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Joint IPSS-EIP Hybrid Conference

Hate Speech and Misinformation in Ethiopia

2 June 2021 | 09:00 AM – 12:00 PM (GMT+3)

Hybrid Conference (*Sheraton Hotel, Addis Ababa & Online*)

Concept Note

Hate speech, misinformation, and fake news have thrived in the Ethiopian media ecosystem, and particularly online. This is strongly correlated with significant, tragic, real-world events.

During times of instability, hate speech and misinformation contributed to violence and conflict, for example in the June 2019 regional coup attempt in Amhara, the clashes in Mota in December 2019, and the violence in Oromia in October 2019 and June/July 2020. The conflict in Tigray that started in November 2020 gave rise to another wave of misinformation. Often this has resulted in internet shutdowns - sometimes limited in scope, at other times cutting communications across Ethiopia.

With the national elections around the corner, it is a good time to take stock of the challenges ahead, and the most effective policy responses the new government could pursue. How big is Ethiopia's challenge? Are there specific election-related risks? What has been effective in addressing the issue – and what not? What new approaches can be considered to deal with hate speech, misinformation, and fake news?

This event, organised by the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at Addis Ababa University and the European Institute of Peace (EIP) will bring together a variety of stakeholders, including government representatives, academics, civil society, and international organisations to discuss these questions.