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CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT OF
RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

INSIGHT INTO ONLINE CONVERSATIONS ON THE INCLUSIVENESS OF ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE PROCESS

(January 2022 – October 2024)

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Note: The Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD) wishes to clarify that it does not take positions on policy matters. This report is solely based on the monitoring and analysis of social media conversations related to the Ethiopian national dialogue process. CARD neither endorses nor opposes the views expressed in the content featured in this report. The materials included are presented exclusively to inform stakeholders about the nature and tone of discussions occurring within the digital media space. This report reflects online conversations observed prior to October 2024.

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Monitoring Online Discourse about Inclusiveness of the National Dialogue Process in Ethiopia

Executive Summary

This report is intended to monitor and analyse online conversations with a special focus on inclusiveness of the National Dialogue process in Ethiopia. The report examined these conversations from individual accounts to news outlets and public institutions; including political parties, the ENDC, the media, individual observers as well as armed groups who underscored that they have a stake in the process. The subjects of conversations mainly emanated from statements or criticisms on the process from political groups or other observers. Hence, the political contestations on the ground were the main drivers of the conversations.

The monitoring activity demonstrated that measures, like boycotting of the national dialogue process by some political parties; the conflicts and their impacts on the process as well as the questions of inclusiveness at different levels were the main subjects among netizens. The monitoring also showed that the online platform is not an isolated area with no contact with offline events. In fact, online discourses are intersections of public mood and offline events. This is largely due to the nature of internet platforms, which allow for the free flow and exchange of ideas. Although people have interacted with content related to the national dialogue process, there is also skepticism and a lack of confidence displayed in the chats.

The monitoring activity also discovered that incidences of misleading information circulating online, particularly during the early stages affected the national dialogue process. Although this monitoring was not meant to deeply investigate incorrect information about the national dialogue process, such political procedures frequently generate inaccurate material online.

Gender inclusion, one of the main elements in the national dialogue processes, was another subject of discussion among netizens. Unlike other forms of inclusion, gender conversations saw a strong negative sentiment online because some thought participation and inclusion should not be gendered while feminist organizations and others demanded conscious inclusion of women in the process.

Key Findings

Online Discourse Reflects and Responds to Offline Developments

Digital conversations surrounding the national dialogue process have largely been reactive in nature, emerging in direct response to official announcements, media coverage, or political party statements. This pattern highlights the extent to which public online engagement is shaped by real-world developments, indicating that offline actions significantly influence the tone and direction of online discourse.

Political Inclusivity Remains the Most Frequently Raised Concern

Among the various themes observed in online discussions, political inclusiveness emerged as the most prominent and debated issue. The decision by key political actors—such as the Caucus of Opposition Parties and Enat Party—to withdraw from the process citing concerns over transparency and representation contributed to the intensity of public scrutiny. This underscores the importance of perceived fairness and openness in fostering broad-based confidence in the dialogue process. Official communications and other way of public awareness creation, dialogue platform debriefings from the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission remained largely assuring of these concerns. Segments of social media commentators have aired similar optimism.

Public Sentiment Marked by Caution and Skepticism Despite high levels of engagement with national dialogue-related content, online sentiment has been largely characterized by cautious optimism and, in many cases, skepticism. A significant portion of the commentary

reflected doubts about the credibility, inclusiveness, and likely outcomes of the process, suggesting a need for greater confidence-building measures moving forward.

Perceptions of Structural Challenges Affect Legitimacy

Some critical observers have described the national dialogue as facing serious foundational challenges. Key concerns cited include ongoing insecurity in parts of the country—particularly in the Amhara and Oromia regions—as well as perceptions of insufficient independence and impartiality in the commission's mandate. These challenges are seen as constraining the emergence of a fully enabling environment for meaningful dialogue. The Commissions marked presence and vast reach to grassroots have been reflected in its digital communication efforts reassuring of these concerns while at times airing similar shortcomings due to insecurities.

Gender Representation Sparks Divergent Views

The issue of gender inclusion elicited strongly divergent reactions across online platforms. While advocacy groups and feminist voices emphasized the importance of intentional gender representation, other contributors expressed concern that participation should be framed

around broader citizen engagement rather than identity-based quotas. This indicates that gender representation remains a highly debated aspect of the inclusivity discourse.

Early Exposure to Misinformation Highlighted Vulnerabilities

The initial stages of the national dialogue process were affected by the circulation of misleading or inaccurate information online indicating the susceptibility of high-stakes political processes to digital misinformation and disinformation, which can influence public trust and shape the broader narrative environment.

Youth Representation Identified as a Key Gap

A notable concern expressed across online platforms related to the perceived underrepresentation of young people within the national dialogue process, particularly regarding the composition of the proposed commissioner list. Comments frequently pointed to the absence of youth voices, reflecting a broader sentiment that this vital demographic—central to the country's future—had not been sufficiently engaged or reflected in key decision-making structures.

Introduction

Overwhelmed by historical and ongoing contestations and conflicts, Ethiopia launched a national dialogue process in 2022 and established a National Dialogue Commission to lead this process. The Commission was established by and in effect accountable to the House of People's Representatives (usually called the Parliament). The parliament appointed 11 Commissioners to the ENDC from 42 candidates nominated by the public.

National dialogue processes are political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders on major nationally contested matters. These processes usually pass through three phases – preparation, process, and implementation.

National dialogues are governed by a list of principles such as; inclusion, transparency and public participation, and a credible convener. These principles are set so that national dialogue processes achieve their intended goals of creating consensus on most of the issues they address.

This report looks into online discourse regarding one of the major principles of the national dialogue process – inclusion. Inclusion was conceived as conscious involvement of concerned stakeholders during the preparation, process and in the post-dialogue period in the implementation phase. This report approached inclusiveness in three themes: political, geographic and social (mainly gender and religion).

Social media conversations regarding the national dialogue process started from the early stages, including the selection of the commissioners to lead the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission. Inclusion was at the centre of these conversations, and they continued to the latest stages of the process. Overall, while other forms of inclusion had also gained attention online, political inclusion was the prominent subject. Gender and religious inclusion was also among the prominent subjects online.

Objective

The objectives of this report is to find out the online conversations regarding the inclusiveness of the Ethiopian national dialogue process and analyse the findings in terms of the sentiment of the conversations.

Method

The data for this report was gathered through the search of keywords in Amharic, English, Afaan Oromo and Tigrigna languages from the social media conversations. Screenshots of relevant content are included in the report. These languages were selected because of their wide usage in online conversations in Ethiopia as also evidenced by previous CARD monitoring experience.

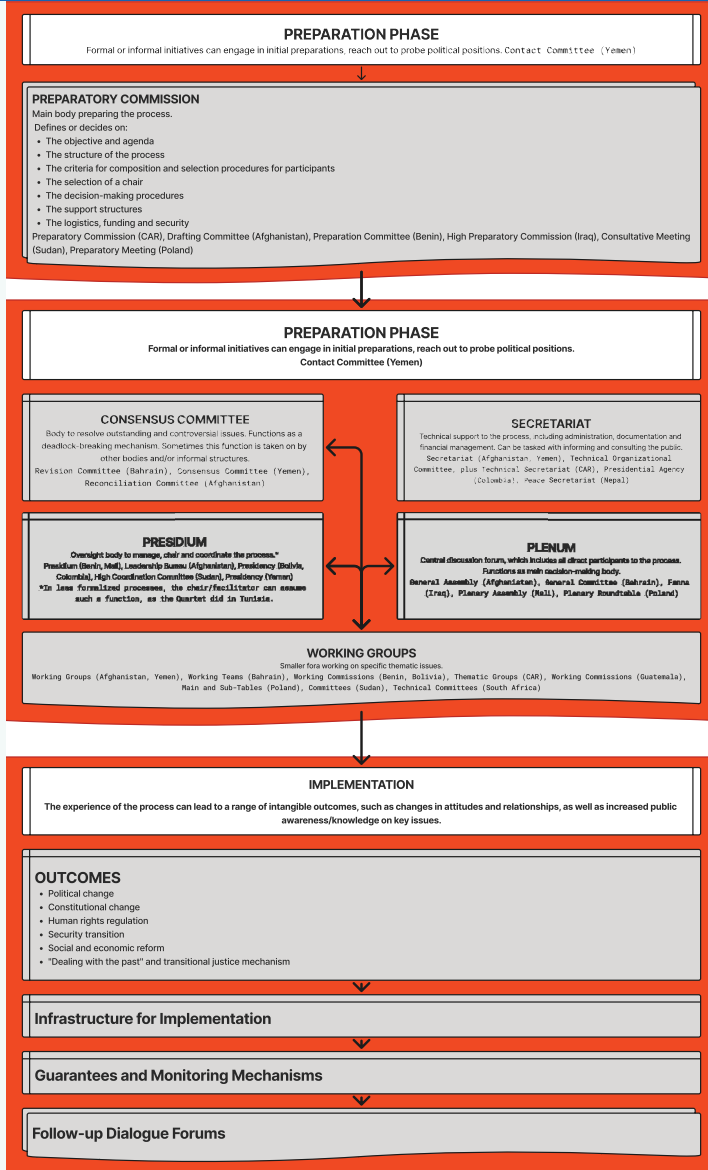
Social media monitoring and national dialogue subject matter experts were involved in the development of this report. The experts monitored more than 270 social media content exclusive of comments. Sentiment analysis was done by categorizing the conversations as positive, neutral and negative based on the messaging in the contents pulled from the online platforms. The report is organized to reflect the nature and dynamics of online conversations concerning the inclusiveness of the Ethiopian national dialogue process. It was compiled in October 2024, based on social media monitoring of digital discourse that took place prior to that date.

The Concept of National Dialogue

National Dialogues are “nationally owned political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders in times of deep political crisis, in post-war situations or during far-reaching political transitions.” Abdulqadir Adem (2020) defines national dialogue as a “tool for conflict resolution and managing political transformation” that “can broaden debate regarding a country’s trajectory beyond the usual elite decision makers, and can be “used to build consensus among contending political forces to resolve major political differences and avoid violent conflict.” Because national dialogues usually happen in contexts of conflict, popular uprising, war or armed conflict, they should be designed to realize immediate and/or far-reaching outcomes; managing crises or reframe state-society relations as an outcome.

A departure point for national dialogue processes from other forms of settlements, however, is that they are mechanisms intended to expand participation in political transitions beyond the political and military elites by allowing diverse interests to influence the transitional negotiations. National dialogue processes can have three to four phases – preparation, process and implementation phases.

Figure 1: Visualized process of national dialogue process



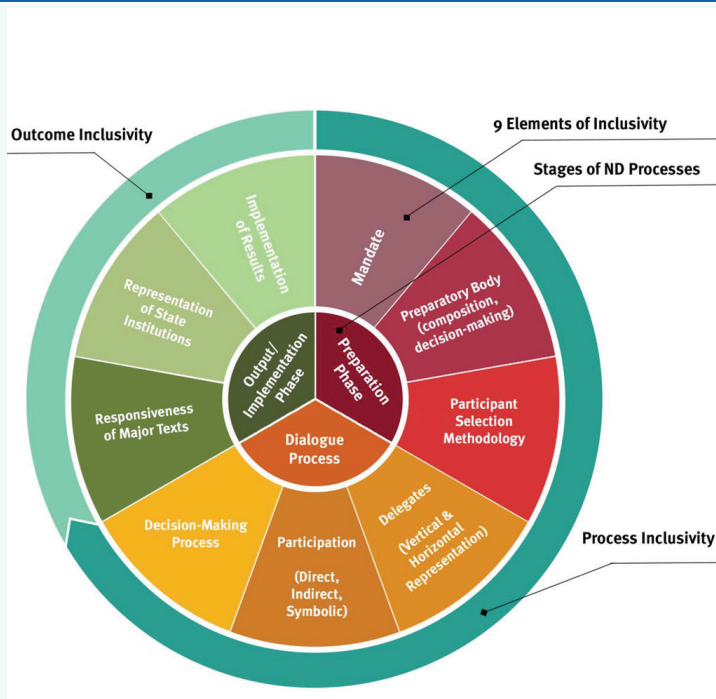
As the visualization shows, each step feeds into the other and complements the next step ultimately contributing to the aspired changes to the process.

Finally, the success of a national dialogue process is determined by two factors: whether an agreement had been reached or not and to what extent that agreement had been implemented.

Inclusiveness in National Dialogues

Inclusivity is one of the main elements of any national dialogue process. National dialogues are conceived as “inclusive negotiating mechanisms utilised to influence or shape the decisions taken during periods of political transition.” Inclusivity in national dialogue processes could imply to inclusiveness during the process or in the post-dialogue period in the implementation phase. However, as it does not mean more inclusivity equals better outcomes, inclusivity must go beyond the value attributed to the principle itself and also critically consider the challenges and dilemmas related to inclusivity. Inclusivity or lack thereof is the maker or breaker of national dialogue processes. National dialogues can only be transformative if they are genuinely inclusive of society. To achieve this, it is necessary to help balance power asymmetries and ensure actual decision-making power. According to the ENDC, its modality of agenda selection process considers the power balance between representatives in addition to representativeness, participation of contending views, as well as transparency and legality.

Figure 2: Stages and elements of inclusiveness



The above wheel of inclusiveness shows that national dialogue processes should ensure inclusiveness from the very early stages. This report will present conversations in the national dialogue process in three areas: political, social and geographic.

Background to National Dialogue in Ethiopia

Recent past and historical events and political contestations were considered among the main sources of grievances in Ethiopia for a long time. These grievances have been at the centre of politically induced conflicts in the country. The grievances ranged from questions of nationalities to economic questions, including land ownership.

The political, economic, and social relations of the imperial Ethiopia was slowly creating grievances and resistances among the urban and rural elite, especially during the regime of Haileselassie I. These grievances were manifested in the peasant rebellion, especially from Gojjam and Bale provinces in the 1960s. While the cause of the peasant rebellion remained multifaceted, the introduction of land administration system called Qallad, and religious antagonism (in Bale as a result of Christian norms imposed on Muslim majority area) as well as higher taxes and reclassification of land in Gojjam were the among the main elements of the peasant rebellion during Haileselassie.

Then came the monumental Ethiopian student movement. Two main questions stick out in this contestation which sometimes are the domains of other sub-questions or come in different variations: the question of land and nationalities. The historical roots of these questions are often traced back to the student movement in the mid-1960s, a juncture that led to the mid-70s change in administration. These questions were articulated in a five-page manifesto read by Welelegn Mekonnen, a student at the Haileselassie I University, now the Addis Ababa University.

The political parties that proliferated following the Ethiopian revolution that brought the ascent of the Derg to power in 1974 were proponents of these questions in one way or another. These questions also informed policy measures the Derg took especially in reforming land administration and ownership schemes. However, the indirect response the Derg gave to the question of land (making land state property than of the 'tiller') created the continued grievance to date. Moreover, the most "elusive or challenging question in Ethiopian politics has been the question of nationalities often leading to conflicts and "threatens the viability of Africa's oldest state." The question of nationalities also played in the centre-periphery relations, such as the northern Ethiopia (Tigray and Eritrea), and the southern Vs the centre, which some termed as political and cultural marginalization.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of four parties that led the country for 27 years (1991-2018) adopted a constitution where ultimate sovereignty of the country "resides in the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia". The constitution also formed the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) with constituent units organized based on ethno-linguistic lines anchoring political mobilization along ethnic lines. However, the constitution as well as the political decision of organizing the Federation along ethno-linguistic lines had faced criticisms through time. The EPRDF's "rigid grip on power" had created "fears of continued inter-ethnic conflict". The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) dominated EPRDF achieved neither the democratization of the Ethiopian state nor local autonomy that could satisfy the quest for self-rule, but 'new authoritarianism' with a prevailing 'tyranny of a minority'.

Central to ongoing fractured and persistently violent political landscape are questions of state-society relations, constitutional reforms, and the legacy of Menelik II's expansion to south and eastern part of Ethiopia,

nation-building processes, political structures, government systems, democratization, and the organization and mobilization of political parties.

The Authoritarian rule of the Haileselassie, the Derg and the EPRDF regimes, marked by skewed state-society relations, severe human rights abuses, and widespread economic and political repressions have left a legacy of political repression and ethnic tensions.

The failure to democratize the state from the EPRDF side created a wide-ranging grievance and discontent among Ethiopians who took it to the streets to protest despite violent state reaction. The Oromo protests of 2014-18 was the beginning of the end to the TPLF-led EPRDF. The crucial roots of the Oromo protest are multifaceted, as Merera Gudina stipulated . These also work for the subsequent protests in the Amhara region that joined hands with the Oromo youth to pressure the regime.

[The Oromo protest was driven by] historical marginalization of the Oromos as well as the continued marginalization, the dangerously growing corruption, maladministration and the discrimination thereof, the existence of the OPDO as a wound in Oromo nationalism, youth unemployment, etc; while the extensive land grab and the displacement thereof is a triggering factor.

The peculiar nature of the Oromo protest that was complemented by the Amhara youth movement was the extensive use of the digital media, specifically mobilization done on social media with a direct impact on the ground, spearheaded by the diaspora.

This nationwide protest brought the EPRDF to its knees finally leading to the ascendance to power of a reformist administration led by PM Abiy Ahmed. The administration introduced a plethora of institutional and legal reforms that gave the hope for the democratization of the state. However, the country immediately descended into widespread conflicts in Oromia, continued attacks on civilians in various parts of the

country as well as the outright war in the Tigray region which stalled and reversed the reform process the country started. Observers argued that the country is observing reversal of its reforms by eliminating significant competition by reversing political liberalization in order to create a monopoly of power for Abiy and his political vehicle, Prosperity Party. Politicians also argued that the reversal of the reform was happening at a fast pace and called for an inclusive dialogue that would eventually lead to a national consensus.

Because of the wide range of discontent among political actors and scepticism about the reform process, scholars and politicians alike called for the launching of a national dialogue process before the country held the 2021 elections. The election was a landslide win for the Prosperity Party led by PM Abiy Ahmed. Although the government did not want to postpone the elections despite the calls for a national dialogue, the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in the postponement of the elections earlier by one year. The result of this postponement led to the confrontation and ultimately war with the Tigray region led by the estranged Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

Following this win, PM Abiy announced that the country would hold an inclusive national dialogue process during his swearing in ceremony. He promised that this is "not a dialogue of political elites alone but will be encompassing all sections of society." Subsequently, the House of People's Representatives (HoPR) passed a law establishing the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission that was responsible to conducting an inclusive national dialogue in Ethiopia. All in all, it can be stated that the country's political history characterized by political polarizations and contention linked to flaws in the nation-building and state-building processes, as well as divisions in the recent past necessitated the holding of a national dialogue process in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC)

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) was formed by the Proclamation No.1265/2021 with clearly defined objectives. The proclamation provides the following objectives to the ENDC.

1. Facilitate consultation between the various segments of society by identifying the root causes of the differences on fundamental national issues and identifying the topics on which the discussion will take place;
2. Implement an effective National Dialogue process by ensuring that National Dialogues are inclusive, led by a competent and impartial body, with a clear focus on the cause of disagreements, guided by transparent system, and have a plan to implement the results of the consultations;
3. Establish a system of deliberations that will improve the relationship among the different segments of the population as well as between the public and the Government so as to enable the creation of new political dispensation that is marked by mutual trust;
4. Support the implementation of the recommendations made by the dialogues and build a democratic system of trust between citizens, the government and the People at the national level;
5. To develop a political culture that can solve internal problems that have been simmering for centuries through dialogues and create a conducive environment for the building of a democratic system;

6. Lay the social and political foundations on the basis of which current problems can be solved in a sustainable manner, ensuring lasting peace;
7. Lay a firm foundation for national consensus and the building of a State with strong legitimacy.

Following the launching of the process, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission stated in its strategic plan that it can deliver the dialogue within the three years period of its existence. This strategic plan outlines the plans for agenda and participant selection as well as the partnership requirements to deliver its task.

The Commission also devised mechanisms for the selection of participants as well as agenda selection for the national dialogue process. Through partner/cooperation institutions and organizations at all levels, the Commission identifies community levels (woreda representatives) who then gather at a designated centre to choose their representatives and agenda. These participants drawn from communities will then represent their communities and the regions they were selected from in the national plenary.

The proclamation establishing the mandates of the Commission envisions to achieve the aforementioned objectives by observing the principles of inclusivity, transparency, credibility, tolerance and mutual respect, rationality, implementation and context sensitivity, impartial facilitator, depth and relevance of agendas, democracy and rule of law, national interest, and using national traditional knowledge and values.

Nonetheless, the National Dialogue Commission has to navigate through various controversies, including; the selection of the commissioners, concerns on the lack of inclusiveness of the process from the start, the on-going conflicts, issue of neutrality, transparency as well as the conduct of the process

Figure 3: The four focus areas for drawing dialogue participants (ENDC)

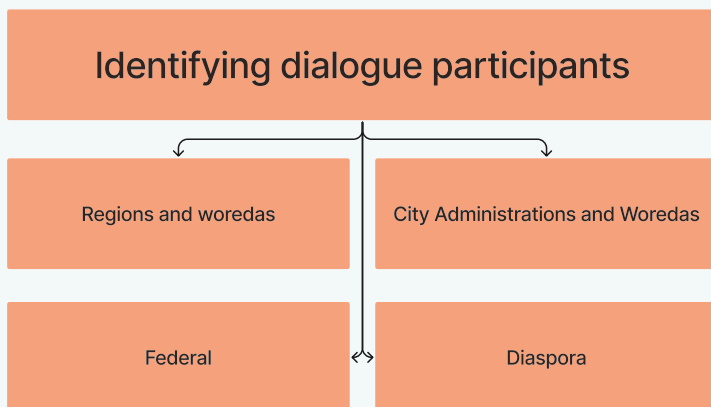
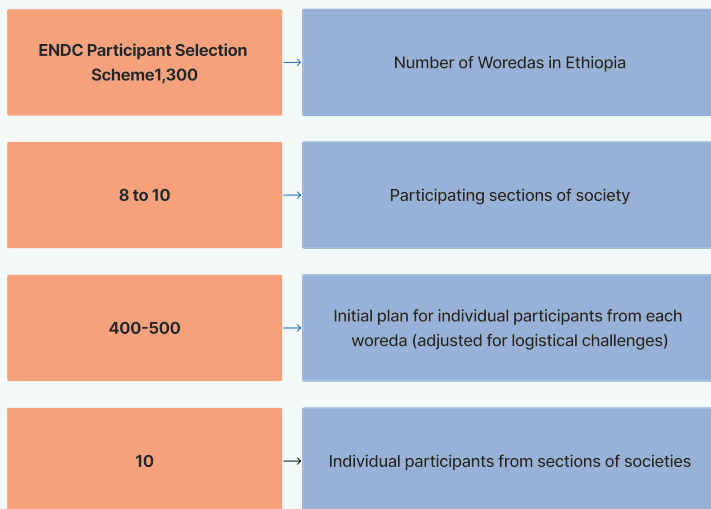


Figure 4: Participant selection scheme for the dialogue process



Monitoring Online Conversations

Monitoring online conversations gives an interesting perspective into important developments in a certain socio-political context because of the unique nature of the space. The online space provides a relative freedom of expression allowing netizens to express their views with lesser fear of repercussions although there were instances where such exercises had led to prosecution. New legal frameworks such as the Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation indicate the state's effort to regulate the virtual realm in addition to existing laws in the likes of the Computer Crime Proclamation.

Nonetheless, such expansions of jurisdiction into the virtual world have not limited online discourse as documentation and analysis of online conversations by CARD demonstrated.¹ In fact, in addition to the proliferation of hate speech, false information and content inciting to violence in the online sphere, the level of dissent especially concerning the socio-political and conflict situations in the country was not deterred. While limitations in the media space and freedom of expression can explain this to some extent, the liberal online space, the capability that the online space provides for people to hide identities and communicate intentions, and the geographic transcendence of such messages can be the primary drivers. Hence, monitoring the online space and analysing the content and sentiment within the digital world can give a

1 See CARD's Social Media Conversations Sensitivity Report

unique perspective into issues of interest. Because of this, social media listening was developed as a mechanism to gather information from the online platforms and analyse to inform decisions.

Social media listening provides valuable insights into netizens' preferences, opinions, and behaviors and this information can in turn improve what an entity is doing.² This becomes important for political processes such as elections and national dialogues that need to understand the information environment/context and analyse their positive and negative potential and impact.³ High-performing democracies less cases of disinformation compared to mid-range or budding democracies because the former generally have stronger institutions, more transparent political processes, and higher levels of digital literacy, making disinformation more difficult to gain traction.

While some approaches use data from the online space/conversations to predict outcomes of certain processes such as elections, other researchers rather suggest using the study of the online space to see what the agenda for the online public is.⁴ Hence, the exercise of monitoring the online space is relevant to understand if a subject is an agenda, who is setting the agenda and what is the sentiment toward a certain agenda item.

This report will also attempt to document and understand sentiments based on data gathered from the online space, especially concerning inclusiveness of the national dialogue process.

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- 2 Abeer Mohamed (2023) Social Media Listening to Conversations: The Ultimate Guide. Blog Post. Available at: <https://www.aimtechnologies.co/2023/12/12/social-media-listening-to-conversations-the-ultimate-guide/#:-:text=Social%20media%20listening%20provides%20valuable, strategies%2C%20and%20customer%20service%20improvements.>
 - 3 Ingrid Bicu (no date) The Information Environment Around Elections. Available at: <https://www.idea.int/theme/information-communication-and-technology-electoral-processes/information-environment-around-elections>
 - 4 Kwak, J., & Cho, S. K. (2018). Analyzing Public Opinion With Social Media Data During Election Periods: A Selective Literature Review. *Asian Journal for Public Opinion Research*, 5(4), 285–301. <https://doi.org/10.15206/ajpor.2018.5.4.285>

A glimpse at On-line Conversations about the National Dialogue Process

Monitoring the online space (social media, news sites and publications by thinktanks or similar organizations) in Ethiopia has revealed certain trajectories, ranging from support, criticism to withdrawal, although a mixture of these have been seen throughout.

The Ethiopian national dialogue process emerged in the context of calls from local, continental and international organizations for a meaningful dialogue in the country. For instance, a caucus of opposition political parties composed of 11 opposition parties called⁵ for a meaningful dialogue to resolve nationwide instability and tension. Concerned about the ongoing conflicts and political crises in the country, the AU had also called for a dialogue⁶ to resolve the quagmire. The UN had also acknowledged the need for a political dialogue to avoid further crises and disaster in the country.⁷

5 Addis Standard. 2023. News: Opposition groups urge end to forceful measures, call for “meaningful dialogue” to resolve nationwide instability. Available at: <https://addisstandard.com/news-opposition-groups-urge-end-to-forceful-measures-call-for-meaningful-dialogue-to-resolve-nationwide-instability/>

6 African Union. 2023. Statement of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, on the situation in Ethiopia. Available at: <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20230816/statement-chairperson-situation-ethiopia>

7 UN. 2021. Voicing Support for African Union's Peace Efforts in Ethiopia, Security Council Speakers Urge Political Dialogue Between Parties to Prevent Disaster. Available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14693.doc.htm>

Political parties such as the All-Ethiopian Unity Party (AUP)⁸ expressed support to a dialogue process because they believed that Ethiopia's political crisis can only be solved through a political dialogue. Political parties such as the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (Ezema) were supportive of the initiative although the party criticized the hasty and non-transparent approach in the process starting from the enactment of the proclamation.⁹

The conversation online exhibited an uptick during the selection of Commissioners triggering a debate online regarding who is the right fit for the position. This included the spreading of false information online.

8 ENDC. 2024. #ምክክር አስፈላጊ ነው- አቶ ማሙኸት አማረ #ሚያዚያ 30/2016 ዓ.ም. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vFAZAfjP1A>

9 DireTube (2022) ሀገራዊ ምክክር የጥንሰሳ ምዕራፍ መጠናቀቅን አስመልክቶ ከኢሊማ ሀገራዊ ምክክር ኮሚቴ የተሰጠ መግለጫ. Available at: https://web.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10160695397054587&id=48789244586&set=a.10152259127894587&locale=ku_TR&_rdc=1&_rdr

Figure 5: One of the early disinformation online regarding the national dialogue process



Gist of the post

This post lists 25 people that it claims have received highest votes to lead the national dialogue process

The following report¹⁰ by Ethiopia Check debunked the above and other similar contents regarding the selection of Commissioners.

10 Ethiopia Check (2022) “የሀገራዊ የምክክር ኮሚሽን ዕጩ ኮሚሽኖች ዝርዝር ይፋ አልተደረገም” — ኢትዮጵያ ጥቅም ሲሆን ተወካዮች ምክር ቤት መረጃ Available at: <https://web.facebook.com/EthiopiaCheck/posts/pfbidOm6ifhcZgF8DLCQE8WymYdhfbK94kZJC1Bf1rsXDC->

Gist of the post:

Candidates for the ENDC commissioners has not been made public yet as per information Ethiopia Check found from the parliament. This is despite information circulating online containing names of “candidates” that supposedly were voted in.

Figure 6: A screenshot of debunked false information from Ethiopia Check

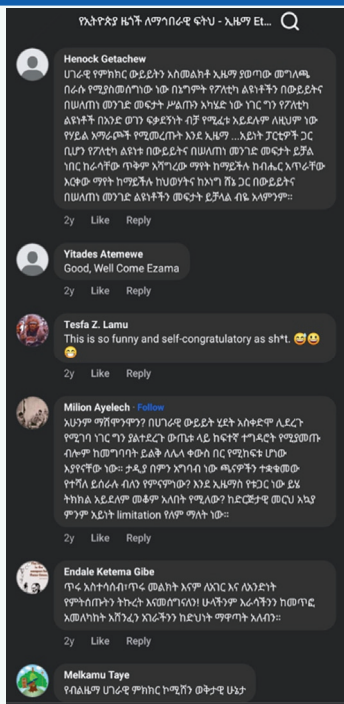


One noticeable trend in the online discourse regarding the national dialogue process is that the general public usually reacts to statements, news or other forms of content from political parties, news agencies or content aggregators online. For instance, Ezema's statement¹¹ triggered a conversation online where people appreciated the constructive engagement of the party, while expressing scepticism regarding the process if it started off as a controversial process.

MdS662YiHULP9TgzF6ksI

11 Ezema (2022) ሀገራዊ ምክክር የጥንሰሳ ምዕራፍ መጠናቀቅን አስመልክቶ ከኢ.ዚ.ማ ሀገራዊ ምክክር ኮሚቴ የተሰጠ መግለጫ. Available at: https://web.facebook.com/ETHZema/posts/ሀገራዊ-ምክክር-የጥንሰሳ-ምዕራፍ-መጠናቀቅን-አስመልክቶ-ከኢ.ዚ.ማ-ሀገራዊ-ምክክር-ኮሚቴ-የተሰጠ-መግለጫ/506423557515068/?_rdc=1&_rdr

Figure 7: A screenshot of conversations under Ezema's statement from Facebook's comments section



Translation:

C1: The statement from Ezema on the national dialogue is commendable. I believe resolving political differences through dialogues is a sign of civilization. However, our political differences are not resolved by the will of one side. That is why some resort to violence. Political differences could

be resolved in a civil manner if it were with parties like Ezema. I don't think it is possible to resolve differences through dialogue with groups like TPLF and OLF that cannot see beyond their interests and ethnicities.

C4: Are you still sugar-coating it? There should be measures that needed to precede the national dialogue which will impact the outcome because they are not done. They open the door for another crisis than bring consensus. So, how can we believe that they can resist pressures and deliver it? When will Ezema call out the wrongs and say that's not right? This means there is no limitation in terms of your party principles.

C5. We thank you for the good thinking, good message and the focus on national unity. We all have to win bad thinking and get our country pout of poverty.

C6: Update on Bilzema's national dialogue (Bilzema implying that the PP and Ezema are the same)

Some observers online had also expressed their support to the national dialogue process and the Commission as they believed it will resolve the country's longstanding problems.

Figure 8: A screenshot from Facebook's comments section under Fana Broadcasting Corporate's post



Such mixed reactions to the national dialogue process continued at various stages of the dialogue process. Major milestones in the dialogue process such as the selection of commissioners and the launching of the dialogue process have seen attracting attention among netizens. The following screenshot demonstrates one of the reactions to the launching of agenda and participant selection session in Addis Ababa.

Figure 9: A screenshot from Facebook's post



Hence, online conversations regarding the national dialogue process gained mixed reactions and the launching of major milestones in the dialogue process is seen triggering discussions among netizens.

Online Discourse about Inclusiveness of the Dialogue Process

Online participants of conversations dealt with inclusiveness in two ways – one is through direct posts and the others through reactions to content created by other entities such as political parties, news outlets or the Commission.

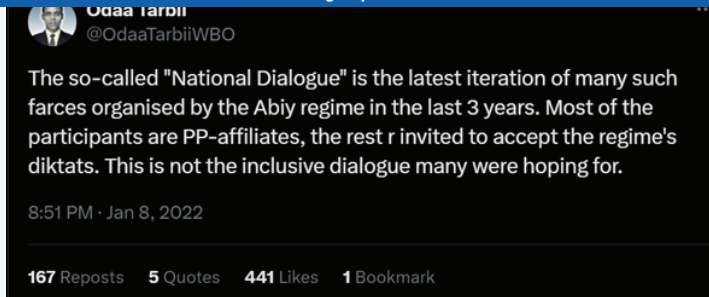
Although the Commission had devised mechanisms to ensure inclusiveness in its process, it was facing criticism from various sections of the society for its failure to live up to its promises. The Commission is mainly depended on partner organizations to select participants at lower levels of administration because limitations of reach given the conflicts in various parts of the country. Another challenge was the withdrawal of political forces from the process. Here, online conversations regarding the inclusiveness of the national dialogue process will be presented divided into three themes: political, social, and geographic inclusiveness.

Political Inclusiveness

Conversations regarding political inclusiveness were a prominent subject online because of perceptions of or actual alienation of other political groups from actively participating in the national dialogue process. Political groups either withdrew from the process, in the case of the Caucus of Political Parties, or lacked safer mechanisms put in place by the ENDC to allow them participate, in the case of armed groups. Hence, criticism regarding the process partly came from these groups

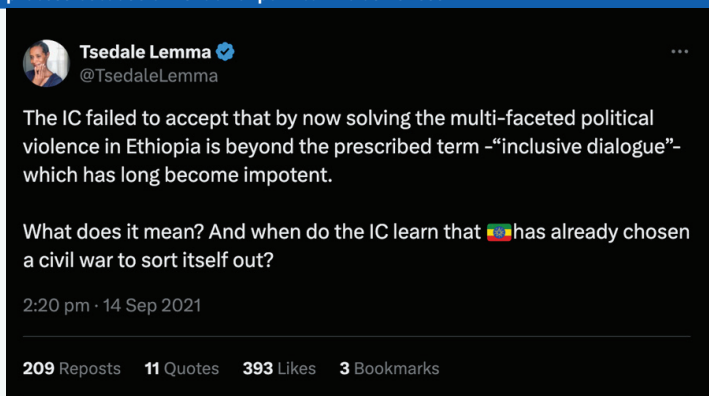
in one way or another or their supporters as well as observers. The following screenshot demonstrates a post by Odaa Tarbii, an X (formerly Twitter) account that claims to be the international spokesperson to the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and advisor to its commander.

Figure 10: A screenshot of a post from an X user criticizing the inclusiveness of the national dialogue process



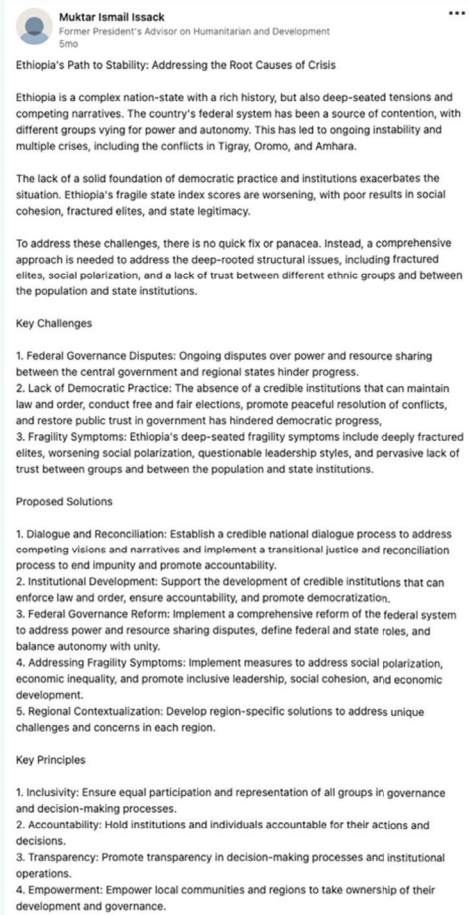
Other social media users were also critical of the national dialogue process arguing it won't deliver.

Figure 11: A screenshot of a post on X rejecting the dialogue process because of its lack of political inclusiveness



Similarly, the following post on LinkedIn calls for equal participation and representation of all groups in governance and decision-making processes.

Figure 12: A screenshot of a post from LinkedIn emphasizing the need for inclusion of all groups in the national dialogue process



The calls for transparency and inclusiveness in the national dialogue process started from an early stage and continued to be voiced. For instance, the Joint Council of the Ethiopian Political Parties called for a halt in the process until inclusiveness is achieved through a transparent process.

Figure 13: A report about the call from the JCEPP to halt the national dialogue process until inclusivity is achieved

ክቢሊና ሚኒያ - Abyssinia Media
14 February 2022

የአገራዊ ምክር ቤት በጊዜያዊነት አገዳዎች በአጠቃላይ አካሄዱ ላይ በድጋሚ ወደይት አገዳጂረግ ተጠየቁ !!!

የካቲት 7 ቀን 2014 ዓ.ም (ዚህ ስም ሌን)

ምክር ቤቱ ጥያቄውን ያቀረበው፣ ለህዝብ ተወካዮች ምክር ቤት አና ለአፈ ፖሊስ ጽ/ቤት ባለፈው ዓምንት ባሰገባው ደብዳቤ ነው።

ደብዳቤ የገባው አገራዊ ምክር ቤት በተመለከተ በጠቅላላ ፖሊስ (45 የገላጥነት ፓርቲዎች በተሳተፉበት) ገምገማ ካሳየ ስለሆነ ምክር ቤቱ አስታውቋል።

የምክር ቤቱ ሰብሳቢ ዳር ራሳል ባል አገራዊ ምክር ቤት ልዩ አካላት ይሆን ዘንድ ለሆነ የተጀመረው የምክር ቤት 'አገራዊ አገዳጋ' መጠየቁን በዚህ ጊዜ ውስጥ ወደ ዋናው ምክር ቤት በፊት ምክር ቤቱ 'ምላሽ ለፖሊስ' ይገባቸው ነበር' ባላቸው ጉዳዮች ላይ በድጋሚ ወደይት አገዳጂረግ ጥያቄ ማባረብን ተናገረዋል።

ዳር ራሳል ባል፣ "ለሆነ ያለው 17ር ከመነሻው ላይ መስተካከል ስላለበት አገዳጋና ዳገም ተዳማኒ ሆኖ መገባት ስላለበት፣ ፕፖሊን በአገባቱ አፈታጎ የሆነ በአካላትና አገዳጋዊነት ለሆነ ፓርላማው አየረገጠበት ያለበትን ሁኔታ ምንም እንኳን ወደ ምክር ቤት ለመሰብሰብ ሲሉ ተናገረዋል።

መሰረታዊ ፕፖሊን ፕፖሊን የተጠቀሰ።

- 42ቱ ዕጩ ኮሚሽኖች የተመረጡበት መስፈርት ገልጽ አይደለም።
- ከመነሻው ደምር የተጠቀሙት ሁሉም ዕጩዎች ለህዝብ ድል መደረግ ነበረባቸው።
- ከዕጩ ኮሚሽኖች መካከል በአዋጁ የተቀመጡትን መስፈርት የማያሟሉ አሉ።
- በዕጩ ኮሚሽኖችን ለማቸው ከተዘረዘሩት ውስጥ የሁለት ሀገር ዜግነትን የያዙ አሉ።
- የገላጥነት ፓርቲ ወገንተኝነት ያሳቸው አና ወገንደፈ ተስብሎ የሚሄድ ተከትተውበታል።



13 2 comments

Like Comment

Statements on the national dialogue like the one from Ezema have also triggered questions of inclusiveness in the national dialogue process, particularly of political inclusiveness. Under the following statement¹² from Ezema highlighting the need for a national dialogue in Ethiopia, while some expressed optimism, other commentators expressed their scepticism on the process.

¹² ኢትዮጵያዊ ዜጎች ለማኅበራዊ ፍትህ - ኢዜማ Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (2024) ሀገራችን ኢትዮጵያ አንድነት ሀገራዊ ምክር ወደሚያስፈልገው ሁኔታ ላይ ደረሰች? Available at: https://web.facebook.com/story.php?id=100044422836699&story_fbid=986481452842607&_rdc=1&_rdc

Figure 14: A statement from Ezema on the need for a national dialogue in Ethiopia to end its political quagmire and a comment under it expressing wariness about the lack of political inclusiveness in the process



Gist of the comment:

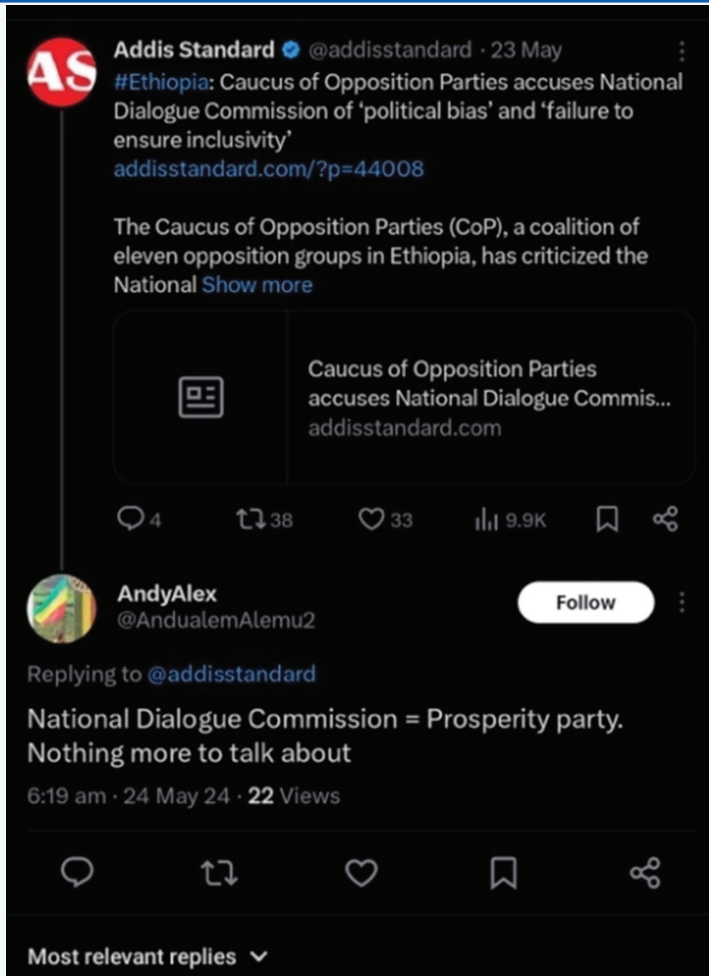
The required result cannot be achieved by a process led by a Parliament controlled by a single party

Reasoning the lack of inclusiveness and transparency in the dialogue process, a Caucus of Opposition Parties made up of nine opposition political parties, withdrew from the national dialogue process.¹³ People were equating the national dialogue process with the ruling Prosperity Party under this news on Twitter. Other parties such as Enat Party¹⁴ have also withdrawn from the process for lack of inclusiveness.

¹³ Addis Standard (2024) News: Caucus of Opposition Parties accuses National Dialogue Commission of 'political bias' and 'failure to ensure inclusivity'. Available at: <https://addisstandard.com/caucus-of-opposition-parties-accuses-national-dialogue-commission-of-political-bias-and-failure-to-ensure-inclusivity/>

¹⁴ Enat Party (2024) 'ግልጽ ደብዳቤ ለኢትዮጵያ አገራዊ ምክር ቤቱ'. Available at: https://web.facebook.com/EnatParty/posts/pfbid026Lm2dpFAxi86Ea5DxuphnejcXscblJuDRLm-vmRDGKitWAQC8WmjRs8HfDWYx73qUl?amp%3B__tn__=%2C0%2CP-R&rdc=18_rdr#

Figure 15: Screenshot of a news post by Addis Standard and a comment given by a user



The following screenshots of posts also show the scepticism regarding inclusiveness of the dialogue process during the Addis Ababa agenda and participant selection session.

Figure 16: A Screenshot of a meme post questioning the inclusiveness of the dialogue process



Translation

Who is sitting for the dialogue?

A nation stands firm through dialogue!

Figure 17: A screenshot from a post rejecting the national dialogue for alleged lack of political representation for Addis Ababa



Translation

There will not be any dialogue for the people of Addis Ababa without ensuring its political representation and self-administration.

Text on the picture:

Paid cadre don't represent the country

Meanwhile, research organizations called for recalibration of the national dialogue process for a better outcome and ensuring inclusiveness. The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Africa [posted](#) a blog where the researcher [argued](#) that the National Dialogue Commission should pause and calibrate the process while urging government and armed opposition groups to agree to a nationwide ceasefire.

Public spaces such as webinars and X Spaces were also used to discuss the deficiencies in the political inclusiveness of the national dialogue process. The following picture shows a webinar organized by Yenetsanet Chooraa (Guchaa Bilisummaa), titled “*National Dialogue or Prosperity Party Dialogue?*”. This webinar criticized the lack of inclusion of members of the opposition as well as those in armed struggle.

Figure 18: A screenshot of a **promotion** for a webinar on the political inclusiveness of the national dialogue process



The same event was streamed on YouTube and X Spaces showing the multiplatform dissemination of such content. Meanwhile, the Commission stressed “the success of the dialogue hinges on the inclusivity and active engagement of diverse groups, including pastoralists, farmers, and persons with disabilities.”¹⁵ It also emphasized its institutional freedom that helps its inclusiveness of various sections of society such as the diaspora community.

On the other hand, observers and experts argued that it is not impossible to gather a representative agenda¹⁶ in the ongoing exercise of the national dialogue process while armed groups are excluded from the process because of absence of mechanisms to bring them on board.

Social Inclusion

Youth Inclusion

One of the elements of online conversations regarding the national dialogue process is social inclusion. This specifically concerns under-represented sections of the society such as youth and women, as well as religious entities. Similar to concerns about political inclusiveness, discussions and debates about social inclusiveness also emerged starting from the early stages of the dialogue process. Among the topics regarding inclusiveness, women and religious groups' participation was the prominent one among netizens. The following reaction to the news of the publicization of the list of candidates for the national dialogue commission was, for instance, criticized for its lack of inclusiveness.

15 EBC (nd) ENDC Chief Emphasizes Importance of Inclusive Participation in National Dialogue
for Peaceful Ethiopia. Available at: <https://ebc.et/english/newsdetails.aspx?newsid=7171>

16 Ethiopian Reporter (2024) የአገራዊ ምክክር ኮሚሽን ታሪካዊ ኃላፊነትና ከትግበራዊ ጀርባ የሚነሱ ሐሳቦች። Available at: <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/129274/>

Figure 19: Screenshot of a **post** by Baro Tube and comments

Baro Tube
4 February 2022 · 🌐

የኢትዮጵያ ሀገራዊ ምክር ቤት ስልጣን ስላለው ዘርዘር ይፋ ተደረገ

የኢትዮጵያ ሀገራዊ ምክር ቤት ስልጣን ስላለው ዘርዘር የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ተወካዮች ምክር ቤት ይፋ አድርጓል።

በተለያዩ አገባቦች በተጠቀሙት 42 የኢትዮጵያ ሀገራዊ ምክር ቤት ስልጣን ስላለው ዘርዘር ተከታታይነት አስተናግጦ አገልግሎቶች ዘርዘረው ይፋ መደረጉን ከምክር ቤት የተገኘው መረጃ ያመለክታል።

አስተያየታቸውን መስጠት የሚፈልጉ ሰዎች ከስርዓቱን ማስፈንጠሪያ በመጠቀም ሀሳባቸውን መስጠት የሚችሉ መሆኑን ምክር ቤት አስታውቋል።

13 2 comments

Like Comment

Most relevant ▾

Tamene Gopa Kele
ከዘመናዊነት ብቻ ውጣታስ?
100% 800 ስለም አጠጋ
በጦርነት በስደት በሰራተኝነት... See more

2y

Dhugaa Gomboree Nagawoo
ሀገራዊነት ብቻ ሆኖ ስያህን አስታውቃለሁና ካልተቻለ እድሜዎ

2y

Translation of comments

C1: All are old timers. Where are the youth?

C2: It won't be successful if religion, ethnicity, gender and youth are not equally included.

Meanwhile, ENDC's three years strategy as well as different communications by the Commissioners highlighted the importance of including the youth in the dialogue process.

Figure 20: A screenshot of a tweet highlighting ENDC Commissioner Ambaye Ogato's (PhD) statement about the role of the youth

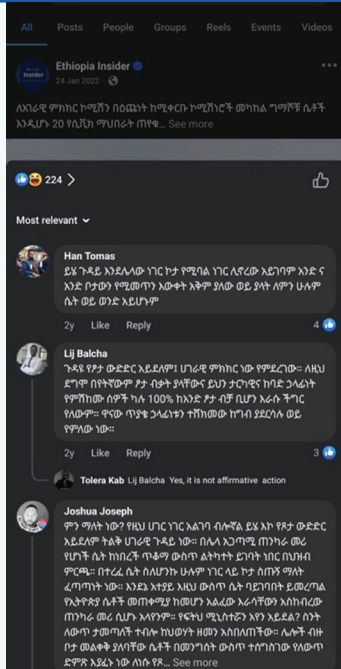


Gender Inclusion

Women's inclusion was also a prominent subject throughout the dialogue process with advocates of human rights calling for proper inclusion of women in the dialogue process. Twenty (20) civil society organizations called for gender parity in the selection of the commissioners.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ethiopia Insider (2022) ለአገራዊ ምክክር ኮሚሽን በዕጩነት ከሚቀርቡ ኮሚሽነሮች መካከል ግማሹን ሴቶች እንዲሆኑ 20 የሲቪክ ማኅበራት ጠየቁ። Available at: https://web.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=478999670421021&id=107512647569727&rdid=DFnriQKEOG6OkYYM

Figure 21: A screenshot of a Facebook post by Ethiopia Insider regarding gender parity and comments by page followers



Translation:

C1: This should not have a quota system like any other things. The only consideration should be fitting to the position and having the capacity to deliver – so it doesn't matter whether if all are men or women

C2: This is not a gender competition; it is a national dialogue. So, it is not a problem even if all are

100% from one gender as long as they have the capacity and can bear this burden of national responsibility. The main question is 'can they deliver on the responsibilities they carry?'

C3: What does this mean? I don't understand the affairs of this country. This is not a gender competition; it is a huge national matter. If there is a woman who delivered well in other areas can be a candidate. Apart from this demanding a position just because she is a woman is a misplaced demand. I even prefer if women are not included in this. We haven't seen Ethiopian women emerging out strong beyond being used by others. Haven't we seen the Minister of Justice. She was expected to bring big changes but she made it worse than the TPLF. Many women who should leave their positions are holding positions and suppressing voices.

The sentiment in the comments above undermines a constructive public discourse regarding gender inclusion in all aspects of life. This can also limit women from getting heard in national and regional issues that affect them directly as research findings regarding online violence against women demonstrated.¹⁸

Finally, only three (3) of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission's 11 commissioners were women.¹⁹

Beyond the call to include women in the dialogue process, civil society organizations as well as others have been calling for a fair inclusion of women in the dialogue process. A Coalition for Women's Voice in the National Dialogue (CWVND) was formed under Timran's coordination in collaboration with 22 CSOs to enhance women's participation in the national dialogue process and ensure their meaningful participation.²⁰

The ENDC has also initiated a scheme to participate women in the national dialogue process as a separate section of society. Nonetheless, the framing of its message caused backlash from both netizens and rights groups.

18 Center for Information Resilience (2024) Normalised and invisible: An analysis of gendered hate speech on social media in Ethiopia. Available at: https://www.info-res.org/_files/ugd/587f01_b8c99e0b5f724039abf21356cfe3660b.pdf

19 ENDC (no date) Commissioners Profile. <https://ethiondc.org.et/en/commissioners-profile/>

20 Timran (2023) Who is the Coalition for Women's Voice in the National Dialogue (CWVND)? Available at: <https://timran.et/2023/03/29/who-is-the-coalition-for-womens-voice-in-the-national-dialogue-cwvnd/>

Figure 22: A screenshot criticizing the framing of a message from the ENDC calling for women's participation in the dialogue process



Translation

Post by user: What do they mean? Are we supposed to come as our country respected us? I thought the dialogue was a platform for us to demand we see is missing. The way your invitation is framed seems to make us cheerleaders.

Post by the ENDC:

Women of Ethiopia – Come!

Let's discuss for the country that honoured us and make it proud!

Article 35, a women's rights advocacy group also campaigned for the removal of the post by the ENDC and demanded an explanation. It later congratulated its followers after its removal.

Figure 23: Screenshots from Article 35 campaigning for the removal of the post by the ENDC and later congratulating its followers after the removal of the post from ENDC's sites



Discourse online regarding gender inclusiveness of the dialogue process has seen an extreme opposition from some users while civil society organizations and rights group were calling for conscious inclusion of women in the process. The ENDC had also taken measures to include women as a separate constituency.

Religious Inclusion

Despite the listing of religious groups by the ENDC as one of its partners for the delivery of the national dialogue process, and the signing of an agreement between the ENDC and the Ethiopian Religious Affairs Council, some religious groups continuously raised concern on the fair inclusion in national dialogue process.

The Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council had complained about “unfair representation” of Muslims in the dialogue. The Council had formed a committee to deal with the national dialogue.

Figure 24: A screenshot of a [news](#) from Minber TV about the announcement from the EIASC regarding a smaller representation of Muslims in the dialogue



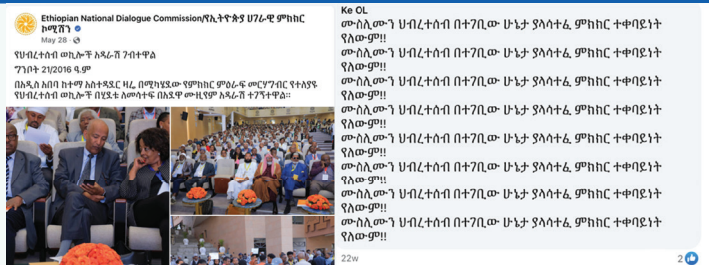
Others on social media had also argued that a process that alienates Muslims will not be successful.

Figure 25: A screenshot a **post** from an X user calling for corrective measures to ensure inclusion of Muslims in the dialogue process



Concerned citizens were also commenting under the Commission's posts on social media regarding ensuring inclusion of Muslims in the dialogue process as the following screenshots demonstrate.

Figure 26: Screenshots showing a **post** about preparations for the Addis Ababa dialogue held in May and a comment by one user emphasizing inclusion of Muslims in the process



Similarly, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) expressed its concerns regarding inclusion in the process.

Figure 27: A statement from EOTC regarding the need to recognize its rights to submit agenda items to the national dialogue process

 የኢትዮጵያ ብዙሃን አገልግሎት ሥርዓት ድርጅት / EOTC Broadcasting Service Agency/

6 June · 🌐

በስመ አብ ወወልድ ወመንፈስ ቅዱስ አሐዱ አምላክ አሜን።

ከኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ቅዱስ ሲኖዶስ የተሰጠ መግለጫ።

በመንፈስ ቅዱስ የሚመራው የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ቅዱስ ሲኖዶስ በቅዱሳን አበው ሐዋርያት ትውፊት በፍትሕ መንፈሳዊ አንቀጽ 5 ቁጥር 164 በተደነገገው መሠረት ምልዓተ ገባኤው የርክበ ካህናት መደበኛ ስብሰባውን ከገንቦት 21 እስከ ገንቦት 28 ቀን 2016 ዓ/ም ድረስ በርካታ አጀንዳዎችን በመቀረጽ ወይደት ሲያካሄድ ሰገብቷል።

ምልዓተ ገባኤው አቤተ ክርስቲያኖችን አገድነት፣ ለሐዋርያዊ ተልክ መስፋፋት፣ ለመንፈሳዊ ዕድገትና ለምስጢናን ደላንነት ትኩረት በመስጠት ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያኖችንና ለሀገራችን ጠቃሚ የሆኑ ውሳኔዎችን አባልቷል።

በዚህ መሠረት፦

በቅዱስ ቤተ ክርስቲያንና በሀገራችን መንግሥት መካከል ሊኖር ስለሚገባው መልካም የሥራ ገንኙነት በቅዱስ ፓትርያርኩ መሪነት ከመንግሥት የሥራ ኃላፊዎች ጋር የሚመክከር የብፁዓን አበው ሊቃነ ጳጳሳት ልዑክ ቅዱስ ሲኖዶስ ሰይሟል።

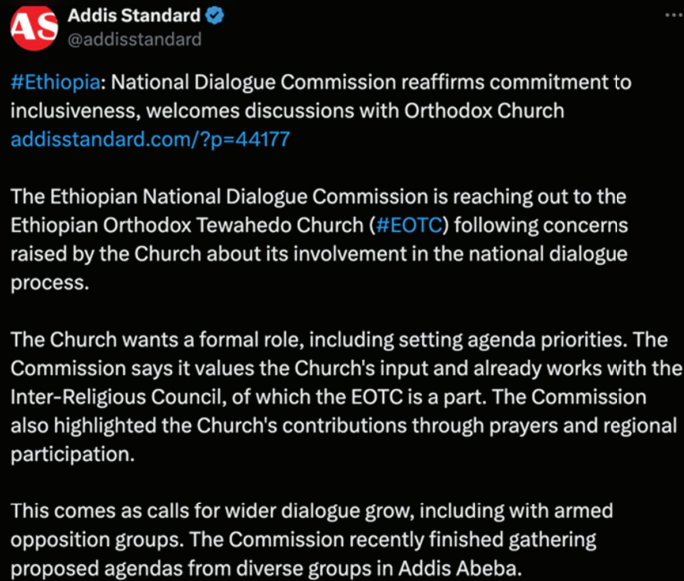
በመላው ሀገራችን በተፈጠረ ግጭቶች፣ አለመግባባቶችና የሰላም ዕጦት በርካታ የሰው ሕይወት መጥፋትና የጎብረት ውድመት አገዳዊነት መሆኑ ቅዱስ ሲኖዶስን በአጅጉ አባዝቷል። ስለዚህ ጉዳዩ የሚመለከታቸው ሁሉም ባለድርሻ አካላት ከግጭትና ከጥፋት ድርጊት ተቀጥበው የተፈጠረውን አለመግባባትና ግጭት በወይደትና በምክከር አገዳፊቱ እና ዘላቂ ሰላም አገዳረጋገጥ ቅዱስ ሲኖዶስ በአጽጋኦት ጥሪውን ያቀርባል።

በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር እየተከናወነ ባለው የኮሪኒድ ልማት ምክንያት ለፈረሰ የቤተ ክርስቲያኖችን ደዘታዎች የከተማ አስተዳደሩ ምትክ ቦታ በመስጠትና ቤተ ክርስቲያኖችን ወደ መልስ ማልማት አገድገን ደጋፍ በማድረግ፣ በተለይም ከብርት ከጎብረት ወ/ር አዳነቸ አበቤ በፈረሰው የጽርሕ ምኒልክ የቤተ ክርስቲያኒቱ ሕንፃ ምትክ በከተማ አስተዳደሩ ሙሉ ወጭ ተጨማሪ ምድር ቤትና የቦታ ስፋት ያለው B+G+4 ሕንፃ ገንብቶ ለማስረከብ ቃል በመግባትና የቤተ ክርስቲያኖችን የበላይ ኃላፊ አባቶች በተገኙበት የመሠረት ድንጋይ አገዳጣል ማድረጋቸውን ቅዱስ ሲኖዶስ ከምስጋና ጋር የተቀበለው ሲሆን በተሰጠን ምትክ ቦታ ላይም የከተማው ፕላን በሚፈቀደው መሠረት የመልስ ማልማት ሥራው አገዳከናውን ቅዱስ ሲኖዶስ ወስኗል።

የሀገራዊ ምክክር ኮሚሽን ከተቋቋመበት አዋጅ መረዳት አገዳሚቻለው ባለድርሻ አካላትን ባሳፈሩ ሁኔታ ሀገራዊ ችግሮችን በምክክርና በወይደት ለመፍታት የተቋቋመ መሆኑን ተረድተናል። ደህን አገጅ ሀገረ መንግሥትን ከመመሥረት ጀምሮ በአስታራቂነትና በሰላም ግንባታ ግብር ቀደም ተጠቃሽ ለሆነችው አናት ቤተ ክርስቲያን አስከክሁን ድረስ በይፋ የቀረበ የተሳተፎ ጥሪ ሳይኖር ኮሚሽኑ የተሳተፈ ልዩነትና አጀንዳ መረጣ አጠናቂ ወደ ምክክር ተገብሮ አየገባ መሆኑ ቅዱስ ሲኖዶስን ቀር አስኖቷል። በመሆኑም የቤተ ክርስቲያኒቱ ተሳትፎና አጀንዳ የማቀረብ መብቷ አገዳረጋገጥ ከኮሚሽኑ ጋር በመነጋገር ጉዳዩን ተከታትሎ ለፍጻሜ የሚያበቃ ኮሚቴ ቅዱስ ሲኖዶስ ሰይሟል።

The National Dialogue Commission immediately reacted to this statement and expressed its readiness to engage with the Church on its concerns.

Figure 28: A news about the decision by the ENDC to engage with the EOTC on its concerns



Geographic inclusiveness

Conversations regarding the geographic inclusiveness of the dialogue process emanated from the limited reach of the Commission because of armed conflicts or political instability. Because of these factors majority of the Amhara and Oromia regions started the dialogue process very late while others still remain unreachable. Tigray region has not started yet.

Hence, following the Addis Ababa dialogue initiation, many voiced concerns regarding this gap in the process. The following post highlights the concern regarding the limited reach of the dialogue process, especially in terms of the lack of activities in majority of the conflict-ridden Amhara and Oromia regions as well as the Tigray region. The following screenshot highlights this.

Dr. Abay Sibat Nega
31 May · 🌐

ትግራይ አማራ ሶሮሞ ያልተሳተፉበት ምክክር።
ገን ኢትዮጵያ የተባለች ማናት?
ማን ከማን አየመከረኛ ነው?
እነገ ሶፌታ ፋኖ ህወሓት በሌሊት ማን ከማን ነው የሚመከከሩት የጨነቀ ለት ነው ነገሩ።
ኢትዮጵያ አግድላትቸው ነው ቢባል ይቻላል
እነገሩ ምን አገባኝ

ኢትዮጵያ የመከረኛ ነው

ማን ናት ኢትዮጵያ? የኢትዮጵያውያን የመከረኛ
ውይስ የብልጽግና የማታላያ ጉባኤ ????

👍👍👍 16 12 comments 3 shares

👍 Like 🗨 Comment

Most relevant ▼

Cheramlak Worku
እነሱ በብርቱኛ አገጃጂ ሥርዓት አማራ ትግራይን አይደሉም። ምንም ዓይነት የገሪህ የአገር ብቻ ትሆን አለችሁላ።...? የሚባሉት እነሱ የሚያስታርቁት እነሱ የሚያገረመርሙት እነሱ።... እነሱ ምክክር አገገጽ ሃሳብ ስለሆነ ገና አኛ ስንመከከር እነሱ ጢሻቸው ላይ ሆነው በቲቪ ይመሰክሩ/ይማሩ ያህኑ ተቀጭተው ይመለሳሉ።

22w

Leul leul
ኢትዮጵያን አግደረብኩ ነው

22w

Spinoza Niyat Gonzalez
ፈረንጅ መቀፊያ ነው

22w

A dialogue where Tigray, Amhara and Oromia are not taking part. But what is Ethiopia? Who is sitting for dialogue with whom? Who is in

dialogue in the absence of OLF, OFC, Fano, and TPLF?

Some have also been emphasizing the need for active participation in the dialogue process as the outcome will also affect the people who are not part of the national dialogue.

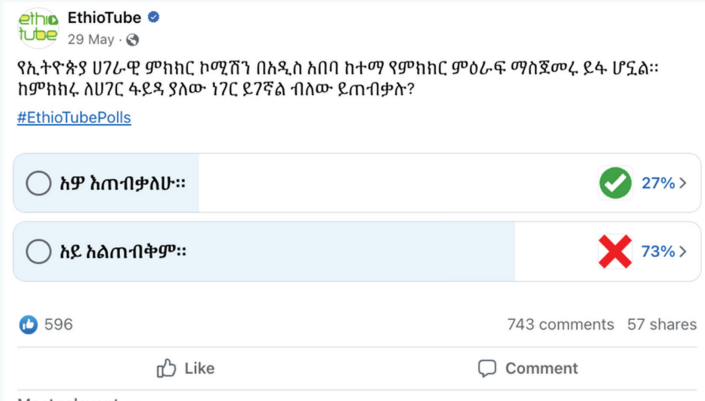
Figure 30: A Social media post calling for active participation in the dialogue process to avoid future complaints about the outcomes



Translation

1. The NDC that we are making fun of has proceeded with its work. The dialogue is taking place without the representation of the Amhara because of the state of emergency.
2. Unless the Fano emerges victorious, we will continue complaining that we were not represented in it like the past 27 years which we have been mourning for the constitution-making process which we were not part of.

Figure 31: A screenshot of the poll by EthioTube



Meanwhile, Ethiopia Tube, an online media, conducted a poll to gauge the public's view and expectations from the national dialogue process. From a total of 13,886 voters out of the 2.1 million followers of the page, 72 percent said they don't expect the dialogue will be of use to the country while 28 percent said they expect a positive outcome from the process.

Translation

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has started the Addis Ababa dialogue process. Do you expect there will be any outcome from this that would benefit the country?

Sentiment analysis

Sentiment analysis is the process of analyzing large volumes of text to determine whether it expresses a positive, a negative or a neutral sentiment and extract meaningful insights from it quickly and efficiently.²¹

From observations of online conversations regarding the national dialogue process, one can see that there is a mix of the three sentiments, although neutral sentiment seems to be the dominant expression. This is largely because of the news and reporting of the content by news sites which are largely neutral in their nature.

Negative sentiment was observed in terms of inclusion, especially of religious and cultural groups. The comments sections of different sites (news, aggregators etc) have exhibited this as they trigger conversations among their followers.

Opinion pieces by some experts, explanations from the Commissioners as well as government officials and similar communications were largely showed positive sentiment. Moreover, there was also support from social media users to the national dialogue process mainly because of hopes it instilled in people for resolving the country's conflicts.

²¹ IBM (no date) What is sentiment analysis? Available at: <https://www.ibm.com/topics/sentiment-analysis>

Conclusion

This report has looked into social media discourse about inclusiveness of the national dialogue process in three themes: political, social and geographic inclusion. Engagement with matters of national dialogue was observed from the early stages of setting up the Dialogue Commission to the ongoing dialogue process.

Observations show that netizens understand the importance of the national dialogue as well as achieving inclusiveness for a better outcome. However, people were not shy in using memes and other kinds of posts to give opinions about their observations of the national dialogue process at all stages.

Social media was also seen to be reactive of actions from different entities including the ENDC. The online outrage and campaign against a faulty messaging from the ENDC while inviting women for the dialogue shows the attentiveness of online citizens.

These also demonstrate that the online platform is not an alienated space with no interactions with the offline happenings. Online discourses are intersections between the public sentiments and the offline happenings. This largely can be attributed to the nature of the online platforms that allow liberal flow and exchange of ideas.

Although people have interacted with content concerning the national dialogue process, there is also scepticism around and lack of trust expressed in the conversations.

It was also observed that the national dialogue process has seen an incidence of false information spreading online especially during the early phases. Although this report was not intended to look into false information regarding the national dialogue process, such political processes

are common triggering false information online. Gender based misrepresentation that could potentially grow into hate speech was observed in discussions regarding inclusion.

In general, the national dialogue process had been a subject on the online space and inclusiveness of the process was also treated in the discourses. Online conversations regarding the dialogue process exhibited three sentiments – neutral, positive and negative. The neutral sentiments were dominant features of these conversations while negative sentiments were also significant.