

30 YEARS OF DEMOCRACY UNVEILED



**AN ANALYSIS OF MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF
THE 2024 SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS**

BRIEF

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Written By:

Lister Namumba

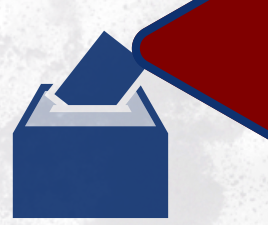
Designed by:

Nomshado Nkosinkulu

ELECTIONS



1. INTRODUCTION

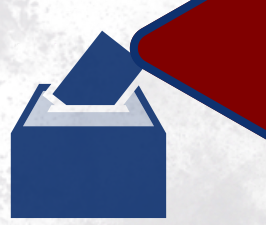


Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) is conducting monitoring of media coverage of the 2024 South African National and Provincial Elections (NPE) to identify the prioritised issues, dominant political parties, and any potential biases in the coverage. The monitoring includes the public broadcaster, South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), community media, and other news media. The data collected will be analysed in separate detailed reports for SABC, community media, and other news media. MMA will also release bi-weekly briefs to highlight any gaps in the coverage to encourage improvement.

This fourth brief focuses on the key trends observed in media coverage of the National and Provincial Elections from 24th May to 6th June, 2024. A total of 1, 299 articles were collected during this two-week period, averaging 93 stories per day. This is the highest count compared to the previous monitoring periods including the previous period which recorded a total of 1, 081 articles.



2. FINDINGS



ARTICLE COUNT OVER TIME

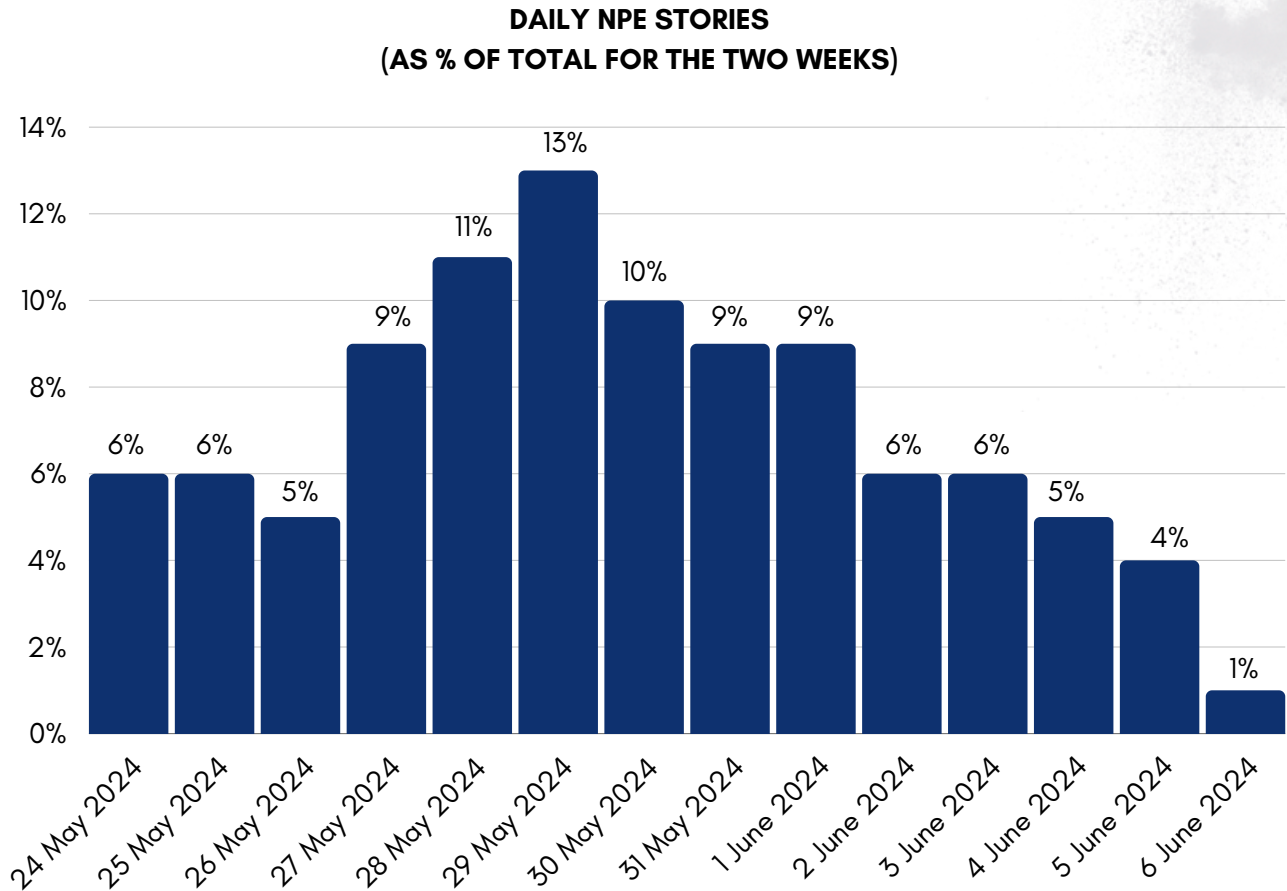


Figure 1: Daily percentage of stories on NPE

The graph shows the daily percentage of stories on the National and Provincial Elections (NPE) from 10th to 23rd May, 2024. This two-week monitoring period includes the day of voting and as can be seen from the graph above, 29th May, which was the day of voting, received the highest amount of coverage on the NPE with 13%. The lowest percentage of stories occurred on the last day during the monitoring period which was the 6th of June with only 1% of coverage.



TOP 5 TOPICS

TOP 5 TOPICS (WHICH IS 78% OF ALL CODED TOPICS)

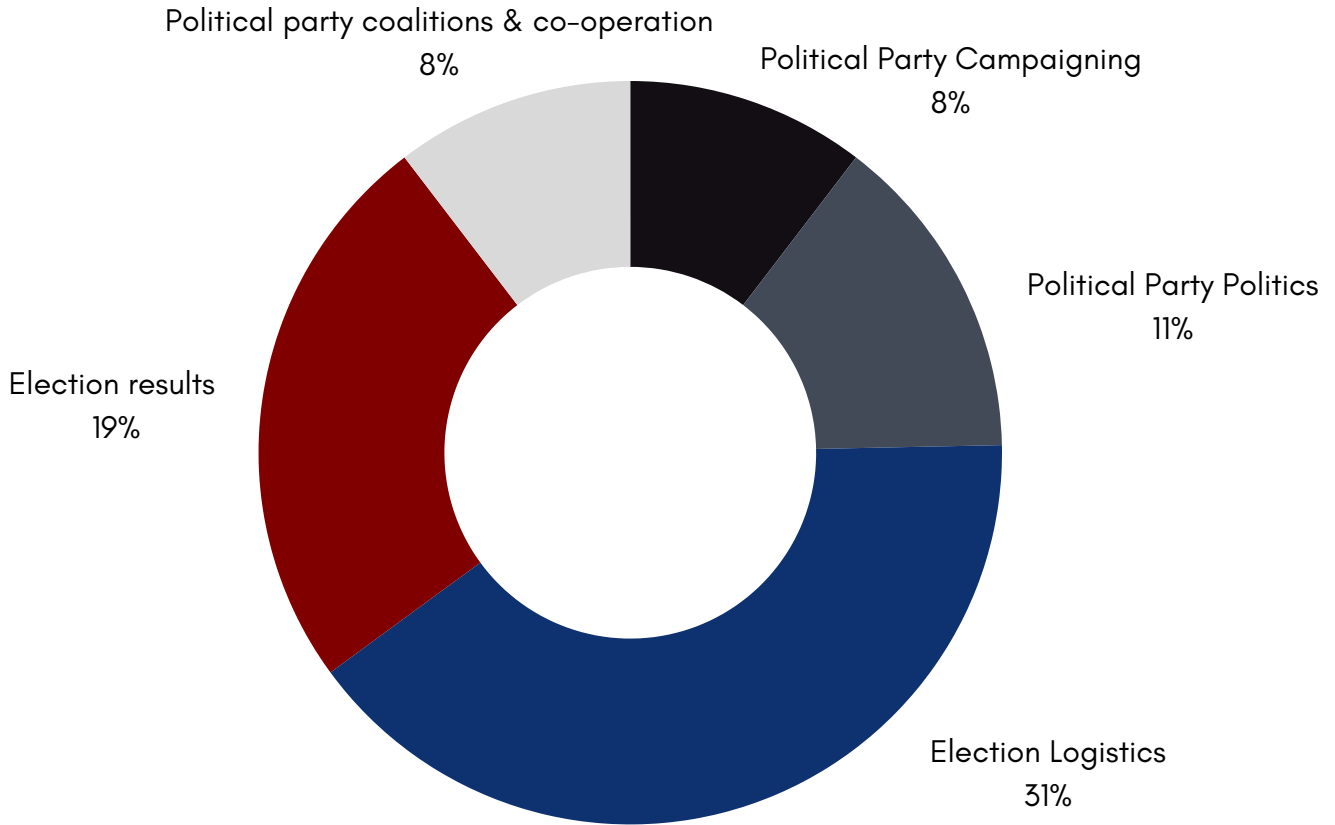


Figure 2: Top 5 topics in coverage

The graph shows the top 5 topics in the media coverage of the NPE. As can be seen, Elections logistic as a topic dominated with 31% of coverage followed by Election results at 19%. These two topics could have dominated because of the voting day which fell on the 29th of May as well as the announcement of results, a topic that dominated the election discourse after voting day. These top 5 topics collectively make up 78% of all the election-coded topics – one of the highest coverage share recorded since the beginning of monitoring! This could be attributed to the overall increase in coverage of the NPE.

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TOP 10 PARTY & ELECTIONS RELATED GROUP COVERAGE

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POLITICAL PARTY/GROUP COVERAGE (WHICH IS 70% OF ALL CODED POLITICAL PARTIES/GROUPS)

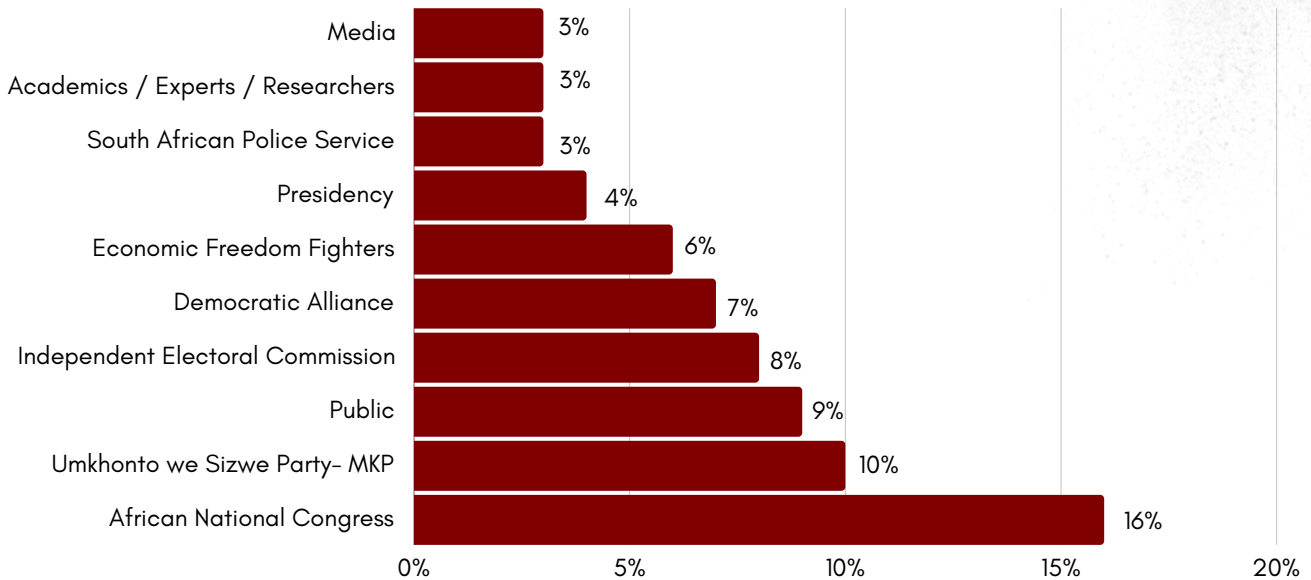


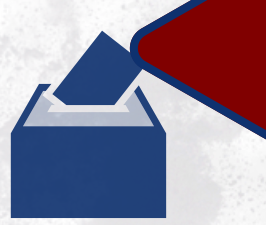
Figure 3: Top 10 political party/group coverage

The graph shows the top 10 political party/group coverage in the media. The African National Congress (ANC) continued to dominate in coverage, accounting for 16% of the total coded political parties/groups. The Umkhonto we Sizwe Party (MKP) got the second highest coverage at 10%. Of note and commendably so from the graph above is the featuring of the voice of the public in the top 3 with 9% voice share. This is one of the highest percentages recorded for the voice of the public since the monitoring began. It is also an increase from the 4% recorded in the previous monitoring period.

These top 10 political party/group coverage collectively make up 70% of all the coded political parties/groups.



GENDER REPRESENTATION OF SOURCES



Gender representation of sources

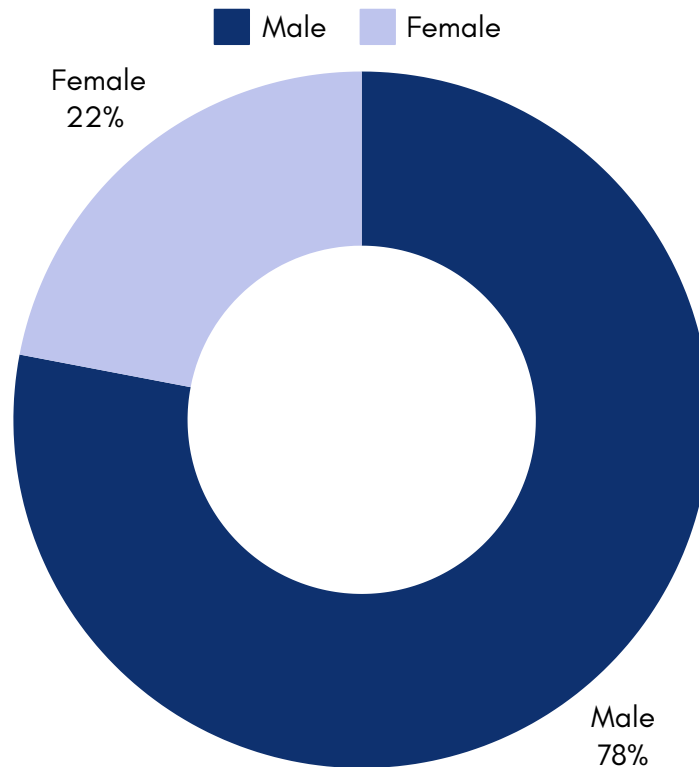
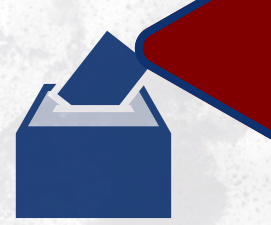


Figure 4: Gender representation of sources in coverage of NPE

The graph shows the gender representation of sources in the media coverage of the NPE. Male sources account for 78% of the total sources, while female sources account for only 22%.

While this is an increase from the previous monitoring periods including the recent one which had 17% voice share for female sources, it is still a far cry from the gender equality and equity being sought in media coverage of events and issues of national importance. It is still commendable that the media have increased their representation of women in the media coverage of the NPE.





CONCLUSION

The media coverage of the 2024 South African National and Provincial Elections reveals not only an increase in the amount of coverage, but also several key trends and areas for improvement. The period leading up to and including election day saw a significant increase in coverage, with a peak on voting day itself.


Topics such as election logistics and results dominated the discourse, reflecting the immediate public interest and media focus. Politically, the African National Congress (ANC) maintained a strong presence in media coverage, followed closely by the Umkhonto we Sizwe Party (MKP) and notable representation of public voices. Previous monitoring periods revealed that the voice share for the public remained significantly low. Therefore, it is commendable that the media was more deliberate about accessing as sources, this crucial voice.


However, the analysis also highlights persistent challenges, particularly in gender representation, where male sources overwhelmingly outnumber female sources despite a slight improvement from previous monitoring periods. This underscores the ongoing need for greater gender equity in media coverage of national events. Moving forward, continued monitoring and targeted interventions are essential to ensure balanced and inclusive media representation, ultimately enhancing the democratic dialogue surrounding South Africa's elections.

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CONTACT US



 listerramma.org.za

 011 788 1278

 www.mediamonitoringafrica.org

 @Mediamattersza

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