

SOCIAL MEDIA, DISCRIMINATION AND INTOLERANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA



A LEXICON OF
HATEFUL TERMS



Project Team: Will Ferroggiaro, Caleb Gichuhi, Kelly Hoye, Achol Jok Mach, Althea Middleton-Dezner

Partner Organization: Media Monitoring Africa

Project Lead: Caleb Gichuhi

Lead Author: Will Ferroggiaro

Front and Back Cover Design: Cesar Manuel León Osorio | www.potencialpuro.com

Editorial Design: Kirsten Ankers | Citrine Sky Design

About the Author: Will Ferroggiaro is a Director at Strategy for Humanity LLC, where he focuses on issues of conflict, governance, and media. He has served as PeaceTech Lab's primary consultant on hate speech since 2015, including as lead author of lexicons on South Sudan and Nigeria. Previously, he established the Media and Conflict program at Internews. Among other roles, he led a Fund for Peace team producing analysis for the UN Special Advisor on Genocide Prevention and conducted a lessons-learned study on the 1994 Rwanda genocide for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

About the Partner Organization: Media Monitoring Africa (“MMA”) is an NGO that has been monitoring the media since 1993. We aim to promote the development of a free, fair, ethical and critical media culture in South Africa and the rest of the continent. The three key areas that MMA seeks to address through a human rights-based approach are: media ethics, media quality and media freedom. MMA’s vision is a just and fair society empowered by a free, responsible and quality media.”



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Introduction

This report is PeaceTech Lab's fifth lexicon focused on social media and hateful speech. It identifies key terms in online discourse in South Africa and analyzes their origins, context, and influence as the country prepares for general elections in May 2019. Thus, it represents a snapshot of a global phenomenon in one country at a particular juncture of its history. As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the UN Human Rights Council in February 2019:

Hate speech is a menace to democratic values, social stability and peace. It spreads like wildfire through social media, the Internet, and conspiracy theories. It is abetted by public discourse that stigmatizes women, minorities, migrants, refugees and any so-called "other." Indeed, hate is moving into the mainstream – in liberal democracies and authoritarian States alike.¹

Like all countries, language in South Africa reflects its particular national heritage and history.¹ In South Africa's case, this history involves colonial expropriation and subjugation of native Africans; national conflict between and among European and African nationalities; the separation of the races by law and force known as apartheid; a revolutionary effort to bring about multi-racial democracy; and post-apartheid challenges to enable social, economic, and political rights for all South Africans to address this legacy. The country's languages and discourses thus exhibit all of the rough features of the society, and offensive and inflammatory speech has been a feature particularly given these historical factors. Through its post-apartheid Constitution, legislation such as the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, and new institutions like the South African Human Rights Commission, South Africa has aimed to address the persistence of discrimination, intolerance, and hateful speech.²

PeaceTech Lab, in partnership with Media Monitoring Africa, intends this effort to contribute to understanding language and the context for potential conflict in the lead up to the 2019 elections. This project seeks to tackle the problem of identifying and contextualizing the particular type of language that's likely to cause violence. Rather than assessing the existence or prevalence of hateful speech, this project instead examines the terms, their origins and context, and their use in a particular country context. To successfully monitor and counter hateful speech, we must first identify specific terms and the social and political context that makes them offensive, inflammatory, or even potentially dangerous. This research also seeks to identify alternative language that would mitigate or counter the impact of this speech and thereby contribute to building peace in the country. Finally, this resource intends to inform other individuals and organizations involved in monitoring and countering hateful speech in South Africa so that their work can be more effective. It will also contribute to the overall body of knowledge on this issue to inform other efforts around the globe. The Annex at the end of the report includes a description of the project's research structure, methodology, and operation.

The Lexicon

To compose this lexicon, the project team (comprising staff of PeaceTech Lab and Media Monitoring Africa) conducted an online survey of South Africans to identify offensive and inflammatory terms used online. More than 600 individuals responded to identify the terms and contextual information synthesized below. After an initial draft of terms was prepared, workshops were held in Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, and Cape Town to evaluate the terms, provide qualitative analysis and further contextual information, and contribute additional terms not previously identified. [PeaceTech Lab specialists provided data visualizations to represent the terms and their associations. Once the draft reached its final stages, it was reviewed by a small group of South Africans serving as the project's expert advisers.]

For each term, the “Definition” section contains information provided by survey respondents and then workshop participants about the term’s origins, general meaning, and related information. The “Why it is offensive/inflammatory” section discusses information that respondents and participants provided as to why they believed the term was offensive and inflammatory, including past usages, historical references to past conflict, and other contextual information. Finally, the “Alternative words that could be used” section lists terms provided by respondents and participants that they thought could be used in place of the offensive and inflammatory terms or to mitigate or counter those terms. In some cases, they didn’t provide alternative terms or didn’t determine that any were constructive or relevant. Further discussion about the survey, workshops, and other aspects of the project’s methodology can be found in the Annex A below.

Country Context: The Republic of South Africa in 2019

In 2019, South Africa is set to hold a general election that marks the anniversary of 25 years of multi-racial, multi-party democracy.

South Africa stands among the rising ‘BRICS’ countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) as a next generation global power. Its independent course at the United Nations and in other global forums and promotion of relations amongst countries of the Southern Hemisphere has won the respect of many countries, while its diplomacy in some of Africa’s worst conflicts has earned it commendation. Yet there is a sense that South Africa could do more to prioritize human rights in its foreign policy, and its new term on the United Nations Security Council affords such an opportunity.³

At the political level, the African National Congress (ANC) remains the country’s main political force, although its hold on power, particularly at provincial levels, has been increasingly challenged. This year, while the ANC, the official opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), and radical populist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) are the most popular and recognized on the party list, some 48 parties will put up candidates⁴ for seats in the National Assembly and provincial legislatures. However, this election is the first since the resignation of President Jacob Zuma in 2018, who was forced to relinquish his position atop the ANC and thus the presidency over a series of corruption scandals. In that case, the rule of law may have won out, but perceptions of corruption and political stagnation may lead to opposition parties building on their breakthroughs achieved in local elections in 2016.⁵

More broadly, many South Africans would argue there is still much work to do in society and the economy. As a longtime observer of the country recently wrote,

“Since apartheid ended, social and economic change for most South Africans has been disappointing. The white minority still largely controls the economy, while the black majority remains poor; though visible, the black middle class remains small.”⁶

Income inequality is one of the highest in the world⁷, unemployment and poverty remain exceptionally high, and crime is an everyday fact of life—all disproportionately affecting black South Africans. Land ownership and access — an issue since Dutch colonists arrived in the 17th Century — remain a key justice and development challenge for the country. Farm attacks targeting white farmers and black agricultural workers have been a feature of the post-apartheid era;⁸ however, while the rate of attacks has increased in recent years, their lethality has decreased substantially. Nonetheless, given the inequities surrounding land and land rights in South Africa, it is a key issue motivating hate speech. In addition, the 2008 xenophobic attacks on migrants and refugees, who originated mainly out of the dire conditions in South Africa’s neighbors, demonstrated viscerally the desperation that many black South Africans hold. The massacre of striking miners by police at Marikana in 2012 demonstrated that the economic struggle had only become more complex — while under apartheid the white-owned mines could rely on a white political establishment and white-led security forces to ensure labor peace, now there were black politicians and directors of police, as well as foreign ownership of the mines with black business leaders on their boards of directors.

In this volatile atmosphere, hate speech has continued to plague society. Hate speech has strong roots: for nearly 50 years, the apartheid system codified discrimination based on race. This system controlled access to all aspects of life including resources, education, housing, work, and leisure and set parameters for the language that accompanied it. Today, hate speech terms born in the apartheid era persist, while new terms reflect the unaddressed grievances and unfinished business of race, class, and culture. As the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) observed in its submission on the national Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill,

“The SAHRC recognises that the phenomenon of hate crimes and hate speech in South African society is a manifestation of the continued social and economic divisions, intolerance, and racist attitudes.”⁹

Despite its history, South Africa has become a champion of global human rights and enshrined far-reaching human rights protections, including freedom of speech, in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution). It has built and maintained an institutional and legal infrastructure — from free media to independent courts, including institutions like the SAHRC — to promote and protect human rights and good governance for citizens. Leadership is even working to address societal challenges. After extensive consultation with civil society, the government announced in March 2019 a five-year “National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.”¹⁰

Section 16(1) of the Constitution provides that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press and other media; freedom to receive or impart information or ideas; freedom of artistic creativity; and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research. Section 16(2) of the Constitution goes on to provide that the right contained in sub-section (1) does not extend to certain categories of speech, namely propaganda for war; incitement of

imminent violence; or advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender, or religion and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000), which contains a prohibition on hate speech, further defines such speech:

“No person may publish, propagate, advocate or communicate words based on one or more of the prohibited grounds, against any person, that could reasonably be construed to demonstrate a clear intention to - (a) be hurtful; (b) be harmful or to incite harm; (c) promote or propagate hatred.”¹¹

More recently, the draft Hate Crimes and Hate Speech bill is an example of legislative efforts to deal with hate speech; the SAHRC — as well as civil society organizations, political parties, and members of the public — also brings cases, such as the challenge to religious protections for bigoted speech¹² and its ongoing review of complaints against Julius Malema and members of the EFF.¹³ In addition, South Africa’s Electoral Act (1998) contains a Code of Conduct to which parties must adhere for their candidate lists to be accepted. Registered parties and candidates are prohibited from any speech or activity that involves incitement or intimidation, and the Independent Electoral Commission is empowered to take actions including disqualification of candidates and cancellation of party registration.¹⁴

Whether or not certain expression constitutes hate speech will inevitably depend on the context and other relevant factors, including the intention of the speaker or author. This may include considerations of whether the speech in question is being used for satirical, journalistic, or artistic purposes. Indeed, in its March 2019 determination on Malema and the EFF’s use of the song ‘Kill the Boer,’ the South African Human Rights Commission noted that “[o]n an objectively construed meaning of the song as figurative and political, it can accordingly not be held to evince an intention to have a severe psychological impact on white Afrikaners, to harm or incite harm against them, or to promote or propagate hatred against them.”¹⁵ Thus, context and intent are important as to whether language meets the threshold of hate speech. The words and phrases identified below may not always amount to hate speech or incitement when taken in isolation; rather, they are highlighted because of their potential to be offensive and inflammatory, and consequently to incite tensions and violence.

Importantly, the right to freedom of expression does not only apply to information or ideas that are favorably received or inoffensive but also to those that “offend, shock or disturb.”¹⁶ Similarly, South African courts have noted that, “Freedom of speech must be robust and the ability to express hurt, pain, and anger is vital, if the voices of those who see themselves as oppressed or disempowered are to be heard.”¹⁷ Another interesting current case is the petition to have the 1928 South African flag labeled as hate speech, since the Nelson Mandela Foundation and others believe it embodies white supremacy and black disenfranchisement.¹⁸ The case raises important questions about what constitutes hate speech — words or symbols and statues as well? — and the scope of legal responses to it.

Except for speech that falls within section 16(2) of the Constitution as outlined above - that does not enjoy constitutional protection — any limitation on freedom of expression must be justified in terms of section 36 of the Constitution such that it be reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society. The Constitutional Court has previously noted that the right to freedom of expression is instrumental in encouraging open debate, noting that, “If society represses

PLEASE NOTE: The sample posts and quoted comments from online posts may contain offensive and inflammatory terms as well as obscene terms.

views it considers unacceptable, they may never be exposed as wrong. Open debate enhances truth-finding and enables us to scrutinize political argument and deliberate social values.”¹⁹

While not all of the terms below may constitute hateful speech from a legal perspective or incite violence, they have been described to the project team as offensive or inflammatory for the reasons set out. Language is also constantly evolving: new terms are developed, existing terms take on different meanings, and old terms become redundant. Furthermore, it is not intended that the notes regarding the terms below are the only meanings that they possess. Context must remain a fundamental consideration.

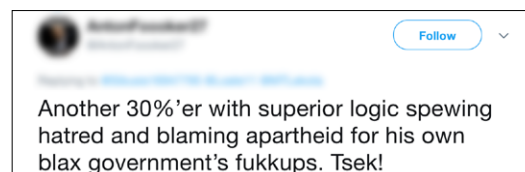
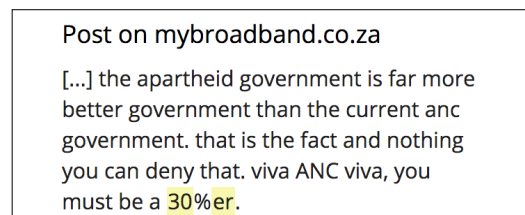
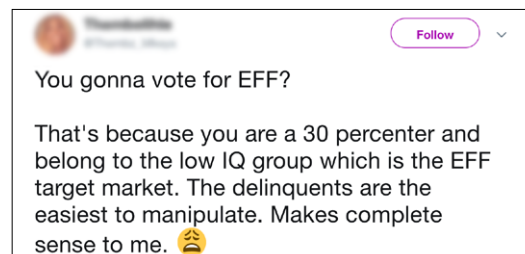
Words or Phrases That Are Offensive and Inflammatory

The words and phrases that follow were identified by survey respondents as “offensive and inflammatory” and potentially inciting violence in South Africa. The terms’ severity, meaning, and context were further critiqued by workshop participants in South Africa, as well as by the project’s South African expert advisers. Based on these terms and their associated data, PeaceTech Lab staff then employed human and automated monitoring to identify examples of such terms in online posts,²⁰ as well as “word clouds”²¹ that show how the terms are associated with other terms, actions, or events.

1. 30%

Other spellings and related references: 30 percenter; 30%er loser

Sample posts:



2. Coconut

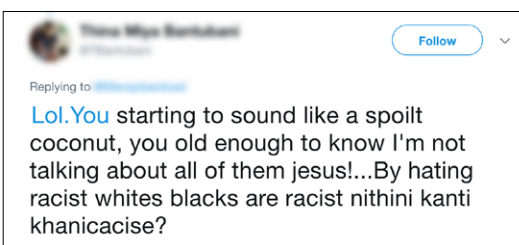
Other spellings and related references: *coconut politician; Amabujwas; Clever blacks; Ama model C/Model C; Oreo*

Sample posts:



Replied to [Amabujwas @Amabujwas](#) and 2 others

A white woman can sleep & give birth to dozen of coloured children. Her loyalty will always be with the Whites she is part of. Mmusi's wife is a privileged racist masked by sleeping with a Coconut.



Replied to [\[User\]](#)

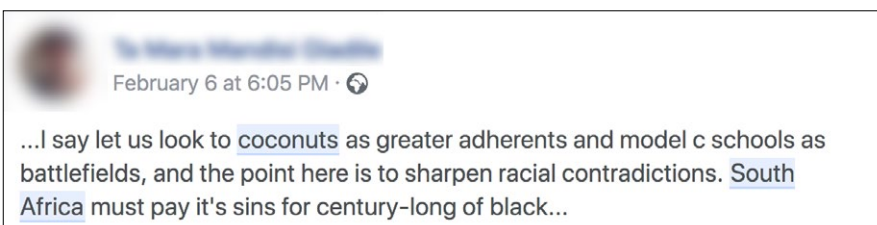
LoL.You starting to sound like a spoilt coconut, you old enough to know I'm not talking about all of them jesus!...By hating racist whites blacks are racist nithini kanti khanicacise?



I didn't have to face slavery or apartheid to see that white people are not our friends, some of us our grandparents or even parents are so destroyed that even to this day they have not healed but white people and coconut blacks will tell us to "get over it" TSEK!!

10:40 pm - 14 Aug 2018

12 Retweets 48 Likes



February 6 at 6:05 PM · 🌐

...I say let us look to [coconuts](#) as greater adherents and model c schools as battlefields, and the point here is to sharpen racial contradictions. [South Africa](#) must pay it's sins for century-long of black...

Definition: This term is used to refer to a black or coloured person who is seen by their peers to behave like a white person or prefer the lifestyle, music, etc. associated with whites and therefore, is 'black on the outside, white on the inside.' The term is thought to have originated in the 1990s when blacks started moving from the townships to the suburbs, which were restricted to whites during apartheid. It appears in social media, traditional media, and in conversation. The term is also used to refer to a politician who is perceived to serve the goals of the white population while paying superficial attention to the black or coloured communities. Workshop participants noted that some blacks use the term to refer to other blacks who have English accents, who are believed to have forgotten or rejected their culture, or who went to multi-racial, 'Model C' schools. One workshop participant shared the experience of returning to his village after having studied in the city and being referred to as 'coconut.' 'Amabujwas' is a derivative of boujee, which is slang for bourgeoisie. Use of the term may be triggered by situations where a black person has attained a level of success other blacks had not. Thus, there is an aspect of social class resentment to the use of the term.

Definition: An English-language term that means someone of a state that occupied, controlled, and administered an area that may already have had its own culture, governance, and territory. In general, it refers to someone who is in a place temporarily to exploit its land, people, and resources. The term may have replaced the older use of ‘European,’ although obviously with more negative connotation. In the South African case, it refers to white Europeans who came to southern Africa and established and maintained colonial administrations and structures to exploit the resources of the lands of pre-South Africa. Drawing on the history of oppression by whites of blacks in South Africa, it is generally used by blacks to refer to whites who impose or force themselves on other people or otherwise abuse their power. It has appeared in the Land Debate, and it is also triggered when there is racial tension that is perceived to be caused by white people. Nonetheless, some white people believe that Dutch and English colonization brought some benefit to what is now South Africa in terms of economic development despite the subjugation of people.



South Africa HateSpeech Monitor: Co. — Words from 12/22/18 to 4/14/19

Why it’s offensive and inflammatory: It is used to attribute historic behavior and incidents to a whole racial group and suggests that this historic behavior is ongoing. It also implies that white people don’t belong in South Africa. As one respondent argued, “It means all white people are colonials and should go back to Europe.”

Alternative words that could be used: white; white South African

Why it's offensive and inflammatory: The speaker uses the terms to depersonalize and dehumanize the other person in order to make them seem abnormal or to define them only by their sexual orientation. The terms are offensive, and their use often provokes a reaction.

Alternative words that could be used: LGBTQI; gay; homosexual


5. Kaffir

Other spellings and related references: *kafir/kaffer; k-word*

Sample posts:



Y'all who say EFF is wrong for what is doing now shall forever be called by k-word you piece of shit.



My stupid ass spoke Afrikaans in primary school thinking them white kids and teachers thought I was the shit, they probably thought "die kaffir"



This coming from a Black man? Come one you bloody Kaffir man up and say it with Enthusiasm. I hate pricks.




This kaffir is dragging men's name/image through the mud

Definition: The word has Arabic origins and literally means 'unbeliever' or barbarian. Particular to South Africa, it is a derogatory word used against a black Africans to denigrate them as without worth. In South Africa, it was used under apartheid by whites to refer negatively to a black person as uncivilized and not worthy of rights regardless of origin and character. It is deeply offensive and probably the most offensive term used in South Africa. An older workshop attendee observed that since all blacks were referred to as 'kaffirs' under apartheid, calling a black 'kaffir' today would cause more offense. While not as common today, it is still used by whites against blacks, as well as by Indians and coloureds against blacks. It occurs under a variety of circumstances; perhaps because of its severity as well as its association with the apartheid era, it appears more offline in conversation or at work or in private social media like WhatsApp rather than on public social media. However, as of 2018, when a white woman, Vicky Momberg, was sentenced to three years in prison (with a year suspended) for being caught on video repeatedly using the term against a black policewoman, the implications and penalties for its use are understood.²² Nonetheless, the Momberg case and the case of Adam Catzavelos, who posted a video in which he used the 'k-word' to refer to blacks,²³ show it is still a problem both online and offline. Finally, it is worth noting that some blacks use the term to refer to other blacks, appropriating the k-word on their own terms, much as with the n-word in the United States.²⁴

6. Kill the Boers


Other spellings and related references: *kill the farmer, kill the Boer; kill te Boer; dubula lbhunu; shoot the Boer*



Sample posts:

Follow ▾
Kill the Boer. One bullet, one settler.
The Constitution has been captured.
End of debate. 🙌
[twitter.com/Sowellnomics/s ...](https://twitter.com/Sowellnomics/s...)

Post on mybroadband.co.za

- Wakanda forever - Simbaaaa! - Hakuna matata - **Kill the boer** - Pool's closed

Follow ▾
Kill the boer! #BringBackTheLand

 is 🤡 feeling pissed off at 

February 7 · Pretoria, South Africa

#Kill the Boers kill the famers

#bloody shit 😏😏😏

And for that statement Im prepared to die 😏😏

Definition: It is an English phrase, with variations in Zulu and Xhosa, meaning to kill those farmers of Afrikaans heritage. The term 'Boer' is a Dutch term for farmer; it also describes those Dutch who settled in the Cape colony in the 18th and 19th Centuries and their descendants. Umkhonto weSizwe militant Peter Mokaba popularized the 'Kill the Boer, Kill the Farmer' slogan, which was a common song during the struggle against apartheid. It is related to the phrase 'One settler, one bullet.' In the apartheid era, it had the meaning of 'kill the oppressor' as the apartheid government was predominantly led by Afrikaners who were intent on preventing majority rule. As such, it is a term that resonates with the problems of land distribution and land equity. In 2011, the Supreme Court found that the anti-apartheid song 'dubula iBhunu' (Zulu for 'shoot the Boer'), sung at a rally by then-ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema, was hate speech and banned the ANC from its performance. However, as mentioned above, the SAHRC recently decided that, used with political or artistic intent, the phrase might not be hate speech; it would depend on the context as to whether it should be prohibited.²⁶ The phrase continues to be used, including by leaders and militants of the Economic Freedom Fighters and Black First Land First, including at political rallies.

Why it's offensive and inflammatory: It demonizes a whole group as criminal and as lacking rights to the land they own. As one respondent noted, "Many whites don't even own land." Moreover, the victim wants what is stolen returned, so this language can potentially incite blacks against white landowners.

Alternative words that could be used: settler; farmer; South African

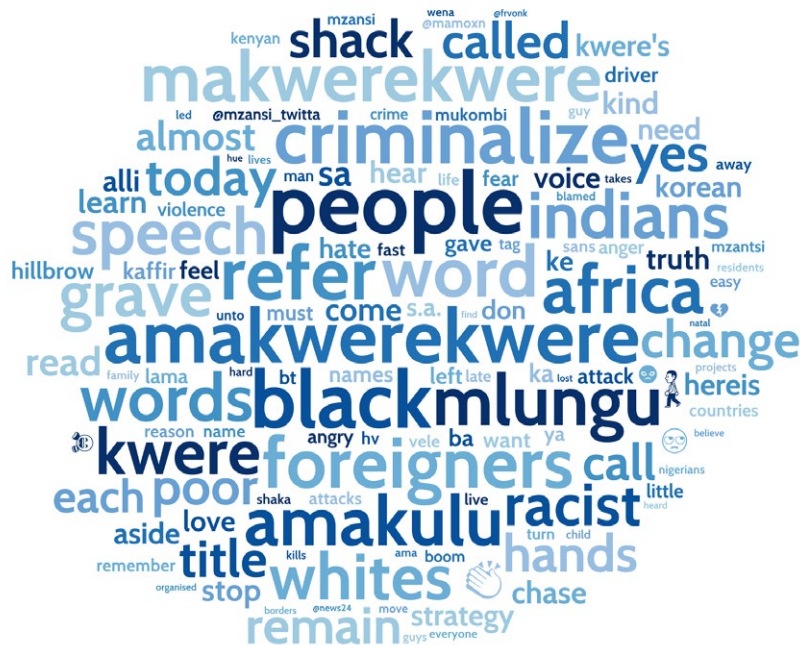
9. Makwerekwere/kwerekwere

Other spellings and related references: *qwera-qwera, qweru-qweru; hambani makwerekwere!; amazaizai (Zulu); amanyasa/amangongongo; Gweja (Xhosa)*

Sample posts:



Definition: This is a colloquial term meaning 'foreigner' and is generally used to target black migrants or refugees in South Africa, especially those from southern African countries. It is a post-1994 term; *amanyasa/amangongongo* were used to describe foreigners before the transition to democracy. One workshop attendee observed that it wasn't originally uttered as hate speech but as a way to describe how one spoke. It took on the characteristic of incitement of hate speech around the time of the series of xenophobic attacks against migrants in 2008 and 2014. However, it has also been used against Chinese and Pakistanis and in some cases even against Venda, Tsonga, and others who reside in KwaZulu Natal but speak languages other than Zulu. Workshop participants believed it was not reserved to particular incidents but was more commonly used. It is generally believed to be exacerbated by the lack of employment and access to services amongst black South Africans.



South Africa HateSpeech Monitor: Ma... — Words from 9/3/18 to 4/14/19

Why it’s offensive and inflammatory: The term is used to stereotype foreigners as drug dealers and criminals and claim that they want to take things from black South Africans; as an example, respondents cited the phrases, “Amakwerekwere want to take our jobs and our women,” “Hambani makwerekwere!/ Foreigners go home!”. Because of this, it can be used to mobilize people to attack migrants. Workshop participants indicated it is “highly” likely to incite violence, including looting, “hectic” violence, and abuses against female foreign nationals.

Alternative words that could be used: migrant; refugee; foreign national; S’bari

10. Monkey

Other spellings and related references: *monkeys; baboon; aap; bobbejaan*

Sample posts:

Lmao she can't even come back to South Africa coz her white neighbours might mistake them for monkeys and shoot them.

Hollywood Reporter @THR
Charlize Theron has considered leaving U.S. for safety of her black children thr.cm/PjZnyx

This 702 porch monkey does not belong on this continent. Like most stupid weak blacks he's part of the problem that keeps Afrika & it's people from moving into the right direction.

Why it's offensive and inflammatory: The phrase calls for the murder of white Afrikaner farmers, who are characterized as settlers or Boers in historic terms, in order to take back land. It incites black people to attack whites on the basis of their perceived membership in a group. As a workshop participant saw it, "When the phrase was first used, it was used to fight back against "systematic" violence against the majority population, but that if used now, it could cause violence because of its specific call to arms." Participants reported that the phrase was used during the #FeesMustFall and Cecil Rhodes statue protests suggesting that the phrase is used in battles against the system. Given the association with issues of land ownership and white farmers, the potential for violence is high.

Alternative words that could be used: None provided

12. Pink Pigs

Other spellings and related references: *pink pigs must die; pink thieves; pinkies; lekgoa; white pigs; piggy piggy*

Sample posts:



The image shows a screenshot of a forum post on the left and three tweets on the right. The forum post is from mybroadband.co.za and discusses a user who is referred to as a 'pink pig'. The tweets are from Twitter and contain the following text: 'You white pigs think we give a Flying fuck of your opinions, we're not even phased.', 'Fucken white racist pigs must rot in jail.', and 'Kill that pink pig'.

Definition: The English words and the Sesotho/Setswana/Sepedi term 'lekgoa' are derogatory terms for a white person based on the generally light complexion of their skin; the pink description came about because white people's skin would appear red when they were angry. It's not clear how or when it originated or what triggers its occurrence. It is used by blacks against whites; in some instances, it is used against albino people as well as coloured people. Respondents provided two examples: "We will kill you pink pigs! You settlers stole our land. We will rape and kill your white bitches!" and "Why don't pink pigs fuck off back to Europe?"

14. White monopoly capitalists

Other spellings and related references: *white monopoly capital; white minority capital; WMC; white elites*

Sample posts:



The image displays four sample social media posts arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each post is contained within a rectangular frame and includes a profile picture, a 'Follow' button, and a 'Replying to' field. The text of the posts is as follows:

- Top-left post:** "White monopoly capital exists! Whites dominates the economy. And okunye DA is a white party, mazilime ziyoma elityeni, kuqhawuke eqhawukayo!"
- Top-right post:** "This is white monopoly at its better, as long as whites control the economy, nothing will change in terms of African blacks closing a gap with whites economically"
- Bottom-left post:** "6. Who is the enemy of black people? White Monopoly Capital which is the system of power which benefits all whites and disadvantages all blacks"
- Bottom-right post:** "But I See White Monopoly Capital is a permanent friend we need to destroy."

Definition: While the phrase existed previously, it is known to have been promoted by British public relations firm Bell Pottinger to stoke divisions in the country for the benefit of corrupt businessmen around then-President Zuma.³⁴ As one respondent noted, the meaning behind the phrase is that, "White people use their (perceived) capital wealth in monopolist ways to enrich themselves" - manipulating the economy or 'pulling all the strings.' Nonetheless, whether or not South Africans see the term as connected to Zuma-era political scandals, there is widespread belief that whites still control the economy and that it still works largely to their benefit — despite multi-racial democracy and the presence of wealthy black business leaders such as (now-President) Cyril Ramaphosa and Patrice Motsepe. For example, workshop participants recalled that the term was prevalent in debates surrounding the police massacre of striking mine workers at Marikana in 2012, where a mostly black police force shot down black trade unionists working for the foreign-owned Lonmin mining company. Some online commenters have referred to prominent blacks who work for white-owned firms as 'WMC stooges.' As the workshop participants pointed out, the phrase serves to distract from the questions about unemployment, the distribution of wealth, and 'state capture' in South Africa by highlighting the issue of race.



South Africa HateSpeech Monitor: Wh... — Words from 9/3/18 to 4/14/19 🌸

Why it's offensive and inflammatory: While there may be white capitalists who are enriching themselves at the expense of others, it is used broadly to target white business people in general and suggests an unwillingness to share wealth with a broader group. It may be more offensive and inflammatory when used to rally people, especially by a foreign public relations firm as alleged, whereas it is not hate speech when used to describe South Africa's existing economic structure.

Alternative words that could be used: wealthy businessman, wealthy businesswoman

15. White privilege

Other spellings and related references: *white supremacy*

Sample posts:

Replying to [redacted]

I'm not in the business of licking white privilege ass. I am born of freedom fighters. Biko would slap the hell out of bullshit white racist. That's the only language they understand. All over the world.

[redacted] · 5 months ago

Not sure how long it will take, but their lands will return to what they previously were once they kick the "white privilege(d)" and "racists" out. History repeats. 10 ^ | v · Reply · Share

[redacted] is with [redacted]

March 8 · 🌐

White privilege is equals black misery since apartheid. They claim to be hard workers holding onto stolen property.

[redacted]

March 14, 2018 at 12:18 PM · 🌐

White privilege is kill for ownership and whatever right white men decree they have is by superior right over any and all natives. Oppression by the violently... See More

Additional Words or Phrases That Are Offensive and Inflammatory

Workshops were held in Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, and Cape Town in February 2019 in order to validate the primary terms. At these workshops, participants identified additional terms that were new or that were not included in the preceding list of terms. Given the limited scope of the workshops, there is less contextual information for these new terms.

Amakhula/khuli	A term originating in the apartheid era to refer in a derogatory way to South Africans who were or appeared to be of Indian heritage. It was also prominent in the 2008 and 2015 xenophobic attacks targeting people of both Indian and Pakistani heritage. Since it's based on appearance, it is highly inflammatory and similar to 'kaffir' in impact. 'Indian' and 'ama ndiya' are two alternative terms that could be used.
Amakrok okroko/ amakroko kroko	A derogatory phrase used online and offline to refer to people living with disabilities. It originated in commentary around the Special Olympics and its athletes, including by national sports organizations and national broadcasters, but it has been used more broadly to refer to people with disabilities. Reportedly, President Mbeki advised people against the using the term as he believed it was offensive. Athletes or Paralympians could be used as alternative terms.
Bushies/ Hottentot/ama dushie [Sotho]	Bushies is a derogatory term used by blacks and others against coloured people to characterize them as illiterate, uneducated, and primitive. It is believed to have been originated by the Xoi and San peoples. Hottentot is used by whites against coloured people with the same meaning and purpose. It is an older term, less commonly used, and its offensiveness depends on the context in which it is used.
Heshe/He or She	A term used to refer to people from the LGBTQI community
Inkawu [Zulu/ Xhosa]/leswafe [Sesotho/ Setswana]	A term that translates as white monkey with the connotation of ugly and is used to refer to people with albinism. It is highly inflammatory because it characterizes a human as an animal. It has incited people to kill those with albinism in KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo. An alternative phrase that could be used would be 'people living with albinism.'
Prostitute/ umagosha [Zulu]/ umarhosha/ legosha [Sotho]	Terms used in a derogatory way by police and community members to refer to female commercial sex workers or women who are perceived as promiscuous. The terms are common online as well as offline in communities. Alternative terms that might be used are 'commercial sex worker' or 'promiscuous woman.'
S'dudla/plus-size	A term used to refer to big-built, full-figured, large, or overweight people, as well as people who are slightly big but not overweight. It is mostly used against women. While it is mainly offensive and normally results in bullying, there have been instances of people who were targeted committing suicide. Alternative English-language terms might be 'overweight' or 'obese.'
S'febe/bitch	Terms used to refer to females who are considered promiscuous. It is typically used to denigrate women by drawing a link between a woman and a female dog.
Tea Bag	A term used to refer to a black or coloured person who is light skinned
VW/Volkswagen	A term used to refer to people from the LGBTQI community
Yellow bones	A phrase used to refer to black people with a light complexion

Annex A: Methodology and Considerations

Scope and Design

Working with partner Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), the project team created a web-based survey so that South Africans could provide their experiences and insights about the phenomenon—as PeaceTech Lab has done in prior lexicons. Approximately 650 people responded to the online survey administered by MMA in early 2019. Project and MMA staff then held three days of workshops in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Pietermaritzburg in late February-early March to validate the lexicon’s findings. Finally, in early 2019, the team assembled a small group of South African advisors, who provided expert review of the draft lexicon.

Survey

The project team drafted the online survey. The design that was developed drew on surveys for prior lexicons but was tailored to ensure it did not restrict respondents from providing multiple examples of offensive terms and phrases. While the prior surveys drew on other approaches and initiatives, including that of the Dangerous Speech framework pioneered by Susan Benesch, the team decided to use the more common phrase “offensive and inflammatory” in framing the survey questions. This decision was largely based on the fact that the survey’s primary goal was to have respondents identify specific terms that could inflame conflict rather than evaluate the variables of a particular framework. With this goal, the project team also intended to avoid prejudging or prequalifying the associations and dynamics that the respondents assigned to the terms. “Offensive and inflammatory” is a more readily understood threshold that reflects hate speech’s core meaning as conveying offense, as well as possible incitement to action or discrimination. If a term was seen merely as offensive, it would not rise to the threshold of inclusion; it needed also to be inflammatory. Relatedly, while South Africa has legal prohibitions against hate speech, this project didn’t aim to determine the legality of identified terms but rather the context by which the terms are offensive and inflammatory and might lead to violence.

The survey was hosted on a Google Forms platform because of the widespread familiarity with Google products, as well as Google’s security features. For this lexicon, PeaceTech Lab and MMA undertook different means of dissemination. As with the earlier surveys, the project team decided not to broadly publicize the survey, given both the topic’s sensitivity and the desire for thorough and reflective responses. Rather, MMA assembled a list of potential respondents based on its contacts and networks related to its work promoting access to media, ethical journalism, and democracy and human rights. As with past lexicons, the team believed this reliance on MMA’s networks would produce quality responses, even if the respondents were not randomly selected. In addition, to facilitate participation, MMA made the survey available on its Facebook page. Reminders were sent to the contacts and network to encourage participation. In the end, the survey achieved approximately 650 responses.

Validation Workshops

Based on data from the survey, a draft of the most frequently cited offensive and inflammatory terms was produced, including origins, meaning, and other contextual information. This draft was then critiqued over the course of three days in workshops organized and facilitated by PeaceTech Lab and MMA in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Pietermaritzburg. The workshops

comprised approximately 60 participants and represented multiple segments of South Africa's population: youth leaders, women leaders, and civic and religious leaders with overlap across the groups. The workshops provided important clarification on the origins and usage of the terms, and importantly, the contexts in which they were most potent while also unearthing new terms. The sessions were audio-recorded to ensure accurate capture of the data and perspectives. The inputs from the workshop sessions were then incorporated into a draft of the lexicon's most frequently cited terms.

Expert Advisors

Finally, the project assembled a small group of four South Africans to provide expert review of the full draft lexicon. These expert advisors were selected based on their expertise and represented different communities, genders, and professions. They contributed additional analysis and insights on the lexicon, helping to interpret local context and meanings.

Annex B: Online Survey Questions

Survey of Online Hate Speech and Violence in South Africa

This is a short survey to identify words and phrases currently used online that are offensive and inflammatory and could contribute to violence in the current national context. Thank you for helping us gather and understand as many terms as you know about, by answering the following questions as best as you can.

1. Examples of Words or Phrases that are Offensive and Inflammatory.

Please list as many words or phrases as you can, that you have seen online that are offensive and inflammatory and could contribute to violence.

For example, in Argentina in the 1970s and Rwanda in the 1990s, political and military leaders referred to people they disliked as 'insects' (word) and 'cockroaches to be exterminated' (phrase).

2. Sources of Offensive and Inflammatory speech.

a. Where do you see these words or phrases most often? Choose all that apply (check box)

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- News Website
- Other: _____

b. In which specific groups, pages or accounts did you see these terms online?

Please kindly provide the URL or name of the group, account and site, or the direct URL to the website or page.

- Which specific groups, pages or accounts on Facebook did you see these terms?
- Which specific or accounts on YouTube did you see these terms?
- Which specific accounts on Twitter did you see these terms?
- News website (for example, in an opinion or comment section of an article)

3. Meaning and Context of Offensive and Inflammatory Speech.

From the list you provided in question 1, choose three (3) terms are the most offensive and/or the most frequently seen online - and provide the following additional information:

1 (Word or Phrase that is Offensive and Inflammatory)

- Term:
- What language is this term in?
- What does this term mean?
- Why is this word or phrase offensive and inflammatory?
- How the term is used in a sentence or comment:
- What is a different word or phrase that people can use to express this idea -- but is less offensive and inflammatory?

- What specific issues or topics are most likely to trigger use of the word or phrase that you identified?

#2 (Word or Phrase that is Offensive and Inflammatory)

- Term:
- What language is this term in?
- What does this term mean?
- Why is this word or phrase offensive and inflammatory?
- How is the term used in a sentence or comment?
- What is a different word or phrase that people can use to express this idea -- but is less offensive and inflammatory?
- What specific issues or topics are most likely to trigger use of the word or phrase that you identified?

#3 (Word or Phrase that is Offensive and Inflammatory)

- Term:
- What language is this term in?
- What does this term mean?
- Why is this word or phrase offensive and inflammatory?
- How is the term used in a sentence or comment:
- What is a different word or phrase that people can use to express this idea -- but is less offensive and inflammatory?
- What specific issues or topics are most likely to trigger use of the word or phrase that you identified?

4. Your Background

- Any information you provide will be kept private and confidential. It will not be shared with anyone and will only be used for analysis of this survey. This information will help us to ensure that we have reached a broad demographic representation.
- Email (Your email address will enable us to share with you the results of the survey once the data analysis is completed.)
- What is your age?
- What is your gender? (Non-gender binary options)
- What is your primary language?
- Where do you currently live?
- Do you have any questions or comments for us? (Please feel free to ask us any questions or provide comments on this questionnaire. We will respond to your questions and comments using the email address you provided above.)

Issues and Risks

During the research process, the project team encountered several issues and risks that it attempted to mitigate.

Relevance of Model to South Africa

The previous lexicons focused on social media and conflict in countries where there were active armed conflicts (South Sudan I and II, Nigeria, Cameroon) in addition to other forms of conflict and violence. Like many countries, South African society features a variety of forms of violence, from criminal to inter-personal, but it doesn't experience widespread civil conflict. Moreover, while many citizens have their complaints, South Africa also has robust government and civil institutions and ongoing policy initiatives to address many of the issues that trigger hate speech. In assessing these country differences, as well as the applicability of the model, the team nonetheless affirmed that the focus of project and process is understanding the context and dynamics of language and speech whether or not there was an active conflict into which such speech fed. Moreover, while more of a flashpoint or trigger, the impending general elections in South Africa provided an opportunity to understand how such speech affects an election environment. Finally, the variation in countries under study provides insights for refining the PeaceTech Lab model.

Limitations of Survey as a Data Collection Tool

This lexicon employed an online survey as its main data collection tool. This format has several limitations, among them, that some respondents may have found it unwieldy and that its online nature limits fuller and more sophisticated responses. However, the large pool of invitees to the survey and the large number of respondents helped ensure that enough data was collected and that a broader cross-section of society participated. In addition, the team revised the survey format used previously to better accommodate multiple responses; in this way, a corresponding increase in the variety of contexts and meanings were obtained for each term. Finally, the project addressed these risks by utilizing validation workshops and expert reviewers to evaluate and validate the data.

Aspects of Time and Scope

PeaceTech Lab and Media Monitoring Africa intended for this lexicon to be available and useful to groups involved in monitoring for hate speech in the lead-up to the 2019 elections in South Africa. The project's operations all occurred after the date of the election was announced; it is quite possible that with additional time to analyze data or additional time to hold workshops in other areas of the country that other terms or other context or associations for the terms could have been obtained. Nonetheless, the project mitigated this concern with the size of the survey response and the robust participation at the workshops, as well as the opportunity to conduct the research as campaigning was taking place, thus capturing terms and context provoked by the election and its issues.

Limitations Regarding Project Methodology and Hate Speech Concepts

Methodologies for identifying and analyzing hate speech in any country context are relatively new and in need of not only testing and refining but also of elucidating and explaining. Post-apartheid South Africa is a revolutionary and transformational society, and as mentioned above, is often at the forefront of incorporating a human rights or justice perspective into its institutions, legal frameworks, and broader culture - an effort which continues. PeaceTech Lab's approach seeks to identify the words and phrases being used and their context in order to understand the dynamics that make them inflammatory. While South Africa defines prohibited speech in legislation, there isn't a universally accepted or understood definition of hate speech amongst society. Thus, the team uses the phrase 'offensive and inflammatory' as a threshold to guide respondents/participants, monitors, peer reviewers, and expert advisors in assessing such speech. The terms are then considered on the basis of how offensive and inflammatory they are on a continuum of derogatory, offensive, and action. In this way, the team aims to avoid the tendency among respondents to want to offer legalistic definitions but instead allow for the complexity of origins and meaning and the fluid nature of language.

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ABOUT PEACE TECH LAB

PeaceTech Lab works for individuals and communities affected by conflict, using technology, media, and data to accelerate local peacebuilding efforts. An independent non-profit organization, the Lab's mission is to amplify the power of peacetech to save lives through earlier warnings and smarter responses to violence. The Lab's programs emphasize a data-driven, cross-sector approach, engaging everyone from student engineers and citizen journalists to Fortune 500 companies in scaling the impact of peacetech.



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