

2021 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS MEDIA COVERAGE

WEEKLY TRENDS

27th September 2021 - 3rd October 2021

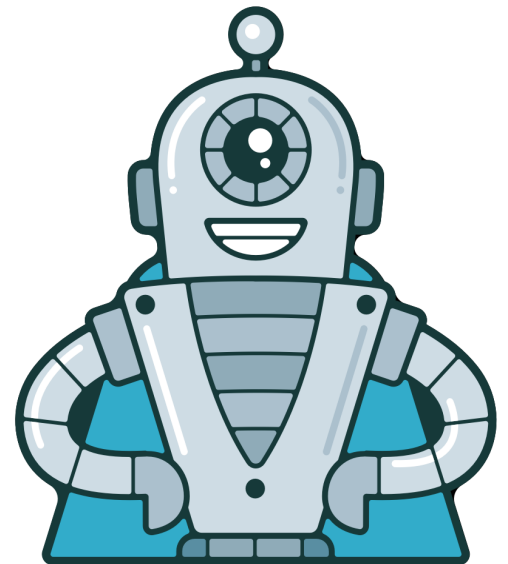
By Lister Namumba



INTRODUCTION

Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) is monitoring selected media’s coverage of the run up to the 2021 Local Government Elections (LGE) to determine what issues are considered a priority by the media, check whether political parties and/or their candidates are represented fairly and without bias and, whether there is an equitable representation of the different racial and gender groups, among other things. More in-depth analyses will be written on these findings every month and at the end of the election monitoring period, an overall report will be compiled.

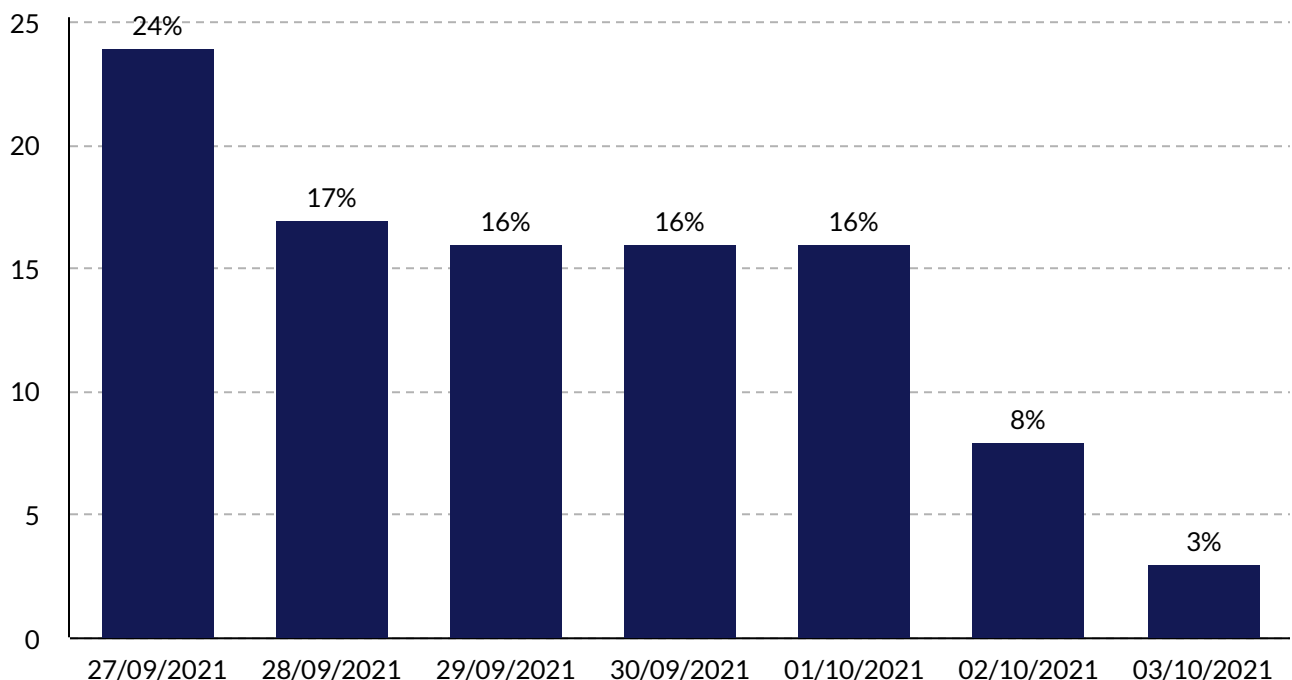
Below is a brief analysis to show what and who dominated media coverage from the **27th of September to the 3rd of October, 2021**. A total of 529 stories on elections were recorded in this monitoring period, 17 more from the 546 stories recorded in the previous week. The gradual increase in elections stories is typical of media trends at this time.



DEXTER
MEDIA MONITORING AFRICA INITIATIVE

DAILY LGE STORIES ARTICLE COUNT

1. Daily LGE Stories (as % of total for the week)



Monday, the 27th of September, 2021 received the most coverage of stories about or relating to the 2021 local government elections according to the graph above. Stories reported on this day included the launch of election manifestos by political parties including the [African National Congress \(ANC\)](#), the [Congress of the People \(Cope\)](#) and the [GOOD](#) party. Other coverage was on the ANC Treasury General, Paul Mashatile who was seen in a video posted online [handing out money to church congregants](#) in Limpopo. Some political parties called on the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) to look into the matter. The killing of Tshwane ANC councillor and candidate, Tshepo Motaung was also in the news on the 27th of September. Coverage of this incident revealed that Motaung's killing was "[believed to be politically-motivated and linked to the party's recent councillor candidate-selection process](#)". The 29th and 30th of September, 2021 together with the 1st of October all received a coverage share of 16% each. Stories reported on these days included [the call by opposition political parties for criminal investigations against those implicated in the Special Investigating Unit report into the R150m Digital Vibes tender](#).

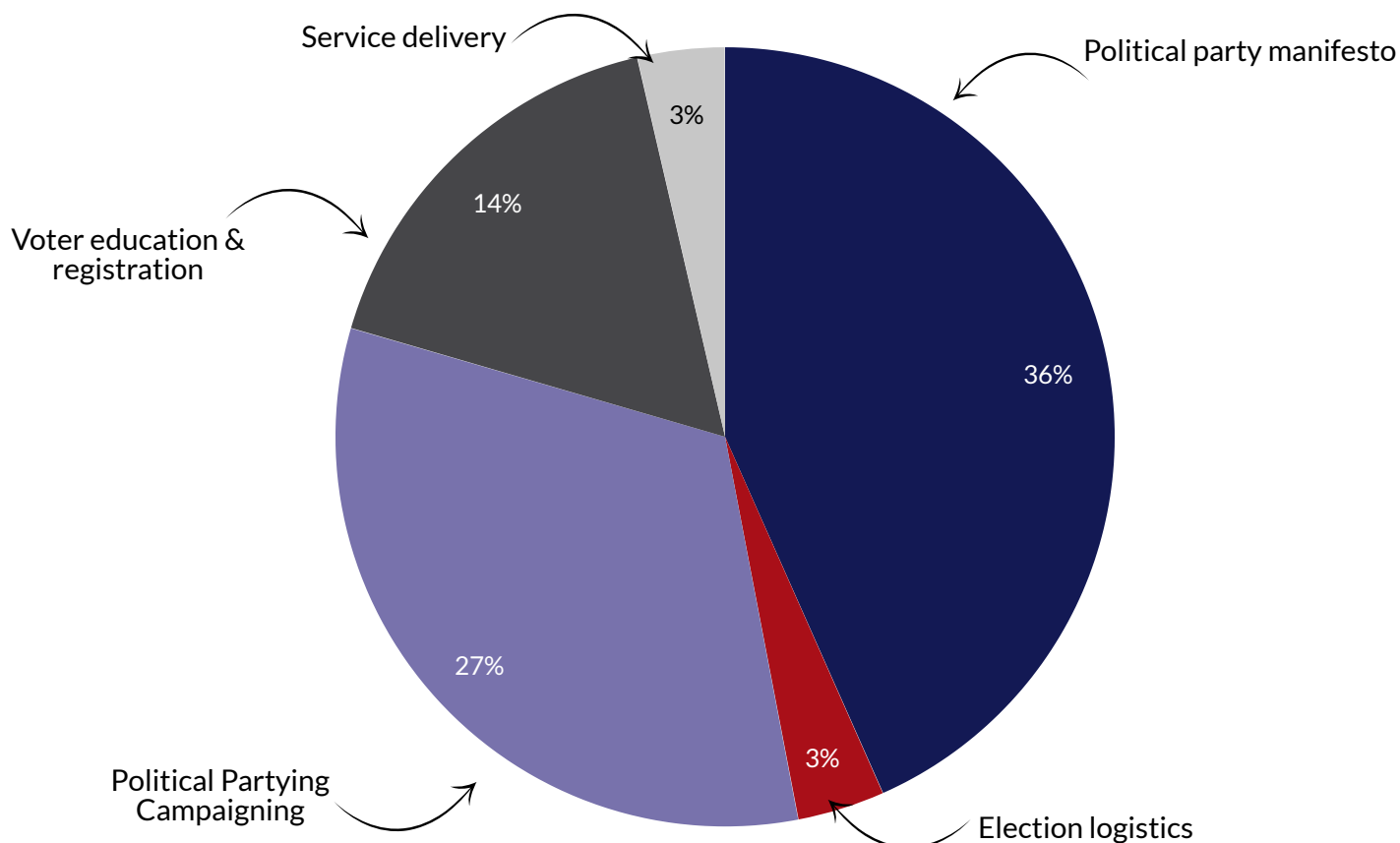
Coverage of this issue which dominated coverage over the three days and throughout the monitoring period revealed that former health minister, Dr. Zweli Mkhize is among those implicated. Other coverage during the three days was on the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)'s [manifesto launch](#) and the failure by ANC to pay staff salaries. Coverage of this shows the ANC blaming "[the new party funding legislation that regulates how much political parties can receive from their funders and also demands that these funders be publicly declared](#)".

The election of the [new City of Johannesburg Mayor, Mpho Moerane](#) was also in the news during the monitoring period. Moerane replaced the late Jolidee Matongo who died in a car accident in September, 2021.

Another issue that received a considerable amount of coverage during the seven day monitoring period was the [electoral code of conduct](#). According to coverage of this, several political parties signed the code committing themselves to ensuring free and fair elections.

TOP FIVE TOPICS

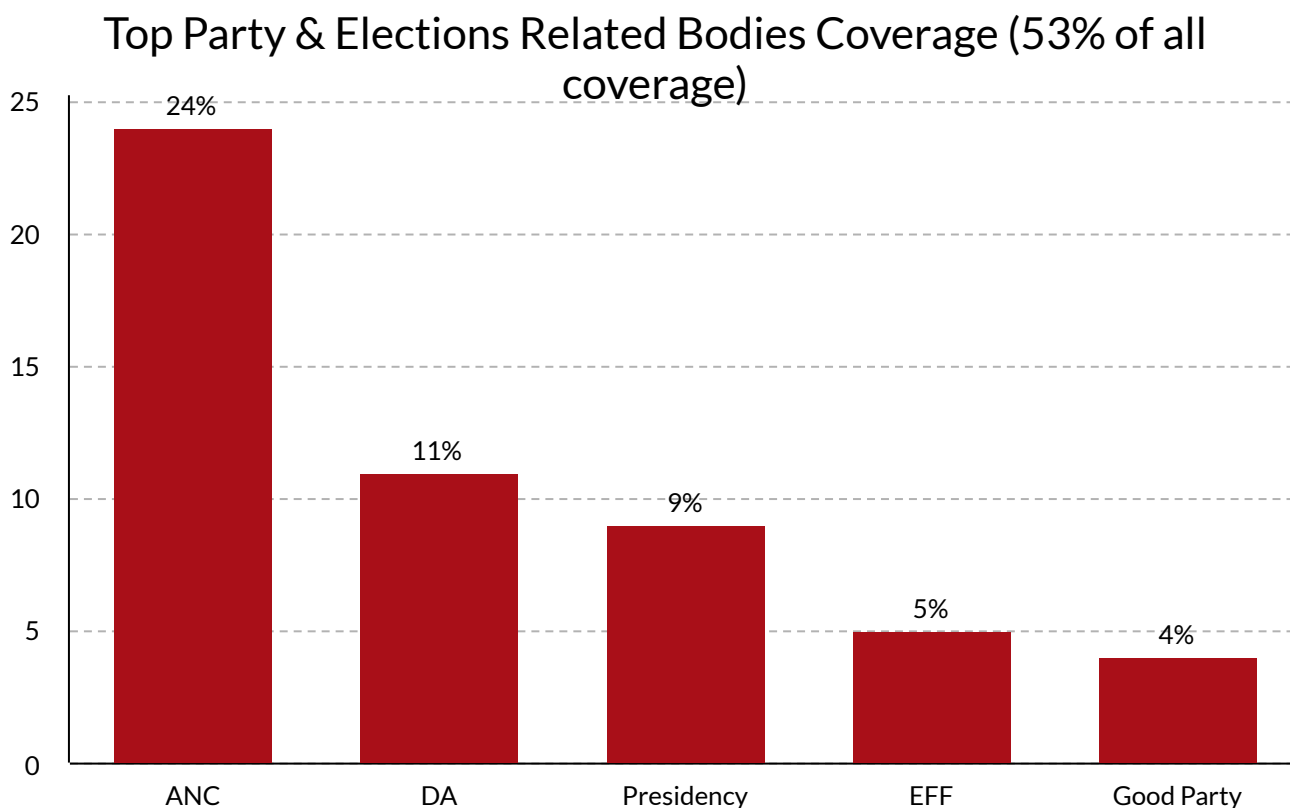
2. What are the stories about? (Top 5 which is 83% of all coded stories)



As can be seen from the graph above, the top five topics made up 83% of all coded topics on or relating to the local government elections leaving only 17% to be shared among other more than 10 topics relating to elections. The graph above reveals that much of the coverage of the 2021 local government elections during the monitoring period was on political party manifestos which received a coverage share of 36%. In the previous monitoring period, this topic was the last on the list of top five topics with a coverage share of nine percent. Those political parties that launched their elections manifestos during the previous monitoring period were still receiving coverage during this monitoring period but the majority of coverage of this topic was on the launches of manifestos by the [ANC](#), the [Cope](#), the [GOOD](#) party and the [IFP](#).

New to the list of top five topics on or relating to the local government elections is the topic, service delivery with a share of three percent. Stories under this topic included the protest by Khayelitsha residents in Cape Town over "[a lack of service delivery in the area](#)". Other coverage on service delivery was on the over [500 schools in Limpopo still using pit latrines after failing to comply with a 2018 court order to provide schools with safe and dignified toilets](#).

TOP FIVE PARTY & ELECTIONS RELATED BODIES COVERAGE



The total number of parties sourced (i.e. where they speak or were mentioned) in the media monitored during the monitoring period for affiliation of sources was 915. The graph above only shows the top five affiliations and as can be seen, the top five affiliations dominated media coverage as sources with a combined total voice share of 53%. The four political parties shown in the figure above (ANC, DA, EFF and GOOD party) have a combined coverage share of 44% and according to the IEC, [325 political parties will be contesting the 2021 local government elections](#). This means that these 325 parties had to share the 56% coverage share remaining. The ANC continues to dominate voices in media coverage of the 2021 local government elections at 24% after receiving a 21% in the previous monitoring period.

Below is the countdown of sources for the period of monitoring:

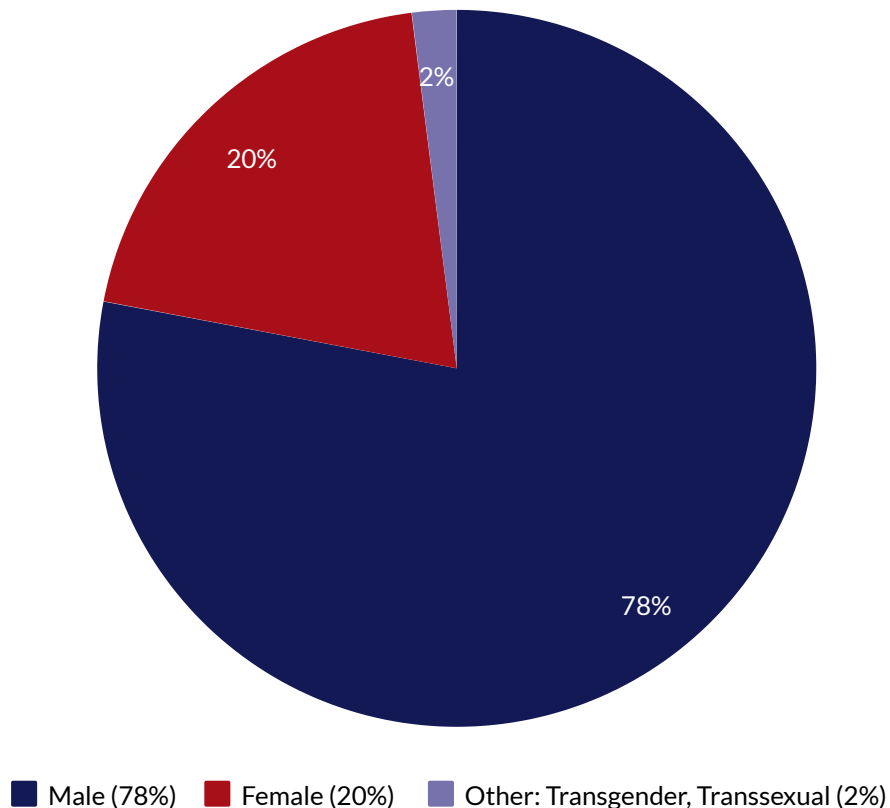
- 5** **Number 5 – The Good Party at 4%:** The GOOD party did not make it to the top five list of sources in the previous monitoring period. At four percent during this monitoring period, the party was in coverage of mainly their [election manifesto launch](#) and the call with [other political parties](#) for the [NPA to “act swiftly” against those implicated in the Digital Vibes Communication Contract with the Department of Health](#). Other coverage with the GOOD party as a source was on the [election misinformation by DA’s Helen Zille that the party submitted to the IEC](#). It was revealed in coverage of this issue that Zille shared an edited video on social media of the GOOD party’s mayoral candidate, Peter de Villiers and that the content was assessed by [MMA’s Real411](#) platform.
- 4** **Number 4 – The EFF at 5%:** The five percent coverage share obtained by the EFF is the same as the one obtained in the previous monitoring period only that now the party is number four of the top five list whereas it was number five previously. Media coverage of the local government elections with the EFF as a source included the continued coverage of the [party’s election manifesto launch](#) and being [blamed for leaving behind tents and rubbish at Ghandi Square](#) where the launch was held. Other coverage on the party’s manifesto launch included the accusation by the DA that the [EFF flouted lockdown level two regulations by having “more than 500 people gathered”](#) at the event. Stories about the running of the party’s [“election campaign on credit, in hopes that it will be able to repay the debt at a later stage”](#), was also in the media during this monitoring period.
- 3** **Number 3 – The Presidency at 9%:** The President, Cyril Ramaphosa was mostly in coverage of the Digital Vibes saga where former minister of health, Dr. Zweli Mkhizi was among those implicated. In this coverage, the president was [blamed for the scandal](#). Other coverage on the Digital Vibes saga was on the president when [he “defended” the former health minister](#) saying the fact that he was “implicated in the damning Digital Vibes scandal did not take away the contribution he made in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic”. The president was also a source in coverage of [South Africa’s move to lockdown level one](#) which he announced during this monitoring period.

2 **Number 2 – DA at 11%:** Having previously been on the same spot in the top five list but with a 13% coverage share, the DA was during this period mostly in coverage of its party campaigning and the Digital Vibes saga stating that president [Cyril Ramaphosa was to blame](#) and also [calling for criminal investigations against those implicated](#). The DA was also in coverage about the [petition the party launched for Afrikaans to be officially recognised as an indigenous language by the government](#).

1 **Number 1 – ANC at 24%:** The ANC has continued to dominate media coverage of the 2021 local government elections with stories such as those on about the [party’s election manifesto launch](#), the continued [campaigning](#), the party’s continued [candidate disputes](#) and the [handing out of money to church congregants](#) in Limpopo by the party’s Treasury General, Paul Mashatile. The party was also in coverage where it was being accused of breaching [Covid-19 lockdown regulations at its manifesto launch](#). The [killing of Ward 22 councillor, Tshepo Motaung](#) which sparked protests in Mabopane in Pretoria and the [“possibility of a march” to Luthuli House by Kwa-Zulu Natal ANC Youth League over youth representation on the party’s candidates list](#) could have also contributed to the ANC receiving the largest share of coverage. Another big story that contributed to the ANC dominating media coverage during this monitoring period was the Digital Vibes saga implicating former health minister, Dr. Zweli Mkhize. Other coverage on this was about opposition Members of Parliament accusing the [“ANC of shielding Mkhize from accountability”](#).

GENDER OF SOURCES

Gender of sources



The representation of women in media still remains a challenge, more so when it is during an election period. MMA's previous monitoring has revealed that women rarely speak in media coverage of events such as elections. Over the years, the representation of women in media coverage of elections has largely remained at around 20%, just as can be seen in the figure above. During this monitoring period, a great amount of coverage has been on political parties campaigning at 27% as shown in figure two. While it is not yet known how many women candidates are contesting the 2021 local government elections, the fact is that there are women contesting the elections means that they should be accessed as sources in media coverage of the 2021 local government elections fairly. During this monitoring period, only one big story had the spotlight on [women politicians and this was reporting about the challenges they face](#). In addition, the female electorate has to be accessed in media coverage as much as the male electorate because not adding women's voices in media coverage of issues of national importance further perpetuates the stereotype that women are not important sources.

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