

A brief social media analysis

Issued by [Meltwater](#)

15 Feb 2021

On 11 February 2021, President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered the annual State of the Nation address, done digitally this year due to Covid-19 restrictions limiting the usual red carpet style of the event that most South Africans have enjoyed seeing over the years. But without the usual pizzazz of it all, the president gave an address that focused on the Covid-19 pandemic, the current economic situation and providing much needed hope.

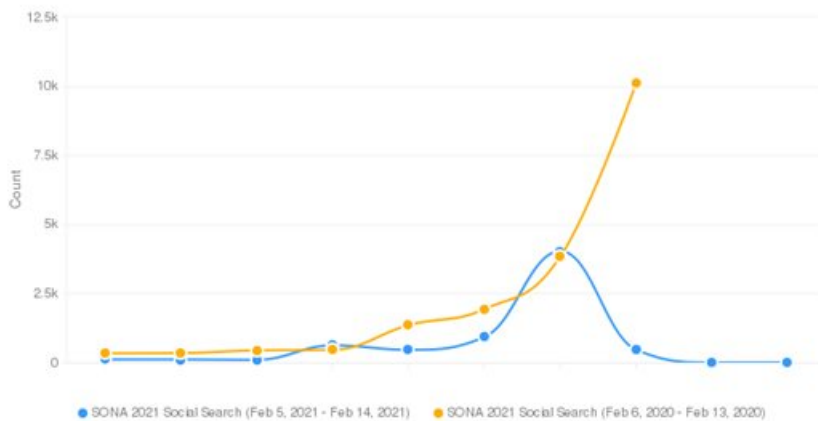
Meltwater, the world's leading editorial and social media analytics company, tracked social media mentions surrounding this year's State of the Nation address to see some of the online reactions to the key focus areas that the president addressed.

Social media analysis

On 11 February 2021, when looking at the amount of times 'SONA' or 'State of the Nation Address' was mentioned on social media in South Africa, it was just over 4,000 times. Compared to last year's address, which took place on 13 February 2020, the amount of mentions was just over 10,000. The reason for the high number of mentions last year included the presence of Miss Universe, South African-born Zozibini Tunzi, reactions to the usual glitz and glam of the red carpet fashion, as well as reactions to topics that the president touched on (such as youth unemployment).



"SONA" Media Exposure



Social Media Exposure on 'SONA' mentions in February 2020 (orange) vs February 2021 (blue)

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Even though this year's 'SONA' garnered few social media mentions, the social reach of these mentioned was 235 million people on 11 February 2021. At least 94% of these social media mentions came from Twitter, 5% were from blogs and 1% were from online forums.

When it comes to how South Africans were feeling about this year's SONA address, the data indicates that 79% of social media mentions on 'SONA' or 'State of the Nation Address' were negative on 11 February 2021. Social media comments that were of a negative nature include users who felt underwhelmed by what the president had to say this year. [One Twitter user](#) felt misled by the 'narrow definition of unemployment', while others felt that watching SONA is a waste of time.

However, the 21% of online users who felt positive about this year's SONA praised the president for his efforts in acquiring Covid-19 vaccines, as well as how he touched on corruption in the country being "one of the greatest impediments to the country's growth and development", as [The Citizen News tweeted](#).



"SONA" Sentiment



Sentiment analysis on 'SONA' mentions on Social Media between 6 February and 12 February 2021

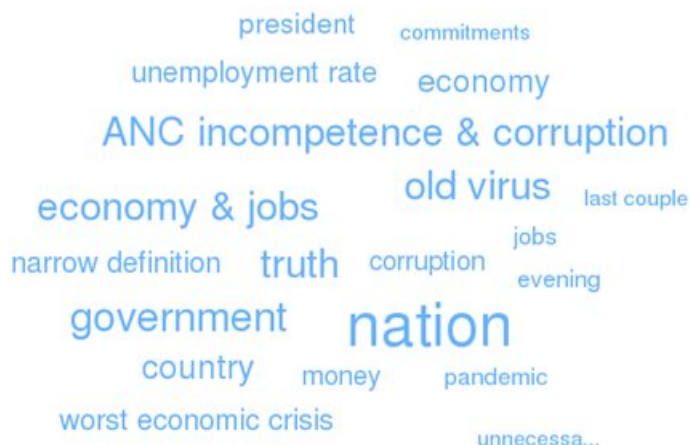
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Looking at some of the trending themes to have emerged from this year's SONA, it echoes how President Ramaphosa chose to focus his speech mainly on the Covid-19 pandemic, the economy and unemployment rate. These are noted to be some of the key themes that online users picked up on, alongside the following trending themes:

- 'ANC incompetence and corruption', which refers to [this tweet from @SimonPGrindrod](#) that gained much engagement
- 'Unnecessarily expensive displays', which refers to [this tweet from @MelBala](#) regarding the cost of this year's SONA as opposed to the previous year



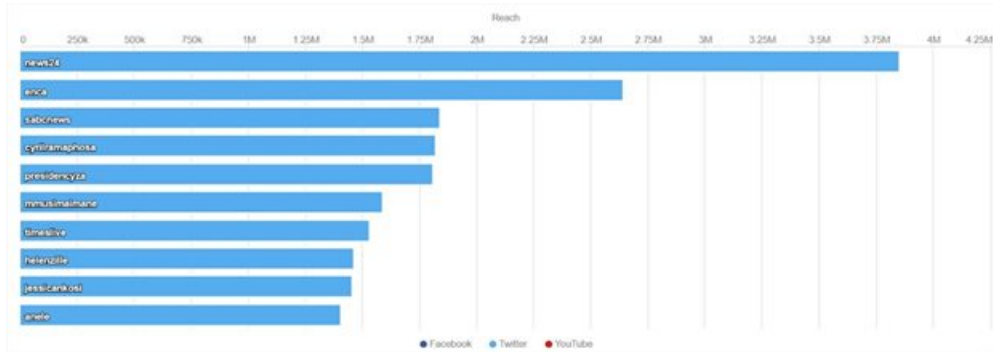
"SONA" Trending Themes



Trending themes on 'SONA' social media mentions between 6 February and 12 February 2021

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While South African news outlets, such as *News24*, eNCA and SABC News, covered most of the address on social media, some other influential and top posters that engaged with 'SONA' or 'State of the Nation Address' conversations online include Mmusi Maimane, Helen Zille, Jessica Nkosi and Anele Mdoda.



Top posters, by reach, on 'SONA' social media mentions between 6 February and 12 February 2021

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Without the usual pomp and circumstance of this year's State of the Nation Address, social media users in South Africa did not seem all too invested in tuning into what the president had to say. But for those who did listen in, very little positivity was felt towards what President Ramaphosa addressed in his speech. Perhaps there will be more to look forward in next year's SONA; only time will tell.

If you want to get insights like these to monitor trending topics in news and social media about your brand, business, industry or competitors, you can contact the [Meltwater Team here](#).

Source: Data gathered by Meltwater from 6 February 2021 to 12 February 2021.

About Meltwater

Meltwater is a leading global provider of social and media intelligence. By examining millions of posts each day from social media platforms, blogs and news sites, Meltwater helps companies make better, more informed decisions based on insight from the outside. Meltwater was founded in Oslo, Norway, in 2001 and is headquartered in San Francisco, California, with 50 offices across six continents. The company has 1,700 employees and 28,000 corporate customers, including industry leaders in several sectors.

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