

Social media analysis report on RSA protest actions - Part 2

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Following the recent cabinet reshuffle and subsequent downgrade of South Africa's economic rating, there has been a surge in the number of public tweets and posts on related topics. Praesignis in partnership with Insights Radar conducted an advanced social media analysis on the protest actions in South Africa. The analysis and findings of this report are a factual presentation of the data analysed, and do not represent the opinion of Praesignis nor Insights Radar. [Click here](#) to view the full report.

Summary of findings:

This is the second report in a series on this topic. For the duration of the monitoring period there were over 84,000 hits on this topic. More than 60% of these hits came from Twitter accounts as opposed to 90% from the previous reporting period.

There were regular spikes of Twitter data throughout the period but noticeably on 27 April, between 4-5 May and between 10-12 May:

- Thursday, 27 April: This was Freedom Day in RSA and a lot of discussions took place around how South Africans are not free. We are locked up behind our secure walls and fences and celebrate our "freedom" behind six-foot walls. People are only truly free if they have a say in the direction of the country without fear of retaliation and intimidation from others.
- Sunday, 4 May: The peak of hits on this day was all around the court order and if the court will set aside the cabinet reshuffle. There were a lot of talks around why we reached junk status and how Jacob Zuma just does what he wants and is not accountable for his actions.

On the actor analysis side figures are still skewed towards females but not as much as in the previous period. Female participation is now only double that of males as opposed to nine times from the previous period.



Ruan de Beer

From an age group perspective, a third of the hits were coming from the 25- to 34-year-old group in the previous report. For this reporting period, however, this has changed to the majority (42%) coming from the older 35- to 49-year-old group. This group represents the parental group and more mature working class that shows an interest in their retirement and future in this country. In the previous period the youth was more interested in contributing to the topic but has now shown less of an interest than the older group.

Johannesburg is by far the most prominent role player in this context with most of the hits (27%) coming from this area. Cape Town follows in second place with just over 14%.

Topic discussions are centred around 2-3 main topics:

- Zuma: The public consensus is that Mr Zuma is a corrupt leader who needs to step down. A lot of mention is made in this reporting period of his alleged rape case and how he defies all laws and calls for him to step down.
- Cabinet reshuffle: A lot of mentions are on this topic specifically. There is a lot of concern from the public that someone can make decisions that impact an entire country so negatively and still not see that this is not the right decision. The South African public are extremely irate on this topic. Mention is made of the financial impact this is

having on the country and how taxpayers are paying for his arrogance and defiance of law.

When it comes to influential people or groups, two major political parties have rallied to voice their concerns. The DA and EFF have been major players in this context uniting against the decisions of a reshuffle and collectively standing up against "corruption". This has remained the same over both reporting periods and both these political parties are using this platform and context to rally for support for future elections.

Noteworthy on the number of hits and participation, is that the average hits are down considerably from the previous period from around 23k per day to only 10% of that to 2.5K per day. The interest in the topic has died down or slowed down a lot and people are going on with their lives as usual.

Average hits over the period for review as just over 2,500 hits per day. Overall sentiment is neutral with the second majority being extremely negative on Mr Zuma. There is a major shift towards some positivity based on the past period and marches that united South Africans. Angus Buchan brought about a big shift of positivity in people and united all together in a massive prayer meeting attended by more than one million people.

One of the most negative topics was around Jacob Zuma's style of leadership and ethics. The public consensus is that he is a "corrupt leader" that has reached the end of his reign and that the time is now for him to step down as the leader of the ANC and president of the country.

The EFF and DA play a major role in posts and take up the top two spots in the influential posters and impactful posts. This is a major topic of interest to political parties and opposition to Jacob Zuma.

Most impactful posts were around the court application to force Jacob Zuma to disclose the record of decision for his cabinet reshuffle and his subsequent appeal and defiance of the requests.

The top 10 most impactful posts had a combined impression (Opened tweets) of just over 20 million. On average, each of the top 10 impactful posts were opened by 900,000 people. This is an extremely powerful reach and impact on public. This is down from the previous period of over 2.5 million.

South Africa has united as a country in the protest actions. This was however also reflected in the rest of the world with numerous posts coming from various other countries in the world. The news and images of these protests and words of the actors were spread across the globe in less than 24 hours.



Some notable timelines in discussions from the DA were:

- DA files papers to force Mr Zuma to disclose Cabinet reshuffle records of decision.
- Judge rules that Mr Zuma must supply reasons behind his cabinet reshuffle.
- Jacob Zuma misses the deadline to supply reasons and papers for his cabinet reshuffle.
- Jacob Zuma files appeal to delay revealing his cabinet reshuffle record of decision.

Some other notable mentions were:

- Guptas grabbed Optimum coal holdings from resources giant Glencore. When the time came to pay and they could not come up with the money, "Eskom lent a helping hand".
- Major trends in discussions on Angus Buchan and his prayer meeting. The public rallied behind this opportunity to unite and pray for the future of the country. People of all ages, races, genders and political backgrounds rallied to this meeting to pray for a better future.
- Motion of no confidence in Jacob Zuma should be done through a secret ballot. This is a major move to assist people to vote against Mr Zuma and to cast aside fears of retaliation from the ANC.

From News24:

- Boos for Zuma, Mbete and Duarte and cheers for Ramaphosa at Cosatu May Day rallies.
- The divisions in the tripartite alliance over the ANC's succession battle played out at Cosatu's nationwide May Day rallies with President Jacob Zuma and his "allies" booed while his deputy Cyril Ramaphosa was cheered and welcomed.
- Ramaphosa was once again endorsed as the preferred candidate to take over from Zuma.
- Zuma, African National Congress national chairperson Baleka Mbete and deputy-general secretary Jessie Duarte faced a torrid time in front of the labour federation members.
- Zuma faced the worst embarrassment since ascending to ANC presidency in 2007 when unrelenting Cosatu members heckled and chanted anti-Zuma songs in his presence.
- This forced the federation to prematurely end its main Worker's Day celebrations in Bloemfontein. In an unprecedented move all speeches were cancelled and the event abandoned.
- It seems that Mr Zuma will no longer be allowed to merely trample over public and this country without facing some consequences.

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