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CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT OF
RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

POLITICAL INCLUSIVITY IN ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE: INSIGHTS FROM MONITORING ONLINE CONVERSATIONS

AUGUST – NOVEMBER 2025



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 between August-November 2025

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This report entitled “Political Inclusivity in Ethiopia’s National Dialogue: Insights from Monitoring Online Conversations” is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

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Executive Summary

This report highlights findings from an analysis of online conversations surrounding Ethiopia's National Dialogue, with a focus on political inclusivity. The report monitored digital platforms, ranging from individual accounts to news outlets and public institutions such as political parties, the media, individual observers, the ENDC and others to capture public sentiment, stakeholder engagement, and narratives and contestations that shape perceptions of the dialogue process.

The monitoring of these conversations revealed that, while some of the conversations exhibited skepticism and questioned the legitimacy of the process, others called for increased transparency in the process. Other conversations raise the issue of the absence of armed groups and the participation of Tigray region in the process. Moreover, some questioned the timing of the dialogue process as it coincided with the elections as they expected the dialogue process to inform the election. The monitoring activity demonstrated that Facebook and X have become important arenas for shaping the national dialogue agenda. Voices on these platforms consistently prioritized immediate regional peace and conflict concerns over national dialogue objectives, such as the lack of full implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in Tigray. While the role of the diaspora was emphasized by the ENDC, the boycott of diaspora participants from the process gained traction online while state narratives promoted the dialogue as a significant step toward national reconciliation.

Key Findings

1. Public Skepticism and Perceived Legitimacy Issues Online

There is a continuous and widespread online criticism of the national dialogue process, including the frequent association of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) with the ruling Prosperity Party.. Many citizens online (netizens) view the process with suspicion, questioning its independence and impartiality. This continued skepticism complicates the Commission's goal of forging a national consensus and suggests that public perception will play a critical role in shaping the dialogue's effectiveness and long-term credibility.

2. Continuation of Demands for Transparency and Accountability

There are persisting online calls for the Commission to provide greater transparency, including public disclosure of the identity of community representatives and the full list of submitted agenda items. These demands reflect conditional public trust, as citizens appear willing to engage if they are confident in the process's openness. The current opacity may discourage participation and fuel perceptions of selective representation or manipulation, highlighting the need for proactive communication strategies to build confidence in the dialogue.

3. Dialogue Timing in Relation to Elections

Monitoring of online conversations of political parties and commentators also reveal concerns about the timing of the national dialogue relative to upcoming elections. Some aired fear that if the dialogue precedes the elections, its outcomes may lack sufficient political authority to influence or adjust electoral results. Conversely, if it follows the elections, it

may be viewed as reactionary or symbolic. These concerns underscore the delicate balance between pursuing national reconciliation and maintaining electoral legitimacy, indicating that sequencing is a politically sensitive issue.

4. Social Media as a Platform for Influence and Contestation

Online platforms such as Facebook and X have become important arenas for shaping the national dialogue agenda. Citizens, activists, and partisan actors use these spaces to advance specific regional priorities, propose agenda items, or critique participants. However, social media is also used to attack, delegitimize, or insult Commissioners and representatives, creating a highly polarized information environment. This dual role as both facilitator of participation and amplifier of criticism reflects the complex dynamics of digital engagement in politically sensitive processes.

5. Regional Conflicts and Local Priorities

In conflict-affected regions, particularly Amhara and Tigray, public discourse consistently prioritizes immediate regional concerns over national dialogue objectives. Issues such as full implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreement, territorial integrity, negotiated cease-fires, and the release of political prisoners dominate online conversation. This illustrates the challenge of reconciling urgent local grievances with national-level objectives, suggesting that regional crises can significantly overshadow the ENDC's broader agenda unless adequately addressed.

6. Diaspora Engagement and International Dimensions

The ENDC had indicated in its strategic document that diaspora is one important constituency to participate in the dialogue process. To that end, the ENDC organized virtual and physical meetings in the diaspora, mainly in the US, Europe and Africa. While some sessions saw participation

from the diaspora, protests, boycotts, and critical commentary was also observed by the Ethiopian diaspora in major cities, including London. These served to internationalize the debate around the dialogue. While this engagement demonstrates the global reach of Ethiopian politics, it also contributes to a perception of domestic credibility challenges. Diaspora opposition highlights the transnational dimension of public trust and underscores that legitimacy is not confined to internal actors alone.

7. State Media and Counter-Narratives

Several media outlets, mainly the state and state-affiliated media, such as Fana Broadcasting Corporation, along with other government institutions, have actively promoted the dialogue as a significant step toward national reconciliation. Official communications by officials and government institutions such as the Communications Service emphasize the same messaging. This state-led communication effort seeks to counter opposition narratives and reinforce the dialogue's legitimacy. While effective in amplifying official messaging, these efforts can be perceived as partisan, raising questions about the independence of the dialogue and its ability to address public skepticism.

8. Calls for Inclusion as Evidence of Political Shortcomings

The ENDC continued its public invitations for armed groups and excluded actors to participate in the dialogue. Online discourse, however, emphasizes that the continued absence of these groups reflects broader political and security shortcomings, including insufficient guarantees, delayed release of political prisoners, and incomplete ceasefires. Public commentary frames these absences as a measure of the government's political commitment and highlights that meaningful inclusion requires concrete measures to create a secure and credible environment for participation.

Introduction

Ethiopia's National Dialogue is a landmark initiative launched to address the deep political crises that have beset the country in recent years. After years of turmoil – including the 2016–2018 Oromo and Amhara protests, the 2018 government transition, and the 2020–2022 Tigray war – the federal government under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed pledged to convene a broad national conversation. The idea, first floated among opposition parties, then by various groups of civil society organizations and networks, later by Abiy and then echoed in state statements, was to create a “healing process” encompassing all regions and groups¹. In practice, legal steps were taken in late 2021 when the Ethiopian parliament passed a law establishing the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC)².

Ethiopia is a federation of ethnically defined states, and its social fabric remains highly divided along ethno-regional lines. Despite the recently revived pan-Ethiopian rhetoric in the public political discourse by the ruling party, the country's politics continue to be driven by ethnic identity. The old ethnic federal model (adopted in 1995) is still salient, and political change has often followed ethnic realignment rather than inclusive national consensus.³ Historical grievances abound: many Amharas and Oromos felt marginalized during the TPLF-dominated EPRDF era, while Tigrayans saw themselves as resisting recent centralizing⁴ reforms.

¹ (Brook Abdu, 2021), “*Inclusivity in national dialogue*”, The Reporter, 23 October 2021

² “*Ethiopia passes law to start national dialogue commission*”, AP News, 29 December 2021

³ (Gerrit Kurtz, 2024), “*The Narrow Limits of Ethiopia's National Dialogue*,” SWP, August 2024

⁴ This term reflects the ongoing concerns voiced by certain political groups including significant Tigrayan political groups. It is important to note that discussions surrounding centralization and decentralization policies can vary widely across different political and policy perspectives. CARD remains neutral on the effectiveness and implementation of the centralization policy.

These structural fractures have fueled conflicts – some ongoing – and mass suspicions. In short, Ethiopia lacks a widely accepted national narrative, and power-sharing has been mostly zero-sum: gains for one group can feel like losses for others.⁵

In this complex backdrop, the national dialogue carries high stakes. It is meant to be the vehicle to forge consensus on Ethiopia's future, from constitutional revision to governance reforms.⁶ Success could stabilize Ethiopia and legitimize the government; failure could exacerbate fragmentation. Complicating this, media and communications have been polarized. Since 2018 there have been significant liberalizations (journalists released, laws reformed), but the media space is nonetheless fragmented. Diaspora-led digital outlets (like social-media news sites) coexist with a growing local internet-native press, yet both camps often reflect ethnic or political biases. Research finds that “media polarization has increased alongside the expansion of media”, fueled by ethno-nationalist versus pan-Ethiopian content streams⁷. In practice, this means that online communities often interpret the national dialogue through their existing identity lenses.

Ethiopia's digital ecosystem, while still limited in absolute reach (around 21.7% internet penetration as of 2025)⁸, punches above its weight in shaping debate. Millions of Ethiopians (especially youths)⁹ and a large diaspora actively use social media platforms (Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, and

⁵ Ibid, N3

⁶ “*The imperative to forge national consensus*” The Reporter, 25 January 2025

⁷ Ethiopian Digital Media Information Ecosystem Assessment, Internews, 2023, https://internews.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Ethiopian-Digital-Media-IEA_edited-Final-SinglePage.pdf

⁸ Digital 2025: Ethiopia, DataPortal, [Digital 2025: Ethiopia — DataReportal – Global Digital Insights](#)

⁹ According to the abovementioned report (Ibid, N8), Ethiopia is home to 9.80 million social media users as of October 2025, equating to 7.2% of the total population.

increasingly Twitter/X among diaspora) to share news and opinions. In many cases, social media has been the beating heart of political mobilization: for example, digital influencers in the diaspora played a critical role in the 2018 political transition¹⁰. Social media are thus key fora where narratives are constructed and contested. They can amplify hard-line or conciliatory messages very rapidly. For a sensitive process like the national dialogue, the public perception created online can influence whether people trust or reject the initiative, especially among younger and diaspora audiences who may feel under-represented in formal politics. Moreover, misinformation and hate speech have been documented risks, threatening to inflame inter-communal tensions.¹¹ Understanding and monitoring these online narratives is therefore crucial for gauging the real-time pulse of inclusion/exclusion sentiments and anticipating possible flashpoints.

¹⁰ Ibid. N7

¹¹ Gessesse, Kibrom & Moges, Mulatu. (2025). Social media discourses amidst ethno-political extremism and conflict: The case of Ethiopia. 10.1177/1461445625137425.

1. Problem Statement

Despite the stated goal of broad inclusion, serious gaps persist in who feels represented in the National Dialogue. The official narrative from the government indicates that it is committed to ensure that the dialogue process is inclusive with all voices represented at all levels. The establishment proclamation for the ENDC as well as its operational strategy also provide frameworks for inclusion in addition to expression of intent to ensure inclusiveness. Nonetheless, observers note that key political factions and communities have so far been sidelined or skeptical. The Ethiopian government officially categorizes the OLA (Oromo Liberation Army) as “terrorist organization” and has ruled out negotiating with them through the dialogue.

At the same time, armed resistance continues in large parts of Oromia and Amhara. Numerous opposition parties (both armed and unarmed) have criticized the dialogue’s design. For instance, the ISS Africa analysis points out that from its inception many prominent opposition actors have rejected the process as insincere, warning that their non-involvement would undercut legitimacy¹². Even major societal institutions like the Ethiopian Orthodox Church have lodged complaints of exclusion.¹³ These gaps have led to contestations regarding the legitimacy of the National

12 (Tegbaru Yared, 2024) “*Ethiopia’s national dialogue needs a reset*”, ISS Africa, 11 July 2024. The paper says, “.....this process is proceeding without the involvement of key opposition political organisations. At the launch of the process in Addis Ababa, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed stressed the importance of citizens’ participation and urged the opposition to seize the opportunity to contribute. His words are a testament to the fact that a lack of involvement from key opposition groups would undermine the legitimacy of the process and its outcomes. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/ethiopia-s-national-dialogue-needs-a-reset>

13 Ibid.

Dialogue. Critics contend that it was 'established amid controversy' with terms largely predetermined by the government. In contrast, the opposition characterizes the entire process as 'exclusive,' designed to validate the ruling party's agenda. In the current climate of low trust in formal processes, these contestations are particularly concerning.

Finally, the digital nature of today's debate adds layers of uncertainty. Online, grievances and rumors can spread rapidly, often unfiltered. Coordinated social media campaigns already highlight calls for "an all-inclusive dialogue" and denounce perceived injustices. At the same time, government and pro-dialogue voices use digital channels to publicize meetings and solicit input. This mix of voices means it is unclear what the dominant narrative will be and how it might influence on-the-ground politics. For example, if social media propagate negative narratives about the dialogue certain groups will likely retaliate, weakening the process before it even concludes. Conversely, positive online engagement could help build pressure for compromise. The problem, therefore, is to map and understand these digital narratives: which groups feel included or excluded, how they frame inclusion, and how these online dynamics may shape the broader success of the dialogue.

2. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess political inclusivity in Ethiopia's National Dialogue through the lens of online narratives. Specifically, the study aims to gauge perceptions of inclusion and exclusion as expressed on social media, news commentary, and online forums, identifying which stakeholders feel represented or marginalized.

Additionally, it seeks to map the framing of inclusivity by analyzing how various actors, including the government, opposition, civil society, and activists, discuss inclusion, participation, and legitimacy. This analysis will involve identifying competing narratives, such as unity versus marginalization, and examining their presentation in digital spaces.

The study will also document emerging grievances and tensions related to the dialogue that surface online, including claims of disenfranchisement and concerns from marginalized groups, as well as inter-communal resentments. Furthermore, it will explore the linkages between online and offline discourse by examining how digital conversations reflect or respond to real-world events, such as legislation, reports, and incidents of violence, to understand the feedback loop between online narratives and the progress of national conversations. By doing so, the study aims to provide an evidence-based overview of the dialogue's inclusivity as perceived through public digital conversations.

3. Conceptual and Analytical Framework

3.1. Defining Political Inclusion

■ “Political inclusion” is a broad concept that encompasses participation, representation, voice, and legitimacy in governance processes. At its core, it means that *all* segments of society – regardless of ethnicity, gender, region, class, or ideology – have meaningful opportunities to participate in political decision-making.¹⁴ As defined by scholars, political inclusion involves “engaging all in the community in political processes, such as civic education, voting, running for office, and offering input to representatives as policies... are developed, thereby creating a sense of agency and belonging”.¹⁵ This implies not just passive presence (being allowed to sit at meetings) but also effective influence (having one’s views considered and respected). Key dimensions include:

¹⁴ Political inclusion means ensuring that all individuals and groups, regardless of background, can actively participate in political processes, such as voting, running for office, and influencing policy decisions. It aims to remove barriers and guarantee equal rights, representation, and access for marginalized or underrepresented communities, strengthening democracy and legitimacy. See “Political inclusion is vital to sustainable democracy”, IDEA, 28 June 2017.” Link here <https://www.idea.int/news/political-inclusion-vital-sustainable-democracy>

¹⁵ “Achieving Political Inclusion”, German Marshall Fund of the United States, September 2019. Link here gmf.us/sites/default/files/achieving_political_inclusion.pdf



Representation: Whether diverse interests are present among the official participants (e.g. are women, youth, minorities, opposition parties included in the dialogue?).



Participation: The degree to which groups can actively engage (e.g. can grassroots leaders speak, can questions be asked, do average citizens contribute via community forums?).



Voice and Agency: Beyond attendance, do groups feel their perspectives shape outcomes? Are there channels for feedback, and do people see their inputs reflected in the dialogue's agenda or decisions?



Legitimacy: Public trust in the process as fair and equitable. A process might *appear* inclusive on paper, but if groups believe it is rigged or biased, it lacks legitimacy.

In the context of a national dialogue, inclusion also means involving non-state actors and even “adversaries”. The USIP framework notes that effective dialogues should invite “all key interest groups...including women, youth, and other traditionally excluded groups”¹⁶. In Ethiopia’s case, this would ideally include not just registered political parties but also rebel groups (or their proxies), civil society, faith communities, and diaspora representatives. The goal is to address the root causes of conflict by airing and reconciling grievances, which requires *breadth of voice*.

However, political inclusion can be interpreted in various ways, ranging from strict adherence to constitutional institutions to broader engagement with non-state or extra-legal actors. Some stakeholders consider

¹⁶ (Susan Stigant and Elizabeth Murray, 2015), “*National Dialogues: A Tool for Conflict Transformation?*”, United States Institute of Peace, 23 October 2015. Link here <https://www.usip.org/publications/2015/10/national-dialogues-tool-conflict-transformation>

inclusion fulfilled if constitutional mechanisms are respected, while others argue that genuine inclusion requires the participation of all relevant groups including those operating outside formal legal frameworks. This divergence in definitions is central to Ethiopia's ongoing dialogue, where debates about inclusivity shape both the process and its legitimacy.¹⁷

3.2. Political Inclusion in Dialogues and Peace Processes

National dialogues around the world vary in form, but political science literature highlights some common principles regarding inclusivity. National dialogues emerged as a conflict-resolution tool in many countries (Tunisia, Yemen, Kenya, South Sudan, etc.) and are generally understood as extra-constitutional forums meant to confront divisive issues. Analysts caution that dialogues can be double-edged: on one hand they can “broaden debate beyond the usual elite decision makers” and promote consensus on conflict drivers; on the other hand, they can be “misused by leaders to further consolidate their grip on power” if not genuinely inclusive.¹⁸

Key insights from comparative studies highlight that Inclusivity is paramount. As noted by a United States Institute of Peace brief, “to maximize the dialogue’s potential... all key interest groups should be invited to participate, including women, youth, and other traditionally excluded groups”¹⁹. This broad invitation helps ensure that underlying grievances

17 Ethiopia's National Dialogue struggles to include armed groups, many of which have refused to participate due to mistrust and concerns over government dominance, undermining the process's legitimacy and peace prospects.

18 Ibid. N16

19 Ibid.

are addressed. In practice, many successful dialogues involve civil society and community leaders, not just politicians. The failure to include significant parties (for example, excluding rebel factions in Sudan's dialogues, or certain ethnic groups in past African national conferences) often correlates with derailment of the peace process.

On the other hand, transparency and legitimacy are key. Inclusive dialogues must be seen as transparent and fair. If the public suspects backroom deals or pre-determined outcomes, support would decline. Dialogues with open participation, clear rules, and visible buy-in from multiple stakeholders tend to produce sustainable settlements.

An important element in this regard is the credibility of the convener and the rules of engagement. The convening authority (often the government or an empowered mediator) must be neutral enough to be trusted by all sides. Fixed procedures and guarantees (parliament ratification, oversight committees, etc.) can help marginalize spoilers.

Finally, national dialogue processes should allow for broad agenda to ensure inclusiveness at the idea/agenda level too. In principle, it addresses "a broad set of issues or problems" (often long-standing constitutional, social, economic questions) as opposed to single-issue talks²⁰. Limiting the agenda can leave crucial conflicts unresolved.

Applying these insights to Ethiopia: the literature suggests the Ethiopian dialogue's chances of success hinge on it meeting inclusion criteria. If major factions feel left out, or if the dialogue's scope is perceived as too narrow, the process may lack legitimacy. Past dialogues (e.g. Kenya 2008) have shown that even high-level mediated agreements fall apart if grassroots buy-in is weak. The analytical framework will therefore treat inclusivity and legitimacy as closely linked outcomes.

²⁰ Ibid.

4. Methodology

Research Design

- This study utilizes a digital ethnography and qualitative content analysis approach. Qualitative analysis is employed to interpret meanings and narratives within the data. The research design is iterative, facilitating a deeper understanding of the material.

Data Sources

Our data come from multiple digital platforms to reflect Ethiopia's diverse information ecosystem:



Social Media: Public posts on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Telegram, and TikTok (where relevant) is reviewed. X is widely used by diaspora activists, journalists, and politicians; Facebook remains the dominant domestic platform (including Messenger); Telegram is a key channel for news distribution and group discussions; and TikTok is increasingly influential among youth. Relevant hashtags and keywords (e.g., #EthiopiaDialogue and Amharic equivalents) are identified, and posts and comments scraped where feasible. Particular attention is given to distinguishing content from official sources (such as state media and party accounts) and content generated by grassroots users.



Online News and Comments: Coverage of the dialogue on major Ethiopian news websites (such as Addis Standard, The Reporter, Fana, and BBC in Ethiopian languages) were examined, along with reader comments where available, as these often provide insight into public reactions. Diaspora outlets and foreign media analysis were also monitored.



Political Forums and Channels: Discussions on activist forums or blogs were monitored, along with closed channels—only to the extent ethically permissible—on platforms like Telegram that function as hubs for political organizing. Archived or open-source Telegram channels relevant to the dialogue, including those operated by civil society networks, were also included.

Sampling Strategy



Keyword and Hashtag Mapping: A list of relevant keywords and hashtags were developed based on preliminary research (including terms in English, Amharic, and other scripts). This list is refined iteratively as new terms emerge, such as the names of commissions, leaders, or common slogans.



Event-Based Windows: The study monitoring period spanned from January 2025 to November 2025 but monitored content covered broader timeframe.

Overall, the research strategy balanced broad coverage capturing general discourse trends with focused depth on specific communities and events. As not every private conversation can be accessed, the analysis emphasized publicly visible discourse.

Data Collection

Analytical Methods

- **Content Analysis & Sentiment:** The text data was processed to identify sentiment or polarity (positive, negative, or neutral toward the dialogue) using automated tools, with cross-validation through manual coding. This approach enabled quantification of trends, such as the proportion of supportive versus critical messages over time.
- **Triangulation:** Findings from social media were compared with other sources (e.g. comments on news articles, official reports on participation) to corroborate.

Text data was processed to identify sentiment or polarity (positive, negative, neutral) toward the dialogue using automated tools, with cross-validation through manual coding. This approach allows quantification of trends, such as the proportion of supportive versus critical messages over time. Topic modeling and keyword co-occurrence mapping will highlight prominent themes.

Analysis remained sensitive to context, interpreting English and Amharic posts with attention to culturally significant nuances. All findings are presented with reference to the underlying data, using screenshots or quotations as supporting evidence

Limitations



Platform Biases: This study focuses on digital platforms, which skews towards urban, younger, and diaspora populations. Rural or offline perspectives (which may differ) will not be captured. This means some voices (e.g. local elders) might be under-represented.



Bots and Coordination: Large political movements have occasionally used automated or semi-automated methods to flood social media. Obvious bot activity (e.g., accounts with unusually high posting rates or duplicate content) will be filtered where possible, though detection is not perfect. Coordinated campaigns, such as the #NationalDialogueNow surge²¹, will be noted, while caution is exercised to avoid over-interpreting numerical volumes.



Temporal Ambiguity: When mapping dialogue events and online responses, establishing causality is challenging. For example, a spike in negative tweets following a government announcement may indicate public frustration, but it cannot be assumed that the announcement alone caused the increase, as other news or rumors could coincide.

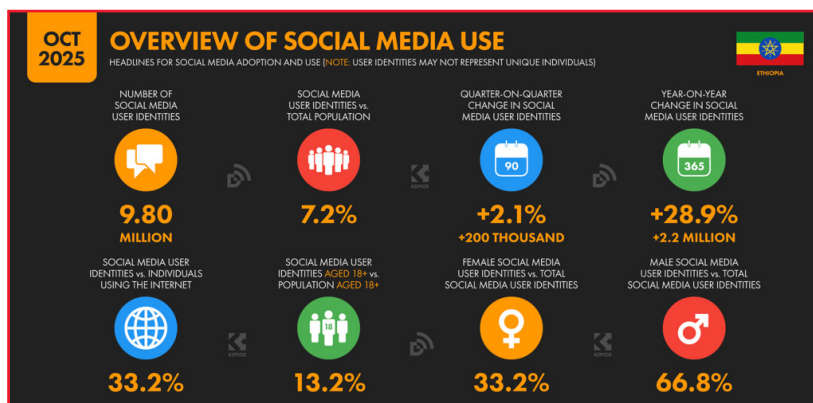
21 “November and December Social Media Campaigns” Defyhatenow, 20 December 2020. Link here <https://defyhatenow.org/november-and-december-social-media-campaigns/>

5. Findings

5.1. Overview of the Online Discourse Landscape

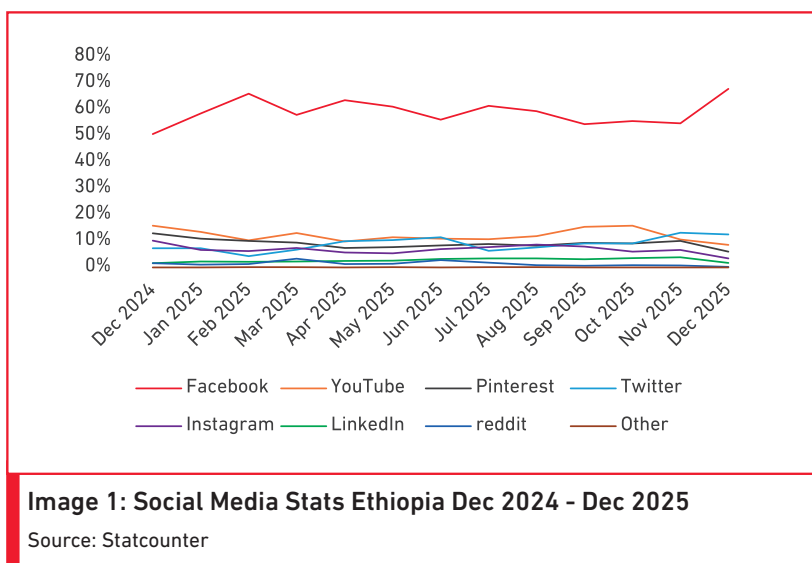
- The Ethiopian online space, especially social media, remains polarized along ethnic and political lines. Conflicts, religious tensions, political divides as well as momentary developments such as speeches by high-level politicians attract significant attention among netizens who engage with these agenda items as they emerge.

Platforms such as TikTok and YouTube are up and coming platforms, others such as Facebook and X also remain prominent among Ethiopian netizens, while Telegram takes the lead in terms of messaging apps.



Source: DataPortal: Digital 2026 [Report](#)

As of late 2025, Ethiopia has approximately 9.80 million social media users, with significant growth in recent years. Facebook remains the dominant platform for news and information (see the graph below), but other platforms like TikTok and Telegram are also popular, especially among younger demographics. A major concern is the prevalence of hate speech and misinformation, which disproportionately originates from influential figures and has been linked to social conflict.



Although Ethiopia has one of the lowest Internet penetration rates in the world with 79 percent of the population remaining unconnected²², digital activism has had a significant impact on Ethiopian politics and what makes the use of social media more problematic and complicated is that digital activism follows an ethnic and religious line of politics.²³

²² UNESCO. 2025. Assessing Internet development in Ethiopia. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/assessing-internet-development-ethiopia#:~:text=79%25,frameworks%20remains%20a%20critical%20concern.>

²³ Jemal Mohammed Haile. 2024. Social media for diffusion of conflict & violence in Ethiopia: Beyond gratifications. International Journal of Educational Development. Volume 108. [https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2024.103063.](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2024.103063)

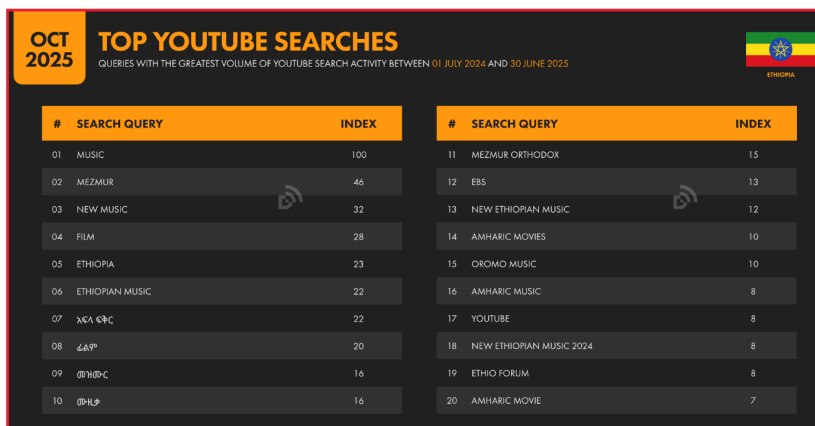
By monitoring more than 2000 content posted by influencers with more than 5000 followers across Facebook, Telegram, YouTube, X, and TikTok, the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA) also found that text-based hate speech and disinformation constitute the majority of harmful content, accounting for 56.1 percent of cases. Motion pictures and videos contribute 14.7 percent, while a combination of video and text makes up nearly 12 percent. According to this study, hate speech predominantly targets political views (76.8 percent), followed by ethnicity (15.2 percent) and religion (5.6 percent). The primary targets include national institutions (31 percent), politicians (22.1 percent), and Ethiopia itself as a country (21.4 percent).²⁴

While the extent to which one extends hate speech and entities and their protected identities it targets seem confused in the study by the EMA, other studies have shown that the misuse of social media threatens social cohesion, particularly in the context of Ethiopia, where the digital literacy gap exacerbates issues like internet addiction and the spread of misinformation.²⁵

Another insight into YouTube shows that, search data is skewed towards entertainment and spirituality than political and social issues, as the following search index by DataPortal demonstrates.

24 Capital. 2025. EMA raises alarm over escalating hate speech, fake news on social media. <https://bit.ly/4sKJG7p>

25 Policy Studies Institute. 2025. Social Media Use and Misuse in Ethiopia: Looking For Pro-found Policy Intervention. <https://bit.ly/4bKt5e0>



Source: DataPortal: Digital 2026 [Report](#)

However, there are also significant political conversations online, especially in the form of comments under news such as agenda gathering of the national dialogue process or related matters, as will be demonstrated in the sections below.

Conversations and engagements on the topic of national dialogue are also affected by the activities of the commission such as agenda gathering or statement by the national dialogue commission. For instance, during the agenda gathering session in Addis Ababa, netizens on platforms such as Facebook, X, YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn were seen actively sharing reactions to the dialogue process. Some social media users expressed optimism, encouraging participation and highlighting the dialogue's potential to address deep-rooted national issues. Similarly, state-affiliated media promoted the process as a major step toward national healing and warned the audience about misinformation and narratives intended to discredit this effort.²⁶

²⁶ Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporate. 2025. በሀገራዊ ምክክሩ ለትግሮችና ዘላቂ መፍትሄ አንዲገኝ፡ የሁላችንም ንቅ ተሳትፎ ወሳኝ ነው። <https://tinyurl.com/w2ahup76>

Because of gaps in the transparency of the agenda items presented to the commission which are kept secret, some media were releasing bits and pieces of the agenda items submitted to the Commission. For instance, Shegger FM reported that the government presented agenda to the ENDC calling for the amendment of the Ethiopian constitution to build trust among the public by creating a common understanding of the owners and founders of the nation.²⁷

In these conversations, while the main actors were media outlets, government institutions and news aggregators, netizens were active in commenting as well as new content creation.

5.2. Perceived Inclusion and Exclusion

The Ethiopian government prioritizes the national dialogue process and it has repeatedly indicated that the way out of the country's predicaments is through dialogue. For instance, in April 2024, the Ethiopian National Security Council issued a statement highlighting the need for an inclusive approach to address national fractures, prompted by recent challenges such as the conflict in northern Ethiopia. The Council highlighted that the National Dialogue, Transitional Justice, and National Rehabilitation processes have been initiated to overcome the challenges faced by the country.

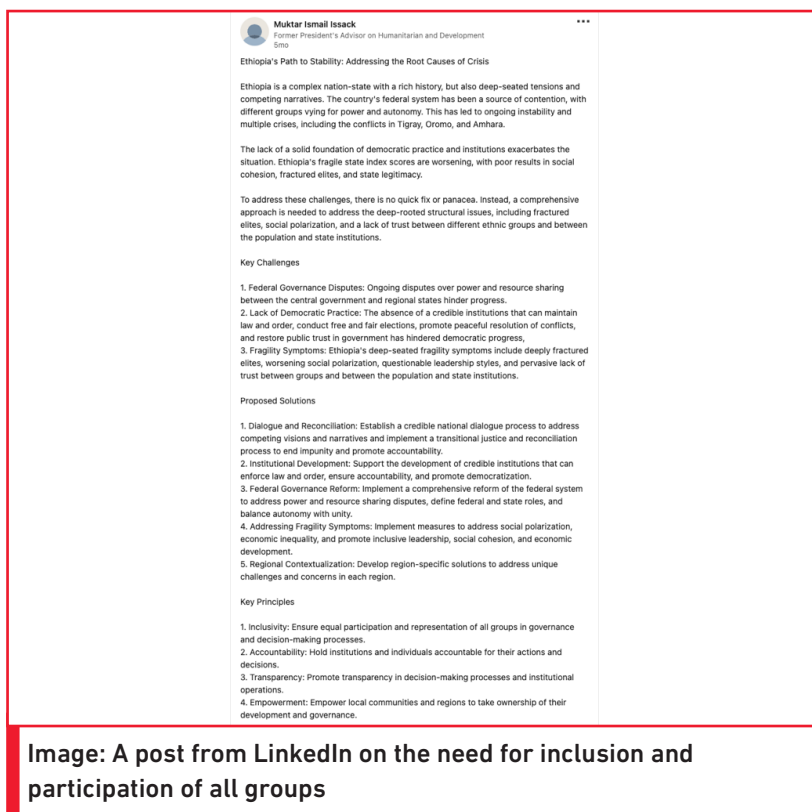
27 Sheger FM. 2025. የሀገሪቱ ህገ መንግስት እንዲሻሻል፤ መንግስት አጀንዳ አድርጎ ለምክር ቤቱ አቀረበ።
https://web.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1141555641348607&id=100064825447015&rid=GrD7PLDsZkqURKJ7

Meanwhile, the Caucus of Opposition Parties (CoP) accused²⁸ the National Dialogue Commission of failing to facilitate an inclusive national dialogue, alleging that it was being used for political gains by the ruling party. The Caucus claimed that the commission had not fulfilled its mandate to create an accessible, inclusive, and equitable forum for peace talks. Opposition groups argued that the Commission's members were appointed contrary to the spirit of the proclamation, resulting in a lack of inclusivity and transparency in the national consultation process. On May 28, Commissioner Mohamoud Dirir gave an update²⁹ on the commission's activities, emphasizing that discussions are underway in Tigray and Amhara to select representatives from conflict-affected areas. The commission urged armed groups to participate in the dialogue process, with agenda gathering set to extend to other regions after the Addis Ababa sessions.

As the dialogue process proceeds, calls for inclusiveness and transparency of all groups also grew online, although understandably, some aspects of inclusion, such as the armed groups, is beyond the duties of the Commission. Nonetheless, this reflects on the need for political commitment to involve all the necessary groups.

28 Addis Standard. 2024. News: Caucus of Opposition Parties accuses National Dialogue Commission of 'political bias' and 'failure to ensure inclusivity'. <https://bit.ly/4sQi7Kb>

29 Fana BC. 2024. National Dialogue at Final Chapter of Agenda Gathering: Commissioner. Available at: <https://www.fanamc.com/english/national-dialogue-at-final-chapter-of-agenda-gathering-commissioner/>



The calls for transparency and inclusiveness in the national dialogue process started from an early stage and continued to be voiced to date. Statements on the national dialogue such as the one from Balderas have captured general concerns of inclusiveness in the national dialogue process, particularly of political inclusiveness.³⁰

³⁰ Balderas. 2025. <https://balderasfordemocracy.com/ethiopias-national-dialogue-commission-the-imperative-for-genuine-inclusivity-and-reconciliation/>

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.³¹ At least one person was equating the national dialogue process with the ruling Prosperity Party under this news on Twitter (X)³². Other parties such as Enat Party³³ have also withdrawn from the process for lack of inclusiveness.



31 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/>

32 <https://x.com/AndualemAlemu2/status/1793844117312807353?s=20>

33 Enat Party (2024) ግልጽ ደብዳቤ ለኢትዮጵያ አገራዊ ምክር ቤት ስሜት. Available at: https://web.facebook.com/EnatParty/posts/pfbid026Lm2dpFAxi86Ea5DxuphnejCxcscBLJuDRlMvmvRDGKitWAQC8W-mjRs8HfDWYx73qUl?amp%3B_tn=%2C0%2CP-R&_rdc=1&_rdr#

Other social media users also attempted to show the relevance of the national dialogue process for a common understanding on contestations such as history and narratives.

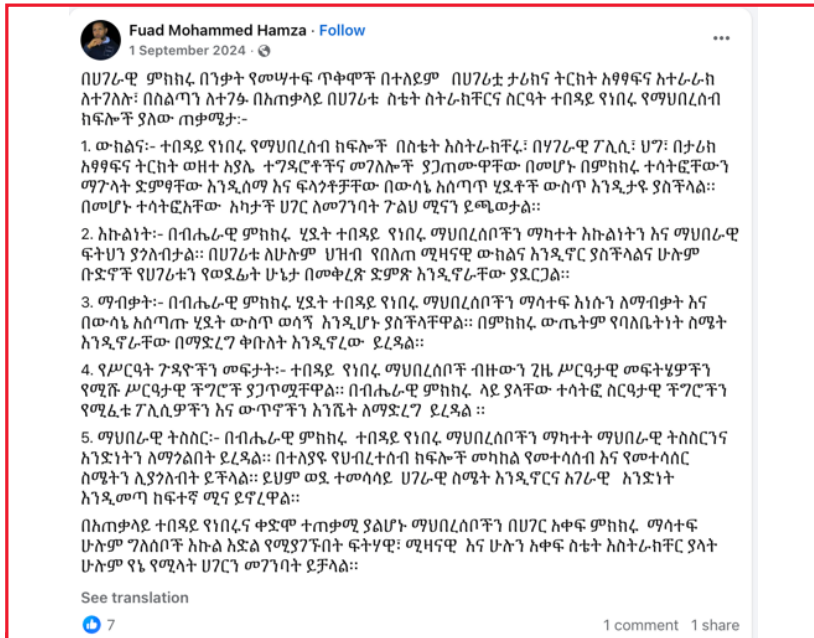


Image 2: A post from a Facebook user showing hope in the national dialogue process³⁴

The following post from a Facebook user also highlights that national dialogue processes could help mend past wrongdoings and heal current fractures.

³⁴ <https://bit.ly/3PZbtCx>



Image 3:A post from a Facebook user who highlighted that national dialogue process could help overcome past and existing problems of the country

Another one also highlights that everyone should believe in resolving differences and challenges through dialogue and the youth should not squander this chance.

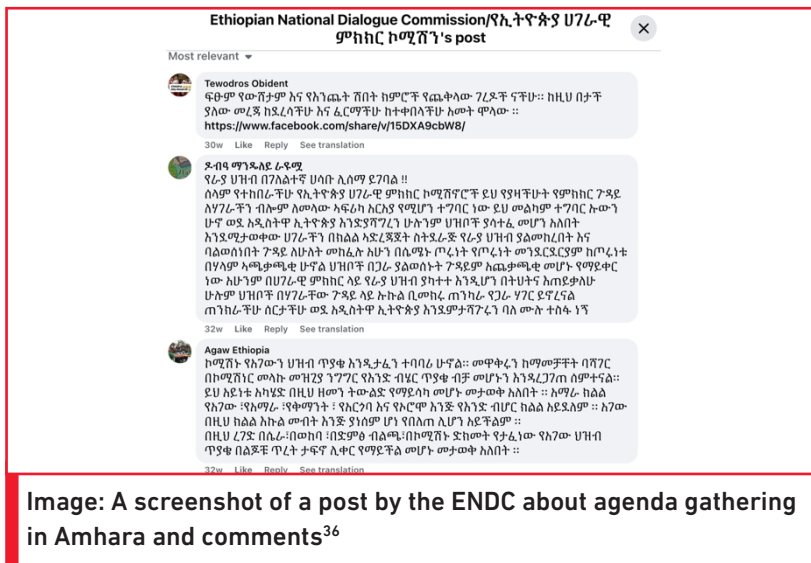


Image 4: A post from a Facebook user highlighting the need to believe in dialogues to resolve challenges

Meanwhile, calls for stopping and recalibrating the national dialogue process were voiced to ensure inclusivity.³⁵

Sometimes, perceptions of success as well as inclusiveness of the dialogue process are sometimes bitterly expressed by netizens, such as in the following comments under a post by the ENDC.

35 ISS. 2024. <https://x.com/issafrica/status/1815405372275937575>



³⁶ ENDC. 2025 የክልሉ አጀንዳዎች እየቀረቡ ነው። <https://bit.ly/4tqQBFO>

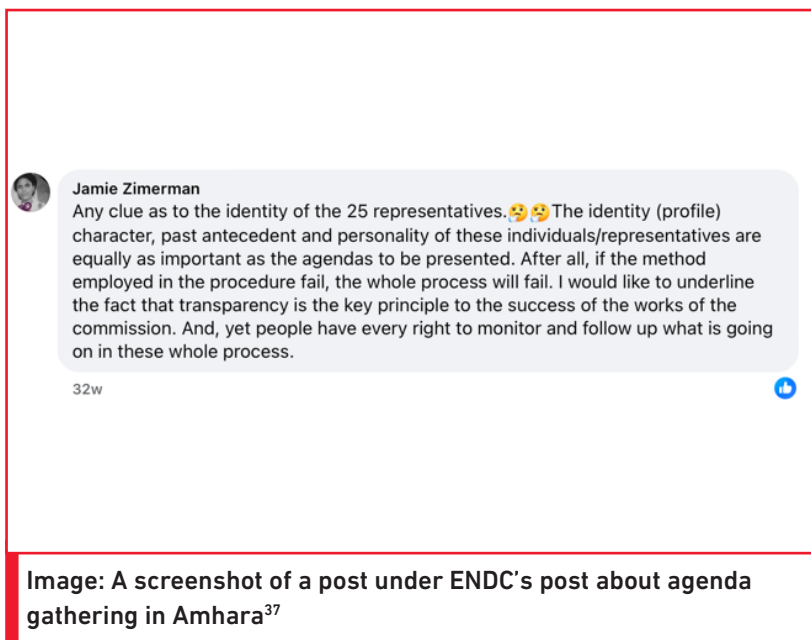


Image: A screenshot of a post under ENDC's post about agenda gathering in Amhara³⁷

The comments above demonstrate that, some people used social media platforms to voice concerns and sometimes insult participants/commissioners, while others such as ethnic minorities push their agenda items in hopes of getting noticed. Others, such as the comment below called for increased transparency so that people know who is representing them in choosing the agenda items for the national dialogue process.

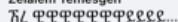
Similar news on the national dialogue process received significant reactions online. The following post³⁸ by *Fana BC* on the completion of agenda gathering in Amhara received 131 comments most of which remain to be criticizing the Commission, in addition to calls for transparency.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Fana BC. 2025. <https://bit.ly/4sb1cRm>



See translation





Although the ENDC did not publicize the list of participants in who took part in the agenda gathering process of the dialogue in regions, it had originally devised in its plans regarding participant selection at each level. These participants drawn from communities will then represent their communities and the regions they were selected from in the national plenary. But the dominant participants are considered to be supporters, or at least sympathizers, of the ruling party, creating perception of domination and lack of representation among some groups.

ENDC Participant Selection Scheme

1,300 Number of Woredas in Ethiopia

8 to 10 Participating sections of society

400–500 Initial plan for individual participants from each woreda (adjusted for logistical challenges)

10 Individual participants from sections of societies



Identifying dialogue participants

Regions

City Administrations

Federal

Diaspora

Images: ENDC's participant selection scheme

In a supervisory mission that the House of People's Representatives (HoPR) did in 2023³⁹ regions to assess the performance of the national dialogue process, the House Democratic Affairs Standing Committee identified that some Kebeles were not represented, especially in the Benishangul Gumuz region and that the Commission did not put a mechanism to let the public know who were selected as their representatives.

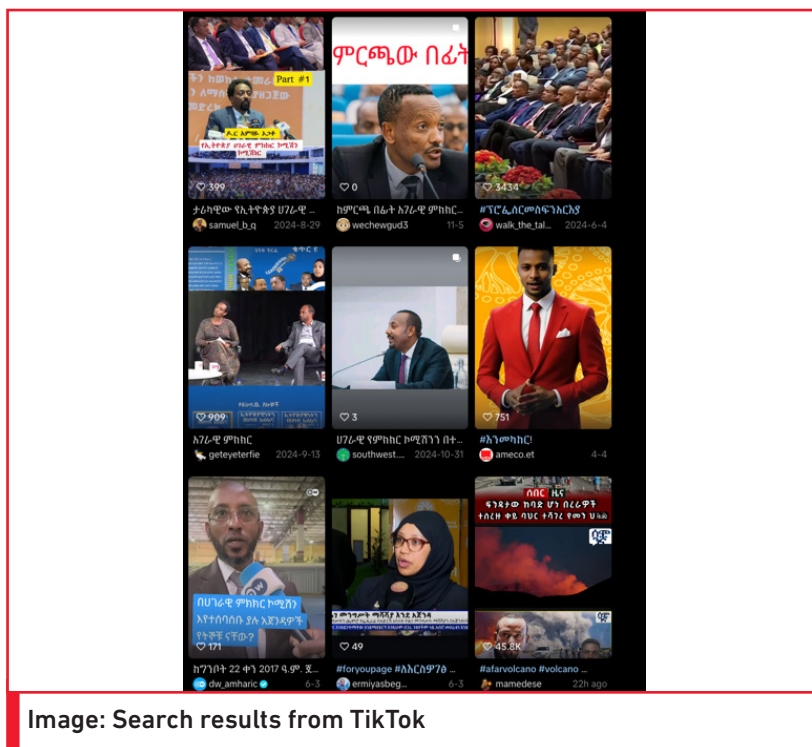
39 ENA. 2023. በአገራዊ ምክክር ኮሚሽን አፈጻጸም ላይ የተደረገ የሱፐርቪዘን ምልከታ። (ቪዲዮ) <https://web.facebook.com/reel/1050054309574756>

Meanwhile, social media posts were also appreciative of some people who turn to the national dialogue process to voice the concerns of their societies, like the post below.



Image: A post by a Facebook user appreciating someone for participation in the ND

Content regarding the national dialogue issue have also been shared on TikTok and X, but the engagements with these content among netizens seems limited.



5.3. Armed groups and the dialogue process

From its inception, the National Dialogue has been overshadowed by the conflicts raging in Oromia and Amhara, leading to widespread calls for the inclusion of the armed groups operating in these regions. Major opposition political parties, local civil society organizations (CSOs), and international observers have consistently underscored that a dialogue that excludes the main conflict drivers is doomed to fail. This is based

on the argument that armed groups have the ability to undermine any outcome from which they are excluded—making their non-participation a fundamental threat to lasting national consensus.⁴⁰

The ENDC has publicly asserted its commitment to an all-inclusive process, extending formal invitations to armed groups. Commissioner Professor Mesfin Araya urged armed entities to seize the opportunity for dialogue and offered security assurance for participants who opt for dialogue.⁴¹ Participation is contingent upon putting down arms and agree to advance their causes through peaceful dialogue.⁴² This shows that the ENDC believes political goals should be achieved through dialogue, although the primary reason the combatants refuse to do so is limitations in this approach causing their mistrust in the process.⁴³ Later the ENDC said armed groups can just send their agenda while keeping their arms.⁴⁴

In the conflict-ridden Amhara region, for instance, the ENDC said 4,500 representatives from 267 Districts engaged in Dialogue from diverse societal groups.⁴⁵

40 ACLED. (2024, May). *Ethiopia's national dialogue faces high expectations and criticism*. <https://acleddata.com/update/ethiopias-national-dialogue-faces-high-expectations-and-criticism-may-2024>

41 Addis Standard. (2024, April 22). *National Dialogue Commission invites armed groups to negotiations, assures 'security guarantees'*. <https://addisstandard.com/national-dialogue-commission-invites-armed-groups-to-negotiations-assures-security-guarantees/>

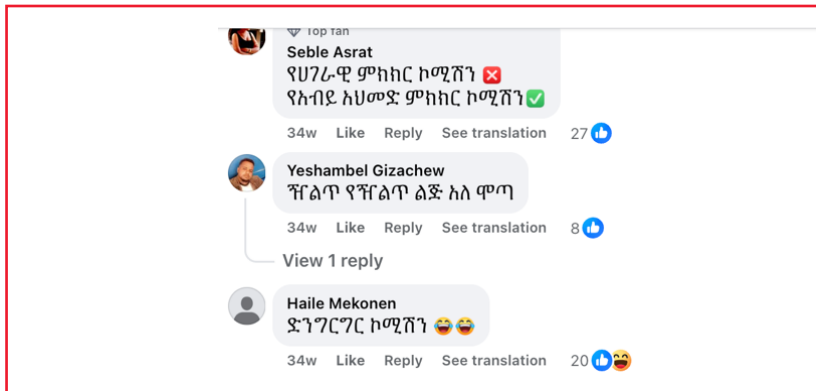
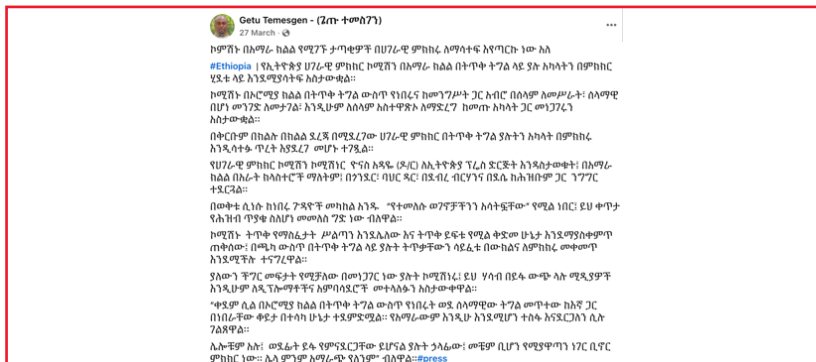
42 New Business Ethiopia. (2022, December 21). *ENDC invites armed groups in Ethiopia for national dialog*. <https://newbusinessethiopia.com/politics/endc-invites-armed-groups-in-ethiopia-for-national-dialog/>

43 APA News. 2025. *Armed militias snub Ethiopian national dialogue*. <https://apanews.net/armed-militias-snub-ethiopian-national-dialogue/#:~:text=Home%C2%BBCONFLITS%20%7C%20CONFLICTS%C2%BBArmed,the%20commission's%20representation%20and%20inclusivity.>

44 AMICO. Interview with Commissioner Yonas Adaye. 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCAxrp7Sv-A>

45 ENA. 2025. *Ethiopia's Nat'l Dialogue Commission to Launch Agenda-Setting Process in Amhara Region*. https://www.ena.et/web/eng/w/eng_6323102

Meanwhile, the Commission renewed its calls⁴⁶ for armed groups during the agenda gathering session in the Amhara region. While some reactions to this call encouraged continued efforts to include armed groups in the dialogue process, most comments and reactions demonstrated the scepticism on the legitimacy of the ENDG and trust in the process as can be seen below.



⁴⁶ Facebook. 2025. <https://web.facebook.com/getu26/posts/pfbid03395ScdQh41RduPpbE-j8WSNW1jS6hjsYAE6nxdJ89TAMhvw4MjEVxGZj7qRv4XKmmI>

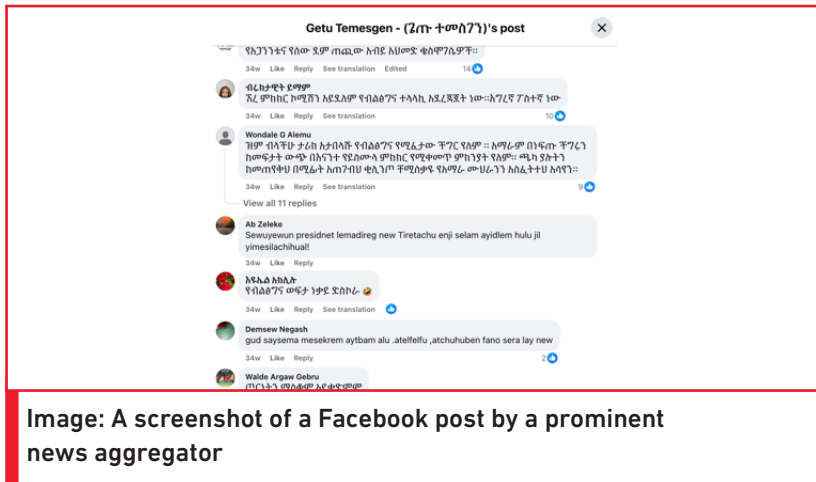


Image: A screenshot of a Facebook post by a prominent news aggregator

Some posts also demanded to know if the ENDC has involved other armed groups such as the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) as it renewed its call for the armed groups in Amhara to take part in the dialogue process, as is commented under the following post.

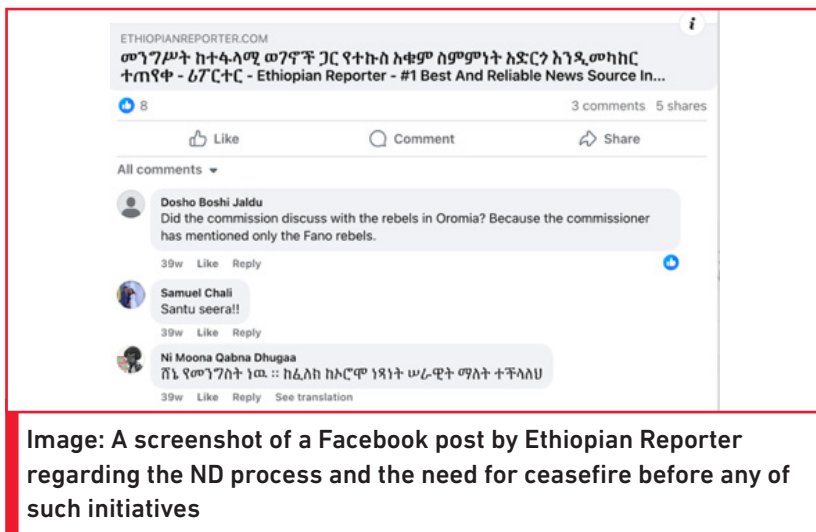


Image: A screenshot of a Facebook post by Ethiopian Reporter regarding the ND process and the need for ceasefire before any of such initiatives

Dessalegn Chanie (PhD), member of parliament, emphasized during a parliamentary session in February that, “The intellectuals and scholars of the Amhara region are largely in prison. A people cannot participate when its intellectuals are imprisoned,”⁴⁷. Nonetheless, the ENDC indicated that it will continue its efforts to include Amhara representatives that are involved in armed struggles.⁴⁸

As the elections approach, political parties have also started questioning the sequencing of the dialogue process with the elections as some expected some of the agenda items, they gave to the dialogue process would inform the electoral system. Some even demanded to know if the outcomes of the dialogue process when they come after the election would have the power to reverse electoral results.⁴⁹



Image: ENDC Discussion with political parties on the dialogue process.

⁴⁷ Asham TV. (2025). <https://bit.ly/45Cdbig>

⁴⁸ Ethiopia Insider. 2025. በትጥቅ ትግል እና በአስር ላይ ያሉ የአማራ ክልል ተወላጆችን በምክር ሂደት ለማሳተፍ የጀመረውን ጥረት አንደሚቀጥል የሀገራዊ ምክር ኮሚሽን አስታወቀ. <https://ethiopiainsider.com/2025/15691/>

⁴⁹ ENDC. 2025. <https://web.facebook.com/reel/845050335129496>

5.4. National Dialogue in Tigray

In a consultative session with political parties, the issue of Tigray was also raised by participants who voiced concerns regarding the absence of Tigray in the process and how the Commission plans to bring the region on board. The deputy commissioner Hirut Gebreselassie told the participants that throughout the national dialogue process, the Commission had been attempting to involve Tigray to take part in the dialogue process.

Attempts to engage the Tigray region in the national dialogue process have also been faced with strong reactions from people who demand that the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement should be fully implemented to ensure the territorial integrity of the region as well as the returning of IDPs, as the following screenshot of a news and comments regarding the national dialogue demonstrates. Some even reject the idea of dialogue as the region does not need to seek advice from/dialogue with anyone.


Ethiopian News Agency
1 August

በትግራይ ክልል የምክከር ሂደት ለመጀመር የሚያስችል ውይይት ተካሄዷል።

መቀሌ፣ ሀምሌ 25/2017(ሐ.ዘ.አ)፡ በትግራይ ክልል የምክከር ሂደት ለመጀመርና ምቹ ሁኔታዎችን ለመፍጠር የሚያስችል ውይይት ከጊዜያዊ አስተዳደር ጋር አድርገናል ሲሉ የኢትዮጵያ ሀገራዊ ምክከር ዋና ኮሚሽነር ፕሮፌሰር መስፍን አርባያና ተናገሩ።

በኢትዮጵያ የቀዳ ችግሮችን በምክከር ለመፍታት ሀገራዊ የምክከር ኮሚሽን ተቃዋሞ በክልሎችና የከተማ አስተዳደሮች ከዝግጅት ምክራፍ አንስቶ በሂደት የምክከር ምክራፍ ላይ ይገኛል።

የአስከ አቤት ሂደትም አሳታፊ በሆነ መልኩ የተከናወነ መሆኑንና በስኬታማነት መቀጠሉን የኢትዮጵያ ሀገራዊ ምክከር ኮሚሽን አስታውቋል።

የምክከር ኮሚሽኑ የጀመረውን ስኬታማ ጉዞ በመቀጠልና ተሞክሮዎችን በመቀመር በትግራይ ክልልም ለመጀመር አንቀስቃሊ ጀምሯል።

በዚሁ ጉዳይ ላይ በክልሉ የተጀመረው አንቀሳቃሊ ምን ይመስላል? በማለት ሐ.ዘ.አ የኢትዮጵያ አገራዊ ምክከር ኮሚሽን ዋና ኮሚሽነር ፕሮፌሰር መስፍን አርባያን አጋገሯል።

ኮሚሽኒፈም በማብራሪያቸው የምንም ነገር መፍትሄው ምክከር መሆኑን አንስተው ለኢትዮጵያ አቤት ላይ ከምንም በላይ ምክከር ያስፈልጋል። ይህንንም በነፃነትና አሳታፊ በሆነ መልኩ ቀጥለንበታል ሲሉ ተናገረዋል።

በትግራይ ክልል በስተቀር በሌሎች ክልሎች እና ከተማ መስተዳደሮች አሳታፊና አካላት የሆነ አጃንዳ የማሰባሰብና የልዩነት ስራ በተሳካ መልኩ መካሄዱን አስታውሰው በትግራይ ክልልም በተመሳሳይ መልኩ ለማካሄድ አንቀስቃሊ መጀመሩን አረጋግጠዋል።

በመሆኑም በትግራይ ክልል የምክከር ሂደት ለመጀመርና ምቹ ሁኔታዎችን ለመፍጠር የሚያስችል ውይይት ከክልሉ ጊዜያዊ አስተዳደር እና ሌሎች አካላት ጋር አድርገናል ብለዋል።

በውይይታቸውም ለሀገራዊ ምክከር የላጃንዳ ማሰባሰብና ሌሎች ስራዎች አጋዥ የሚሆኑ ገንቢ የውይይት ጊዜ እንደነበራቸው ያስታውሱት ዋና ኮሚሽነሩ ለስኬታማነቱ አገዛዥ ተብሎችን ተጠናክሮ ይቀጥላል ሲሉም አረጋግጠዋል።

የምክከሩ ሂደት በሌሎች አካባቢዎች በነፃነትና አሳታፊ በሆነ መልኩ መካሄዱን ገልጸው በትግራይ ክልልም በተመሳሳይ መልኩ የሚካሄድ በመሆኑ ሁሉም አካላት ተሳታፊ እንዲሆኑ ዋና ኮሚሽነሩ ጥሪ አቀርቦዋል።

የኢትዮጵያ ሀገራዊ ምክከር ኮሚሽን ዋና ዋና ሀገራዊ ችግሮችን በምክከር በመፍታት ሀብረ-ብሄራዊ አንድነትን ለማጥበቀና ጠንካራ ሀገራዊ-መንግስት ለመገንባት የሚያስችል ታሪካዊ አጋጣሚ የተገኘ አኗኗር መሆኑም ይታወቃል።

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Demands for the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) seem to trump the discussions regarding Tigray's participation in the national dialogue process. The following person asks that before any national dialogue is held in Tigray, the Pretoria peace agreement should be fully implemented.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Facebook. 2025. <https://bit.ly/4uXOcRw>

 **Chahmay Gebretensay · Follow** 11 August · 🌐

#በትግራይ_አገራዊ_ምክክር_ከመጀመሩ በፊት የፕላቶሪያ የሰላም #ስምምነት ሙሉ በሙሉ መተግበር አለበት ተባለ

#Ethiopia: «ምክክር ለማድረግ ቅድመ ሁኔታ ማስቀመጥ ተገቢ አይደለም» አገራዊ ምክክር ኮሚሽን የአገራዊ የምክክር ኮሚሽንን ሥራዎች በትግራይ ክልል ለማስጀመር ከመሥራት በፊት፣ የፕላቶሪያ የሰላም ስምምነትን ሙሉ በሙሉ ተግባራዊ ማድረግ አገዳሚነቱን በክልሉ የሚንቀሳቀሱ የፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎች ገለጹ።

በአገራዊ ምክክር ኮሚሽን የአጃጃዲ ማሰባሰብ ሒደት በክልሉ ባለው የፀጥታ ሁኔታ ሳይካተት የቀየውን የትግራይ ክልል ለማሳተፍ፣ ከክልሉ ጊዜያዊ አስተዳደርና ከተለያዩ የሳብረተሰብ ክፍሎች ጋር መወያየትን አስታውቆ፣ «ምክክር ለማድረግ ቅድመ ሁኔታ ማስቀመጥ ተገቢ አይደለም» ብለዋል።

ሆኖም ለፖርቲና ለፓርቲዎች መቀመጫቸውን በትግራይ ክልል አድርገው የሚንቀሳቀሱ ሁለት የፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎች በምክክር ሒደቱ የመሳተፍ ፍላጎት አገደሉላቸው ገልጸው፣ ለዚህም ምክንያታቸው ከኮሚሽኑ ሥራ በፊት የፕላቶሪያ የሰላም ስምምነት ሙሉ በሙሉ ተግባራዊ ማድረግ ቅድሚያ መስጠት አለበት የሚል መሆኑን ተናግረዋል።

የሰልጣዊ ወያኔ ትግራይ (ሳወት) የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ኃላፊ አቶ ብርሃነ አፅብሃ በምክክር ሒደቱ የመሳተፍ ፍላጎት አገደሉላቸው ለፊገርቲር ገልጸው፣ የትግራይ ሕዝብ አሁን ያለበት ሁኔታ በምክክር ሒደቱ የሚፈታ አገዳሚነት ተናግረዋል። ሕዝቡ በየመጠለያ ጣቢያዎችና በግጭት ውስጥ በምትገኘው ሱዳን ተፈናቅሎ ባ...

ተጨማሪ ያንብቡ: <https://ethiopianreporter.com/144271/>

Because of absence of one full region from the national dialogue process, the national dialogue process is facing hindrance⁵¹ that is blocking the national plenary session planned to be held before the end of the extended period of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission.

 **Addis Standard** 20 November at 16:06 · 🌐

News Analysis: National Dialogue moves hit “deadlock” on [#Tigray](#), Deputy Chief Commissioner reveals

#Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission is facing a “deadlock” in its moves to advance consultations in the Tigray region due to unresolved issues between the federal government and regional actors, Deputy Chief Commissioner Hirut Gebreselasie told political parties during a forum held in Adama from 15–16 November 2025.

During the discussion, Hirut revealed that the involvement of the war-torn region of Tigray has been central to the Commission's work since its inception. “It has been three and a half years that we have been engaged in this work. Not a single day has passed where the Tigray issue was not an item on our agenda,” she said.

However, Hirut acknowledged that progress stalled when underlying disputes between the federal government and Tigray authorities proved beyond the Commission's mandate. “In the middle, we understood that there was a kind of deadlock. We understood that there are major problems arising between the two sides, which is not something for us to resolve, nor is it within our mandate,” she told the gathering.

Hirut's admission of a “deadlock” mark one of the most direct acknowledgments from the Commission that structural political disputes, not procedural delays, are preventing the national dialogue from advancing its objectives in the Tigray region.

<https://addisstandard.com/?p=53695>

⁵¹ Addis Standard. 2025. News Analysis: National Dialogue moves hit “deadlock” on Tigray, Deputy Chief Commissioner reveals. https://web.facebook.com/AddisstandardEng/posts/news-analysis-national-dialogue-moves-hit-deadlock-on-tigray-deputy-chief-com-mis/1262936585871575/?_rdc=1&_rdr#

Addis Standard's post

5d Like Reply

Mekonen Arefaine
Jock of the year ! Dialogue needs honesty , abiy must understand this dialogue was critical issue for both the Tፒ The TPLF ! ! !

5d Like Reply

Efrem Tekelmariam
ትግራይ አገር ከሆነች ሁለት ዓመት አረፈች. ትግራይ አሸንፋለች. 🙏🙏

5d Like Reply See translation 🗨️

Hiyab Kahsay Ako
What is the need of dialogue in tigray occopaying it land by enwmies? No dialogue until its constitutional teritory is restored. No dialogue until the pretoria agreement is fully implpyied.

5d Like Reply Edited 2 🗨️

View all 2 replies

Horn Tribune
The main problem is "who appointed the members of this commission?" have genocide perpetrators (prosperity higher officials) the mandate to appoint this commission?

5d Like Reply Edited

Emaney Jacs
It's true "The Pretoria agreement" is not yet come in to real practice. constitutional teritory is still under "Genocider's administration. No dialogue until the pretoria agreement is fully implpyied.

The monitored conversations in general indicate that, there are grievances from netizens regarding the lack of inclusion and participation in the dialogue process, while there seems to be no appetite for the national dialogue process from social media users who tend to reflect Tigray's causes. If it is permitted to conduct the national dialogue process in Tigray, the Commission believes that it can get into operation within three days⁵² and they will prioritize Tigray during the 2018 (2025/26) Ethiopian year.⁵³

⁵² Dire Tube. 2024. የትግራይ ክልልን ፍቃድ ካገኘ በሦስት ሳምንት ውስጥ ውስጥ ሥራዎችን መጀመር እንደሚችል የሀገራዊ ምክር ቤት ኮሚሽን አስታወቀ. <http://bit.ly/4qlb2jq>

⁵³ ENDC. 2025. በ2018 ትልቅ ትኩረት ከሚሰጣቸው ጉዳዮች ቀዳሚው የትግራይ ክልል ምክር ቤት ዋና ኮሚሽነር መስፍን ዓርዳቤ(ፕሮፌሰር). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0ACQow7whE>

5.5. Agenda gathering and the diaspora representation

■ From the outset, the ENDC had expressed plans to gather agenda for the national dialogue process, including from the diaspora.

The Commission stated that it had completed consultations and agenda gathering phase in all regions and the two city administrations as well as the diaspora. The participant diaspora included those living in Europe, North America, and South Africa.

In a September 2025 press statement, the Chief Commissioner stated that the Commission “received valuable input from diaspora communities that will shape the path forward.”⁵⁴ Engaging and participating were the main preoccupations of the ENDC as can be attested from its activities over the year. Open calls were advertised on social media in addition to organizing live information sessions targeting the diaspora.

Nonetheless, the ENDC faced opposition in some instances during dialogue processes in the diaspora. For instance, while staging protest as they believed there should not be a dialogue while the Fano are fighting, London resident Ethiopians pressed the Commission what would be the outcome of a dialogue process where armed groups and opposition are not taking part.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2025. National Dialogue Takes Center Stage as Ethiopia Builds on Unity.

⁵⁵ DW. 2025. የኢትዮጵያ ሀገራዊ ምክክር ኮሚሽን ብሪታኒያ ከሚኖሩ ኢትዮጵያውያን ጋር ያካሄደው ውይይት. <https://bit.ly/3Q1o5ZX>

The major points of the diaspora include views that the process lacks credibility as it is a state-controlled mechanism in addition to insisting that justice should precede any dialogue⁵⁶, including cessation of hostilities in the Amhara and Oromia leaders as well as the releasing of political prisoners. The diaspora also voiced concerns that genocide is being committed in Amhara.

The divisions and participation in the national dialogue in the diaspora demonstrate that the diaspora is fragmented along political lines, ailments the Commission is attempting to overcome.

56 International Peace Institute. 2024. As Ethiopia Moves Forward With Its Transitional Justice Initiative, Challenges Abound. <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-moves-forward-its-transitional-justice-initiative-challenges-abound>

6. How Inclusivity is Framed and Emerging Issues

■ The national dialogue process is received variedly among netizens, political parties and armed groups as the monitoring activities have demonstrated. While some believe that the dialogue process doesn't have credibility and it is controlled by the government and rejected it, others believe that the dialogue process is an important engagement to take part in to voice concerns. Some demands for the implementation of peace deals as well as the calls for cessation of hostilities seem intended to create conducive environment to participate in the process and that some sections of the society are not left out.

On the other hand, some content online delegitimizes the process because of the shortcomings and perceived and real influence that the state has in the process. The gaps in inclusion and transparency also inform these comments. On the other hand, there are legitimizing efforts from others who amplify the relevance of the dialogue process to overcome the country's long-standing challenges.

On the other hand, identity, ideological orientation and partisanship are used to discuss the issues inclusiveness of the dialogue process. Armed groups and region based political parties emphasize the need to stop

conflicts and release prisoners to allow full participation while state media and others stress the successes of the Commission and highlight that it is an inclusive process.

As the national dialogue process comes to an end and the general elections nears, political parties have started voicing concerns as to how the two processes could be aligned. One of the main concerns from the opposition political parties is that their agenda for the national dialogue was intended to inform the elections and they question how the outcome of the national dialogue process would impact the election's outcome?

The conversations also demonstrate the polarizations between the federal government and regional actors. The federal government represented by the ENDC wants to carry on the dialogue process while regions such as Tigray and the opposition in Amhara demand that there are other priorities to precede the dialogue. In Tigray, the returning of IDPs and the restoration of pre-war territory of the region is a priority, while calls from the Amhara and Oromia regions emphasize peace deals with armed groups to lead to cessation of hostilities. The conversations demonstrate that, despite efforts to ensure inclusiveness in the dialogue process, there are still grievances and concerns from certain groups which ultimately affects the legitimacy and credibility of the process.

7. Sentiment Analysis

- The dominant sentiment observed in the monitored conversations is Negative/Skeptical. This is driven by strong opposition allegations of bias and a fundamental disagreement over the sequencing of the dialogue (i.e., the need for ceasefire, political freedom, and transitional justice to precede talks).⁵⁷ While the Commission and state media actively project a positive, legitimizing narrative, this is consistently challenged and often overwhelmed by the negative reactions from key conflict-affected constituencies.

The negative sentiment is also linked to the opposition's deep-seated distrust of the Commission, which is widely perceived as being controlled by the ruling party. This is evidenced by the allegations of political bias, the withdrawal of opposition parties like the Caucus of Opposition Parties (CoP), and the consistent demand for justice before any dialogue from the diaspora and armed group supporters. Furthermore, the exclusion of armed groups and the focus on conflict prerequisites such as ceasefire, and releasing of political prisoners contribute significantly to the negative framing, as conversations often prioritize urgent regional demands—such as the full implementation of the CoHA in Tigray or the release of Amhara intellectuals—over the ENDC's national agenda.

⁵⁷ Ethiopia's National Dialogue and Transitional Justice: Competition or Complementarity? (2025, May 14). Polity. <https://www.polity.org.za/article/ethiopias-national-dialogue-and-transitional-justice-competition-or-complementarity-2025-05-14>

The positive sentiment, as monitored, is driven by state-affiliated actors and is dominated by criticisms. The state media and government institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, actively promote the dialogue as a necessary step toward national consensus. This is mirrored by a smaller segment of the public who express optimism and encourage participation to address deep-rooted national issues. There was also neutral sentiment mostly confined to the procedural reporting by the Commission (e.g., updates on agenda gathering or participant selection schemes) and factual reporting by news aggregators.

8. Conclusions

- The monitoring of conversations and activities surrounding the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) reveals a stark duality: the official narrative of success and inclusivity, juxtaposed against a widespread and deep-rooted public opposition, and armed group skepticism that challenges the process's legitimacy. The key challenges boil down to a credibility deficit stemming from issues of transparency, perceived impartiality, and structural exclusion.

Despite the ENDC's efforts for successful agenda gathering across most regions and the diaspora, the process is fundamentally stalled at the initial stage, with Parliament extending the mandate to January 2026. The central issue remains the perceived lack of independence and the transparency gap. Netizens and opposition groups, notably the Caucus of Opposition Parties (CoP), actively equate the ENDC with the ruling Prosperity Party, arguing the Commission's members were appointed contrary to the spirit of the proclamation. This skepticism is amplified by the secrecy surrounding the representative selection and the agenda items. The revelation by media outlets like Shegger FM that the government submitted an agenda item calling for constitutional amendment to redefine the owners and founders of the nation further fuels fears that the dialogue is a state-controlled effort to push a pre-determined constitutional agenda.

The monitoring activities have demonstrated that the challenges to ensure inclusivity in the dialogue process is largely attributed to the structural exclusion of major conflict actors: Armed groups believe that confidence-building measures should come first for their involvement, such as a negotiated ceasefire, the release of political prisoners, and a commitment to genuine transitional justice. The national dialogue cannot be truly national without the inclusion of the Tigray region. Despite ENDC efforts and a recent visit to Mekelle, the region's participation is hindered by the unresolved implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement (CoHA), the return of IDPs, and disputes over territorial integrity, which remain the top priorities for Tigray actors.

The diaspora community, particularly in London and North America, has become a potent voice of rejection. On social media platforms like X, Facebook, and Fana BC comment sections, netizens actively challenge the commission's inclusiveness and transparency, demanding to know who their representatives are and criticizing the perceived influence of the ruling party. This online activism and polarization reflect the broader national fractures the ENDC was intended to heal, demonstrating that a successful dialogue requires a political environment free from armed conflict and political repression.

In essence, the conversations surrounding the ENDC show a public that is highly engaged but deeply skeptical. For the dialogue to achieve its goal of national consensus, the Commission must urgently address the structural flaws of impartiality, transparency, and political sequencing of the process, especially regarding the participation of armed groups and the full inclusion of regions like Tigray. The upcoming general elections further pressure the process, as opposition parties question whether its outcomes will have the necessary political weight to influence a post-election Ethiopia.

9. Recommendations

For the National Dialogue Commission (ENDC)

- Continue prioritizing the political inclusion of the Tigray Region, and clearly separate the final national consensus-building phase from immediate challenges to mitigate political polarization.
- Work more to enhance transparency by publicizing the list of participants in agenda gathering and release agenda items it gathered
- Request a neutral, external advisory body to help organize a non-state-aligned diaspora advisory mechanism to engage the critical mass in the diaspora

For Political Actors (Government/Ruling Party)

- Authorize a neutral mediation channel (domestic or international) to negotiate a limited ceasefire and political prisoner release as a confidence-building measure for OLA and Fano participation, replacing the unilateral disarmament precondition.
- Commit to a time-bound process for the conditional release of high-profile political leaders, intellectuals, and journalists, demonstrating political will for reconciliation and de-escalation of tensions.

For Civil Society and Media

- Engage in a coordinated public education campaign to demystify the dialogue process, promote conflict resolution mechanisms, and aggressively counter misinformation about the ENDC.

For International Partners

- Earmark a portion of their funding for technical support to an independent fact-checking coalition and CSOs dedicated to monitoring the dialogue's inclusivity and implementation.

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