OCTOBER 2026

INFLATION MONITOR

A simplified version of inflation data for trade union negotiators

LRS Labour Research Service

40 YEARS WORKING FOR WORKERS
1986 – 2026

Price inflation: Cost of living

Consumer price index increased to 5,2% in October 2026

Inflation is a sustained rise in the general level of prices of goods and services. It is measured as an annual percentage increase (October 2025 to October 2026). A falling rate of inflation means that prices are rising more slowly.

CPI AND SELECTED PRICE CATEGORIES

CPI	The annual headline inflation rate increased to 5,2% in October 2026 from 4,5% in September 2026. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 0,7% month-on-month in October 2026.
Food	prices rose to 1,2% in October 2026, up from 1,0% in September 2026.
Transport	inflation rose to 15,2% in October 2026, up from 10,8% in September 2026.
Public transport	inflation rose to 13,4% in October 2026, up from 12,3% in September 2026.
Administered prices	rose to 17,2% in October 2026 from 13,0% in September 2026.

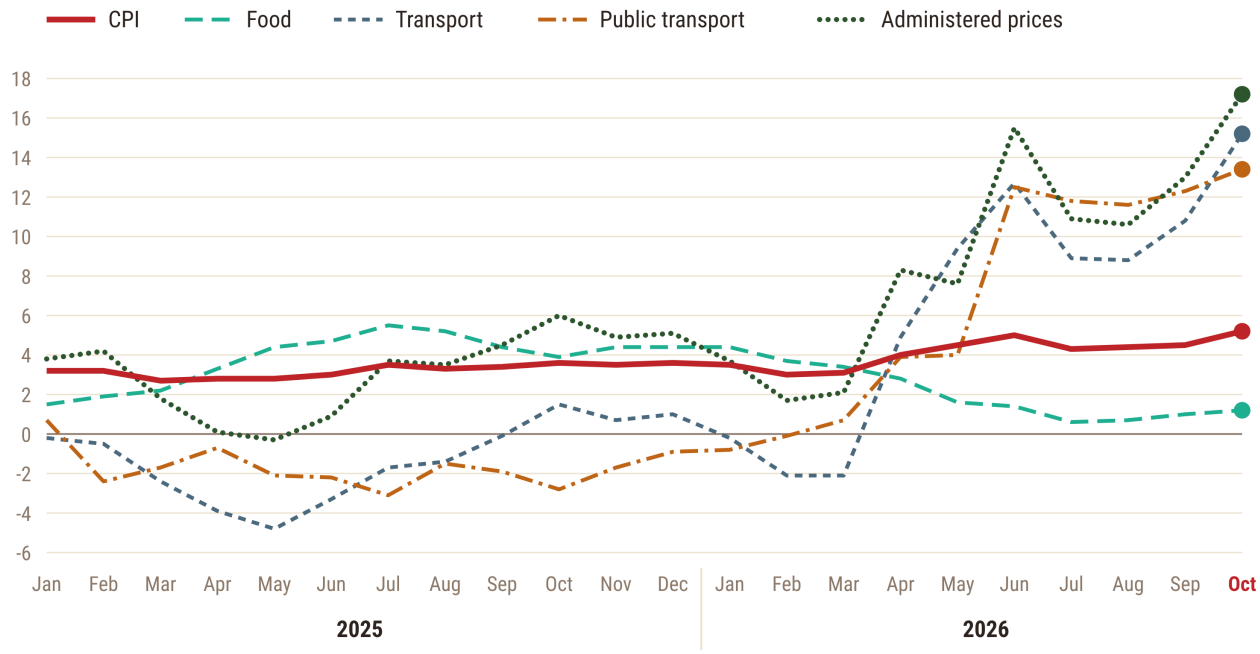
Table 1: Annual inflation rate (CPI) and selected price categories (%)

Oct 2026 Sep 2026

Category	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26
CPI	3,6	3,5	3,6	3,5	3,0	3,1	4,0	4,5	5,0	4,3	4,4	**4,5**	**5,2**
Food	3,9	4,4	4,4	4,4	3,7	3,4	2,8	1,6	1,4	0,6	0,7	**1,0**	**1,2**
Transport	1,5	0,7	1,0	-0,2	-2,1	-2,1	4,9	9,4	12,7	8,9	8,8	**10,8**	**15,2**
Public transport	-2,8	-1,7	-0,9	-0,8	-0,1	0,7	3,9	4,0	12,5	11,8	11,6	**12,3**	**13,4**
Administered prices	6,0	4,9	5,1	3,7	1,7	2,1	8,3	7,6	15,5	10,9	10,6	**13,0**	**17,2**

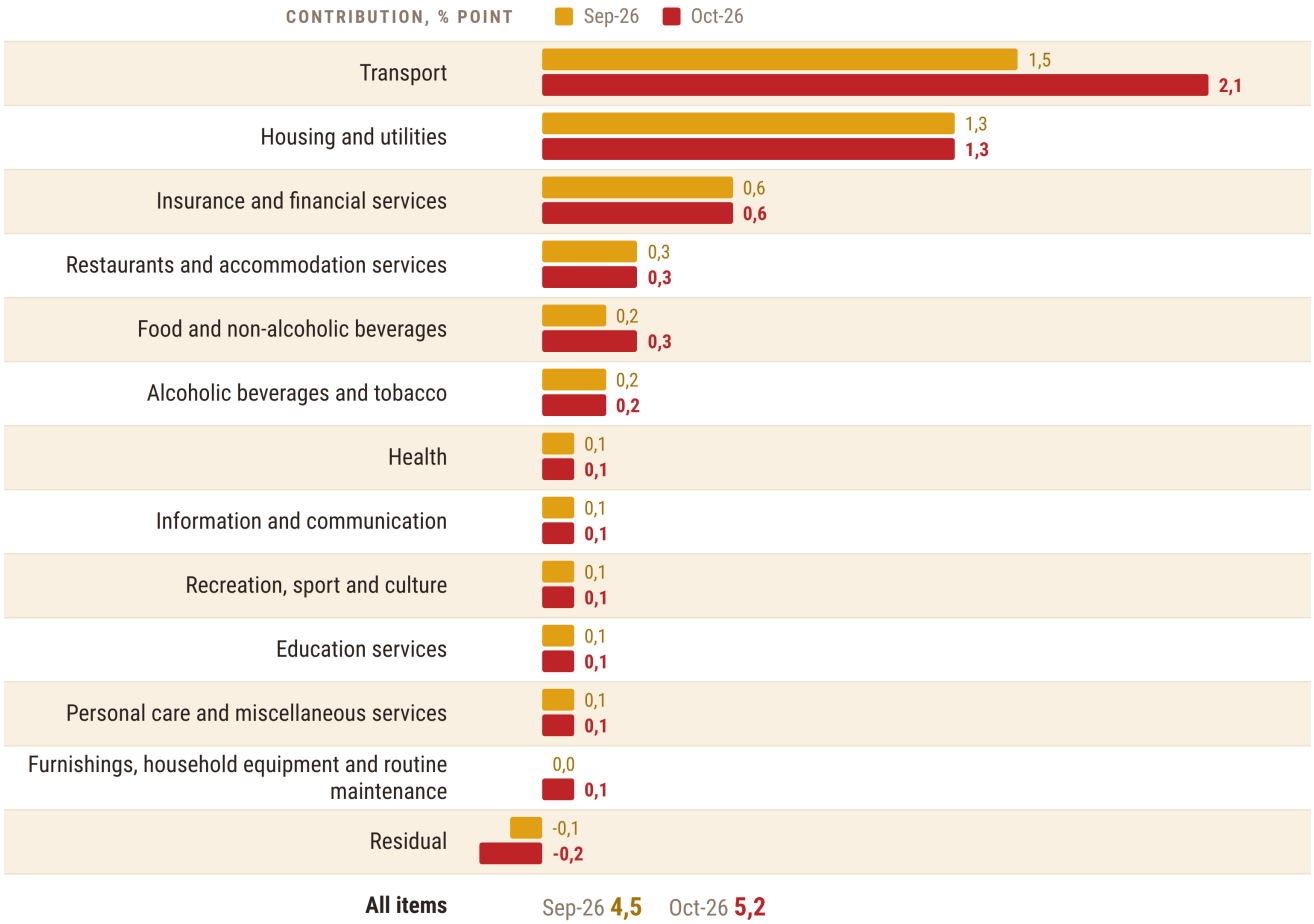
Source: Statistics South Africa

Figure 1: Consumer Price Index (CPI) and selected price categories | January 2025 to October 2026



Source: Statistics South Africa

Figure 2: Contributions of the different groups to the annual percentage change in the CPI headline | October 2026



Source: Statistics South Africa

Inflation by expenditure group

Statistics South Africa divides monthly household expenditure into 10 deciles. Expenditure in decile 10 was higher than expenditure in decile 1, indicating extreme inequality.

Table 2: Annualised inflation by expenditure group | October 2026

Expenditure group	Monthly expenditure	Inflation rate % Oct-26
Annual CPI		**5,2**
Decile 1	Up to R1 678 per month	**3,5**
Decile 2	R1 678 up to R2 802 per month	**3,4**
Decile 3	R2 802 up to R4 056 per month	**3,6**
Decile 4	R4 056 up to R5 434 per month	**3,7**
Decile 5	R5 435 up to R7 058 per month	**3,8**
Decile 6	R7 058 up to R9 097 per month	**4,1**
Decile 7	R9 097 up to R11 931 per month	**4,2**
Decile 8	R11 931 up to R16 660 per month	**4,8**
Decile 9	R16 660 up to R26 021 per month	**5,5**
Decile 10	R26 021 and more	**5,7**

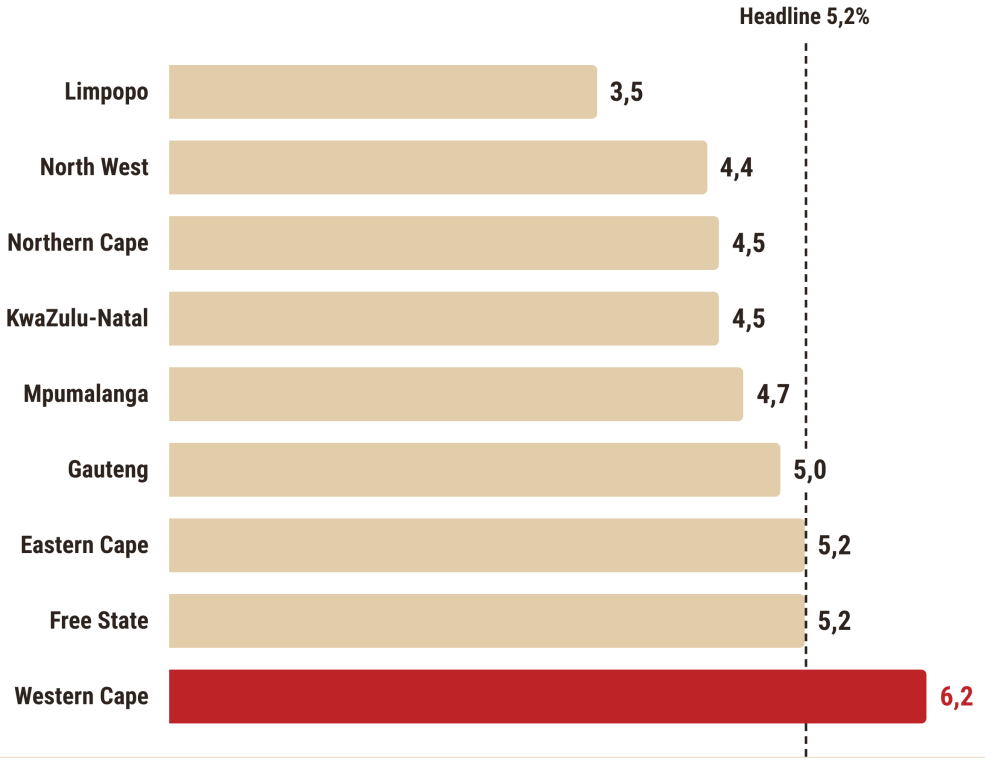
Source: Statistics South Africa

There is more than one inflation rate. Different groups, from the very poor to the rich, can experience different inflation rates because they buy different things. The very low spending group (decile 1) experienced an inflation rate of 3,5%, lower than the headline annualised inflation rate of 5,2%. In comparison, the very high spending group (decile 10) had an inflation rate of 5,7%, which was 0,5 percentage points higher than the annualised inflation rate of 5,2% in October 2026.

Inflation by province

Statistics South Africa publishes annual inflation rates for each of South Africa's nine provinces. Provincial inflation rates differ from the headline rate depending on local spending patterns and price pressures.

Figure 3: Annualised inflation rate (%) by province | October 2026



Source: Statistics South Africa

Limpopo (3,5%), North West (4,4%), Northern Cape (4,5%), KwaZulu-Natal (4,5%), Mpumalanga (4,7%), Gauteng (5,0%), Eastern Cape (5,2%) and Free State (5,2%) were the provinces with annual inflation rates lower than or equal to the headline rate.

Western Cape (6,2%) was the province with annual inflation higher than the headline inflation.

Table 3: Consumer Price Index (%)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
2019	4,0	4,1	4,5	4,4	4,5	4,5	4,0	4,3	4,1	3,7	3,6	4,0	**4,1**
2020	4,5	4,6	4,1	3,0	2,1	2,2	3,2	3,1	3,0	3,3	3,2	3,1	**3,3**
2021	3,2	2,9	3,2	4,4	5,2	4,9	4,6	4,9	5,0	5,0	5,5	5,9	**4,5**
2022	5,7	5,7	5,9	5,9	6,5	7,4	7,8	7,6	7,5	7,6	7,4	7,2	**6,9**
2023	6,9	7,0	7,1	6,8	6,3	5,4	4,7	4,8	5,4	5,9	5,5	5,1	**6,0**
2024	5,3	5,6	5,3	5,2	5,2	5,1	4,6	4,4	3,8	2,8	2,9	3,0	**4,4**
2025	3,2	3,2	2,7	2,8	2,8	3,0	3,5	3,3	3,4	3,6	3,5	3,6	**3,2**
2026	3,5	3,0	3,1	4,0	4,5	5,0	4,3	4,4	**4,5**	**5,2**			

Source: Statistics South Africa

The consumer price index is known as the headline inflation rate and is also called the official inflation rate. The monthly prices of over a thousand goods and services are used to calculate the CPI.

Table 4: Food Price Index (%)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
2019	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,8	3,2	3,0	3,8	3,7	3,5	3,5	3,8	**3,0**
2020	3,7	4,2	4,4	4,6	4,8	4,5	4,6	4,3	4,2	5,6	5,9	6,2	**4,8**
2021	5,6	5,4	5,9	6,7	6,8	7,0	7,0	7,4	7,0	6,7	6,0	5,9	**6,5**
2022	6,2	6,7	6,6	6,3	7,8	9,0	10,1	11,5	12,3	12,3	12,8	12,7	**9,5**
2023	13,8	14,0	14,4	14,3	12,0	11,1	10,0	8,2	8,0	8,8	9,0	8,4	**11,0**
2024	7,0	6,0	4,9	4,4	4,3	4,1	3,9	4,1	4,1	2,8	1,6	1,7	**4,1**
2025	1,5	1,9	2,2	3,3	4,4	4,7	5,5	5,2	4,4	3,9	4,4	4,4	**3,8**
2026	4,4	3,7	3,4	2,8	1,6	1,4	0,6	0,7	**1,0**	**1,2**			

Source: Statistics South Africa

The Food Price Index shows an increase in the price level of food only, each month. It is included in the overall CPI inflation.

Table 5: Transport Price Index (%)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
2019	2,9	3,6	6,4	7,4	7,1	5,5	3,0	3,1	2,4	0,3	-0,3	3,3	**3,7**
2020	6,4	6,2	3,4	-3,5	-8,4	-5,9	0,0	0,2	0,3	-0,5	-1,3	-1,6	**-0,4**
2021	-0,4	1,2	3,8	10,6	15,3	12,3	8,0	9,9	10,1	10,9	15,0	16,8	**9,5**
2022	14,5	14,3	15,7	14,7	15,7	20,0	25,0	21,2	17,9	17,1	15,3	13,9	**17,1**
2023	11,1	9,9	8,9	7,6	7,0	1,8	-2,6	0,8	4,2	7,4	4,3	2,6	**5,3**
2024	4,6	5,4	5,3	5,7	6,3	5,5	4,2	2,8	-1,1	-5,3	-3,3	-2,0	**2,3**
2025	-0,2	-0,5	-2,4	-3,9	-4,8	-3,3	-1,7	-1,4	-0,1	1,5	0,7	1,0	**-1,3**
2026	-0,2	-2,1	-2,1	4,9	9,4	12,7	8,9	8,8	**10,8**	**15,2**			

Source: Statistics South Africa

The transport price index measures the increase in the price level of transport items in the basket of goods and services that make up the inflation index. It is included in overall CPI inflation.

Table 6: Public Transport Price Index (%)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
2019	9,6	8,9	10,1	10,5	9,5	8,3	7,6	9,0	3,0	2,5	2,8	3,7	**7,1**
2020	0,7	0,8	-1,7	-1,8	-0,7	-1,1	1,5	0,6	1,6	2,9	1,9	1,2	**0,4**
2021	1,5	1,2	4,5	5,1	4,3	6,9	3,7	5,3	6,7	6,0	8,3	9,9	**5,3**
2022	10,0	12,3	14,0	12,6	12,5	14,3	22,0	23,6	22,1	23,2	20,5	16,7	**17,0**
2023	18,0	15,8	14,6	14,2	14,2	9,7	2,6	-0,2	-0,1	-0,3	0,8	0,4	**7,5**
2024	0,5	2,2	-0,2	-0,6	2,0	1,8	3,0	1,3	0,7	0,9	0,0	0,5	**1,0**
2025	0,7	-2,4	-1,7	-0,7	-2,1	-2,2	-3,1	-1,5	-1,9	-2,8	-1,7	-0,9	**-1,7**
2026	-0,8	-0,1	0,7	3,9	4,0	12,5	11,8	11,6	**12,3**	**13,4**			

Source: Statistics South Africa

The Public Transport Price Index shows the price rises for taxi, rail, bus and other public modes of passenger and goods transport. It is included in the overall CPI inflation.

Table 7: Administered Price Index (%)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
2019	5,0	5,7	7,9	8,3	8,2	6,9	4,7	4,9	5,2	3,5	3,0	5,9	**5,8**
2020	9,2	8,8	6,8	0,9	-3,1	-1,7	2,1	2,1	1,8	0,9	0,6	0,2	**2,4**
2021	1,1	2,7	4,0	9,2	12,5	10,4	9,1	10,3	10,4	11,2	14,1	15,6	**9,2**
2022	13,8	13,1	14,3	13,3	14,4	17,8	19,0	15,8	13,4	12,3	10,9	10,3	**14,0**
2023	7,4	6,8	6,2	5,3	4,7	0,7	-0,8	1,7	6,1	9,3	6,4	4,9	**4,9**
2024	6,9	7,6	7,9	8,8	8,9	8,3	6,8	5,4	2,1	-1,4	0,6	1,8	**5,3**
2025	3,8	4,2	1,8	0,1	-0,3	0,9	3,7	3,5	4,5	6,0	4,9	5,1	**3,2**
2026	3,7	1,7	2,1	8,3	7,6	15,5	10,9	10,6	**13,0**	**17,2**			

Source: Statistics South Africa

An administered price is the price of a product deliberately fixed by a single producer or group of producers and/or any price that may be determined or influenced by the government, either directly or through one or more government agencies/institutions, without reference to market forces. Examples include school fees, telephone charges, electricity, trains, petrol/paraffin, mobile phone calls and public transport. This rate is part of the overall CPI inflation rate.



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