

HSRC report says the poor will get poorer

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A new Human Sciences Research Council report paints a bleak picture of South Africa's future, with Stellenbosch University economics professor Sampie Terreblanche predicting that "the poor will remain trapped for the foreseeable future in poverty and destitution".

"There is increasing evidence that the most important targets in the provision of basic household services will not be reached because government will just keep extending the deadlines for meeting their targets," say HSRC research managers David Hemson, Jonathan Carter and Geci

Karuri-Sebina.

"About 2 000 schools remain without adequate toilets while the target for delivery was supposed to be in 2004," they say.

The authors warn the government against responding to service delivery protests with empty promises of allocating more funds.

"These additional allocations are often nothing more than the funds that were already allocated, relabelled and marketed under a new name," they say.

The report has harsh words for opposition parties.

"The DA's perceived and real opposition to efforts to end apartheid's legacy has not endeared it to the black majority," says

independent political analyst Somadoda Fikeni, while the UDM and ID depend too much on their high-profile leaders.

Fikeni describes the PAC, Azapo and splinter groups from the black consciousness movement as "deeply fractured" and says they could win fewer votes than ever in the elections this month.

After the elections, the government will come under enormous pressure to deliver services fast, which will put the ANC under pressure, says the report.

Echoing Reserve Bank governor Tito Mboweni's statement on Tuesday that the likely Zuma government will have little room to manoeuvre, Fikeni says the new

government will have "limited scope for policy changes".

If the Zuma government does not make a "real impact on poverty and unemployment and curb corruption", the ANC's alliance partners could "try to take over direct control of the ANC", pitting them against core ANC members who would resist such a takeover, says Fikeni.

He says a new "breakaway party to the left of the ANC" could emerge if the Zuma government frustrates attempts by the SACP and Cosatu to change government policies.

"Such a party would have a realistic chance of challenging and even defeating the ANC," he says.