

DIGITAL BUZZ

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE

#LGE2026



Compiled by
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Sere**



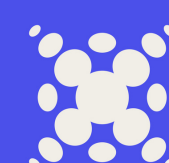
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Introduction

The Local Government Elections (LGE) are the most important elections for citizens and communities as they provide an opportunity to vote for leadership that will improve and uplift communities and municipalities. As it stands, most municipalities in South Africa are underserved and lack the resources to remedy their shortcomings. As South Africa moves closer to the 2026 LGEs on the 4th of November, the online conversation around political parties and candidates is already underway. As Moxii Africa, we will use the Meltwater platform to conduct social media monitoring and provide concise weekly briefs highlighting key conversations, trends, sentiment, and insights.

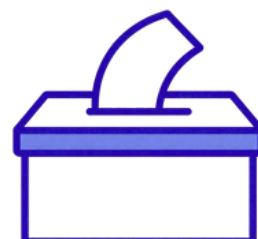
This brief is the first in a series of weekly social media monitoring reports tracking how citizens, candidates and parties are engaging in the digital public sphere in the lead up to the LGE.

Methodology

Monitoring is conducted across X, Facebook, Instagram, Threads and YouTube using Meltwater as our primary data collection tools. Facebook, Instagram, and Threads returned no results for this topic during the monitoring period, a finding cross-verified through METAs Content Library. This week's brief covers the period 4-11 August 2026 and focuses on the South African Political Candidates and Parties which generated over 24 460 mentions in the seven-day period making it the most active topic of the week.

The keywords used are following:

- ▶ ANC or "African National Congress"
- ▶ DA or "Democratic Alliance"
- ▶ EFF or "Economic Freedom Fighters"
- ▶ MKP or "uMkhonto weSizwe Party"
- ▶ IFP or "Inkatha Freedom Party"
- ▶ "ActionSA"



About Moxii Africa's Election Work

Moxii Africa has monitored every democratic election in South Africa since 1994, bringing three decades of independent, evidence-based media monitoring to safeguard information integrity. For #LGE2026, Moxii Africa anchors the Partnership on Information Integrity in Elections (PIIE) –working in partnership key stakeholders and with the IEC to safeguard information integrity in elections. Other election work focuses on tracking media coverage, monitoring political party ad spending via [PAdRe](#), and holding candidates accountable.

Explore live media tracking, accountability tools, and election insights at [Moxii Africa's LGE2026 Hub](#) or learn more about the coalition at [PIIE](#). Important Notice: For official election dates, voter registration details, candidate lists, and official results, please consult only the [Electoral Commission of South Africa \(IEC\)](#).

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- "Patriotic Alliance"
- "Rise Mzansi"
- "Build One South Africa"
- "GOOD Party"
- "Freedom Front Plus" or "FF Plus"
- "National Freedom Party"
- "Cyril Ramaphosa"
- "John Steenhuisen"
- "Julius Malema"
- "Jacob Zuma"
- "Herman Mashaba"
- "Gayton McKenzie"
- "Mmusi Maimane"
- "Sengezo Zibi"
- "Sy Mamabolo"
- "Janet Love"
- "Elections"
- "Voting campaign"
- "Government"
- "South Africa"
- "Democracy"

These keywords were chosen because they relate to the most prominent and influential political actors in the lead up to the 2026 LGE. The parties and candidates included are those with the greatest capacity to mobilise voters, shape public discourse and influence electoral outcomes. Broader keywords such as “elections”, “voting campaign” and “government” were included to capture organic discourse that references the electoral process without specifically naming a particular party or candidate. This keyword set will be reviewed and updated iteratively as the monitoring cycle progresses

Key Findings

Word Cloud- What people are talking about



- The word cloud demonstrates the dominant voices and the themes of the week.
- The ANC, EFF and Action SA were the most prominently mentioned. organisations with Cyril Ramaphosa, Julius Malema, Herman Mashaba among the most referenced individuals.. Geographic concentration was a main focal point with eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal, Johannesburg and Gauteng featured heavily which could suggest that local political tensions in these areas are already shaping the outline conversation ahead of the elections
- What is also interesting is the word “privatisation” in the word cloud. It signals that citizens are not just debating *who* should lead their municipalities, but how those municipalities should be run.
- Privatisation of public services such as water, electricity and sanitation has become a flashpoint in local government discourse with communities divided between those who see it as a solution to chronic service delivery failures and those who view it as a threat to public access and democratic accountability
- The presence in this week’s conversation suggests that beyond party loyalty, voters are beginning to engage with the structural question of governance that will define the next term of local leadership



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- The prominence of Jacinta in this week's conversation is a telling signal. The name refers to Jacinta Ceasar a prominent figure associated with Put South Africa First which is a movement that has been vocal about immigration and the perceived threat of foreign nationals to South African jobs and communities.
- Her appearance in a political candidates and parties conversation, alongside hashtags like #putsouthafricafirst, suggest that the anti-immigration narrative championed by movements like Put South Africa First and Operation Dudula is bleeding into the broader electoral discourse
- This data point reflects an ongoing mobilisation of xenophobic sentiment as a political tool ahead of the LGE, one that cuts across party lines and speaks directly to the Afrophobia workstream being monitored in parallel.



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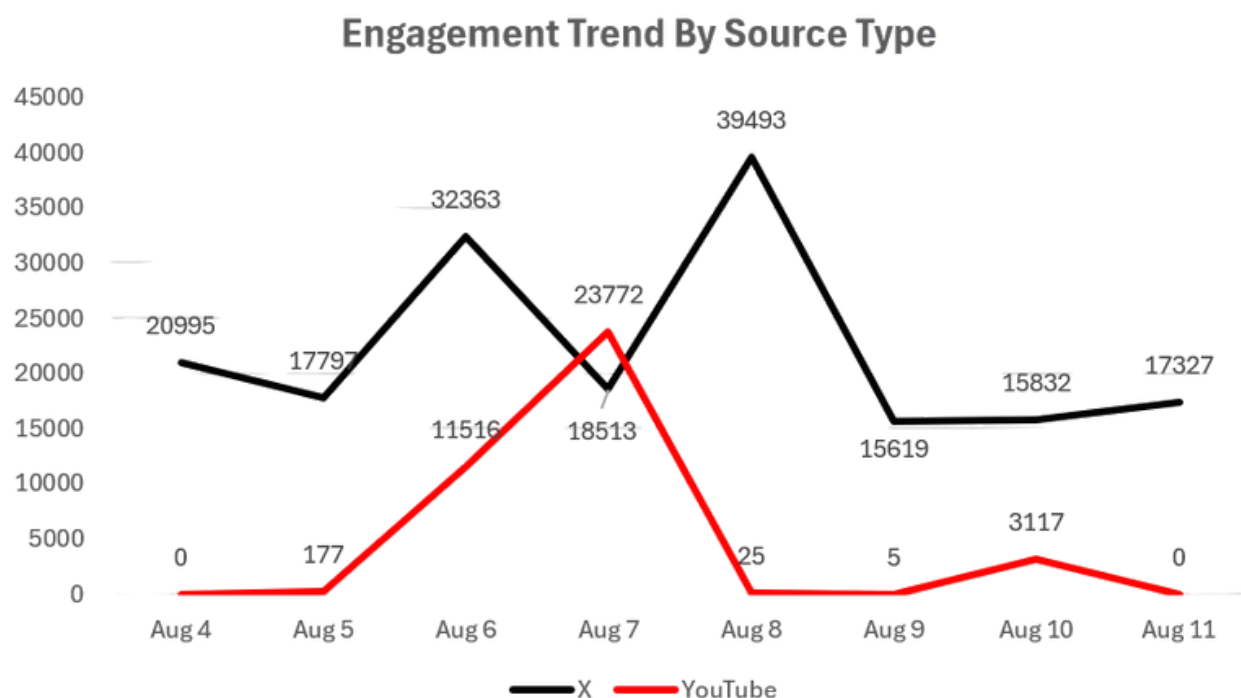
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Engagement Trend



- The Engagement Trend by Source Type graph reveals two distinct patterns playing out simultaneously.
- X maintained consistently high engagement throughout the week, with notable peaks on 6 August (32 363 engagements) and again on 8 August (39 493) the latter being highest single-day engagement of the monitoring period.
- These two peaks in the two platforms indicate two separate surges in political discourse rather than one continuous viral event, suggesting that online audiences were actively and repeatedly responding to developments in real time. It may also reflect heightened conversation around the final week of voter registration.
- You Tube tells a sharper and more concentrated story. After recording zero engagement on the 4th of August, it surged to 23 772 engagements on 7 August before dropping to near zero by 8 August.
- This pattern could be characteristic around the last voter registration week
- As noted in the mentions analysis, Facebook, Instagram, and Threads returned no results for this topic during the monitoring period, a finding cross-verified through METAs Content Library.

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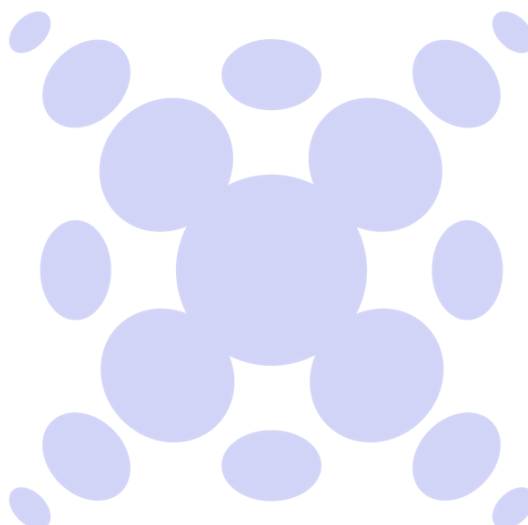
Conclusion

The first week of monitoring shows that South Africans are already deeply engaged in the political conversation ahead of the 2026 Local Government Elections, with activity concentrated almost entirely on X. In just seven days, over 24 460 mentions and 212,000 engagements were recorded, signalling one of the most digitally active election cycles in local government history. Dominant themes include party positioning, candidate scrutiny, voter mobilisation, and the intersection of immigration with electoral politics, indicating that the LGE will not be fought on service delivery alone but also on identity, trust, and accountability. Narratives requiring close attention include the EFF's visible voter registration drive alongside public pressure over its stance on migration, the emergence of privatisation as a governance issue, and the integration of xenophobic sentiment into candidate discussions.



CONTACT US

For any questions, comments, or clarifications, please contact Moxii Africa Formerly Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) from Media Monitoring Africa on (011) 788 1278 or email: keamos@mma.org.za



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