

Social media analysis report on RSA protest actions

By [Ruan de Beer](#), issued by [Praesignis](#)

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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:

Twitter was used as the main medium to spread the word on the public protests and to spread the images of the protests country wide.

For the duration of the monitoring period there were over 450,000 hits on this topic. More than 90% of these hits came from Twitter accounts.

There was a significant spike on three days:

- Friday, 31 March: When the cabinet re-shuffle was announced
- Friday, 7 April: When the country wide protests and shutdown took place
- Wednesday, 12 April: When opposition united against Jacob Zuma



Ruan de Beer

On the actor analysis side figures seem to be skewed more towards females partaking in the topic. Female participation is nine times as much as male participation. From an age group perspective, 1/3 of the hits are coming from the 25-34-year-old group. This group represents the future of the country and indicates concern from future leaders on the current standing and state of our leaders and economy. Johannesburg is by far the most prominent role player in this context with 20% of the hits coming from this area. Cape Town follows in second place with just over 7%.

Topic discussions are centred around two-three main topics.

- **Zuma:** The public consensus is that Zuma is a corrupt leader that needs to step down.
- **Opposition unite:** How all people from different thinking can leave their differences aside for one day and unite for a common cause.
- **Cabinet re-shuffle:** A lot of mentions are on this topic specific. There is a lot of concern from the public that someone can make decisions like this 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.

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 re-shuffle and collectively standing up against "corruption".

Noteworthy on the number of hits and participation is that **over 300,000 of the total hits of almost 500,000 came from just two days**. The country was set alight by tweets on the two days in question. These days being:

- 31 March cabinet re-shuffle 123,016 hits
- 7 April country wide protests 186,164 hits

Average hits over the period for review as just over 23,500 hits per day.



Overall sentiment is neutral with the second majority being extremely negative on Mr Zuma. 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. Mention is made how only one of the top 6 of the ANC was present at his birthday celebrations.

The EFF and DA play a major role in posts and take up two spots in the top three 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 protest action with photos from the various areas around the country being sent around via twitter. There have been some posts around racial divide and this showed that as a country, even though we unite, there is still not enough trust between different groups and that we should all stand together for other events as well and not just for "suitable topics".

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 2.9 million people. This is an extremely powerful reach and impact on public.

South Africa has united as a country in the protest actions. This was however also reflected in the rest of the world with over 50,000 posts coming from various other countries in the world. There were over 15,000 posts originating from the USA with the UK in third place with just under 10,000 posts on this topic. The news and images of these protests and words of the actors were spread across the globe in less than 24 hours.

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