



Public Comment Appendix for

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

Case description

In late July 2021, a Facebook user posted in Amharic on their timeline claiming that the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) killed and raped women and children, as well as looted the properties of civilians in Raya Kobo and other towns in Ethiopia's Amhara Region. The user also claimed that ethnic Tigrayan civilians assisted the TPLF in these crimes.

The user begins by claiming that "people in the area" have reported that Raya Kobo is empty and had been looted prior to the "rebel group" TPLF entering it. They then allege that in Raya Kobo, Kobo City, Aradum, Menjelo, Robit and Goby, children and married women were raped, and youngsters were shot dead. The user alleges that farmers were killed "by the terrorist group" in retaliation for saying "I don't like the colour of your eyes." The user also claims that "mothers in the area" have no food, are atrociously treated and forced to feed the TPLF. The user also states that "the Tigray rebel group" announced that the Raya Kobo community members would be given an ID card indicating "Tigre". The user adds that the TPLF "appealed to everyone they meet on the phone" informing them that the government has "sold" "the part of Amhara from Alawha and beyond." The user claims that the TPLF brought and publicly executed "innocent youths" from Alamata, Korem and other parts of Raya Kobo. According to the user, they did this to appear credible in the Raya Kobo community." The user states that the TPLF lied and deceived the community by claiming that the executed youths were robbers who had followed them from Tigray and who did not speak Amharic. Furthermore, the user claims that in "every town where the crowds live" the TPLF locates itself in every health centre and school to "annihilate the people" in the event of an air strike. Lastly, the user states that they are receiving reports from people living in the area that "the Tigreans, who know the area very well" led the TPLF door-to-door to expose women to rape and to loot property. The user ends the post with the words "We will secure our freedom through our struggle."

The user does not claim in the post to be an eye witness to the events described. The post also does not attribute any of the claims or allegations that it contains to named individuals, institutions or media. It does not contain hyperlinks to external sources or include any images.

The post was viewed more than 6,500 times, receiving fewer than 35 comments and more than 140 reactions. It was shared over 30 times. According to Facebook, the user's account that posted the content is located in Ethiopia, but not in the Tigray or

Amhara regions. The user's profile picture includes a hashtag signalling disapproval of the TPLF. The post remained on the platform for approximately one day. The post was automatically reported. Facebook then removed the post under its [Hate Speech Community Standard](#). The Board does not know at this stage whether the post was reviewed by a human moderator or automatically removed. As a result of the Board selecting this case, Facebook identified the post's removal as an "enforcement error" and restored it.

Under Tier 1 of Hate Speech, Facebook users are prohibited from posting content targeting a group of people with generalisations, or unqualified behavioural statements about them being violent, sexual or other criminals. The Hate Speech policy rationale states that Facebook recognises "that people sometimes share content that includes someone else's hate speech to condemn it or raise awareness" and that "policies are designed to allow room for these types of speech, but we require people to clearly indicate their intent. If the intention is unclear, we may remove content."

The policy rationale for Hate Speech was updated in June 2021 to clarify that the company "define[s] hate speech as a direct attack against people – **rather than concepts or institutions**– on the basis of what we call protected characteristics [...]" [emphasis added]. In the June 2021 policy update, Facebook provided a new rule under the title "For the following Community Standards, we require additional information and/or context to enforce." The new rule prohibits content "attacking concepts, institutions, ideas, practices or beliefs associated with protected characteristics, which are likely to contribute to imminent physical harm, intimidation or discrimination against the people associated with that protected characteristic. Facebook looks at a range of signs to determine whether there is a threat of harm in the content. These include but are not limited to: content that could incite imminent violence or intimidation; whether there is a period of heightened tension such as an election or ongoing conflict; and whether there is a recent history of violence against the targeted protected group. In some cases, we may also consider whether the speaker is a public figure or occupies a position of authority."

Though the content in this case was in Amharic, the user submitted their appeal to the Board in English. In their statement to the Board, the user says that the post is intended to protect their community, which is in danger, and that Facebook must help communities in war zones. They state that the post is not hate speech "but is truth." They stated that the TPLF targeted their community of one million people and left them without food, water and other basic necessities. The user also speculated that their post was reported "by members and supporters of that terrorist group", and claims to "know well most of the rules" and that they have "never broken any rules of Facebook."

The Board would appreciate public comments that address:

- Whether Facebook's initial decision to remove the post is consistent with the company's Hate Speech Community Standard, the company's stated values and human rights responsibilities and commitments.
- Whether Facebook's Hate Speech policy adequately enables users to raise awareness of alleged human rights violations, including in conflict zones.
- Content moderation challenges specific to Ethiopia and languages spoken in the country, both in terms of respecting freedom of expression and addressing harms that may result from hate speech, in particular during times of heightened tension or conflict.
- Recent trends relating to the use or spread of hate speech or misinformation by parties to the conflict in Ethiopian languages, as well as by civilians engaged in discussions around it, and the role of Facebook. It would be useful for comments to include socio-political and historical context for these trends, in particular on relations between ethnic groups present in the locations named in the post.
- The current role and composition of the TPLF in Ethiopia, including any distinction between its political and paramilitary functions, as well as the conduct of the TPLF or other groups during the conflict described in the post, in particular any alleged human rights violations or abuses in the places named in this content.
- Challenges that researchers, journalists and investigators may face in documenting atrocity crimes through Facebook, including in collecting evidence for accountability, and any responsibility that Facebook has to preserve content and ensure access to it.

In its decisions, the Board can issue policy recommendations to Facebook. While recommendations are not binding, Facebook must respond to them within 30 days. As such, the Board welcomes public comments proposing recommendations that are relevant to this case.



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Case number

The Oversight Board is committed to bringing diverse perspectives from third parties into the case review process. To that end, the Oversight Board has established a public comment process.

Public comments respond to case descriptions based on the information provided to the Board by users and Facebook as part of the appeals process. These case descriptions are posted before panels begin deliberation to provide time for public comment. As such, case descriptions reflect neither the Board's assessment of a case, nor the full array of policy issues that a panel might consider to be implicated by each case.

To protect the privacy and security of commenters, comments are only viewed by the Oversight Board and as detailed in the [Operational Privacy Notice](#). All commenters included in this appendix gave consent to the Oversight Board to publish their comments. For commenters who did not consent to attribute their comments publicly, names have been redacted. To withdraw your comment, please email contact@osbadmin.com.

To reflect the wide range of views on cases, the Oversight Board has included all comments received except those clearly irrelevant, abusive or disrespectful of the human and fundamental rights of any person or group of persons and therefore violating the [Terms for Public Comment](#). Inclusion of a comment in this appendix is not an endorsement by the Oversight Board of the views expressed in the comment. The Oversight Board is committed to transparency and this appendix is meant to accurately reflect the input we received.



Public Comment Appendix for
2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

23

Number of Comments

Regional Breakdown

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Asia Pacific & Oceania | 0 Central & South Asia | 5 Europe | 0 Latin America & Caribbean |
| 1 Middle East and North Africa | 6 Sub-Saharan Africa | 10 United States & Canada | |

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10209

Public comment number

Middle East and North Africa

Region

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT PROVIDE

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

It is extremely sad and surprising Facebook employees are from the TPLF supporters. How humanity is overlooked.

Full Comment

All this timeno matter bad contents and racist speeches realesed from TPLF supporters facebook will not touch their posts. However if any individual writes to the rights of Amhara people not their massacars, facebook immediately suspend the individaual or delete the post. What is going on? I think the world agreed to fight with God. TPLF is destroying churches and leaders. That is what you are supporting. No One Will Fight God Not Even Win

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10211

Public comment number

Sub-Saharan Africa

Region

Esubalew

Commenter's first name

Mulat

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT PROVIDE

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

In short, TPLF and TPLFites are killing lots of innocent people in Ethiopia (Amhara and Afar). And they are using false claims to make true activists and politician down. There is nothing wrong with the post that goes against community morale or some other standards. This ans such posts are rather vital for the innocent people.

Full Comment

In short, TPLF and TPLFites are killing lots of innocent people in Ethiopia (Amhara and Afar). And they are using false claims to make true activists and politician down. There is nothing wrong with the post that goes against community morale or some other standards. This ans such posts are rather vital for the innocent people.

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10214

Public comment number

United States and Canada

Region

Withheld

Commenter's first name

Withheld

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

YOU HAVE NO CLUE HOW ETHIOPIANS SEE TPLF

Full Comment

TPLF is the the main actor of all the problems in Ethiopia. They have been sponsoring, financing and training other armed groups for the last 3 years. Before that, For the past 27 years, they have been using the colonialists divide and conquer rule. They were the ones creating the chaos and they come to manage it. They have a lot of lobbyists and digital army throughout the west funded by the wealth accumulated by stealing from Ethiopia. I understand You are overwhelmed by them. But trust me with all our differences with Abiy Ahmed, We all Ethiopians will never let TPLF rule ever again. As for the post, I have heard more evil acts than those mentioned. I have known TPLF all my life and they can do much more worse than this. They have slaughtered over a thousand in maicadra, even two weeks ago 136 bodies have been found in chena. Not to mention the metekel and wellega massacres, Which are all financed and trained by tplf. They themselves have explicitly said they will go to hell to rip apart Ethiopia into pieces. They are terrorists and war criminals. I know they can do more than what's said. I tell you all, don't be on the wrong side of history. Terrorists never win a war, they might just win a battle but they never win a war.

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10216

Public comment number

Sub-Saharan Africa

Region

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

**Legambo Woerada Communication
Affairs Office.**

Organization

Yes

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

If we write articles like this in Ethiopia, Facebook will not hesitate to shut down. Our site, which had 109,746 followers, has been completely shut down due to the public's awareness of the dangers posed by the junta. Legambo Communication has been shut down by Facebook for allegedly violating social norms by repeatedly posting photos of soldiers. Despite repeated complaints, we are saddened that Facebook has not been prosecuted and that we have been shutting down our website for six years with district, regional and national information. It is good to see that there are still Facebook complaints. Please, we are being deprived of freedom of information in Ethiopia by Facebook.

Full Comment

Solve Facebook Page Closure Campaign! It closed for about a month in June. Since then, we have deleted more than 3 posts. It also prevents us from violating the standards of the community without deleting the information we report from other national media sources. Finally, we have been posting the victories of the Ethiopian army because of the ongoing war in Ethiopia, and we have closed our page, which has more than 109,740 followers, until it looks like it is closing its normal page. The posts we publish do not violate community standards for whatever reason. However, it would be wrong to use the closure as an alternative to informing the public about the war. To inform you of the facts; 1st. As the site is owned by the government, we are obliged to comply with the country's media law and will be held accountable for posting information that harms the community. 2nd. The information we have taken from other government media sources in the country is why we are not saying that you have violated the standards of the community. The information is the same. 3rd. It is not appropriate for Facebook to destroy the government office, which has been working for more than six years, while

Facebook should help those who are exposing the power of the junta. 4th. The company refuses to accept the information, even though it is a fake. In general, Facebook is busy destroying not only posts in Ethiopia but also more than 100,000 pages. Or let us know if community violations have been improved! Facebook Name - ሊጋምቦ ኮሙኒኬሽን Page Name - Legambo Communication/ሊጋምቦ ኮሙኒኬሽን Like - 109,746

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10218

Public comment number

Europe

Region

Birhanu

Commenter's first name

Mek.

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT PROVIDE

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

Facebook is on a clearly wrong path in the ongoing crisis in Ethiopia. For people closely following, this is not a matter of discussion.

Full Comment

Facebook has played an important tool in mobilizing public resistance against the TPLF regime mainly 3 to 5 years ago. But now, it has back-slashed its positive image and currently Facebook is considered as TPLF's right arm propaganda wing. It is not a question whether Facebook has acted inappropriately in favour of TPLF or not, the question should rather be: why has Facebook got the conflict in Ethiopia so wrong? - Is it really Facebook's intention to do so as an organization? or - Is it only due to the unprofessional role of its employees in the East African hub? - Is it the influence from the biased Western media coverage? - Is it because Facebook is a pure reflection of the political positions of the USA which more than 100 million Ethiopians consider it to be an extension of neocolonialist interests?

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10221

Public comment number

United States and Canada

Region

Alemshet

Commenter's first name

Addisalem

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

Amhara Association of Canada for
Human Rights

Organization

Yes

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

Nowadays, Facebook becomes the best place to promote human rights such as free speech. However, the platform is arbitrarily restricting the free speech rights of users, and thus, I commenting on its inconsistent, untransparent, discriminatory, and unlawful restriction measures on Ethiopians.

Full Comment

Although Facebook has been the best place for access to information & free speech rights, its recent restrictions measures on Amhara Ethiopian activists are untransparent, discriminatory, unlawful & inconsistent with its several promises and rules. 1) Despite its community standards & rules, and Corporate Human Rights policy state that Facebook is committed to the int'l Bill of rights, several restrictions measures have been taken place in contradictory to these human rights instruments; 2) The restriction procedures of the platform lack clear and transparent ways how it can identify the intention of the users whether the posted contents are for awareness creation or not. e.g. how the automative system can understand the intention of users? 3) Further, the platform's conclusion & frequent restriction measures against those who work to expose gross human rights violations by TPLF are discriminatory and against Int'l human rights laws. e.g. Facebook suspended the page of someone who posted "The Genocide of Maikadra happened in Raya Amharas again" (document attached). 4) The Ethiopian parliament designated TPLF as a terrorist organization. It is already normal to see reports that TPLF raped Amhara women & children, destroying infrastructures & looting aid trucks. In such a case, how Facebook sees TPLF is unclear.

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10224

Public comment number

Europe

Region

Meron

Commenter's first name

G

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT PROVIDE

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

Initial decision by FB to remove the post was correct

Full Comment

The initial decision of FB to remove the post as Hate Speech was correct. 1. Political discourse in Ethiopia makes no distinction between the political party TPLF and ethnic Tigrayans. TPLF/Tigre /Woyane/Junta ethnic are used interchangeably. 2. Such uncorroborated and demonising narratives are being used to fuel hate against ethnic Tigrayans across Ethiopia endangering all, amidst the ongoing Tigray Genocide. Of note, Tigrayans are being ethnically profiled, rounded up, and disappeared with no legal procedure other than the claim that they support TPLF [see attached Human Rights Watch document]. 3. These narratives fuel the intention of the Ethiopian regime to feed its war machine by planting animosity between peoples.

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10225

Public comment number

Europe

Region

Withheld

Commenter's first name

Withheld

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

The Ethiopian federal forces, the Amhara militia and Eritrean forces have committed war crimes that amount to genocide against the people of Tigray. Now the same force are accusing the the TDF for committing crimes. The motive of these false accusations is to demonise Tigrayans and to continue with their genocidal agenda.

Full Comment

The Ethiopian federal forces, the Amhara militia and the Eritrean forces committed war crimes that amount to genocide against the people of Tigray for the last 11+ months. Prior to the war they demonised the people of Tigray and their leadership by spreading hatred through government media outlets, and social media. The result was massacre of civilians, rape and gang rape of underage girls and women, using starvation as a weapon of war, destruction of schools, health services, industrial infrastructure, cutting of banking and communications services. Now they are trying to cover up their crimes and blackmail the well disciplined Tigray defence forces. Moreover they are trying to incite ethnic violence against the people of Tigray. This dangerous move must stop other wise it may lead to full blown Tigray genocide

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10229

Public comment number

United States and Canada

Region

Matias

Commenter's first name

Mamo

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT PROVIDE

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

The Tplf , a designated terrorist organization, and its diaspora community are committing genocide against the people of Ethiopia. They are actively engaged in a wide spread campaign to block the social media accounts of prominent Ethiopians specially Amhara activist .

Full Comment

TPLF , a designated terrorist organization and its diaspora supporters are committing crimes against Ethiopians specially ethnic Amhara and afar . Their is wide spread rape , looting and killing. They have killed over 600 people in a small town in north wollo, Kobo , alone . The perpetrators of these heinous crimes are also engaged in wide spread misinformation using social media and main stream media like CNN and BBC . They have strong connections with lobbyists, politicians and western media personnel , a strong tie they established while they were in power for 27 years. They are actively engaged in blocking the social media accounts of Amhara activist and any another Ethiopian who works in the best interest of Their country. I call up on FB to look in to the matter and be a voice for over 100 million Ethiopians whose are held hostage by this terrorist organization and its supporters . What ISIS is to the west/Middle East , TPLF is 100 x to Ethiopians .

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10230

Public comment number

Asia Pacific and Oceania

Region

Withheld

Commenter's first name

Withheld

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

Withheld

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

The removal of the post by Facebook was not consistent with international human rights law standards nor in line with its Community Standards and values. As such, I demand the Oversight Board to overturn the initial decision of Facebook to remove the post.

Full Comment

On a closer reading of the post, the impugned parts of the post are the claims that “ethnic Tigrayan civilians assisted the TPLF in these crimes”, and “the Tigreans, who know the area very well” led the TPLF door-to-door to expose women to rape and to loot property.” Outwardly, these two claims may stir up reprisals against Tigrean civilians. However, these two claims along with the entirety of the post didn’t cross the threshold of hate speech under international human rights law. First, under international human rights law, freedom of speech includes any speech that may offend, shock or disturb any population or sections of the society. In consonance with articles 19(3) and 20 (2) of the ICCPR, these claims are not breaching the rules on hate speech. While these claims may have a potential to exacerbate the polarisation between Amahra and Tigreans in the country, it does not foment a direct violence against ethnic Tigreans. Whether the above post is qualified as a hate speech, we need to assess it with the Rabat Plan of Action that outlines a six-part threshold test taking into account (1) the social and political context, (2) status of the speaker, (3) intent to incite the audience against a target group, (4) content and form of the speech, (5) extent of its dissemination and (6) likelihood of harm, including imminence. Accordingly, while the context of this post was made in connection of an armed conflict between the TPLF forces and the Federal Defence Forces and Amhara regional forces, this post may reflect the ongoing political rivalry between ethnic Amhara and Tigreans over contested territories of Raya where some of such allegations of human rights abuses were

reported. When we see the post in its entirety or those disputed contents, the author's intent seems to expose the alleged violence that ethnic Amharas are facing in those areas than calling its audience to take direct retaliatory measures on Tigreans. When it comes to the status of the speaker, the author seems less popular in the society since the reactions of the post before removal was quite limited as s/he received fewer than 135 reactions. In terms of content and form, the author's post in its entirety was not direct and provocative against ethnic Tigreans while citing their involvement in abetting the crimes of TPLF. While the extent of the speech was significant as it was viewed more than 6500 times, however, the likelihood of inciting imminent harm against civilians was limited given the internet blackout in those conflict areas since the war broke out in Tigray region. Given that the Rabat six-part tests are cumulative, it follows that the post did not pass the required threshold despite the context and extent of the speech are fulfilled. Reverting to Facebook's Community Standard on Hate Speech, it defines hate speech as a direct attack against people – rather than concepts or institutions – on the basis of protected characteristics. Despite the author failing to adduce any evidence to his/her claim, it seems that the author was exposing the alleged atrocities committed on residents in those areas rather than uttering a hate speech against Tigreans. Seen from Facebook's values, one of the stated values of the company is to make sure everyone at Facebook has access to as much information as possible. Simply put, Facebook seeks to create a place for expression and give people a voice. Thus, the author of the post was exercising his/her right to freedom of expression. Overall, the removal of the post by Facebook was not consistent with international human rights law standards nor in line with its Community Standards and values.

- Whether Facebook's Hate Speech policy adequately enables users to raise awareness of alleged human rights violations, including in conflict zones: No. Facebook's Hate Speech Policy doesn't adequately enable its users to raise awareness of alleged human rights violations. First, the updated policy of Facebook on hate speech impinges international human rights standards such as legality, legitimacy, necessity and proportionality. For example, the new rule adopted in June 2021 prohibits content "attacking concepts, institutions, ideas, practices, or beliefs" associated with protected characteristics. In the above case, the author claims TPLF's atrocities against residents in North Wollo areas. But when we assess this claim with the updated policy of Facebook, TPLF may be considered as a political institution for Tigreans as it took power in a landslide 98% regional vote. So, attacking or exposing the crimes of TPLF may in this context be associated with attacking the protected characteristics, i.e., ethnicity. Second, the updated policy is overbroad and won't enable its users to report in conflict zones.
- Content moderation challenges specific to Ethiopia: The major challenges of content moderation in Ethiopia are mainly related with Facebook's insensitivity with local contexts, linguistic injustice, lack of enough content moderators and over-reliance on flooding of reports. Recent challenges include Facebook's aggressive stance towards certain contents and the issue of partiality in taking down contents. Following the war in Tigray, Facebook tends to be pulling down contents that are pro-government and pan-Ethiopian activists and human rights activists. As a result, the Ethiopian Information Network Security Agency (INSA) vehemently opposed

the stance of Facebook towards some contents and aims to develop an alternative social media platforms in Ethiopia. The Head of INSA accused Facebook of deleting posts and user accounts which were “disseminating the true reality about Ethiopia”. I hope the Oversight Board will give some guidance on to what extent Facebook relies on flooding of reports when a certain post is reported by a crowd of people. For these reasons, therefore, I demand the Oversight Board to overturn the initial decision of Facebook to remove the post.

[Link to Attachment](#)

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10231

Public comment number

United States and Canada

Region

Giziew

Commenter's first name

Biazen

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT PROVIDE

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

Facebook unfairly blocking accounts of Amhara human right activists.

Full Comment

Amhara in Ethiopia has lost so many life's and facing huge human right abuses by TPLF in Wollo and in Wolega by OLF Terrorist groups. The human right activists Role is vital for the Survival of Amhara people. So Facebook should fire those who are assigned to monitor Facebook abuse the platform for their personal benefit or use their position for the benefit of the group they support. Thank you

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10232

Public comment number

United States and Canada

Region

Laike

Commenter's first name

Misikir

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT PROVIDE

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

I hope FB will continue to serve humanity in a positive way. I have used FB from its early days and believe in the value it has in our society.

Full Comment

Regarding the case presented before you it is very important that you hear what we the users are informing you. The crimes committed by TPLF are real and true. As you are gathering public comment innocent people are being slaughtered by TPLF in ETHIOPIA. I myself have first hand information supported by real data that shows the nature of the crimes committed by TPLF. The TPLF initiated an Amhara genocide campaign long time ago and is in that same path today. I believe silencing victims and shutting down advocates is no less crime than the actual crime itself . In the past TPLF supporters have lobbied to shutdown advocates and in some case have done so successfully. This does not change the truth on the ground. I strongly believe if the platform is to remain to its true objectives serving communities globally it needs to be fair when it comes to these matters that have grave consequences. You are dealing with peoples life . TPLF has billions of dollars that it looted from the county and powerful lobby group to silence victims and advocates. FB can not afford to suffocate victims voice . I strongly recommend you make fact based decisions and not yield to tyrants and their lobbying efforts. No matter how much the truth may be suppressed it will eventually come and those who suffocated it will regret they took the wrong actions . Crime against humanity has been committed by TPLF not only in Raya Kobo but in Metekel, in Guraferda, and in many other places . I hope you stand for truth!!

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10234

Public comment number

United States and Canada

Region

Biniam

Commenter's first name

Ambachew

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

Medical Student

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

The facebook post reporting on #RAYA KABO massacre is correct & speaks the truth, and his voice should not be silenced. A lot of Amhara activist voice are being silenced on Facebook by Tigrean/Oromo activist working at Facebook. There is a real and concrete evidence showing #AmharaGenocide by two groups: OromoLiberationArmy, whose sole political enterprise lays in killing innocent Amhara civilians in Wellega,Oromia. The second group is TPLF who have invaded Afar & Amhara regions using 200,000 thousand trained militia, & who are currently in control of North Gondar, Entire Wollo region, and some part of Afar. It's important to know, TPLF invaded & is killing innocent civilians, looting hospitals & livestock as we speak.

Full Comment

The facebook post reporting on #RAYA KABO massacre is correct & speaks the truth, and his voice should not be silenced. A lot of Amhara activist voices are being silenced on Facebook by Tigrean/Oromo activist working at Facebook. It's a shame for a Facebook freedom of speech to silence only Amhara activist. There is a real and concrete evidence showing #AmharaGenocide by two groups: OromoLiberationArmy, whose sole political enterprise lays in killing innocent Amhara civilians in Wellega,Oromia. Please refer to Amhara Association of America for more detailed report on the daily Amhara massacres taking place in Wellega,Oromia. The second group is TPLF who have invaded Afar & Amhara regions using 200,000 thousand trained militia, & who are currently in control of North Gondar, Entire Wollo region, and some part of Afar. It's important to know, it's hard to distinguish TPLF from Tigreans because they TPLF has the entire support of Tigreans, and when TPLF invaded Amhara & Afar region, they invaded with a unimaginable surplus of people. For instance, in control of Weldia, they used

60,000 Tigreans. It's important to know, when they control these Amhara regions, including Raya Kobo, they kill innocent civilians, loot hospitals & livestock. TPLF spokesman Getachew Reda said, our goal is to settle score against Amharas and Balkanize the Ethiopian state, and they are working toward that goal. It's also worth mentioning that TPLF uses heavy artillery including tanks, rocket launchers to shield large populated towns before sending in their trained & untrained civilian human wave. Therefore, the situation between Tigray and Amhara is a full scale complete war, do not be deceived by propaganda. War is against armed militants not innocent women and children. Therefore, when Amhara activist report Amhara civilians being persecuted by Tigrean Military, we speak the truth. We see what's happening to our dear family members on the ground more than any journalist. Thus, instead of silencing Amhara activist when they report on occurred to our people on the ground, Facebook oversightboard should question the validity of the Facebook post simply by checking with the Amhara Media Corporation or Amhara Regional Government spokesman Getachew Muluneh. Please, there are enough Amhara intellectuals who will provide you with facts not accusations, but facts: for instance, Amhara Association of America, Genocide Prevention of Ethiopia, Amhara Professionals Union, and more. So, please consider what's happening to Amharas. TigreanInvaders have ruined Amhara cites in Wollo into Ash, and there is a global humanitarian catastrophe - AmharaWolloFamine is currently taking place. Food aid trucks are reaching Tigray, but not a single aid truck is coming to support or relieve Amhara IDPs. Lastly, please respect Amhara lives, Amhara activist, and Amhara intellectuals to clearly speak their mind without their Facebook post being removed for misguided hate speech. It's not hate to say TigreansInvaders slaughtered Amhara Civilans if indeed they committed the crime. TigreanInvaders are deliberately targeting not trained AmharaForces, but civilians. Please do not silent Amhara activist, and please refer to Amhara intellectuals for more clarification about events that transpire before removing the post or preventing activist from posting for 30 some days. Lastly, understand Ethiopian politics not just from political activist but from professional civil societies and respected journalists operating in Amhara region, and around the world. AmharaGenocide is taking place in Ethiopia, and silencing Amhara activist voices is allowing these genocide to continue by TPLF/OLF joint a military operation.

[Link to Attachment](#)

No Attachment

አስተዳደር ባሉ ቀበሌዎች፣ በራያ ቆቦ ዙሪያ ባሉ ቀበሌዎች በተለይ በዙብል፣ በራማ፣ በመደፈራ፣ በቀዬ ጋራ፣ በገደመዬ፣ በአራዱም፣ በአቧሬ፣ በተኩላሽ፣ በሮቢት፣ በጎብዩ፣ በወርቄ አጋምሳ፣ በሃራ ከተማ፣ በወልዲያ ከተማና ወረዳ፣ በጉባላፍቶ ወረዳ ለምሳሌ በደሮ ግብር፣ በስሪንቃ፣ በሳንቃ፣ በመርሳ ከተማ፣ በመሃል አምባ፣ በወርጌሳ፣ በጊራና፣ በግዳን ወረዳ ባሉ ቀበሌዎች፣ በኩል መስክ፣ በአንጉት ወረዳ ባሉ ቀበሌዎች ለምሳሌ በባሳት፣ በቀበሮ ሜዳ፣ በአሁን ተገኝ ከተማ፣ በጋዞ ወረዳ ባሉ ቀበሌዎች ለምሳሌ በእስታይሽ ከተማ፣ በቦያ፣ በላሊባ ከተማ አና በላስታ ወረዳ ባሉ ቀበሌዎች ለምሳሌ በብልበላ፣ በሽምሽህ፣ በዋድላ ወረዳ ለምሳሌ በሀሙሲት፣ በጋሽና ከተማ፣ በኮን ከተማ፣ በመቄት ወረዳ ባሉ ቀበሌዎች ለምሳሌ በአርቢት፣ በጣጃ፣ በገረገራ፣ በፍላቄት፣ በኮኪት፣ በደብረዘቢጥ፣ በአይና ቡግና ወረዳ ባሉ ቀበሌዎች እና በዋግህምራ ዞን ባሉ ወረዳዎች እና ቀበሌዎች እንዲሁም በደቡብ ጎንደር ዞን በተወሰኑ ወረዳዎች ላይ TPLF ያደረሰውን በደል በአይኔ የማየት እድሉ ገጥሞኛል። አማራ በመሆናቸው ምክንያት ንፅሁን ተገለጠ። ህፃናት ከወላጆቻቸው እጅ ቀምተው ደፍረዋል፣ የአባውራ ሜስቶች ከባሎቻቸው ፊት ተደፍረዋል፣ የሃይማኖት አባቶች እምነትን መሰረት ተደርጎ ተገለጠ እንዳይቀበሩም ከልክለዋ ጅብም አስበልተዋል፣ ወንዶች ከ12አመት በላይ እስከ 80 አመት ደረሰ ታስረዋል፣ በዕስር ቤትም የዳኞችና የዳቃቢያ ህጎችን ቤት፣ የካቤኔ ቤት እና ጠመንጃ ያላቸውን ሰዎች ቤት አሳዩን ተብለው አናቅም ሲሉ አስቃይተዋቸዋል እያሰቃዩም ነው ገድለዋችንም ። እንደዚህ አይነት መሰረታዊ የሙብት ጥሰቶችን በጥላቻ ንግግር ስም እና የነዚህ አጥፊዎች በስልጣን ዘመናቸው አባላታቸውን በትምህርት ስም፣ በጉዲፍቻ ስም፣ በፖለቲካ ጥገኝነት ስም፣ በጉብኝት ስም፣ በአሜሪካ፣ በአውሮፓ፣ በካናዳ እንዲሁም በእስያ ቀድመው ለዚህ እኩይ ተግባር ስላስቀመጡ በሀሳት ወሬ እና በድምፅ ብልጫ ከማንኛውም እውነት ሀሰቱ ወሬ በልጧል። ንፁህ ኢትዮጵያን የነዚህ አካላት ትግሬን ሊያስጨፈጭፉ ነው በሚይል ትግሬን ከኢትዮጵያ ጋር ለማለያየት የማይፈነቅሉት ድንጋይ የለም ይህ ግን እኛ ስላልን ሳይሆን ማንኛውም ገለልተኛ አካል ቢያጣራው የሚያገኘው ሀቅ ነው ። ለፌስቡክ ድርጅትም ይህንን በማየት በእውነቱ ያለውን ችግር በጥላቻ ንግግር ስም መሰረታዊ የሰው ልጆች ሙብት እንዴት ይታፈናል? የጥላቻ ንግግር ለመባልስ መሰረቱ ምንድን ነው? ዘርን፣ ሐይማኖት እና ያታዊ በሆነ መልኩ ገልፀናል? TPLF በውጭ አገር ባሉት ደጋፊዎች አማራን የመርገም ትዕይንት በማንኛውም ሚዲያ በፎቶ፣ በቪዲዮ በምዕሰለ ትይንት ብቻ በማንኛውም አይነት ተግባር ያሳያሉ ይህ የጥላቻ ትዕይንት በፌስቡክ ጭምርም ሲስተናገድ ይታያል። እየበደለን ያለው የትግራይ ነዋሪ እና ሕዝብ ነው አላልኩም በዚህ ክልል ውስጥ የተፈጠረው እና በትግራይ ሕዝብ ስም የሚነግሩትን TPLF እና አባላቱን እንጂ አቤቱታችን ታዲያ እንዴት ብሎ ነው የጥላቻ እና የሀሰት ንግግርን መሰፈርት የሚያሟላው? የሆነ ሆኖ ፌስቡክ የአፍሪካን ብዙሃነትን መሰረት ያደረገ በቅርበት ክትትል ሊያደርግ የሚችል አካል በህግ ማዕቀፍ ማስቀመጥ እና መተግበር እንዳለበት ለነገ ስራ የሚባል አለመሆኑን እንንዲታወቅልን እና ለአቤቱታችንም ፈጣን ምላሽ ይሰጠን ስል ለፌስቡክ ያለኝን አክብርት በመግለፅ ጭምር ነው። የተከበራችሁ የፌስቡክ ባለቤት እና አስተዳዳሪዎች በዚህ የአለም ድምፀ ማስተጋቢ የሆናችሁ እድለኞች ናችሁ። በመሆኑም ህግ ሲከበር የሰው ልጆችን ድስታን ከማይት ውጭ ደስታ የለም በተቀራኒውም ዘግናኝ የሆነ የሰው ልጆች ሙብት ጥሰት ሲከሰት ያሳዝናል። የሆነ ሆኖ አሁን በእኛ አገር እየሆነ ያለውን ክስተት አሳዛኝና ለማንም ግልፅ ናቸው። በአጠቃላይ እኔ እና መሰል በጎ አድራጊዎች የሚያደርሱትን መረጃ በጥሞና በቀና ልቦና አይታችሁ እና ተረድታችሁ በንፁህ ኢትዮጵያን ላይ እየደረሰ ያለውንና ለወደፊቱም ሊደርስብን ከሚችል አደገኛ ጥቃት በአግባቡ እንድንከላከል እና የተከሰተውን ሰብአዊና ቁሳዊ ጉዳት ያለበትን ሁኔታ ለሚመለከተው የአለም ህዝብ በታሪክ መዝገብ እንዲይዝልንና ይህ አይነቱ ክስት እንዳይረሳና እንዳይደገም እንዲያዝ እና ለሌሎች በምሳሌነት እንዲቀመጥ ይህ አይነቱን ክስተት በየአገራቱ በተለይም እንደ ኢትዮጵያ ባሉ የብሔር ብሔሰብ አገሮችን የመናገር ሙብትን እና የድረሱልኝ ጥሪን ግምት አስገብቶ ፌስቡክ እገዛ አንዲያደርግልን በማለት በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ። ፈጣሪ ይባርካችሁ

Link to Attachment
No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10236

Public comment number

United States and Canada

Region

Alemayehu

Commenter's first name

Teferra

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

None

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

I strongly believe facebook is unfairly targeting posts and activists exposing human atrocities against Amhara people in Ethiopia.

Full Comment

I strongly believe, facebook is a platform to speaking about human rights, and disclosing human rights violations to the general world community so that to take action timely. It is a platform to access and information: But many times, facebook is limiting information flow to those that may prevent the problem. It is a platform for freedom of speech. We have the right to post or share messages following facebook standards. But so many times, facebook is violating its rules, its core values. Facebook is a platform for Non-discrimination. We Amharas deserve the right to be heard equally with any human beings in the globe. But facebook discriminates voices Amhara people not to be heard. Inconsistency of decisions with its rules regarding Amhara issues in Ethiopia. Content moderation system: Facebook uses content moderation system to check the content posts that may have harmful messages or against the community standards. But, how this can understand the ongoing gross and grave human rights violations on Amhara people of Ethiopia. For example, when posts having the name of most places (like Wollega, Mai Kadera, Wolkyite, Shashemene, Raya, Chena, Agamsa, Woldia, Metekel, Burayu, Arsi, Ataye, Guraferda so and so) where horrific human rights atrocities (genocide and war) taking place, appear on Facebook, the system immediately considers as posts having a content against community standards. And then the system flagged and blocks these posts soon. This is happening frequently, while the posts are sharing human atrocities happening to the world for timely intervention. The term "Neftegna" is a code name to target Amhara people. This is deliberately given by the Tigray People Liberation Front/TPLF. Here, how facebook can understand hate speech in Ethiopian context? The decision to block posts, and people or organization sharing such posts is not based on these contexts existing on

the ground. Tigray People Liberation Front/TPLF intentionally killing civilians (children, mothers, elders, unarmed people, making mass displacement destroying properties even including killing domestic animals, destroying cities and villages). Those posts exposing these atrocities against Amhara people should not be targeted by facebook.

[Link to Attachment](#)

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10238

Public comment number

United States and Canada

Region

Desalegn

Commenter's first name

Kassa

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT PROVIDE

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

In my opinion, I didn't see a hate speech in that post. The post talks about the TPLF, not any group of people. The TPLF is an organization designated a terrorist organization by the Ethiopian government. It's an organization that brutally ruled Ethiopia for 27 years. TPLF has occupied and the Town of Kobo in Raya. It has killed, raped, plundered the town. As we speak, people in that city are starving to death because of the occupation. Talking about the terrorist organization that occupied your town is not a hate speech.

Full Comment

As I indicated in the summary, the TPLF is a terrorist organization that ruled Ethiopians for 27 years with an iron fist. The people of Ethiopia dislike this organization and overthrew it. It should be noted that talking about the TPLF should not be equated to talking about the Tigrayan people. During the time that the TPLF was in power it had made connections through out the world including key international organization. It has put its people in major news organizations, international human rights organizations, civic organizations. I believe Facebook is not an exception. In my opinion, the people who work for Facebook to monitor activities by Ethiopians are biased. They block people who are writing about the occupied towns and cities, especially Amharas. I have seen many Amharas blocked for writing about the war and other important matters regarding Amhara and Ethiopia. On the other hand, many none Amhara Ethiopians who write degrading remarks and opinions about Amhara keep writing without any consequence. Facebook has been infiltrated by the TPLF just like other news organizations such as CNN, AFP, BBC. The TPLF has been pocketing the aid money that was meant for Ethiopia for the last 27 years. It has money, and uses that money to put its supporters in key places in important organizations in the world. Facebook is not an exception!

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10239

Public comment number

Europe

Region

Samson

Commenter's first name

Esayas

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

BI Norwegian Business School

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

We believe that Facebook's standard that prohibits generalizations about a group of people being violent or criminal strikes the right balance between freedom of expression and addressing harms from hate speech, and the initial removal of the content by Facebook was consistent with such standard and the predicament that many Tigrayans find in the current conflict in Ethiopia.

Full Comment

We welcome the Oversight Board's initiative to seek public comments. In this document, we briefly address the points that the Board sought feedback on in their order. (1) We believe that Facebook's initial decision to remove the post is consistent with the company's standards, values and human rights responsibilities and commitments. The user's reference to "ethnic Tigrayan civilians" assisting the TPLF in the alleged carnage squarely falls with "content targeting a group of people with generalizations, or unqualified behavioral statements about them being violent, sexual or other criminals." The user does not attribute the claim to a credible source nor does the reference to reports from "people in the area" help anyone verify or refute the claim. Given the current context in Ethiopia, where conflict is raging and Tigrayans are subject to horrific ethnic-based abuses across the Country, such general and unverified accusation "is likely to contribute to imminent physical harm, intimidation or discrimination" against Tigrayans, especially those living in Amhara region and areas currently occupied by Amhara paramilitary forces. Tigrayans living in those areas have been subject to horrific attacks, often following military losses and alleged attacks against Amharas in Tigray or TPLF-controlled territories. Thus, by removing the post, Facebook uphold its responsibility to protect. (2) We believe in the powerful role social media platforms play in raising awareness for human rights violations in conflict zones. With complete blockade of all means of communications from Tigray for the past 11

months and the Ethiopian government's assault on media and journalists, platforms such as Facebook offered Tigrayans abroad the possibility to raise awareness and draw attention of the International community on the human rights abuses. But at the same time, we believe that the Country's current situation, where ethnic tensions run high and the number of documented human rights violation against Tigrayan in the past few months, dictate careful consideration of generalized and unverified accusations that endanger the lives of civilians. Thus, we believe that Facebook's standard that prohibits generalizations strikes the right balance, and the initial removal was consistent with such standard. (3) We recognize the challenges that Facebook faces in moderating content from multi-lingual and multi-ethnic countries like Ethiopia. We also recognize the need to strike a balance between freedom of expression and addressing harms from hate speech. However, we want to emphasize the fact that Facebook's systems are not able to detect content written in Ethiopian languages often plays in favor of keeping the content in the platform. In a recent leaked document obtained by the WSJ, Facebook admitted to the difficulty in removing harmful content targeting Tigrayans. According to the report, content inciting violence against Tigrayans "slipped through the cracks due to a lack of moderators who speak the native language." Thus, we hope that the Board would do a better job at striking the right balance. (4) Relations among ethnic groups in Ethiopia had been tense for some years. However, the past three years saw an open, state backed denigration of Tigrayans. This was heightened during the war. The state frequently presents the TPLF, and its supports, which easily translates to all Tigrayans as the source of all evil in the country. Often senior government officials set the scene and then it is relayed by state and affiliated media that garner millions of followers in a form of a campaign. For instance, the Prime Minister has used references such as "weeds to be uprooted", "cancers", "day-time hyenas" and "27 years of darkness led by Tigrayans." The president of Amhara regional state and a senior advisor to the prime minister have also used clear languages that incite ethnic targeting against Tigrayans. The content is mainly disseminated through Facebook, the primary online source of information and communication in Ethiopia. A recent study by Harvard University documents the rise of online hate speech and how coordinated the government campaign has been. (5) The TPLF has been limited to administering Tigray since 2018. During the hostilities, it was clear that TPLF led-government in Tigray coordinated the fight, as do the other parties. We cannot see special entanglement between the TPLF and the fighting forces that would attract the accusations in the post. There has, indeed, been few allegations of TDF, the Tigray military, abusing civilians in the relevant area. However, they are not confirmed by a neutral body or a media, and have been denied by the authorities in Tigray. (6) As stated above, Facebook plays a critical role in helping document abuses. This is particularly the case in developing countries, where many conflicts take place and where it serves as a major tool of communication. In the light of this, we think that Facebook's position entails more responsibility to preserve content and probably introduce terms that address conflict situations.

[Link to Attachment](#)

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10241

Public comment number

United States and Canada

Region

Habtamu

Commenter's first name

Akalu

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

Ethiopian community

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

Thr Amhara activists are genuine and honorable people. Do not suspend their Facebook page.

Full Comment

Do not block the Amhara activists page

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

2021-014-FB-UA

Case number

PC-10242

Public comment number

Sub-Saharan Africa

Region

Berhan

Commenter's first name

Taye

Commenter's last name

English

Commenter's preferred language

NA

Organization

No

Response on behalf of organization

Short summary provided by the commenter

Facebook has been unable to fix the lack of content moderation issues in Ethiopia. Its platforms have been used to call for violence and massacre of protected and vulnerable groups. Since this is a systemic problem, and since an ad-hoc and non-binding recommendation will not adequately address this challenge, the Oversight Board should rather shed light on Facebook's obscure content moderation policies in Ethiopia and other global majority countries. The Board should compel Facebook to publish its Ethiopia human rights impact assessment conducted in 2020, publish slur and hateful terms for Ethiopia, translate its community standards, and publish the number of content moderators, among other details.

Full Comment

I find that - It is difficult to assess this case without seeing the entire text in Amharic - It is impossible to comment on this case without knowledge about the speaker, their account, affiliation, previous engagement, an offense related to the community standard - It is concerning that this Oversight Board, just like Facebook, is asking for historical context and information about this situation. Grassroots groups have been providing Facebook 'context' for the past few years on their lived realities and experiences without any improvement to the harms perpetrated through and by Facebook. This shows, yet again, that those in the global majority have to explain their lived realities, their context, and their situations to avoid being harmed by this tool - It is impossible to assess and comment on Facebook's action of removing the content without fully understanding what it means for content to be flagged automatically, what terms or words or actions flagged this specific content for removal, and why this was an error - It is concerning that those most affected by this content were not meaningfully engaged on this topic or specifically asked to provide comments. It is highly likely that the Raya Kobo people don't know this

Oversight Board exists or that their issue or claim about their realities are being considered in this manner I note that - From my experience engaging with Facebook on content moderation issues in Ethiopia, it is my humble opinion that Facebook is unable and unwilling to fix the content moderation issues on its platforms related to Ethiopia. - For instance, Facebook has failed to take down content that is unequivocally hateful, violence-inciting, and calling for the targeted massacre of protected groups. When this content is reported through the platforms, it is common to receive an automatic response indicating that the content does not violate the community standard. However, when the same content that was deemed 'legitimate' is shared in an excel sheet with Facebook's human rights team, 90% of the content is taken down. This shows that this is a systemic problem, and puts the burden on grassroots groups to continuously monitor and flag kinds of content. - Even after Facebook has publicly claimed that it has invested millions to solve these problems, still, community standards are only available in Amharic. Critical languages like Tigrinya, Afaan Oromo, Somali, and Afar are still not covered. This is a systemic problem, and an ad-hoc and non-binding recommendation or engagement will not solve this problem. Therefore, it is my humble opinion that the Oversight Board should instead help shed light on Facebook's obscure and dangerous content moderation practices and policies in Ethiopia and other global majority countries. Given this context, I recommend that the Oversight Board - Facebook's human rights and policy team had traveled to Ethiopia to conduct a human rights impact assessment in 2020. The Board should impress upon Facebook to publicly publish the human rights impact assessment on Ethiopia - The Board should compel Facebook to publish the number of human content moderators per language in Ethiopia and other places - The Board should impress facebook to publish its slur and hate speech list for Ethiopia and other global majority countries - The Board should encourage Facebook to translate its community standards into Tigrinya, Afaan Oromo, Somali, Afar, and other languages

[Link to Attachment](#)

No Attachment