

MONTHLY BRIEFING

With selected case studies on
information disorder in Ethiopia

Voice up! Information for Peace (VIP) Project
Reporting Period: October 20 - November 20, 2025



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the briefing period of October 20 and November 20, 2025), Ethiopia was still in the midst of an intensifying wave of information disorder and hate speech that touched every aspect of public life. What was once largely confined to political discourse has now expanded into social, educational, and economic domains, reshaping how citizens access and interpret information. Misleading claims with manipulated visuals including deep fakes, and coordinated disinformation campaigns spread rapidly across social media platforms.

The spread of distorted claims consistently ruined the integrity of both cognitive and structure. In addition to muddling public perception, the online claims directly attacked the nation's cybersecurity, caused instability in financial markets, and made the public lose trust in institutions faster. The country is still at war with the information from different directions, and the war made the country's information still polarized and weak, and the society that was made up of individuals, communities, and organizations found it very difficult to operate without being caught in the trap of manipulation by the miscreants.

During the monthly briefing period, we spotted and debunked numerous coordinated hate speech and disinformation campaigns. The project's trainees debunked a number of local and international claims, such as scams that are related to Shein and Poppo live applications that were very controversial and somehow used to scam the wider public, along with such assertions as scam elements, recently, a trend was seen where unscrupulous travel agencies and visa consultancies are leveraging the pervasive reach of social media to systematically scam the public. These fraudsters deploy highly sophisticated and targeted advertisements on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, promising guaranteed visas, expedited job placements abroad, and dream vacations at low prices.

The digital landscape was flooded with a surge of AI-generated deepfakes, predominantly designed to spread political disinformation. A significant portion of this content specifically targeted the sensitive geopolitical tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea concerning Red Sea access and port rights, fabricating scenarios to inflame nationalist sentiments and muddy diplomatic waters. Amid this disinformation crisis, even high-ranking officials, including the Prime Minister, fell victim to sophisticated satirical deepfakes. This trend reveals a critical evolution in the use of synthetic media; it is no longer merely a tool for foreign interference or outright deception, but is being co-opted as a potent, albeit dangerous, form of public discourse.

A newly arisen dispute that consists of accusations against the women's football team has turned out to be the trigger for a much larger online wave using AI-generated images to depict the alleged players. Right after a sport media stated that some players are engaged in the same marriage, a number of YouTube channels not only promptly seized the opportunity of the topic's virality but also ran AI-generated pictures of the women in the act of kissing while dressed in the national team's shirt as a part of their promotion. The whole thing, indeed, was done with the fake visuals being used as the main reason for the public outrage and engagement. The swiftness of the dissemination of the content shows just how easily social issues can be manipulated when combined with synthetic media as the result is more division of opinions and less trust in the team and the media channel.

Citizens are now leveraging this technology to create and disseminate exaggerated, AI-generated caricatures of their leaders to voice dissent and critique government performance on pressing economic, political, and social issues, signaling a new frontier in digital political expression.

During this period, The Tikvah editorial team identified a significant surge in information disorder, characterized by widespread hate speech and meticulously crafted disinformation. We verified and debunked a series of false claims, including images purporting to show students in Addis Ababa wearing Egyptian symbols, a clear attempt to inflame geopolitical rivalries. Similarly, a synthetic image falsely depicting Ethiopian migrants traveling to Saudi Arabia circulated widely, alongside dangerous, unfounded rumors of a Marburg virus outbreak within the country. These examples represent a deliberate campaign to exploit sensitive issues, from national identity and migration to public health, threatening to erode social cohesion and fuel inter-community distrust.

KEY FINDINGS

AI-Generated Imagery Used to Amplify Sensitive Narratives

The keyfinding in this report discloses an evident scheme where the images produced by AI were tactically used in a way that the already controversial story got amplified. The falsified images that were meant to look real were not presented in such a way as to enlighten but rather to stir up feelings and to further strengthen the existing biases.

This indicates that the spread of such images is taking place because the disinformation makers are getting more and more dependent on generative AI which is then used to take advantage of the cultural and moral sensitivities and mainly in the contexts that revolve around gender, sexuality, and national identity where the debates are very intensive. The situation points out the necessity for digital literacy and quick verification tools more than ever as synthetic media is going to be a major part of the resultant viral misinformation.

Political deepfake manipulations is becoming a trend

The digital information landscape in Ethiopia has been fundamentally reshaped by the widespread and strategic deployment of synthetic, AI-generated video edits, with platforms like TikTok and YouTube serving as primary vectors for their viral dissemination. These are not merely isolated instances of misinformation but represent a sophisticated, new front in political warfare and public discourse.

We have observed the proliferation of hyper-realistic deepfakes that manipulate the likenesses of high-level officials, including the Prime Minister, to fabricate statements or place them in satirical scenarios, thereby eroding public trust in leadership. Concurrently, AI tools are being used to generate persuasive visual narratives around sensitive geopolitical issues, such as the Red Sea dispute, creating false evidence to inflame nationalist sentiments.

Deceptive and scam online campaigns are still a problem

During the monitoring period, a bunch of fake sponsored pages were observed, many of which promoted fraudulent investment opportunities or impersonated online visa applications, including a scammers approaching on social media platforms.

Infodemic seems to rise amid the outbreak of the Marburg virus in Ethiopia

The recent Marburg virus outbreak in Ethiopia has been severely complicated by a parallel infodemic, where misleading narratives about transmission, death numbers, fatality rate, and treatments spread rapidly through algorithm-driven platforms like Telegram, Facebook, and TikTok. This proliferation fragmented the digital landscape and is amplified by limited public digital literacy. The result is heightened panic, erosion of trust in health authorities, and the promotion of risky behaviors, underscoring an urgent need for targeted media literacy campaigns and more accessible, direct channels for credible public health information.

Verification Barriers and Media Literacy Gaps

The combination of quick social media sites and an unprepared public brings about a perfect storm for disinformation. Closed Telegram groups, polarized Facebook communities, and TikTok’s viral video feed are the places where misleading stories are spreading so fast that fact-checkers are hardly able to detect them in time. The public’s limited digital literacy and the absence of easy to use verification tools on these platforms considerably worsen this issue. Thus, the issue of perception is by far the most important one, which in turn, leads to disinformation campaigns that are emotionally charged and persuasive being very effective. Hence, the escalating threat brings to the fore the urgent need for a two-pronged defense, proactive media literacy education to create a more skeptical and informed citizenry, and the embedding of accessible, real-time fact-checking resources right into the user experience.

APPROACH AND SOURCES

This briefing was compiled during the project period (October 21, November 20, 2025) under the Voice Up! Information for Peace (VIP) Project, combining fact-checking, field reporting, original interviews, fact-checking submissions, audience input, and editorial analysis. It draws on verified inputs from 24 trained participants, Tikvah Ethiopia’s editorial team, and cross-referenced media sources to capture how misinformation and disinformation circulated during this time.



Fact-checking reports and monthly summaries from VIP trainees - 24 participants delivered structured reports on viral claims, verification, and analysis. These reports provided crucial insight for the case studies presented here.

Tikvah Ethiopia news and editorial resources - published news, unpublished stories, and interviews, supported by monitoring teams and on-the-ground checks carried out by reporters.

Media Monitoring outputs - External media monitoring reports from social media, local and international outlets, used to be cross-check narratives and highlight discrepancies.

Polls and perceptions - data from trainee polls and wider audience surveys provided insight into how misinformation is perceived and prioritized by different groups.

EDITORIAL PROCESS

Every piece of content has been analyzed, verified, and organized following Tikvah Ethiopia's editorial process. The report included both institutional assessments and grassroots observations through the inclusion of trainees fact-checking reports and Tikvah Ethiopia's media coverage capacities.

CASE STUDIES

The case studies used in this report for the specific monthly briefing report demonstrate how information disorder was spread online, including diluted information in which truth and lie were used in tandem to deceive public opinion, and how it affects various areas of the country's current health, sociopolitical, conflict, economic, cultural, religious, and other dynamics.

CASE STUDY 1:

Recent political sphere oriented AI-generated Music videos perpetuating famous Ethiopian musicians

A [YouTube](#) channel named Fano-Media that was created on September 19, 2025, and is politically active, pro-Fano content and garnered more than 8,000 subscribers in this short period, and has become a regular source of such content. During our monthly monitoring, we spotted one AI-generated [music](#) piece on the channel. The video wrongly attributes the performance of a song called “Fano Get Into 4 Kilo” to Getish Mammo, a popular Ethiopian singer. The storyline indicates that Fano should occupy Addis Ababa and the national palace, thus demonstrating the use of AI-generated media as a tool for disseminating politically explosive messages.



However, despite the claim that the music was made by Getish mammo we saw a mistake such as a glitch. The vocal track in the video displays several characteristics inconsistent with synthetic audio. The singer's pronunciation and accent do not resemble those of a native speaker, and the voice exhibits a robotic tone, flattened intonation, and mechanical timing. These audio artifacts are common in AI-generated or voice-cloned material, suggesting that the music may have been produced using synthetic voice technologies.

How this was made

Altered or synthetic content

Sound or visuals were significantly edited or digitally generated. [Learn more](#)

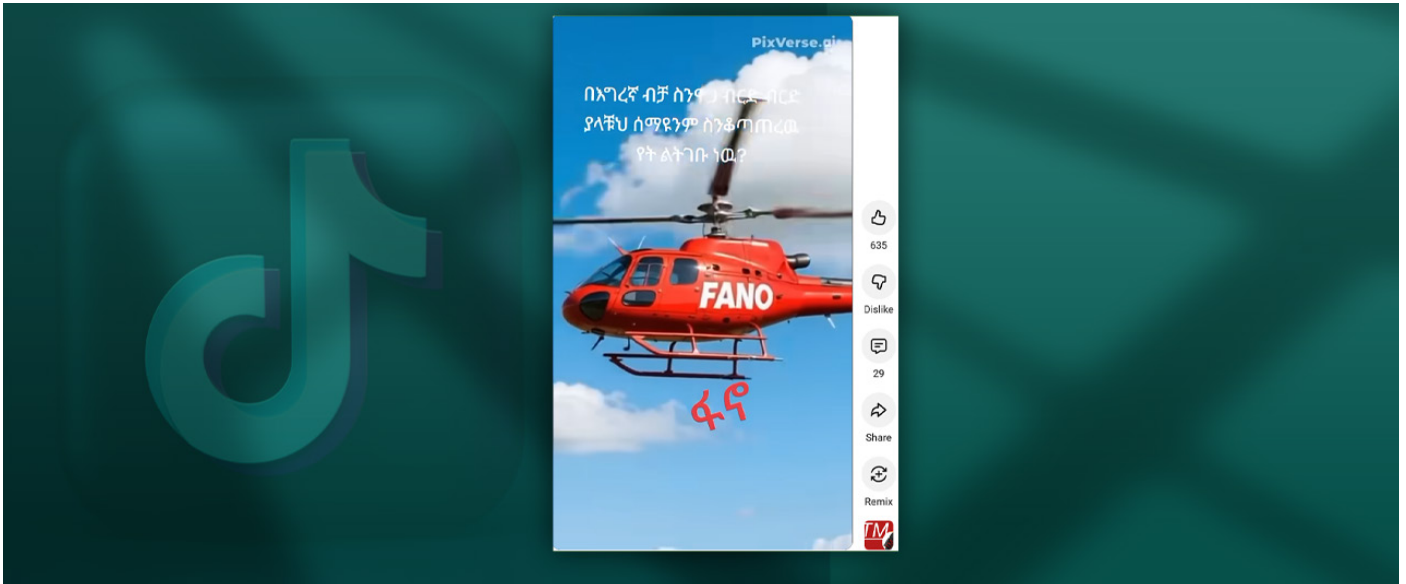
Not only that but we also found a disclaimer below the video which stated that the content is Altered or synthetic content. This indicates that a video contains content that has been meaningfully altered or synthetically generated. As of YouTube's policy we learned that this implies that either the creator manually discloses the use of 'altered or synthetic' content in the YouTube Studio workflow, or the creator uses YouTube's generative AI tools (e.g., DreamScreen), or the content contains valid Content Credentials data indicating the entire video is made with AI.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

This case study demonstrates that debunking this type of content matters because synthetic audio that falsely attributes a message or song to a real public figure can mislead audiences, distort public perception, and contribute to the spread of misinformation. When AI-generated voices imitate well-known artists, it can create a false sense of authenticity and influence how people interpret events, narratives, or social dynamics.

CASE STUDY 2: AI generated a video claiming to show Fano militants about to acquire war craft helicopters.

A Youtube channel by the name teraraw media shared a video claiming a question about what is going to happen when fano militants conquer the air. The channel shared more than 400 videos in which most of them are related to the conflicts happening in Ethiopia's Amhara region. We also notice some of the commenters supporting and believing the alleged video.



However, we can easily see a watermark that reads Pixverse.ai, an advanced generative AI platform that enables users to create high-quality animated videos from text prompts, images, or a combination of both. It is designed for fast, realistic video creation, transforming simple descriptions into cinematic clips in under a minute, with features like smooth motion, realistic physics, and dynamic camera movements.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Debunking seemingly silly AI-generated videos or false claims is vital, particularly in conflicts, precisely because their simplicity is a strategic weapon, not a weakness. These materials are designed not to convince critical thinkers, but to overwhelm the information ecosystem, sow confusion, and erode shared reality. By targeting emotions and pre-existing biases, they can quickly galvanize groups, incite violence, and dehumanize opponents, making reconciliation even harder.

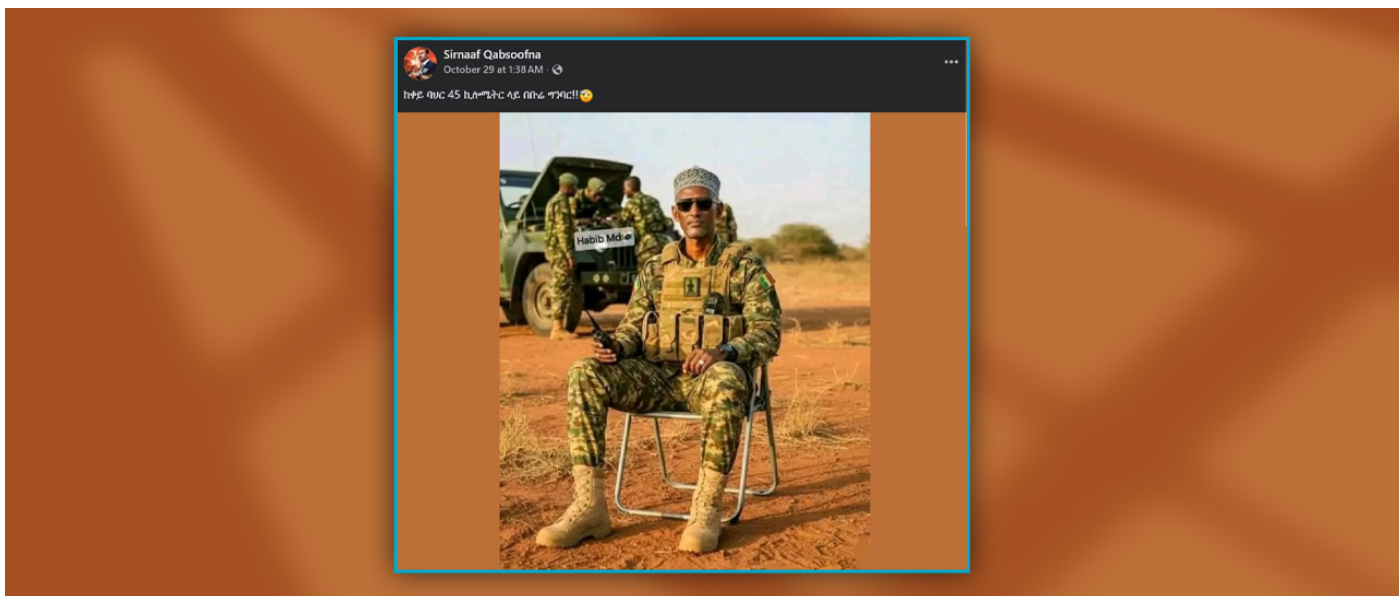
CASE STUDY 3:

False image claiming to show President of the Afar region Awol Arba 45km away from the Red sea in Bure Afar.

A Facebook page with more than 30,000 followers shared an image on October 29, 2025, captioned “45km away from the Red sea in Bure front” and shared an alleged image of the president of the Afar region wearing camouflage. The post also garnered attention among followers.

Bure is a small area about 80 km west of Asseb. It sits on the Eritrea-Ethiopia border. Both countries claim it. It also lies on the Awash-Asseb highway, an important trucking route.

At the same time, Ethiopian officials have [said](#) the country needs access to a coastline. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has repeated that Ethiopia must secure a route to the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean. He has also urged neighboring countries to start talks. In a recent televised address, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed stated that if peaceful negotiations fail and Eritrea chooses to pursue war with Ethiopia, the country is fully prepared and, according to him, the outcome is already certain.



Online AI images detecting tools gave a result that the image is 100% AI.

AI vs Human Image Detector

Upload an image to classify if it was likely generated by AI or created by a human. Uses the 'Ateeqq/ai-vs-human-image-detector' model on Hugging Face. Running on CPU.

Upload Image

Prediction Results

ai	100%
hum	0%

Share via Link

The analysis considered all the different aspects of the image like the landscape, the background, the distribution of the people, the human forms, the trees and plants, and ground textures. Initially, the hills, the whole terrain, and the sporadic plants gave an impressive illusion of naturalness, and even the lighting and shadows were very similar to real outdoor photography in their subtlety and irregularities. But a closer examination brought to light some inconsistencies that were in a way challenging the initial view. The crowd was the most visible source of the above-mentioned issue regarding the density and the appearance.

The people in the foreground were clearer and more distinguishable, whereas those who were more remote were simply a mass without any individual characteristics. A lot of them had the same patterns, indistinct edges, and strange uniformity. This uniformity suggested that the people were not really there but rather they had been digitalized and placed using an algorithm.

On the other hand, the shallow water and the stony ground of the environment had a more real-like appearance to them. The textures of the stones and the light reflections matched what one would see in a real photograph. Yet this realism merely highlighted the contrast between the natural elements and the artificial crowd, thus emphasizing the synthetic origin of the image.

AI vs Human Image Detector

Upload an image to classify if it was likely generated by AI or created by a human. Uses the Ateeqq/ai-vs-human-image-detector model on Hugging Face. Running on CPU.

Upload Image

Prediction Results

ai

ai	100%
hum	0%

Share via Link

Clear Submit

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

This case study demonstrates how debunking this image is important because AI-generated visuals can easily mislead people, shaping opinions or spreading false narratives if taken at face value. Exposing inconsistencies like unnatural crowd patterns or repetitive figures protects credibility, prevents misinformation, and highlights the limits of current AI technology. It also promotes critical thinking and media literacy, helping the public distinguish between real events and synthetic creations in an era where seeing no longer guarantees believing.

CASE STUDY 5:

Old video attributed to the current pandemic virus in Ethiopia perpetrating the prime minister warning the public

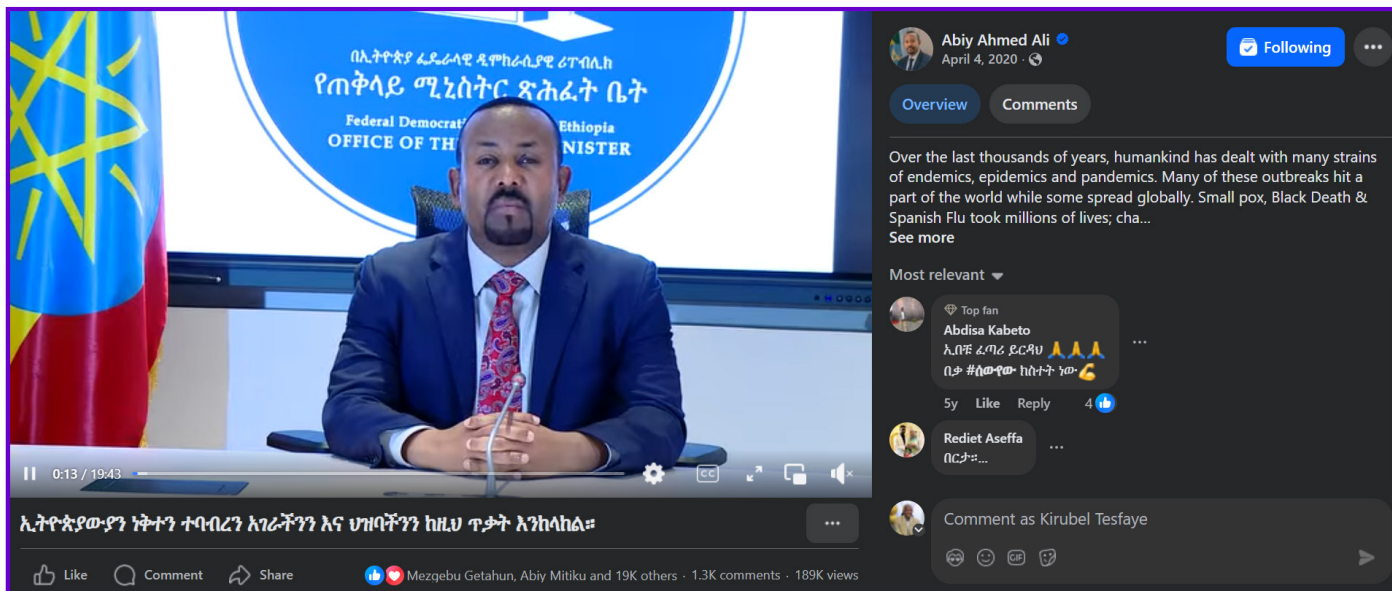
On 13 November 2025 a [video](#) was shared via Facebook [page](#) with more than 70,000 followers alleging that the Prime Minister of Ethiopia had warned people about an outbreak of a new strain of Marburg Virus. The video, which is 2 minutes 49 seconds long, shows the Prime Minister speaking directly to camera and explains what he believes to be the dangers of coronavirus and announces how the government will try to stop its spread. In the video, the Prime Minister stresses on public vigilance, abeyance of health advisories and cooperating with local administration. The video went viral soon after, garnering comments, shares and reactions a sure sign that the public at large was both concerned and confused about the supposed outbreak.



However, the [video](#) was taken years back during the Covid-19 outbreak from the Prime Minister’s official facebook page.

In the video we heard the prime minister say “over the last thousands of years, humankind has dealt with many strains of endemics, epidemics and pandemics. Many of these outbreaks hit a part of the world while some spread globally. Small pox, Black Death & Spanish Flu took millions of lives; changed the course of history & pushed humans to innovate. The pandemic we are dealing with now, COVID-19,

has infected more than 1mil people world wide with over 61,000 deaths world wide. What makes this time different is that we are armed with technological innovations, resources & knowledge, which if we apply collective leadership to, we can overcome as a community. Let's divert our energy from fear to collaboration, think & act together for our survival.”



WHY DOES IT MATTER?

This case study proved that debunking this video matters because false claims about a Marburg Virus outbreak can create nationwide panic, fear, and mistrust among the public. In Ethiopia and beyond, health-related misinformation can lead people to take unsafe actions, ignore official guidance, or spread rumors that hinder effective government and medical responses.

Correcting the record preserves public trust in authorities, ensures accurate information guides behavior, and prevents the social, economic, and political consequences of unfounded health scares.

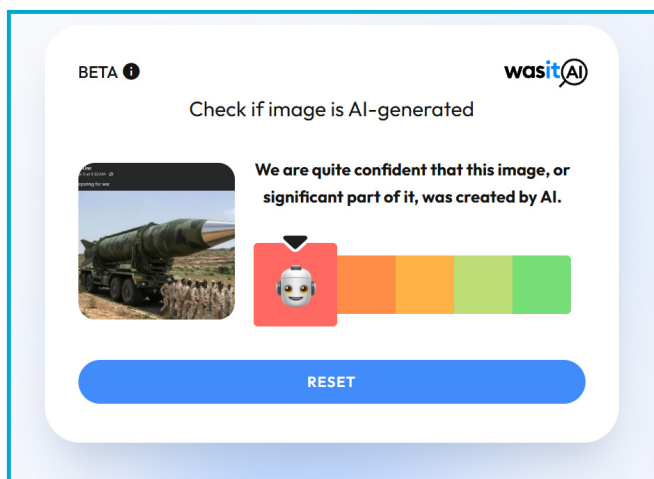
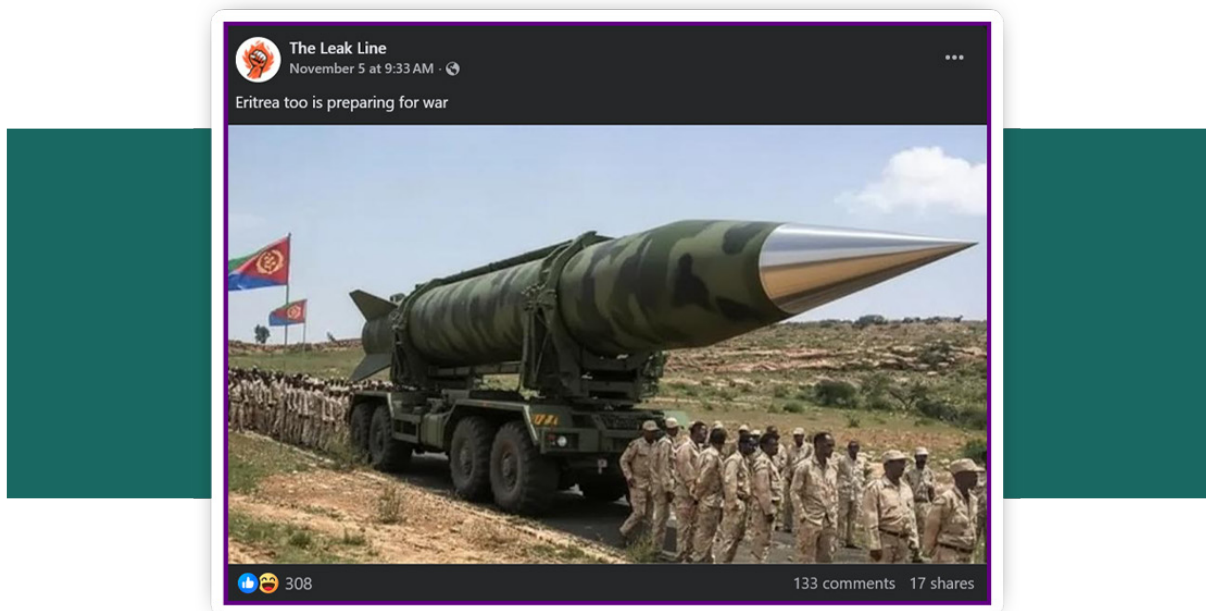
CASE STUDY 6: Scam rental request focusing on Social media accounts and groups

A [scam](#) targeting Ethiopians has been identified on social media, involving accounts and groups with more than 900 subscribers. The fraudulent page claims to purchase various social media accounts, asserting that older accounts with posts dating from 2017 to 2024 are worth significantly more. It even advertises that a Telegram account with over 10,000 followers can fetch a high price.

CASE STUDY 7:

AI-generated images used to exaggerate the current geo-political issues

A Facebook [page](#) with more than 58,000 followers shared different AI-generated images claiming to show the current military stances of Ethiopia and Eritrea, trying to show that they both are ready to get into war. On November 5, 2025 this page shared an image captioned as “Eritrea is preparing for a war”. The post garnered more than 15 shares and hundreds of comments.



We have implemented online verification tools to check the authenticity of the image and proved that it is a synthetic product depicting to show the Eritrean military with Pakistani-made Ghauri Hatf-V ballistic missile displayed on transporter erector launcher (TEL) vehicle.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

In highly sensitive geopolitical situations debunking such a claim is crucial because AI-generated military images can dangerously escalate tensions between countries, especially in moments when relations are already fragile. False visuals showing missiles, troop mobilization, or military readiness can create the illusion of an imminent threat, prompting fear, retaliatory rhetoric, or even pre-emptive actions based on misinformation. Clarifying that these images are artificial helps prevent diplomatic misunderstandings, reduces the risk of unnecessary conflict, and protects the public from being manipulated by propaganda or fear-mongering content.

CASE STUDY 8: AI-generated video claiming to show an Iran made drone in Asmara, Eritrea

A Facebook [page](#) with more than 130,000 followers shared a video purporting to show an Iranian drone in Asmara, Eritrea. The post received thousands of likes and hundreds of comments.



The post is shared amid the current tension between the two countries. The recent visit of the Eritrean president to Egypt and the Federal government public assertion of the Red Sea ownership is making the tension in the region high.

However, we have found the [image](#) previously shared years ago on different websites, claiming to show Iranian drone productions and ownership. Not only that but we can also see a water mark at the top-right corner of the video labeled as Video-AI.

Israel, US step up direct actions against Iranian drone production

"This is not a new front, but now the actions will be more frequent and more aggressive," an Israeli defense source told Breaking Defense.

By Arie Egozi on November 02, 2021 3:13 pm [Share](#)

A photograph of a white and blue drone on a runway. The drone has a high-wing configuration and a V-shaped tail. It is parked on a light-colored, flat surface under a clear blue sky. The background shows a flat, open landscape.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Debunking this claim matters because it shows the public how easily static images can be transformed into convincing videos through generative AI, making misinformation harder to detect at first glance. When people see a drone moving in a fabricated video, they may assume it is real footage and react with fear, confusion, or anger especially in tense political or security environments. Exposing the manipulation helps audiences recognize how simple AI prompts can create highly deceptive content, encourages critical evaluation of visual media, and strengthens public resilience against emerging forms of disinformation.

CASE STUDY 9: Sensitive social constructions rife with controversies along with a synthetic media

This case examines how a socially sensitive controversy involving women's national football team members was rapidly transformed into a vehicle for AI-generated synthetic contents. Following reports of alleged personal relationships among players, several YouTube pages circulated AI-generated videos to intensify public reaction. The incident highlights the growing role of synthetic media in shaping narratives and escalating social tensions.



These videos have gone viral because the topic is sensitive specially for a country like Ethiopia, and the youtube and facebook posts uses a synthetic image purporting the Ethiopian national team members having an alleged intimate moment.

By the time this report was published the youtube [video](#) garnered more than 160,000 views in just a week. However, if we see the disclaimer section suggested by Youtube the video is labeled as Altered or a synthetic content.

How this was made

Altered or synthetic content
 Sound or visuals were significantly edited or digitally generated. [Learn more](#)

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

This assertion is subject to the proof because the deployment of AI images in such sensitive issues with strong emotions can change the way the public views the situation and even create tensions where none exist between the people concerned. If fake visuals are presented and perceived as real proof, then they will not only support but also expand false perceptions, and damage the reputation of the group and community at large.

Patterns and Trends

The eight case studies selected for this specific briefing period demonstrate a current trending broad spectrum of information disorder in Ethiopia, including politics, economics, technology, and society. While the cases vary in content, certain recurring concepts appeared in the specific monitoring period:-

1. Generative AI is advancing at an unprecedented pace.

Generative AI is the new technology that drives misinformation and has come to be recognized as powerful. The ability of generative AI to produce lifelike yet fabricated content, such as images, videos, and audio, is a major turning point in the use of AI to disseminate false information. The use of AI in the production of these materials gives a fake aura of trustworthiness to the disinformation campaigns which can thus get a wider reach and be a great problem for the fact checkers and the public's ability to tell what is true and what is not.

2. A growing pattern in Health related misinformation

The emergence of health rumors related to the Marburg virus, particularly on social media, has become a major issue. Overstated and unproven stories are quickly spread taking advantage of the public's fear and uncertainty about outbreaks. The government is often portrayed as impotent, treatments are offered that are not backed by science, and people are made to panic and become confused. The pattern indicates that once such misinformation is accepted, it propagates through shares, comments, and reaction-based engagement at a fast rate, which underlines the necessity for timely fact-checking, public awareness campaigns, and strong verification mechanisms to fight the infodemic.

3. Strategic Defamation and Political Narratives

The same pattern was also detected in this briefing period where disinformation is increasingly deployed as a weapon for character assassination and political warfare. A common tactic involves the circulation of false allegations and fabricated scandals about newly appointed government officials or influential figures. The goal is to damage credibility, sow public discord, and derail political processes before they even begin.

4. Constructed or Misrepresented Geopolitical Narratives

In intricate regional and international conflicts, coordinated deception flourishes. We have witnessed the use of completely fraudulent images

and letters that appear to be from governments to bolster specific narratives. These inclinations are meant to create the impression that alliances, conflicts, or diplomatic crises entail the widespread use of false information to influence public opinion.

5. Generative AI used to inflict TFGBV

A clear pattern is becoming visible where the synthetic media is intentionally utilized to carry out Trolling, and created a fertile ground for a Technology facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) in women's sports. In all the social media platforms, images, and videos created by AI are altered to create scandals, stir up public anger, and damage the image of the female athletes. The stories that are untrue often take advantage of delicate cultural or moral topics, which not only escalate the harassment and emotional suffering but also make the content look trustworthy. This whole thing is a clear indication of how generative AI is increasingly being

Overall Trend

These varied and extensive threats have one thing in common that is a Generative AI system that utilizes the most substantial weaknesses in our digital and institutional tapestry in real-time. Actors in the disinformation process use organizational and responsible individuals to silence and a climate of intimidation to create information manipulations, which are promptly filled with wholly plausible synthetic lies, from fabricated political intrigue and geopolitical misinformation to toxic and culturally sensitive issue still a victim of the synthetic products, all designed to destroy trust and undermine peace and social cohesion.

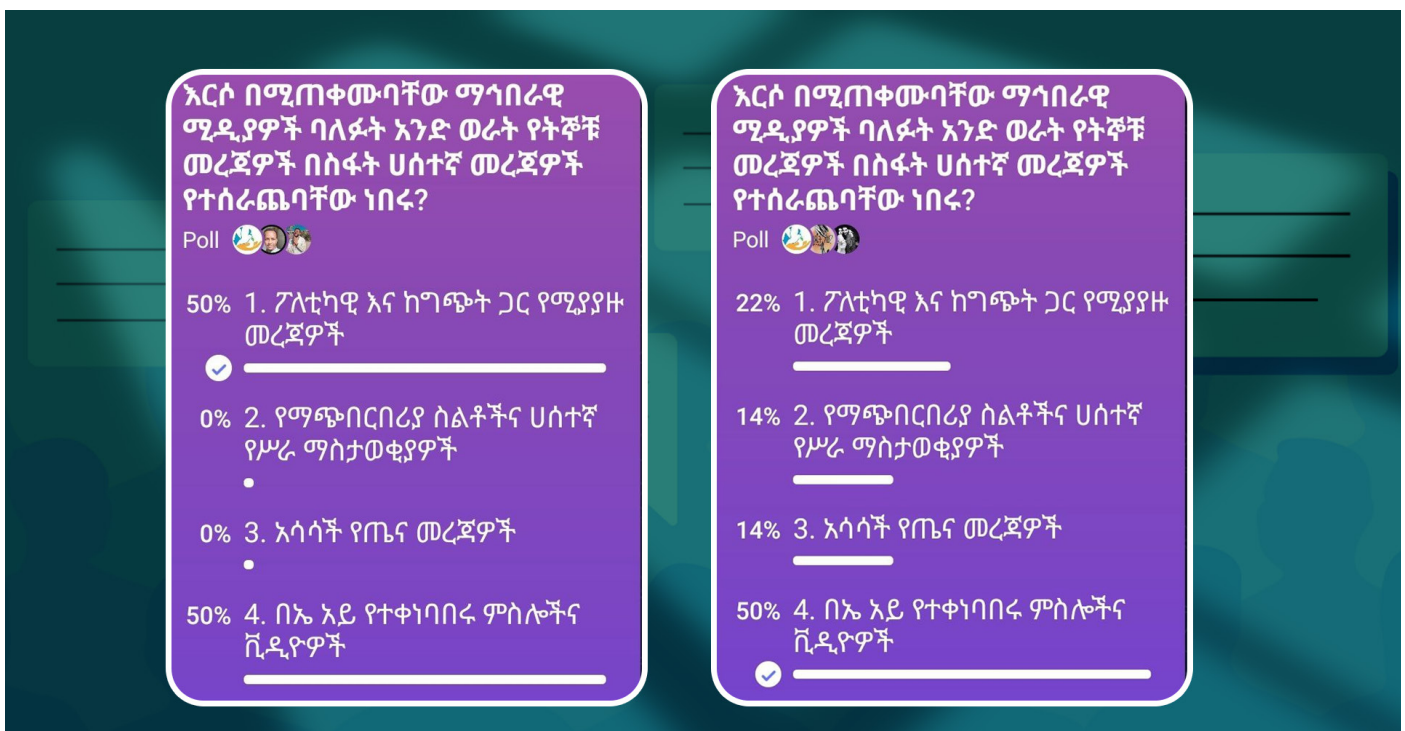
Scammers have been using digital platforms, social media groups, and online marketplaces to target people and businesses in Ethiopia, where the number of scams has been steadily rising. Fake account sales, rental scams, investment fraud, and misleading online job offers are examples of common schemes that frequently take advantage of the perceived value of cryptocurrency, mobile money transfers, or social media accounts. By presenting fictitious endorsements or payment confirmations, many of these scams undermine victims' trust and leave them financially and digitally vulnerable.

Poll on Misinformation Trends

A brief survey was conducted as part of this monthly briefing under the Voice Up! Information for Peace (VIP) Project in order to gather input from the general public as well as VIP trainees. The aim was to understand how misinformation circulated during this reporting period and how it was perceived by different groups.

Student and Journalist Participants

Student and journalist participants were asked to choose one type of misinformation that had the greatest impact on them or that they encountered most frequently during this reporting period.

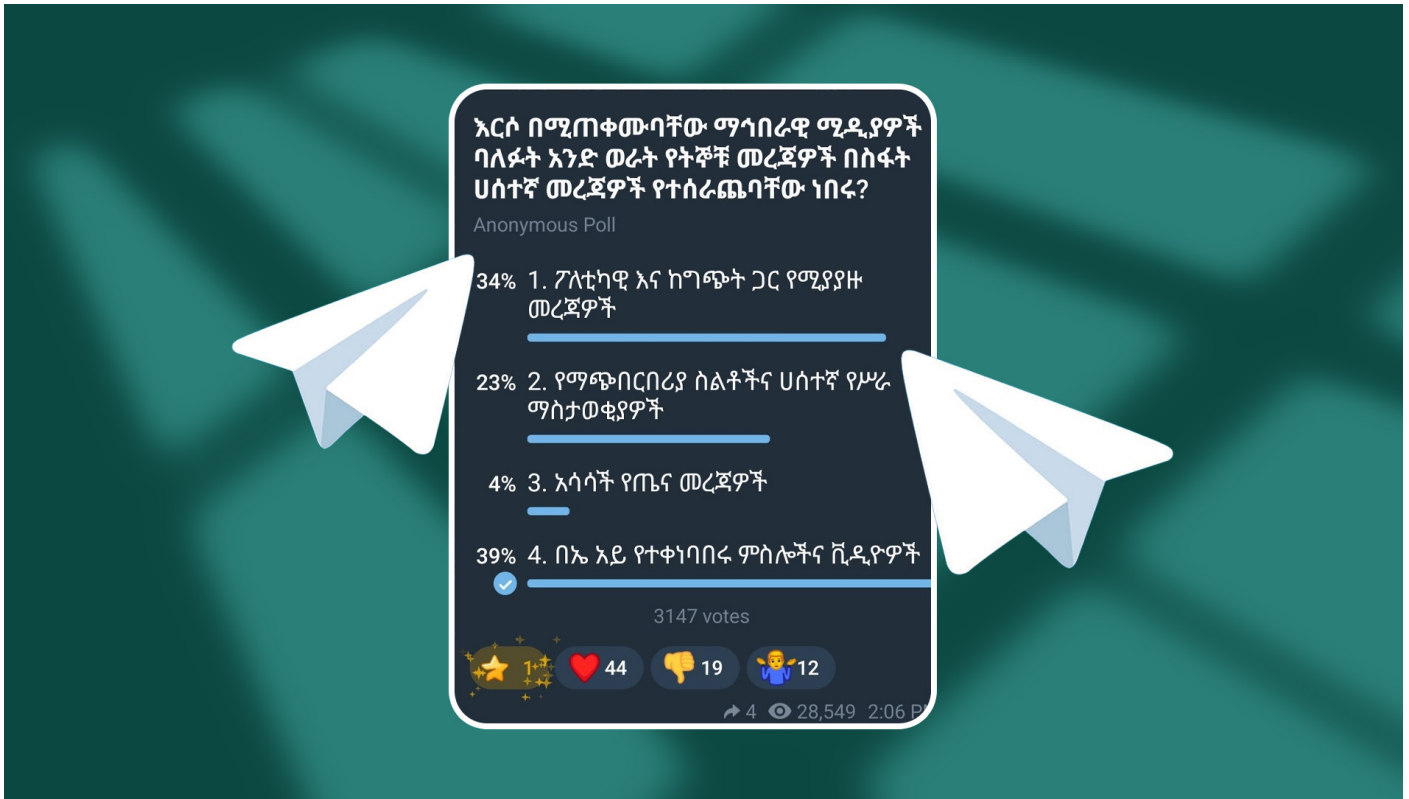


Journalists

Students

General Public Participants

Members of the general public were also given a single choice to identify the type of misinformation they encountered most often or found most influential.



Question:

“Which types of misinformation did you most frequently encounter on your social media platforms in the past month?”

Options:

1. Political and conflict-related content
2. Scams and fake job advertisements
3. Misleading health information
4. AI-generated images or videos

Findings

- Among the Voice Up! Information for Peace (VIP) student trainees, AI-generated images or videos were identified as the most frequently encountered type of misinformation during this reporting period. Political and conflict-related misinformation followed, while scams and fake job advertisements appeared at lower levels. Misleading health information was the least detected.
- Among the journalist trainees, the most commonly observed misinformation types were political and conflict-related content and AI-generated images or videos, each receiving equal attention. Scams, fake job

advertisements, and misleading health information were not detected or reported by the journalist group.

- Among the general audience, AI-generated images or videos were encountered more frequently than other forms of misinformation. Political and conflict-related misinformation followed closely, while scams, fake job advertisements, and misleading health information were observed at lower rates.
- Across all groups, there was a notable and increasing visibility of AI-generated misinformation, signaling a continued rise in synthetic content and manipulated visuals within the digital environment this month.

Impression

These survey findings continue to mirror the trend observed in previous months, where AI-generated content remains one of the dominant forms of misinformation across all groups. This further demonstrates how the misinformation landscape is increasingly shaped by synthetic media and digitally manipulated visuals.

Among the students, AI-generated images or videos were again the most frequently encountered, followed by political and conflict-related misinformation. Scams and fake job advertisements were present as secondary concerns, showing that students are navigating a mixed environment of both traditional and AI-driven misinformation.

Journalists, on the other hand, reported an equal level of exposure to political/conflict-related misinformation and AI-generated content. This balanced split may reflect the current national context, where political tensions and synthetic media are simultaneously influencing public narratives and journalistic workflows.

For the general audience, AI-generated content also appeared prominently, alongside a strong presence of political and conflict-related narratives. Scams were moderately noted, while health misinformation remained minimal. This pattern suggests that while disinformation is diversifying, AI-driven manipulation and political narratives continue to shape online information habits.

Overall, the results highlight the ongoing need for targeted awareness efforts, digital literacy interventions, and strengthened verification skills, especially as AI-generated misinformation steadily increases across all user groups.

Overall Reflections

The circulation of misinformation in Ethiopia continues to develop into a layered and deeply entrenched phenomenon, extending well beyond the familiar political narratives. Although political and conflict-related sensitivities remain extremely high, often contributing to polarized discussions and rising local tensions the increasing spread of AI-generated content has added a new and worrying dimension. Synthetic visuals and digitally manipulated materials now blend into everyday online interactions, making it increasingly difficult for users to separate fact from fabrication.

This month's survey results show that misinformation is growing more intertwined with daily life. Both student participants and journalist participants reported significant exposure to AI-generated misinformation, reflecting how synthetic media now shapes the information environment across different groups. Students, in particular, noted a strong presence of AI-driven manipulations alongside political and conflict-related claims, while journalist participants experienced an equal pressure from both political narratives and AI-generated content.

Beyond these groups, the wider public continues to face misinformation tied to employment, social welfare, community issues, and economic concerns, much of it amplified by manipulative techniques and the rapid spread of unverified claims. Scam-related misinformation, while less prominent among the trained participants, remains a significant challenge for the general audience, taking advantage of economic strain and the limited availability of dependable information sources. The broader pattern observed this month illustrates how AI-generated content, digital insecurity, online manipulation, and ongoing political instability create the conditions for misinformation to flourish. In such an environment, silence fueled by fear, uncertainty, or limited press freedom allows speculation and falsehoods to fill the gaps.

Even so, there are encouraging signs within the efforts of the Voice Up! Information for Peace (VIP) Project. The consistent work of local fact-checkers, along with the commitment shown by both student and journalist participants, demonstrates that community-rooted media literacy and verification initiatives can make a meaningful difference. Through their ongoing attempts to investigate claims, challenge false narratives, and promote reliable information, they show that despite systemic obstacles, misinformation can be countered, and a more informed and resilient public sphere is still possible.

