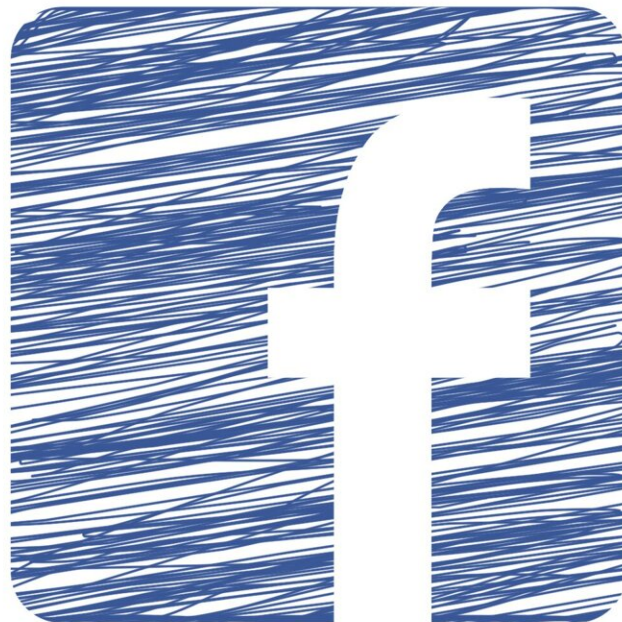


Social media platforms under scrutiny ahead of Kenyan elections

August 1 2022, by Samuel Gebre



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Authorities in Kenya have given Facebook a week to comply with regulations related to hate speech after a report found the social media giant had failed to address the issue ahead of elections next month.

The warnings by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission follow findings from an investigation by Global Witness documenting how Facebook, owned by Meta Platforms Inc., didn't detect hate [speech](#) advertisements in both Kenya's official languages—English and Swahili.

Misinformation on social media has become an increasingly major problem around the world, especially during elections. Kenya holds what promises to be a closely fought presidential poll on Aug. 9, with Deputy President William Ruto and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga the leading candidates to replace Uhuru Kenyatta.

Meta said earlier this month it has been working for the past year to prepare for the elections, using [artificial intelligence](#), human reviews and user reports to remove content that is harmful or otherwise violates company standards.

"In the six months leading up to April 30, we took action on more than 37,000 pieces of content for violating our Hate Speech policies on Facebook and Instagram in Kenya," the group said in a July 20 update. Elections in the East African nation have in the past been marred by violence.

Meta didn't immediately comment on the NCIC's recommendation.

Kenya is not new to the use of [social media](#) for nefarious reasons during

elections. In the 2017 vote, Cambridge Analytica was accused of working secretly with Kenyatta's campaign, as reported by Channel 4. The country has one of the highest internet penetration rates in sub-Saharan Africa, at 85%.

Facebook is not the only platform under scrutiny. Twitter Inc. and newcomer TikTok are also being analyzed. Research by Mozilla Foundation found that TikTok has become a "forum for fast and far-spreading political disinformation," in a report released in June.

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