

Moxii Africa's Assessment of Media Performance, Regulatory Compliance and the Enabling Environment for Free and Fair Elections

LGE26 Media Brief 2 : 12 – 18 August 2026

Written By:

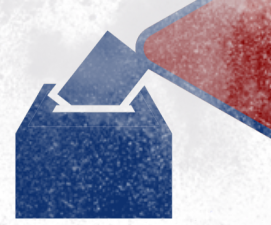
Ntsako Manganye

Designed by:

Kgothatso Baatile Mohale



INTRODUCTION



[Moxii Africa](#), formerly Media Monitoring Africa, is monitoring media coverage in the lead-up to the 2026 Local Government Elections. The activity reviews election-related coverage across broadcast, print and digital media in South Africa to assess the performance of the media and their compliance to regulatory frameworks as well as the enabling environment necessary for free and fair elections. The monitoring is conducted to promote fair, balanced and responsible election reporting by tracking how political parties, election-related issues and key voices are covered in the media.

Moxii Africa has monitored media coverage of elections since 1994.

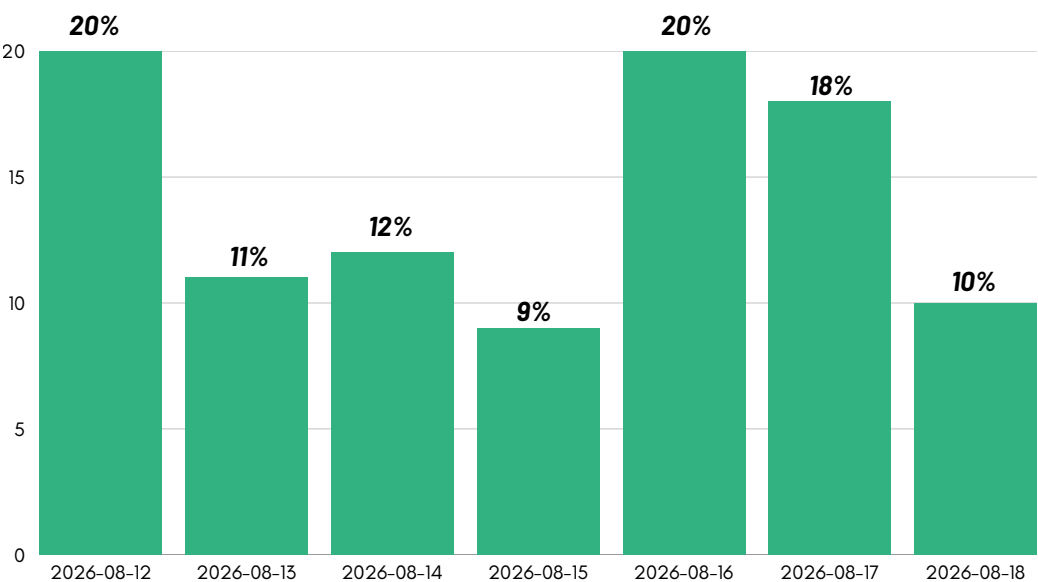
This week’s brief highlights findings from the monitoring period, 12 to 18 August, 2026. During this period, 142 election-related items were recorded and analysed. In the [previous brief](#), 184 election-related news stories were recorded and analysed. This decrease may be attributed to media coverage focusing more on the 46th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) that took place in Durban.

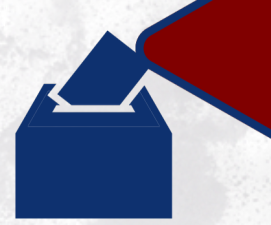
Key Findings

The finding below summarises the main trends in election-related media coverage from 12 to 18 August 2026.

During this period, 142 election-related news items were analysed. The findings show which issues received attention, how visible political parties were, and who shaped election narratives between male and female.

Figure 1: Daily LGE Stories Article Count

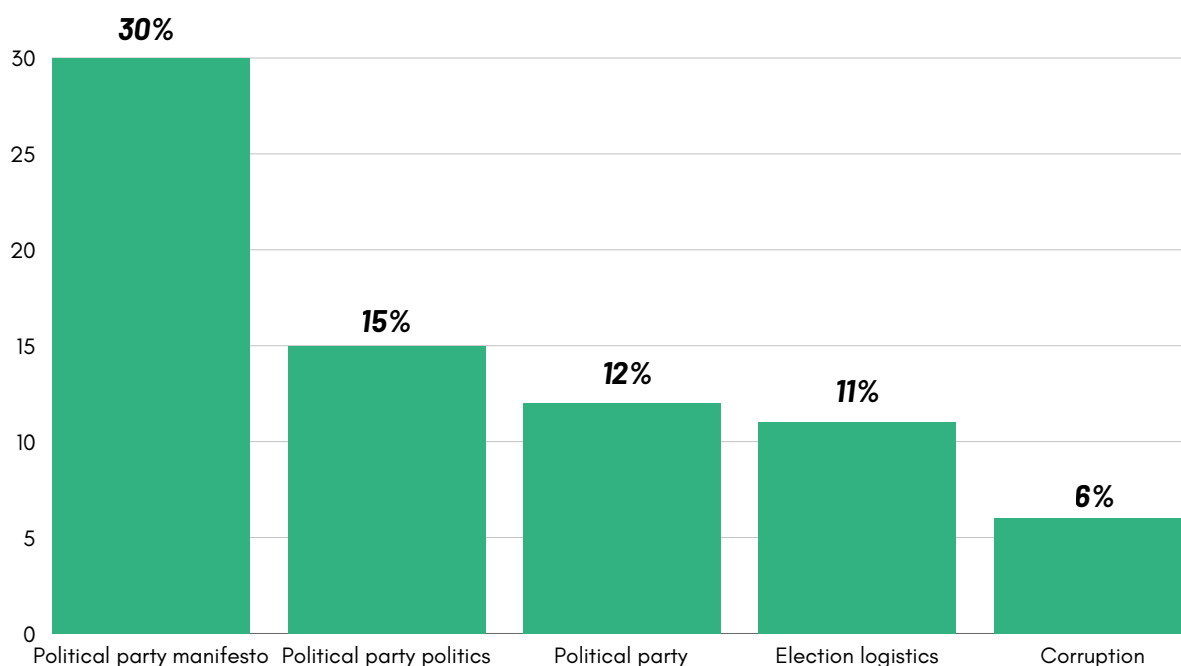




The graph shows that election-related stories continued to receive media attention during the reporting period, accounting for 20% of coverage on 12 August. Coverage then declined and remained relatively stable at between 9% and 11% from 13 to 15 August, before increasing again to 20% on 16 August. This was followed by a further decline to 17% on 17 August and 9% on 18 August. The pattern indicates that election-related coverage occurred in short bursts rather than following a consistent upward trend.

The fluctuations may reflect changes in the news cycle, with election-related stories receiving greater attention on days when there were significant political developments, announcements or campaign-related events. While political parties continued to feature in election-related coverage, the data does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that campaign activity or overall public interest was steadily increasing. Overall, the findings suggest that elections remained an important media topic, but the level of attention varied considerably from day to day rather than showing sustained growth.

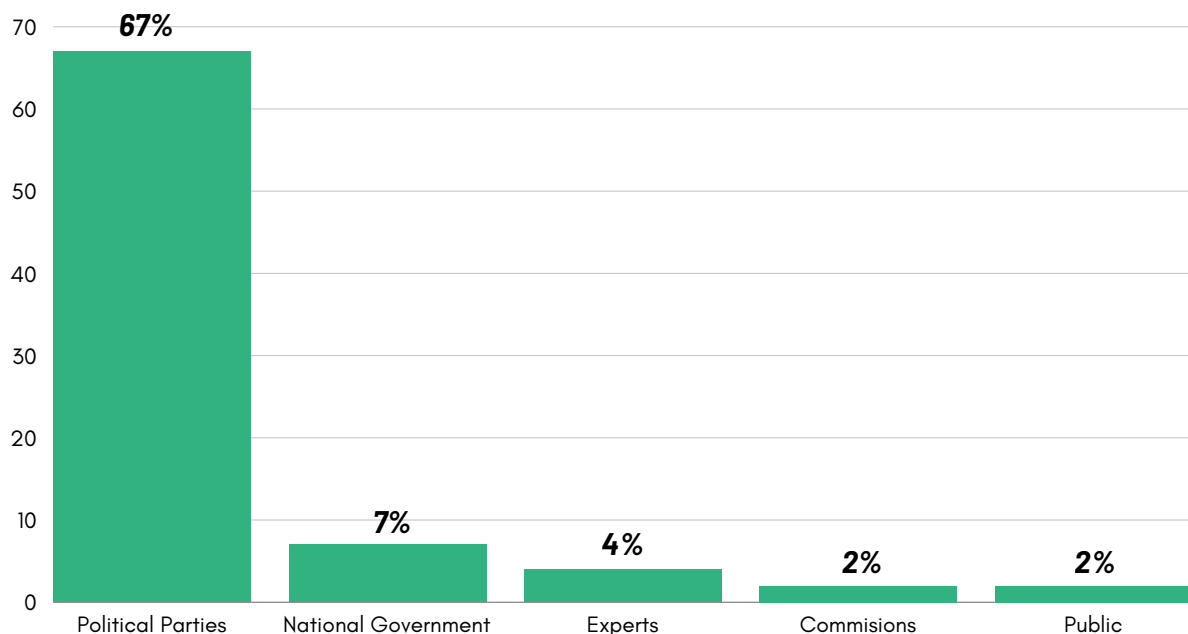
Figure 2: Top five topics



Compared to [last week](#), the media landscape is beginning to shift in a noticeable way. Last week, coverage was mainly driven by IEC-related issues, including election logistics and voter education. This week, however, political party activity has taken centre stage. The top three topics are all linked to party political activity, with political party manifestos leading at 30% of coverage. This is followed by political party politics, both internal and external, at 15%, and political party campaigning at 12%. Election logistics, which was a leading issue last week, has now moved to fourth place with 11% of coverage.

Corruption also features among the top five topics, ranking fifth. This is a clear sign that the campaign environment is starting to intensify. As parties compete for public attention, it is likely that accusations and counter-accusations will become more visible, with corruption expected to be one of the key issues used to challenge opponents.

Figure 3: Top five Sources by Affiliation

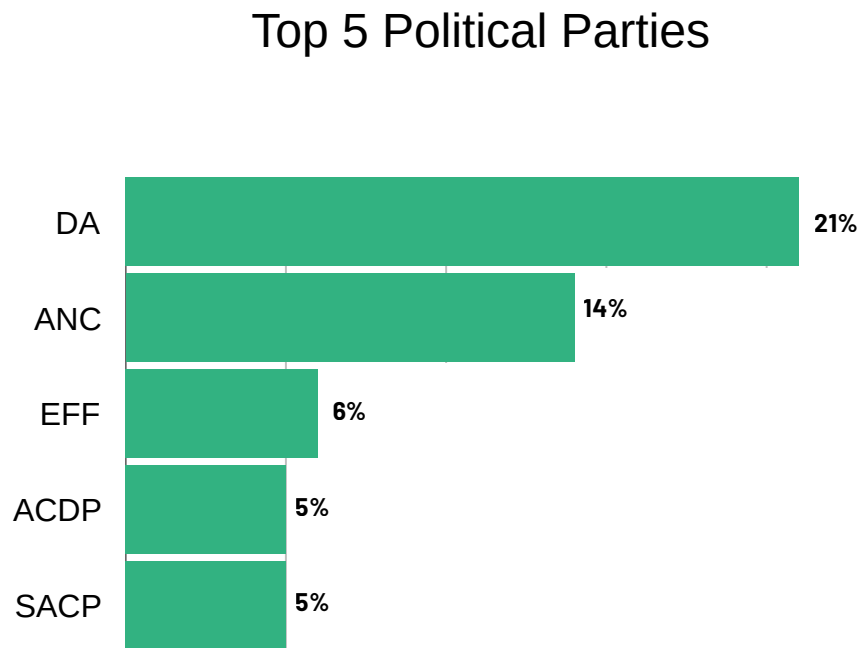


Political parties dominate media sources, accounting for 67% of sources. Meaning that coverage mainly focuses on their manifestos, campaign positions and political messages. National Government accounts for 7% of sources, suggesting that some of the conversation around the upcoming election is still taking place at the national level, as the process remains in its preparatory stage.

Experts make up 4% of sources. Experts play an important role by providing independent analysis and context for political claims.

Commissions account for 2% of the sources represented in the graph. All these sources were from IEC. Citizens as well account for 2% of sources, making the IEC and public voices the least represented in the top 5.. This shows the need for more people-centred media coverage in the coming weeks of the elections, reflecting voters’ concerns and experiences.

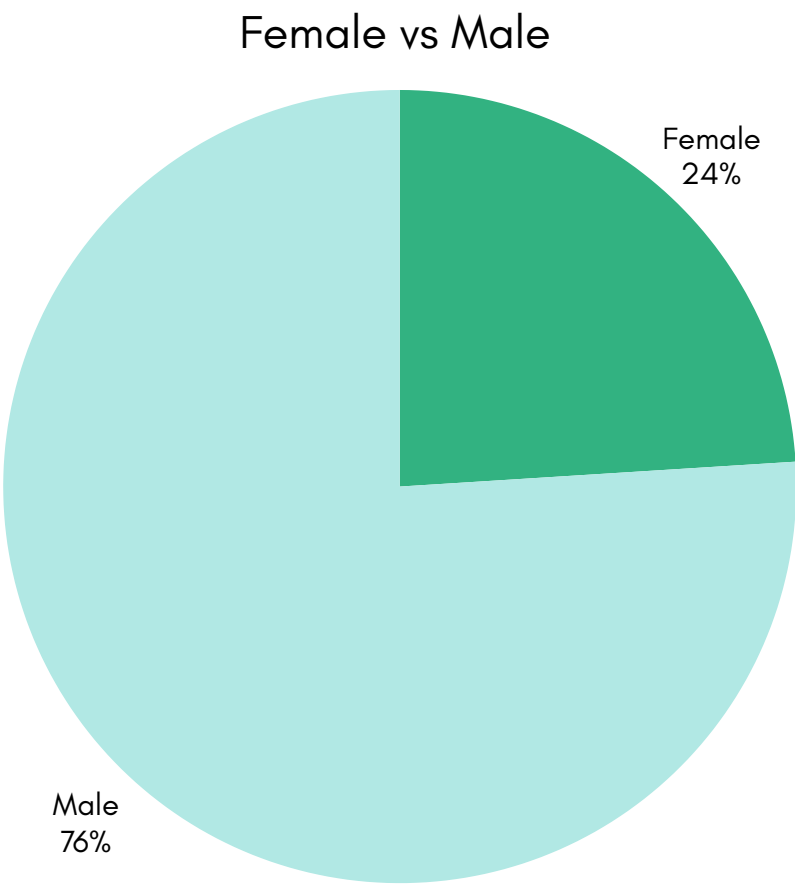
Figure 4: Top five parties



The Democratic Alliance (DA) with 21% and African National Congress (ANC) with 14% continued to dominate media coverage during the week of 12-18 August 2026, despite fluctuations in their respective shares from the previous week. The emergence of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), with 6% of media mentions, is notable and may reflect increased campaign activity, political statements or engagement on issues ahead of the elections. The SACP and ACDP each recorded 5%, while the MK Party, which featured prominently the previous week, did not appear among the top five. Overall, the findings indicate that media attention remains concentrated on major political parties, while coverage of other parties is beginning to fluctuate as election activity develops.

While it is encouraging to see different parties featured in the top five, there is a need for the media to maintain balance and ensure more equitable coverage of smaller parties.

Figure 5: Female vs Male Sources



Compared to last week, female voices recorded a modest increase from 18% to 24%, which is an encouraging sign in the effort to address gender imbalances. However, the fact that 76% of sources are still male remains a major concern and clearly shows the continued dominance of male voices in election-related media coverage. More work is still needed to close this gap and move towards a more representative balance of female voices.

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 \(IEC\)](#).

Report Online Harm: Seen something misleading online? Report disinformation, hate speech, or incitement through [Real411](#), the official platform for reporting digital electoral harms.



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: ntsakom@mma.org.za

