



## Press Release

IPSOS IN SOUTH AFRICA, JOHANNESBURG / INCLUSIVE SOCIETY INSTITUTE, CAPE TOWN:  
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### South Africans express doubts about GNU's cooperation and effectiveness

***The recent postponement and subsequent vote on the Budget Speech in the South African Parliament have intensified public scrutiny of the Government of National Unity (GNU). This delay not only raised questions about the GNU's stability but also heightened concerns about the country's economic outlook.***

The 2025 Budget, put to a vote in Parliament yesterday, passed with a narrow margin of 194 votes in favour and 182 against. This outcome reveals significant fissures within the Government of National Unity (GNU), which typically commands a comfortable majority with its 10 member parties accounting for 287 votes. The budget rifts have placed considerable strain on the coalition, as evidenced by the voting patterns.

Among the GNU partners, the African National Congress (ANC), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Patriotic Alliance (PA), United Democratic Movement (UDM), Rise Mzansi, GOOD Party, Al Jama-ah, and Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) voted to adopt the budget. They were joined by non-GNU members Action SA and Build One South Africa (BOSA).

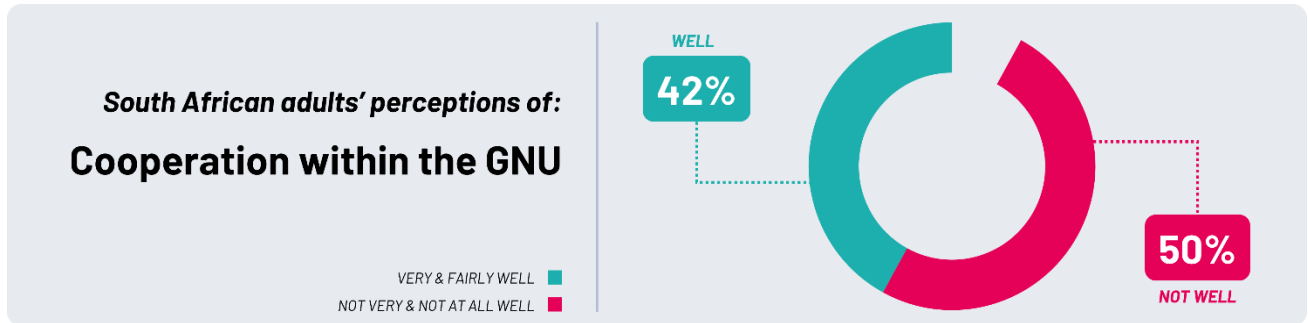
However, two key GNU partners, the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Freedom Front Plus (FF+), voted against the budget, consistent with their previously stated position. The DA, in particular, had been firm in their stance that they would not support the budget without revisions, which led to the initial postponement. They were joined in opposition by parties outside the GNU, including uMkhonto we Sizwe (MKP), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), United Africans Transformation (UAT), and African Transformation Movement (ATM). The National Coloured Congress (NCC) representatives were absent for the vote but had indicated their rejection during the debate. This divisive outcome underscores the challenges facing the GNU coalition and raises questions about its ability to find consensus on critical issues.

In light of these developments, media outlets and public forums have been discussing key questions about the GNU, particularly focusing on how South Africans perceive the cooperation between different parties and the handling of inter-party issues. The Ipsos Government Performance Barometer (GPB) and the Inclusive Society Institute (ISI) GovDem Poll have recently explored these questions in a study conducted in December 2024 and January 2025. This research aimed to assess South Africans' impressions of the GNU's functioning and effectiveness, since its establishment following the May 2024 national elections.

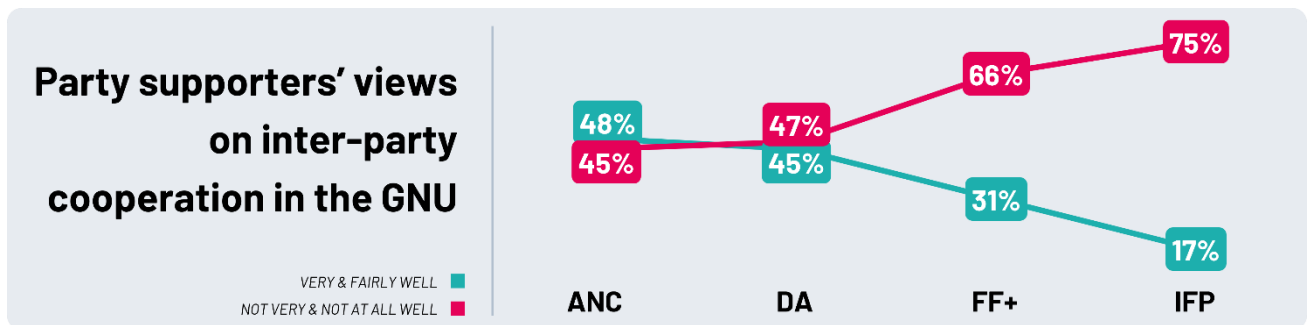
The study comprised 3,600 face-to-face interviews conducted in respondents' homes and in their preferred languages. Participants were randomly selected from all nine provinces of South Africa, covering various types of settlements including urban and rural areas. This methodology ensured a representative sample of South Africa's diverse population.

### How well do you think different parties are working together in the GNU?

The findings show widespread scepticism among South Africans whether the different parties can effectively work together within the GNU. Overall, just over four in every ten (42%) adult South Africans expressed a positive view of the current state of cooperation amongst the different parties forming the GNU, whereas half (50%) held negative views, and 8% did not express an opinion.



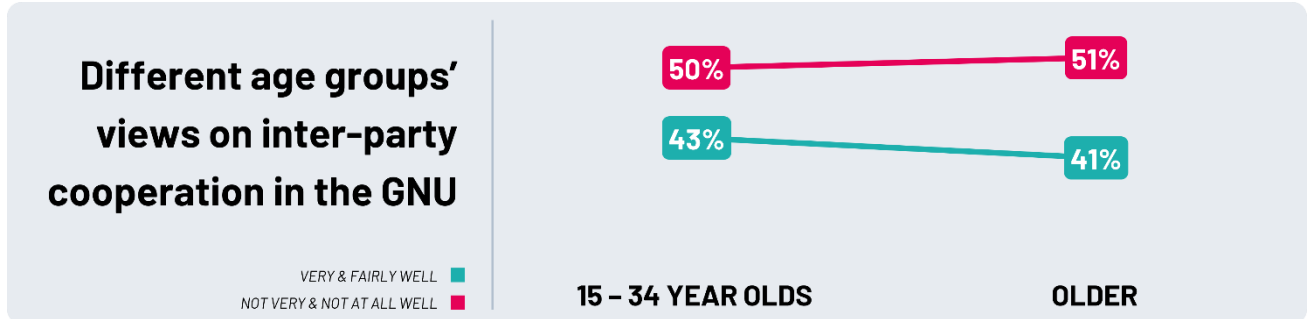
A closer analysis of the results reveals that scepticism is widespread across supporters of all political parties. Supporters of the two largest parties – the ANC and the DA – expressed similar levels of sentiment, with nearly half expressing positive views about cooperation within the GNU, and a comparable proportion holding negative opinions. However, supporters of smaller parties demonstrated greater scepticism. Two-thirds (66%) of FF+ supporters and three-quarters (75%) of IFP supporters believed that the different parties were either not really working well together or not working well together at all.



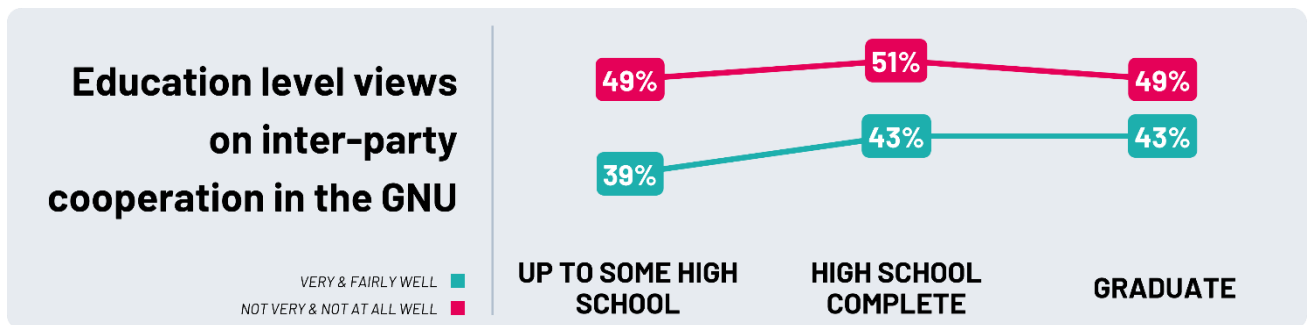
The study also examined perceptions across different racial groups, revealing that no single group had a majority view of parties working well or fairly well together in the GNU. Whites showed the most positive outlook, with 48% believing that parties were working either very well or fairly well together. This was followed by decreasing levels of positive sentiment among Blacks, Asians and Coloureds, respectively.



Despite young people under 35 comprising more than half of the South African electorate, the study found little difference in opinions between younger and older South Africans regarding the GNU's performance. Young people showed only a marginally more positive sentiment compared to their older counterparts.

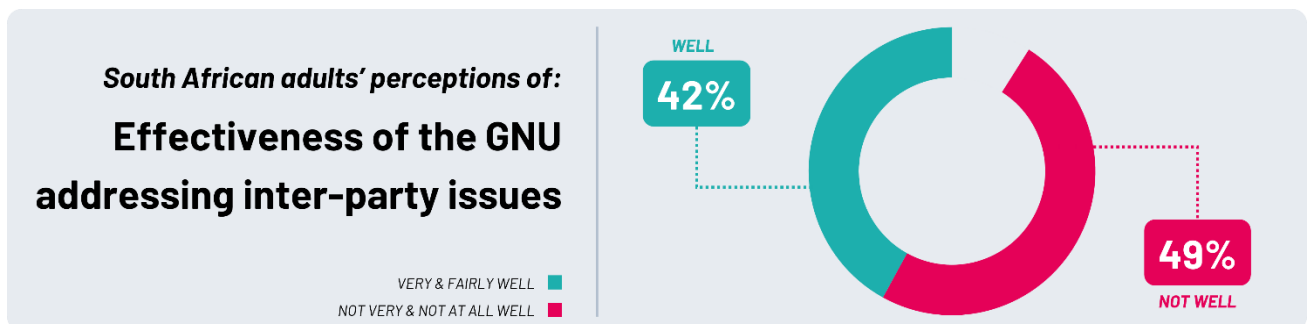


The graph below illustrates that the lukewarm sentiment towards the GNU's cooperation extends across all educational levels. Those with the lowest level of education (up to some high school) were the least positive, with only 39% of this group viewing the cooperation as very or fairly well. Respondents with higher levels of education demonstrated more positive views.



## How well do you think the GNU is addressing issues between the parties?

The study also examined perceptions of how well issues were being handled between parties in the GNU. As illustrated in the graph below, these results closely mirror those of the first question regarding cooperation between parties. This similarity extends across all demographic sub-groups, indicating a consistent perception of the GNU's performance in both cooperation and issue resolution. The parallel findings suggest that South Africans view the GNU's ability to work together and its capacity to address inter-party issues as closely linked challenges.





## Press Release - Continued

### The way forward

The findings of this study clearly indicate that political parties within the GNU face significant challenges in instilling public confidence regarding their ability to cooperate effectively and address critical issues. To overcome these challenges, two key steps are crucial:

- **Building inter-party trust:** The GNU must develop trust among its participating parties. This can only be achieved through consistent daily collaboration and public alignment on shared strategic goals. The process of working together towards common objectives is essential for fostering a cohesive government.
- **Enhancing public communication:** The GNU needs to substantially improve its public diplomacy and strategic communication efforts. Transparent and effective communication with the South African public is vital to build the confidence necessary for the GNU's long-term legitimacy and sustainability.

By focusing on these areas, the GNU can work towards bridging the current gap between public expectations and perceptions of its performance. The success of these efforts will be crucial in determining the GNU's ability to maintain and build on the economic benefits that came from the establishment of the GNU, govern effectively and maintain public support in the coming years.

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#### **About the study**

- *This press release is based on the views of 3,600 randomly selected respondents. Interviews were conducted by trained Ipsos interviewers in the homes and home languages of respondents.*
- *Interviews were conducted from 25 November to 15 January – with a 2-week break over the festive period.*



## Press Release - Continued

- A scientific process of multi-stage stratified random selection distributed interviews in all areas of the country, including deep rural areas. This methodology ensured that the results are representative of the views of the universe (adult South Africans) and that findings can be weighted and projected to the universe.
- Trained quantitative fieldworkers were responsible for the interviewing and CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) was used.
- All results were collated and analysed in an aggregate format to protect the identity and confidentiality of respondents.
- All sample surveys are subject to a margin of error, determined by sample size, sampling methodology and response rate. The sample error for this sample at a 95% confidence level is a maximum of plus or minus 1.9%.

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