

## Conclusion

I have never properly understood why more South Africans do not exercise their right to vote. However, I am hoping that this book provides readers with an easily accessible resource to help choose where to leave their mark on election day should they choose to do so. South Africa's democracy is still firmly in its developmental phase and consistent and high voter turnout would indicate an engaged citizenry that seeks to have a say in their country's future. Rights—civil or otherwise—do not disappear in an instant. Like muscles in the human body, if left unused, they are slowly weakened over time, until they are incapable of performing the function they were intended to without serious therapy. I do not choose this analogy lightly or for comical effect. Many failed states first embarked on the slippery slope to oblivion and hardship for their people with the erosion of democracy and a complete lack of interest in voting among the electorate, with electoral cycles becoming nothing more than a rubber stamp for the governing class. Citizens have the power to change that by voting and encouraging those around them to do the same.

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South Africa finds itself at a critical juncture in the democratic era where its political and socioeconomic development has seemingly stalled and the country is growing restless. Voting, however, will not magically solve the country's challenges. Being an active citizen does not begin and end with merely casting your vote in an election. For anything to truly change in any country it takes the sustained and combined efforts of most of the citizens to first take an interest and then act to build the society they want. However, your mark on a ballot alongside millions of others is the easiest way to signal your aspirations for the future to the people that lead you politically.

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