



Founded:	1994
Leader:	Pieter Groenewald
Political position:	Centre-right to right-wing
Ideology:	Afrikaner conservatism

History

The Freedom Front was established shortly before South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 by former South African Army General Constand Viljoen and has contested every election in the democratic era. It later merged with the remnants of the Conservative Party, Federal Party and Afrikaner Unity Movement to become the Freedom Front Plus, also known as Die Vryheidsfront Plus (VF+) in 2003.

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The party primarily represents the interests of Afrikaner and conservative voters and focuses on issues such as minority rights, cultural preservation, and free market principles. It is vehemently against land reform in the form of expropriation without compensation as well as opposed to affirmative action and Black Economic Empowerment (18).

The VF+ advocates for the right to self-determination of all South African communities, with a specific focus on protecting the rights of Afrikaners and more recently, Afrikaans-speaking coloured South Africans. In 2019 the party expressly adopted Cape Independence as an official party position. After many years as a sub one per cent party, the VF+ bagged 2,38 per cent of the vote in 2019 as conservative—mostly white—voters abandoned the Democratic Alliance. Traditionally, the party has drawn most of its support from the Northern Cape, Free State, and Gauteng. However, the VF+ has begun making inroads into the Western Cape where it has begun attracting the support of coloured voters.

The VF+ has never led a government in South Africa, however, the party forms an integral part of numerous coalitions at municipal level throughout the entire country. The party's former leader Pieter Mulder, served as deputy minister of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in Jacob Zuma's first cabinet from 2009 to 2014.

Electoral record (19)

- 1994: 2.2%
- 1999: 0.82%
- 2004: 0.89%
- 2009: 0.83%
- 2014: 0.90%
- 2019: 2.38%

Positions

(Source: Email correspondence with VF+ spokesperson Wouter Wessels)

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Economic growth and job creation

The VF+ believes prosperity cannot be created through redistributing of wealth, but rather by creating it. The party is of the view that unemployment can only be overcome and economic growth achieved by amending government policy to create a favourable environment for job creation and investments. Accordingly, the VF+ rejects Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) as it believes the policy focuses on enriching specific individuals, not on truly empowering entire communities. Instead, the party would reduce personal and company tax to stimulate investment in the economy and create more jobs. Moreover, the VF+ proposes to aid economic development by eradicating corruption and state capture; ensuring reliable electricity supply; replacing BEE with skills development and providing regulatory clarity, and policy certainty.

A unique VF+ economic policy would be the introduction of a fiscal commission, which will function independently like the South African Reserve Bank by formulating and controlling an upper limit for state expenditure. When it is reached, the fiscal commission will have the power and capacity to increase Value Added Tax (VAT) and once the risk is mitigated, the VAT rate must be decreased again.

Safety and security

The VF+ believes that the causes of poor policing must be resolved instead of merely allocating more resources to fight crime. A VF+ government would institutionalise effective policing by enforcing consequence management and professionalism in the police service. The party would crack down on illegal firearms, however, remains a steadfast supporter of legal and responsible private firearm ownership for use in self-defence, should any situation warrant such action. The VF+ would also focus on eradicating drug-trafficking in South Africa which it believes fuels gangsterism and causes thousands of murders every year.

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To ensure convictions of criminals, the party would prioritise and enforce better cooperation between the police and the prosecuting authority to ensure arrests are followed by the successful prosecution of the offenders. The VF+ regards farm murders as a crisis and believes the mortality rate of farmers illustrates that it is more dangerous to be a farmer in South Africa than a police officer. To address this, the party would prioritise the formulation and implementation of a national rural safety plan to be implemented by police, the South Africa National Defence Force, and farmers.

Foreign affairs

The VF+ wants South Africa's foreign relations not to be determined by who supported the liberation struggle during Apartheid, but by what is most beneficial to South Africans. The party wants Africa's

development and security to play a central role in South African foreign policy, however, not to the extent that diplomatic or military influence is used to maintain governments without merit. The VF+ wishes to build foreign relations on mutual respect with preference to countries which promotes self-determination within their own borders and to countries with which South Africa has or may have strong trade relations.

Energy security

The VF+ proposes that the national electricity network be decentralised into smaller units and areas before being ultimately privatised and deregulated to the extent that enables competitiveness of various power utilities. Although the VF+ believes addressing the current electricity shortage should be the priority, the party envisions that South Africa moves away from utilising energy sources that are destructive to the environment, like coal. Moreover, it would halt any functional power station from being decommissioned if there is not a functional replacement ready to compensate for the loss in electricity generation.

The party would also prevent “skills shedding” at Eskom and appoint and retain the best technical skilled persons regardless of their ethnicity.

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Education

The VF+ proposes to implement an educational culture where hard work, high standards, and honesty is given paramount importance. As such, the party would prohibit all forms of protest actions and marches in the immediate vicinity of schools and universities. A VF+ government would ensure teachers who are willing to work at less affluent schools will receive higher remuneration and introduce performance-based bonuses for all state educators. The party would drastically increase spending on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and transfer the responsibility of this to the department of Education from the department of Social Development. The party regards ECD as critical

and believes ECD training will improve learners' performance in school and universities, addressing the problem of a poor throughput rate. The VF+ also proposes a system of parent- and community-driven mother-tongue education and would enable any community to establish their own schools with the support of the relevant authorities.

Mineral resources

The VF+ government would scrap the mining charter in its current form since the party believes it disincentivises investment through a narrow focus on transferring mine ownership to black shareholders. The party would instead pursue a mining policy that focuses on the sector's ability to earn foreign exchange and grow the economy, while ensuring that existing mining companies rehabilitate the mines in which they operate. Furthermore, a VF+ government would incentivise and reward the processing and beneficiation of raw materials domestically, which will further grow the local economy.

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Youth development

The VF+ believes that education, skills transfer, and equal opportunities are crucial to youth development. The party aims to address the high level of youth unemployment with a focus on critical reforms in the education system and creating a conducive environment for job creation.

Housing

The VF+ believes the best way to address the shortage of adequate housing in South Africa would be to stamp out the corruption and exploitation prevalent in the current national housing projects. The party would also provide title deeds to all beneficiaries of housing projects while at the same time, aggressively addressing the backlog of indigent

South Africans awaiting housing through strict project management. The VF+ believes that obtaining a balance between protecting land for agricultural purposes to sustain food security and the development of human settlements is crucial.

The environment and climate change

The VF+ regards climate change as a painful reality and the resulting increase in the intensity of droughts and floods is detrimental to South Africa. The party believes the solution is not only to restrict carbon emissions, but to also increase and strengthen the international agreements binding those limitations. This can be done in South Africa through the progressive pursuit of renewable energy. Moreover, the party wants the environment to be protected through the effective policing of pollution and other violations of environmental legislation, including municipal governments which it believes to be the greatest polluter of water in South Africa due to the non-maintenance of sewage plants. They would empower the Green Scorpions to pursue criminal prosecutions against polluters in all sectors of society.

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Tourism

The VF+ believes tourism is an easy route to earning foreign currency and promoting South Africa beyond its borders. The party would ensure easy passage into South Africa for legal tourists by streamlining visa requirements. The party would seek to ensure all foreign tourists are safe and do not become victims of crime during their visits.

Immigration and xenophobia

While the VF+ regards immigration as a natural process that every country must manage, South Africa must pursue beneficial immigration where immigrants must possess knowledge and skills that are scarce

in South Africa. The VF+ believes illegal immigrants put immense pressure on already scarce resources, put unnecessary pressure on South African taxpayers, and are the root cause of xenophobia. Moreover, the VF+ believes the country's current porous borders lead to the free flow of contraband as well as legal goods without incurring tariffs to the detriment of the South African fiscus. The party would thus enforce effective border control by restoring the integrity of South Africa's borders.

LGBTIQA+ rights

The VF+ stands for equality and against all forms of discrimination. The party believes each person has the right to his or her belief system and any outlook of life should be respected.

South Africa's twelve official languages

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The VF+ advocates the recognition and development of all South Africa's indigenous languages. It regards the fact that not all official languages are used publicly by the state which constitutes a violation of our Constitution and is detrimental to race relations. The party would prioritise the conservation and development of all twelve official languages in South Africa to ensure their usage in all higher functions of society.

Artificial intelligence

The VF+ would formulate a policy aimed at creating an enabling environment for the potential of technological innovation and advances that Artificial Intelligence (AI) creates. The party acknowledges the role of AI in modern economic activity, however, wants safeguards implemented to protect South Africa from its possible abuses without suppressing any potential gains.

Sources:

- (18) Who is the Freedom Front Plus - <https://www.vfplus.org.za/policy/#who-is-freedomfront-plus>
 - (19) Independent Electoral Council 2019 National & Provincial elections - <https://results.elections.org.za/dashboards/npe/app/dashboard.html>
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