

# President of South Africa

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The **President of the Republic of South Africa** is the head of state and head of government under the Constitution of South Africa. From 1961 to 1994, the head of state was called the **State President**.

The President is elected by the National Assembly, the lower house of Parliament, and is usually the leader of the largest party, which has been the African National Congress since the first non-racial elections were held on 27 April 1994. The role was originally founded to be distinct from the now defunct role of prime minister, but the two roles were merged in the 1983 constitution which specified a four-year term of office. The 1993 and later constitutions limits the president's time in office to two five-year terms.<sup>[2]</sup> The first President to be elected under the new constitution was Nelson Mandela, and the incumbent president is Jacob Zuma.

Under the interim Constitution (valid from 1994 to 1996), there was a Government of National Unity, in which an MP from the largest opposition party was entitled to a position as Deputy President. Along with Thabo Mbeki, the last State President, F.W. De Klerk also served as Deputy President, in his capacity as the leader of the National Party which was the second-largest party in the new Parliament. But De Klerk later resigned and went into opposition with his party. A voluntary coalition government continues to exist under the new constitution (adopted in 1996), although there have been no appointments of opposition politicians to the post of Deputy President.

The President is required to be a member of the National Assembly at the time of his election. Upon his election, he immediately resigns his seat for the duration of his term.

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## President of the Republic of South Africa



Seal of the President of South Africa



**Incumbent**  
**Jacob Zuma**  
since 9 May 2009

<b>Residence</b>	Mahlamba Ndlopfu (Pretoria) Genadendal (Cape Town) Dr John L Dube House (Durban)
<b>Appointer</b>	National Assembly of South Africa
<b>Term length</b>	5 years renewable once
<b>Inaugural holder</b>	Nelson Mandela
<b>Formation</b>	10 May 1994
<b>Deputy</b>	Deputy President of South Africa
<b>Salary</b>	R2,622,561 <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thepresidency.gov.za">www.thepresidency.gov.za</a>

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(<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/>)

## Origins

The office of the President, and the roles that come with it, were established by Chapter Five of the Constitution of South Africa which was formed by a Constituent Assembly upon the dissolution of apartheid as state policy.<sup>[3]</sup>

A number of manifestations of the office have existed. Aspects of these offices exist within the presidency today. The executive leadership of the British colonies of Natal and of the Cape of Good Hope were invested in their Governors, likewise was invested in the Presidents of the Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Alternating sovereignty as a result of wars culminated in the Vereeniging Treaty signed in which concluded the South African War.

The Union of South Africa, a British Dominion, was established on 31 May 1910<sup>[4]</sup> and the head of state was invested in the apolitical and ceremonial Monarch of the United Kingdom (who was represented by a viceroy, the Governor-General).

Upon the declaration of South Africa as a republic in 31 May 1961, the State President was created.<sup>[5]</sup> and A realignment of power took place in subsequent years until the dissolution of the Office of the Prime Minister.

## Electoral system

South Africa has a nearly unique system for the election of its president. Unlike other former British colonies and dominions who have adopted a parliamentary republican form of government and those that follow the Westminster system, South Africa's President is both head of state and head of government and Commander-in-Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Contrary to presidential systems around the world, the President of South Africa is elected by the Parliament of South Africa<sup>[6]</sup> rather than by the people directly or an Electoral College, thus answerable to it in theory and able to influence legislation in practice as head of the majority party (presently the ANC). The Constitution has thus prescribed a system combining both parliamentary and presidential systems in a unique manner. Only Botswana uses a similar system.<sup>[7]</sup>

Although the presidency is the key institution, it is hedged about with numerous checks and balances that prevent its total dominance over the government, as was the case in many African countries. The presidential term is five years, and is limited to two consecutive terms. Thus the electoral system attempts (at least on paper) to prevent the accumulation of power in the president as was during Apartheid or in many other African countries.<sup>[8]</sup>

# Presidential powers

The President is the head of state, head of government and commander in chief of the armed forces of the Republic of South Africa. The rights, responsibilities and remuneration of the President are enumerated in Chapter V of the Constitution of South Africa and subsequent amendments and laws passed by the Parliament of South Africa.

The executive power of the Republic is invested in the president. He appoints various officials to positions listed in the Constitution however the most significant are the ministers and justices of the Supreme Court. Through the Cabinet, the president implements and enforces the constitution and laws and enforces his or her political objectives.

The president plays a role in the formation of legislation. He or she signs bills into laws and can do the opposite, veto them (although subject to an override), refers bills back to Parliament or to the Constitutional Court or can call for a referendum. The president summons parliament, often delivering his or her objectives and agenda in a State of the Nation Address at the beginning of each session.

The president is the commander in chief of the armed forces thereby possessing influence or control over foreign and security policy. He or she is accorded the constitutional powers to declare war and make peace, negotiate and sign (although not ratify) treaties (and the alliances that may come with them), and receives and appoints diplomatic officials, confers honours and grants pardons.<sup>[9]</sup>





The President is addressed as "Your Excellency" or "Mr/Madam President" and referred to as "The Honourable (name)".

The official seat of the President are the Union Buildings in Pretoria and the Tuynhuys in Cape Town. His living residences are Mahlamba Ndlopfu in Pretoria, Genadendal in Cape Town and Dr John L Dube House in Durban.

## List of Presidents of South Africa since 1994

### Parties

African National Congress

#	Name (Born–Died)	Picture	Took office	Left office	Elected (Parliament)	Political Party
1	Nelson Mandela (1918–2013)		10 May 1994	14 June 1999	1994 (22nd)	African National Congress
2	Thabo Mbeki (1942–)		14 June 1999	24 September 2008 (Resigned)	1999 (23rd) 2004 (24th)	African National Congress
3	Kgalema Motlanthe (1949–)		25 September 2008	9 May 2009 <sup>[10]</sup>	2008 (24th)	African National Congress
4	Jacob Zuma (1942–)		9 May 2009 <sup>[10]</sup>	Incumbent	2009 (25th) 2014 (26th)	African National Congress

## Latest election

## See also

- State President of South Africa
- Prime Minister of South Africa
- Governor-General of the Union of South Africa
- List of Presidents of the South African Republic (1857–1902)
- State President of the Orange Free State
- Freedom Day

## References

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2. "Constitution, chapter 5: The President and National Executive, 88. Term of office of President" (<http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons5.htm#88>).
3. "Constitution, chapter 5: The President and National Executive, 88. Term of office of President" (<http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons5.htm#88>).
4. "General History of South Africa Timeline: 1910s" (<http://sahistory.co.za/topic/1900s/1910s>).
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## External links

- Office of the Presidency (<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/>)



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| Lists of political office-holders in South Africa

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