WEEK 11

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

With the Local Government Elections (LGE) two weeks away, South Africans are close to deciding which parties and councillors will oversee their municipalities. Questions such as "who will we vote for?" and "how will the public benefit?" are now at the centre of the online conversation.

For Moxii Africa, monitoring these conversations matters because social media has become one of the main spaces where political information is shared, contested and absorbed. It reflects public opinion, but it also shapes it, influencing how voters see parties and candidates and which narratives gain traction. By tracking the conversation, we can show the public which issues are driving the debate, how political actors engage with citizens and whose voices are being amplified or left out. We aim to make visible what is being said and pushed in digital spaces at a time when it can influence decisions at the ballot box.

This 11th edition of the digital buzz covers 15 to 21 October 2026, the final stretch to the voting day on the 4th of November. With such a short amount of time left, the conversation is increasingly about final choices- what parties are promising, what is being claimed about candidates and whether the electoral process can be trusted.

Insights and Trends framing this week

- The Constitutional Court ruling of 15 October dominated conversations and engagement on social media.
- It ordered the IEC to include 181 ANC candidates who had been excluded in six municipalities after a dispute over the electronic submission process, following the hearing covered in last treatment of parties and the election's credibility
- The IEC said it accepted the judgement and would extend the same relief to the other parties affected in similar circumstances.
- Questions about unequal electoral treatment persisted while the IEC continued to communicate its readiness, emphasizing transparency and operational preparedness.
- The ANC is intensified its campaign amid legal and organizational pressure. Cyril Ramaphosa and Gwede Mantashe stepped up grassroots campaigning with door-to-door outreach, youth mobilization and appeals for stronger support against smaller parties.



- Fikile Mbalula's emotional reaction to the ruling also became a prominent human-interest storyline.
- Immigration remained one of the most prominent and polarizing issues in election-related discussions.
- Political parties, particularly ActionSA and the MK Party, continued to position border security, undocumented migration and citizen prioritization at the centre of campaign messaging while critics warned against scapegoating foreign nationals.
- The MK Party called on illegal immigrants to respect South African law, Duduzane Zuma linked the issue to election mobilization.
- Julius Malema's immigration position drew criticism over a perceived gap between his rhetoric and personal circumstances and public commentary polarized over border controls and whether foreign nationals are being blamed for governance failures.
- Coalition politics continued to shape election narratives with discussions focusing on the likelihood of hung councils, particularly in major metros and the role coalition governments may play in determining future municipal leadership.
- Service and governance failures remained major concerns. Residents and commentators linked political dissatisfaction to unfulfilled promises, unemployment, infrastructure failures, water crises and power outages with water safety and corruption allegations used to challenge governing parties
- Opposition parties increasingly focused on governance, accountability and municipal performance with debates extending beyond immediate municipal issues to questions of political leadership, coalition stability and succession with major political parties.
- The elections were increasingly framed as contest over the future direction of local governance with debates extending beyond immediate municipal issues to questions of political leadership, coalition stability and succession within major political parties.

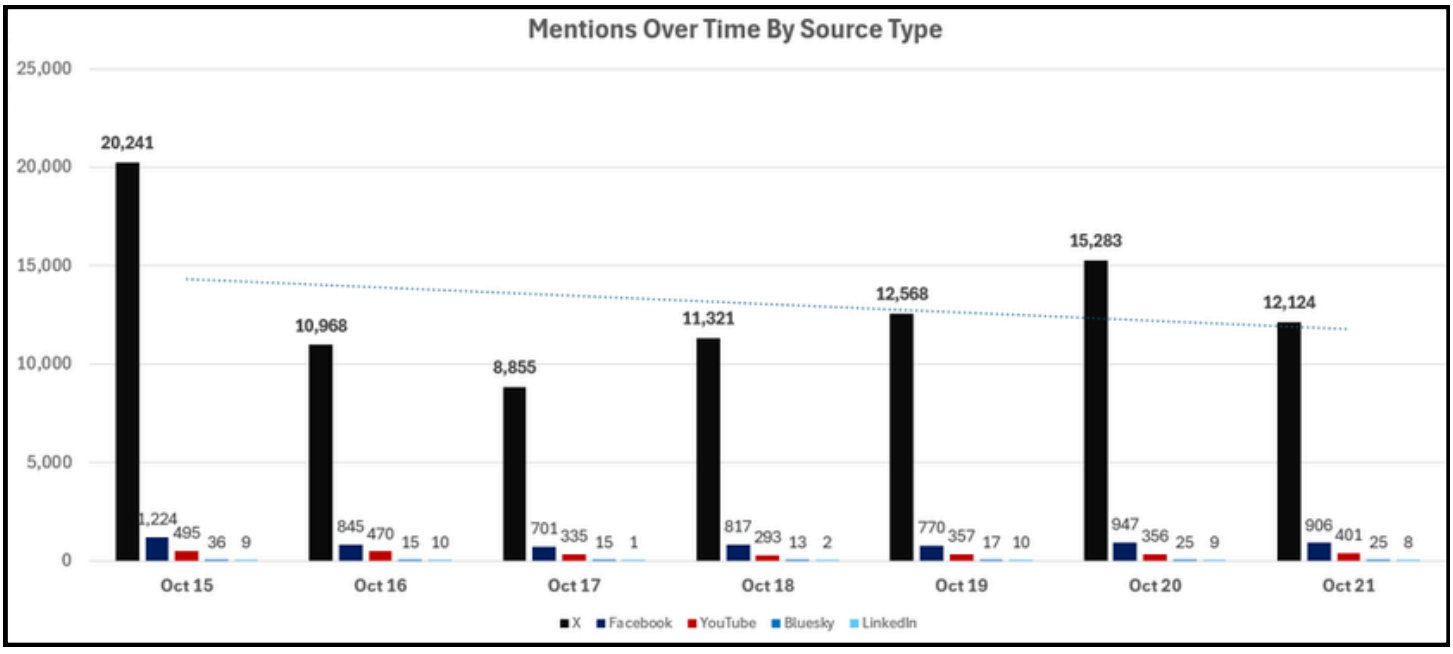
What people were talking about



- The word cloud reflects an election conversation dominated by the ANC, electoral administration and immigration with political parties, election institutions and senior political figures being the centre of online discourse.
- The ANC was again the most prominent term by a wide margin, with 45.5K mentions. ActionSA (70.1K) and the DA (5.59K) followed the EFF. Curil Ramaphosa, Julius Malema, Fikile Mbalula, Herman Mashaba, Gayton McKenzie and Helen Zille were the most visible individuals.
- The prominence of terms such as ANC, elections and IEC, highlights the extent to which the Constitutional Court ruling reinstating 181 ANC candidates shaped conversations during the reporting period.
- The IEC accepted the judgement and reaffirmed its impartiality, while the practical consequences included ballot updates, possible reprinting and added expense, and pressure on the IEC to show equal treatment for other affected parties.
- Mbalula drew 3.92K mentions after reports that he became tearful and collapsed while addressing the media following the ruling. Video coverage spread widely and Ramaphosa praised his handling of the dispute and urged him to take time off.
- Reactions ranged from concern for his health to ridicule and some commentary portrayed the ANC as under pressure.
- Hashtags tied to the ruling were the most prominent with *#enca(3.43K)* and *#dstv403(3.31K)* appearing to reflect broadcast coverage of the ruling. EFF-linked hashtags (*#voteeff2026*, *#voteeff*, *#eff*, *#victoryordeath)* remained visible, alongside *#southafrica*, *#southafricanpolitics* (1.42K) and *#juliusmalema*.

- The major parties campaigned on service delivery and coalition arithmetic. The ANC stepped up door-to-door campaigning and urged youth turnout, aiming to regain Cape Town, while residents questioned whether years of unfulfilled promises would be addressed.
- In Johannesburg, polls cited in coverage placed the DA ahead of the ANC but urged voters to reject smaller parties and blamed coalition.

Mentions by Source Type



- **Overview:** X carried most of the volume with daily totals between 8 855 and 20 241. Facebook came at a distant second with 701 to 1224 mentions a day. You Tube stayed between 293 and 495 and Bluesky and LinkedIn each stayed under 40. The week opened its highest volume, fell to a weekend low, then built to a smaller secondary spike on 20 October. The peak was close to last week's 20 733 mentions but the low was well below last week's quietest day of 12 118 mentions
- **Peak Activity:** The spike followed the Constitutional Court ruling that restored 181 ANC candidates to the ballot. Coverage that day covered the fallout, including possible ballot reporting, Fikile Mbalula's call to the review warning about party posters on power poles and growing tensions that posts from Grok added to X volume.
- **Post-Peak Decline:** Volume on X fell on the 16th of October and reached the week's low of 8 855 on Saturday 17 October. Our findings suggest the decline reflects a spike tied to a single breaking story, fewer posts on X once the story moved on, a quieter weekend news cycle and no new trigger event after the ruling. The conversation did not go quiet. On the 16th of October, engagement centred on the reported arrest of Suliman Carrim, ANC Youth League demands to remove DA ministers and debate over immigration and Pan Africanism following Julius Malema's remarks.

- **Secondary Spike:** Volume built back from 18 October to 15 283 mentions on X on 20 October. The conversation that day centred on Tshwane's contaminated water crisis and the dispute over responsibility, Ramaphosa warning that South Africa should prepare for a possible loss of AGOA access and his rejection of claims that the ANC is registering asylum seekers to vote. Reports of worsening US relations, including the reported expulsion of South Africa's ambassador, also feature in the conversation. Mentions eased to 12 124 on 21 October with no new breaking trigger.

Top 10 Authors

	Accounts	Mentions	Estimated Views	Engagement	Reach
1	Comment on eNCAnews	89	8.29m	104K	118m
2	MyANC	432	9.15m	57.5K	131m
3	Comment on Herman ...	11	151K	53.5K	2.15m
4	Comment on SABC N...	625	11.4m	37.2K	163m
5	SAN24 News	27	126K	36.2K	1.8m
6	Kurrently.	9	322K	31K	4.6m
7	Comment on Economi...	164	4.35m	26.5K	62.1m
8	Comment on Times LIVE	59	3.86m	21.9K	55.2m
9	Comment on MDN News	106	5.05m	18.6K	72.2m
10	eNCA	29	2.57m	18.6K	144m

- The ranking highlights that election discourse is increasingly audience driven. Rather than simply amplifying party messaging, users are actively using comment sections on political and media pages to debate electoral fairness, coalition politics, immigration, governance failures and service delivery concerns as polling day approaches.
- Comments on Herman Mashaba's page remained among the most active discussion spaces for another week. Conversations focused heavily on ActionSA's positioning on immigration, governance in Johannesburg, service delivery, accountability and the party's election commitments.
- The continued prominence of audience comments suggest that Mashaba's messaging continues to generate strong public engagement and debate.
- Comments on eNCA News were heavily influences by the Constitutional Court ruling reinstated 181 ANC candidates, Discussions focused on the ANC's legal victory, the extension of the ruling to other parties by the IEC and broader debates about electoral fairness and election administration.

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.

- News pages such as SAN24 News, Kurrently, MDN News and news publisher, Times LIVE generated notable engagement despite relatively low posting volumes, suggesting that audiences are increasingly using digital news platforms not only to consume election information but also debate governance, service delivery, immigration and broader political developments.

Top 5 Most Engaged Content

Click on the image to see the actual post











Call to action for the public and platforms

As election day approaches, online conversations are becoming increasingly shaped by debates over immigration, governance, service delivery, and electoral integrity. This week's discussions highlighted growing political polarization, heightened scrutiny of government performance and continued contestation around election administration, particularly following the Constitutional Court ruling reinstating 181 ANC candidates to the ballot. The ruling sparked significant debate around electoral fairness, with critics questioning whether major and smaller parties are treated equally under electoral rules, while also exposing tensions within the Government of National Unity.

These discussions demonstrate how quickly legal; political and governance issues can influence public trust in democratic institutions. As voters prepare to cast their ballots, the public is encouraged to verify information before sharing it, rely on credible and official sources, and engage constructively in online discussions. Social media platforms should continue strengthening efforts to counter misinformation, elevate authoritative election information and prevent harmful or misleading content from undermining public confidence in the electoral process. The final weeks before the elections will require vigilance from citizens, institutions, and platforms alike to ensure that robust democratic debate does not give way to misinformation, distrust, or unnecessary polarization.

About Moxii Africa

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 with key stakeholders and 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.

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.

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.

CONTACT US

For any questions, comments, or clarifications, please contact Moxii Africa, formerly Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) 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.