

Biweekly Report: Disinformation Trends and Social Media Monitoring in Ethiopia

November 16–30, 2025

**Compiled
By**

**MFC Team
MultiFact Check, Inc
(MFC)**

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*MultiFact Check, Inc
www.multifactcheck.org*

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1. Executive Summary

Ethiopia’s digital landscape remained highly turbulent during this reporting period. Political tension, security crises, and emerging election narratives converged to create a volatile information environment. As a result, graphic content, polarizing political messages, and fast-moving misinformation surged across major platforms.

Moreover, actors with diverse motives used AI-generated images, recycled footage, and manipulated narratives to influence public perception. These tactics shaped political debate, intensified fear, and deepened mistrust among online communities.

This report highlights the major conversations, explains the patterns behind misinformation, and provides insights into how digital manipulation continues to influence Ethiopia's online discourse.

2. Scope

This biweekly report examines public conversations across Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and TikTok. These platforms dominate Ethiopia’s digital ecosystem and rapidly shape public perception. Consequently, they serve as central hubs for political debate, crisis communication, and rumor circulation.

Additionally, we monitored statements from political actors, religious authorities, and civil society organizations, since their public positions often spark immediate reactions online. This broader lens helps us evaluate how narratives originate, spread, and transform across platforms.

3. Approach

We used advanced monitoring tools, including Feedly, TweetDeck, and Google News, to track narratives in real time. This approach allowed us to identify emerging rumors quickly and observe how they evolved into misinformation or disinformation.

After collecting the narratives, we compared them with verified fact-checks from MFC, PesaCheck, AFP Fact Check, and Ethiopia Check. This cross-verification ensured accuracy and limited the influence of unverified claims in our analysis.

When a narrative lacked evidence, we labeled it as a claim. This practice reinforces transparency and helps readers distinguish fact-based reporting from unverified or speculative commentary.

4. Disclaimer

This report analyzes publicly available digital content. It does not promote, endorse, or support any political actor, institution, or ideological position. Screenshots, links, and examples reflect patterns in misinformation and are included strictly for research purposes. Their inclusion does not imply

agreement or amplification. Verified claims always take precedence. Unverified stories remain clearly marked to avoid confusion and preserve editorial integrity.

5. Introduction and Context

Ethiopia’s information environment remained deeply polarized between November 16 and 30. Several overlapping forces contributed to this instability, and each force shaped online debate in distinct ways.

First, the Pretoria Peace Agreement continued to drive conflict-related narratives. Many users argued that the agreement had stalled or was deliberately undermined. Others insisted that critics were sabotaging the process. Because of this tension, the digital space became a venue for battles over legitimacy, territorial rights, and the return of displaced persons.

Second, worsening insecurity in Amhara and Oromia pushed graphic violence into the center of online conversation. Violent videos spread rapidly, while rival groups used AI-generated images to frame opponents. These tactics made it difficult for users to distinguish truth from manipulation and eroded already fragile trust in institutions.

Third, political actors intensified their online messaging ahead of the 2026 election. Parties issued public statements, coordinated appeals, and mobilized supporters across platforms. Their activity increased exposure to partisan narratives and expanded opportunities for misinformation to flourish.

Overall, Ethiopia’s digital environment reflected a population searching for clarity while navigating an ecosystem overwhelmed by political tension, fear, and competing narratives.

6. Viral Topics and Discussion Issues

This section highlights conversations that captured national attention and generated

extraordinary engagement across major platforms.

6.1 High-Traction Non-Election Conversations

6.1.1 X’s Location Feature

X introduced its [“About This Account”](#) feature on November 23. The update allowed users to see the country or region linked to an account. The rollout quickly spread across both [global](#) and Ethiopian digital spaces and triggered immediate reactions.

Many users began checking the locations of influencers, activists, and political commentators. Consequently, the feature fueled suspicion, exposed cross-border networks, and intensified debates about credibility and foreign interference.

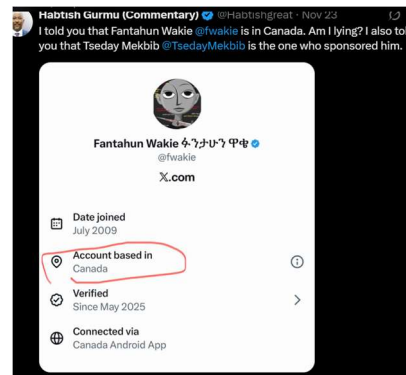


Image: Screenshot taken from X

6.1.2 Graphic Violence Videos

Graphic videos dominated the Ethiopian digital landscape. The first video showed armed men cutting off a man’s hand while accusing him of supporting the government. The clip spread rapidly across Telegram, X, and Facebook.

Government supporters blamed Fano. Fano supporters countered with a screenshot

showing the attacker among individuals who allegedly surrendered earlier to the government. This narrative reversal escalated accusations and deepened confusion.



Image: Screenshot taken from X

Then, a senior government adviser [stated that](#) the Fano group filmed its own crimes and that authorities released the video intentionally after capturing the perpetrators.

Shortly afterward, an AI-generated image appeared online showing the alleged attacker sitting with an ENDF commander. This image intensified outrage until [fact-checkers](#) exposed it as fabricated.



A second violent video showed a man tied to a car and dragged on the ground while bystanders laughed. Users expressed shock and horror, and the clip fueled renewed debate about lawlessness and impunity.

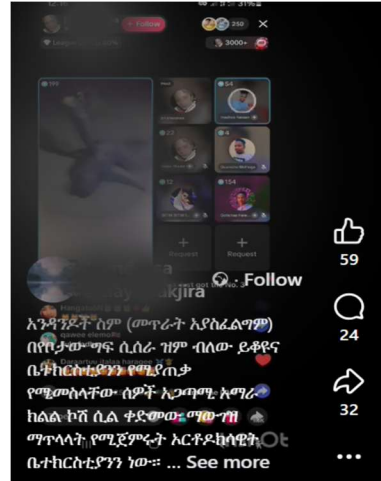


Image: Screenshot taken from Facebook (A Tiktok livestreamed video recorded and shared on Facebook)

6.1.3 Misleading “Sheep Disguise” Migrant Photo

A global viral image claimed to show migrants disguised as sheep while attempting to enter Spain. Ethiopian users shared it widely, often with disbelief or humor.

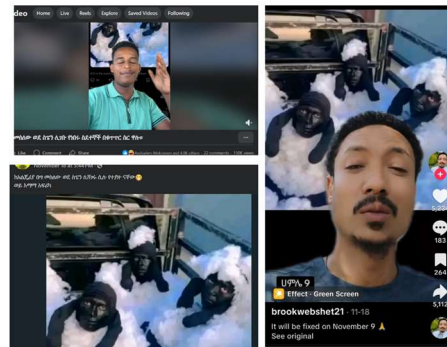


Image: Screenshot taken from Facebook and Tiktok

However, [fact-checkers traced](#) the image to a TikToker comedy skit. The incident demonstrated how novelty content transforms into misinformation when shared without context.

6.1.4 Attack in Benishangul-Gumuz

More than 40 civilians were [killed in Bakuji Kebele](#) on November 22, 2025. The attack triggered widespread condemnation. Political actors issued statements, while users expressed grief, anger, and demands for accountability

The incident dominated discussions about insecurity, state capacity, and rising [extremist activity](#).

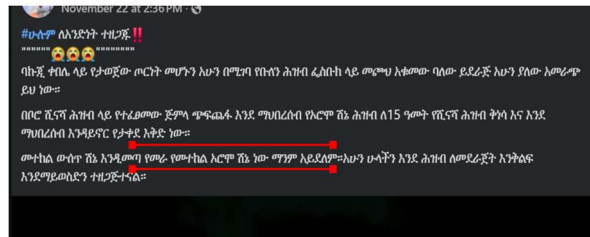


Image: Screenshot taken from Facebook (Emphasis added)

6.1.5 Volcano Eruption in Afar

The Hayli Gubbi [volcano erupted](#) for the first time in about 12,000 years. Although the eruption subsided quickly, ash plumes disrupted international flights.

Ethiopian users discussed the eruption extensively, sharing images, personal accounts, and scientific explanations. The topic offered a rare moment of non-political engagement.

6.1.6 U.S. Embassy Map Error

The U.S. Embassy posted a video that displayed inaccurate maps of Ethiopia and Sudan. Users immediately noticed the mistake. The error triggered criticism, conspiracy theories, and claims of geopolitical intent.



Image: Screenshot taken from Facebook

Although the embassy deleted the post and [corrected the video](#), the controversy persisted and fueled speculation for days.



Image: Screenshot taken from Facebook

6.1.7 Marburg Virus Updates

The Ministry of Health continued to share daily updates on Marburg cases. Although engagement was lower than at the start of the outbreak, users still discussed the disease frequently.

These updates demonstrated how public health information competes with political narratives in digital spaces.

6.1.8 *Getachew Reda's Interview - Short Clip*

A [short clip](#) from Getachew Reda's interview with Mehdi Hasan on Aljazeera's Head to Head went viral. During the War in Tigray, Getachew accused Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of committing genocide in Tigray. In the clip, he hesitated when pressed to restate those accusations.



Image: Screenshot taken from X

Critics called his response inconsistent and accused him of protecting the government. Supporters argued that the Pretoria Agreement required both sides to refrain from inflammatory statements.

The clip sparked intense debate about political accountability, consistency, and loyalty.

6.1.9 *Public Reaction After Reda's Full Interview Release*

Al Jazeera released the full interview on November 27, 2025. Although controversy decreased, discussions continued.



Image: Some of the social media conversations

Some users argued that the panel lacked balance, especially regarding the [Amhara perspective](#). They claimed the scholars - Tsedale Lema, Bisrat Lemessa, and Kjetil Tronvoll - represented Oromo or Tigray viewpoints.

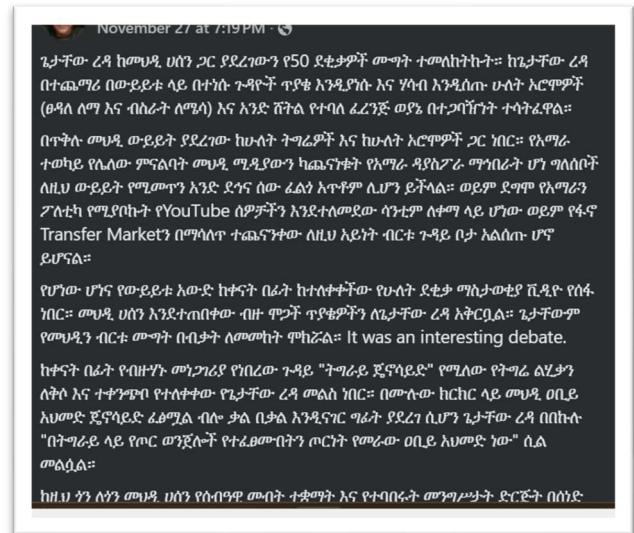


Image: Screenshot taken from Facebook

This debate reflected broader concerns about representation and narrative dominance in national politics.

6.2 Election-Related Conversations

6.2.1 Tigray Democratic Solidarity Party Statement

The Tigray Democratic Solidarity Party (TDSP) warned that inflammatory rhetoric threatened the Pretoria Agreement. The party accused intellectuals and religious figures of undermining peace and obstructing efforts to return displaced persons in Tigray.

The [statement](#) reignited debates about constitutional order, territorial disputes, and the government’s responsibility to protect peace.

6.2.2 The Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) and the Oromo Liberation Front’s (OLF) Letter to Shimelis Abdissa

[OFC and OLF](#) jointly sent a letter requesting a meeting with the Oromia regional president, Shimeles Abdisa. The letter called for discussion on security, governance, and the rights of the Oromo people.

Supporters shared the letter widely, viewing it as a coordinated effort to pressure regional authorities.

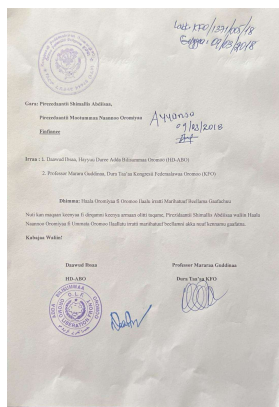


Image: OLF and OFC Joint letter to Shimelis Abdissa

6.2.3 OFC’s International Appeal on Detentions

OFC announced an urgent appeal after two senior members - [Gemechu Dobocho](#) and [Ali Abdella](#) - were detained. The party alleged unlawful arrest, intimidation, and restricted family access.

OFC demanded immediate release and appealed to local and international bodies. The story sparked strong reactions across Oromia and contributed to rising political tension.

6.2.4 BDP–PP Merger

Baro Democratic Party (BDP) announced its [plan to merge](#) with the Prosperity Party (PP). Some leaders opposed the decision and questioned its legitimacy.

The debate highlighted shifting alliances, internal fractures, and concerns about political competitiveness.

6.2.5 EPRP Public Meeting Announcement

Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party (EPRP) [announced](#) a public meeting scheduled for December 6, 2025 to discuss insecurity, displacement, and governance failures.

The announcement revived discussions about the party’s historical legacy and its role in modern political debate.

7. Disinformation Trend

7.1 Visual Manipulation and AI-Generated Images

AI tools played a major role in digital deception. Actors created images to fabricate

meetings between militants and military officials or to depict fictional drone strikes. These images spread quickly because they confirmed existing beliefs and heightened emotional responses. Fortunately, fact-checkers detected distortions, lighting inconsistencies, and unnatural features that exposed the fabrications.

7.2 Recycled Media Reports and Old Footage

Several viral posts reused old videos or images. Actors presented them as new evidence of conflict or political resistance.

One [post falsely](#) claimed that the “Menelik Army” captured a tank in Wollo. A reverse image search indicates the image has been on the internet for at least two years.



Image: Screenshot taken from X

Another viral video of supposed Eritrean protests [came from 2016](#). These examples show how old media gains new life when tied to current anxieties.



Image: Screenshot taken from X

7.3 Misleading Interpretation of Genuine Events

Some actors manipulated real speeches or events to build false narratives. [Several posts](#) claimed that Lt. General Zewdu Belay announced an attack on Assab port. A full review of his speech showed no such reference. He only warned internal actors to stop threats.

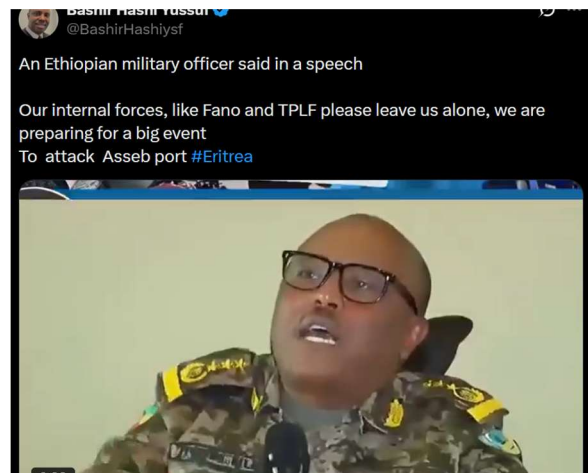


Image: Screenshot taken from X

This manipulation demonstrated how selective framing can transform a genuine message into a sensational but false claim.

8. Data Collection Overview

During this reporting time, our monitoring team tracked a total of 396 instances of disinformation across various sources and social media platforms in the Ethiopia digital media landscape. The data collected is presented from three perspectives: Disinformation Volume by Source Type, Disinformation Volume by Source Category, and Disinformation Distribution Across Social Media Platforms.

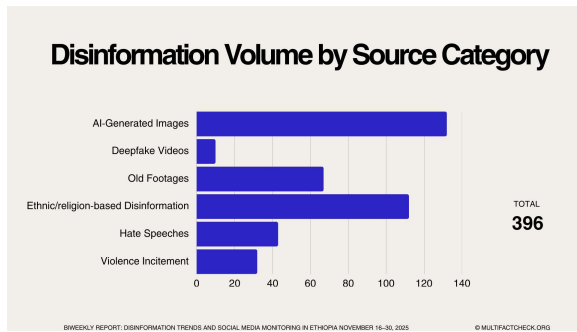


Image: Infographics - Copyright MFC

The primary sources of this content were Individual Users (396 instances) and Political Activists (250 instances), accounting for the largest share of the volume by source type. Disinformation was most frequently distributed on TikTok (29%) and Facebook (27.8%), followed closely by X.

The dominant categories of harmful content observed were AI-Generated Images (around 135 instances) and Ethnic/religion-based Disinformation (around 115 instances), which together constituted the largest share of the monitored volume by category.

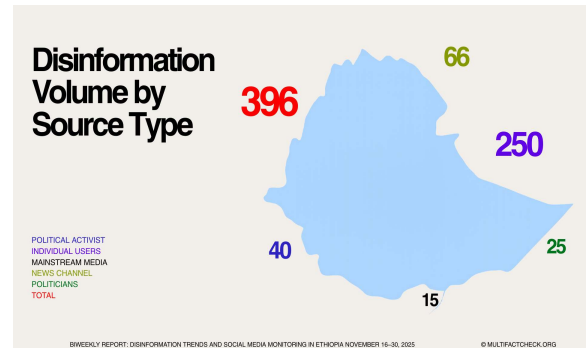


Image: Infographics - Copyright MFC

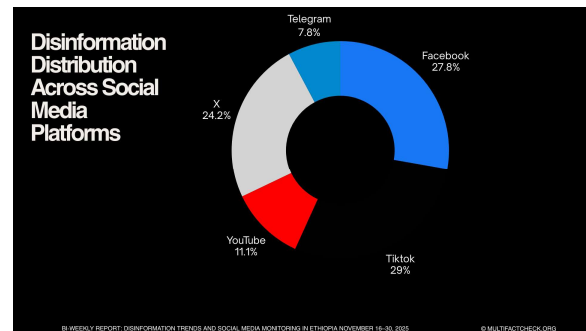


Image: Infographics - Copyright MFC

9. Conclusion

Ethiopia's digital ecosystem remains highly susceptible to manipulation. Political uncertainty, regional instability, and election mobilization created fertile ground for misinformation.

Therefore, Ethiopia needs stronger media literacy, rapid verification systems, and continued investment in independent fact-checking.

MFC will continue monitoring emerging narratives and providing evidence-based guidance to help the public navigate an increasingly complex digital sphere.

MultiFact Check (MFC) is an independent fact-checking organization dedicated to investigating claims that spread misinformation and disinformation, and publishing fact-checked reports to inform the public. Our work is geographically focused, with primary emphasis on nations in the Horn of Africa and their diaspora communities. With a presence in various regions of Africa, Europe, and North America, MFC leverages a team of professionals with diverse expertise to deploy best practices in journalism and scholarships, identifying, investigating, and publishing accurate facts.