WEEK 13

DIGITAL BUZZ

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE #LGE2026



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Introduction

This is election week. With 4 November here, South Africans are heading to the polls, and the online conversation has moved from persuading voters to the practical questions of the vote itself: who is on the ballot, whether the process can be trusted, and what the result will mean for the municipalities people live in.

Moxii Africa tracks this conversation because election week is when information carries the most weight. Claims about voting procedures, candidates and results can spread within minutes and shape how far citizens trust the outcome. By showing which issues are driving the debate, which narratives are gaining traction and where claims remain unverified this series aim to help the public tell what is being said online from that is confirmed.

This thirteenth edition of the Digital Buzz covers 29 October to 4 November 2026. It looks at how the conversation built through the final days of campaigning and how it unfolded around polling day. As in previous editions, monitoring is conducted on Meltwater platform using the same keyword set, covering political parties and candidates, Afrophobia and related mobilizations service delivery and the South African elections more broadly so trends stay comparable from week to week.

Insights and Trends framing this week

- Election week was dominated by immigration and the security response in KwaZulu-Natal.
- The deployment of SANDF members to support police, following anti-immigration protests and unrest linked to misinformation about Constitutional Court ruling on refugees and asylum seekers, drove heated debate about migration, border control protest rights, police operations and the role of the security forces.
- Critics called the deployment excessive or authoritarian, while supporters said it was needed to maintain order and protect communities.
- Immigration also anchored party messaging. ActionSA centred its campaign on “putting South Africans first”, with stronger enforcement and municipal cooperation and Herman Mahshaba’s position that children of undocumented migrants could face deportation generated debate about citizenship and children’s rights.
- Campaigning intensified across the ANC, DA, EFF, MKParty and ActionSA in the final days, with rallies, community meetings, door-to-door visits and voter mobilization.



- Messaging focused on service delivery, water and electricity, crime, jobs, coalition risks and immigration. Engagement was particularly strong around ANC, EFF and ActionSA content.
- Opposition messaging linked ANC decline to poor services, infrastructure decay, and broken promises particularly in Johannesburg and Soweto. Water shortages, electricity supply, roads and waste management featured throughout.
- The EFF presented relief for poor households, including exempting SASSA beneficiaries from water and electricity charges, as a local government priority and proposed reform affecting municipal authority over water and electricity again drew debate over governance versus affordability and access.
- Coalition politics became a major narrative. Discussion focused on whether any party would win outright control in Johannesburg, Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and eThekwini with voters and commentators debating whether coalitions bring instability or offer an alternative to ANC dominance.
- Parties and government urged citizens to vote, and post-election messages thanked voters and emphasized turnout. Initial results from one Eastern Cape voting district showed the DA ahead of the ANC, which reinforced narratives of tight competition. A single voting district is not an indication of the overall outcome.
- Electoral integrity and legitimacy remained contested. MKParty allegations concerning IEC officials and ANC agents led to calls for investigation, transparency and protection of electoral independence.
- Discussion also continued regarding the 15 October Constitutional Court judgement, covering electoral fairness, candidate nominations and the IEC's role and the IEC maintained that only registered South African citizens can vote.
- Reports of confrontation involving a Somali-descended voter highlighted tensions between immigration and political participation.

About Moxii Africa's Election Work

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What people were talking about

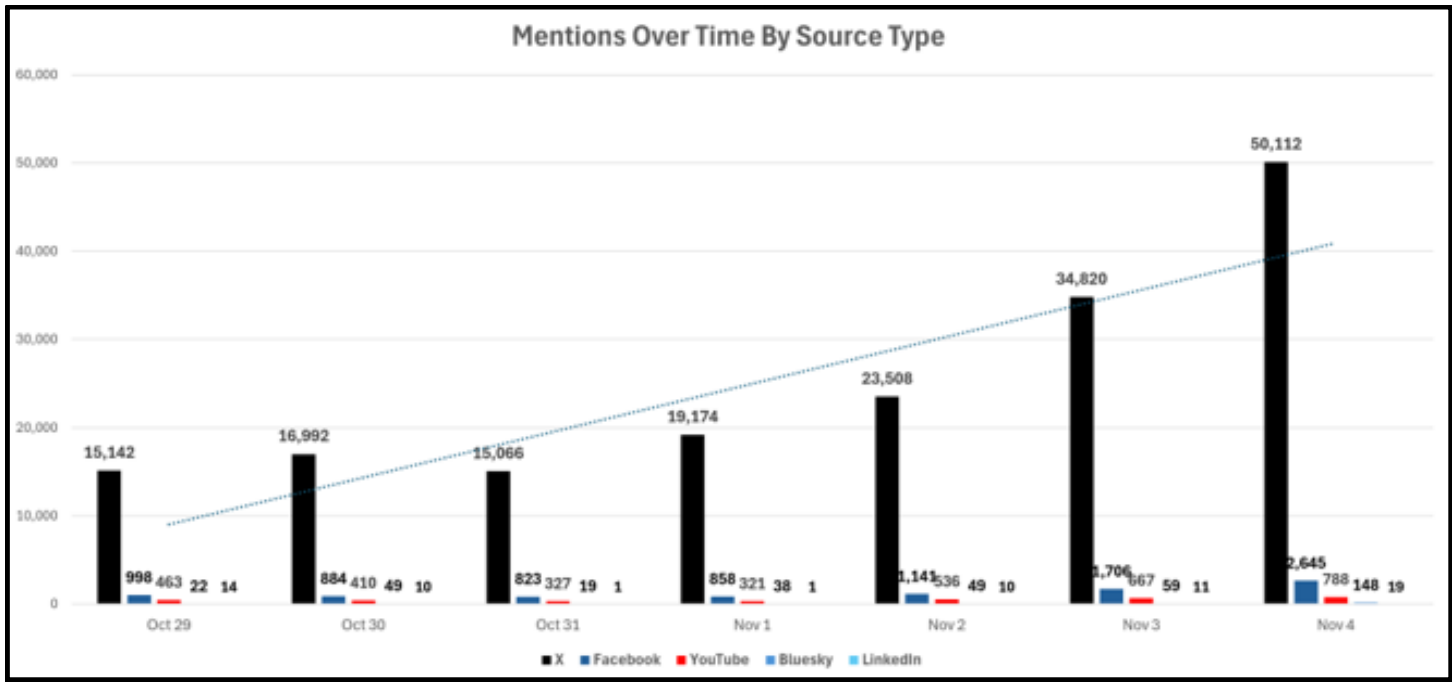


- TThe ANC again led by a wide margin with 85.3K mentions, followed by “elections” (42.1K), the EFF (40.2K) and ActionSA (16.4K).
- The DA, the GNU (3.48K) and the MKParty were also prominent, with Cyril Rampahosa (10.3K), Julius Malema, Herman Mashaba (1.85K), Jacob Zuma and Donald Trump the most visible individuals.
- Election day language filled the cloud including “vote”, “voting station” (7.2K), “stations”, and “rally”. Campaign hashtags stayed consistent with earlier weeks (#voteanc2026, #voteeff2026, #voteeff2026lge, #voteeff, #voteactionsa, #lge2026, #victoryordeath, #fivemoreyears), joined by #elections2026.
- Parties urged supporters to vote and verify stations, and the conversations covered election-day incidents such as reported theft at stations, a dispute over voting premises and a voter arrested for allegedly photographing a marked ballot.
- Electoral integrity featured, with the MKParty questioning the IEC’s impartiality and posts, including one from an EFF regional account, alleging ballot-box tampering, stolen boxes or compromised seals. These are unverified allegations.
- Reports of a confrontation between ANC and ActionSA supporters and of a Somali-descended voter being mishandled at a Durban station, prompted calls for peaceful and tolerant voting and are not independently confirmed.
- Early Eastern Cape results showing the DA ahead circulated widely but they came from one voting district with 63 registered voters and cannot indicate the overall result.



- High-engagement posts portrayed the ANC as corrupt, disconnected and responsible for deteriorating services, while the party's leaders defended their record on housing, education, electricity, grants and healthcare.
- Some voters rejected the ANC, DA and EFF alike, and the GNU drew broad distrust, with the MK Party and others urging voters to remove its parties.
- Water shortages and refuse collection were cited as evidence of governance failure, including residents in Diepsloot who faces a water shortage while attending a voting station.
- The EFF's campaign centred on visible leadership and mobilization, with Malema's voting and station visits, the Tshela Thupa Rally in Soweto, party agents at stations and promises on water, sanitation, electricity and exempting SASSA beneficiaries from water and electricity charges.
- The *"Kill the Boer"* chant remained contested. Malema said it was not literal and called for killings of white and Black farmers to stop, while critics argued that the wording normalizes anti-white violence.
- ActionSA campaigned on municipal restoration and immigration enforcement. Herman Mashaba supported deporting children with undocumented parents, and the party made restrictions on businesses run by undocumented migrants and a specialized metro-police unit conditions for coalition participation.
- Tshwane messaging focused on renewing Nasiphi Moya's mayoral leadership while critics raised xenophobia and funding concerns. A debate under *"woolies"* (2.1K mentions) compared consumer choices with voting for ActionSA and some users linked party to pro-Israel positions. These are users' claims.
- Jacinta Ngobese-Zuma (2.42K mentions) was described by supporters as challenging ANC authority and by critics as using migrants as scapegoats.
- Police and government reportedly sought court restrictions on March and March protests over alleged blockades, violence and intimidation which critics called coercion.
- Posts under *"Zulus"* (2.33K) debated Zulu identity, political agency and historical memory and one lengthy post warned that failed remedies could trigger violence.
- International issues were also present in the conversation. *Trump* (4.51K mentions) and *"white genocide"* (5.03K) both rose sharply after posts about Trump's confrontation with Ramaphosa over alleged farmer prosecution.
- Some praised it and others rejected the *"white genocide"* framing as attack on farmer Donovan Marx fed the debate.
- The reported US move to end South Africa's AGOA benefits from January 2027 drew competing blame with AfriForum blaming ANC policies and opponents blaming AfriForum. Ramaphosa called the exclusion a setback and spoke of diversifying trade.

Mentions Over Time by Source Type



- **Overview:** X again carried most of the volume, about 93% of the mentions charted, with daily totals between 15 066 and 50 112. Facebook rose from 823 to 2 645 mentions a day. YouTube from 321 to 788, and Bluesky and LinkedIn stayed small with Bluesky reaching 148 and LinkedIn 19 at their highest. Unlike earlier weeks, volume did not fall at any point after a peak. It climbed through the final days, and the conversation was still rising when the reporting period ended on election day.
- **Build-up:** Volume on X held at about 15 000 to 17 000 from 29 to 31 October, then rose every day. 19 174 mentions on 1 November, 23 508 on 2 November and 34 820 on 3 November. By election day it had more than triples from the 31 October low of 15 066.
- **Peak Activity:** Mentions peaked on 4 November, election day, at 50 112 on X and 53.6K mentions across platforms. That is about three times the previous period's daily average of 17.3K and more than double the previous weekly peaks on X of 20 733(Week 10), 20 241(Week 11) and 17 845(Week 12). All five platforms peaked on the same day. #Ige2026 appeared in 6.43K mentions and the ANC IN 17.8K mentions that day.
- **Peak Drivers:** Our findings suggest the surge reflected election=week mobilisation and on the day, the vote itself. In the run-up to polling day, posts accused the ANC of corruption and electoral manipulation and claims of stolen ballot boxes and IEC misconduct circulated. These are allegations. Voters also debated how to spread their support across opposition parties and local candidates. On election day, Julius Malema voting in Seshego and heavy EFF activity on Facebook drove engagement. A viral X post showed voters blaming the IEC after failing to check their registration.

SABC News' announcement of the first result from the Eastern Cape, where the DA took a voting district from the ANC, drew the day's highest engagement. Immigration rhetoric around Action SA and service delivery also featured as voting issues, as did the dispute over AGOA exclusion.

Top 10 Authors

	Accounts	Mentions	Estimated Views	Engagement	Reach
1	Comment on Economi...	431	10.7m	169K	152m
2	Comment on SABC N...	772	20m	112K	286m
3	Herman Mashaba	46	563K	98.5K	8.04m
4	Comment on Julius Se...	26	57.5K	81.2K	821K
5	Comment on Democra...	125	727K	60K	10.4m
6	Comment on Action SA	75	248K	52.5K	3.55m
7	Comment on IOL News	119	3.83m	42.4K	54.8m
8	Comment on eNCAnews	205	12.1m	41.6K	173m
9	Comment on uMkhont...	132	291K	32.9K	4.16m
10	Comment on MyANC	457	7.99m	31.4K	114m

- Facebook comment sections overwhelmingly dominated the top 10 Authors, accounting for nine of the ten entries. Most engagement occurred in the comment sections of party pages and news outlets.
- This suggests that audiences were actively debating election developments rather than simply consuming campaign content
- The comment section of the EFF page generates the highest engagement and ranked first overall with 434 mentions and 169K engagements.
- Discussion centred on voting mobilization, the Tshela Thupa Rally, municipal service delivery, anti-corruption messaging and promises of improved water, sanitation, electricity and governance.
- The comment section of SABC News ranked second and generated the highest discussion volume (772 mentions).
- Conversations focused on election results, voter participation, party campaigning, service delivery issues, immigration and the performance of major political parties, reinforcing the role of mainstream news platforms as key forums for election debate.

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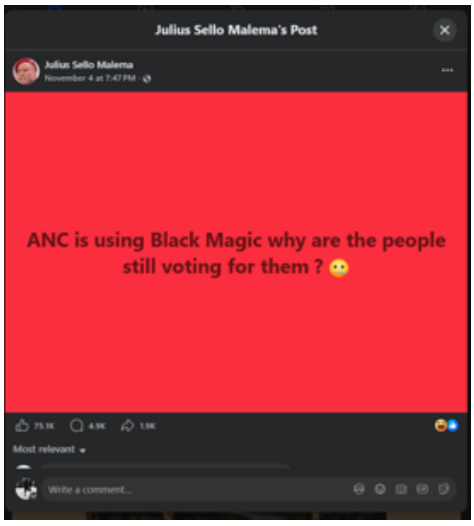
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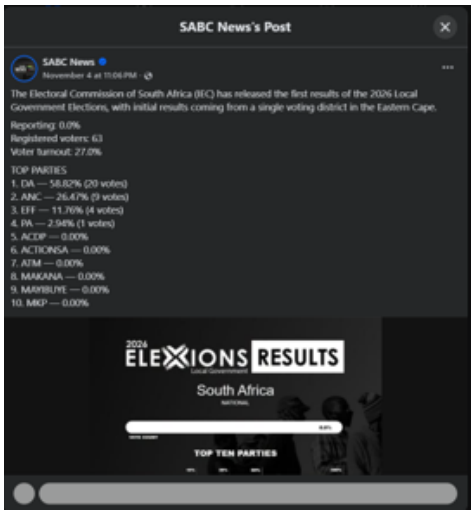
- Herman Mashaba remained one of the most influential individual political figures online ranking third overall. His most successful posts promoted ActionSA's *"South Africans First"* message, immigration enforcement, dissatisfaction with the ANC and commitments to improve governance in Johannesburg.
- This content generated more than 100 000 total engagements despite relatively few mentions.
- Immigration remained a major engagement driver through Herman Mahsaba's content, indicating that border management, national identity, and law and order issues continued to resonate strongly with sections of the online electorate.
- The comment section of Julius Malema's page ranked fourth, driven largely by a single viral post that generated over 81 000 engagements. Discussion focused on the ANC-EFF competition, corruption, sovereignty, fuel prices and broader election issues.
- The comment section of MyANC remained highly active with 457 mentions and 31.4K engagements. Discussion focused on the ANC 's final campaign push, voter turnout efforts, jobs, youth opportunities and service delivery issues such as water and electricity infrastructure.
- News media comment sections also continued to feature prominently with SABC News, IOL News and eNCA all appearing in the top 10. This indicates that election-related conversations were increasingly taking place within news audiences rather than solely within party-aligned spaces.
- The prominence of party comment sections suggests audiences were seeking spaces for debate and reaction, particularly around election results, immigration, service delivery, coalition politics, and leadership performance.
- Overall, the top-author landscape shows that engagement was driven less by traditional campaign advertising and more by audience participation, debate, and reaction within highly engaged Facebook communities.

Top 5 Most Engaged Content

Click on the image to see the actual post











Call to action for the public and platforms

As South Africa moves from election day into the results and coalition-building phase, citizens should continue to verify claims about results, voting irregularities, and coalition negotiations against information from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and credible news sources before sharing them. Online platforms should remain vigilant against the spread of unverified allegations that could undermine confidence in the electoral process or inflame tensions around immigration, political parties, and election outcomes. Public debate is an important part of democracy, but it should be grounded in evidence, transparency, and respect for democratic institutions. Maintaining a fact-based information environment will be critical as municipalities enter a potentially complex period of coalition formation and governance.

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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) on (011) 788 1278 or email:keamos@mma.org.za

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