

ANC may fall short of two-thirds majority

by UPI

PRETORIA, South Africa -- South Africa's ruling African National Congress may not gain enough votes for a two-thirds parliamentary majority, analysts said Thursday.

While on track to gaining a strong majority in national elections and likely making ANC leader Jacob Zuma the country's next president, early returns indicate the party may fall short of the two-thirds mark, which is necessary in any moves to change South Africa's constitution, The Times of London reported.

With 35 percent of vote counted, the opposition Democratic Alliance was doing much better than in the 2004 election, in which it polled 12 percent. The early returns showed the DA gaining 19 percent of the vote, perhaps even scoring an overall majority in its Western Cape power base previously held by the ANC, The Times reported.

The ANC breakaway group, the Congress of the People, or COPE, had about 8 percent of the vote.

The ANC's totals were down from 2004's 69 percent to 64 percent in the early going this year. Even though the ANC has never moved to change the South African constitution, a less-than-two-thirds total would be seen as a blow to the prestige of Zuma -- a negative reaction to his ousting of former President Thabo Mbeki, analysts told The Times.

It may be days before final results are known, the BBC reported, saying a record 23 million South Africans had registered for Wednesday elections and the turnout was so heavy some people waited in line for five hours to cast their votes and some polling stations ran out of paper ballots.

There were no reports of political violence or intimidation, the British broadcaster reported.

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