

HATEFUL SPEECH AND CONFLICT IN THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA



A LEXICON OF HATEFUL
AND INFLAMMATORY
WORDS AND PHRASES



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Purpose

PeaceTech Lab’s overarching goals of this lexicon are to identify and explain hateful language, and also to offer alternative words and phrases that can be used to combat the spread of hateful language in Ethiopia. PeaceTech Lab intends for this lexicon to serve as a resource to inform individuals and organizations involved in monitoring and combating hateful language in Ethiopia. This lexicon will also contribute to the overall body of knowledge on this issue and inform other efforts around the globe.

The hateful language specified in this lexicon is not an exhaustive list, and the proposed meaning and contextualization of this language is not prescriptive. This lexicon is not a legal document. This lexicon is not intended to promote censorship, or to serve as a basis for the Government of Ethiopia, or any other authority, to restrict speech. The lexicon and the research that underlie this lexicon are not designed to be a reference or evidence for any legal or regulatory proceedings or exercise, including those involving criminal or civil sanctions or penalties. PeaceTech Lab recognizes that there is no international legal definition of what constitutes unlawful hate speech. PeaceTech Lab thus takes no position, and makes no recommendation, regarding what constitutes unlawful speech under the law of Ethiopia, under the law of any other jurisdiction, or under international law.

Additionally, the order in which the hateful language appears in their respective sections of the lexicon does not infer additional significance other than what is described in the research methodology. Hateful language described in this lexicon should not be interpreted to be more or less harmful based on the order in which it appears in this lexicon, or for any other reason that is not expressly stated in this lexicon.

The list of terms included in this lexicon, as well as their proposed meaning and contextualization, are not static. Instead, the lexicon is a ‘snapshot’ (in time and space) of how hateful language is used, perceived, and understood by those who contributed to the research process in Ethiopia between March and September 2020. How these terms are understood — their meanings, usage, and the assessment of their harmful nature — may evolve or change over time. The non-static nature of hateful language is in line with the sometimes abrupt changes that can occur in the context of conflict and the evolution of language over time in any society, including in Ethiopia. There is a significant subjective dimension to hateful language, and context can change the meaning of language used. The results of the research laid out in this lexicon should be approached as such.

Hateful language is by its very nature offensive. PeaceTech Lab is not using hateful language in its lexicon for the purpose of promoting or spreading it. Instead, PeaceTech Lab displays this hateful language to identify it, explain it, and inform the public.

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“Hate speech is a menace to democratic values, social stability and peace. It spreads like wildfire through social media, the Internet, and conspiracy theories. It is abetted by public discourse that stigmatizes women, minorities, migrants, refugees and any so-called ‘other.’ Indeed, hate is moving into the mainstream – in liberal democracies and authoritarian States alike.”²¹ —António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

Introduction

Since 2014, PeaceTech Lab has undertaken research and worked with local partners in ten countries ranging from Nigeria to Iraq to understand the dynamics of hate speech and the connection between the proliferation of hateful narratives online and violent events offline.

This research and the resulting lexicons seek to identify and contextualize the particular type of language that's likely to cause violence by exacerbating ongoing tensions and deepening ongoing crises within communities in conflict. Rather than assessing the general existence or prevalence of hate speech, each lexicon instead examines the most prevalent inflammatory terms, their origins and context, and their use in a particular country context. To successfully monitor and counter hateful speech in its degrees of severity, we must first identify the vocabulary most commonly used and the social and political context that makes these terms offensive, inflammatory, or potentially dangerous.

This lexicon of hate speech in Ethiopia aims to highlight the problem of hateful speech in 2020 amidst profound social and political divisions in the country. As illustrated throughout this document, hate speech is *both* a symptom and cause of these divisions.

In the complex and multilayered context of Ethiopia's current reality, inflammatory speech is used as a tool to achieve political and material ends. This ultimately results in the deepening of ethnic divisions, polarizing of opinions, and dehumanization of targeted groups, exacerbating feelings of frustration and grievance, and calls for violent action. Since the transition of power and the opening of civic space in 2018, a steady increase in the number of social media users are expected to increase the frequency of inflammatory speech across all online platforms. Several instances in recent events have demonstrated the power that hateful narratives and disinformation circulating online have to further escalate already tense situations.

In this context, and because of the nature of hateful language itself, this lexicon aims to serve as an initial guide to specific words and phrases identified by the surveyed population as particularly inflammatory or having inflammatory potential, during the period of March through September, 2020, in Ethiopia. PeaceTech Lab intends for this lexicon to serve as a resource to inform individuals and organizations involved in monitoring and combating hateful language in Ethiopia. This lexicon will also contribute to the overall body of knowledge on this issue and inform other efforts around the globe.

The Lexicon

To compose this lexicon, the project team, comprising staff and consultants of PeaceTech Lab, as well as Ethiopia civil society partner organizations and collaborators, conducted a multi-phased research process that consisted of an extensive online survey, consultations via phone, a series of online focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and expert reviews with Ethiopian scholars and professionals. The research process allowed the team to identify the terms and phrases that are — according to all those surveyed — contributing to Ethiopia's conflicts and tensions because they are themselves inflammatory or are used in an inflammatory way. For each term, the **“Definition of Term or Phrase”** section contains information that respondents provided in the first three survey questions about the term's origins, general meaning, and related information. The **“Why It's Offensive or Inflammatory”** section discusses information that respondents provided as to why they believed the term either was offensive and inflammatory or could be used in an offensive and inflammatory way. This section often also discusses past usages, historical references to past conflict and grievances, and other contexts

that provide a wider understanding of a term’s nuanced use and meaning. Finally, the “**Non-Offensive Alternative**” section includes terms provided by respondents to use in place of the offensive and inflammatory terms or that could be used to mitigate or counter those terms. The lexicon discussion groups critiqued this information and provided additional contextual analysis. Finally, a select and diverse group of Ethiopian expert advisers supplemented the data from the survey, discussion group, and in depth interviews with additional analysis and insights.

Further discussion about the survey, workshops, and other aspects of the project’s methodology can be found in the appendices at the end of the document.

Country Context: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is the most populous country in the horn of Africa with 110 million people.² It has more than 80 ethnic groups of which Oromo (34.3% of the population) and Amhara (26.9% of the population) form a significant majority followed by Somali and Tigray ethnic groups whose populations constitute 6.2% and 6% of the entire country’s population, respectively. Similarly, 62.8% of Ethiopians are followers of Christianity (of which 43.5% are Orthodox Christians) while 33.9% are Muslims.³ Since 1995, Ethiopia has been restructured in a federal arrangement that is demarcated along ethnic lines.⁴ Accordingly, there are now ten federal member states known as regions and two federal cities, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa.

Ethiopia’s history dates back to the first century during the reign of the Axum kingdom.⁵ Since then, conquests, mass migrations, and wars between the Christian kingdom and Islamic sultanates, as well as communal customary rules, have led to the evolution of an ethnically and religiously diverse Ethiopia. The modern Ethiopian state was arguably created during the reign of Emperor Menelik II. Emperor Haile Selassie I further strengthened the Christian kingdom and was removed through a popular revolution in 1974.

The 1974 revolution of Ethiopia delivered the famous and historic “Land to the Tiller” proclamation abolishing the feudal land tenure system as well as secularizing the state. Since then the political discourse in Ethiopia has increasingly developed an ethno-linguistic focus which has mostly evolved around three major groups: the Oromos, Amharas, and Tigrayans. Other ethnic groups such as the Somalis and the Afaris from the southern parts of the country have remained largely marginalized. Historically, Amharas and Tigrayan are both part of the old historical Ethiopia (Abyssinia) and have the majority of Christian followers. Oromos long had a traditional belief and administration system, collectively known as *Gadaa*,⁶ which was later replaced by Islam and Christianity. The *Gadaa* system is still practiced in many parts of Oromia today, even though its role and influence has diminished over time.

The Communist Regime

The 1974 revolution ended the rule of the Christian imperial kingdom but the Derg military committee that took over the leadership continued the long history of repression. The Derg regime lasted for 17 years. In the early days of the regime, thousands of clandestine group members of Marxist-Leninist organizations were murdered in a political repression campaign known as the *Qey Shibir* (Red Terror) movement. Some historians argue that this repression was launched in response to the “white terror” campaign led against the Derg and its supporters by clandestine opposition groups known as the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party (EPRP).⁷

In 1991, the Eritrean liberation movement (led by the Ethiopian Liberation Front) launched during the imperial era joined forces with the Tigrayan liberation movement led by the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and defeated the Derg regime.⁸ This led to the independence

of Eritrea and the formation of the Ethiopian ethnic federation. In 1998, the Ethio-Eritrean war erupted over a border land dispute. It cost more than 70,000 lives on both sides.⁹ Peace was restored after the 2018 reform was introduced in Ethiopia.¹⁰

Ethnic-Federalism

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), which came into effect in 1995, introduced a federal arrangement which demarcated administrative regions and zones along ethnic lines. As a result, the Amhara, Somali, Afar, Sidama, and Harari regional states were named after major ethnic groups in the territory among the total of ten regions and two federal cities. Administrative districts and zones were then again subdivided based on ethnicity.¹¹

The demographic asymmetry of regional states has also become a source of controversy; Oromia and Amhara regional states hold more than 60% of Ethiopia's population, giving them an opportunity to dominate the federal government. On the other hand, in the Harari regional state, this system means that the 9% of ethnic Harari rule the regional state.¹²

Importantly, political office, access to jobs, and land ownership in the different regions are now often conditioned on ethnic affiliation. Critics argue that it has ethnicized every aspect of life in Ethiopia, from business to sports,¹³ and that inter-ethnic local conflicts have increased since the introduction of federalism because of the wealth and power asymmetries it creates between ethno-cultural groups.¹⁴ Its proponents argue that this system was created as a compromise between competing ethno-national groups who would otherwise have faced disintegration and cultural erasure. Consequently, the ethnic federalism model created new issues as it sought to solve old problems.¹⁵

Contested Elections

The 2005 general elections are a key moment in the recent history of conflict in Ethiopia. After the end of the civil war in 1991, Ethiopia introduced free press, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly. Many media outlets and political organizations came into the newly-opened political space. After a decade of slow democratization, the most contested and relatively free general elections in Ethiopia were held on May 15, 2005. This election was the first of its kind because it offered meaningful choices.¹⁶ However, the results of the election were contested by the opposition groups.¹⁷ The contestation escalated when opposition groups used boycotts to press for new elections in some polling stations where witnesses reported irregularities. Protests erupted in the capital city of Addis Ababa and in other cities where the CUD swept all the available seats. At least 193 civilians were killed¹⁸ and most of the CUD leaders were detained for more than a year during a mass arrest of thousands of their supporters.

Additionally, the government responded by banning many media outlets, adopting a law restricting funding sources for civil society and advocacy groups, and passing an anti-terrorism proclamation (which was used to prosecute dissidents). Major opposition leaders went into exile while others formed armed groups believing that the EPRDF wouldn't be removed from power through democratic elections.¹⁹

Consequently, media outlets such as Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) and Oromo Media Network (OMN) as well as other social media news aggregators became major platforms for political activism and information centers. Citizen journalism blossomed where the political space was narrow and the media and civil society barely functioned. The Ethiopian diaspora beyond the country's borders has also played an important role in filling the void of media and civil society in-country — many have become active critics on social media and on satellite television broadcasts, in addition to creating diplomatic pressure from their countries of residence.²⁰ Regardless, the EPRDF and its partners won both the 2010 and 2015 general elections

in a landslide victory, grabbing 99.6% of parliamentary seats each time.²¹ This dominance of EPRDF would face growing popular resistance, which would eventually lead to the 2018 reform of Ethiopia and the dissolution of the EPRDF.^{22,23}

The 2018 Reform and Rising Ethnic Tensions

Six months after the EPRDF declared total victory in the 2015 general election, popular protests erupted in Oromia, the largest region of Ethiopia. Beginning in November 2015, Oromo protests quickly spread across the whole region. The frontliners of the “#OromoProtests” (as they became known on social media) were youth members commonly known as *qeerroo* — an Afaan Oromo term meaning youth, bachelor, or unmarried man. Up to that point Qeerroo was known as a political association that had been founded in 2011 as a wing of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), an Oromo-nationalist organization that has been outlawed for most of its 50-year existence.²⁴ However, during the 2015 protests it became a movement of Oromo youth in general.²⁵

For three years, the protests spread across the country and gained momentum as other groups joined the struggle, increasing pressure on the regime in power. In December 2017, the ruling party announced its decision to undergo a “deep reform,” and promised to start releasing political prisoners whose existence it had until then denied. In February 2018, the party elected a new chairperson, Abiy Ahmed, who was sworn in as Prime Minister of Ethiopia on April 2, 2018. The following weeks sparked hopes of real change.²⁶

In September 2019, the Prime Minister authored a book titled *Medemer* in which he put forward his political aspirations for Ethiopia.^{27,28} Even though *Medemer* was first welcomed, many feared that *Medemer's* promotion of national unity could only come at the expense of their ethnic interests. Young Oromo-ethnic protesters burned copies of the book in October 2019, chanting “down, down, medemer.”^{29,30}

In the meantime, the Prime Minister managed to dissolve and merge the individual members of EPRDF, with the exception of TPLF, and formed a unified party named Prosperity Party (PP).³¹ The rationale given to the dissolution of the EPRDF was that it was not inclusive of parties from five of the regional states. This move was controversial. Outsiders expressed concerns that the merger of the EPRDF may endanger the federal system because it was perceived as giving too much autonomy to ethnic groups.³²

Whereas the first months of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s rule were a generally optimistic time (the political space was opened and legal reforms were adopted), new threats soon began to emerge — chief among them mounting violence by non-state actors. Political assassinations became a rising threat, and mob violence caused the displacement of millions fleeing, rising ethnic tensions.^{33,34, 35}

Hate Speech and the Anti-Hate Speech and Defamation Proclamation

Most would agree that social media plays a major role in setting the agenda for political developments in Ethiopia. However, the proliferation of divisive and hateful conversation online contributes to the fragile political reality on ground. Many national and international actors have been raising alarm on how disinformation and dangerous speech circulating on social media — particularly on Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube — is further exacerbating tensions and grievances, pushing Ethiopia to the brink of civil war and genocide.³⁶

Recent events following the assassination of Hachalu Hundessa, a famous Oromo musician and influential activist, on June 29, 2020, illustrate just how tense the situation has become. His murder triggered a national outcry, with accusations, calls for revenge, and disinformation circulating online. This disinformation often led to offline violence (mostly targeting Christian Oromos

and ethnic non-Oromo), costing the lives of at least 239 people.^{37,38} In an attempt to curb the online and offline violence, the Ethiopian government shut down the internet in the country in order to cut off access to the social media sites and messaging apps most prominently used to circulate hateful content. The shutdown lasted for three weeks, but could not prevent further violent incidents, destruction of property, and killings. Indeed, such a blackout strategy has actually been shown to have the opposite effect, as a lack of internet access prevents those in-country groups tasked with flagging online hate speech content from reporting issues in a moment of crisis. This means that disinformation and hateful messages can then spread unchecked, compounding the problem further. While the tensions kept rising during this particular crisis in Ethiopia, the diaspora (who still had access to the internet) continued to call for change.³⁹ However these calls for change were made in a divided way⁴⁰ and often along ethnic lines, with many of these calls contributing to spreading false or misleading claims about events going on in-country.⁴¹ By August, numerous leading opposition figures and activists in Ethiopia were arrested for incitement.

In 2018, the government introduced an anti-hate speech draft bill in an attempt to address increasing concerns linked to hate speech and disinformation, such as rising incidents of ethnic violence and displacements. The Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation was adopted by the parliament in March of 2020. According to the proclamation, harmful speech and disinformation online poses a threat to “social harmony, public stability, national unity, human dignity.”⁴² The law introduces criminal charges for acts of hate speech or disinformation committed by social media accounts with more than 5,000 followers. Users can incur up to three years of imprisonment and a fee of 100,000 birr (USD 2,907). The punishment can reach up to five years of imprisonment if “violence or a public disturbance occurs as a result of dissemination of disinformation.”⁴³ Critics and human rights organizations have expressed concerns over the combination of high stakes and relatively vague concepts contained in the proclamation.^{44,45} These critics argue that it gives authorities and institutions in charge of applying these sanctions too much room for interpretation, thus carrying a considerable risk of misinterpretation and abuse of power, and posing a threat to the freedom of expression won, for many, via their access to the very social media platforms subject to new regulations.⁴⁶

Words and Phrases that are Offensive and Inflammatory

The following words and phrases were the terms most frequently identified by survey respondents as “offensive and inflammatory,” or as “used in an offensive or inflammatory way” and contributing to the ongoing tensions in Ethiopian politics and society. Each term’s severity, meaning, and context was further critiqued and validated by focus group participants and through targeted interviews, as well as by the project’s expert advisors. Based on these terms and the associated data, the PeaceTech Lab team then employed human and automated monitoring to identify examples of the use of such terms in online posts.⁴⁷ All terms and phrases were collected and discussed in Amhara, Oromo, Tigray, or Somali, and then translated into English for this report. The list is currently presented in alphabetical order.⁴⁸

Please note that the list of terms included in this lexicon is not prescriptive nor static. It is a ‘snapshot’ of how hateful language is used, perceived, and understood by those who contributed to the survey and the subsequent discussions in Ethiopia during the period of research.⁴⁹ How these terms are understood — their meanings, usage, and the harmful nature of the terms — may evolve or change over time.

Legend for Subsections in Words and Phrases

Word or Phrase

These are words or phrases identified by both survey respondents and validation workshop participants as being offensive and inflammatory and prevalent in offline and online discourse.

Other Spellings and Associated Terms

This subsection may include other common spellings or variations of the main word or phrase encountered during the survey and validation process. It may also include terms and references that are associated with or relate to the main word or phrase as identified by survey respondents and workshop participants. This section is meant to provide additional information or context for the reader to further understand the usage of the main term. Having a 'cluster' of terms as a reference can also be helpful for monitoring on social media. Moreover, there may be regional or other different applications of the main word or phrase.

Definition of Word or Phrase

This subsection may discuss what the term designates, who uses it, who is the target, and in what context it is used. Direct quotes and examples provided by workshop participants may be included to give the lexicon a richer context and to show how a term or phrase is used by or in a community.

Related Hashtags

Hashtags are popular subject terms identified with a # sign in social media posts in order to popularize a topic or theme, e.g., #MotivationMondays. In this lexicon, the hashtags are associated with the main word or phrase, and were identified and validated in the course of the research process. Monitoring hashtags is an additional helpful tool for monitoring the usage of terms on social media.

3. ባርያ (bariya)

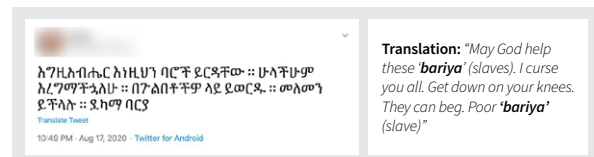
Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *barya*, ሻገቀላ (*shaqilla*) dark skinned, *galla bariya*, *shankila bariya*

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Bariya* means "slave" in Amharic. Ethiopia's long history of slavery goes back to the 15th century, and the term *barya* came to be associated with ethnic minorities and groups from the south of the country — thus perpetuating the idea that southerners were descendants of slaves. A pervasive legacy in the collective memory that is illustrated by many of the survey respondents' responses: "[*barya*] is a derogatory and racist term directed against darker skinned citizens mainly from [the] south and south western part of [Ethiopia]."

Why It's Offensive or Inflammatory: The use of this term is intended to dehumanize and degrade as it refers to the trade of humans being like cattle or objects. There is a strong connection with the term *shankila* (dark skinned). According to several workshop participants its use "refers to somebody who is black [and] can be sold and bought." Together, these terms are a source of racism and discrimination against populations associated with these terms. Its use is violent and inflammatory because of the legacy to which it refers, and because of the dehumanizing and discriminating connotation it conjures up in the collective mind. As a workshop participant explained, historically "*bariya* is considered as someone who is little bit better than an animal who is created to serve his lord."

Related Hashtags: None provided.

Sample Posts:



Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

Why It's Offensive or Inflammatory

This subsection explains why this term is considered hate speech (i.e., why it is more than just an insult) and what impact — intended or indirect — it has on a targeted individual or group or in the context of the country's social and political dynamics. The effect or impacts are again based on responses by survey and workshop participants, as well as expert reviewers.

Sample Post(s)

Examples of posts are provided to show how the main words and associated terms are used on social media, their context, and how variations in usages occur.

Non-Offensive Alternative

These words or phrases are also provided by survey and workshop participants and are meant as constructive, non-offensive alternatives that might be used instead of the offensive or inflammatory word or phrase.

1. አሰጋ (aheya), አጅጊ (adgi)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *Ahiya, ahya, aheya, አሰጋ, አሰጋቶ (aheych/plural), የአሰጋ_ዘር (of the donkey race), አሰጋ ነሀ (you are a donkey), Kurkur (puppy/ኩርኩር), kurkurat (puppies), hadgi, ሓጅጊ, Adgi Amharay (Donkey Amhara)*

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Aheya (አሰጋ)* and *adgi (adgi)* means “donkey” in Amhara and Tigrinya, respectively. This term is used by different groups against other groups because of the derogatory connotation it has in Ethiopian culture. Donkeys are commonly considered to be dumb, stubborn, and lazy. Some survey respondents explained that Tigrayans use *adgi (አጅጊ)* to refer to Amharas, saying that “maybe [it] started in stadiums at soccer games.” Others explained that it was “targeting members of the TPLF while [they] controlled government power,” “so people consider them as donkeys.” And finally, a few participants mentioned that Amhara nationalists use it against the Oromo community.

Across all groups, however, workshop participants pointed out that this term is commonly used to denigrate women within their own communities. “She is targeted because she is subdued under her husband and culturally she is hit by her husband like [a] donkey. There is even a saying in Amharic, ‘A woman and a donkey deserves to be hit.’”

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: When used by one community to refer to another ethnic community, this term is inflammatory and dehumanizing because, as survey respondents explained, a donkey is “something that loves to be attacked, someone that does not understand, listen or know how to think.” In a context of conflict, this term is demeaning and justifies violence against the targeted group. Survey respondents agreed that in general the term refers to somebody who is “classless and deserves a beating,” and is “stupid/dumb.” As a workshop participant explained, “There are values attached to donkeys in our society, which is demeaning, that does not ascribe any respect to donkeys.” Another workshop participant provided the example that “they stick the picture of a donkey on an Oromo person to suggest that he is not worthy of anything.”

Related Hashtags: None provided.

Sample Posts:



April 7 · 🌐

የኮሮና ቫይረስን በሽታ ያመጣብን ደህ አሕያ ነውና ከአሕያዎች ህብረት ዳይሬክተርነት ወደ ዘመዶቹ አሕያ አረኝነት መቀላቀል አለበት። የግብረሰጾችም ዋና አባል እና ወደ አገሩ አምባጣ ሰፈር ያስገባ ዝምባም ነው ስለዚህ ሌላውን ሳይበክል ደወገድ!!

ተገራግጥ ግን ጠቆላ የሁለት ለማንድን ደግሞ ከግምብ ውስጥ ጋር

የሕይወት ህብረት ለቆይታ

28 88 Comments 2 Shares

Translation: “This *aheya* (donkey) is the one who brought COVID upon us, he should go back to his relatives as shepherd of *ahyas* (donkeys). He is an active member of homosexuals and brought homosexuality to us, he should be eradicated before adulterating others”

Replying to [redacted]

My friend we know you people addiction to the port it is never being the people just like your grand father haile selasie said, Dr Abiye & few Eritrea traitors will make it happen for you guys, Congrats! Hope 2 C Tigray and Oromo ppl make you their slave አህዮች Death to Isayas!

3:42 AM · Sep 17, 2018 · Twitter for iPhone

Translation: “(...)Hope 2 C Tigray and Oromo people make you their slave *aheyoch* (donkeys). Death to Isayas!”

Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

2. ባንዳ (banda); gantu

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *ganttu, gantuu*

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Banda* (ባንዳ) and *gantu* or *gantuu* means “traitor” in Amharic, Tigrinya, and the Oromo language, respectively. A traitor is “someone who betrays his country,” or “someone who unites with the enemy of his country for his own benefit” even if “his action could negatively affect his country,” focus group participants explained.

Most agreed that in recent history, the term was used during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1935/36 -1941),⁵⁰ in particular to refer to Ethiopians who fought for the occupier as mercenaries. This therefore conferred an additional historically negative dimension to the usage of the term.

In the current political context, it is used by most groups or communities to stigmatize political opponents or other ethnic groups as “sell outs.” For example, according to a workshop participant, “anybody from one group who is trying to ‘work’ or reconcile with the other group” or “who are working to compromise national interest of the country by cooperating with historic enemies in order to get money or other material benefits.”

More specifically, survey respondents explained that “Tigrayans use the term against other ethnic Tigrayans who are working with the central government of Ethiopia. Amharas use it against other Amhara ethnic members who are not Amhara nationalists, etc.,” and that it is usually used against “Oromos by other Oromos to refer to people who work with non-Oromos, or [who are perceived to work] against Oromo interest.” Workshop participants indicated that the “Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) members use the term to refer to Oromo People’s Democratic Organization (former member of EPRDF).”

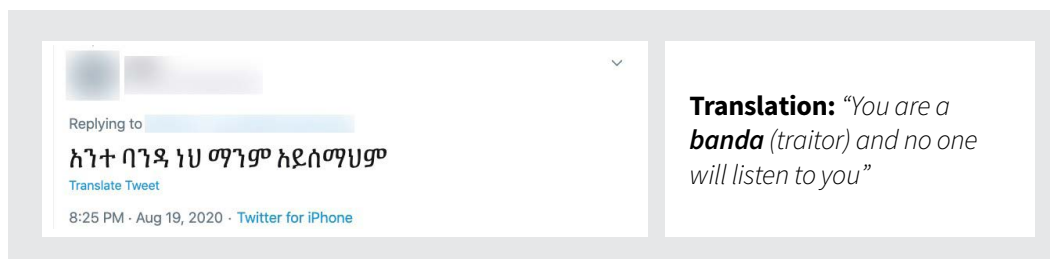
Respondents also pointed out that it is “used by the government to refer to opposition groups” and that it is “used to refer to former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and the Tigray people” or that “recently this word has been used by the government to indicate TPLF.”

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: This term is about power as well as political and ethnic allegiances. It is inflammatory when used among members of the same community because being labeled a traitor carries great political and social stigma as the intention is to ostracize the target. Its widespread use contributes to inhibiting collaboration across communities or political parties since it threatens those who attempt collaboration with shame and possible retaliation. As a workshop participant explained, it is the “biggest accusation among members of the same community or political party. It has a consequence of shame, discrimination, and/or attack.” Another participant confirmed that “it is [a] dangerous allegation because the targeted person will be hated, discriminated [against] and shamed for allegiance with [the] ‘enemy.’” For example, being “labeled enemy of the Oromo exposes you to attacks,” a survey participant indicated.

The term is also inflammatory because it perpetuates the idea that other political groups and communities are, and remain, “enemies,” which is commonly understood to imply irreconcilable interests and a duty to fight against or to defeat said enemy.

Related Hashtags: None provided.

Sample Posts:



Translation: “*Banda banda* (Traitor traitor). Only a *banda* (traitor), bigoted, and a vengeful like you ‘likes’ this *banda* (traitor)singer.”

Translation:...*traitor*...

Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

3. ባርያ (bariya)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *barya*, ቸንቅላ (*shanqila*) dark skinned, *galla bariya*, *shankila bariya*

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Bariya* means “slave” in Amharic. Ethiopia’s long history of slavery goes back to the 15th century, and the term *barya* came to be associated with ethnic minorities and groups from the south of the country — thus perpetuating the idea that southerners were descendants of slaves. A pervasive legacy in the collective memory that is illustrated by many of the survey respondents’ responses: “[*barya*] is a derogatory and racist term directed against darker skinned citizens mainly from [the] south and south western part of [Ethiopia].”

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: The use of this term is intended to dehumanize and degrade as it refers to the trade of humans being like cattle or objects. There is a strong connection with the term *shankila* (dark skinned). According to several workshop participants its use “refers to somebody who is black [and] can be sold and bought.” Together, these terms are a source of racism and discrimination against populations associated with these terms. Its use is violent and inflammatory because of the legacy to which it refers, and because of the dehumanizing and discriminating connotation it conjures up in the collective mind. As a workshop participant explained, historically “*bariya* is considered as someone who is little bit better than an animal who is created to serve his lord.”

Related Hashtags: None provided.

Sample Posts:

March 28 · 🌐

ሰበር...
~~
ከፋኛ በፊት የአማራ ልዩ ሃይል አባላት ሊታገቱ እንደሆነ መረጃ አየወጣ ነው።
እንግዲህ የአማራ ፋኛ ደጋግቶ ስለ አሉ፣ የአማራ ልዩ ሃይል ደብተን አሉ፣
ከዚያም ህዝቡን ባርያ አድርገን እንግዛው ይላሉ።
የአማራ ልዩ ሃይል ሆይ፡ ለራስህም ለወገንህም ስትል ከፋኛ ጎን ቆመህ መከት!
አከተመ!

See Translation

👍👎👏 247 26 Comments 146 Shares

Translation: “There is leaked information that they want to destroy the Amhara special forces. Well, they want to destroy Fano, they want to defeat Amhara special forces and then they want to make the people ‘bariya’ (slaves). Dear Amhara special force: stand with Fano when for yourself and your people! Finished!”

ኦገስት 17፣ 2020 · Twitter for Android

አገዚአብሔር እነዚህን ባሮቾ ደርዳቸው ። ሁላችሁም አረግማቸውን ላሉ ። በጎልበቶቻቸው ላይ ይወርዱ ። መለመን ይቻላሉ ። ደካማ ባርያ

Translate Tweet

10:49 PM · Aug 17, 2020 · Twitter for Android

Translation: “May God help these ‘bariya’ (slaves). I curse you all. Get down on your knees. They can beg. Poor ‘bariya’ (slave)”

Jul 30, 2020 · Twitter for Android

የሰነልባና ባርያ የሆነ ሰው ምን ቢሆን ባለፀጋ ቢሆን ባለስልጣን ቢሆን ነፃ ሊሆን እንደማይችልው ሁሉ ኮሮሞ አዩዬውን አስካለቆመ ድረስ ነፃ ሊሆን አይቻለውም። አገር ገዛሁ እያለ ባርያ ባርያ የሚጫወት ያልተባረከ ህዝብ። አብ ከላያችን ላይ ውረዱ

Translate Tweet

1:50 AM · Jul 30, 2020 · Twitter for Android

Translation: “As mentally enslaved person no matter how rich or educated he may be, he cannot be free, similarly unless humiliation against Oromos stopped they can’t be free. Unlucky Oromo people that are still enslaved even while ruling the country. Ah!, leave us alone.”

Replying to [redacted]

4:03 AM · Jul 27, 2020 · Twitter for Android

እውነተኛው ኮሮሞ እነ ዮናታ ተስፋዬ ናቸው ሌላው ኮሮሞ ሕዝብ ጋላ ባርያ ማለት ነው አንተ ብሎ ኢትዮጵያ የናገሩ የውሸት አንድነት ይህ ነው ማይም ሕዝብ አይሰዱብም ያንተ አቢይ ዮናታም ከዚህ ሕዝብ ነው የወጡት ባለጌ ነህ

Translate Tweet

4:03 AM · Jul 27, 2020 · Twitter for Android

Translation: “True Oromo are like Jonathan Tesfaye. The other Oromo people are **galla bariya** (slaves). You fake Ethiopians, your unity is fake. You shouldn’t insult Oromo people, even Abiy and Jonhatan are among these people.”

Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

4. ጋላ (galla), gaalaa

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *gala, gal, ga*a; gaallaa, gallaa አንተ-ጋላ (you galla), ጋላ ነህ (ante galla: you are galla), qero galla, galla qeerroo*

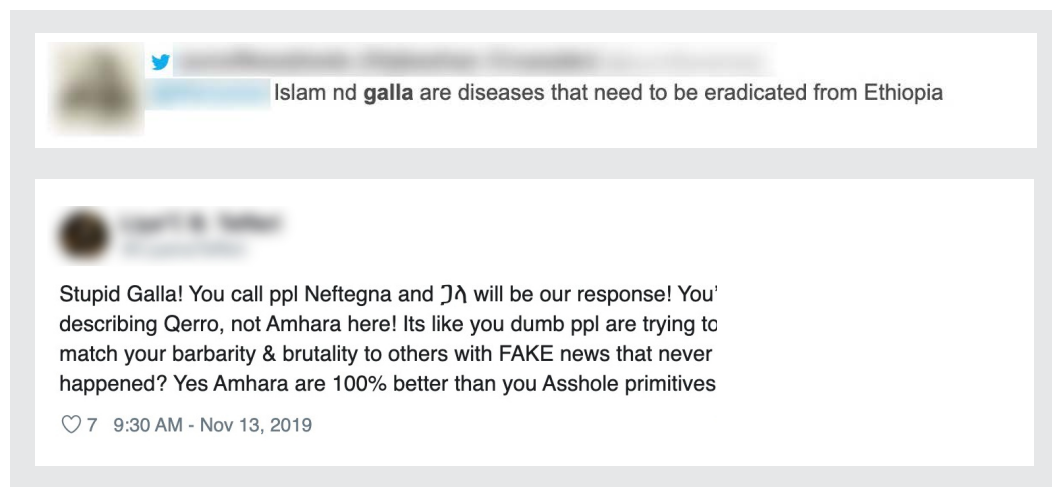
Definition of Term or Phrase: The word ጋላ *galla* (in Amharic and Tigrinya and *gaalaa* in Afaan Oromo) probably finds its origin in the name of an old ethnic group, and is now used to refer to members of the Oromo community. Among survey respondents and focus group participants, there was little consensus regarding the exact origin and/or the literal meaning of the term *galla*. One Amharic dictionary offers the definition of *galla* as “...a migrant from central Africa, an enemy of the Amhara.”⁵¹ Only very few respondents were able to offer a definition, but survey respondents and workshop participants largely agreed that the term has a very negative connotation, and that it is frequently used. “It is a derogatory term used to describe ethnic Oromos as uncivilized, backwards, and barbaric in history books,” a workshop participant explained. Another participant added, “[Amongst] most northern people, *galla* (ጋላ) means those people who were enslaved by the previous regime [and] who lived to the south of the country,” referring to the conquest of southern Ethiopia by Menelik II in the 19th century.

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: A majority of survey respondents flagged *galla* as having multiple and very negative connotations when used to refer to Oromo. Validation workshop participants explained that the term can be used in an offensive and inflammatory manner because “it is used to tell those called *galla* [that they are] people of no civilization, no culture, no chance of being classified as people of Ethiopia.” The use of this term in this way aims to ostracize the group targeted, signifying that they do not belong to the larger community because they are different, or even because they don’t want to belong.

The term can also have a degrading and dehumanizing connotation; participants explained that it refers to a “barbaric lower life form” and that “it was historically used to abuse and disenfranchise the Oromo people.” Another participant emphasized that it was a “derogatory term [...] that could be equivalent to the word N** in English and it is used to degrade the person targeted.” Another added that it means “Godless people, pagans.”

Related Hashtags: None provided.

Sample Posts:



October 3, 2019 · 🌐

ግድሃን ጥንብ አስመሳይ ጋላ በሚቀጥለው ምርጫ በተባበረ ክንዳቸን እንቀብረዋለን።

Translation: “We will bury this stinky phoney **galla** together in the upcoming election.”

August 28, 2019 · 🌐

ወደድንም ጠላንም ኢትዮጵያን ወደ ቀድሞው ሃያልነቷ መመለስ የመንቸለው መጤዎቹን የአገር እና የሰንደቅ አለማ ፍቅር የሌላቸውን ጋላ እና አጋሜን ከኢትዮጵያ ስናስወግድ በቻ!!

Translation: “Whether we like it or not, we can only restore Ethiopia to its former glory when we remove the **Galla** and **Agame**, who do not love the country and the flag, from Ethiopia!!”

Replying to [redacted]

Oromo or Galla is trash they have too many babes they are lazy don't work but eat only they can't survive without their Ahmara master

7:13 PM · Jul 23, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

#Oromo or #Galla people can't survive without #Amhara believe or not. #Oromo are lazy people they hate to work,they love to have too many children then later they will die for #famine. Also Oromo they can't rule themselves they are like #Hawiye in Somalia they destroy and loot



7:18 PM · Jul 23, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Non-Offensive Alternative: Oromo/ኦሮሞ

5. ቂጥ ኣጣቢ (kiti atabi)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *qit atabi*

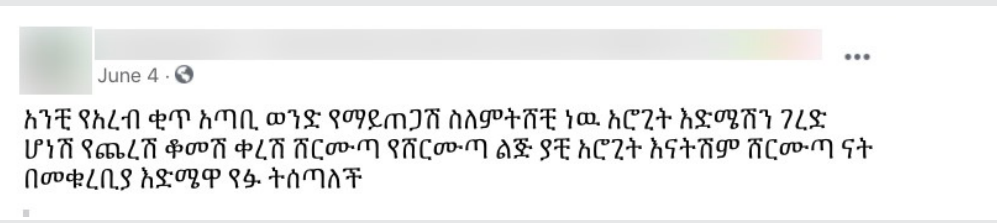
Definition of Term or Phrase: *Kiti atabi* (ቂጥ ኣጣቢ) literally means “ass washer” in Amharic. According to the survey respondents it is an old derogatory term used to refer to somebody who is an “opportunist.” According to some focus group participants, it is an insult originally used to refer to the members of the Muslim community. As a survey respondent explained, “the Christian community used to insult the Muslims by this term” by referring to the practice of ritual washing before prayer (but that use seems to be uncommon today).

However, some workshop participants explained that in the current political context the term is more often “used to stigmatize political opponents,” implying that they “profited from the previous or current regime” in some dishonest way — either by being corrupt or by compromising their integrity (their convictions or moral stance) in order to gain political power or personal advantages.


Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: When used in reference to the members of the Muslim faith, this insult is dehumanizing and denigrates a religious practice, and is inflammatory because it pits members of religious communities against each other. When used in reference to political opponents, this term infers that somebody will do anything for economic or political gain and therefore connotes a lack of morals or integrity.

Related Hashtags: None provided.

Sample Posts:



Translation: “You Arab’s *kiti atabi* (Ass Washer). You smell bad and are unattractive to anyone, you have been a mistress to someone throughout your age.. You’re a daughter of a prostitute and you are a prostitute yourself. your old mother is also a prostitute even at her old age.”



Translation: “*Popo Obang Meto*, Amhara’s slave and who are not even certified as human beings yet, try to talk about Oromo and Oromia. This deaf, ignorant: *Kiti atabi* (ass washer) kkkkiii”

Replying to [redacted]

Can be. My whole point is there is huge racism within Tawhedo against Oromo & other minority yet the church does not want to admit. As a Muslim growing up i remember they used to call us Muslim ቂጥ ኣጣቢ, not knowing the benefit we have been doing for 1450 years .

Translation: “.. *kiti atabi* (ass washer)”..

Replying to [redacted]

ኣንተ የጃዋር ቂጥ ኣጣቢ
 May you be cursed to live the rest of your life in absolute sorrow and pain. Let the innocent victim's souls of Jawar Mohammed's, OLF, and OPDO's genocide haunt you and your clan.
 GALLAtoma @Abbaacabsa
 #Oromo #Ethiopia #Oromia #Somalia

Translation: “You are Jawar’s *kiti atabi* (ass washer)” ...

Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

6. ቆማጣ (komata); qomaaxaa

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: None provided.



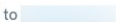
Definition of Term or Phrase: *Komata* (ቆማጣ) means “leper” in Amharic. Historically the term was used to stigmatize those who have leprosy (and those who were or are considered outcasts) for fear of contagion and harm that may come from being in contact with them.

Survey respondents pointed out (and most workshop participants agreed) that nowadays this term is commonly used to refer to members of the Amhara community. According to a respondent, this usage of the term is “based on the claim that one of the Ethiopian Emperors of Amharan descent was a leper (Emperor Menelik)” and the commonly held misconception that leprosy is a hereditary disease. A survey respondent added that “this unverified claim has been trending on social media over the past few years, in particular since the transition.” According to interviewees, “the radical Oromo nationalists use the term [on Facebook] targeting the Amhara.” The term *komata* (leper) is sometimes used interchangeably with the term *komche* (see entry 18).



Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: This derogatory term is dehumanizing because it identifies a community by referencing a disease which has historically sparked fear of contagion in the rest of the population. It is inflammatory when used to stigmatize an entire ethnic group. Given the common misconception in Ethiopia that leprosy can be hereditary in addition to being contagious, the term then implies that members of the Amhara community carry and/or spread a disease, thus connoting that they are undesirable and unwelcome. As a workshop participant explained, “the term is used to degrade [Amhara] morale and dignity” and to discourage contact with them.

Related Hashtags: #komata

Sample Posts:



 Replying to 
 You son of a bitch. You want see Ethiopia only through Amhara, which you will not be successful again. That is already dead. You hate Oromo but love Ethiopia! Go to hell. ቆማጣ!!
 6:55 AM · Mar 23, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

Translation: (...) *komata !!!*



 August 19 at 11:25 AM · 🌐

Qerreeo oromya የምትባል ሀገር የለችህም ጫማህን አጥልቅ አ ይ ጫማ የለህም ለካ ቆማጣ ቆምጩሁላ ንፍጣም ጋላ ጉዞ ወደ ማዳጋስካር አዝዝህሁ ፈጥም!!! ነፍጣኛው ሚኒልክ።

Translation: “You don’t have a country called ‘qerreeo oromya’ (Oromo qeerroo), wear your shoes. Oh I see you don’t have shoes as you are **Komata**. You bunch of **komechee** go home to Madagascar. I command you and you have to obey!! I am Neftegna Menelik’s descendant”



 November 27, 2019 · 🌐

“...”ኩፍፍፍፍ ዛሬ ሶሻል ሚዲያው ቆማጣ ቆማጣዎች ይሸታል!” የሚኒሊክ ቆምጮዎች ተቀላቅለው ነው አንዱ? “...”አረ በፈጠራችሁ የቆምጮን ዘሮች አታሳዩን በቃ።




Translation: “pff today social media smells like komatas - did Menelik komcee’s join here?... Please don’t show us komcee descendants ”



 Ye qomxa zar 🤔👉👉👉👉

 Like · 1w 🤔 2

Translation: “Race of the qomata”



 Replying to 
 Stupid listen to the video you posted you ignorant fool This is about Ethiopia and Amhara is the main Ethiopian ቆማጣ የሰውነት ቆምጣ
 7:27 AM · Jul 16, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Translation: “...Komata TPLF’S mistress”

Non-Offensive Alternative: Akal gudategna/ አካል ጉዳተኛ, disabled/sick

7. ቆምጮ (komche); komcee

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *qomche, qomce, qomchee, qomcee, komchie, komche, komiche, qomxa, qomche nafxanyaa, komche extremists, narrow minded komche*

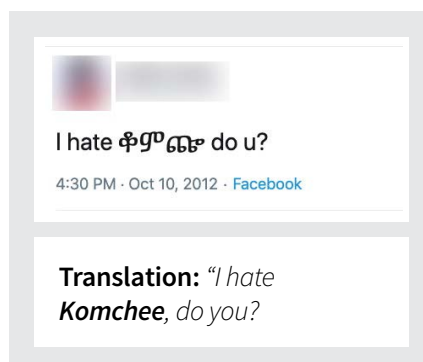
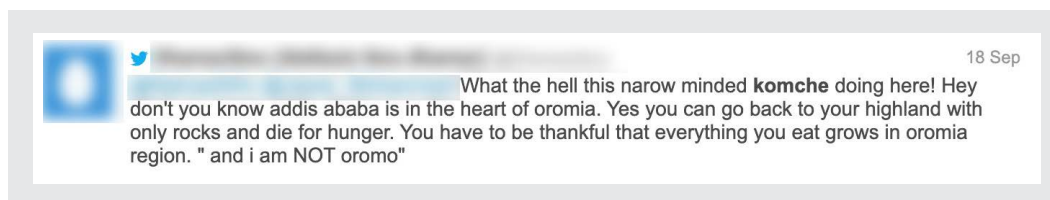
Definition of Term or Phrase: Survey respondents and workshop participants provided varying interpretations of the term in its Amharic and Oromigna versions, but the term seems to have its historical origin in the name of Komce Ambaw, an administrator of a small village in Amhara regional state during the Derg regime who came to symbolize rural living.

According to workshop participants, the term was commonly used by city dwellers to refer to rural communities in a derogatory way, as it conjured up images of somebody “wearing shorts” as a marker for being “uncivilized” and “somebody who smells bad.” A participant explained that when used in the capital Addis Ababa, it refers to “someone who comes from the countryside to the city, mostly used to refer to the Amhara region, rural area dwellers.” More recently, Oromo nationalists have begun using the term to target Amharas.

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: Used in a derogatory way to target members of the Amhara ethnic group, it is inflammatory in particular when used in political debate and discourse, as its purpose is to denigrate and ridicule the whole group as inferior. When asked what they associated with this term, workshop participants explained that “it means low-classed, poor, less mannered, and disabled.”

Respondents added that when used that way it is meant to “belittle, [imply] low social status and [to signify] that they are inferior beings.” Many respondents also thought that “smelling bad” was associated with being *komche*. The use of the term is dehumanizing and feeds into inter-ethnic prejudices and existing tensions and mistrust between communities.

Related Hashtags: None provided.



November 27, 2019 · 🌐

"::"ኩፍፍፍፍ ዛሬ ሰሻል ሚዲያው ቆማጣ ቆማጣዎቻ ይሸታል!" የሚኒሊክ ቆምጮዎቻ ተቀላቅለው ነው እንዴ?
 ""::"እረ በፈጠራቸሁ የቆምጮን ዘሮቻ አታሳዩን በቃ::

Translation: “; ; “ uffff today the social media smells as there is **komata**, did Menelike’s **komchee**’s join here??” ; ; “ please don’t show us this **komchee** people..”

ከንቴ አኮ ቆምጮ ሱርክ ዉስጥ ዩምትሸና እንደሆነክ
 አዉቃልዉ ወያኔ ቅጥከን ዩብዳቸ ቡሽት ነክ

Translation: “I know you’re a **komcee** who pees on himself, and those **woyane** (revolutionary) rape you, you are **bushti** (faggot)!”

April 11, 2019 · 🌐

ቆምጮ + ጋላ
 < ዲላ

Translation: “A **komchee** + **galla** is lower than/less than (<) a **tsila**.”

Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

8. መናፍቅ (menafik)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: Manafeqe, menafek, መናፍቅን (menafqan) plural, munafik, munafiq (መናፍቅ)

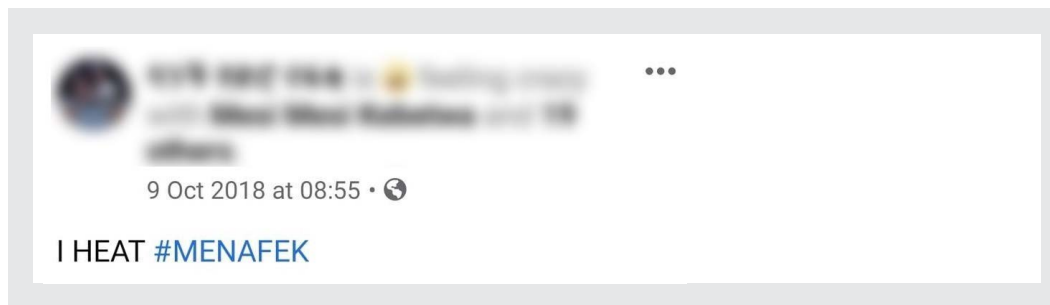
Definition of Term or Phrase: *Menafik* (መናፍቅ) means “heretic” in Amharic, probably originating from the Arabic word *munafik*. According to validation workshop participants, it is a common term used by Christians of the Eastern Orthodox Church (EOC) (the majority of Christians in Ethiopia) to refer to Protestants and Pentecostal Christians who are the minority of Christian adherents in the country.

According to a participant, the term is used to refer to Protestants “because most Protestants in major towns are believed to be converts from EOC.” Since they changed their religious practice, they may thus be perceived as “betrayers,” as one workshop participant explained.

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: Workshop participants agreed that being labeled a “heretic” carried great social stigma in the 1990s, but opinions diverged on its current use and cultural weight in Ethiopia. Some insisted that it is still commonly used in a derogatory way. As a participant explained, “it is noted everywhere in taxis, transport [and during] sermons.” It is inflammatory because it stigmatizes the Protestant faith as invalid and its practice as wrong. The term is used “to isolate individuals who exercise their beliefs freely and without following religious instructions of mainstream beliefs.” It carries the “connotation of a disbeliever” and “betrayal,” which can be a dangerous accusation because of its stigmatizing and ostracizing effect. A participant pointed out that the impact of the term has to be considered in the context of the historical “cultural hegemony of Orthodox Church” and the power dynamics that arise from that. With the majority of the population being of Orthodox faith, most of the political leadership and those in power are as well.

Related Hashtags: #menafek, #menafik

Sample Posts:



Non-Offensive Alternative: Name of religion.

9. መንጋ (menga); mengha

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *Meniga, mengaw, menga, mengha, መንጋው* (the herd), *qerroo menga, mangaa, kebiti, kebt* (cattle), *girrisa* (locust swarm), *girrissaa, abbaa girrissa* (leader of the swarm)

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Menga* (መንጋ) means “herd” in Amharic, and *mangaa* is its transliteration in the Oromo language.

Survey respondents explained that *menga* (herd) is generally used to refer to demonstrators, groups, or movements in a derogatory way, implying that they are mob-like, manipulated, and “a group of people under a certain chain of command and [that] follow that command without thinking” — like a mindless herd of cattle.

Workshop participants pointed out that currently this term is commonly used to refer to the Oromo youth movement, *Qeerroo* (“youth” in Oromiffa), as *Qeerroo Menga* (“herd of youth”) in general and sometimes more specifically in reference to followers of the opposition figure and activist Jawar Mohammad. In this context, many survey respondents also cited the term *girris-saa* (flock or swarm in Oromiffa),⁵² and according to some respondents it is used in a similar way as *menga*.⁵³

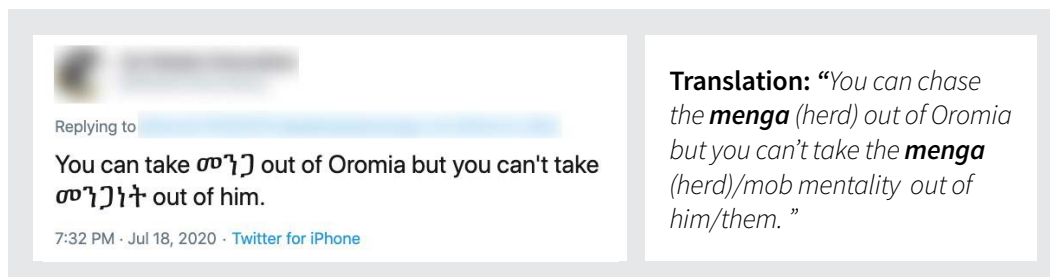
Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: The use of the term *menga* as described above, is dehumanizing because it compares political (youth) groups to herds of cattle susceptible to being manipulated by their leader(s), “following them without question.” A herd of animals is a “group that does not think” or that “acts irrationally.” It is a concept that also instills fear, because it evokes large uncontrollable crowds that are “capable of violent acts, stealing or vandalism,” survey respondents explained.

The term is used to stigmatize “those who request their rights” (“[they are] are *menga*”), by characterizing them as violent mobs. As a workshop participant explained, the term implies that these groups “unite to do certain acts (like attacking or surrounding and claiming pieces of land plots around Addis Ababa).” The term is “used to defame youth activism”, irrespective of their affiliation or political stance.

While the term is frequently used on social media to refer to the Oromo youth activists (*Qeerroo Menga*), its meaning is increasingly extended to target Oromo youth in general who are accused of causing violent unrest. One workshop participant pointed out that some of their leaders are said to be “in their comfort zones living in America and order the young ones to go through what they would never go through” — an assertion that seeks to further delegitimize the activists’ claims by saying that they are either not their own or come from outside of the country.

Related Hashtags: #menga, #girrissa

Sample Posts:





The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter post. On the left, there is a blurred profile picture and a blue reply button. The text of the tweet reads: "You can take መንጋ out of Oromia but you can't take መንጋነት out of him." Below the text, it says "7:32 PM · Jul 18, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone". On the right side of the screenshot, there is a white box with a black border containing the following translation: "Translation: 'You can chase the **menga** (herd) out of Oromia but you can't take the **menga** (herd)/mob mentality out of him/them. '"

 updated their status. ...
 September 16, 2018 · 🌐

ቁሮ የተባለ መንጋ ቡራዩን ባግዳድ አድርጓት ነው ያደረው።አሮሞኛ
 የማይናገር ሰው ሁሉ በገጃራ አንገቱን እየተመታ ተጥሏል።ሴቶች
 ተደፍረዋል።ጎብረታቸው ወድሟል።ተዘርፏል።አቶ ዘይኑ ጃማል የተባለ ሰው
 አፍንጫው ሥር ያለቸውን ቡራዩን አንኳን መከላከል አልቻለም።አጅግ
 በጣም የሚያሳዝን ነው።


   653 625 Comments 1.5K Shares

Translation: “A *menga* (herd) called Qero has turned Burayu into Baghdad overnight. Anyone who did not speak Oromigna was beaten on the neck with a machete. Women were raped. Their property was destroyed and looted. Ato Zeynu Jemal (commissioner general of federal police commission) couldn’t even protect Burayu, a place close to the city center.”




 Replying to 



Qeeros have መንጋ mentality. They don't know s*** what their movement is about. And one toxic person is enough to create chaos and destruction. Just stop this comparing BLM with this so called qeero/Oromo protest. BLM never hangs people upside down!

2:28 PM · Jul 12, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone


 **Abdishaa finfinne**
 July 7 at 11:17 AM · 🌐


Girrisa and bandda must go 🤔🤔🤔

  469 337 Comments 23 Shares


 **Abdissa Jemal**
 8 Aug at 16:23 · 🌐 

When these thugs are terrorizing the society and beat each other up, please, don't say they are from Arsi, Jimmaa, or any other place. They are thugs, they are #girrisa, they are idiots. Remember, terrorists do not have a region, region, or race. They are thugs without a real identity. They don't represent anything, but themselves. THEY COULD CLAIM OMN AS THEIR IDENTITY!


 Here is another #Girrisa. We keep archiving these losers who keep throwing thorn in #OromoStruggle. #Qeerroo #WBO #ABO #WGU #DayofReckoning



 The girrisa community of Oromo are arrogant, selfish. and want Abiyu to take revenge on other Ethiopians. this are from one tribe of the Oromo the are jealous of Abiy's Ability and the exceptions he got around the world. We Oromo should name them and a shame them

5:33 AM · Aug 22, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

 18 mins · 🌐

Oduu Ammee:

Uggurri geejjibaa boru ganama saa'aa 12:00 irraa kaasee xumuramuu Qeerroon Oromiyaa ibsee jira. Uggura godhame kanaan tokkummaan Qeerroo daran kan itti mul'atee fi guyyaa 4 keessatti diinagdee mootummaa kan laamsheesse tahuus ibsan. Uggura kanas tooftaaf jecha kan addaan kutan yoo tahu, yeroo gabaabduu booda bifa addaatiin ammas kan itti deebi'an tahuus himan. Guutuun ibsa Qeerroo boru ganama kan isinii dhihaatu taha.


 Going forward let us agree that an #OLF fool that utters neftegna the code word for ethnic cleansing he will be called Girrisa. Example Awol Girrisa, Henok Girrisa, Jawar Girrisa, others depending on noise created, medium Girrisa, minor Girrisa, nonsense on twitter mini Girrisa

3:28 AM · Aug 2, 2020 · Twitter Web App

10. መጠኔ (mete)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *Mette, mettie, metie, ሰፋሪ (sefari)*

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Mete* (መጠኔ) literally translated means “newcomer” in Amharic, and according to the survey, is generally used to refer to immigrants. According to respondents, it was used to refer to immigrants from Eritrea fleeing the war in the late 1990s. *Mete* then seems to have come to also mean “displaced,” or somebody with no home of their own. In more recent years, survey results indicated that the term is increasingly used to refer to persons of a given region and ethnicity in Ethiopia that settle in other regions in Ethiopia that are not considered aligned with their ethnic origin by those already present in the given territory.

Survey respondents described that this term carries a strong negative connotation, and that it could mean something or somebody that is not only “foreign” (or “not from here,” and not indigenous), but that is also “unbelonging, unwanted” and unwelcome. A *mete* is “somebody or something that should not be allowed,” validation workshop participants explained. This can also refer to people who migrate for economic reasons, and are considered “foreign” or “strangers” by the local population, such as “a person or a group of people who [are] displaced from somewhere and have no acceptance.”

According to survey and focus group discussions, the term is used against different communities in different regions, often along ethnic lines. “Amhara and Tigray people are considered *mete* in Oromia region; and Oromo people are *mete* in the Somali region etc.,” one focus group participant explained. Another participant added that “the Oromos mostly use this term against almost anyone who is not [from] around there (i.e. not from the same ethnic group), mainly the Amhara and the Southern community. And around Gondar, the Tigray community is referred to as *mete*.”

Finally, the term seems to also be used to refer to other groups within the same ethnic community. In certain contexts it has been used to designate members of different religious groups. Examples provided by survey respondents showed Christian Oromos being referred to as *mete* in order to distinguish them from Muslim Oromo. By extension, *mete* can also refer to beliefs or ideas in order to signify that they are outside or “foreign to Ethiopian culture and society.” As a survey respondent explained, “the Orthodox [Christians] use this term against protestants.” Another stated that it is “used against feminist ideas.”

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: The increased use of the derogatory meaning of the term *mete* against Ethiopian migrants originating from other parts of the country is significant because it illustrates and reinforces the alignment between ethnicity, land, and belonging in local and regional contexts, and thus stokes the tensions born from that reality.

It is inflammatory because the connotations of this word imply that the “newcomers” pose a threat to the local population. The stigmatization it carries can — and has — led to violence, as a focus group participant explained: “In the last three or four years when someone came from another region and started to live in another region, those who were born and raised in that area want to evict the new settlers.”

It is a term that evokes dreaded scenarios, as a participant confirmed that “It is inflammatory because it is followed by eviction and ethnic cleansing.” “If you are *mete*, you are forced to leave.” Survey respondents indicated that “people feel threatened because they think that the *mete*’s took their land or their work etc.”

Focus group participants explained that calling somebody *mete* “creates [an] ‘us or them’ narrative and excludes others as ‘settlers’ and leads people to attack them.”

Related Hashtags: #mete

Sample Posts:


February 7 · 🌐

የጃዋር መሀመድ ጠባቂዎችን መንግስት ቢያነሳ የመጀመሪያዎቹ ተገዳዎች በኦሮሚያ ክልሎች የሚኖሩ #መጡ ሰፋሪዎች ናቸው።

•

ምንገዜም አነጣጥራቹ ተኩሱ


See Translation



Translation: “If the government removes Jawar Mohammed’s bodyguards, the first victims will be #mete (immigrant) settlers in the Oromia region. Shoot your targets carefully!”

< 14 Oct 2019 · 🌐


#መጡ ስለ ሸገር አያገባውም!
Iskindar yittaassar
#share



Translation: “Sheger (Addis Ababa) the first victims will be #mete (immigrant) settlers in the Oromia region. Shoot your targets carefully!”

< 6 Mar 2019 · 🌐

#የዛሬው የፋኖ አማራ ምርጥ ፎቶ!!!
#መልካም ዕሮብ ደሁንላችሁ!!!
#መጡ መሆኑን ደብቆ ታሪክ አያዘባ "ሰፍራ" አያለ ሲያላዝ" ከሚውል ፅንፈኛ ደጠብቃችሁ!!



Translation: “Fano Amhara’s photo of the day!!! - Wish you a good Wednesday - Stay protected from extremist who obliterates history and moans “sefari” all day while hiding his true #mete identity.”

Non-Offensive Alternative: Engeda/ አገግዳ (guest, new comer), Addis (New)

11. ነፍጠኛ (neftegna); nafxanya

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: ነፍጠኞቹ (*plural*), *nafetana*, *neftagna*, *neftega*, *nefetega*, *nefitegna*, *nefitegna*, *naftegna*; ወራሪ (*invader*), *colonizer*, *neftegna komata*, *nafxanyota* (*plural*, *gunmen*), *hidda nafxanyaa* (*pure naftagna*), *naftagna*, *neftegna*, *nafxagna*, *neftenya*, *naftenyaa*, *nafxanyaa*, *nafxeenya*, *nafxanya*, *nafxenya*, *naftanya*, *nafxenya*, *nafxanya*, *naftenya*, *nafxanyaa*, *nafxenya*, *nafxeeynaa*, *dhala nafxanyaa* (*daughter/son of neftegna*), Neo neftegna, neftegna system, neo neftegna system

Definition of Term or Phrase: The term *neftegna* (transliteration from Amhara) or *nafxanya* (Afan Oromo) can be translated to *bearer of arms* or *gunman/rifleman*.

Survey respondents and validation workshop participants could not agree on the term’s exact origin, only that it is “old.” Historically, the term refers to members of the army of Emperor Menelik II, who conquered parts of southern Ethiopia in the 19th century. In reference to these events, workshop participants explained that they understood the term to refer to “Amhara people who settled in Oromia regional state ‘at gunpoint,’ a little more than a century ago.”⁵⁴ Another workshop participant agreed that “people think of Amhara ethnic members when it is used.”

While many respondents considered that it “normally had a non-offensive meaning,” others suggested that there is also a connotation rooted in historical events, and that some associate the term with “thief” and “bandit.”

The negative connotations associated with this term seem to have further evolved over the past year, especially since Hachalu Hundessa’s assassination on June 29, 2020. Among mounting violent discourse online, and violent events unfolding in the capital of Addis Ababa and in the Oromia regional state,⁵⁵ data suggests that *neftegna* seemed to be increasingly used by Oromo extremists to refer to “Amhara, christian Oromo, Gurage, Tigray, etc.,” and in particular to target members from these groups living in Oromia.

Finally, some Amhara have begun using *#lamneftegna* online to reclaim the term. (This, however, predates the events of the summer of 2020). As one participant explained: “The president of Oromia [Shimeles Abdissa] specifically said ‘Oromo struggle broke the ankle of *Neftegna*’ during the Irreecha holiday in October 2019.⁵⁶ Then the hashtag *neftegna* [appeared and] regional disruptions and rallies erupted all over the place.”

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: The offensive nature of this term is contextual and seems to have evolved particularly over the last few months. The term is already loaded with meaning due to its link to historical events that remain a source of controversy (including among leading political figures⁵⁷) — disagreements deeply rooted in competing narratives regarding the genesis of Ethiopia’s modern state and source to modern grievances.

As such, the term, when used with the intent to stigmatize all ethnic Amhara, aims to depict them as a threat. Most survey respondents agreed that when *neftegna* is used in a derogatory way, it implies that “[the Amhara] do not belong [in Oromia] and are seen as invaders, intruders, colonizers and oppressors,” reinforcing the idea that they are “the people who conquered the Oromo [and others].” Workshop participants explained that when the term is used like this, it is “intended to automatically categorize Amharas as not indigenous” to the Oromia region in particular, where Oromo nationalists see them as descendants of these “occupiers.”⁵⁸

Others said that “it is used to mean cruel, killer, oppressor” and that “it is highly offensive.” According to those respondents, the term *neftegna* “is associated with the Amhara people as if they were killers of other tribes in Ethiopia.”

Online data suggests that since July 2020, the use of this term online has increased significantly in the aftermath of the assassination of the popular Oromo singer Hachalu Hundessa. As violence broke out in the capital and in the region of Oromia (targeting non-Oromos and Christian Oromos^{59,60}), some analysts suggest that *neftegna* became a “code word” designating “ethnic Amhara, christian Oromo, Gurage and Tigray, etc.,” as targets and granting others “a licence to kill.”⁶¹ “Being perceived as being *neftegna* puts your life at risk,” an interviewee explained.

Related Hashtags: #NeftegnaSettlers, #DecolonizeOromia, #neftegnasystem, #iamneftegna, #neftegna, #neftegnamustgo

Sample Posts:

The collage consists of seven screenshots of social media posts:

- Top Left:** A tweet from a user with a blue profile picture, dated 5 Sep. The text reads: "Jezba Amhara and Oromo are the one who were looting the country. Tigray paid the ultimate price to keep the country united and make it one of Africa economy power. Power hungry **Neftegna** and gala used mobs to destabilize the country. Ungrateful subhumans."
- Top Right:** A tweet from a user with a black profile picture, dated 19 Nov. It is a retweet (RT) of another user. The text reads: "No one: Not a single soul: Oromo 'nationalist' democracy camps(❤️🌱❤️): **SEFARI! SEFARI!! QOMCHE NAFXANYAA!! GET OUT OF FINFINNEE NEFTENYA! ORTHODOX=AMHARA! DOWN DOWN MENELIK!(died over 100yrs ago) WOLLO KEENYA!! THEY'RE BURNING THEIR OWN CHURCHES!! ABIY ICE CREAM NW!! ABICHU👊**"
- Middle Left:** A tweet from a user with a red profile picture, dated 20 Aug at 04:51. The text reads: "#Neftegna! U have no place in Oromia if u believe or not! sheet & bull! U will pay a cost of your shallow mouth!!!Go to hell with ur neftegna rule! Dismissing & eliminating ur ideas strongly keep it going!!!"
- Middle Right:** A reply to the tweet above, dated 4:46 AM - Jul 23, 2020. The text reads: "50 million oromo people crying today but when our Time Is Coming you will see deaths for neftegna and Takele as well neftegna out of oromia soon we are never ever sleep we come for u and neftegna"
- Bottom Left:** A tweet from Omar @_oromar, dated Nov 13, 2019. The text reads: "Dont ever tell me neftegna's are civilised people, throwing students off buildings, beating them with rocks/sticks and forcing them to show ID's to see if they are oromos shows very deep similarities with the Nazi Era. What's scarier is how quiet everyone is on this. twitter.com/TigGeme/status"
- Bottom Center:** A tweet with a dark background, dated Jul 22, 2020. The text reads: "Fuck neftegnas. Fucking pigs, scary ass piece of shits. Their too scared to fight fair. Don't worry justice will be served because OROMO people are not gone let those pigs get away with what they did to **Hachalu Hundessa.**" It has 1 reply, 5 retweets, and 11 likes.
- Bottom Right:** A reply to the tweet above, dated 3:30 PM - Jul 22, 2020. The text reads: "the problem of Ethiopia is narrow minded Neftegna"

July 23 at 9:45 AM · 🌐

እነ ፈሳሎች ኢንተርኔት ዘግተው አካኪ ዘራፍ ቢሉም የኦሮሞ ህዝብ ልካቸው ማሳየት ችለዋል። አሁንም ነፍጠኛ አማራ የኦሮሞ ህዝብ እየገደለ የሚኖረበት አድል አይኖርም። የነፍጠኛ አማራ የሆነ ንብረት ሁሉ ሙቃጠል ሙድደም አለበት ይህ ሲደረግ ብቻ ነው ነፍጠኛ አማራ ተጠራርጎ ከኦሮሞ ምድር የሚወጣው።

👍👎👏 174 32 Comments 14 Shares

Translation: “These cowards have shut down the internet and are trying to threaten people in Oromia. Yet it should be noted that there won’t be a chance for **Nefteгна** Amharas to continue killing Oromos.

*Properties of **Nefteгна- Amharas** needs to be burnt and destroyed, that is the only way **Neftegnas** could leave from Oromo land.”*

May 24 · 🌐

ነፍጠኛ ደቀጥቀጥ ይሙት ጠንቅቆ ቡዳ ዘረኛ ይውደም ነፍጠኛ ከ አስም ደግሞ ኢትዮጵያውያን ተባብረን ነፍጠኛን ከምደረገልን እናጠፋ አንጀምረው አንጀምረው አንጀምረው

👍 2 1 Comment 46 Shares

Translation: “let **neftegnas** die! We Ethiopians should join hands to eradicate **neftegnas** from the Earth, lets Begin ! Let us begin!

Non-Offensive Alternative: *Amhara/አማራ/ አምሐራ*

12. Qeerroo

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *qerroo, qero, quero, querro, qerroo, qarre* (female youth), *menga, mengha*

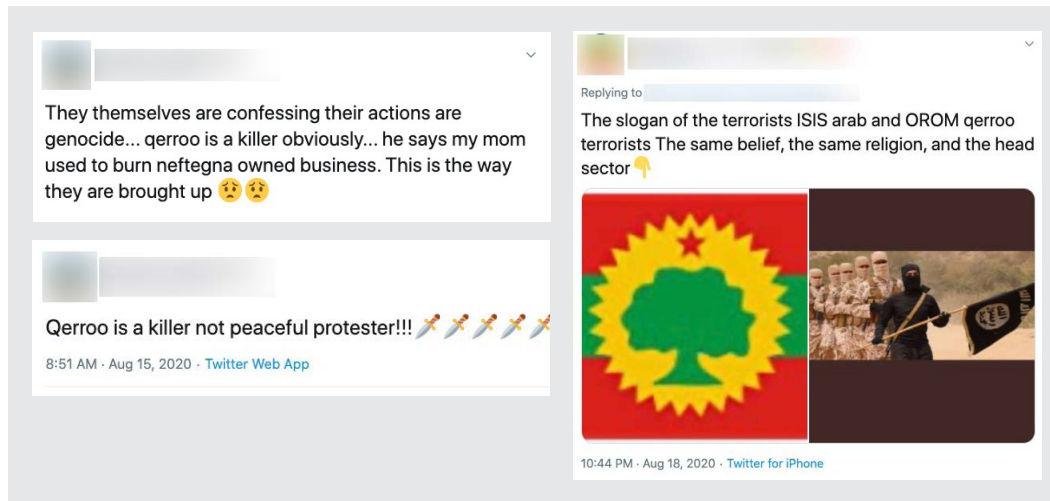
Definition of Term or Phrase: The term *qeerroo* means “youth” in the Oromo language (*qarre* for female youth). It was the name adopted by the Oromo youth activists who played a leading role in the 2018 movements that eventually led to the political transition. It is a name still used today by youth in Oromia as a term of political empowerment and self-assertion. In this context, its meaning comes close to “change agent.”

In recent years, however, and in the larger national context, the term has acquired another usage. According to focus group participants, when “there were similar movements in other regions across the country such as Hego,⁶² Zerma,⁶³ Fano and the like,” *qeerroo* was used to refer to these protesters, regardless of their ethnicity. For others it has acquired a negative connotation and is used as such by some Amhara to “refer to members of the Oromo community in general, in a negative way.” A workshop participant explained that “if a person is Oromo then he is also considered a Qerro, and that means he is aggressive and close-minded and unfair.” Survey respondents cited the following saying to illustrate the negative associations some seek to imply with this term: “Ende qereo dingay athun” means “don’t be a stone head as Qerros” in Amharic.

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: This term is inflammatory when it is used to stigmatize the Oromo as a group by depicting these political youth groups (and by extension all Oromo) as threatening, unpredictable, violent, and not law-abiding. “In general, it is associated with challenging the rule of law,” one participant said and that one is “impossible to deal with in a reasonable manner.” Respondents further compared Oromo *qero* “militant youth” with a terrorist group, adding “they don’t follow the law but execute the law by themselves. They might block roads, use stone, or use force on others.” The use of the term in this manner is meant to instill a sense of fear and feelings of insecurity.

Related Hashtags: #Querroo_of_Oromia, #Querroo

Sample Posts:



Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

13. ሰፋሪ (sefari)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: ሰፋሪዎች /sefariwoch (plural, settlers), መጤ (mete/ Newcomer), ወራሪ (werari/Invader), Menelik serafi

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Sefari* means “settler” in Amharic. In its broader meaning, workshop participants explained that “it is the opposite of indigenous, and can be defined as someone who came from another place but [...] he or she is unwelcome at that place.”

In recent years, similar to the term *mete*, this term has acquired an increasingly negative connotation in step with rising ethnic tensions and internal displacement of different peoples. Rather than just meaning “settler” or “migrant” in general, it also means that “you don’t belong here because you are not from this ethnicity,” according to a workshop participant. There is also an added aspect of being associated with armed or forced occupation like “people who settled in a village by force without the permission of the previous villagers,” or as another workshop participant stated, “like ‘settler-colonialists.’”

According to this latter meaning, survey respondents often associated *sefari* with “a derogatory term referring to Amhara.” Participants in the validation workshop explained that this was a historical reference to the “Amharas who settled in the southern part of current-day Ethiopia during Emperor Menelik II’s [reign] or Amharas and Tigrayans who settled in western part of Oromia during the 1985 [Ethiopian] famine under the Derg regime.” This “makes the targeted people

heirs of the atrocities of Menelik’s army in the time of conquest,” they added. In this context, survey respondents cited examples that associated the terms *Menelik serafi* together.


Finally, another workshop participant explained that the term is often “used to refer to Addis Ababa residents by Oromos because Oromo ethno-nationalists claim that Addis Ababa belongs to Oromos⁶⁴ (Finfinnee is the capital of Oromia regional state) and that others (specifically Amharas) took it away by force.” Indeed, the geographic overlap and administrative entanglement of the historical Finfinnee and Addis Ababa, as well as the attempted expansion of the latter, remains a source of contention today.^{65,66}

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: The use of the term *sefari* in the above described way is inflammatory as it promotes the idea that an ethnic group that is not considered indigenous to a given area poses an existential threat to the established community (economically and culturally), as it implies that they have come as aggressors and conquerors. As one workshop participant explained, *sefari* can also be “used to refer to persons that may already be present for several generations but their grandparents might come from other regions,” thus implying that the connection and belonging to a given land is defined by ethnic appertenance alone.

An entrenched historical animosity uses the term to promote the idea that the *sefari* are like “settler colonialists.” When referring to members of the Amhara community, this means that “[they] have come here not to live with us but to colonize us,” a workshop participant explained. In the current context, the term feeds into the perception that the Amhara, as a group, are “hostile and oppressive colonisers.” Accordingly, “the Menelik settlers should leave our lands,” a survey respondent wrote.

Related Hashtags: #minilik_safaris

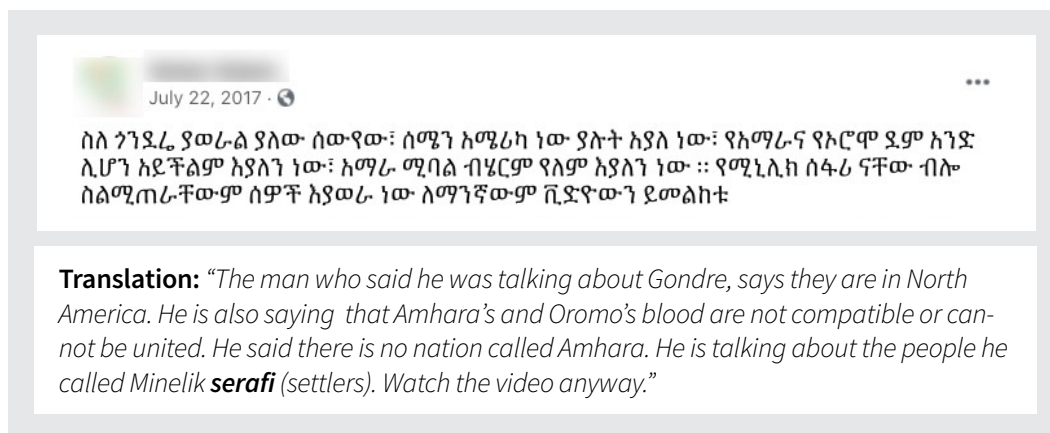
Sample Posts:



November 18, 2018 · 🌐

Shameful, Dirty, trash " Menlik Sefari" Amara cowardly begging Oromos to spare his cousins, but by the same poisonous tang preaching the murder of Tigraians. They have no stand but to manipulate their way to power. "ደትረፍዶ ክስዕሩ ኻስ ክትስዕሮም ዝደግዕሙ ህዝቢ" ወልደአብ ወልደሚርያም

Translation: (...) “It’s too late, it’s too late, it’s too late People” Woldeab Woldemiriyam



July 22, 2017 · 🌐

ስለ ጎንደራ ያወራል ያለው ሰውየው፣ ሰሜን አሜሪካ ነው ያሉት አያለ ነው፣ የአማራና የኦሮሞ ደም አንድ ሊሆን አይችልም አያለን ነው፣ አማራ ሚባል ብሄርም የለም አያለን ነው። የሚኒሲክ ሰፋሪ ናቸው ብሎ ስልሚጠራቸውም ሰዎች አያወራ ነው ለማንኛውም ቪዲዮውን ይመልከቱ

Translation: “The man who said he was talking about Gondre, says they are in North America. He is also saying that Amhara’s and Oromo’s blood are not compatible or cannot be united. He said there is no nation called Amhara. He is talking about the people he called Minelik *serafi* (settlers). Watch the video anyway.”

I think they never claimed ownership of the land Other Poeple that they Go as a "#Safari they simply live there by knowing that they are on the land of others but the #Minilik_Safaris did that, they claimed ownership. That's what makes smell bad of the #Safaris of #minilik the asshole #Ignorant.

Like · Reply · 1y



Translation: “The son of a Menelik trustee! This is a Menelik *serafi* (settler) holding a sword to attack native Oromo in Addis Ababa. The perpetrator of the May 7 atrocity! We need this brutal *yeken jib* (daylight hyena) to be prosecuted for his brutal atrocities on native Oromo now!”

Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

14. ሻንቅላ (shankila)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: Shankla, shanqella, ባላይ (bariya/slave), shankila bariya

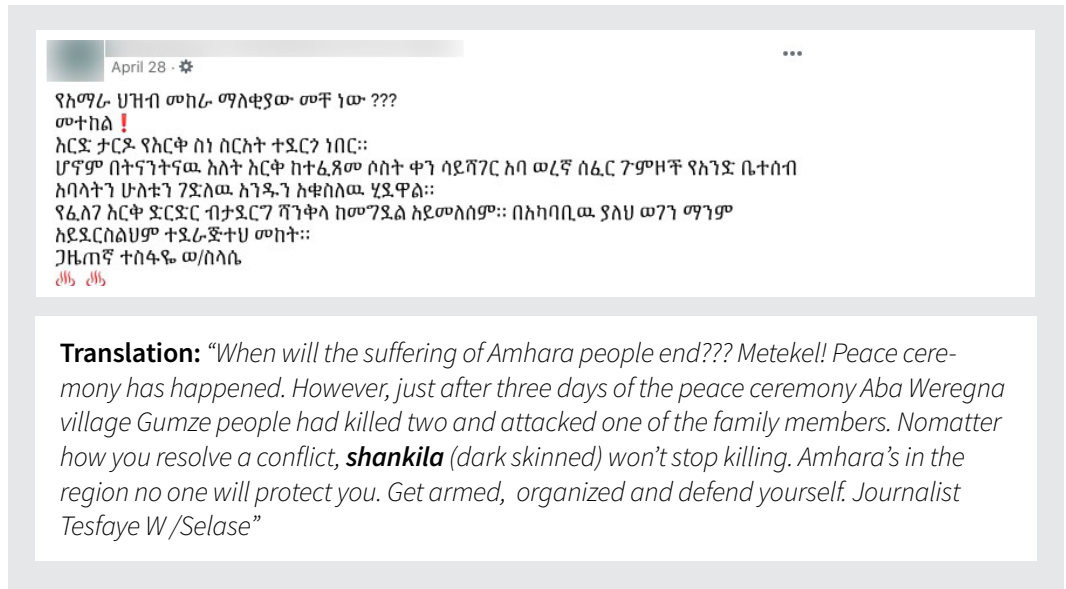
Definition of Term or Phrase: According to the survey data and workshop discussions, *Shankila* is a pejorative term used to refer to populations in the western part of the country near the South Sudan border. It may have its origin in the Amharic word for “dark skinned,” but some participants thought it to be more ancient. It is historically associated with the term *bariya* (ባላይ /slave) and the slave trade in the region because the people often described using this term were ethnic minorities historically targeted and enslaved. As focus group participants explained, “[*barya*] is a derogatory and racist term directed against darker skinned citizens mainly from [the] south and south western part of [Ethiopia].”

Another participant pointed out that *shankila* usually refers “to people in western Ethiopia (Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz regional ethnicities),” adding that “[this term is] given to the people that used to be sold as slaves, especially from the Western part. These people have a dark[er] skin color.”

Why It's Offensive or Inflammatory: This pejorative term dehumanizes historically-targeted communities because of its association with the word *bariya* and the violent legacy that term carries, and to which it refers. The use of the term *shankila* is racist and perpetuates strong negative prejudices against these populations, implying that they are uncivilized and inferior. Those originating from communities in the western part of Ethiopia targeted by this term have historically been discriminated against, and focus group participants explained that “*shankila* [is used] to undermine and disdain people from these areas.” Its use is inflammatory and violent because, as a validation workshop participant reflected, “you call them *shankila* regardless of their identity and culture, and this makes them feel like you stole their identity, since the name [is a direct reference to] the slave trade.”

Related Hashtags: None provided.

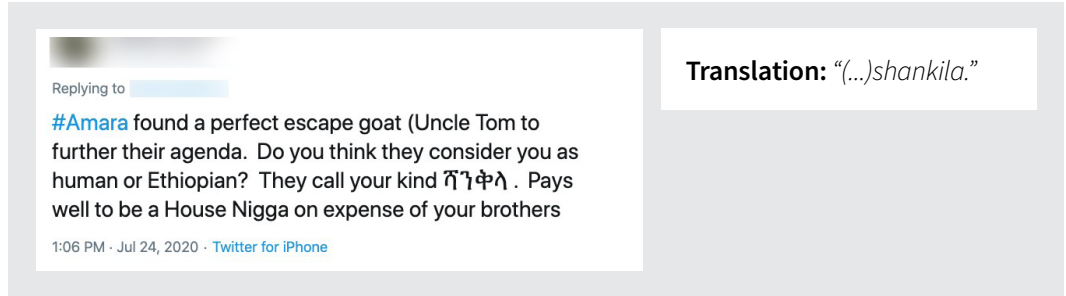
Sample Posts:



April 28 · ✨

የአማራ ህዝብ መከራ ማለቂያው መቸ ነው ???
 መተከል !
 አርፎ ታርፎ የአርቅ ስነ ስርአት ተደርጎ ነበር።
 ሆኖም በትናንትናዉ አለት አርቅ ከተፈጸመ ሰስት ቀን ሳይሻገር አባ ወረኛ ሰፈር ጉምዞቹ የአንድ ቤተሰብ አባላትን ሁለቱን ገደለዉ አንዱን አቁሰለዉ ሂደዋል።
 የፈለገ አርቅ ድርጅር ብታደርግ ሻንቅላ ከመገደል አይመለሰም። በአካባቢዉ ያለህ ወገን ማንም አይደርስልህም ተደራጅተህ መከት።
 ጋዜጠኛ ተስፋዬ ወ/ሰላሴ

Translation: “When will the suffering of Amhara people end??? Metekel! Peace ceremony has happened. However, just after three days of the peace ceremony Aba Weregna village Gumze people had killed two and attacked one of the family members. Nomatter how you resolve a conflict, *shankila* (dark skinned) won’t stop killing. Amhara’s in the region no one will protect you. Get armed, organized and defend yourself. Journalist Tesfaye W/Selase”




Replying to [redacted]

#Amara found a perfect escape goat (Uncle Tom to further their agenda. Do you think they consider you as human or Ethiopian? They call your kind ሻንቅላ . Pays well to be a House Nigga on expense of your brothers

1:06 PM · Jul 24, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Translation: “(...)shankila.”



I thought this shankila is one of the reasonable few, but I was wrong. He thinks that Mengistu's Red Terror and other atrocities in Ethiopia and Eritrea was part of national building. What an idiot!

Non-Offensive Alternative: Name of the person, or other group they identify with.

15. ጠባብ (tebab)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *Tababe, tebab; tebabe, tebab, ጠባብ ዘረኛ (tebab zerenya/narrow racist), ዘረኛ (zereгна/racist), ጠባብ ብሔርተኛ (tebab bihertegna) narrow nationalist,*

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Tebab (ጠባብ)* means “narrow” in Amharic. Survey respondents defined it as being used broadly to describe a person as “somebody who is narrow-minded,” and then more specifically as “someone who puts his/her ethnicity first,” above his or her country. Indeed, the term *tebab bihertegna (ጠባብ ብሔርተኛ/narrow nationalist)*, was often quoted together in the survey responses. A “narrow nationalist” refers to somebody with ethnic nationalist convictions and who rejects the unitary nationalist model for Ethiopia. In other words, somebody who is an ethnic nationalist is also narrow (minded).

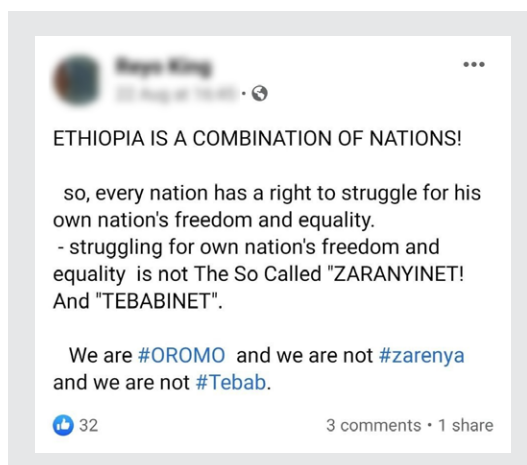
Survey results indicated that many respondents associate the term *tebab* with targeting ethnic Oromo - which probably is an extension of the reference to Oromo ethnic nationalists.

Why It's Offensive or Inflammatory: In its broadest use, workshop participants agreed that the term is commonly used (especially in political rhetoric) to undermine political opponents by stigmatizing them and their stance as “dumb or short-sighted.” Being “narrow-minded” is derogatory and dismissive because it implies that somebody does not have the capacity to think rationally or to consider a situation fully, and that their political convictions or ideology is therefore a product of a person with limited intellectual capacity.

The use of the term *tebab* or *tebab bihertegna* (narrow nationalist) is inflammatory in the current context because it further fans explosive divisions between ethnic and political groups (especially when wielded by elected officials) and carries accusations of undermining or working against the unitary nationalist project. One focus group participant explained that it is “used by the government to fight against groups that could be considered secessionist,” implying that such accusations could also have more serious consequences. “[It is] mostly given to Oromo nationalists,” another participant added. “A former EPRDF official labeled the Oromo nationalists as *tebab*,” they explained.⁶⁷ Another stated that “nowadays it is being used to attack people from [the] Oromo tribe who are fighting for their rights and against discrimination by Amharas,” irrespective of how radical their political convictions are.

Related Hashtags: *#tebab*

Sample Posts:



September 27, 2019 · 🌐

"አዚች ሀገር ላይ ገበሬ ችግር ሆኖ አያውቅም፤ ችግር ፈጣሪዎቹ ምሁራንና ጠባብ ብሔርተኛ ፖለቲከኞች ናቸው.....!!!!
.....!!!!

Translation: “Farmers have never been a problem in this country. The culprits are intellectuals and **tebab bihertegna** (narrow nationalist) politicians ... “

March 18 · 🌐

100% አርግጠኛ ሆኜ የምናገረው ዶ/ር አቢይ አህመድን የሚተቸኝ የሚጠላ ሰው ካለ ያ ሰው ጥቅሙ የቀረበት ዘረፋና ስርቅት የቀረበት የቀን ጅቦች እና ጠባብ ብሔርተኛ ባንዱ የኦነግ ደጋፊ የሆነ ፀረ ኢትዮጵያዊ የሆነ ግለሰብ ወይም ቡድን ብቻ ነው።ሁላችንም ከዶ/ር አቢይ እና ከብልፅግና ፓርቲ ጎን አንቀማለን።

Translation: “I am 100% sure that if there is anyone who criticizes and hates Dr. Abiy Ahmed, that person or group is the **tebab bihertegna** (narrow nationalist) **banda** (traitor) who is an anti-Ethiopian individual or group that supports the OLF, a robber **yeken jib** (daytime hyena) who lost his benefit because of the change . We all stand by Dr. Abiy and the Prosperity Party.”

October 16, 2019 · 🌐

አንዲህ አይነት ጠባብ ቆሻሻ ግለሰብ ኢትዮጵያውያንን ወክሎ በኢምባሲ ደረጃ መቀመጥ ስለለበት ባስቸኳይ ስልጣኑን ለቆ ወደ ቀድሞው የፌስቡክ አርበኝነትና ስድድቡ ይቀላቀል! አናሳ አናሳ ነው የፈለገ ቦታ ብታስቀምጠው!

Translation: “Someone dirty and **tebab** (narrow) -minded like this person should not represent the country as an ambassador. He should immediately step down and so that he can join the incitement on Facebook as he used to do. He should immediately step down!”

Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

16. ትምክህተኛ (Temekehetana)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *Timkihitegna, timkehetegna, timikihitenya, timikitegna, timikitegna, timkihitegna, temkehet*; ትምክህተኞች (plural of ትምክህተኛ)

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Temekehetana* literally means “proud” or “conceited” in Amharic, but survey results suggest that in its current popular use, the term is associated with a more negative meaning of “chauvinism” or “unjustified and unwarranted boast or pride” or even “[racial] supremacist.” Respondents indicated that it is commonly used to refer to members of the Amhara community, in reference to the historically perceived forced geographic and political dominance exercised by the Amhara in Ethiopia. As a workshop participant explained,

“Historically, Amhara elites were rulers during the long monarchic times and they were repressive to other ethnicities and the legacy of this historical privilege is believed to continue by many other ethnic nationalists.” According to some interviewees, this usage can also be found in a 1967 TPLF manifesto⁶⁸ “which shows that the Amhara is their major enemy.”

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: Survey respondents and workshop participants agreed that in the current national context *temekehetana* is a problematic and “politically loaded term” used against members of the Amhara ethnic community who are accused (by members of the other ethnic groups) of thinking they “are superior and they are the only ones they have to rule the country.” Its usage is inflammatory because it implies that members of this group pose an existential threat to the culture and way of life of other ethnic groups in the country. As a workshop participant explained, Tigrayans accuse Amhara of “ethnic chauvinism” in that they “impose their language and culture on others and say that the other [group] is lucky to get such a culture.” The usage of the term lays bare the ongoing cleavages along ethnic lines in Ethiopian society, as one interviewee said, “I have seen a video yesterday that shows a man saying that the major enemy for Tigray is first Egypt and second Amhara people.”

Related Hashtags: None provided.

Sample Posts:

	<p>Translation: “..mindset of <i>timkehetegna</i> (arrogant) forces!”</p>
	<p>Translation: “It is Tigre bandits doing all this kind of activity. It is your job. Killing innocent people is TPLF successful job. Nothing more. <i>Timkehetegna</i> (Arrogant minds)”</p>
	<p>Translation: “The problem with this country is not federalism. The problem in this country is a cancer called #Amhara. Stop going around the bush and naming them <i>temkehetegna</i> (arrogant). This cancer must be removed and discarded.”</p>

Non-Offensive Alternative: Kuru/ኩሩ / (someone proud);

17. ጁላ (ዲላ), (tsila)


Other Spellings and Associated Terms: ምድረ ጁላ (*midre tsila/a bunch of tsila*)

Definition of Term or Phrase: According to survey results, *Tsila* is a term used to refer to members of the Tigrayan community, imitating one of the main sounds in the Tigrinya language, the “tse.” Focus group participants explained that the term (and by extension Tigrayans) is associated with “someone who gets angry for no reason because the Tigrayans as people are perceived to be someone who gets frustrated and angry easily. It may also be used to describe someone who is rich without hard work.” A number of Tigrayan survey respondents and focus group participants found this term to be offensive because of all the negative connotations it carries.

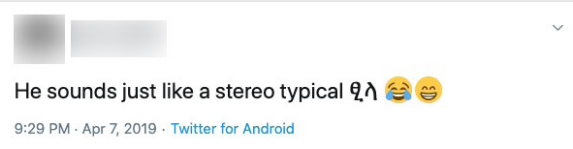
Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: The use of the term can be demeaning since it uses a belittling word to refer to a language and an ethnic community as a whole. The negative attributes that are associated with it, and therefore associated with the members of the Tigrayan community, can be inflammatory in nature since they conjure up sentiments of threat (“somebody who gets angry for no reason”) but also imply inferiority or “undeserved riches.” A focus group participant pointed out that the latter was particularly associated with Tigrayans in administrative positions. Another explained that it was offensive when used by non-Tigrayans, but not between Tigrayans.

Related Hashtags: None provided.


Sample Posts:



Translation: “You who says Tigray, Tigray, Tigray. Fuck you! Bunch of dirty people. All of you go to hell, you all are **tsila** thieves. Debretsiion⁶⁹ fuck you.”



Translation: “He sounds like a stereotypical **tsila**.”



Translation: “If Jawar Mohammed is being held with the prisoners so called thieves by artist Abiy Amed we know they are the former TPLF ministers which are **tsila** so they will ask Jawar to sing ‘Ember tegadalay’ for Candle contribution.”

Non-Offensive Alternative: Tigre/ ተግራ (a person from Tigray)

18. ወያኔ (weyane), woyyane

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *Woyane, digital woyane*

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Woyyane* means “revolutionary” or “rebel” in Tigrinya, and this term normally has a positive connotation when used by Tigrayans. According to focus group participants, in that context it conveys “someone who fights for what he believes” and commits “heroic act(s) of the struggle for their belief.”

However, focus group participants explained that more recently the term has acquired a negative connotation, in particular when used in Amharic or by members of the Amhara and Oromo communities. For instance, survey respondents indicated that “government officials use this term to refer to TPLF⁷⁰ officials.”⁷¹ Used in this way, “the term comes closer to meaning ‘bandit,’” a participant pointed out, “like a robber and torturer,” because, according to an interviewee, it is “associated with [a] rebel group [from Tigray] that is doing a lot of atrocities.”

The term is also sometimes used more broadly by members of the other communities to denigrate “all Tigrayans and sometimes to mean TPLF or TPLF supporters” and is “loaded with the connotation of repressiveness.” By extension the term *digital woyane* is a reference to the prominent role social media plays in Tigrayan organizing. It is used to both self-describe or designate nationalist Tigrayans active on social media.

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: The derogatory use of the term *woyane* targeting members of the TPLF is inflammatory when it is intended to label a political group (currently in the opposition) as a group of violent rebels or terrorists. Workshop participants indicated that it “evokes the connotation of being ruthless and corrupted, rude or cruel.” This has a dehumanizing effect, in particular when used to refer to members of the Tigrayans community in general, because it implies they are “without compassion or redeeming qualities as fellow members of Ethiopian society.”

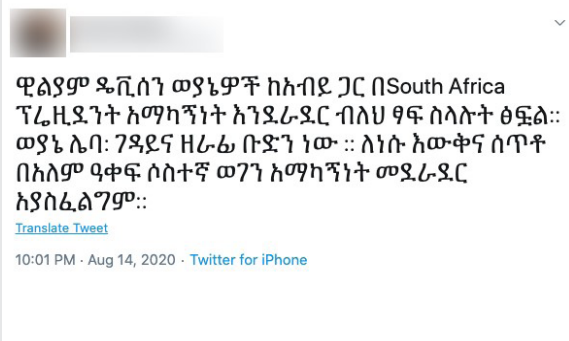
Related Hashtags: #woyane , #digitalwoyane

Sample Posts:

The image shows a collage of social media posts. On the left, a tweet from August 20, 2020, reads: "What a MORON! an idiot! a clueless DIGITAL WOYANE! booooooot lick the dead AGAMES because you are an AGAME!". Below it is a Facebook post from June 27, 2019, with a red background and white text: "With Internet back in #Ethiopia, we will witness an upsurge in #TPLF's '#DigitalWoyane'—its social media #propaganda war spreading hate & division among the Ethiopian people, and lies & demonization against #Eritrea. TPLF will be particularly busy stoking the fires of hate ('አላተና ጭድድ') between #Oromo & #Amhara, two majority groups whose unity it fears the most." On the right, a Facebook post from June 3, 2020, features a screenshot of a press release from Juba TV titled "Sudan agrees to Egypt for military base ne:". The press release text is partially visible, mentioning the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sudan.



Translation: “*TPLF / Woyane who fell by the blood of qerro won’t be raised again by the blood of qerro!*”



Translation: “*William Davison writes that the TPLF is negotiating with Abyeï through the President of South Africa. Woyane: They are a murderous and thug group. There is no need to acknowledge them and negotiate with them through an international third party*”

Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

19. ወላሞ (Wollamo)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: ወላሞ (*welamo*), *wolamo*, *dicha*, *ditcha*

Definition of Term or Phrase: According to some workshop participants *Wollamo* is an Amharic term composed of *wola* (fig tree) and *mo* (to eat), therefore meaning to “eat a fig (tree).” Other participants suggested that the term *Welamo* is originally a combination of two words in Wolaytta language: *Wa* and *Lamo*. *Wa* means “eating” and *Lamo* means “fig tree” (*Shola* in Amharic) and therefore refers to people who “eat the fruit of fig tree.”

However, participants agreed that it is a derogatory term referring to members of the Dorzie tribe and/or to the Welayta and Gamo communities (both are located in the southern parts of the country). It is mostly used by residents of the capital and is said to mean “a person that takes lowly jobs without questioning. They don’t choose.” This implies that they are poor and less civilized and therefore “at the lowest level of the society.”

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: The attributes associated with this term of crime and theft promote prejudices against southern communities. As a workshop participant explained, “It has a connotation of undermining the class of the person; it is sometimes used to mean someone barbaric.”

Related Hashtags: *#wollamo*

Sample Posts:

<p>9 Nov 2019 at 13:53</p> <p>According to me: #Wolamo are not Human being Tiiishhh that is Shame competing With #Sidaama</p> <p>Like Comment Share</p>	<p>May 23</p> <p>ወላሞ በየቦታው አየዞረ የሰው ንብረት ለመዝረፍ ከመሞከር ውጭ የሚያውቀው ሞያ የለውም! በቅርቡ ጋሞ ዞን ቅጭ ወረዳ በዲቃላ ወላሞዎች ላይ አርምጃ ደውሰዱል!</p> <p>Translation: “<i>Wolamo has no profession other than trying to rob people of their property! Action will soon be taken against the hybrids of Wolamo’s by Gamo Zone Kucha Woreda!</i>”</p>
<p>7:43 PM · Jan 25, 2017 · Facebook</p>	<p>Translation: “<i>It is true that if only Oromo were shepherds, the cattle would be Amhara and Wolamo. That’s it.</i>”</p>
<p>fb.me/2GwYynsS9</p>	<p>Translation: “<i>Listen to this stupid idiot Wolamo. He is insulting the Amharas abroad. how can a Wolamo, insult Amhara?</i>”</p>

Non-Offensive Alternative: Wolayita, / ወላይታ (to designate the Welayta people)

20. የቀን ጁብ (yeken jib), warrabessa guyyaa

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *yekeni jibi, yeken jeb, jeqen jib, jeken jiboch*; የቀን ጁብ ዘራፊዎች (*daytime robbers*), *yeqen jib zerafiwoch, yeken jib zerafiwoch*

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Yeken jib* (የቀን ጁብ) and *warrabessa guyyaa* mean “daylight hyena” in Amhara and Afaan Oromo. As a workshop participant explained, “hyenas normally hunt at night, but *yeken jib* means a hyena that does hunting even on [sic] the day.” According to survey respondents, this term is used to refer to “people who do the worst openly,” like a “thief that has the audacity to steal in daylight” or a “daybreak robber.”

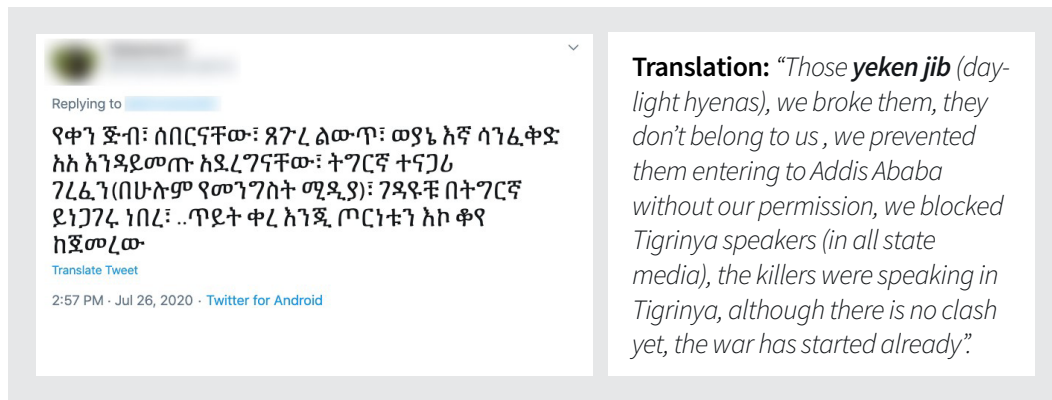
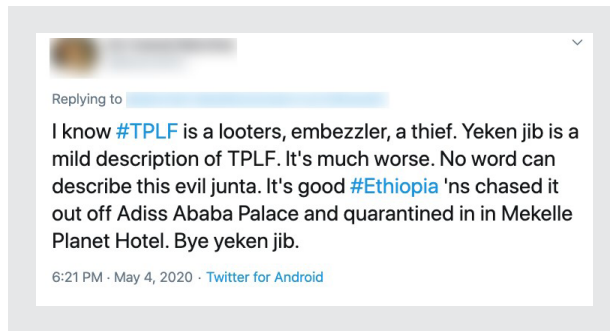
While the term *yeken jib* was originally used to refer to “financially corrupt people” in general, survey data suggests that its use and meaning have evolved in recent years. Workshop participants pointed out that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed mentioned it in a speech⁷² in which he used the term to reference members of the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF),⁷³ later repeating the term on national television. After this incident, participants explained that “it started to be used against previous regime officials and beneficiaries [...] that were assumed to [...] have

amassed wealth under it.” Many survey respondents pointed out that by extension, it began to be used as a derogatory term to refer to Tigray in general.

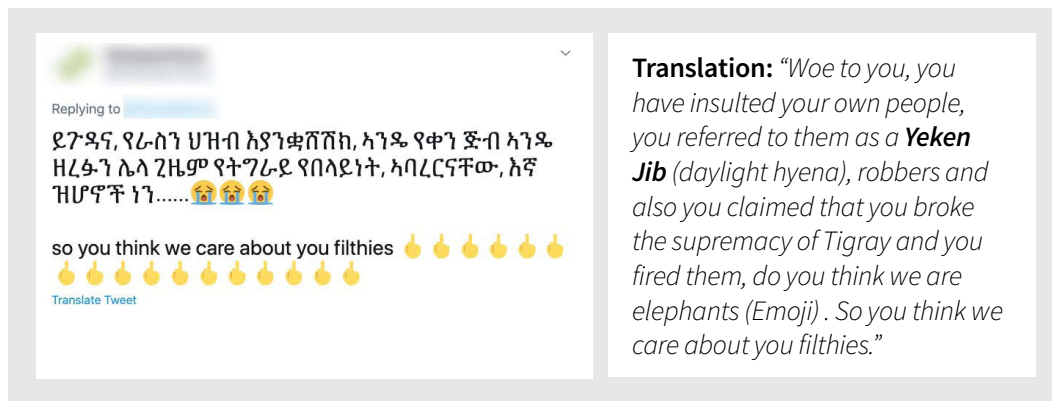
Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: The use of the term “daylight hyena” is derogatory and dehumanizing, especially when used against the Tigrayan community as a whole. A hyena moves around at night and, as workshop participants explained, “takes a sheep or animal or human sometimes. So the hyenas take or rob at night.” It is commonly believed that for a hyena to come out in daylight, it means that it is a “starved hyena who will hurt humans.” This adds a threatening connotation since one has to protect oneself against an attacking hyena. The person accused of being a “daylight hyena,” therefore, is a person who, according to those surveyed, “has no shame, no conscience, no regard for morals, no regard for social values, he will go out and take [that] which isn’t his.” Survey respondents agreed that even in its least inflammatory incarnation, it is a problematic term, especially the way it is used by some party officials, making it a “politically charged” term used by “the supporters of the new regime against the supporters of the old political regime.”⁷⁴

Related Hashtags: #yekenjib

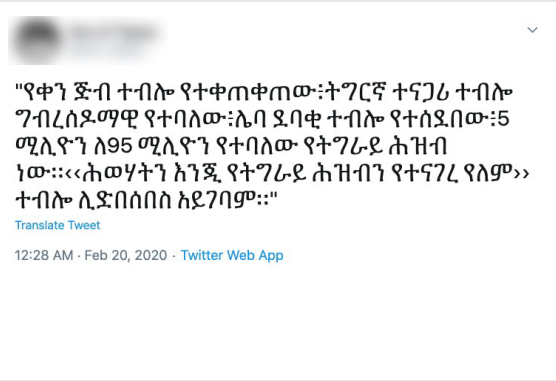
Sample Posts:



Translation: “Those **yeken jib** (daylight hyenas), we broke them, they don’t belong to us, we prevented them entering to Addis Ababa without our permission, we blocked Tigrinya speakers (in all state media), the killers were speaking in Tigrinya, although there is no clash yet, the war has started already.”



Translation: “Woe to you, you have insulted your own people, you referred to them as a **Yeken Jib** (daylight hyena), robbers and also you claimed that you broke the supremacy of Tigray and you fired them, do you think we are elephants (Emoji) . So you think we care about you filthies.”




“የቀን ጅብ ተብሎ የተቀጠቀጠው፡-ትግርኛ ተናጋሪ ተብሎ ግብረሰዶማዊ የተባለው፡-ሌባ ደባቂ ተብሎ የተሰደበው፡-5 ሚሊዮን ለ95 ሚሊዮን የተባለው የትግራይ ሕዝብ ነው፡፡-«ሐወሃትን እንጂ የትግራይ ሕዝብን የተናገረ የለም» ተብሎ ሊጽብሰበስ አይገባም፡፡”

[Translate Tweet](#)

12:28 AM · Feb 20, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Translation: “It’s not true when they say that it’s the TPLF who is being insulted and not the people of Tigray. It’s the people of Tigray (who are said to be 5 million to 95 million), who are being called **yeken jib** (daylight hyena), those are Tigrinya speakers who are being called homosexuals and accused of hiding thieves.”



Replying to [redacted]

አዚህ የሚንጮጩት ወያኔ የቀን ጅብ አጋሚዎች ናቸው ሲዘርፉ ኖረው ግድቡን አዝረከርከው ፈርጥጠው የተደበቁት 😂 ደሞ ተቀርቋል መምሰል 😊 አህ የሌባ ነገር 🙌🐶

[Translate Tweet](#)

10:50 AM · Feb 7, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Translation: “Those who are shouting now are the **yeken jib** (daylight hyenas) **Woyane**, Agame. They are hiding now after robbing from the renaissance dam project all this time (Emoji) and now they are pretending as if they care (Emoji) Ah thieves (Emoji) ”

Non-Offensive Alternative: Museгна/ ሙስኛ (a person that is corrupt)

21. ዘረኛ (zerenya)

Other Spellings and Associated Terms: *Zaranyaa, zerenga, zareenyaa, ጠባብ ዘረኛ (tebab zerenya/narrow racist), temekeheta*

Definition of Term or Phrase: *Zeregnya* (ዘረኛ) means “racist” in Amharic. According to a workshop participant, the “word [is] derived from the Amharic word *Zer* (race).” Survey respondents explained that in the “Ethiopian context it means discriminating [against] someone based on their ethnicity.”

According to workshop participants, *zeregnya* describes an ethnic chauvinist, or somebody “who thinks their ethnicity is better than the others’ and also undermines and demoralizes the other identity.” Many agreed that it is widely “used to stigmatize anybody with a different [political] ideology,” but that in more recent times it is increasingly used to “refer to any Oromo who is proud of their identity and heritage,” irrespective of their political ideology.

Why It’s Offensive or Inflammatory: In the Ethiopian context, accusations of being racist imply that the targeted person is an ethnic nationalist, and that they are therefore hostile towards the other ethnic groups and that they are against the unitary federal model of governance. Workshop participants pointed out that the term is used to stigmatize political opponents and to question the legitimacy of those in power. It is inflammatory because it exacerbates tensions and mistrust between communities, and stokes further nationalist sentiments since the *zeregnya* poses a threat to the other groups. “It’s inflammatory, you hate those who are outside of your

ethnicity. It shows that you are choosing someone based on their ethnicity,” a workshop participant explained.

Related Hashtags: #Zereгна, #Zeregninet

Sample Posts:



March 31 · 🌐

ጸ/ር አብይን የሚቃወሙ ግለሰቦች ተቀማቸው የቀረባቸው እንደፊት ሲዘርፉ የነበሩ ዘረኛ ጠባብ መሀደሞች፣ ፀረ ኢትዮጵያውያን ህገር ሻጭ ባንዳዎች፣ ባፍር ነቃፎ ፌዴራሊስቶች፣ ግብረሰዶዎ ፈፃሚዎች የሆኑ እና የአነሱ ጽሕፈት ለቤተሰባቸው ለቃላት ጠቅላይ ሆኖቻቸው፡፡

እኩርሃሁ!

በጨለማ ውስጥ ብርሃን ያየሁብህ መሪዬ ነህ!

👍❤️👍 1.6K 101 Comments 504 Shares

Translation: “Individuals who oppose Dr. Abiyeh are those **zereгна** (racist) extremists, anti-Ethiopians who rob at will, only nail-biting federalists, homosexuals and their followers”



20 Sep 2018 at 13:09 · 🌐

#Tedy_Afro Gives 1,000,000 for those who displaced from #Burayu but he keep silent when 1,000,000+ displaced from #Somalei region this is what we call it #Zereгна

👍 12 7 comments + 1 share

👍 Like 🗨 Comment ➦ Share

Non-Offensive Alternative: None provided.

Additional Words and Phrases that are Offensive and Inflammatory & Other Terms to Watch

Below are additional terms that were less frequently cited by survey respondents and workshop participants, but that have been highlighted as offensive and inflammatory during the research and validation process⁷⁵ or raised as potentially problematic.

The terms are listed in alphabetical order.

<p>1. ዓዲ ሰለስተ (adi selste)</p> <p>Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: kilil sost, ክልል ሦስት (ክልል ሰስተ)</p> <p>Definition and Context of Use: Adi selste (ዓዲ ሰለስተ) means “third region” in Tigrinya. It is a historical reference to the 14 regions that existed before transition to the federal system. The region numbered “three” was the Amhara region. “Today the Tigrayans use the name of the old region to refer to the Amhara as a group,” a workshop participant explained.</p>
<p>2. ክጋሜ (agame)</p> <p>Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: ክጋሜ, anbeta belitta, anbeta belita</p> <p>Definition and Context of Use: Agame (ክጋሜ) is the name of a tribe located in the regional state of Tigray, which is one of the country’s poorest areas. According to focus group participants, people in the capital of Addis Ababa use the term to insult members of the Tigrayan community in general. It carries the negative connotation by referring to “illiterates, laborers, despised, low class.” “It is used to humiliate the person by making them think they are low class, illiterate and greedy,” survey respondents indicated.</p>
<p>3. ክንበጣ በሊታ (anbeta girita)</p> <p>Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: anbeta belitta, anbeta belita</p> <p>Definition and Context of Use: Anbeta girita means “locust-eater” in Amharic. According to workshop participants “the word is used to degrade people from the Agame district in the Tigray region,” implying they are so poor that they have to eat grasshoppers. For some participants, it is a very degrading term, because it has “a connotation of undermining a person’s humanity, like they are sub-human, not human enough to make their own food.” They indicated that it is currently widely used to refer to Tigray. Historically this term was used to designate Tigray and Eritrea, and was used as a derogatory term particularly during the times of the student movement in the 1960s and 1970s.⁷⁶</p>
<p>4. ቦተያም (botiam)</p> <p>Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: None provided.</p> <p>Definition and Context of Use: Botiam (ቦተያም) is the Tigrinya name of a type of shoe worn by some farming communities. It evokes connotations of being “backward, rural” and as having a bad smell (like very old shoes). Survey respondents indicated that this term is used as a derogatory reference to Oromo. As a workshop participant explained, “It’s used to tell people that they are backward, or uncivilized.”</p>

5. ቡዳ (buda)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: None provided.

Definition and Context of Use: Buda (ቡዳ) means “evil eye” in Tigrinya, and implies that somebody is “possessed by an evil spirit.” According to focus group participants and interviewees, this term is used to refer to members of the Amhara community, more specifically those from the Gojam region. Another participant depicted a wider use, saying, “Buda is the power of the evil eye. It is generally believed to be a power held and wielded by those in different social group such as ‘bete Israel’ (Ethiopian Judas).”

6 ቡሽቲ (bushti)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: ቡሽቲዎች (plural), ግብረ ስዶም (gibre-sedom/sodomite)

Definition and Context of Use: Bushti (ቡሽቲ) is a homophobic term to refer to a gay man or boy. According to workshop participants, the term gebre-sedom (sodomite) is more commonly used, but participants agreed that both are very stigmatizing and demeaning terms. Bushti connotes something “unnatural, sinful, western,” they explained. A survey respondent pointed out that “feminists are often called gebre-sedom.”

7. ጩናዊ (chenawi)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: ግማታም gimatam

Definition and Context of Use: Chenawi (ጩናዊ) means “to stink” in Tigrinya. It is normally a common insult, but according to interviewees, in the current political context, it is used by some Tigrayans to refer to members of the Oromo community.

8. ዲርጊ (dergi)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: Derg, dergue, ዲርጊ, “committee” or “council” in Amharic/Geez skipt

Definition and Context of Use: Derg or dergue (ዲርጊ) is the name of the military junta that ruled Ethiopia (officially called the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia) from 1974 until it was officially disbanded in 1987. According to survey respondents, some Tigray use the term to today to refer to the Amhara because “many Tigrayans consider the Derg to be a regime of Amhara and the [current] government is also understood by Tigrayans as the government of Amhara,” thus implying that it is not representative of them and rather only serves Amhara interests.

9. ኦንቦጫም (embocham)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: None provided.

Definition and Context of Use: Embocham (ኦንቦጫም) is a Tigrinya name for the water hyacinth (eichhornia crassipes), which is considered an invasive weed. It is used to refer to the Amhara community, making allusion to the belief held by many that they are invaders or conquerors.

10. girrisaa

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: GIRRISA, abbaa girrisa (leader of the swarm), mengha, kebt

Definition and Context of Use: GIRRISA means “flock” or “swarm” in Oromiffa. Some survey respondents suggested that the term refers to swarms of locust. These commonly devastate harvests in Ethiopia and are therefore considered harmful and destructive. Others explained that a more accurate translation would be “flock” (as in a flight of birds). The online use of this term refers to Oromo youth and in particular to the supporters of the opposition leader Jawar Mohammad, calling him Abbaa girrisa (leader of the swarm) or girrisa (seemingly implying that they are mindless groups following their leader without question). A workshop participant suggested that it is the Oromo equivalent to the Amharic mengha in meaning and use. (See entry for mengha in the main list of terms.)

11. ሀበሻ (habesha)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: Habasha

Definition and Context of Use: The term possibly comes from the Arabic word الأَبَاش / al-aḥbash meaning “the Ethiopians” (in reference to the Abyssinian empire),⁷⁷ or from “Al Habash,” referring to a region in the Horn of Africa that comprises parts of modern day Eritrea and Ethiopia. It also may originate with an even older term referring to “harvesters of incense.”

There is no consensus on the exact definition of the term, and its meaning and impact are very complex. Different communities and groups use it in different ways (its usage can even vary within groups) to include or exclude different ethno-linguistic groups from a larger ancestral regional, cultural, or religious identity. One narrow understanding of this term would, for example, exclude the Oromo who were not historically part of the Abyssinian empire. The broader definition, on the other hand, states that Habesha “is a common pan-ethnic and meta-ethnic term used to refer to both Ethiopians and Eritreans as a whole.” The “Habesha identity” (especially when referred to by diaspora communities) “is used as an inclusive pan-ethnic identifier for Ethiopians, Eritreans, and the various ethnic groups they comprise.”

However, focus group discussions raised the issue that in the current context of rising ethnic-based politics and division, the term’s use can be perceived as divisive. Many survey respondents included the term in their responses, but workshop participants could not come to a consensus on whether it was inflammatory or not, with opinions varying greatly on both ends of the spectrum. For this reason this term was not included in the main list of terms. A participant offered the following explanation, “Those who subscribe to a more narrow (and seemingly much older) definition of habesha, consider that the use of the term to refer to the Ethiopian (national) identity as a whole, intends to exclude certain ethnic groups such as the Oromo, and that it therefore signifies a planned cultural erasure and forced assimilation of these groups.”⁷⁸

12. ክብት (kebiti)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: Kebt, mengha, girrissaa

Definition and Context of Use: Kebiti (ክብት) means “cattle” in Amharic. It is a dehumanizing term used to imply that someone doesn’t think or analyze on their own. It is used on social media to stigmatize political opponents or dissenting opinions. Many survey respondents indicated that this term is often used to attack ethnic Oromos. In particular, it is used in reference to a leading Oromo activist or his followers - implying that they are “like a herd of cattle that does not think.” As one workshop participant explained, “It’s used to dehumanize and disenfranchise Oromo people.” (See entry for mengha in the main list of terms.)

13. መሸረረት (meshrefet)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: Mushrefet, ማርግግግግ (Amharic)

Definition and Context of Use: Meshrefet (መሸረረት) means “fan” in Tigrinya. The term is used by some Tigrayans to refer to the prime minister and the incumbent government in a derogatory way. According to a workshop participant it implies that “you don’t have your own thinking and that you are reflecting the idea of people driving you from behind — weightless, only talk, shallow, empty.”

Other respondents explained that “the word is used against the prime minister, implying that he only talks and never takes actions. He does not have his own original idea but reflects the interest of other powers who bought him or use him. Just says, does not act!”

14. ቆማል (qomale)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: ቆማላም

Definition and Context of Use: Qomale (ቆማል) means “body lice” in Tigrinya. According to workshop participants the term is used to refer to members of the Amhara. It is inflammatory because it is dehumanizing and “it suggests the person is dirty and a parasite.”

15. ቁልቁል በሊታ (qulqual belita)

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: None provided.

Definition and Context of Use: Qulauql belita means “cactus eater” in Amharic. Some survey respondents explained that this term targets members of the Tigray community. According to them, it is a derogatory reference to the climate in the northern part of the country where it is hotter and cactus fruit is consumed.

Validation workshop participants felt that it was mostly associated with “poverty and famine” and was more recently being used on social media in reference to the - -1985- famine during which it is said those populations started consuming qulqual. “It is meant to belittle and to be a reference to social status.”

16. Shanee

Alternative Spelling and Associated Terms and Phrases: Shanne, shane

Definition and Context of Use: Shanee means “five” in the Oromo language. It is the name of an OLF (Oromo Liberation Front) faction that, according to a participant “has broken off to continue with armed struggle, despite the peace deal that was made with the new prime minister.”

A workshop participant explained that “[the term] is being used by the ruling party to target any Oromo group or personality that is a dissenter to paint them as a terrorist or as linked to the runoff militia in Oromia. It’s also used to justify unwarranted imprisonment and killings of thousands of Oromos by Abiy’s government.”

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Appendix A: Methodology

Scope and Design

To investigate hateful speech and conflict in Ethiopia, the project team created a web-based survey so that the public could contribute their experiences and insights.^{79,80} In total, more than 726 individuals took the online survey or responded to in-person questions. In March and April of 2020, PeaceTech Lab’s project partners conducted eight small online focus group discussion workshops. These were followed by a series of in-depth phone interviews with additional key experts. Finally, in July and August of 2020, the PeaceTech Lab team assembled a small group of Ethiopian advisors who provided expert review of the draft lexicon.

Survey

Differing from the methods for the preceding Nigeria and South Sudan surveys, the project team decided to make the Ethiopian survey openly available online in English, Amhara, and the Oromo language as opposed to restricting access to only a targeted group of individuals. The project team disseminated the URL and instructions through existing networks and partner connections. This was done to gather as many responses as possible.

The survey was drafted by building on previous designs of PeaceTech Lab surveys regarding choice of terminology and language for questions. For the language used in the survey, the project team used “offensive and inflammatory” as a reference for the terms and phrases the project team sought to identify in the survey (as opposed to naming the concept of “hate speech”). “Offensive and inflammatory” remains a more readily understood threshold that reflects hate speech’s core meaning as conveying offense, as well as possible incitement to action or discrimination. If a term were seen merely as offensive, it wouldn’t rise to the threshold of inclusion – it needed to be inflammatory as well.

For the Amhara and Oromo versions of the survey, local partners provided feedback and translation for the wording of the questions. By adapting and localizing the language in the survey, the project team was able to make it accessible to a wider audience.

The survey was hosted on a Google Forms platform for ease of use and because of the widespread familiarity with Google products and Google’s reliable security features which would protect the identity of respondents as well as the confidentiality of their responses.

Focus Group Discussions, Review and Validation

PeaceTech Lab’s project partners implemented eight online focus group discussions. Focus groups were composed of five to ten participants each, with special care taken to have as diverse a representation as possible among language, ethnicity, geographies, genders, occupations, and socioeconomic status.

Based on the terms collected via the survey, a list of 25 terms was submitted to each group. The focus group members were tasked with validating the initial data gathered and completing the definitional and contextual information for each term. This included discussing emotionally-loaded

and controversial topics or “triggers” that could cause violence which might not have been elucidated within the restricted format of an online survey.

The validation workshops provided important clarification on the definitions and usage of the terms. Importantly, they also clarified the contexts in which these terms were most potent while also bringing new terms to the researchers’ attention.

In-depth Interviews

Following the conclusion of the workshops, five additional interviews were held with key informants arranged by the local project partners. These interviews provided an opportunity to address remaining gaps in the data, as well as to yield additional contextual information for the definitions and usage of terms.

Expert Reviews

Finally, the project assembled a group of Ethiopian experts to review the full draft lexicon. These reviewers included experts in Ethiopian history and international development professionals from both genders representing different communities. They contributed additional validation, analysis, and insights on the lexicon, helping to interpret the wider historical and current political context in Ethiopia.

Appendix B: Issues and Risks

During the development of this lexicon, the project team encountered a number of issues, limitations, and risks that it attempted to mitigate.

Time Constraints and Timing of the Study

Expectations regarding timing and time frame of the overall study imposed by project funders proved challenging to fulfill in the particularly dynamic and rapidly-changing environment of Ethiopia's ongoing political developments. The time frame available, as well as limitations on other resources, impacted the scope and breadth of the data and analysis that could be performed.

In this regard, the project's timeline⁸¹ coincided with several major moments of global and national repercussions, which may have colored overall results by impacting the data and information that could be collected.

The project timeframe overlapped with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that for the safety of all in-country teams and participants, all research and validation activities had to be shifted and adapted to be held remotely online. This forced the teams to make compromises that impacted the representativeness and breadth of the study. In-person survey interviews had to be limited, and most information collection was done online via social media and partner networks. The validation workshops were moved online as well, which in turn meant that groups had to be kept smaller and discussion sessions shorter in order to optimize work in this format. However, unreliable internet connectivity and availability greatly impacted partners' ability to reach potential participants and those who were able to attend were limited in their ability to engage fully in the conversations.

The end of the research phase coincided with another pivotal moment in Ethiopian social and political events. The assassination of popular singer Hachalu Hundessa triggered a time of upheaval in the capital of Addis Ababa and the region of Oromia,⁸² leading the government to shut down internet services in an attempt to curb online and offline violence. This caused additional delays and challenges for the finalization of this lexicon, since connection with in-country experts was lost for a period of three weeks.

Finally, it is important here to note that the lexicons are — by design — iterative. They each represent a snapshot of a country's landscape of online hateful language at a certain moment, and are meant to be updated over time. As events unfold on the regional, national, and/or international stage, the meaning and usage of terms included in the primary and additional list in these lexicons may evolve and change.

Limitations of Online Surveys and Validation Workshops

Online surveys offer opportunities for respondents to share information and insights; however, an online form can also limit the number and demographic representation of respondents in a situation of low or unreliable internet connectivity. To work around low internet penetration and unreliable infrastructure, on-the-street interviews were planned near local focal points in an attempt to broaden the overall reach of the study. However, these in-person activities had to be canceled due to health and safety precautions introduced with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The workshops and focus group discussions require individuals to address the terms identified via the survey (and their usage) not only individually, but also through interaction with others in the group setting — and in some cases this means interacting with individuals from groups in society who perpetrate and/or are targeted by such terms. Rather than inhibit speech, however, these workshops establish important contextual insights and information about the potency of certain terms. They also tend to surface new terms not mentioned in the surveys.

The interactive dimensions of the in-person validation workshops were somewhat diminished through the online format, which in turn limited the quantity and depth of insights gathered in this stage. The project teams mitigated this loss by redesigning the validation workshops to maximize inputs and interactivity for an online setting.

Challenges Regarding Language and Translation

This project's research environment was not only multilingual but also comprised different scripts — the Roman and the ge'ez scripts. To achieve broad reach, the survey was distributed in Amharic, Oromo, and English. Amharic is the official language in Ethiopia, and Oromo is spoken by its largest demographic group. The English survey was made available as a third option, in particular for the Ethiopian diaspora. No further surveys were provided in other languages and this may have impacted the data on several levels: comprehension of questions by respondents, comprehension of replies by researchers, adequate translation, and capture of full cultural and linguistic meaning of certain terms. Most survey participants provided their responses in Amharic and Oromo. A few respondents gave their replies in other languages such as Tigrinya or Somali. Overall, survey responses yielded a rich and complex pool of data in several languages and scripts, providing challenges regarding various combinations of translations and transliterations or even a combination of both. Managing data in this context required great diligence and care.

Most survey submissions, and subsequent discussion and interview notes had to be translated into English for the purpose of analysis and writing of this report. This time-consuming and work-intensive task was mostly shouldered by the project's partners. PeaceTech Lab may consider outsourcing all translation to professional translators for future lexicon projects to optimize time and workflow. Finally, most sample posts required translation as well, which was a task that proved particularly challenging because of the informal and sometimes hybrid nature of the language used by social media users.

Conflict Sensitivity Considerations

As a part of ongoing conflict sensitivity practices throughout the development of the lexicon, and in response to the evolving conflict context in Ethiopia at the time, PeaceTech Lab undertook additional conflict sensitivity steps at the stage of finalizing and publishing the lexicon in order to address the specific conflict sensitivities that were emerging in real time. These steps included another round of interviews with independent experts, as well as consultations with all local partners and collaborators specifically on the question of the potential impact of the lexicon publication. The resulting recommendations focused on mitigating identified risks, which the lexicon team proceeded to implement. Clarifying language and additional revisions were included in the lexicon, and the publication and rollout plan was revised accordingly.

Scope of Research and Gendered Hate Speech

Many survey respondents cited gendered insults against women as hate speech terms, which may be an indication of the overall level of discrimination or violence against women and/or of a heightened level of awareness of the problem in Ethiopia on behalf of the survey respondents. Violence against women in conflict contexts is often an integral part of the dynamics examined PeaceTech Lab's hate speech lexicons, though the current lexicon research methodology focuses on eliciting inflammatory speech as it is linked to and born out of current and historical violent conflicts and divisions in a country's society and politics. The in-depth examination of terms and phrases targeting women in Ethiopia could thus warrant further study.

Challenges Linked To Communication

Technical connectivity issues (internet availability and low bandwidth) made continued and efficient communication with partners challenging throughout the project. This not only impacted logistics and the capacity to organize the information validation activities, but also hindered some of the collaborative aspects of the team's research activity that had already been limited by the logistical restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

On June 30, 2020, the government implemented a country-wide internet shutdown, impacting all web-based channels of outside communication. The internet was partially re-established around July 14, and only fully (for all services) on July 23, 2020⁸³ — leading to very limited communication capabilities between the local partners and the PeaceTech Lab research team over a three week period.

Since local partners are crucial to the data analysis process by providing additional contextual information on the historic and cultural meanings of the terms, as well as to bridging any translation gaps for some survey responses and validation discussions, these connectivity issues imposed delays (in some cases significant delays) and required additional patience and efforts on the team's part to maintain communication and workflow.

Concerns about Privacy and Security

Initially, the survey required participants to submit personal information (such as their first name, last name, and email address), but feedback from partners indicated this had a dissuasive effect because most were suspicious of the use of this data and the privacy afforded to it. To foster trust and increase participation, the questions regarding personal information were dropped from the open survey halfway through the information-gathering process. It is not clear from the data whether this had the desired effect of mitigating concerns. The questions were not dropped from the in-person questionnaires in cases where the interviewers could emphasize their optional nature.

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ABOUT PEACE TECH LAB

PeaceTech Lab works for individuals and communities affected by conflict, using technology, media, and data to accelerate local peacebuilding efforts. An independent non-profit organization, the Lab's mission is to amplify the power of peacetech to save lives through earlier warnings and smarter responses to violence. The Lab's programs emphasize a data-driven, cross-sector approach, engaging everyone from student engineers and citizen journalists to Fortune 500 companies in scaling the impact of peacetech.



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