

Hello, and welcome back to As It Is. I'm Kelly Jean Kelly.

A funeral service honoring anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela is taking place this weekend in his childhood hometown of Qunu, in Eastern Cape. Most South Africans are mourning his death. But there appears to be growing dissatisfaction with the party that brought him to power: the African National Congress.

VOA reporter Anita Powell recently spoke with a group of South Africans in Johannesburg who are struggling to separate their personal and political feelings. Jim Tedder has her report.

Nelson Mandela often liked to joke about what he planned to do immediately after he died. He said he planned to set up an office of the African National Congress in the afterlife. But the party he led to power in 1994 seems to be losing its influence.

South African is set to hold national elections next year. The year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the country's move from white-minority rule to democracy. The ANC has led the nation since that time. ANC leaders often talk about Nelson Mandela's loyalty to his party. It can be hard to tell where one begins and the other one ends.

However, South Africans say the recent death of Nelson Mandela has made it easier to separate their love for the man from their growing dissatisfaction with the party.

South Africa may be free, but it is far from equal. Blacks are still the

members of society. The nation's unemployment rate stands at 26 percent. And in recent years, ANC members have been named in a number of corruption cases.

Sixty-six year old Frans Maloka lives in Alexandra Township. He says he no longer trusts the party that earned him his freedom. And, he says he trusts current president Jacob Zuma even less.

"No, no, no, no, no. I won't go there. I tell you, there's no security. But I won't vote ANC. I rather can vote DA. Look, now we are suffer. You see, ANC no more good. Under Zuma is no more good. You see, it's not ANC we need. We voting when Mandela, we put Mandela. This ANC's no good."

He is talking about the nation's main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance. Mmusi Maimane is a spokesman for the party. He says the party has avoided talking about politics since Mandela's death. Like many South Africans, Maimane used the nickname Madiba when talking about Mandela.

"As a party, we've taken a view that says we don't want to divert the focus so that it becomes about politicking and politics. But that, in fact, it is about Nelson Mandela's life, it is about the celebration of that, it is about the Madiba family. And so to cloud that with so many political issues would be in some ways to do an injustice to a life well lived."

Maimane says his party accepts that Nelson Mandela is inseparably tied to politics. He notes that criticism of the ANC was increasing long before Mandela's death.

“That

feeling is one that has been growing regardless of the passing of Nelson Mandela. There’s a broad parallel where people are questioning the future of this country and there’s a question about that that still lingers on. And I think, as, it’s a very difficult time and so people are going to make statements either way or another. Ours is to accept the fact that there is going to be an election next year which is going to be an interesting one, a tough one at that.”

Jan Mogano is an unemployed construction worker. He says he worries that Nelson Mandela’s death will have a negative effect on elections.

“Even our ruling party, the way things are now, it’s like, I think, lots of people, they don’t know who to vote for now.”

That, truly, is Mr. Mandela’s legacy -- a leader so inspiring, so beloved, that many cannot envision a future without him.

I’m Jim Tedder.

And I’m Kelly Jean Kelly.

Thanks for joining us on As It Is.

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