

EFF



Founded:	2013
Leader:	Julius Malema
Political position:	Radical left-wing
Ideology:	African Nationalist Socialist

History

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is an offshoot of the ANC started by Julius Malema in 2013, one year after his permanent expulsion from the party as ANC Youth League leader. Its constitution commits the EFF to being a radical and militant revolutionary movement, with the aim of bringing together activists, community-based organisations, as well as lobby groups under the umbrella of the political party pursuing the struggle of economic emancipation (16).

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However, do not dismiss the party as merely the ANC youth league in exile. It is the only party formed by disgruntled former ANC members to have grown from its first contested election to the next. It represents many South Africans with a claimed audited membership of over one million members. It also leads the debate on many controversial issues in South Africa from the singing of struggle songs like “Shoot the Boer” to land reform. Malema is a superb tactician and strategist with his ability to capitalise on political controversies, from the Marikana massacre in 2012 to the impeachment of Busisiwe Mkhwebane in 2023. These tactics ensures the party gains a constant stream of media coverage, although also earning the EFF the label of “Extreme Flip-Floppers” in some quarters for their ability to change their standpoint seemingly based on the potential for political gain.

The EFF has a limited track record in government to speak of after lending support to DA led local governments since 2016 and suddenly joining several municipal governments alongside the ANC in early 2023.

Electoral record (17)

- 2014: 6.35%
- 2019: 10.79%

Positions

(Source: WhatsApp and email correspondence with EFF spokesperson Sinawo Thambo)

Economic growth and job creation

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) advocate for radical economic transformation, focusing on the nationalisation of key sectors, land redistribution, and wealth redistribution to address the historical inequalities of Apartheid and inclusively grow the economy. The party proposes sustainable industrial development and diversification for job creation through state-led initiatives and special economic zones. The EFF will enforce a significant percentage of state procurement from local producers, with specific quotas for women and youth-owned enterprises. The party emphasises the establishment of state-owned trading platforms, legislation for a living wage and the nationalisation of the South African Reserve Bank, along with the creation of state-owned banks in retail, agriculture, housing, and social assistance sectors.

The EFF has plans to reduce capital requirements for new banks, especially those owned by Africans, particularly black and female owners. They propose legislation mandating a minimum of 30 per cent black ownership, 30 per cent female ownership, and 50 per cent female and youth control in management and boards for companies with financial licenses. The EFF advocates for a law preventing the repossession of properties paid off for more than five years. Recognising the impact of Covid-19 on job losses and home insecurity, the party calls

for the establishment of a relief fund to assist those in financial distress unable to service home loans due to unemployment.

Safety and security

The EFF's crime-fighting strategy centres on addressing the socioeconomic roots of crime by economically developing communities and providing quality jobs. The strategy emphasises specialised police training for handling sexual violence cases, ensuring officers consider victims' mental and physical well-being. The party strongly opposes corruption and wants a minimum 20-year sentence for convicted public representatives, advocating for the forfeiture of pensions and lifetime bans from public sector employment. The party proposes legislation barring public officials from business dealings with state institutions, strengthening whistleblower protection, and introducing measures for compulsory imprisonment, community service, and the repayment of corrupt gains.

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Foreign affairs

The EFF's foreign affairs approach centres on anti-imperialism, advocating for an Africa-focused, anti-colonial stance. The party emphasises solidarity with other African nations, prioritising regional integration and economic cooperation. In this spirit, an EFF government will require each university to offer Swahili studies as a degree. The EFF seeks to break ties with former colonial powers, promote Pan-Africanism, and address global inequality. Their approach aims to reshape international relations to favour the Global South and advance the interests of marginalised nations.

Energy security

The EFF proposes stabilising energy supply through the sustained pursuit of a diverse energy mix including coal, nuclear, and renewable energy. The party would cancel contracts with independent power producers, fix existing coal power stations, and commission nuclear power plants. They envision being able to provide electricity to the entire African continent with this strategy. In the interim, it would also seek electricity generation capacity from other African countries to add to the local grid. An EFF government would cancel all mining rights issued to companies mining coal mines that belongs to Eskom to enable the state-owned mining company to assume operations at these mines to prioritise the supply of quality coal at an affordable price to Eskom and lower the overall price of electricity. Additionally, the EFF demands immediate solutions, including dedicated grants to municipalities for off-grid, hybrid, and microgrid solutions.

Education

The EFF emphasises inclusive education that focuses on a comprehensive approach to societal well-being. The party would implement a unified curriculum across all public and private schools as well as abolish independent examination boards and introduce adult education programmes. The party proposes zero-rating educational apps and implementing compulsory post-secondary education. They also propose the reintegration of students previously excluded due to non-payment of fees, ensuring that those who passed receive their certificates, diplomas, and degrees, regardless of outstanding payments. The EFF will hold parents who do not enrol their children in school criminally liable and implement a shared Early Childhood Development (ECD) curriculum that emphasises nutrition programmes, reading, storytelling, and land-based activities. This approach will enrich children's understanding of their environment, promoting holistic development.

Mineral resources

The EFF would nationalise mineral resources in South Africa and allocate key shares to a sovereign wealth fund. The party proposes enforcing local beneficiation through a 30 per cent cap on the exportation of raw mineral resources and a quota of 70 per cent or more raw mineral resources processed into finished industrial products within South Africa. The EFF would ensure community participation in all mining projects, particularly in the North West and Limpopo Provinces. The party would also ensure mining companies rehabilitate any historically denuded landscapes and revitalise abandoned mining towns, creating sustainable jobs. Additionally, they commit to tracking and ensuring access to pension funds for all ex-mineworkers and their families.

Youth development

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The EFF pledges to ensure a policy of “one-degree-one-job”; to absorb all unemployed graduates into fields aligned with their qualifications. In cases where placement is not immediate, the EFF proposes a young graduate unemployment grant. Furthermore, they aim to boost job creation by establishing studios in every municipality to empower young artists to record and produce their work locally.

Housing

The EFF proposes rezoning all informal settlements in South Africa and take active steps to replace all shacks with formal structures and improve low-cost housing quality through a state housing construction company. The party is also committed to eradicating inhumane bucket toilets, emphasising technology-based sanitation services to restore dignity. The EFF would make it illegal to use houses as loan surety and limit housing finance to no longer than ten years.

The environment and climate change

The EFF acknowledges climate change as a real threat to global humanity and believes the western world should assume the primary responsibility in delivering a solution. The party advocates for the implementation of stringent regulations governing industrial practices and emissions including enforcing limits on greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, and environmental degradation by holding industries accountable for their impact on the environment. Implementing and strictly enforcing these regulations aims to curb the negative effects of industrial activities on the environment. It would implement legislation that guarantees sustainable forestry practices, responsible mining, and conservation efforts to protect biodiversity. They would also publicly name and shame entities found guilty of harming the environment.

Tourism

The EFF's tourism policy prioritises equitable distribution of benefits, emphasising nationalisation of key sectors to address historical imbalances. Their focus on community-based initiatives aims to economically empower local communities, fostering social and economic justice within the tourism industry. The party would fund development in key tourism infrastructure based on its ability to benefit previously disadvantaged groups.

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Immigration and xenophobia

The EFF have adopted a contradictory stance on immigration and xenophobia. While the party advocates for open borders and the protection of asylum seekers' rights, they have also expressed concerns about foreign nationals potentially taking jobs from South Africans. The EFF seeks to address xenophobia through education and community engagement, promoting solidarity with marginalised groups. Their

approach aims to balance compassion for immigrants with the need to address economic and social challenges in the country, fostering inclusivity, and combating xenophobia.

LGBTIQA+ rights

The EFF aims to combat discrimination against the LGBTIQA+ community by implementing public awareness campaigns and training initiatives. They propose amendments to criminal law, advocating for harsher sentences for crimes motivated by hatred, specifically 'corrective' rape. The EFF also plans to amend legislation related to gender identification, facilitating expedited identification documents (ID) alterations for transgender individuals. Additionally, the party commits to investing in a public healthcare system that provides easy access to gender-affirming treatment.

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South Africa's twelve official languages

The EFF supports the preservation and promotion of the twelve official languages in South Africa, emphasising equal status and accessibility. The party will ensure that every public institution, such as hospitals, police stations, home affairs offices, labour offices, and social development offices have at least two people who are trained at and understand sign language to cater for people who have a speech disability. The EFF government will introduce vernacular languages as the foundation of the education system in all provinces. The EFF government will require all institutions of higher learning to provide learning materials in the three most spoken languages where the institutions are located by 2024. The EFF government will require all institutions of higher learning to teach 50 per cent of all courses in a South African language other than English and Afrikaans by 2024. The EFF government will require 10 per cent of all academic publications in the country to be written in a South African language other than English and Afrikaans by 2024. The EFF will turn

the Pan South African Language Board into an institution supporting democracy with a budget to develop all indigenous languages.

Artificial intelligence

The EFF wants to incentivise the study of science and technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI). They party aims to support and protect industries by encouraging innovation and technology adoption in AI, establishing a research and development centre focused on integrating AI into the health system, and promoting the use of AI in state-owned enterprises. Additionally, the EFF government intends to establish AI, robotics, and biotechnology state-owned enterprises, while providing subsidies to produce AI-related technologies.

Sources:

- (16) Economic Freedom Fighter constitution - <https://effonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FINAL-EFF-CONSTITUTION-02.03.2020.pdf>
 - (17) Independent Electoral Council 2019 National & Provincial elections - <https://results.elections.org.za/dashboards/npe/app/dashboard.html>
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