

DIGITAL BUZZ

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE

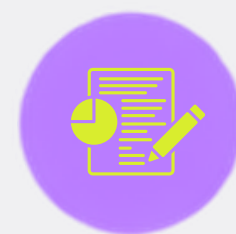
#LGE2026



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Introduction

The 2026 Local Government Elections continued to shape online political discourse during the reporting period, with conversations increasingly focused on party campaigning, governance performance, service delivery, and voter accountability. As political parties intensified efforts to mobilise support ahead of the elections, social media remained a key battleground for contesting narratives, promoting policy positions, and influencing public perceptions. While the ANC and EFF continued to dominate the conversation through campaign messaging, leadership figures, and election-related debates, opposition parties and emerging political voices also gained traction around issues such as immigration, corruption, housing, and service delivery. This week's discussion reflected a mix of electioneering, policy-focused engagement, and growing public scrutiny of political leadership, highlighting the key issues shaping voter sentiment and online political participation ahead of the polls.

Insights and Trends framing this week

Note: some insights in this section draw on a smaller, representative sample of top-relevance documents rather than full mention volume. Total mentions are covered in

Key Findings below:

- ▶ There were 45 840 mentions this week. This week demonstrates a slight increase in mentions from the 38 210 mentions that were generated in the previous week (26 August to 1 September 2026).
- ▶ The spike in mentions in the previous week was fuelled with more controversial debates such as the ANC vs DA debating over Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP), EFF expansion calls and xenophobia/leadership disputes.
- ▶ By contrast, during this week (2 to 9 September 2026, mentions did rise again but the tone of the discourse shifted.
- ▶ The week's activity leaned more toward policy-focused statements (like the IFP's housing proposal's), lower-intensity EFF criticism and international coverage (Ramaphosa at BRICS).



- These topics generated attention but lacked the same controversy and emotional charge as the previous week.
- EFF campaign messaging centred on promises of relief on things such as free electricity, expanded grants and protection of existing benefits.
- These are framed as a direct challenge to ANC patronage politics with campus and youth-focused posts adding student funding and services as further reasons to vote for the party.
- Foreign nationals and border control remained a major issue with posts accusing migrants of fraud and criminality, criticizing the ANC's weak enforcement and pushing broader anti-immigrant narratives.
- Criticism of the ANC focused on corruption and misuse of public funds, from municipal tender abuse to NSFAS and SETA scandals, which many posts described as money taken from young people.
- Debates over grants and RDP housing were contested with some posts arguing that these are state entitlements not ANC gifts. Older and poorer voters appeared more open to supporting other parties because of these debates.
- ANC leadership was seen as weak due to internal disputes, factional tensions and campaign missteps.
- Ramaphosa was singled out as a symbol of dissatisfaction with some posts even calling for the party's removal.

What are people talking about?



About Moxii Africa's Election Work

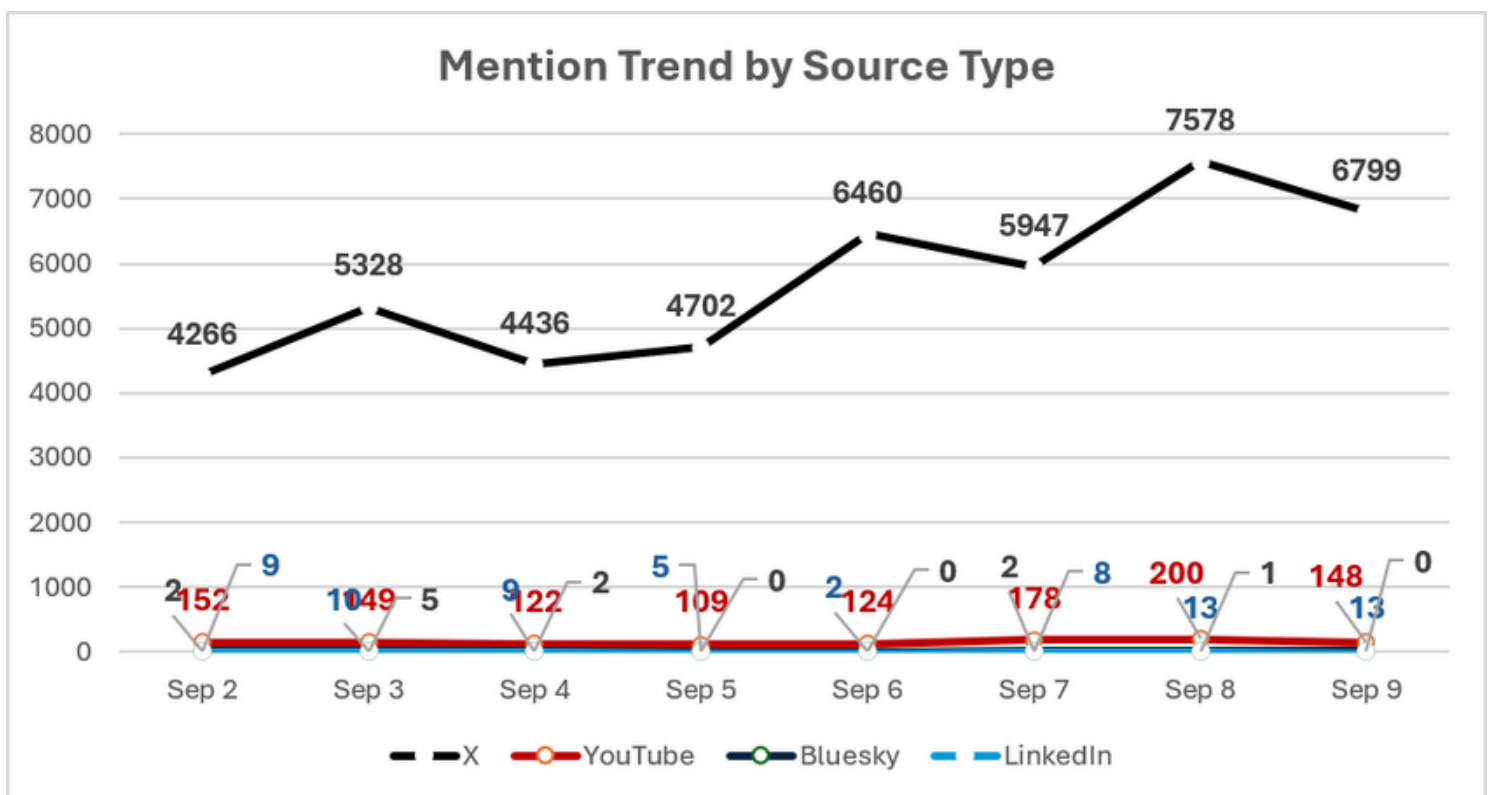
Moxii Africa has monitored every democratic election in South Africa since 1994, bringing three decades of independent, evidence-based media monitoring to safeguard information integrity. For #LGE2026, Moxii Africa anchors the Partnership on Information Integrity in Elections (PIIE) –working in partnership 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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- **ANC and EFF continue to dominate:** Mentions remain anchored around the two major opposing parties, ANC and EFF with figures like Julius Malema, Fikile Mbalula and Cyril Ramaphosa, plus hashtags such as #voteeff and #voteanc2026 being prominent in the conversation
- **Service delivery and loyalty pushback:** RDP housing and grants are framed as government duties, not ANC gifts, with “gogos” highlighted as accepting benefits but still open to opposition parties
- **“South African laws and regulations”** is also prominent and is tied to continued conversation around foreign -owned spaza shops.
- This week’s monitoring found the dominant reaction favoured stricter enforcement, with some replies using dehumanizing language suggesting this framing resonated strongly than any counterarguments.
- **Geographic terms:** The presence of terms like *Gauteng, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Tshwane and Mpumalanga* indicate active campaigning and debate playing out at provincial and municipal level
- **Opposition visibility:** Names like Gayton Mckenzie and Nasiphi Moya show smaller parties and opposition figures gaining traction in the conversation and possibly changing the public’s choices on who to vote for.

Mentions Over Time by Source Type



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Overview: X dominates conversations consecutively. This is because most political conversation overwhelmingly happens on the platform, far outpacing the other platforms we monitored. This reflects X’s role as the primary arena for public political debate in South Africa.

Peak Activity: Mentions peaked at 7578 driven by the EFF’s 2026 local elections advert and Julius Malema’s quotes. Posts tied the advert to broken municipalities, clinics, water and jobs while highlighting ground activity in Ekurhuleni and Nelson Mandela Bay. Supporters praised the campaign as persuasive while critics attacked the EFF over corruption and governance.

Post-Peak decline: After the 8 September peak, mentions dropped slightly to 6 799 by 9 September holding in a narrower band compared to earlier weeks. Engagement cooled as discourse moved from high-energy campaign adverts to routine and administrative disputes

Drivers for decline: The conversation around the ANC missing IEC deadlines and facing legal challenges continues leaving voters awaiting clarity. Candidate list problems and factional tensions weakened the ANC messaging for most voters. After the EFF advert spikes, conversation slowed as audiences shifted to door-to-door mobilization and manifesto launches. Corruption, service delivery failures and immigration rhetoric remained [resent but did not sustain the same viral momentum

Top 10 Authors

Accounts	Mentions	Estimated Views	Engagement	Reach
1  Born-in-SAza	26	314K	13.5K	555K
2  Lungah___	6	128K	9.04K	96.4K
3  Julius Sello Malema	3	1.16m	8.73K	13.3m
4  Economic Freedom Fighters	32	281K	7.01K	76m
5  Ystarhreerai	1	74.3K	6.8K	1.27K
6  Sihle Lonzi	11	130K	6.19K	669K
7  In A Nutshell 🍌	17	200K	6.17K	284K
8  black motsho	53	135K	5.87K	33.1K
9  Hazel	1	516K	4.54K	60K
10  ANC SECRETARY GENE...	46	779K	4.39K	145m

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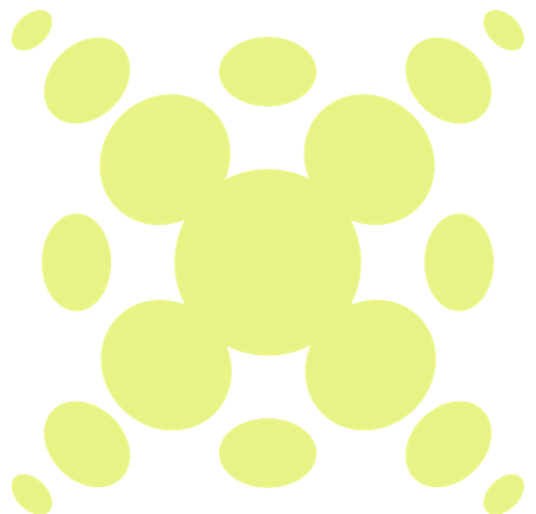
- ▶ Julius Malema and the official EFF account stand out with massive reach (13.3m and 76m respectively), showing how a few high-profile actors can amplify campaign narratives far beyond their raw mention counts.
- ▶ Accounts like *Born-in-SAZa* and *black motsho* generated high mention volumes (26 and 53) with strong engagement relative to their size, highlighting how smaller voices can spark conversation even without huge reach.
- ▶ The list blends official party figures (EFF, ANC Secretary General), prominent individuals (Malema, Sihle Lonzi), and independent commentators, reflecting how both institutional actors and ordinary users shape the online debate.

Call to Action for public the public and platforms

This week's monitoring shows that the political discourse remains overwhelmingly concentrated on X, with ANC and EFF continuing to dominate visibility through hashtags, campaign adverts and leadership figures. Peak activity was driven by EFF'S election messaging while subsequent declines reflected administrative delays, internal disputes and voter fatigue. Across themes the conversation reveals growing scepticism toward ANC narratives and heightened mobilization by opposition parties. To safeguard the integrity of public debate, citizens are encouraged to engage critically with political content, resist misinformation and report false or harmful claims through the real411 platforms. Social media platforms should strengthen moderation against disinformation, xenophobic framing, dehumanizing language, ensuring that online spaces remain transparent fair and supportive of democratic participation.



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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