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THE MANY, MANY COMMISSIONS OF CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

A Comprehensive List of Commissions Established by
President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa (2018–2025)

By Marie-Louise de Nysschen
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KEY FINDINGS

Multitude of Initiatives and "Commission Fatigue":

Since 2018, President Cyril Ramaphosa has launched six major judicial commissions and more than 34 expert panels, advisory councils and task teams. This persistent creation of numerous initiatives has led to what might be described as "commission fatigue". This fatigue is a direct result of what is perceived to be a never-ending stream of high-profile commissions, enquiries, task teams and discussions that consistently fail to deliver tangible results, fostering cynicism among the public. Although the purpose of this report is not to showcase the financial impact of these commissions, it is important to acknowledge significant costs involved - such as administrative and operational costs, research expenses, communication services and logistical arrangements - which undoubtedly represent substantial expenditure. While the expenditures are not explored in detail here, they present an opportunity for further investigation.

Ramaphosa's Strategy of Postponement:

The phenomenon of a never-ending flow of such initiatives is attributed to President Ramaphosa's stated "mission" to "keep the ANC united", even if it means being perceived as a "weak president". His response to the long list of crises that South Africa is faced with is consistently characterised by an unwillingness to take decisive action, presumably because such actions would be regarded as divisive within the ANC. This is particularly relevant for holding corrupt government officials accountable and steering away from destructive policies. As a result, Ramaphosa has - either deliberately or through negligence - adopted a strategy of postponement by commission, consistently initiating commissions and discussion forums to delay necessary decisive action.

Public Disillusionment:

The general public and various institutions in South Africa view initiatives like the National Dialogue as a waste of time and money while having no lasting impact. This negative response is justified due to the perceived government control over these processes, fears of ANC capture, inadequate preparation, inexplicably high costs and the sidelining of voices that are not aligned with the ideological worldview of the ANC and the ruling political elite.

Symptom of a Deeper Systemic Crisis:

The extensive and often ineffective use of commissions is not merely a procedural issue, but rather a symptom of a deeper systemic crisis. It reflects a centralised government struggling with widespread state failure, the implementation of destructive policies, and internal political dynamics that prioritise party unity over decisive action. The central government is seen as struggling to translate policy discussion into effective implementation.

Short-term delay tactics at the expense of long-term solutions:

It is clear from the President's approach that he prefers short term delay tactics at the expense of long term solutions. This is largely as a result of the fact that such behaviour is incentivised by a political system in which winning the next election is more important than implementing policies that might lead to renewal and long term growth. South Africa needs policies and executive decisions that would place the country on a path to prosperity. Yet, it is becoming increasingly clear that such policies are not in the interest of the ruling elite. Even worse, such policies might lead to faction fighting and the disintegration of the ANC. As a result, the president is not just unprepared to take such action, but it could reasonably be predicted that he would continue to be vehemently against such action, opting for delay tactics instead. This is not just a criticism of the president and the ANC, but of a political system that incentivises and rewards such behaviour.

Need for a Better Political Order with More Autonomy for Communities of South Africa:

The report suggests that to address the problem of numerous commissions and governmental indecision, decentralisation is needed. South Africa, is governed by a highly centralised system. This centralised system significantly contributes to the observed challenges. Lex Libertas argues that decentralisation would facilitate autonomy and self-governance for the country's various communities, thereby shifting responsibility from a dysfunctional, centralised state to more responsive and accountable communities. A fundamental re-evaluation of South Africa's governance model is necessary for a sustainable future.

*Note - For the purpose of this report, "commissions" include judicial commissions, expert panels, advisory councils and task teams.

PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

COMMISSIONS ESTABLISHED DURING PRESIDENCY (2018-2025)

EARLY FOCUS ON GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC REFORM

2018 - 2019

01 MAY 2018 Task Team to Implement Findings of High-Level Review Panel on the SARS	02 JUN 2018 Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land Reform	03 SEP 2018 Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture	04 OCT 2018 Advisory Panel to Identify Candidates for National Director of Public Prosecutions	05 OCT 2018 Public Investment Corporation (PIC) Commission of Inquiry	06 OCT 2018 Inter-Ministerial Committee on South Africa Investment Conference
07 NOV 2018 NPA Commission	08 DEC 2018 Eskom Sustainability Task Team	09 2019 (JUN 2018) High-Level Review Panel on the State Security Agency	10 JAN 2019 Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)	11 APR 2019 Interim Steering Committee for Gender-Based Violence & Femicide National Strategic Plan	12 APR 2019 Panel to Review SARS Commissioner
13 SEP 2019 Economic Advisory Council	14 NOV 2019 Investment Envoys				

COVID-19 AND RECOVERY FOCUS

2020 - 2021

15 APR 2020 National Coronavirus Command Council	16 JUN 2020 State-Owned Entities Council	17 JUL 2020 Presidential Infrastructure Commission	18 AUG 2020 Inter-Ministerial Committee on Alleged Coronavirus Corruption	19 NOV 2020 High-Level Task Team on Military Veterans' Benefits	20 DEC 2020 Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Commission
21 JAN 2021 Inter-Ministerial Committee on Vaccines	22 JUN 2021 Commission on African COVID-19 Response	23 OCT 2021 Panel to Shortlist Chief Justice	24 NOV 2021 Task Team to Explore Mandatory Vaccines		

ANTI-CORRUPTION, JUSTICE, AND ONGOING CRISES

2022 - 2025

25 FEB 2022 Climate Task Team	26 JUL 2022 National Energy Crisis Committee (NECOM)	27 AUG 2022 National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council (NACAC)	28 NOV 2024 Presidential Economic Advisory Council for the 7th Administration	29 APR 2025 Commission of Inquiry into Delays in TRC Case Prosecutions	30 MAY 2025 Presidential Water Crisis Task Team
31 JUN 2025 Presidential Digital Transformation Task Team	32 JUN 2025 Eminent Persons Group to Guide the National Dialogue	33 JUN 2025 Joint Committee for Judicial Independence	34 JUL 2025 Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Criminality, Political Interference, and Corruption in the Criminal Justice System		

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01 INTRODUCTION

On June 10, 2025 President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that a National Dialogue would take place in South Africa. He announced that this would be a chance for all the people of South Africa to come together and help shape what was described as the next chapter of democracy in South Africa. The purpose of the National Dialogue was said to be to address South Africa's multifaceted challenges, including economic stagnation, social divisions, and implementation failures of prior plans. The announcement came at a time when the South African government had experienced unprecedented levels of international scrutiny regarding the unfolding crisis in South Africa.

There are several examples of successful National Dialogues held in countries like Tunisia, Senegal, Poland and Bolivia which aided in resolving conflicts, facilitating political transitions, and fostering social cohesion. These dialogues were characterized by high local ownership, neutral facilitation by respected civil society, transparent rules that prevented deadlocks and other good practices.

Shortly after the announcement of the National Dialogue it became clear that a variety of communities and institutions in South Africa were not interested in this initiative and viewed it as just another “talk shop” that would waste time and money while having no lasting impact. Without context, this might seem like an unusually negative response to something that has proven to have success in other countries, but there are several important reasons why this negativity is justified. Despite being labelled as citizen-led, the Dialogue is facilitated by the Presidency and housed at NEDLAC, raising fears of ANC capture.

It was announced that the Dialogue would be led by a so-called Eminent Persons Group, but it soon became clear that the representatives chosen to lead this group were carefully selected to ensure that the ideological worldview of the political elite in South Africa would prevail at these discussions. Several prominent foundations and organisations have announced their withdrawal from the Dialogue, citing a move from a process led by civil society to one dominated by government control. The Dialogue's first National Convention (August 15–17, 2025) was criticized for inadequate preparation. Although Ramaphosa announced in August that the revised cost was R400 million and not R700 million as initially announced, there is a general sense in the country that there are better ways to spend such an amount of money.

Most importantly, it should be said that the citizens of South Africa suffer from what might be described as “commission fatigue”, which is a result of a multitude of high-profile enquiries, commissions and similar speaking initiatives that have failed to deliver tangible results, fostering cynicism towards these kinds of actions. Since 2018, Ramaphosa launched six major judicial commissions and more than 34 expert panels, advisory councils, task teams, and multi-stakeholder groups. A certain source even claims that this number is much higher.¹

The phenomenon of what is perceived as a never-ending flow of such initiatives during Ramaphosa's presidency might better be understood when considering the remarks he made shortly after becoming president about his “mission” as president.

¹ City Press, 'President Cyril Ramaphosa has appointed more than 100 commissions since he came into office to help him do his job or to do his job for him', 18 June 2023.

Shortly after his ascendancy to the presidency, Cyril Ramaphosa announced that he “would rather be seen as a weak president than to split the ANC.” He went on to explain that his mission was to “keep the ANC united.” With this, the president effectively explained that he was not prepared to take decisive action, because decisive action tends to be controversial within the context of the ANC. It is clear that decisive action is particularly necessary to hold corrupt government officials accountable and to steer away from destructive policies. It is, however, precisely this type of decisive action that could potentially “split” the ANC. It is clear from the evidence outlined in this report that President Ramaphosa has adopted a strategy of postponement by commission, through which he repeatedly and deliberately initiates speaking events such as talk shops, commissions, dialogues and so forth, in order to delay taking the decisive action that is necessary to address the problems at hand.

This report compiles a list of the most important bodies established by President Ramaphosa since he became president in 2018.

02 LIST OF COMMISSIONS, ENQUIRIES AND DIALOGUES

2018-2019: EARLY FOCUS ON GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC REFORM

01

Task Team to Implement Findings of High-Level Review Panel on SARS May 2018

This task team was formed to enact recommendations from a prior review addressing governance and operational failures at the South African Revenue Service (SARS), particularly under former Commissioner Tom Moyane. It led to Moyane's dismissal and the appointment of Edward Kieswetter, credited with institutional reforms. According to the Department of Communication, the aim of the commission was “to stabilise SARS, restore its credibility and strengthen its capacity to meet revenue targets”². This commission is also known as the Nugent Commission.

02

Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land Reform June 2018

Ramaphosa established the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land Reform and appointed former Deputy President David Mabuza as its Chairperson. Mabuza called on the Committee to equally focus on the development and implementation of a package of post-settlement support measures to enhance productivity of restituted land, including communal land. Mabuza said, this would ensure that the productive capacity of the country is improved to respond to the challenge of unemployment and poverty³.

The Committee also noted on-going public hearings throughout the country that are in support of this agenda, and further encourages all South Africans to engage in national debates around the proposal for the expropriation of land without compensation. There was some misunderstanding with regard to expropriation, to which the Government replied: “The Government wishes to clarify categorically that when the government talks about land expropriation, we are referring to the 87 percent of the land not the 13 percent that is under the control of traditional leaders and black people. We wish to emphasise that the 13 percent of the land is not under any dispute”, said Minister Mkhize⁴.

² News24. 2019. Cabinet notes 'massive failure of governance integrity' at Sars under Moyane. [Online].
³ Gov.za. n.d. Deputy President David Mabuza: Outcomes of inaugural Inter-Ministerial Committee. [Online].

⁴ Cogta.gov.za. n.d. Government clarifies misunderstanding on land expropriation target. [Online].

03

Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture

September 2018

Tasked with recommending constitutional amendments for land redistribution, this panel submitted its report in 2019, proposing a balanced approach. The panel was mandated to review, research and suggest models for the government to implement a fair and equitable land reform process that redresses the injustices of the past, increases agricultural output, promotes economic growth and protects food security. The panel was further expected to provide perspectives on land policy in the context of persisting land inequality, unsatisfactory land and agrarian reform and uneven urban land development³. The panel was appointed in September 2018 to support the work of the Inter Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Land Reform chaired by the former Deputy President Mabuza. Its findings stirred political controversy, with opposition parties questioning implementation feasibility.

04

Advisory Panel to Identify Candidates for National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP)

October 2018

The Advisory Panel to Identify Candidates for the National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) was established in October 2018 to recommend candidates for the position. The panel was chaired by Minister Jeff Radebe and included representatives from various legal bodies. After receiving nominations, holding interviews with shortlisted candidates, the panel recommended five nominees to the President, with Shamila Batohi ultimately being appointed to the role in December 2018⁶.

05

Public Investment Corporation (PIC) Commission of Inquiry

October 2018

President Ramaphosa appointed the Mpati Commission to inquire into (a) whether there was any impropriety in the investment decisions at the PIC and associated improper personal gain by parties; (b) the governance and operational model of the PIC; (c) the allegations contained in information on the PIC by James Nogu (and others) and the ramifications thereof; (d) human resources-related matters such as victimisation and remuneration including performance awards; (e) possible political interference in the operations of the PIC; and (f) the manner in which the PIC handled regulatory aspects with regards to key legislation such as the Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services (FAIS) Act and other legislation⁷.

06

Inter-Ministerial Committee on South Africa Investment Conference

October 2018

The South Africa Investment Conference promoted foreign investment securing pledges worth billions. The theme of the conference was 'Accelerating Growth by Building Partnerships⁸'. The aim of the conference was to market the compelling investment opportunities in South Africa so as to encourage investments and create jobs. Its success is mixed, with some projects stalled due to logistical issues.

5 Presidency.gov.za. n.d. President Ramaphosa receives report advisory panel land reform and agriculture. [Online].

6 Thepresidency.gov.za. n.d. NDPP selection panel names preferred candidates. [Online].

7 Gov.za. n.d. President Cyril Ramaphosa releases report judicial commission inquiry public. [Online].

8 Gcis.gov.za. n.d. Inter-Ministerial Committee South Africa Investment Conference. [Online].

07

NPA Commission

November 2018

The NPA Commission, also formally known as the Mokgoro Enquiry into the Fitness of Advocates Nomgcobo Jiba and Lawrence Sithembiso Mrwebi to Hold Office in the National Prosecuting Authority, was a judicial inquiry established under Section 12(6) of the National Prosecuting Authority Act 32 of 1998. The commission was chaired by retired Constitutional Court Justice Yvonne Mokgoro. Mokgoro concluded that both Jiba and Mrwebi were neither fit nor proper to hold office due to dishonesty, lack of integrity and professional lapses.

08

Eskom Sustainability Task Team

December 2018

The Eskom Sustainability Task Team was a South African government initiative established in December 2018 to address Eskom's operational and financial crisis and find solutions for restoring the supply-demand balance⁹. The team, comprised of experts like Anton Eberhard and Grové Steyn, was tasked with consulting stakeholders, including labor and business, and was requested to submit initial recommendations by January 2019. The team's creation was a response to ongoing concerns about Eskom's stability, which threatened the national economy and required urgent, simultaneous solutions for its severe financial constraints and operational issues. Progress has been slow, with load shedding persisting, drawing public frustration.

09

High-Level Review Panel on the State Security Agency

June 2018 (Report 2019)

A high-level review panel was appointed to assess the mandate, capacity and organisational integrity of the State Security Agency (SSA)¹⁰. The appointment of the panel follows the President's statement in the National Assembly on 08 May 2018 of his intention to set up a review panel to assess the structure of the SSA relative to its mandate and enquire into its systems and capacity. Examined intelligence abuses under prior regimes, chaired by Sydney Mufamadi. Its findings led to structural reforms, though full implementation remains ongoing. President Ramaphosa has said that the panel must seek to identify all material factors that allowed for some of the current challenges within the Agency so that appropriate measures are instituted to prevent a recurrence. The main objective of the review panel is to assist in ensuring a responsible and accountable national intelligence capability for the country in line with the Constitution and relevant legislation.

10

Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

January 2019

The Commission was created to coordinate the development of South Africa's national response action plan to deal with the 4IR¹¹. As part of this effort the Commission was tasked with identifying policies, strategies and plans that are needed to position

9 Thepresidency.gov.za. n.d. President appoints Eskom Sustainability Task Team. [Online].

10 Thepresidency.gov.za. n.d. President Ramaphosa appoints high-level review panel state security agency. [Online].

11 Gov.za. 2019. 42388gen209. [Online].

South Africa as a leading country in the evolution and development of the 4IR and to advise on integrating digital technologies into the economy. Its recommendations influence current AI and digital transformation initiatives, though adoption is gradual.

11 Interim Steering Committee for Gender-Based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan April 2019

The Interim Steering Committee for the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF-NSP) was established in 2019 following the 2018 Presidential Summit to oversee the production of the NSP and the implementation of its Emergency Response Action Plan (ERAP). Composed of government departments, civil society organizations, research institutions, and development agencies, the committee worked to coordinate the national response to GBVF, which was published in 2020. In 2020, the committee's mandate shifted to the newly established Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Council to take over the implementation and oversight of the NSP¹². A total of R1.6bn has been allocated for the implementation of the plan which outlines intervention areas that was implemented over six months. Funds have been committed by different government departments as well as funding development partners.

12 Panel to Review SARS Commissioner April 2019

In April 2019, a selection panel appointed by the Minister of Finance reviewed candidates and recommended Edward Kieswetter for the position of SARS Commissioner, who was subsequently appointed by the President. Chaired by Trevor Manuel, the panel included Justice Dennis Davis and Ismail Momoniat, among others. This process followed the recommendations of the Nugent Commission of Inquiry and was overseen by then-Finance Minister Tito Mboweni. Assessed SARS leadership post-Moyane, supporting Kieswetter's appointment. It reinforced earlier reforms but faced criticism for limited scope¹³.

13 Economic Advisory Council September 2019

The Council was announced by President Ramaphosa in the State of the Nation Address to ensure greater coherence and consistency in the implementation of economic policy and ensure that government and society in general is better equipped to respond to changing economic circumstances¹⁴. Comprising local and international economic thought leaders, the Council will advise the President and government more broadly, facilitating the development and implementation of economic policies that spur inclusive growth.

The Council is a non-statutory and independent body chaired by the President and brings together prominent economists and technical experts drawn from academia, the private sector, labour, community, think tanks and other constituencies. The members, who volunteered their time and were compensated for subsistence and travel, were appointed to serve a three-year term.

12 Gcis.gov.za. 2019. Steering Committee Implementation National Emergency Action Plan GBVF. [Online].

13 Treasury.gov.za. 2019. Report of the Selection Panel for Commissioner of SARS. [Online].

14 Gov.za. 2019. President Cyril Ramaphosa appoints economic advisory council. [Online].

14 Investment Envoys November 2019

Four Special Envoys on Investment were appointed by the President in April 2018 to promote South Africa as an investment destination, facilitate resolution of administrative hurdles to investment and engage both domestic and foreign investors on the opportunities that exist in the country¹⁵. The office was responsible for developing the country's investment strategy, refining the institutional infrastructure for investment mobilisation, and establishing an investment intelligence capability. Success varies, with some pledges unrealized due to infrastructure challenges.

2020-2021: COVID-19 AND RECOVERY FOCUS

15 National Coronavirus Command Council April 2020

On March 15, 2020 President Ramaphosa announced the establishment of a National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) “to coordinate all aspects of our extraordinary emergency response” to the Covid-19 crisis. After the president and several ministers stated that the NCCC takes binding decisions (and therefore does not merely play a coordinating role), lawyers started questioning the legality of the NCCC and any decisions it might have taken¹⁶.

But as the Presidency has provided at least three different explanations for how the NCCC operates and what functions it has, it is impossible to know whether the many decisions attributed to the NCCC are unlawful and therefore invalid. The NCCC was criticized for overreach, it was dissolved post-pandemic, with mixed public reception.

16 State-Owned Entities Council June 2020

The Presidential State-Owned Enterprises Council (PSEC) was established by President Ramaphosa in June 2020 to reposition state-owned enterprises (SOEs) as drivers of economic transformation and development in South Africa¹⁷. The council, which includes relevant cabinet ministers and external experts, aims to strengthen SOE governance, improve their financial and operational performance, and align them with national priorities. Progress is slow, with entities like South African Airways still struggling.

Furthermore, the Council has been tasked to advise the Government on the repositioning of SOEs, development of appropriate governance frameworks; to identify specific interventions to stabilise and strengthen SOEs' financial and operational performance and reduce reliance on the fiscus, and ensure SOEs are repurposed to align with national priorities. The President called on the Council to work with haste to ensure prioritisation of those SOEs which can have a greater impact on the economy, mobilisation of private capital, and increased operational efficiencies in support of improved national output.

15 Gov.za. 2019. President Cyril Ramaphosa appoints additional Special Envoys on SA investments. [Online].

16 Dailymaverick.co.za. 2020. The National Coronavirus Command Council riddle and the contradictory statements about its powers and functions. [Online].

17 Thepresidency.gov.za. n.d. Statement inaugural meeting presidential state owned enterprises council. [Online].

17

Presidential Infrastructure Commission

July 2020

President Ramaphosa has concluded the inaugural Presidential Infrastructure Commission Council under the 7th administration. The Council convened to discuss amongst others, a plan on dealing with crime and extortion at construction sites, the level of implementation of priority infrastructure projects and programmes, as well as strategic initiatives that are being developed to accelerate the pace and quality of infrastructure investments in the country¹⁸.

The Council was constituted by the President, Deputy President, Ministers designated by the President, Premiers of Provinces, Executive Mayors of Metropolitan Councils and the chairperson of the South African Local Government Association. Per the Infrastructure Development Act, the Council is tasked with:

- Coordinating the development, maintenance, implementation and monitoring of the national infrastructure plan;
- Coordinating the determination of priorities for infrastructure development;
- Ensuring that infrastructure development in respect of any strategic integrated project is given priority in planning, approval and implementation;
- Ensuring co-operation between organs of state affected by projects undertaken;
- Promoting investment and identifying and developing strategies to cause the removal of impediments to investment.

Projects are underway, but funding delays persist.

18

Inter-Ministerial Committee on Alleged Coronavirus Corruption

August 2020

President Ramaphosa appointed a Committee of Ministers to deal with allegations of corruption associated with the country's response to the coronavirus pandemic¹⁹. Chaired by the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Ronald Lamola, the committee looked into corruption in the procurement of goods and services sourced for the purpose of containing and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE). This Committee identified irregularities, but few prosecutions have followed.

19

High-Level Task Team on Military Veterans' Benefits

November 2020

The High-Level Task Team on Military Veterans' Benefits, also known as the Presidential Task Team (PTT), was a South African presidential initiative formed in late 2020 to address the persistent issues faced by military veterans regarding their benefits and support²⁰.

18 The Presidency (2025) 'Infrastructure Commission Council to Fast Track Projects Valued at R340 Billion', [online].
19 South African Government. (2020). President Cyril Ramaphosa appoints committee to focus on alleged Coronavirus COVID-19 corruption.

20 South African Government. (2021). President Cyril Ramaphosa High-Level Task Team meeting matters related.

Chaired by the Deputy President, the PTT was tasked with engaging with military veterans and line function government departments to find lasting solutions to their grievances, leading to the development of specific work streams to focus on key challenges and ensure proper implementation of the consensus document signed with veterans' representatives.

20

Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Commission **December 2020**

The Presidential Climate Commission was an independent, statutory, multi-stakeholder body established by President Ramaphosa²¹. Its purpose was to oversee and facilitate a just and equitable transition towards a low-emissions and climate-resilient economy. Their role was to:

- Create a social partnership around a just transition;
- Define a vision for a just transition, and means of achieving that vision, covering the necessary sectoral shifts, technological innovation, employment opportunities, and climate finance;
- Conduct independent analysis into climate change impacts on jobs, the economy, and policy
- Monitor progress towards mitigation and adaptation goals, as well as the achievement of a just transition linked to broader development objectives;
- Engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including all spheres of government, business, labour, academia, communities, and civil society.

21

Inter-Ministerial Committee on Vaccines **January 2021**

Former Deputy President David Mabuza, in his capacity as the Chairperson of Inter-Ministerial Committee on Vaccines convened consultations with traditional leaders, inter-faith leaders and NEDLAC on the government's roll-out plan of the vaccination programme²². According to the terms of reference as set by the President, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Vaccines should have ensured effective collaboration with social partners, including the private sector and civil society, to support and enable the vaccine rollout. These consultations were aimed at ensuring broader mobilisation and support of all sectors of society for the national vaccination programme.

22

Commission on African COVID-19 Response **June 2021**

The African Union Bureau of Assembly of Heads of State and Government (AU Bureau) announced President Ramaphosa as the AU Champion on COVID-19 at the 34th Ordinary Session of the AU. Following his appointment, he established the Commission on African COVID-19 Response²³.

21 Presidential Climate Commission. (n.d.). Homepage.
22 Presidency South Africa. (2021). IMC on COVID-19 Vaccines hold consultations with various sectors of society.

23 Presidency South Africa. (2019). Communique: Appointment of President of the Republic of South Africa, HE Cyril Ramaphosa, as African Union Champion.

The Commission's mandate was two-fold: 1) identify gaps in the continental COVID-19 response strategy and propose evidence-based interventions within the scope of practice of the Commission, and 2) generate evidence to assess the impact of COVID-19 on social and economic harm on the continent and propose ways to a strong recovery. Some of the specific areas of focus in the Commission's work included the need to strengthen the public health workforce; continental manufacturing of diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics; results-oriented partnerships, and strengthening national public health institutions including the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

23

Panel to Shortlist Chief Justice

October 2021

Following the retirement of Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, the Panel for the evaluation of public nominations for the Chief Justice, chaired by Judge Navanethem (Navi) Pillay, submitted its report to President Ramaphosa on 28 October 2021²⁴. The Shortlisting Panel scrutinising nominations by the public for the position of Chief Justice has received 564 submissions of public comment in favour of or in objection to nominees. The panel gave each nominee an opportunity to comment on the public submissions made in respect of his or her nomination. Upon receipt of the comments of the nominees the Panel commenced with the assessment and evaluation of each candidature in order to compile a shortlist of three to five candidates for submission to, and further consideration by the President. Justice Raymond Zondo was appointed as acting Chief Justice on October 11, 2021 and formally appointed as Chief Justice with effect from April 1, 2022.

24

Task Team to Explore Mandatory Vaccines

November 2021

A government task team has been established to explore the possibility of making Covid-19 vaccinations mandatory in the country. In his address to the nation in November 2021, President Cyril Ramaphosa said the team was expected to report back within a week with a decision which would be communicated to the nation²⁵. The president urged South Africans to vaccinate in large numbers as it may become mandatory to access certain activities. He added that some corporations in the country had already imposed mandatory vaccination for staff. The task team reported to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Vaccination chaired by the former deputy president and made recommendations to Cabinet on a fair and sustainable approach to vaccine mandates.

2022-2025: ANTI-CORRUPTION, JUSTICE, AND ONGOING CRISES

25

Climate Task Team

February 2022

President Ramaphosa appointed Mr Daniel Mminele as head of the Presidential Climate Finance Task Team. In this role it was expected of Mr Mminele to lead South Africa's efforts to mobilise finance for a just transition. On 2 November 2021, the South African government announced an historic partnership with the governments of France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the European Union, to support a just transition to a low carbon economy and a climate resilient society in South Africa.

24 Presidency South Africa. (2021). Shortlisting panel for nomination of Chief Justice receives public comment.

25 News24. (2021). Omicron task team to explore mandatory vaccination.

In line with the Political Declaration to establish this partnership, partner countries have offered to mobilise an initial \$8.5 billion (R132 billion) over the next three to five years through a range of instruments, including grants and concessional finance, to support the implementation of the revised Nationally Determined Contribution.

The Presidential Climate Finance Task Team and the Asset and Liability Division from National Treasury, analysed the offer with a view to advising cabinet on its composition, affordability, alignment with the regulatory environment, engaging with partner countries; coordinating relevant government departments, development finance institutions, and the private sector; and oversee the development of relevant financing mechanisms and facilities to enable the flow of international climate finance to support South Africa's just transition in the electricity, electric vehicles and green hydrogen sectors²⁶.

26

National Energy Crisis Committee (NECOM)

July 2022

The Presidential Energy Action Plan (EAP) was announced by President Ramaphosa in July 2022, and was coordinated by the National Energy Crisis Committee (NECOM) under the leadership of the Minister in the Presidency for Electricity, Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa. The plan aimed to reduce the severity and frequency of load shedding in the short term and achieve energy security in the long term through five key interventions²⁷:

- Fix Eskom and improve the availability of existing supply;
- Enable and accelerate private investment in generation capacity;
- Fast-track the procurement of new generation capacity from renewables, gas and battery storage;
- Unleash businesses and households to invest in rooftop solar;
- Fundamentally transform the electricity sector to achieve long-term energy security.

27

National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council (NACAC)

August 2022

The Council advised the President on matters related to fighting corruption, in line with the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2020-2030. Among other areas of focus, the Council advised the President on effective implementation of the anti-corruption strategy by government and civil society, including the private sector²⁸.

The Council also provided advisory input on matters related to the government's comprehensive response to the recommendations of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture. The Council has been established to deepen the country's efforts to rid society and the administration of corruption, improve investor confidence and secure higher levels of public trust. The Council also engaged with sectoral stakeholders, such as organised business and labour, academia, community- and faith-based organisations to further develop the country's anti-corruption agenda and evaluate progress in the implementation of the anti-corruption strategy.

26 Presidency South Africa. (2022). Daniel Mminele appointed head of Presidential Climate Finance Task Team.

27 State of the Nation South Africa. (n.d.). About NECOM.

28 South African Government. (2022). President Cyril Ramaphosa appoints members of National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council.

28

Presidential Economic Advisory Council for the Seventh Administration **November 2024**

President Ramaphosa chaired the inaugural meeting of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council for the Seventh Administration on 14 January 2025, at the Union Buildings in Pretoria²⁹. The meeting reaffirmed the necessity of structural transformation and economic reforms to accelerate economic growth, and discussed forward-looking policy proposals in areas such as green industrial policy, skills development, and macroeconomic policy. Members of the Council discussed the need to position South Africa for growth in a rapidly changing global environment, in which technological advances in artificial intelligence and the imperative of tackling climate change will lead to structural changes in economies. A key topic of discussion was South Africa's role in advancing the global economic policy agenda as it assumes the Presidency of the G20. President Ramaphosa has outlined a set of clear and actionable priorities for the G20 Presidency which include mobilising finance to support a just transition, addressing the unsustainable debt burden on developing countries, strengthening disaster resilience and response, and harnessing critical minerals for inclusive growth and sustainable development. The meeting discussed proposals to advance these priorities, building on the progress made on issues such as international taxation, reform of multilateral development banks, and climate finance.

29

Commission of Inquiry into Delays in TRC Case Prosecutions **April 2025**

President Ramaphosa formed a Judicial Commission of Inquiry to establish whether attempts were made to prevent the investigation or prosecution of apartheid-era crimes referred by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to the National Prosecuting Authority³⁰. This Commission was also known as the Khampepe Commission. Through this Commission, President Ramaphosa hoped to determine the true facts and finalise the matter. The establishment of the Commission of Inquiry is the outcome of settlement discussions in a court application brought by families of victims of apartheid-era crimes. Following discussions involving The Presidency, the families and other Government bodies cited in the application, there was a joint agreement to establish the Commission. Government has maintained that these outstanding matters would be most appropriately addressed through the Commission of Inquiry, and will therefore be included in the Commission's terms of reference.

30

Presidential Water Crisis Task Team **May 2025**

On the 8th of April 2025 Deputy President Paul Mashatile has convened a meeting of the Water Task Team, comprised of the Ministers responsible for the Departments of Water and Sanitation, COGTA, Finance, Human Settlements, Public Works and Infrastructure, Agriculture, Police, Electricity as well as Land Reform and Rural Development³¹. The meeting received presentations from the Department of Water and Sanitation, the issues discussed included measures and interventions by the departments to work towards resolving the challenges of water and reticulation. In particular, the meeting noted issues such as the non-payment for water services, lack of effective reticulation, declining infrastructure and capacity challenges at the local government level.

29 Presidency South Africa. (2020). President Ramaphosa chairs inaugural meeting of newly appointed Presidential Economic Advisory Council.

30 Presidency South Africa. (2019). President Ramaphosa establish Commission in Inquiry into delay in investigation and prosecution of TRC cases.

31 Presidency South Africa. (2023). Deputy President Mashatile convenes Water Task Team.

The meeting then agreed to intervene within the prescripts of existing legislation, also directing that all budgetary allocations for water in various departments be pooled together to ensure effectiveness. An update was also received on ongoing work under the Strategic Integrated Projects initiative by the Government to create water retention facilities as well as enhancement of water treatment plants.

The Water Task Team also resolved after discussion to accelerate the formalisation of informal settlements, which will assist with the provision of services to residents. This applies to 4076 illegal settlements that use illegal means to connect to water. Furthermore, it was agreed that all incomplete water projects must be completed and to that effect, the meeting requested departments to review their turn-around times on water projects.



Presidential Digital Transformation Task Team

June 2025

On May 7, 2025 President Cyril Ramaphosa launched Operation Vulindlela Phase II. A joint initiative between the Presidency and National Treasury to accelerate the implementation of structural reforms to enable economic growth and job creation³². Phase II of Operation Vulindlela is set to implement reforms in three new areas, including in digital transformation. To operationalise this new reform area, Cabinet has approved the Roadmap for the Digital Transformation of Government as a key pillar of Operation Vulindlela.

The Roadmap sets out a focused plan to modernise delivery of Government services through investment in digital public infrastructure. These crucial digital reforms will attempt to enable all citizens to access seamless Government services through a single trusted platform. This will be driven through improvements in identity verification, real-time payments, and data exchange.



Eminent Persons Group to Guide the National Dialogue

June 2025

In June 2025 President Ramaphosa addressed South Africa about the National Dialogue, an initiative that has been in discussion for quite some time³³. During the first few months of 2025, the Government engaged in discussions with various entities on the purpose and the form of the National Dialogue. He appointed an Eminent Persons Group, to “guide and champion” this initiative. He stated that the 32 persons selected for this group are leading figures in our society, reflecting the great diversity of our nation, with a proven commitment to the advancement of social cohesion and nation-building.

An Inter-Ministerial Committee has been established under the chairpersonship of the Deputy President to coordinate the government's contribution to the National Dialogue. A steering committee will be established, composed of representatives of various sectors of society, to set strategic priorities and coordinate implementation of the National Dialogue process. The Secretariat, which is responsible for day-to-day management of National Dialogue activities, will be housed at NEDLAC, the National Economic Development and Labour Council.

32 South African Government. (2025). Presidency launch roadmap for digital transformation in government.

33 Presidency South Africa. (2023). Announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa National Dialogue.

33

Joint Committee for Judicial Independence

June 2025

The President announced the establishment of a joint committee to develop an action plan to advance judicial independence³⁴. These announcements come subsequent to a historic meeting on 6 June 2025 between an executive delegation comprising President Ramaphosa and several of his ministers, Chief Justice Mandisa Maya and several senior judges. There, the President committed to advancing institutional independence, unification of a single judiciary, and enhancing the capacity of the courts. He believes these actions are vital in arresting the crises facing our courts.

34

Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Criminality, Political Interference, and Corruption in the Criminal Justice System

July 2025

The Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Criminality, Political Interference, and Corruption in the Criminal Justice System, established by President Cyril Ramaphosa on July 21, 2025, in response to allegations made by Lt. Gen. Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, is tasked with investigating criminal syndicates' infiltration of South African law enforcement, prosecution, and intelligence bodies³⁵. This Commission is also known as the Madlanga Commission. Presided over by Acting Deputy Chief Justice Mbuyiseli Madlanga, the commission will report on the scope and extent of these allegations, recommend prosecutorial and disciplinary actions, and propose institutional reforms. The commission will hold public and private hearings, with a focus on witness protection, and aims to submit an interim report within three months of its formation³⁶.

03 CONCLUSION

The persistent creation of numerous commissions highlights a government that, according to the President's own statements, prioritises ANC unity over decisive action, particularly in contentious areas such as holding corrupt officials accountable or veering away from destructive policies. This approach manifests in a cycle of initiating "speaking events" and "talk shops" to postpone necessary, but potentially divisive, decisions. Public response, such as the view of the National Dialogue as just another "talk shop" and fears of ANC capture, further underscores this perception of ineffectiveness. The slow progress of initiatives like the Eskom Sustainability Task Team, with load shedding persisting, or the limited prosecutions following identified irregularities by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Alleged Coronavirus Corruption, exemplify the lack of tangible results. This pattern suggests a central government struggling to translate policy discussion into effective implementation.

Arguments suggesting the need for decentralisation to address the problem of numerous commissions and governmental indecision stem from the understanding that the political system is disconnected from grassroots realities. South Africa is an exceptionally diverse country, perhaps more accurately conceptualised as a region composed of various nations rather than a single unitary state. Yet, it is governed by a highly centralised system, which contributes significantly to the challenges observed.

34 Judges Matter. (2023). Media Statement: President Ramaphosa's announcement of move towards institutional independence for the judiciary.

35 South African Government. (2025). [Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Criminality, Political Interference and Corruption in the Criminal Justice System].

36 The Presidency (2025) 'Statement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on the Establishment of the Commission of Inquiry into Allegations Regarding Law', [online].

In conclusion, the extensive and often ineffective use of commissions under President Ramaphosa, leading to public "commission fatigue," is not merely a procedural issue, but a symptom of a deeper systemic crisis. The sheer volume of these initiatives reflects a centralised government grappling with widespread state failure, the implementation of destructive policies, and internal political dynamics that prioritise unity over decisive action. The challenges faced by South Africa suggest that a sustainable future requires a fundamental re-evaluation of its governance model. This is why Lex Libertas argues that decentralisation is needed to facilitate autonomy and self-governance for the various communities that live in South Africa, thereby shifting responsibility from a dysfunctional, centralised state to more responsive and accountable communities.

END OF REPORT

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visit lexlibertas.org.za | info@lexlibertas.org.za



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