote comes 25 years after the end of apartheid, but despite the demise of the system of racial discrimination the country remains divided by economic inequalities.

The poll of Nelson Mandela that has been in power since 1994, the African National Congress, is likely to win a majority of seats and face a difficult challenge to do as well as five years ago.

The party has been tarnished by widespread corruption scandals and a national unemployment rate of 27% that has left many voters disillusioned.

ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa, who led his party to victory in the 2019 local elections, said the general election would be the most important vote since the end of apartheid.

He said the results of the vote would determine whether South Africa is free of poverty and inequality.

The election is the first since the death of former president Nelson Mandela in December 2013.

The African National Congress (ANC) announced on Friday that it had won the election, securing a majority of 63% of the vote.

The ANC is the ruling party in South Africa and has been in power since the fall of apartheid in 1994.

The vote was seen as a test of the popularity of President Cyril Ramaphosa, who has promised to tackle corruption and improve the economy.

The opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) said it had won the second-largest share of the vote with 20%.

The election was marred by allegations of fraud and violence.

The International Crisis Group, an international non-governmental organization, has warned that the election could be marred by violence and fraud.

The group called for steps to be taken to prevent the spread of violence and ensure a peaceful election.

The group said the election could be a test of the country's commitment to democracy and good governance.

The election was also seen as a test of the country's ability to address its economic challenges and provide opportunities for its people.