WEEK 7

DIGITAL BUZZ

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE #LGE2026



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Introduction

With just under 40 days remaining until South African head to the polls on the 4th of November, the countdown to the 2026 Local Government Elections (LGE) has well and truly begun. This 7th edition of the Digital Buzz Report from Moxii Africa arrives at a critical juncture. This juncture has reached the point in any election cycle where online conversation is at the forefront and serves as a barometer of where the country's attention, anxiety and hope are focused.

As in previous weeks, the briefs cast a wide net of topics to cover. These topics are Political Parties and Candidates, Afrophobia and related mobilisations, service delivery and the South African elections. Each of these threads has proven, week after week, to be inseparable from the others. A pothole complaint becomes a referendum on municipal competence, or a xenophobic flashpoint becomes a proxy for immigration policy. With just over 5 weeks to go, that convergence is only intensifying and this brief aims to capture the conversation as it happens.

As always, monitoring is conducted using the Meltwater platform with findings compiled into weekly briefs highlighting the conversations, trends and narratives that were shaping public discourse from the 17th of September to 23rd September 2026 week.

Insights and Trends framing this week

- Political discussions remained dominated by the elections with significant attention focused on campaign activity, voter outreach initiatives, manifesto commitments and government-related promises.
- While several parties maintained an active online presence, the ANC and EFF remained the most prominent voices in the conversation, extending a trend observed throughout the reporting period.
- Discussions frequently centred around practical concerns such as healthcare access, municipal finances, infrastructure challenges, crime prevention, law enforcement and the restoration of basic services, particularly within major metropolitan areas.
- Foreign nationals and public contracts drove intense debate with posts alleging Zimbabwean and Nigerian-linked companies received major public tenders including SANRAL contracts while questioning procurement oversight and BBBEE scoring.
- These are unverified allegations circulating online rather than confirmed findings. Critics connected this to ANC governance and unemployment while UNISA called for policy debate rather than vigilantism.

About Moxii Africa's Election Work

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- Election related narratives were strongly influenced by opposition voices. Criticism of ANC governance remained highly visible across social media platforms with opposition parties and political figures generating significant engagement around issues including public spending, service delivery, immigration and municipal management.
- Leadership health and institutional continuity attracted sustained attention, with reports stating the President Cyril Ramaphosa and Deputy President Paul Mashatile were unavailable following the BRICS summit due to health issues.
- Coverage noted that constitutional arrangements permit a designated minister to act as a president when necessary while Ronald Lamola represented South Africa at the United Nations.
- The "Kill the Boer, Kill the Farmer" chant remained a contested international issue with US officials urging Ramaphosa to condemn it as inflammatory despite a constitutional court ruling that it does not constitute hate speech.

What are people talking about?



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- The ANC and EFF remained the dominant conversation drivers for the 7th consecutive week reinforcing their central role in election-related discourse.
- Election campaigning continued to shape discussions with hashtags such as "#Voteeff", "#VoteEFF2026", "#EFF", "#ANC", "#VoteANC2026", "#VoteActionSA", "#LGE2026" and "#VictoryorDeath" maintaining strong visibility.
- Opposition parties remained highly visible, particularly ActionSA, Herman Mashaba and the DA highlighting an increasingly competitive electoral environment
- Conversation on "foreign nationals" centred on how they are framed politically and economically. Commenters argued that political actors redirect frustration over unemployment crime and services toward foreign nationals during election season with cited research linking 27% of analysed anti-foreign national content to a bot-related disinformation network.
- Posts also contested foreign nationals' access to opportunities and public benefits including questions over a Zimbabwean -owned company receiving full BBBEEE points and renewed debate over grant Social Relief of Distress (SRD) payments to legally eligible foreign nationals
- Policy and Institutional responses shaped the rest of the debate surrounding "foreign nationals".
- Supporters of documentation pointed to biometric registration, cited enforcement figures of nearly 100 000 assisted departures and almost 200 000 deportations and repatriations. They also referenced the proposed Employment Services Amendment Bill which would require employers to check for locally available skills before hiring foreign nationals.
- UNISA condemned xenophobic violence, distinguishing opposition to undocumented migration from any denial of dignity, safety and due process.
- The "Universities" keyword reflected concerns around youth opportunities, higher education, employment and institutional governance as well as debates around university funding and student access.
- The EFF positioned itself as a youth-focused alternative with conversation highlighting proposals on student funding, grants, campus connectivity and social support.
- The "Phakel" narrative reflected ongoing EFF mobilization efforts portraying the party as politically resilient and resistant to opposition pressure
- KwaZulu-Natal remained a key political background with discussions focusing on election disputes.
- Women's safety and the Ekurhuleni murder case kept crime and accountability prominent, and podcast hosts Sol Phenduka and MacG featured in discussion following controversial remarks about the Elizabeth "Tsontso" case.

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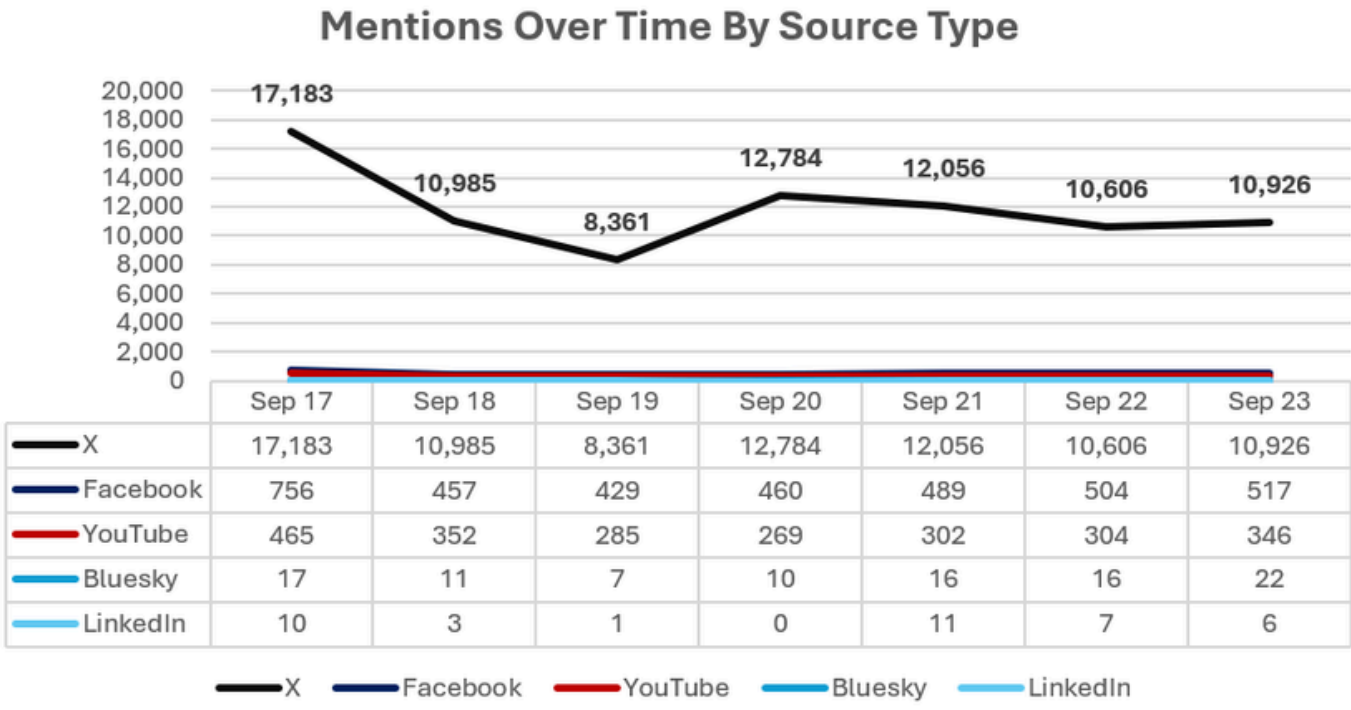
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- Keywords such as Johannesburg, Gauteng, Ekurhuleni, and the Eastern Cape show the conversation remained focused on local governance and community-level concerns while staying linked to national developments.

Mentions Over Time by Source Type



	Sep 17	Sep 18	Sep 19	Sep 20	Sep 21	Sep 22	Sep 23
X	17,183	10,985	8,361	12,784	12,056	10,606	10,926
Facebook	756	457	429	460	489	504	517
YouTube	465	352	285	269	302	304	346
Bluesky	17	11	7	10	16	16	22
LinkedIn	10	3	1	0	11	7	6

- **Overview:** X continues to dominate for the 7th consecutive week with Facebook following behind. These two platforms where most conversations and discourse are largely driven.
- **Peak Activity:** The highest mentions volume for this week occurred on the 17th of September at 17 183 mentions.
- **Likely drivers for the peak:** The spike in conversation volume recorded appears to have been driven with the Electoral Court's dismissal of the ANC's application to reinstate 181 excluded councillor candidates resulting in significant discussion around election preparedness candidate nominations and the party's prospects ahead of the LGE. The ANC's subsequent decision to pursue further legal action further extended the conversation. Conversation was further amplified by widespread reporting on Cyril Ramaphosa's illness following the BRICS Summit, which raised questions around leadership continuity after both the President and Paul Mashatile were temporarily unavailable due to health-related absences. Online discussions expanded beyond confirmed reporting and included speculation linking the illnesses to BRICS-related events, contributing to exceptionally high engagement.

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- **Post-peak decline:** The decline in mentions decreased on September 19 and increased again on the following days. The decline in mentions coincided with a shift from major news-driven developments to routine election campaigning and party activities. With no comparable event to the ANC candidate-list ruling or Ramaphosa's illness dominating the news cycle, online engagement moderated and conversation volumes declined

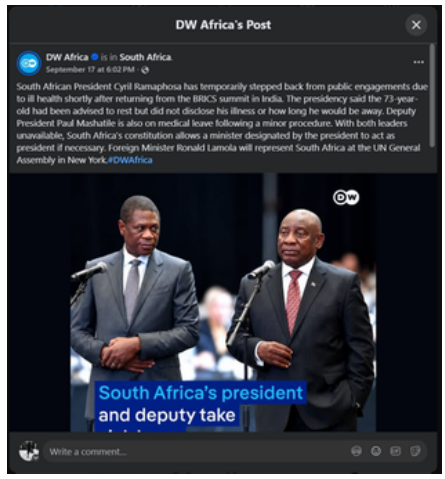
Top 10 Authors

	Accounts	Mentions	Estimated Views	Engagement	Reach
1	ces	1	386K	32.6K	1.76K
2	Herman Mashaba	28	534K	18.3K	22.3m
3	Danilo	1	295K	14.9K	406K
4	Ivyn Sambo	4	200K	10.1K	329K
5	Sir Lebona Cabonena	39	111K	8.57K	624K
6	La-Ndlovu	2	61K	8.19K	34.4K
7	Economic Freedom Fighters	36	289K	8.02K	85.5m
8	V.Mkhza	5	68.8K	7K	2.89K
9	Khoisan_Duduza CD	3	86K	6.29K	37.7K
10	News Algebra	2	205K	6.24K	1.62m

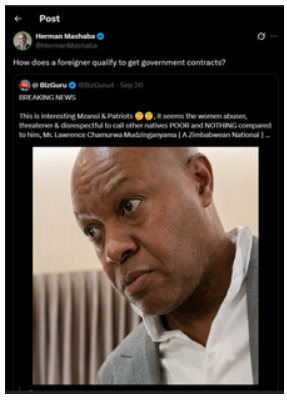
- Political actors continued to maintain a strong presence among the top authors with the official ANC, EFF, and uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) accounting featuring prominently in the conversation
- Herman Mashaba appeared among the top authors for another consecutive week highlighting his continued visibility within election-related discourse.
- His presence is likely linked to his active commentary on governance, immigration, law and order, service delivery and opposition politics, all of which were prominent themes during the reporting period.
- The EFF remained one of the most influential political accounts generating substantial engagement through manifesto launches across multiple provinces, commentary on women's safety in Ekurhuleni and messaging around peaceful participation in the electoral process.
- Comment-based Facebook communities also generated considerable engagement with accounts such as Comment on SABC and Comment on MyANC ranking among the top authors. This suggests that audiences were not only consuming political content but actively participating in discussions surrounding it.

Top 5 most reposted Content











Click on the image to see the actual post

Call to action for the public and platforms

As South Africa moves closer to the LGE, online conversations remain heavily shaped by governance, service delivery, public safety, immigration, leadership accountability and party-political competition. Political leaders and ordinary citizens both featured prominently this week, underscoring how digital platforms are increasingly shaping public opinion and democratic opinion. Moving forward, the public is encouraged to engage critically with political content, verify information before sharing it, and participate constructively in civic discussions. Simultaneously, social media platforms and stakeholders should keep up their efforts to suppress false information, encourage fact-based discourse and cultivate an informed community that facilitates open and democratic voting.

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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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