



## Online JET conversation factsheet 01 January - 13 June 2025

### Overview

- The online Just Energy Transition (JET) conversation on X (formerly Twitter) received more than 86 thousand mentions between 01 January and 13 June 2025. The highest peak in the conversation was detected on 14 March, due to a popular tweet (which was subsequently reposted in high volumes) suggesting that South Africa is being pressured by the European Union (EU) to transition away from coal power towards unreliable green energy so that the EU can get priority access to our coal. This is a prime example of the type of disinformation that gains significant traction within the online JET conversation. The second-highest peak occurred on 6 February and was related to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stating that he will not attend the G20 in South Africa scheduled for November 2025 due to South Africa “doing very bad things”, referring to the widespread disinformation regarding the expropriation of private property in the country.
- The phrase “climate action” received more than 1800 mentions during the reporting period. Within the context of the JET conversation this phrase referred to efforts to counter the effects of climate change and grow renewable energy reserves. The hashtags #climatejustice and #sustainability were amongst the most popular within the conversation during the reporting period, referring to shaping youth leadership and diplomacy on climate action and the crucial role that waste management plays in achieving net-zero emissions respectively.

### Popular narratives emerging in the conversation

- A popular narrative entailed South Africa being pressured by the European Union (EU) to ditch coal power and focus on renewables to allow the EU priority access to our coal supply (X post [1](#) and [2](#)). The switch to renewable energy is being questioned in the wake of South Africa’s loadshedding issues and recovering energy supply. Comments are mostly suspicious of the EU’s intention with regards to the energy transition in South Africa.

- **USA withdrawal from JET partnership with South Africa** - During the reporting period, US President Donald Trump withdrew his government from the Just Energy Transition Partnership with South Africa and well as its membership in the International Partners Group (X posts [3](#) and [4](#)). It should be noted that there was overwhelming support for coal power in the comments of these posts with a popular sentiment being that South Africa should transition to renewable energy at its own pace and on its own terms.
- **Funding from Global Gateway package to support the JET in South Africa** - There was mostly negative commentary regarding 4.4 billion euro funding from the Global Gateway package to support the JET in South Africa (X post [5](#)). A JET financing narrative emerged within the conversation with comments regarding corruption and potential for the misuse of these funds dominating the conversation. The energy conversation in South Africa has been identified as being highly political, especially with regards to coal power and mining.
- **Focus on clean energy by previous Eskom board and CEO caused loadshedding** - In an address to parliament on 14 May, Clive Le Roux, a current ESKOM board member, stated that in his opinion the focus on clean energy by the previous Eskom board and CEO (Andre de Ruyter) was fundamental in the country experiencing crippling loadshedding over the last five years (X post [6](#)). There was substantial support for this opinion on X.
- **NGOs blamed for pushing the JET agenda in South Africa** - A narrative that gained significant traction over the reporting period was that non-governmental organisations are pushing the JET agenda (X post [7](#)). In many comments the JET is referred to as a scam and a hindrance to South Africa's economic progress.

## **Analysis**

An overarching negative perception around renewable energy still persists despite the JET initiatives being championed by our government and NGOs alike. These organisations in particular are being scapegoated for pushing JET agendas which are described as scams and prioritising first world countries instead of our own. Clear evidence of a general lack of understanding and intention that the JET is envisioned to bring to the country is apparent.

## **Recommendation**

1. **Dedicated Information Campaigns** - This dataset has once again made it apparent that there is a clear lack of information and understanding within the conversation regarding what exactly the JET is and why it is necessary. Clear, concise and simplified information campaigns can potentially amend this issue. There is also an opportunity for the creation of spaces and/or forums that people can use to raise questions eg, allay fears about job security for those employed in the current energy sector, while highlighting new opportunities within renewables.