

Statement by Council for Responsible Social Media

The Council for Responsible Social Media is a nonpartisan group of concerned citizens, eminent Kenyans and civil society organizations coming together to defend our country under attack and to hold social media platforms to higher standards.

We are deeply concerned about the harms social media platforms pose to the health and safety of Kenyans and are stepping up to expose the challenges and guide a public conversation on sensible solutions.

As a priority, we are profoundly alarmed about the [recent findings](#) from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) that Meta failed to stop the spread of hateful terrorist content in East Africa. It was revealed that known terrorist organizations have created a highly coordinated network to promote online propaganda and target Kenyans with extremist content, attempting to radicalise the youth and spread harmful narratives that undermine our elections, with specific calls to take up arms and reject human rights and our democracy.

This disturbing content violates Facebook's own terms of service and paints a vivid and grim picture of massive failure by Facebook to regulate harmful content contrary to their own safeguarding and content moderation policies, as was also highlighted in Times' [Inside Facebook's Africa's Sweatshop story](#). This content moderation failure is one of the reasons why Facebook is also under [scrutiny for its role in Ethiopia's conflict](#) where it was used by militias to seed calls for violence against ethnic minorities. Clearly, social media platforms are operating unchecked in Africa. These companies prioritize content moderation in English, but they are woefully underserved when it comes to vetting mis and disinformation in the African languages. This must change.

This lack of effective content moderation poses substantive harm to social media users in Kenya and Africa at large. there is therefore urgent need to demand that social media platforms pay more attention to Africa and put adequate content moderation policies in place and invest properly in platform safety. Kenyan authorities and regulators must prevent companies from profiting from harms and be more accountable and transparent.

We call on the ICT Ministry and Communications Authority of Kenya to actively encourage companies to develop and publicly sign a self-regulatory Code of Practice on Disinformation. The Code should contain explicit public commitments to take down illegal, malicious and hateful content and actively mitigate the risks of disinformation, and perhaps most importantly, make data available to independent researchers to verify that the Code of Practice is being enforced by the companies.

A new force is needed to convene conversations with Kenyan policymakers, the peace and security sector, health practitioners, faith leaders, civil society, tech experts and the media, to elevate mainstream voices of concern and focus on achievable fixes to online extremism and the other harms brought by digital platforms. The Council for Responsible Social Media

is a voluntary effort of concerned Kenyans who are committed to protecting our digital democracy, decency, and dignity.

We are standing up to big tech to demand better for Kenya.

Stand with us.