



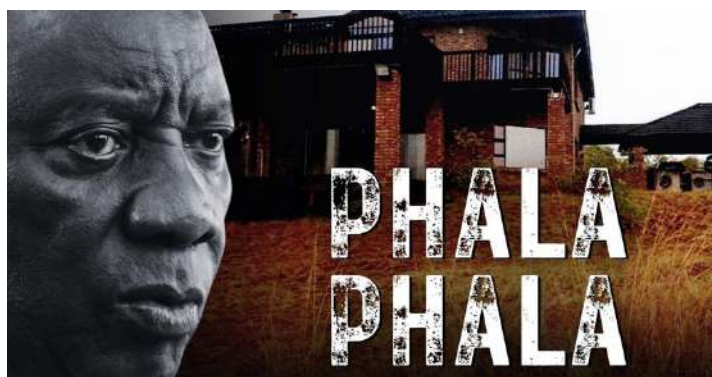
### POLITICAL UPDATES

#### DA ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP

- On 12 April, the Democratic Alliance (DA) Federal Congress elected Cape Town mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis as the party's new federal leader for a three-year term, replacing former party leader and current Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen;
- Geordin Hill-Lewis, won over 90% of the vote to defeat lesser-known rival Sibusiso Dyonase, the DA's caucus leader in the Sedibeng District Municipality in Gauteng;
- In his victory speech, Hill-Lewis laid out a four-point plan for his leadership, which included continuing to show that the DA governs well for everyone in South Africa, connecting more deeply with non-DA voters, leading with belief in South Africa, and being a strong and principled partner in the national coalition;
- Additionally, Geordin Hill-Lewis stated he had no intention of joining Cabinet but would instead have a representative in the Government of National Unity (GNU);
- Other leaders elected include Solly Msimanga as Federal Chairperson, with Siviwe Gwarube, Cilliers Brink and Solly Malatsi as first, second and third Deputy Federal Chairpersons respectively;
- Another key election was that of Ashor Sarupen as Chairperson of the Federal Council, replacing Helen Zille, who is now fully focused on her mayoral campaign in Johannesburg.



#### IPID REPORT RAISES FRESH QUESTIONS OVER PHALA PHALA



- On 10 April, the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) declassified its investigation report into the conduct of members of the Presidential Protection Unit regarding the 2020 burglary at President Cyril Ramaphosa's Phala Phala farm;
- The report followed a complaint by Member of Parliament Vuyolwethu Zungula alleging that Major General WP Rhode, head of the Presidential Protection Unit, together with senior SAPS members, conducted illegal actions including failure to report a crime, unlawful apprehension and interrogation of suspects, and kidnapping;
- IPID found that members of the Presidential Protection Service ran an unlawful parallel investigation outside official police channels;
- The probe further established that senior officers used state resources to track suspects across provinces and even beyond South Africa's borders;
- In response to the findings, Mr Zungula formally requested National Assembly Speaker Thoko Didiza to initiate impeachment proceedings against President Ramaphosa, citing the IPID report as fresh prima facie evidence of serious misconduct arguing that the members of the Presidential Protection Service were acting under the direction of the President;
- Speaker Didiza confirmed receipt of the motion and stated she would apply her mind to whether it discloses a prima facie case warranting referral to a committee;
- Simultaneously, ActionSA called on Public Protector advocate Kholeka Gcaleka to reopen the Phala Phala investigation and expand its scope to examine the potential culpability of high-ranking Presidency officials.

#### JULIUS MALEMA HANDED FIVE-YEAR SENTENCE

- On 16 April, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader Julius Malema was sentenced to five years' imprisonment on five counts related to his 2018 firearm handling and discharge case;
- Malema was convicted last October for violating the Firearms Control Act after firing live rounds during the party's birthday celebrations;
- Immediately after sentencing, Malema's lawyers applied for leave to appeal both the conviction and sentence;
- The magistrate denied leave to appeal the conviction but granted leave to appeal the sentence;
- Parliament spokesperson Moloto Mothapo confirmed that Malema remains a member of parliament while the appeals process is underway;
- The matter now proceeds to the High Court on sentencing, with Malema additionally petitioning to appeal his conviction further citing alleged irregularities in the conduct of the magistrate and prosecutor;
- This ruling marks only the first round of what is expected to be a lengthy legal battle that could ultimately reach the apex court.





### LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY UPDATES

#### DRAFT NATIONAL CONSUMER FINANCIAL EDUCATION POLICY RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

- On 10 April, the National Treasury released the Draft National Consumer Financial Education Policy for public comment;
- The policy is a framework aimed at strengthening financial literacy, capability, and long-term well-being amid South Africa's evolving financial landscape;
- The draft policy addresses persistent challenges including low discretionary savings, inadequate retirement and insurance coverage, limited digital and tax literacy, rising scam vulnerabilities, language barriers, and structural gaps in current education efforts, despite high bank account holders exceeding 90% among adults and the wide range of financial products available;
- It reframes financial education as a core market conduct requirement for financial institutions, integrates it into broader sector reforms around consumer protection, inclusion, and transformation, and aligns with international standards such as the G20/OECD High-Level Principles on Financial Consumer Protection;
- Treasury emphasised that improved financial education will empower consumers to use products safely and confidently, reduce vulnerabilities, and support better household resilience, while the document will inform a revised National Consumer Financial Education Strategy and Implementation Plan;
- Public comments are invited until 15 May 2026, with virtual stakeholder workshops planned to gather further input.



#### ONE-STOP BORDER POST BILL RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT



- On 13 April, the Select Committee on Security and Justice published the One-Stop Border Post Bill [B12B-2024] for public comments;
  - The bill seeks to regulate the establishment of one-stop border posts through international agreements with adjoining states, to provide for the establishment of common control zones in the territory of an adjoining state, to provide for one-stop border processing arrangements, to authorise the application of the laws of the Republic and the adjoining state within the one-stop border post, and to provide for matters connected therewith;
  - It aims to streamline cross-border movement of people, goods, and vehicles at South Africa's land ports of entry by creating joint processing facilities, reducing delays, and enhancing efficiency in trade, travel, and regional integration while maintaining necessary security and control measures;
- The bill is viewed as a positive step towards modernising border infrastructure and supporting economic cooperation with neighbouring countries, though implementation details around joint law enforcement, security protocols, and practical operations are likely to attract focused input from affected sectors.

### AFRICA WATCH

#### DJIBOUTI AND BENIN ELECTION OUTCOMES



- On 11 April, Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh secured re-election with 97.8 % of the vote for a sixth term, while his sole challenger Mohamed Farah Samatar received 2.19 % in a poll boycotted by most opposition parties;
- Guelleh, who has led the Horn of Africa nation for 27 years, had previously promised to step down but ran again after the constitution was amended in November to remove the upper age limit of 75;
- His campaign emphasised the stability he has maintained amid regional conflicts elsewhere;
- Meanwhile in Benin, Minister of Finance Romuald Wadagni won a landslide presidential victory with more than 94 % of the vote;
- Opposition candidate Paul Hounkpe of the Cowry Forces for an Emerging Benin party conceded defeat in a televised statement;
- The Benin election follows four months after the government survived a coup attempt that was swiftly suppressed with assistance from Nigerian troops.



# WEEKLY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS

17 April 2026

## AU-FRANCE STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

- On 13 April, French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noël Barrot and African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf convened the third session of the strategic dialogue between the African Union Commission and France in Paris;
- The strategic dialogue functions as an institutionalised annual platform for structured high-level consultations between France and the African Union Commission;
- This third session continues a series of engagements designed to translate shared declarations into concrete policy alignment on continental and global priorities;
- The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to a strategic partnership centred on global governance reforms, the management of security crises in Africa, and strengthened economic and institutional cooperation;
- On global governance, both parties stressed the urgent need to reform the United Nations Security Council in line with Africa's common position in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration, which calls for permanent African representation;
- Discussions also addressed reforms of the international financial architecture, including improved access to financing, debt management, support for industrialisation, and the continent's green transition under Agenda 2063;
- On the sidelines of the dialogue, the African Union Commission Chairperson held a separate meeting with President Emmanuel Macron.



## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS UPDATES

### G20 FINANCE MINISTERS AND CENTRAL BANK GOVERNORS CONVENE



- On 16 April, G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors held a meeting under the United States G20 Presidency in Washington, DC, on the margins of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings;
- Chaired by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, the gathering focused on returning the G20 to its core mission of promoting pro-growth economic policies, while addressing heightened global uncertainties stemming from the ongoing US-Iran conflict in the Middle East, energy market volatility, financial stability risks, and broader geopolitical tensions;
- Discussions covered modernising financial regulations, tackling excessive global imbalances, enhancing debt transparency and restructuring processes, endorsing a vibrant digital assets ecosystem, improving cross-border payments, addressing payments fraud and scams, and promoting financial literacy;

- The Financial Stability Board Chair Andrew Bailey submitted a letter highlighting rising risks to global financial stability from the Middle East conflict, with supporting inputs including the OECD Secretary-General's Tax Report;
- Ministers and governors emphasised the need for coordinated vigilance on oil price surges, inflation pressures, and potential spillovers to developing economies, with calls for strengthened multilateral cooperation to safeguard growth and resilience;
- The meeting was described as constructive, laying groundwork for further Finance Track sessions, including the August gathering in Asheville, North Carolina, ahead of the 2026 G20 Leaders' Summit;
- It was noted that the meeting emphasised practical, results-oriented outcomes aligned with U.S. priorities, though some highlighted the challenges of reaching consensus amid divergent views on trade, energy, and fiscal policies;
- Most notably, South Africa's Minister of Finance and Reserve Bank Governor did not take part in the meetings, after not receiving accreditation. The U.S. has already stated that South Africa will not be invited to the upcoming G20 summit in Miami, Florida, later this year.

### IMF REGIONAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



- On 16 April, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released its April 2026 Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa, warning that the ongoing US-Iran conflict and resulting Middle East tensions are reshaping economic prospects across the region through higher commodity prices, energy shocks, and tightening financial conditions;
- The IMF downgraded Sub-Saharan Africa's growth forecast by 0.4%, projecting moderation to around 4.3% in 2026 and 4.4% in 2027. Median inflation is expected to rise notably from 3.4% in 2025 to 5% in 2026, driven primarily by rising oil and fertilizer prices, potential fuel shortages, and increased borrowing costs, with particular risks to food security and agricultural output;
- For South Africa specifically, the IMF sharply revised down its 2026 growth projection to 1.0% (from 1.4% in the January outlook) and 2027 to 1.3%, citing heavy reliance on fuel imports, anticipated sharp petrol and diesel price hikes in coming months, and broader global volatility. Regional inflation pressures are also projected to climb, complicating monetary policy responses;



**FRONTLINE AFRICA**  
— ADVISORY —

# WEEKLY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS

**17 April 2026**

- The report emphasises the need for vigilant central bank policies to contain inflation without overly stifling growth, more targeted fiscal measures to avoid unsustainable subsidies, and accelerated structural reforms to build resilience. While acknowledging short-term headwinds from the conflict;
- The IMF notes that medium-term prospects remain favourable if countries strengthen macroeconomic frameworks and address vulnerabilities;
- The outlook highlights the importance of coordinated regional responses and domestic reforms to mitigate the impact of external shocks on households, businesses, and public finances.

**END**