

2025 Edelman Trust Barometer

South Africa: Trust and the Crisis of Grievance

Top 10 Findings

01 Majority trust Business and NGOs

Business remains the most trusted institution in South Africa at 68% followed by NGOs at 63%.

02 Trust in government sees modest increase

Government remains the least trusted institution in South Africa at 36%, an increase of 7% since last year and likely a result of cautious optimism around the recently established Government of National Unity.

03 South Africa bucks trust trends

Out of 13 surveyed countries that saw changes in government leadership last year, South Africa is one of only two to see a significant, positive shift in trust over the past year. (An increase of 4 points)

04 Majority believe leaders are trying to mislead us

Between 74% and 78% of South Africans worry that business leaders, journalists, and government officials purposely mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations.

05 Majority hold grievances against government, business, and the rich

7 in 10 survey respondents hold grievances against business, government, and the rich.

06 Cautiousness around AI for those with high grievance

Only 36% of survey respondents who indicated high grievance said they were comfortable with the use of AI in business, with only 41% saying they trust AI overall.

07 Trust in legitimacy of media sinks

65% of South Africans say it is becoming harder to tell if news is from a respected media or an individual trying to deceive people.

08 Optimism for the future is dipping

Only 36% say that compared to today, the next generation will be better off, indicating declining optimism for the future.

09 Significant minority sees hostility can drive change

4 out of 10 South Africans see hostile activism as a viable means to drive change.

10 Fears of prejudice rising

78% of South Africans worry about experiencing prejudice or discrimination, highlighting a pressing societal issue that institutions must address.

To learn more about the Edelman Trust Barometer, visit [#TrustBarometer](https://www.edelman.com/trust/2025/trust-barometer)

All data is based on general population sample unless otherwise noted.

