
SAFA ELECTIONS: THE NUMBERS THAT WILL DECIDE THE NEXT NEC

By Dennis A. Mumble
10 September 2026

Potentially 264 votes at Congress to elect a 41-member NEC



With SAFA's elections fast approaching, the first question for an ordinary football supporter is a simple one: how many votes will actually be available when SAFA Congress elects its new leadership?

Under the SAFA Statutes 2026, the National Executive Committee (NEC) is structured around 41 positions. However, because four NEC members were expelled on 24 May 2026 and have not been replaced, the outgoing NEC is expected to contribute 36 votes at the elective Congress, assuming all remaining NEC members are in good standing and accredited.

The voting strength of a full Congress, on the present membership numbers, can be summarised as follows:

SAFA Member / voting bloc	Votes
52 Regional Associations × 4 votes each	208
18 National List NEC members x 1 vote each <i>(including the 3 ordinary VPs appointed from within the National List)</i>	18
18 Provincial NEC seats x 1 vote each	18
10 Associate Members × 1 vote each	10
National Soccer League x 6 votes	6
National Soccer League Members x 4	4
Current NEC members entitled to vote	40
Total potential Congress votes	264

There is an important distinction in this table. The 41-member NEC is a structure of people, not a separate 41-vote bloc. The 41 consists of the President, four League representatives, 18 National List members and 18 Provincial members. The three ordinary Vice-Presidents are already included within the 18 National List members, rather than being three additional members.

The President, although part of the 41-member NEC structure, does not have a vote at Congress. Article 36.5 gives the President a vote within the NEC but specifically provides that the President has no right to vote at Congress.

That is why, for purposes of the election, the four vacancies created by the expulsion of four NEC members are significant: they reduce the potential NEC voting bloc from 40 voting NEC members to 36.

How did SAFA arrive at this point?

The road to the 12 September elective Congress begins with the nomination process.

Article 25 of the SAFA Statutes provides that any Member in good standing may nominate candidates for President and NEC positions. But the different categories of NEC positions have different nomination requirements.

For the *National List*, a candidate must be proposed by his or her own Region, or by the Member to which the candidate belongs, and must be supported by at least two other Members.

For the *Provincial List*, only Regional Members in good standing may submit nominations, with a candidate required to be proposed by his or her own Region and supported by at least one other Regional Member in the province.

The nominations must reach the SAFA Chief Executive Officer at least 45 days before the elective Congress, accompanied by acceptance letters from the candidates. The CEO then submits the nominations to the Chairperson of the Governance Committee.

This is where Article 50 becomes important. The Governance Committee, through its Review Subcommittees, conducts the eligibility tests on nominated candidates. The outcome is then submitted to the CEO, who must circulate the approved list to Members before the Congress.

In other words, the process is not simply a case of a candidate putting his or her name forward and appearing on the ballot. The candidate first has to survive the nomination and eligibility process.

The President goes first

At the elective Congress, the first election is that of the President.

Article 25.19 provides that if there is only one valid presidential nomination, that candidate is declared elected. If there is more than one candidate, the first ballot requires a 50-plus-one per cent majority. If nobody achieves that threshold, the two candidates with the highest number of votes proceed to a second ballot, in which the candidate receiving more votes wins.

The presidential election is therefore different from simply asking Congress to choose the candidate with the largest number of votes in the first round.

Then comes the League

Once the President has been elected, the Statutes prescribe the next step. The Chairperson of the National Soccer League is declared one of SAFA's Vice-Presidents. The three members nominated by the League are then confirmed as NEC members.

For purposes of understanding the structure, these are four League places on the NEC — including the League Vice-President.

This is important because the League is not simply another Regional Association. Under Article 22, the League itself has six votes at Congress, exercised through up to six accredited delegates.

The 18-member National List

After the President and League positions have been dealt with, Congress turns to the National List. There are 18 National List NEC members. Article 30 divides those 18 positions according to gender, provincial representation and Associate Member representation.

The formula provides for:

- three female members;
- two members elected from among the Associate Members;
- three representatives from KwaZulu-Natal;
- two from the Eastern Cape;

-
- two from the Western Cape; and
 - one each from Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and North West.

The crucial point for readers is that the three ordinary Vice-Presidents are not three additional positions on top of these 18. Article 30.1.2 says they are appointed by the NEC from the National List members. Thus, the three ordinary Vice-Presidents form part of the 18 National List membership.

If there are exactly 18 compliant National List nominations meeting the required representation, those candidates can be declared elected. If there are more candidates than positions, Congress conducts a ballot.

Each delegate may vote for a maximum of 18 National List candidates, although a delegate may choose to vote for fewer. The 18 candidates receiving the highest number of votes, subject to the required representational formula, are elected. A tie can trigger another round of voting.

Then the Provincial List

The final component of the NEC is the 18 Provincial members — two from each of South Africa's nine provinces.

These consist of:

- nine Provincial Chairpersons; and
- nine Deputy Provincial Chairpersons.

Article 30.1.7 therefore provides for 18 Provincial NEC members in total.

The Provincial candidates come through the nomination process prescribed in Article 25. Where the number of compliant candidates corresponds with the available positions, they can be declared elected. Where there are more candidates than positions, Congress conducts a secret ballot.

Where do the maximum 264 Congress votes come from?

The most powerful voting bloc remains the country's 52 Regional Associations. Article 10.1.1 of the 2026 Statutes expressly identifies 52 Regional Associations as SAFA Members. Article 22 gives each Regional Association four votes. That means:

52 Regions × 4 = 208 votes.

The League has another six institutional votes, while each Associate Member has one vote. The 2026 Statutes list 10 Associate Members.

That produces:

208 Regional votes + 6 League votes + 10 Associate Member votes = 224 Member votes.

Then comes the unusual additional voting category: the current and outgoing NEC members who are in good standing. Article 22 expressly gives each such NEC member one vote at Congress.

Because the NEC structure contains 41 people but the President does not vote at Congress, there would ordinarily be 40 NEC votes. With four NEC positions vacant following the 24 May expulsions, and assuming those positions remain unfilled before the elective Congress, the available NEC voting strength becomes 36.

That produces a potential total of:

208 Regional + 6 League + 10 Associate + 36 NEC = 260 votes.

The figure is therefore 260 potential votes.

The arithmetic reveals something important about the SAFA election. The Regional Associations collectively control 208 of the 264 potential votes — roughly four-fifths of the available voting strength. If the two lists are added, it raises the Regional tally to 242 votes (not including the two NEC members derived from the Associate Members). That raises the percentage to roughly 91.7% of the maximum votes.

The League, Associate Members and NEC members therefore constitute much smaller blocs individually, although their votes can become important in a close presidential contest.

The four expelled NEC members also matter numerically. Their removal does not reduce the number of Regional, League or Associate Member votes. It reduces only the NEC's potential Congress voting bloc.

And there is another qualification: 264 is a potential maximum, not necessarily the number of votes that will actually be cast. Article 22 requires delegates to be accredited and present; proxy or voting by letter is not permitted. Regional Associations may also abstain, and Article 24 provides that blank, spoiled and other abstentions are disregarded when calculating a majority.

The election of SAFA's next National Executive Committee (including the President) will therefore not simply be a contest between candidates. It will also be a contest over the support of a voting Congress whose largest single component is the country's 52 Regional Associations.

And behind the apparently complicated wording of the SAFA Statutes, the essential numbers are simple:

- 41 positions make up the NEC.

-
- 36 NEC members are currently expected to have Congress votes.
 - 224 votes belong to SAFA's Member bodies.
 - 260 potential votes exist when the NEC voting rights are added (not including the 4 expelled NEC members).

Those are the numbers that will shape the election of SAFA's next leadership.

I have deliberately described 264 as the potential maximum, rather than asserting that 264 votes will actually be cast, because Article 22 makes accreditation, attendance and good standing prerequisites, and allows abstention.

###