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FIKILE Mbalula | Twitter

SOCIAL MEDIA

Fikile is top of SA leaders' tweet ratings

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WITH more than two million followers, Fikile Mbalula tops the government's Twitter account holder list.

The second most popular departmental account is that of the SAPS at 1 million, up from 889 000 in 2021. Yet, Police Minister Cele, a controversial newsmaker by far, is not on Twitter.

According to Decode Communication's annual report on government leaders on Twitter, the government's Twitter usage grew from 67% in 2021 to 72% last year.

"Mbalula is followed by President Cyril Ramaphosa, whose account has a healthy following of 2.5 million, up from 2.1 million the previous year – a whopping 20.25% growth," said Decode Communications CEO Lorato Tshenkeng.

He said although all the top 10 government Twitter accounts showed growth in the year under review, all the other eight paled in numbers compared with Mbalula's and Ramaphosa's.

Tshenkeng said Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe came a distant third at just over 500 000 followers, while Minister of Public Works Patricia de Lille continues to experience the least growth at 224 000 followers up just 2% from 2021.

"Unlike in 2021, all the top 10 most followed accounts of Cabinet members and the top 10 most followed national departments in 2022 were verified. On the contrary, none of the 10 most followed accounts of Cabinet members' spokespeople were verified," Tshenkeng said.

The report found the majority of government spokespeople do not use Twitter for policy communication and promotion of messages of their departments and principals.

Tshenkeng said the report also noted it was unfortunate social media accounts of government leaders were not institutionalised.

"This is a missed opportunity for ministers like Health Minister Joe Phaahla and SAPS Minister Bheki Cele, both of whom are big newsmakers.

"Curiously, when it comes to departments, Transport does not feature in the top 10, proving that Mbalula's followers are about the person more than the office.

"The Presidency's account at 2.3 million followers, a 13.26% jump from 2021, pretty much mirrors that of the president."