

DIGITAL BUZZ

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE

#LGE2026



Compiled by
**Keamogetswe
Sere**



Edited by
**Ntombifuthi
Kubeka**



Designed by
**Kgothatso
Baatile Mohale**



www.moxiafrica.org



Introduction

Moxii Africa continues its weekly monitoring of South Africa's digital public sphere as the country moves deeper into the 2026 Local Government Elections (LGE) campaign period. With voting day on 4 November only weeks away, online political engagement is intensifying. In this third segment of the social media analysis, we examine how citizens, candidates, and political parties are shaping and responding to online conversations. These discussions are significant because the election outcome will determine who is responsible for addressing community needs, improving service delivery, and closing resource gaps in municipalities across the country.

This week (18-25 August 2026), monitoring was expanded beyond the existing political candidate tracking. It now includes a search focused on South African elections, capturing conversations that closely overlap with candidate-related discussions. Conversations are tracked using Meltwater across LinkedIn, X, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Bluesky, Threads, and YouTube. Political candidates remain the leading topic of discussion during this period, generating 62,900 mentions over the seven-day monitoring window. Social media mentions nearly doubled from 24,460 in Week 1 (4-11 Aug) to 48,168 in Week 2 (11-18 Aug) and 62,900 this week demonstrating an increase overall in the discourse on social media.

Insights and Trends framing this week

- ▶ Mentions of the ANC remain prominent this week. Commentary largely frames the party's governance record around corruption and service delivery failures. Users often attribute institutional decline to deployment decisions and dismiss infrastructure handovers as political theatre.
- ▶ President Cyril Ramaphosa and the ANC leadership are regularly singled out as ineffective or lacking ethical leadership.
- ▶ Opposition-related discussions are focused on the upcoming elections, and allegations of electoral manipulation and smear campaigns.
- ▶ Activity from ActionSA, the EFF, and BOSA has intensified around the Tshwane mayoral contests.
- ▶ Simultaneously online conversations include claims that ANC internal processes are being manipulated and allegations of coordinated smear efforts that are targeting opposition figures.



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 [PAAdRe](#), 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 [Rea4U11](#), the official platform for reporting digital electoral harms.

Word Cloud



- The ANC continues to dominate online visibility even when sentiment is mixed because its activities generate sustained conversation.
- The prominence of ANC-related hashtags may also reflect the party's rally on 23 August which acted as a trigger event.
- The presence of prominent figures like Cyril Ramaphosa, Julius Malema, Jacob Zuma, Fikile Mbalula, and Nasiphi Moya indicates that political debate is not only about party manifestos but also about leadership credibility and accountability.
- The slogans (#victoryordeath- EFF, #5moreyears-ActionSA, ANC hashtags) reveal how parties are embedding campaign language into social media discourse.
- The ANC's hashtags show greater penetration, while the EFF's framing emphasises urgency and identity politics.
- The ANC's hashtags dominate reinforcing its agenda-setting were power, while the EFF's more radical framing highlights its attempt to mobilise through urgency and identity politics.
- The decision to withdraw the primary perjury charge against Busisiwe Mkhwebane generated significant online engagement.
- Supporters framed the development as a vindication of her position and renewed attention to her anti-corruption credentials.
- Discussions frequently referenced the ABSA report, clean audit outcomes, and crowdfunding initiatives as evidence of continued public support.

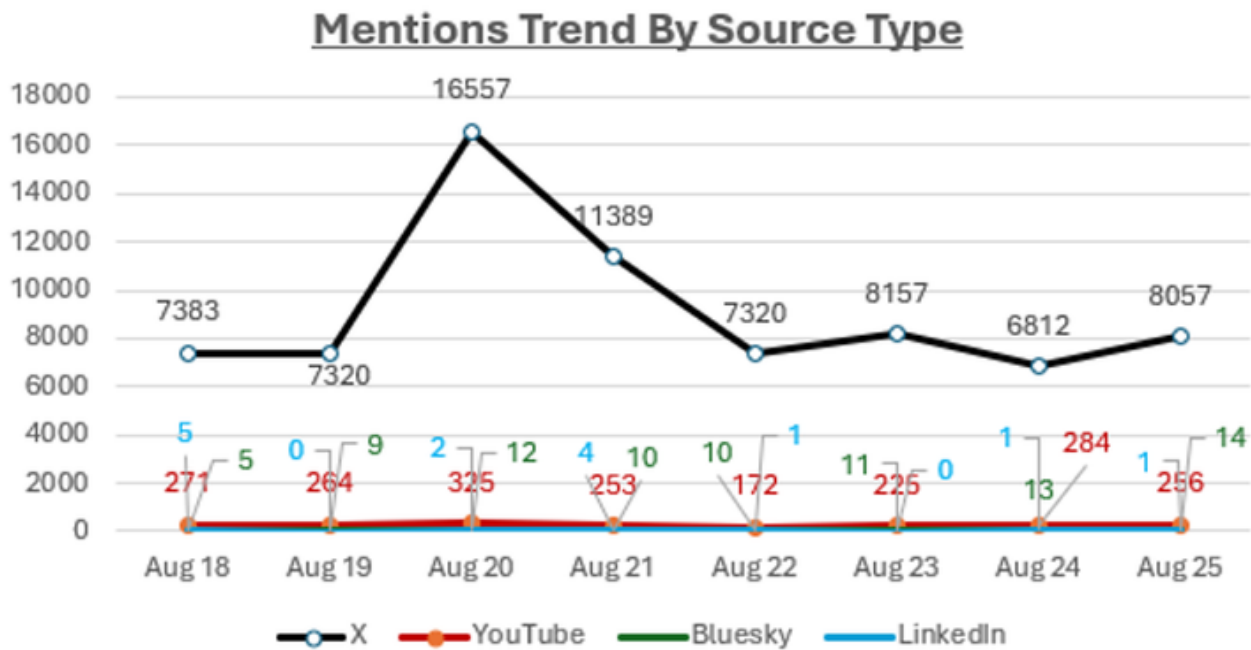
About Moxii Africa's Election Work

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.

Mentions By Source Type



Overview: X dominated online discourse between 18 and 25 August, driven primarily by event-linked engagement, with other platforms (YouTube, Bluesky, LinkedIn) registering comparatively negligible volumes throughout the period.

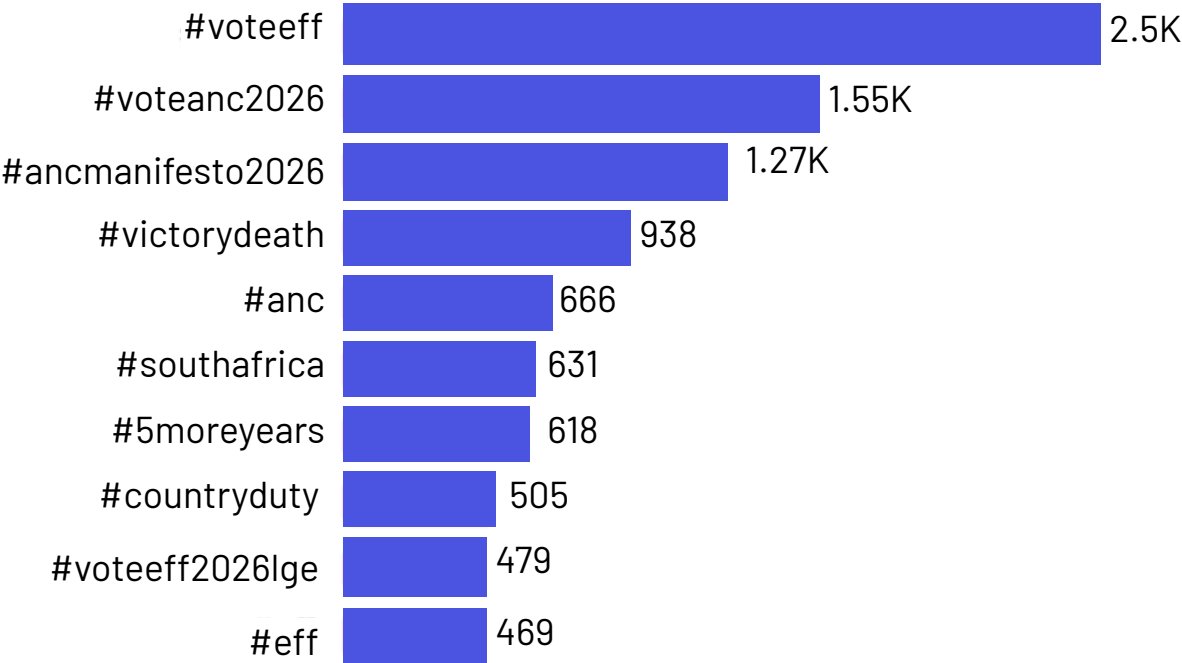
Peak Activity: Volume peaked sharply at 16,557 mentions on 20 August, driven by intensified backlash over ANC governance failures, service delivery, and corruption narratives, including renewed scrutiny of the Madlanga Commission and Andre Lincoln's testimony, alongside allegations tied to the R45 million "grabber deal."

Post-Peak Decline: Mentions eased to 11,389 on 21 August before dropping further to 7,320 over the weekend (22–23 August), reflecting the typical weekend lull in political conversation following the initial surge.

Rebound: Activity dipped again to a period low of 6,812 on 24 August before recovering to 8,057 by 25 August, suggesting renewed engagement as the news cycle picked back up into the new week.



Top 10 Hashtags



Top 10 Authors by Engagement, Views and Reach

Accounts		Mentions	Estimated Views	Engagement	Reach
1	 knick	14	285K	12.7K	386K
2	 mark za	8	160K	8.31K	22.6K
3	 Sizwe Dhlomo	2	422K	6.17K	5m
4	 Marcos Galperin	1	1.71m	5.98K	522K
5	 Herman Mashaba	34	441K	5.88K	27m
6	 Sihle Mavuso	25	189K	5.62K	3.53m
7	 Adv Busisiwe Mkhwebane...	1	122K	5.33K	266K
8	 Rampard za	36	68.6K	5.26K	228K
9	 I ♥ Cape Town ~ I Stand ...	15	120K	5.17K	242K
10	 ChrisExcel	4	271K	5.02K	14.2m

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.

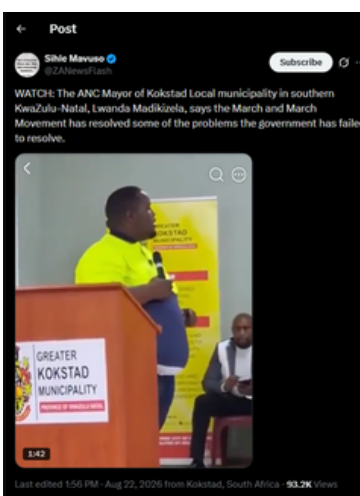
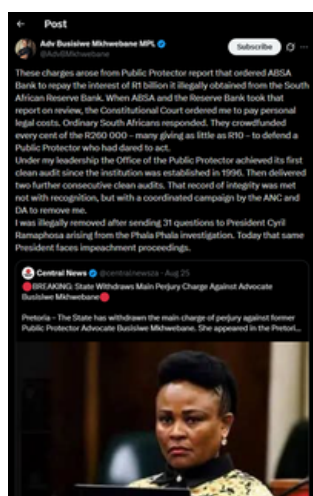
Explore live media tracking, accountability tools, and election insights at [Moxii Africa's LGE2026 Hub](#) or learn more about the coalition at [PIIE](#). Important Notice: For official election dates, voter registration details, candidate lists, and official results, please consult only the [Electoral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



- This ranking of the top 10 authors shows how a small cluster of influential accounts drives much of the online conversation.
- With established political figures like Herman Mashaba and Sihle Mavuso generating substantial reach, while niche voices such as Rampard za or “I ❤️ Cape Town ~ I Stand” achieve strong engagement relative to their size.
- The presence of Busisiwe Mkhwebane underlines how her recent legal developments are resonating in the discourse, while the inclusion of controversial accounts like Chris Excel highlights the role polarising commentators play in shaping tone and amplifying narratives.
- Overall, the data illustrates that online debate is not only steered by mainstream political actors but also by independent and sometimes divisive voices, with reach and engagement patterns showing that influence is not always proportional to mentions.

Top 5 most reposted Content



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.



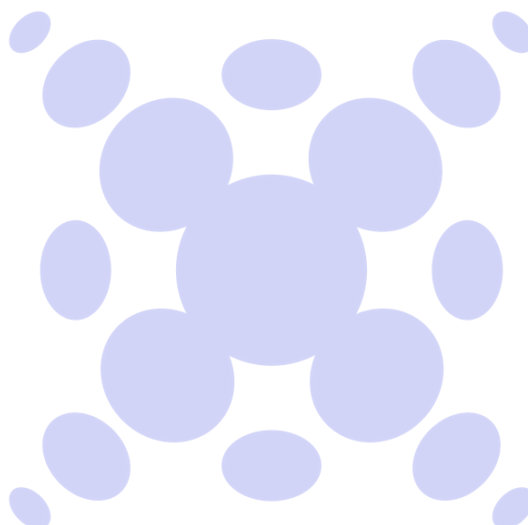
Conclusion

This week's monitoring shows that the ANC continues to dominate online visibility, even when discussions are critical of the party. Opposition parties have also increased their activity, particularly around coalition disputes and local election contests. Online conversations remain heavily influenced by narratives of corruption, governance failures, and leadership credibility. Public figures such as Busisiwe Mkhwebane and Cyril Ramaphosa feature prominently in these debates. At the same time, party hashtags and slogans demonstrate how campaign messaging is being embedded into online discourse. The ranking of top authors indicates that both mainstream political actors and controversial commentators, including Chris Excel, are shaping the tone and reach of election-related conversations. Overall, the data highlights a digital public sphere where institutional mistrust, polarising voices, and campaign branding are converging to influence voter sentiment in the final weeks before the November elections.



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



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.