



2024 Global elections & climate trends monitor

17 May 2024

Greetings,

In the second edition of the 2024 Global Elections and Climate Trends Monitor we turn our focus to the upcoming elections in South Africa, where a new leader will be selected in two weeks. Given the nation's heightened vulnerability to climate change, pledges to prioritise renewable energy and sustainable water management are under deep scrutiny.

Meanwhile, Mexico finds itself grappling with a severe drought that has become a central concern in the country's presidential race. Ruta Cívica offers invaluable insights into this unfolding scenario.

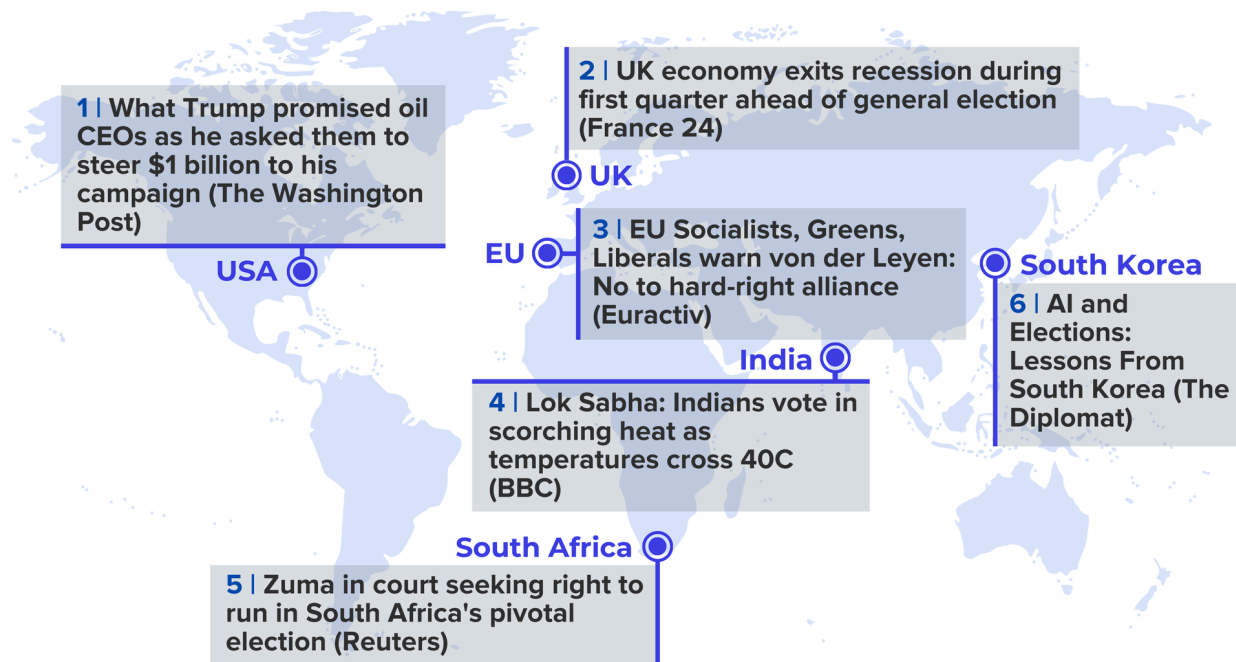
This edition includes a summary of media coverage in key election regions and explores discussions around energy and transport, living expenses and climate impacts.

Feel free to share this newsletter with those who might be interested, and don't hesitate to reach out in case of any queries.

Until next time,

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This month's top stories



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Climate politics

- [UK government's climate action plan is unlawful, High Court rules](#) (Financial Times)
"The UK's latest strategy for meeting its legally binding targets on reaching net zero emissions is unlawful, the High Court ruled on Friday, in a fresh legal blow to the government and its efforts to address climate change."
- [UK plots an accounting trick to hit its climate goals](#) (Politico)
"Britain's making progress on slashing its carbon emissions — so now it wants to slack off a little."
- [NGOs unite against EU's rollback of green policies for the agrifood sector](#) (Euractiv)
"Hundreds of civil society organisations decried the recent reversal of EU sustainability policies for the bloc's agrifood sector in an open letter published on 13 May."
- [Ministers mount last-ditch attempt to save EU laws on restoring nature](#) (The Guardian)
"Representatives of 11 countries led by Ireland urge other states to help get legislation on rescuing habitats over the line."
- [Estimates show Korea's greenhouse gas emissions fell in 2023 for 2nd consecutive year](#) (Korea Times)
"Korea's greenhouse gas emissions are believed to have fallen for the second consecutive year in 2023, government estimates showed Sunday."

Social impacts & cost of living

- [South African youth despondency is rife ahead of vote, survey shows \(Bloomberg\)](#)
"South Africans aged 18-24 were least optimistic of 16 nations. Survey shows that corruption, unemployment are main concerns."
- [Fix Europe's housing crisis or risk fuelling the far-right, UN expert warns \(The Guardian\)](#)
"Unaffordable rents and property prices risk becoming a key political battleground across the continent."

Country spotlight: South Africa

Polling date: 29 May 2024



Country stats

- Political stability (2022): [-0.7](#)
- Free elections score (2023): [0.77](#)
- Happy Planet Index (2021): [29.3](#)
- Envi Performance Index (2022): [37.20](#)
- Net zero target: [Pledged](#)
- RE capacity (2022): [11 GW](#)
- CO2 emissions (tons p/capita) (2020): [6.7](#)

Top election stories

- [South Africa's record unemployment strains social welfare as ANC face voter decline \(Reuters\)](#)
"South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), fighting to extend its 30-year grip on power in elections this month, would like to cast the government programmes that support Dalene Raiters and her family as a success story."
- [South Africa's Ramaphosa denies pause in power cuts is linked to election \(CNBC Africa\)](#)
"South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday rejected opposition allegations that a recent pause in the electricity cuts that have plagued the country for years was due to an election coming up on May 29."
- [Jacob Zuma, once leader of the A.N.C., becomes its political rival \(The New York Times\)](#)
"Spurred by his anger at the African National Congress, Mr. Zuma formed his own political party and is gathering support among voters aggrieved by the failures of South Africa's governing party."

Regional analysis

South Africa will hold its 2024 national elections on the 29th of May. Although the country is highly vulnerable to the impacts of global warming, which are already being felt through rising temperatures, droughts and extreme weather events, climate adaptation has not been prominent in mainstream political discourse or in the manifestos of major parties in the country.

The ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) has promised to focus on renewable energy, public transport, and sustainable water use to mitigate climate change. However, the party's heavy reliance on coal for energy means it's unclear if they can deliver on these promises. The opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) has also stressed mitigation actions like carbon capture and storage, while prioritising disaster management and coastal protection for adaptation. Smaller parties have the most comprehensive climate change policy - for example, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) has 34 climate-related points in its manifesto.

Climate action NGOs and media have criticised the lack of prioritisation of climate action and environmental justice by political leadership, and have called on the major parties to make more

ambitious pledges. These organisations and individuals' emphasise that voting for parties that prioritise environmental sustainability and climate justice in their manifestos can lead to improvements in everyday life for South Africans in key areas like energy security, cleaner air and better health.

Although climate change is not a leading issue in South Africa's upcoming elections, there is a noticeable call for politicians to prioritise climate action and transition to renewable energy sources, address the country's environmental challenges and create a more sustainable future for all citizens.

References and further reading:

[What climate change means for South Africa and its people](#)

[Party manifestos lacking on urgent need to mitigate climate change](#)

Exclusive insight: Drought and the election in Mexico

Polling date: 2 June 2024



Country stats

- Political stability (2022): [-0.7](#)
- Free elections score (2023): [0.67](#)
- Happy Planet Index (2021): [43.3](#)
- Envi Performance Index (2022): [45.50](#)
- Net zero target: [No target](#)
- RE capacity (2022): [81.9 GW](#)
- CO2 emissions (tons p/capita) (2020): [3.0](#)

Regional analysis

By Jimena Silva Pastrana from [Ruta Cívica](#) | 9 May 2024

On June 2, millions of Mexican citizens will head to the polls to elect a new president, a new legislature and thousands of local government officials. The election comes as Mexico confronts severe drought and water scarcity - with almost 80% of the country currently facing some level of drought. In January, residents of Mexico City took to the streets to protest weeks of water shortages, after officials warned of "unprecedented" low levels in a main system that supplies millions, according to Reuters.

Three candidates are contesting the presidency as the tenure of current left-wing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who has been in power since 2018, comes to an end. Dr Claudia Sheinbaum, a scientist who represents a leftwing coalition with the ruling party, Morena, leads the race against Jorge Álvarez Máynez, candidate for the centre-left party Citizen's Movement, and Xóchitl Gálvez, who represents several right and centre-left opposition parties under the banner of the PAN-PRI party.

All three candidates have laid out plans to address the drought and water scarcity, including by creating new water treatment plants or raising the capacity of existing plants; increasing purification and investing in desalination; and investing in water recycling and rainwater harvesting in homes.

Sheinbaum has been the only candidate so far to recognise access to water as a human right, while Gálvez wants to recognise water access as a national security issue. Máynez has proposed creating a water infrastructure fund and strengthening the laws around water use and management.

Challenges persist and it is unclear that any of the candidates' proposals go far enough given the scale of water usage by Mexico's agriculture and industrial sectors, which together account for more than 60% of water consumption. Politicians will likely face issues such as a lack of data on pipes and urban planning considerations when trying to implement new policies and projects.

Cost is likely to be another concern given the capital intensity of several proposed works, such as desalination plants. Currently, up to 90% of water treatment plants in parts of the country are not operating due to prohibitively high running costs. Previous large-scale engineering projects have faced issues with financing.

The winner of the election will face the daunting task of alleviating the drought situation so that it does not continue to damage the water, sewage, and sanitation system, further complicating the task of equitably distributing this vital resource to more than 120 million people living in Mexico.

References and further reading:

[Mexico election 2024: What the manifestos say on energy and climate change](#)

[Mexico City residents protest 'unprecedented' water shortages](#)

[Sheinbaum offers large investment in water for CDMX](#)

[¿Habrá un 'día cero' de agua en CDMX como vaticinan expertos? ¿Qué medidas tomarían los candidatos a la presidencia?](#)

[Corrupción y falta de agua marcan el segundo debate chilango; Chertorivski se desmarca lanzando propuestas](#)

[Cero fugas y captar lluvia: propuestas sobre agua de los candidatos por la CDM](#)

[Vivir sin agua: Las 16 alcaldías de la CDMX están en sequía severa, según Conagua](#)

['Día 0' en el Sistema Cutzamala: ¿Cómo sería un estado de emergencia si la CDMX se queda sin agua?](#)

[Escasez de agua en la CDMX: Salud urbana en riesgo](#)

[Piden declarar emergencia por agua en la CDMX](#)

[Colonias de la CDMX que tendrán cortes de agua, según SACMEX](#)

[Islas de calor en CDMX: ¿Dónde están las zonas más calientes? Esto dicen expertos](#)

Climate impacts

- [Summer heat hits Asia early, killing dozens as one expert calls it the "most extreme event" in climate history](#) (CBS News)

"The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday issued a "red alert" warning for the eastern and southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha, where temperatures have been soaring since mid-April."

- [Will climate change allow another summer Lok Sabha polls in 2029?](#) (Deccan Herald)
"Since this has been the warmest decade on record, with temperatures rising each year, experts weigh in if India will be able to hold another election amidst its acutely hot summer months, as impacts of climate change worsen local weather systems."

- [South Africa: water crisis in the city of Durban could tip the balance in the upcoming elections](#) (France24)

"South Africa's coastal city of Durban is facing a severe water crisis ahead of national elections, with residents suffering from prolonged dry taps and poor sanitation services."

- [South Korea marks hottest April since 1973, average daily temperatures go 2.5 degrees higher](#) (Wion)

"South Korea marked the hottest April since comprehensive records started in 1973, said the state weather agency on Tuesday (May 7)."

Energy and transport

- [South Africa election, energy risks muddle outlook](#) (Bloomberg)

"South Africa's May 29 elections, against a backdrop of power shortages and higher-than-expected inflation, elevate uncertainty for the country according to our quarterly research round up."

- [Biden announces 100% tariff on Chinese-made electric vehicles](#) (The Guardian)

"The US president, Joe Biden, has announced a 100% tariff on Chinese-made electric vehicles as part of a package of measures designed to protect US manufacturers from cheap imports."

- [Global renewables approach 30% share in 2023, on the back of solar, EU leadership \(Euractiv\)](#)
"Renewables made up 30% of global power generation in 2023 for the first time, according to an analysis by clean energy think-tank Ember – putting green power on track to displace coal."
 - [Britain to build Europe's first next generation nuclear fuel facility \(Reuters\)](#)
"Britain is investing almost 200 million pounds (\$251.14 million) to build Europe's first facility to produce high-assay, low-enriched uranium (HALEU), a fuel it says will be needed to power the next generation of nuclear energy projects, the government said on Wednesday."
 - [MPs and peers urge Sunak to U-turn on oil and gas extraction plans \(The Guardian\)](#)
"A cross-party group of MPs and peers has urged Rishi Sunak to make a U-turn on his oil and gas extraction plans as part of a broader plea to increase efforts to address the climate crisis."
 - [There's another Chinese electric vehicle threat: Buses \(Politico\)](#)
"Chinese companies have a third of Europe's e-bus market and local bus makers want the EU to get involved."
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Climate movements

- [Climate activists want to change EU politics before it changes them \(Euractiv\)](#)
"Several activists with roots in climate protest movements are likely to get elected to the next European Parliament, hoping to shake up an institution known for its technocratic ways."
 - [Court strikes down youth climate lawsuit on Biden administration request \(The Guardian\)](#)
"A federal appeals court on Wednesday evening granted the Biden administration's request to strike down a landmark federal youth climate case, outraging climate advocates."
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Disinformation alarm

Explore the murky depths of disinformation with [How disinformation works—and how to counter it](#) from The Economist.

In today's digital landscape, falsehoods spread like wildfire, fuelled by sophisticated AI tools and expansive social media. While disinformation is an age-old issue, the internet has magnified its reach. Amid this chaos, The Economist's analysis suggests a glimmer of hope, emphasising technology and collaboration as crucial elements in combating deception. Cases like Meta's intervention against a Ukrainian disinformation network highlight the potency of unified efforts. Nevertheless, challenges persist, particularly in accessing vital data. Varying degrees of success in addressing disinformation across nations often stem from political discord, yet societies have found ways to cope.

Make sure to also check the following

- [Conspiracy theorists have turned from COVID to climate. How will it impact the EU elections? \(Euronews\)](#)
"Viral narratives have claimed that environmental regulations make hunger 'inevitable', or that, under the guise of preventing pandemics, the EU is seeking new powers to restrict flights and limit civil rights in the name of tackling climate change."
- [AI and Elections: Lessons From South Korea \(The Diplomat\)](#)
"The country was able to limit the impact of AI-generated deepfakes during its recent National Assembly elections. What can other countries learn from its experience?"

Commentary

- [Elections 2024: Consider the climate when making your cross](#) | By Philip Kruger (Mail & Guardian)

“When deciding which party to vote for, voters must assess parties on their understanding of the current and future effects of climate change, especially the effects it has on the consumer. These policies must speak not only on mitigating the environmental effects of climate change. They must also include tangible, workable plans to protect and expand the economy when things really heat up.”

- [Just energy transition is integral to election promises](#) | By Nick Simpson and Matthias Krönke (Mail & Guardian)

“Recent work at the think tank ODI sheds light on how governments, multilateral development banks and private sector investors might navigate the energy transition in politically savvy ways to align with climate change goals. This is important regarding South Africa’s 29 May elections because national development priorities centre on energy and unemployment: two key delivery priorities of the country’s Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP).”

- [Too hot to handle: Editorial on the spectre of climate change eluding the electorate and political manifestoes](#) | By the editorial board of The Telegraph India

“The political arena is not the only entity that is red hot this poll season: the country is being singed too. India was singled out for extreme weather events, including heat waves, floods and glacial lake outbursts, in this week’s State of the Climate in Asia report by the World Meteorological Organization.”

- [Any drift towards the right could be disastrous for Europe’s climate agenda](#) | By Sadhbh O’Neill (The Irish Times)

“While most far-right political actors focus on nativism or anti-immigration themes, they also weave anti-science and climate-change denial and scepticism into their narratives. Social media platforms are largely ineffectual in moderating harmful activity and misinformation, and these themes are then frequently normalised and picked up by mainstream political actors.”

Live monitoring dashboard

Our Talkwalker dashboard offers the latest articles and insights on democratic elections around the world, along with emerging climate narratives.

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