WEEK 9

DIGITAL BUZZ

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE #LGE2026

Compiled by
Keamogetswe Sere

Edited by
Ntombifuthi Kubeka

Designed by
Kgothatso Baatile Mohale

www.moxiiafrica.org

Introduction

Nine weeks into monitoring the 2026 Local Government Elections (LGE), a clear pattern has emerged: campaigning still drives engagement, but the online conversation is increasingly shaped by questions of governance, service delivery, political accountability, immigration, and trust in the electoral process.

This ninth edition of the LGE Digital Buzz report, compiled by Moxii Africa, covers 1 to 7 October 2026, with polling day on 4 November now four weeks away. This week's conversation centred on the effectiveness of local government, debates over asylum and immigration policy, infrastructure and water challenges, and intensifying competition between parties seeking to shape voter perceptions before election day.

As in previous editions, monitoring is conducted on the Meltwater platform using the same keyword set, which covers political parties and candidates, Afrophobia and related mobilisations, service delivery, and the South African elections more broadly. Keeping the keywords consistent allows trends to be compared reliably from week to week.

Insights and Trends framing this week

- Immigration and asylum policy emerged as a major driver of public discussion with significant attention focused on the asylum directive, protests perceived policy changes and concerns around undocumented migration, border management and access to public resources.
- Conversations around immigration were highly polarized with some users advocating for stricter enforcement measures to protect national sovereignty and public services while others challenge narratives surrounding migrants and asylum seekers.
- Misinformation and contested claims remained prevalent, particularly around asylum seekers, voting rights, foreign influence and immigration policies, prompting calls for greater verification and factchecking.
- The election debate centred on governance and service delivery, with parties presenting the vote as a choice between effective administration and political chaos, corruption or criminality.
- Basic service delivery issues such as water, electricity, infrastructure and municipal management featured prominently as campaign concerns.
- The ANC faced criticism over declining support and service delivery failures even as it continued to campaign on community development.

- Political debate became increasingly personalized around prominent leaders particularly President Cyril Ramaphosa and EFF leader Julius Malema who serves as focal points for criticism, campaign messaging and partisan engagement.
- Public commentary also expressed dissatisfaction with all major parties and uncertainty about how to consolidate opposition votes.
- Claims involving racism, corruption, intimidation and criminality intensified partisan conflict across platforms.
- Regional diplomacy and African solidarity remained visible within broader political discussion as official engagement with Ethiopia and Egypt highlighted themes of continental cooperation and South Africa's role in Africa.
- Political discourse also linked domestic immigration debates to wider questions about African unity, sovereignty and international relations.

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.

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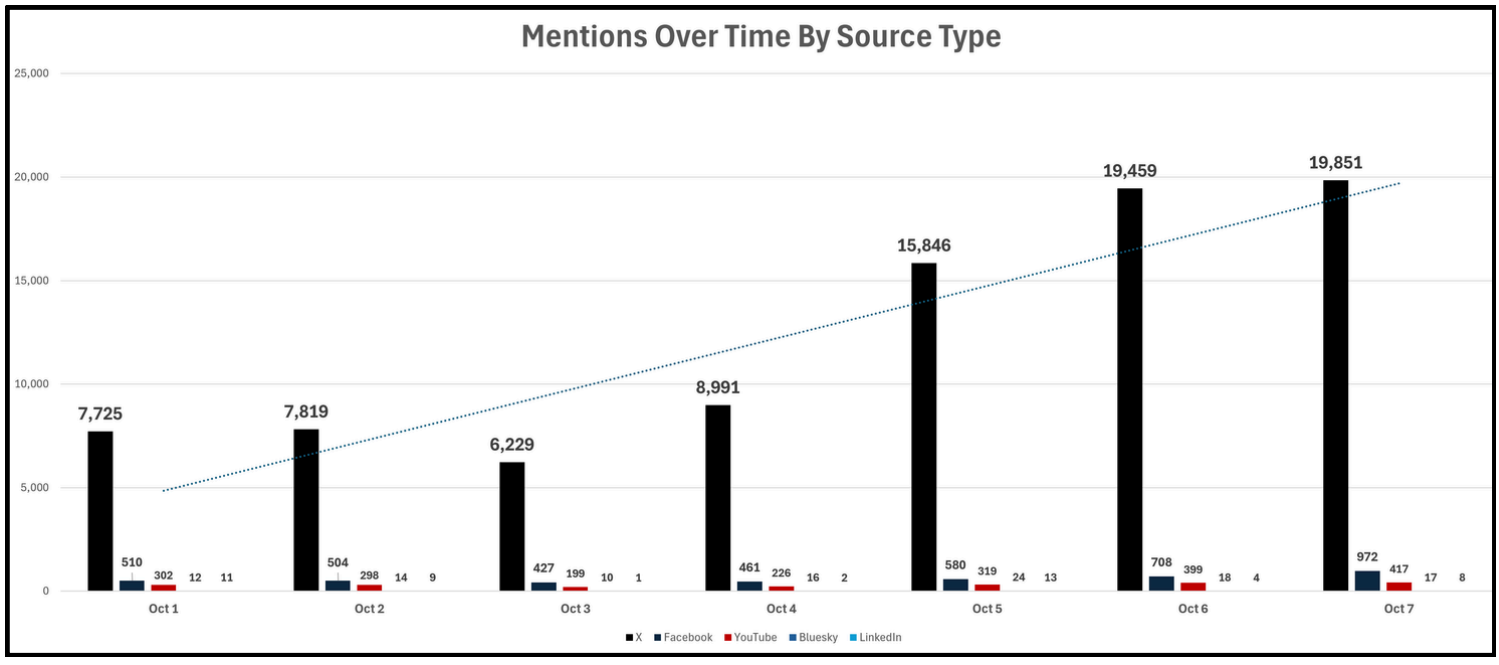
- The word cloud reflects a highly politicised online environment in which election discussion is bound up with governance, immigration, leadership, and service delivery. Electoral competition is increasingly shaped by debates over state performance and national identity.
- The ANC remained the most prominent term by a wide margin at 40.8K mentions, followed by the EFF (19.9K) and the DA (13.6K). ActionSA, the GNU, and the IEC were also visible.
- Much of the ANC conversation linked the party to service delivery failures, reinforced by corruption and governance criticism, including references to Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula's acknowledgement of leadership and corruption challenges. ANC campaign messaging responded with job creation, cleaner communities, and voter registration.
- Election hashtags remained consistent with previous weeks, including #voteanc2026, #voteeff2026, #voteeff, and #victoryordeath. EFF-linked tags outnumbered ANC-branded ones, with #voteanc2026 the only ANC-specific campaign hashtag in the cloud.
- Immigration was one of the clearest themes, with terms and hashtags such as UNHCR, Pakistan, #banfakeasylumseekers, #banfakerefugees, #homeaffairs, and #putsouthafricansfirst. It became a major election issue after the implementation of a Home Affairs directive linked to a Constitutional Court ruling that reopened access to the asylum system.
- Online discussion increasingly tied immigration to unemployment, housing, healthcare, education, and public services. This drew the ANC, DA, EFF, and ActionSA into debates over accountability, border security, and migration policy.
- The phrase "army age terrorists" generated 4.44K mentions. The highest-engagement post alleged that authorities were documenting armed foreign nationals and replies to framed asylum seekers as infiltrators or terrorists. This is an unverified claim.
- Jacinta Ngobese's activism drove polarised debate, with posts framing her as either a mobilising national leader confronting the ANC or a divisive figure exploiting public anger.
- Economic and international concerns also featured, with Trump and Washington appearing in the cloud. Critics warned that strained US relations and possible AGOA consequences could threaten trade, investment, and more than 250,000 jobs.

Mentions by Source Type



- **Overview**: X continued to dominate the conversation for the ninth consecutive week with mentions above 6000. Facebook follows at a low close second and the other platforms are still consistently low. The conversation picked up from 10 413 mentions on the 30th of September to 8560 at the beginning of this week's reporting period. There was also a peak in mentions on X with 19 851 signifying a consistent increase in the conversation during the week.
- **Peak Activity:** Mentions increased steadily to 8991 on 5 October and peaked at 19851 on 7 October. From 4 October, conversation volumes increased sharply as immigration and asylum policy emerged as dominant topics. This follows debates around the Constitutional Court ruling and Home Affairs' asylum directive, generating widespread discussion about border management, national sovereignty, public services and undocumented migration. At the same time, election campaigning intensified with discussions focusing on governance, service delivery failures, opposition alternatives and messaging from opposing parties. Public frustrations around service delivery and municipal performance further intensified the conversation, while misinformation and fact-checking discussions relating to asylum seekers and voter rights contributed to the surge in mentions.
- **Decline Activity:** Mentions declined from 7819 on 2 October to a weekly low of 6229 on 3 October before steadily increasing to 8991 on 4 October. The decline appears to reflect a relatively quiet news cycle dominated by ongoing discussions around municipal failures, corruption, coalition politics and election campaigning, but with no major event to drive exceptional engagement.

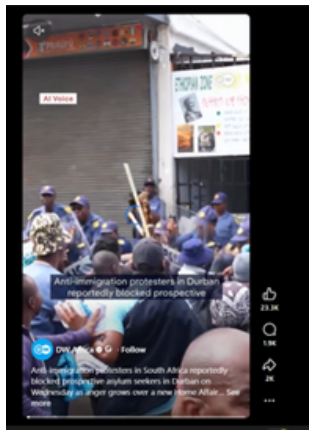
Top 10 Authors

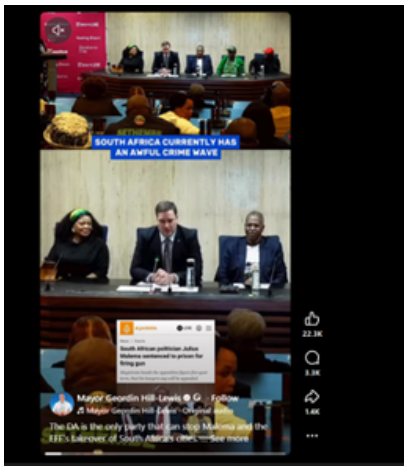
	Accounts	Mentions	Estimated Views	Engagement	Reach
1	Abiy Ahmed Ali	1	564K	75.8K	8.05m
2	Comment on Mayor Geord...	3	34K	24.5K	486K
3	Comment on Economic Fr...	168	5.7m	23.1K	81.5m
4	Comment on Democratic ...	32	129K	22.9K	1.84m
5	Comment on The Preside...	48	3.74m	22.7K	53.4m
6	ChrisExcel	1	212K	19K	3.56m
7	Jacinta Ngobeseza	7	207K	15.6K	575K
8	Herman Mashaba	14	246K	15.5K	3.52m
9	Comment on MyANC	190	4.24m	14.7K	60.6m
10	DJ Khaled	1	1.58m	14.2K	22.5m

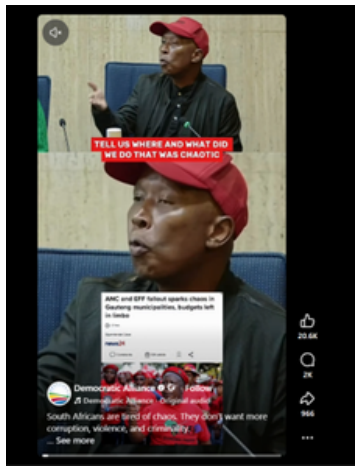
- The top authors demonstrate that influence is not necessarily driven by posting volume. Several of the most influential accounts generated fewer than 10 mentions during the reporting period yet achieved exceptionally high reach and engagement.
- This highlights how a single high-profile or viral post cam significantly shape online discourse and amplify narratives far beyond the original audience.
- Chris Excel remains one of the most influential individual voices in the conversation despite producing only one mention during the reporting period.
- The account generated substantial engagement through content criticizing the South African government's handling of diplomatic relations with the United States Ambassador with posts framing government leadership as failing to respond adequately to perceived foreign interference.
- Jacinta Ngobese continued to emerge as a highly influential and controversial voice in immigration-related discourse. Consistent with trends identified elsewhere in the report, her content focused heavily on immigration enforcement, border management, national sovereignty and government accountability.
- Posts associated with her account frequently expressed dissatisfaction with the government's response to immigration concerns, questioned the role of political parties in managing migration and highlighted perceived impacts on South African citizens, employment opportunities and public services.
- Herman Mashaba's continued appearance among the top ten authors for multiple consecutive reporting periods demonstrates the prominence of party-political voices in online discussions.
- His messaging remains closely linked to ActionSA's focus on immigration enforcement, governance reform, service delivery, and prioritizing South African citizens, themes that also features prominently across the broader dataset.

- Several of the highest-performing accounts were political commentary and advocacy pages, including pages commenting on the ANC, EFF, democratic governance, and presidential affairs.
- While these accounts are not always the most prolific contributors, they generate failures, corruption allegations, service delivery concerns and voter mobilization.
- The presence of both political activists and issue-focused commentary pages among the top authors suggests that the conversation is increasingly being shaped by influential intermediaries rather than official party accounts alone.
- These actors play a key role in amplifying narratives around immigration, governance, corruption, elections and public accountability often reaching audiences comparable to major political organizations.

Top 5 Most Engaged Content







Click on the image to see the actual post

Call to action for the public and platforms

Over the past week, online discourse around the 2026 Local Government Elections was shaped by a combination of governance concerns, service delivery challenges, immigration debates and intensified political campaigning. Conversations reflected growing public frustration with municipal performance, corruption and accountability, while immigration and asylum policy emerged as a highly polarizing issue that drove significant engagement across platforms. Political parties, activists, and influential online personalities continued to shape narratives around border security, national sovereignty, electoral alternatives and voter priorities ahead of election day. As election campaigning intensifies and online engagement increases, it remains critical that public discussion is grounded in varied information, constructive debate and evidence-based claims. Encouraging responsible engagement and challenging misinformation will help strengthen public trust and support informed participation in the 2026 LGE.

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Stay ahead of the LGE26 narrative with Dexter, Moxii Africa's media monitoring platform that captures live and near-live election trends across print, broadcast, and digital news. Discover who gets heard, what drives headlines, and how media quality shapes public understanding in real time.

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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