

24HR TREND REPORT

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COVID-19 Conversations | Simphiwe Ngema | Hashjacking | Other trends

This is a summary of the trending, highest impact, and most active themes and their narratives related to social cohesion and division in South African public-domain social media conversations.



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COVID-19 Conversations

Conversation about the pandemic in South Africa trended yesterday with the imminent end of the National State of Disaster on 15 August. Late yesterday, news of the National Coronavirus Command Council's recommendation to the President broke as several interesting statistics about the pandemic found some space on Twitter.

Lockdown Narratives

Yesterday, News24 [announced](#) that President Ramaphosa and his Cabinet have been advised to lift the ban on tobacco and alcohol sales, and move the country to Level 2 lockdown. The President is expected to make a decision before the end of the week. News24's article about the recommendation to the Cabinet trended heavily on Twitter, receiving nearly 5 000 likes and 3 000 retweets and comments.

@MolefiNyofane [weighed](#) in on the economic effect of the lockdown: "By the time they say u can open we will be weak economically needing help from these other operating countries. This is not right at all." The post included an image showing the volume of air traffic in Europe compared to the air traffic in South Africa and received over 1 000 likes and nearly 500 retweets and comments.

Broadcaster Leanne Manas posted a [tweet](#) of her interview with Health Minister Zweli Mkhize. The post garnered considerable attention online, reaching 2 000 likes and nearly 1 000 comments and retweets at the time of posting. The interview dealt with the country's potential move to lockdown level 2 in the coming days. Although Mkhize did not confirm or deny that the coronavirus lockdown status will change, he did say that a move to level 2 was being considered.

Salient Statistics

This 24-hour cycle featured two trending posts about statistics surrounding the pandemic in South Africa. @ajplus's [post](#) claimed: "About 800 people around the world have died due to #COVID19 misinformation" and that "Almost 6,000 were hospitalized and 60 blinded." Al Jazeera plus cited "a study" without any other information. The post found some traction, reaching 400 likes and almost 500 retweets and comments at the time of writing.

Meanwhile, @TMicholson [posted](#) another statistic describing the COVID-19 recovery rate in the Western Cape. The user wrote “Western cape recoveries now up to 89%. Active cases down to 7416. Average new infections for last 14 days down to 378pd. Well done all citizens of the best clean government in South Africa.” Some users commented by saying “don’t believe these stats,” while others commended the Western Cape government for its handling of the crisis. This post received modest attention online with 60 retweets and nearly 300 likes.

Simphiwe Ngema

The number 1 top topic for the day on South African Twitter was Actress Simphiwe Ngema’s pregnancy announcement, driving over 8 000 mentions.

Announcement

Both Ngema and her partner, actor Tino Chinyani took to Twitter to share their heartwarming news. Ngema took a straight and narrow approach, [posting](#) “I’m expecting my first Child”. The tweet took social media by storm receiving over 44 000 likes and over 2 000 likes and comments at the time of writing. Tino’s [post](#) offered a rare glimpse into their relationship honouring the mother of his child: “For this gift you have given me, I promise I will always love, care & be there for you & our seed. May our seed grow to be a leader of change, a leader of hope & serve the Lord in all their ways. My legacy continued, my mini me.” The post was accompanied by pictures of Ngema at a maternity shoot. The post has garnered nearly 37 000 likes, comments and retweets by 09:30 today.

Reactions

With over 8 000 mentions, the topic was close to many South Africans who took to social media to share their opinions. Some judged Ngema for moving on from her recently deceased partner with one user [posting](#) “Simphiwe Ngema taught me that if I die today my current fiance will be happily in love with someone next year. Life is not fair”. The post resonated with many men and the narrative gained so much traction that many fans came to the rescue with one [posting](#) “Men are pressed at Simphiwe Ngema finding love again. MEN!!!! What a yawn fest.” The post received nearly 6 700 likes, retweets and comments at the time of writing. Ngema herself took to Twitter to defend her decision [posting](#) “Other people are not happy about my pregnancy. Guys I’m a human, life goes on. I take decisions that will make me happy

and live life with peace and joy.” This tweet also gained mass support with over 21 000 likes, retweets and comments.

Many Twitter users supported and celebrated the big news, with one user [posting](#): “Simphiwe Ngema found love again. I am so happy nkare kenna.” The post garnered over 10 000 likes and retweets. Another user shared “Simphiwe Ngema has been a stronger woman. Her pain was witnessed by all, let’s now embrace her joy as well. I don’t think that if one dies, people should stop feeling and living. She mourned her man and kept his memory alive; she must now live. Let her live bantu. Life goes on.” Others also took to Twitter to [warn](#) Tino: “If that Tino guy breaks Simphiwe Ngema’s heart. He will have to deal with us. Simphiwe Ngema deserves pure happiness only.” Many other messages of solidarity, happiness and celebration of Simphiwe’s news were shared - she is definitely loved by Twitterati.

Hashjacking

The concept of hashjacking is not new to South African social media. Yesterday’s social media narratives were dominated by stories that had little to do with the hashtags they were associated with - a common tactic used to gain followers or detract from other pertinent social issues on social media.

The Followers Game

Two posts today used trending hashtags including #alcoholban, #influencerchallenge and #SimphiweNgema and highly emotive posts to gain followers, likes and retweets.

In one post, Twitter user @LindisiphoSiyi1 became the fourth most mentioned tweeter of the day by [posting](#): “Plz help us find #SandiswaRum. Last seen on Monday after work at Nyanga Police station! We recently got a call from the strangers and she’s crying on the background!! Please retweet as much as possible !! Siceluncedo! #AlcoholBan #SimphiweNgema #influencerchallenge” followed by an urgent “Guys!! Those people keep calling us and she is crying on the background”. The original post received over 11 500 retweets and nearly 4 000 likes. The post was accompanied by pictures of a young woman, including one of her in a police uniform. Many users questioned why the information and phone calls were not being taken to the police instead of posting on Twitter. Another user [reported](#) that Rum had been found.

@GiftMogoboya, took a harrowing [original tweet](#) posted on 11 August that gained mass traction and [reposted it](#) using the hashtag #InfluencerChallenge claiming it as their own: “This guys raped my niece on WOMENS DAY In Diepsloot he is in hiding.

I will post his face everywhere until someone says I saw him ko shoprite in Giyani or something. She is just 9 years old! Pls RT guys.

#Zodwa

#MamaKaNoneMustFall

#InfluencerChallenge”

While the post failed to gain mass traction compared to the original post which garnered over 15 200 retweets, possibly due to sophisticated social media users catching on quickly, questions remain over whether Twitter users are exploiting emotive topics such as GBV to gain likes and followers.

iPhone Giveaways

Many Twitter account holders tweeted about iPhone giveaways over the last few days. A few months ago, the 24 Hour Trend report covered the story of a fake mobile phone “giveaway” - it was later learnt that the images of winners were from an actual mobile phone giveaway competition in South America. Images of people posing with phones were given South African names and labelled as winners.

At 13:08, @FaithNketsi_SA_, a parody account who uses the name of a South African celebrity and explains in their bio that they are “NOT AFFILIATED WITH Faith Nketsi AKA Queen Twerk”, [tweeted](#) the image of a young black woman holding a mobile phone and congratulating Mbali Gumede as the winner of the iPhone. One would assume from reading the tweet and looking at the image that the woman in the image is Mbali Gumede but, this cannot be confirmed based on the information in the post. @_ProlificEmpire responding to the tweet [said](#) “Wena you lying to us, Mbali gumede hasn't even tweeted or entered this competition of yours, you just wanna gain followers Nxa! Why isn't she tagged? People search Mbali gumede letla bona”. This shows that Twitter users are wising up to the tactics of the parody accounts in relation to fake competitions. The tweet about “Mbali Gumede” still however received more than 1 000 retweets and close to 2 000 likes.

Other Trends

Job Seekers

At 13:12, @Dlala_Power [put out a call](#) on Twitter for people to retweet his post in the hope that he could find employment. He explained that he had sent out many CVs and hadn't received a single call. He also said that he holds a National Diploma in labour law. His post has been retweeted more than 6 500 times and it received close to 5 000 likes. Responders to the tweet offered helpful tips to encourage the job seeker to continue. @PusoMotidi [suggested](#) that he review the formatting of his CV as it may be the layout more than the content that is dissuading potential employers from making contact with him. @Nna_Ke_Tlhapi [commented](#) "I reviewed my CV, 3 different people also reviewed & changed its format but still go a tshwana. I'm tired and don't know what to do anymore."

@Zizopho45929119 [tweeted](#) that she was desperate and in search of a job. She would appreciate anything that was given to her. The post was retweeted more than 3 000 times and it received close to 4 000 likes. The image that appears with the tweet displays a young woman holding a sign that announces her qualification (a B-Tech in Local Government Finance). The account that posted this tweet was created in July 2020 and contains only tweets about Zizopho looking for employment, first on 22 July 2020 and then again on 11 August 2020

@iGrootman_ [tweeted](#) about a vacancy for a candidate attorney. Within the comments of the tweet he posted more vacancies for candidate attorneys at law firms like Shepstone & Wylie indicating that there are jobs available for those with the right qualifications. This post was retweeted more than 400 times as people tried to spread the word of the available positions.

About CABC

The Centre for Analytics and Behavioural Change (CABC) is a non-profit organisation based at UCT's Graduate School of Business and incubated by the Allan Gray Centre for Values-Based Leadership. It was established to track and counter mis- and disinformation, fake news and divisive and polarising rhetoric that is promulgated online to undermine social cohesion, democratic integrity, and the stability of nation states.