



Bi-Weekly Social Listening Updates & Recommendations for Electoral Engagement #10



The GNU Dispensation

Overview

- The online conversation pertaining to the national election and overall political climate received almost 800k mentions between 1–18 June 2024, within the dataset. The top two hashtags from the conversation were about the result of the 29 May election., #electionresult received more than 40,000 mentions during the period and #electionsresults received just over 9,000.
 - Individuals using these hashtags shared a number of sentiments including: reasons why they did not vote for a particular party; the conversation about coalitions and the Government of National Unity(GNU); allegations that the elections were rigged and suspicions on why some parties either failed to perform as expected or exceeded the public's expectation. (1); (2); (3); (4)
- It was noted that a number of posts alleged that the elections were rigged, predominantly from pro-uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party accounts. The party has since called for a recount¹. Calls for the resignation of Independent Electoral Commissioner (IEC) member, Janet Love, were also reignited. (1) ; (2) ; (3) ; (4); (5)
 - pro-MK Party accounts have been casting doubt on the integrity of the IEC as far back as January². [Earlier](#) this year, these accounts alleged that the IEC was an extension of the ANC; that the commission could not be trusted to carry out free and fair elections and that the MK needed to consider using drones to “monitor the transportation of ballot papers”.
- Economic Freedom Fighter (EFF) leader Julius Malema was also among the topics of conversation due to the party's performance in the recent elections. The party's support declined from 44 seats in 2019 to 39 seats this year. Malema said that the party would not be [servicing](#) communities that did not vote for the EFF in the recent elections.
 - Some accounts suggested that the EFF was robbed by the IEC in the elections. The party has since accepted the election results³. (1); (2)

Narratives of Foreign Interest in the Election

- Throughout the post-election period, the CABC noted posts which sought to push back on international perspectives on the election and the GNU, particularly those expressed by accounts purporting to be from or represent individuals, parties or organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example: (1) ; (2) ; (3) ; (4)
 - Accounts which contributed to this conversation suggested that citizens of other African countries were not in a position to reflect on the South African elections: (1) ; (2) ; (3) ; (4) ; (5)
 - The CABC has noted a variety of anonymous accounts engaged in the post-electoral contestation conversation which identify themselves as Sub-Saharan African or International and drive narratives of polarisation or electoral fraud, among these: [@Ngoma Kurira](#) and [@kaunda bongi](#)

¹ <https://elections.sabc.co.za/elections2024/news/mk-party-accuses-iec-concourt-of-ignoring-election-rigging-evidence/>

² <https://cabc.org.za/working-for-democracy/>

³ <https://elections.sabc.co.za/elections2024/live-blog/we-accept-the-results-we-accept-the-defeat-malema/>

- The emergence of nationalistic, nativist, xenophobic and ethnic-based positions, both prior to and post the election, sets a worrying precedent.

Perspectives on the GNU

- The post-electoral governmental formation period has seen the emergence of a GNU⁴. The GNU, as of late June, constitutes 10 political parties from across the political spectrum, with the notable exception of the 3rd and 4th largest parties, the MK Party and EFF respectively⁵.
 - The GNU has further made clear its intention to form Governments of Provincial Unity (GPU) in provinces where no clear majority has been established, namely in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)⁶, and in Gauteng.
 - We noted several posts claiming that the national government, or the provincial government in KZN, could not be formed without the MK Party. Sentiments that the party should govern KZN are based on the party receiving a majority vote in the province. (1); (2); (3)
 - Reactions to the formation of the GNU have been mixed, with some commentators sharing their perspective that the GNU is made up of parties that are considered anti-poor and anti-transformation. Alongside this, populism, racial and ethnic polarisation have emerged in the positioning of parties and political blocs as ‘for’ or ‘against’ black people: (1); (2); (3); (4); (5)

Mis- and Disinformation

- Throughout the post-election period, allegations of electoral fraud and manipulation by the IEC were rife.
 - These allegations came to a head when the IEC updated the election results dashboard, combining the national and regional votes, each concerned with parliamentary appointments. The resulting tally and reconciliation of ballots led to a growth in certain vote counts. For example, the ANC vote count increased from 6 to 12 million votes. It is important to note that these votes had already been accounted for in the allocation of parliamentary seats, and that the updated vote count represented a combined presentation of the national and regional ballots⁷.
 - Some pro-MK Party accounts have also suggested that they received more votes than reported, with others suggesting that the MK Party received a national majority. Black First Land First leader Andile Mngxitama, whose party [partnered](#) with the MK Party ahead of the elections, also accused the IEC of rigging elections. (1); (2); (3); (4); (5)
 - The MK Party, prior to the dashboard update, capitalised on unfamiliarity with the new 3-ballot system to drive the narrative that [9 million votes had been stolen](#). This on the back of allegations by the MK Party that they have access to evidence of widespread vote rigging, which they are not prepared to share “at this stage”.⁸
 - Reactions on social media, predominantly by accounts in support of the MK Party, galvanised public concern around allegations of vote rigging: (1); (2); (3); (4); (5); (6); (7); (8)
 - Commitment to a disinformation campaign seeking to erode trust in the IEC highlights a worrying trend. As the account [@dudu_sokhela](#), styling itself as an account belonging to the MK Party showcases — the degradation of public trust in the IEC ahead of various bi-elections, the 2026

⁴ <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/government-national-unity-moment-profound-significance>

⁵ <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-06-23-then-there-were-10-unity-government-hits-double-digits-while-talks-continue-over-cabinet-posts/>

⁶ <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-06-12-inkatha-says-it-will-form-kzn-government-of-provincial-unity-with-anc-da-and-nfp/>

⁷ <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/iec-clears-results-dashboard-confusion>

⁸ [News24: MKP Vote Rigging Evidence.](#)

municipal elections and the 2029 national elections may engender continued democratic apathy, withdrawal and a culture of post-electoral contestation.

- Various national and regional bodies have indicated that the 2024 elections were [free](#), [peaceful](#) and [fair](#). As of June 2024, no clear evidence of electoral fraud or manipulation has been accepted. Cases seeking to overturn the results of the 2024 election remain in court, with a judgement being expected in the near future. The IEC has indicated that from their perspective the ongoing legal challenges are an abuse of [court processes](#).

Recommendations

- We are encouraged to see the IEC's swift response to concerns and questions related to the election result. We recommend the media, civil society and campaigns to continue amplifying messaging that dispels mis- and disinformation and unsubstantiated allegations that question the integrity of the IEC.
- We note the spread of misinformation around the 2024 electoral process and procedures related to the formation of governments where no clear party holds an electoral majority. We recommend continued mobilisation and amplification of educational resources in this respect, for example, [FuturElect's Civic Education Programme](#).
- Narratives of electoral fraud abounded throughout this election cycle. We recommend continued monitoring and analysis of accounts and trends engaged in the spread of disinformation. Particularly as concerns around the integrity of future elections begin to emerge.