

2021 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS MEDIA COVERAGE

WEEKLY TRENDS

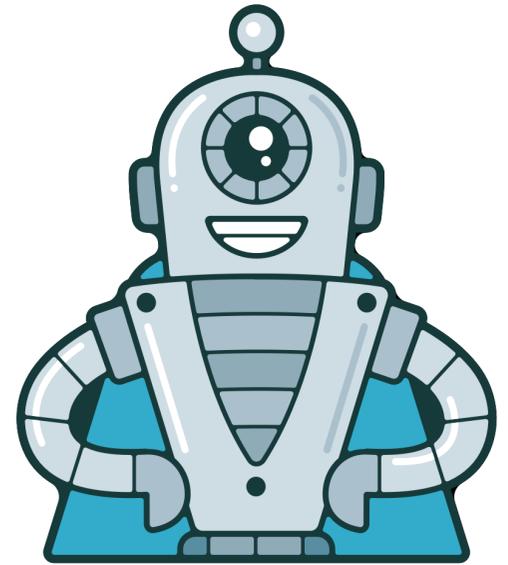
19 September 2021 - 26 September 2021

By Lister Namumba



INTRODUCTION

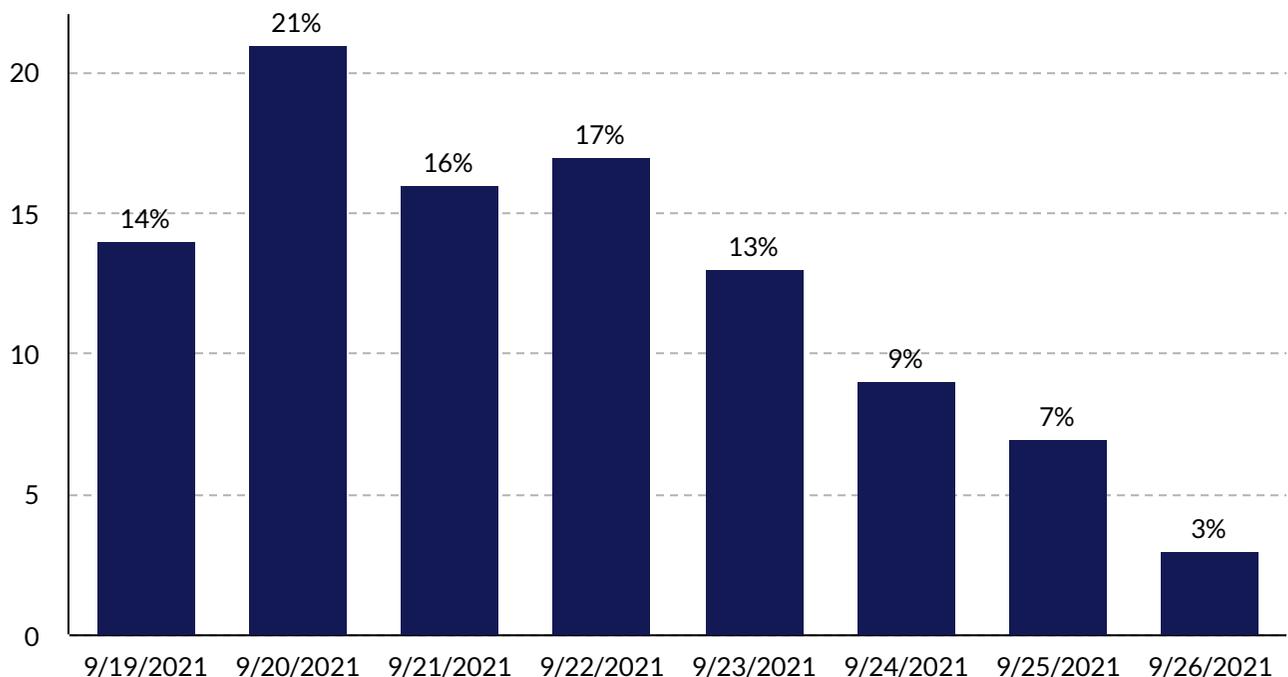
Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) is monitoring selected media’s coverage of the run up to the 2021 Local Government Elections (LGE) to determine what issues are considered a priority by the media, check whether political parties and/or their candidates are represented fairly and without bias and whether 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 19th of September to the 26th of September, 2021. A total of 546 stories on elections were recorded in this monitoring period, a 138 more from the 408 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

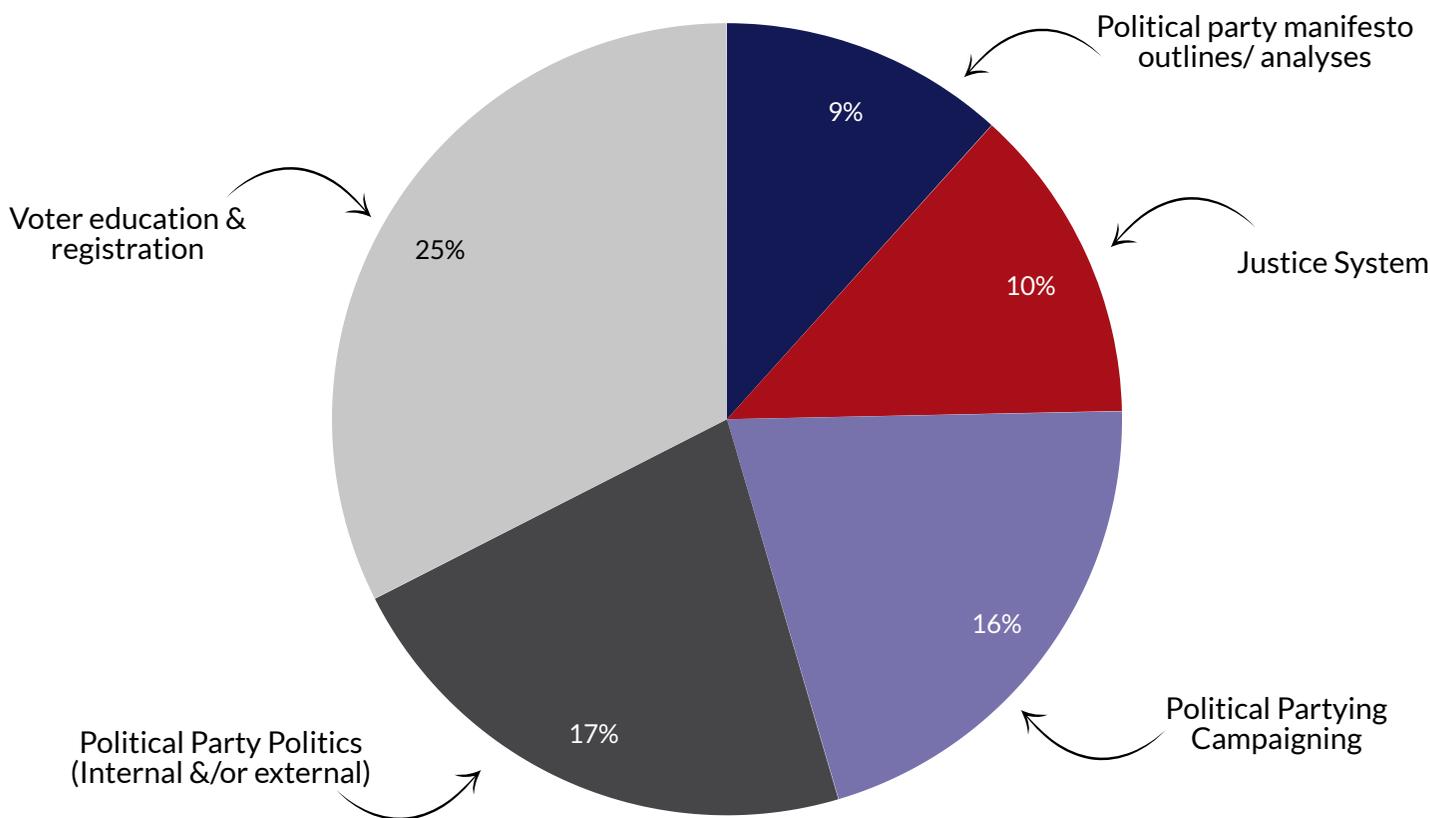
1. Daily LGE Stories (as % of total for the week)



As per graph 1 above, the 20th of September, 2021 received the most coverage of stories about or relating to the 2021 local government elections at 21%. Stories reported on this day included the [ruling by the Constitutional Court that the reopening of candidates registration by the Electoral Commission of South Africa \(IEC\) was lawful](#). Other stories were on the voter registration weekend where the IEC revealed that [91% of new voter registrations were by young people](#) and also that the [IEC had reached over half of its target](#) of new voter registrations. The [death of Johannesburg Mayor, Jolidee Matongo](#) also made news on these days as more political parties, candidates and the general public paid tribute to him. The second spike was on the 22nd of September, 2021 with coverage at 17%. Stories reported included coverage on the African National Congress [\(ANC\) meeting the second deadline for candidates registration](#) following the Constitutional Court ruling and, announcing that [46% of their candidates are women](#), among others.

TOP FIVE TOPICS

2. What are the stories about? (Top 5 which is 77% of all coded stories)

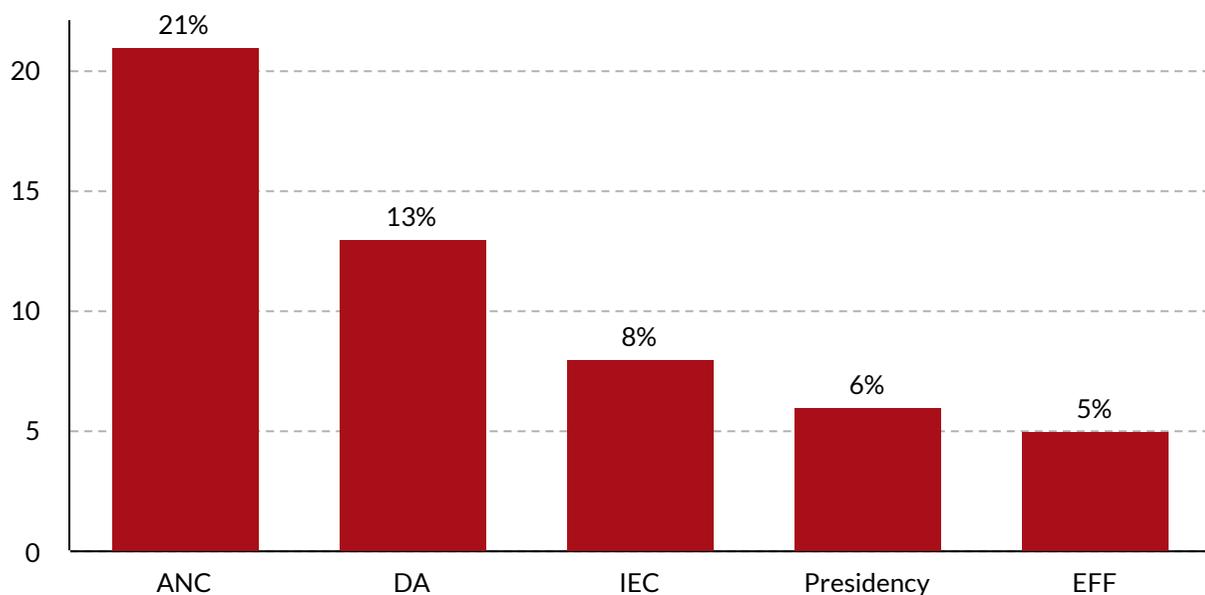


The top five topics made up 77% of all coded topics on or relating to the local government elections leaving only 23% to be shared among other almost 10 topics relating to the LGE. The graph above reveals that much of the coverage of the 2021 local government elections during the monitoring period was on voter education and registration at 25%. The IEC had just conducted the voter registration weekend and much of the coverage between the 19th of September and 26th September, 2021 was on this with the IEC announcing that majority of new registrations were by young people at 91%.

New to this list of top five topics on or related to elections was the topic, political party manifesto outlines/analyses at nine percent. Coverage on this involved the launching of local government elections manifestos by the [EFF](#), [ActionSA](#), the [Democratic Alliance](#) (DA) and the [Congress of the People](#) (COPE).

TOP FIVE PARTY & ELECTIONS RELATED BODIES COVERAGE

Top Party & Elections Related Bodies Coverage (53% of all coverage)



The total number of parties sourced (i.e. where they speak or were accessed) in the media monitored during the monitoring period for affiliation of sources was 1,007. 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%, leaving other parties amounting to more than 60 to share the remaining 47%. The 53% combined voice share for the top five parties/affiliation of sources was the very similar to the one recorded in the previous monitoring period. The only difference with this week's data on affiliations is that the DA and the IEC exchanged places on the top five list by having a voice share of 13% and eight percent respectively. In the previous monitoring period, the IEC came in second on the list with 10% while the DA came in third with an eight percent voice share. The ANC continues to dominate voices in media coverage of the 2021 local government elections at 21%.

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

5 **Number 5 – EFF at 5%:** Having previously obtained a six percent share, the EFF was this monitoring period in stories about the [launch of its party manifesto](#) ahead of the local government elections. Other stories reported during the seven day monitoring period where the EFF was speaking were on the alleged [blocking of the EFF by the ANC in Kwa-Zulu Natal](#) with the EFF announcing that it would report the ANC's conduct to the IEC and ask that the [ANC be disqualified from contesting in Ward 21 in Msunduzi municipality](#). Other coverage with EFF as sources was on the political party funding with the party's former secretary-general, Godrich Gardee stating that the party's books were open for anyone to audit. This after the DA filed a petition asking the IEC to look into "[the disjuncture between the EFF declaration and their significant campaign expenditure](#)".

4 **Number 4 – The Presidency at 6%:** Coverage with the president, Cyril Ramaphosa as a source was mostly on his [tribute to Johannesburg Mayor, Jolidee Matongo](#) who died in a car accident. Other stories where the president was speaking were about his call for Cosatu "[step up their efforts in educating and persuading workers and citizens in the country to get vaccinated](#)". Other news with this affiliation was on his campaigns in [Soweto](#), [Mpumalanga](#), [Mbombela](#).

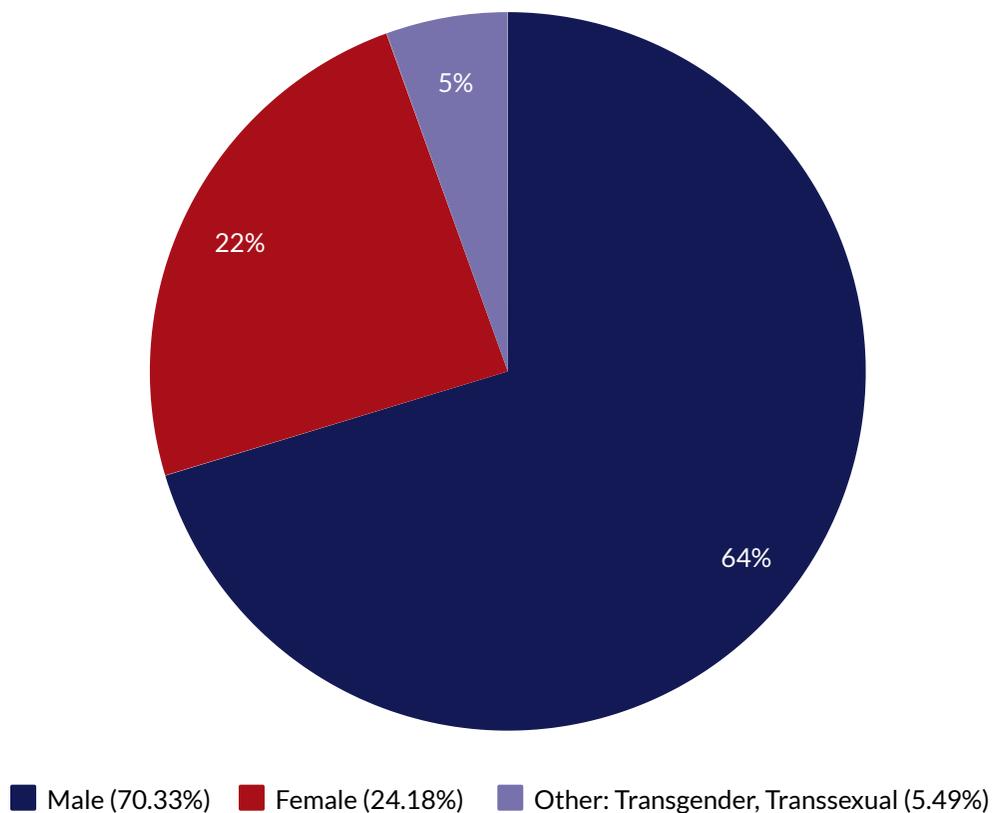
3 Number 3 – IEC at 8%: The IEC was in news about the voter registration where the Commission revealed that [91% of new voter registrations were by young people](#) and also that the [IEC had reached over half of its target](#) of new voter registrations. Other news with this affiliation was on the [ruling made by the Constitutional Court that the IEC could go ahead with candidates registration](#) after the DA and others had applied for the Constitutional Court to rule against the IEC reopening of this registration.

2 Number 2 – DA at 13%: This affiliation is in the top five at five percent because of the coverage on the [DA party manifesto](#) as well as the Constitutional Court’s ruling against the DA’s application on the reopening of candidates registration by the IEC. More coverage on this revealed that the DA had accepted the ruling but that the party still believed the [“IEC had favoured the ANC” with the reopening of candidates registration](#). Other stories with this affiliation were on [two DA staff members who were hijacked at gunpoint](#) and the continued [campaigning by the party](#).

1 Number 1 – ANC at 21%: The ANC again dominated coverage of the 2021 local government elections with stories such as those on the [party meeting the second deadline for candidates registration](#) and later announcing that the party’s new local government elections [candidates list had women at 46%](#). Other stories were on the [clashes with the EFF](#) in Msunduzi municipality. The ANC was also in coverage where they accused the EFF of [defacing and damaging its election posters in KZN](#). Coverage of ANC [staff members suspending their strike over unpaid salaries](#) could have also contributed to the ANC topping the list of sources affiliations. Other coverage that could have contributed to the 21% was on the march by the ANC Youth League in KZN who demanded that the party’s [Proportional Representation councillors candidates’ list have a 25% representation of young people](#). Other stories were on the continued campaigning by the party and its candidates.

GENDER OF SOURCES

Gender of sources



While it is not known at this stage how many women will be contesting the 2021 local government elections, the fact that the ruling party, the ANC announced that 46% of its candidates registered were women should have made females have a much larger voice share than the 22% shown in the figure above. Unfortunately, the representation of gender in coverage of the local government elections still remains unequal potentially indicating that women are still not considered as important sources in such coverage.

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