

# SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

This report is part of a broader initiative to analyze online discourse and specifically monitor hate speech in Kenya in the lead up to the August 9th 2022 general elections in order to help mitigate the threat of hateful language in fueling violence on-the-ground.

Insights gathered from the monitoring efforts are shared with a few civil society actors to inform their interventions geared towards peacebuilding and an inclusive democracy on digital spaces

Kenya

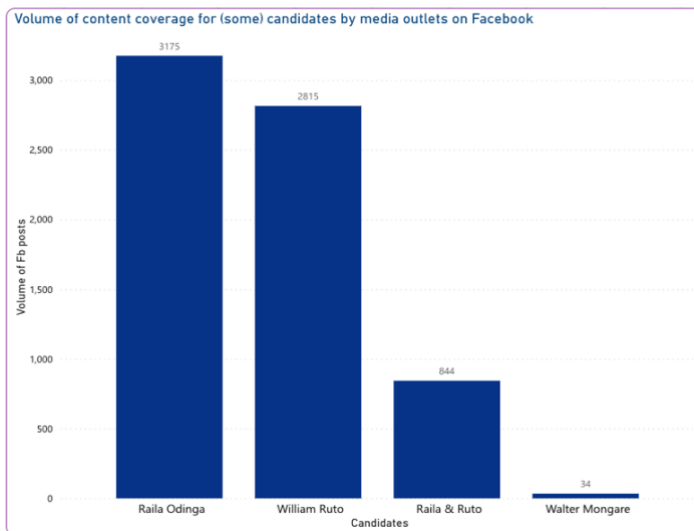
May 2022

BUILD UP 

## Exploring online discourse in Kenya- 2022

### A. Media Coverage of Candidates on Facebook – May.

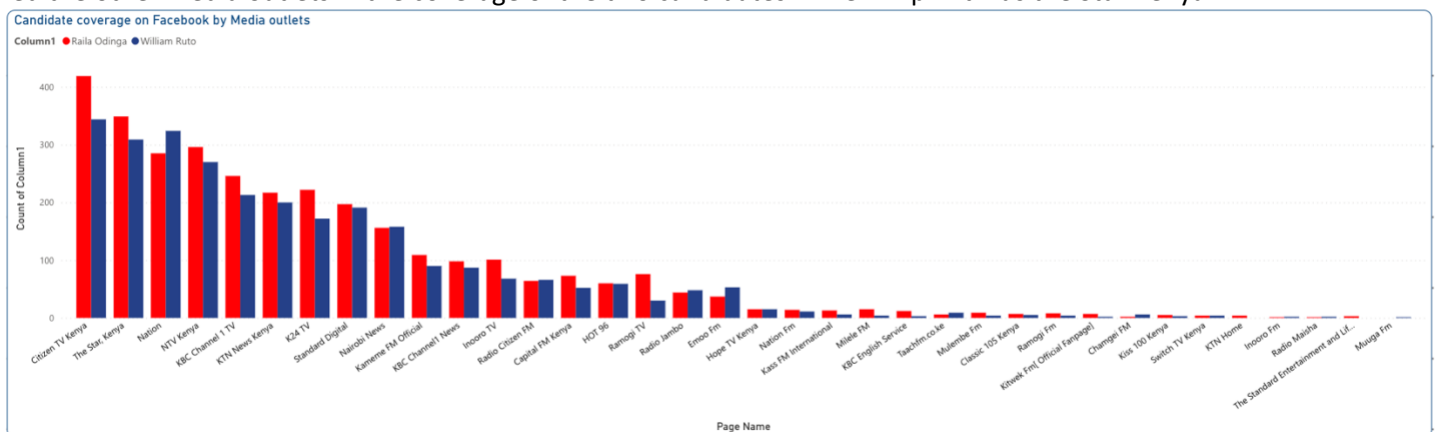
May 29<sup>th</sup> marked the official start of the campaign period in Kenya which will run until August 6<sup>th</sup>. In this report we take a look at some of the polarizing political discourse on social media platforms. This first section explores the media coverage of some of the candidates online – mainly on Facebook. Facebook is selected for this section of the analysis because in Kenya 76% of adults use social media as a source of News (Statista, 2021) and according to Maseko, (2021) Facebook is a leading source for news in Kenya. As we wait for the full official list of presidential candidates to be cleared and published by IEBC, we looked at the volume of airtime some candidates have been receiving on media pages on Facebook. In this analysis we include Walter Mongare aka Nyambane<sup>1</sup> who was recently cleared by the IEBC in May and two popular candidates Raila Odinga and William Ruto.



From the data, content about or referencing Raila, received the most coverage by media outlets via their Facebook Pages.

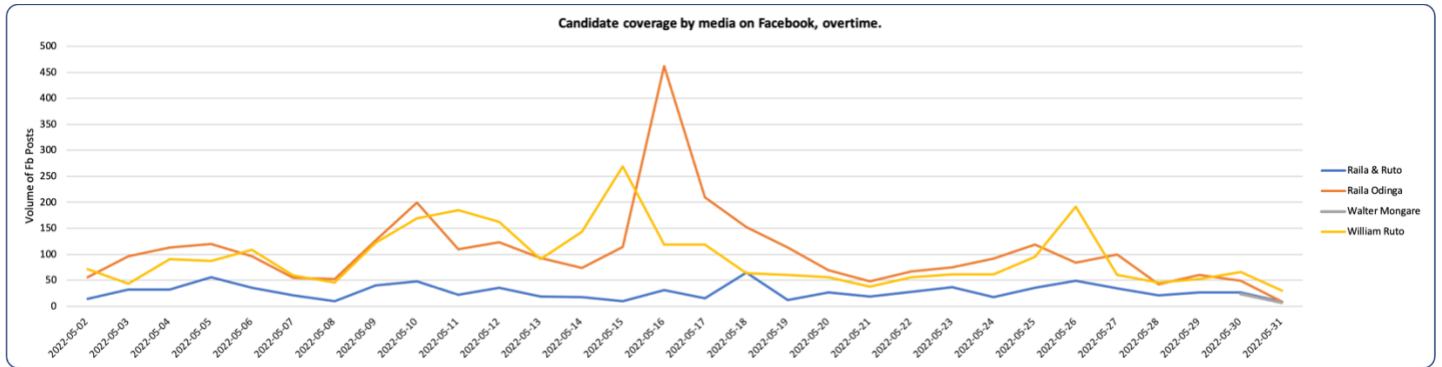
Content on Walter Mongare who is contesting for presidency under the Umoja Summit Party received the least coverage.

Similar to the April report, we see that when the data is disaggregated by the specific media outlets and compared between Raila Odinga and William Ruto, content about Raila Odinga still receives more coverage across most of the media outlets. While this trend continues from the previous month, one noticeable difference is that in May, Citizen TV led the other media outlets in the coverage of the two candidates while in April it was the Star Kenya.



<sup>1</sup> During the development of this report, Walter Mongare's clearance certificate to vie for presidency was revoked by the IEBC. We shall monitor this situation and analyse how it develops.

Some of the media outlets that covered Ruto's content more than Raila's include Nation, Radio Jambo and Emoo FM. The difference in content volume between the two candidates can be attributed in part, to the candidates announcing their running mates on the 15<sup>th</sup> (Ruto) and the 16<sup>th</sup> (Raila) of May. While the announcements happen two days apart, Raila's announcement receives significantly more coverage on social media than Ruto's. See line graph below.



Various narratives related to these announcements emerged on social platforms; for instance, some argued that it is the first time a popular candidate like Raila has chosen a female candidate as a running mate for the deputy president position, hence the excitement in covering the news, while others noted that Ruto's choice is not any different from the current set up with the incumbent and thus was not exciting.

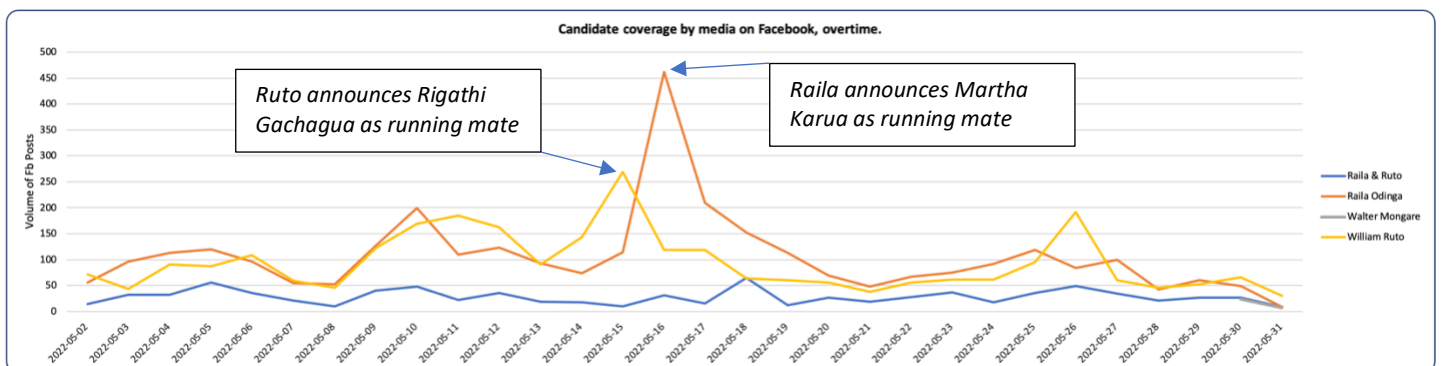
Throughout May, Walter Mongare's coverage is only seen when he was cleared by the IEBC on the 30<sup>th</sup> to contest for presidency. This coverage continues on to the 31<sup>st</sup> of May.

After IEBC releases the official candidates list and the official campaign period begins, we anticipate a slight increase in the coverage of more candidates overall.

## B. Political and Ethnic Polarization - May.

### Facebook

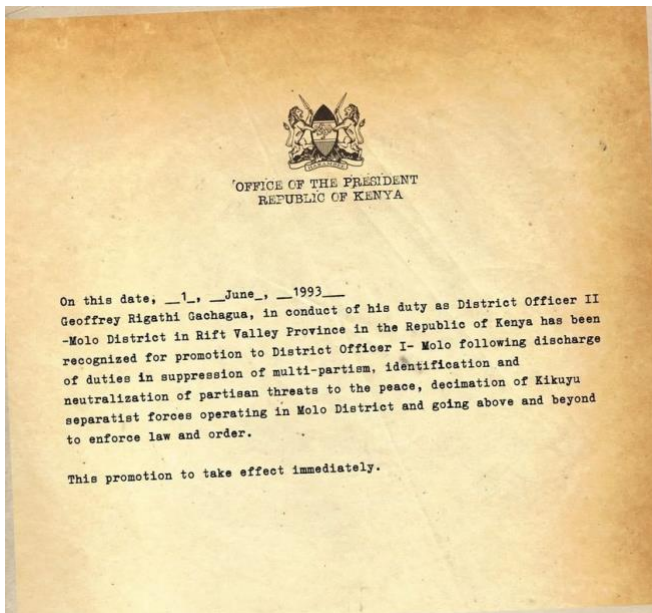
#### Broad summary- *Rigathi Gachagua*



After the Raila and Ruto announced their running mates, various polarizing narratives emerged on social media targeting the running mates. Rigathi Gachagua was accused of overseeing the massacre of Kikuyus in Molo in 1992 when he served as the District Office in Molo during the late former president Moi's regime.

## BUILD UP A

Images supporting this narrative were also shared online. A deeper analysis of the images found that they had been doctored and were not authentic. They were being used to spread misinformation and a smear campaign against Rigathi Gachagua. See images below

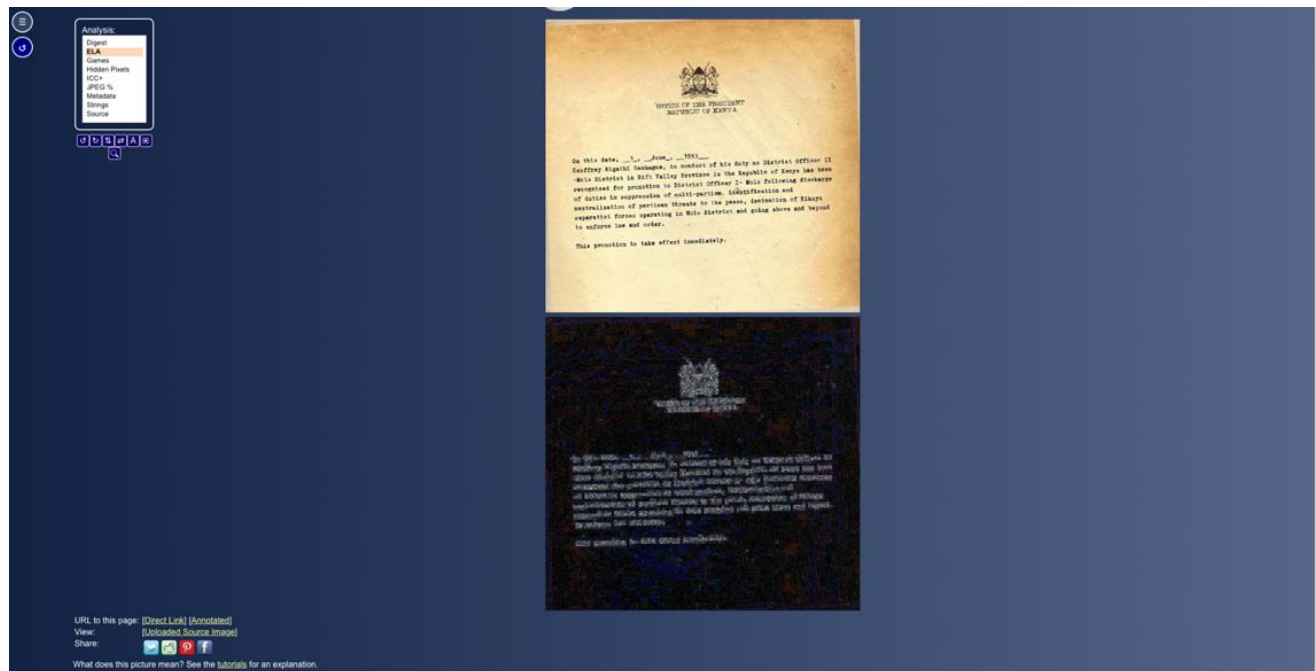


This document dated 1<sup>st</sup> June 1993 was circulated online alleging that the office of the president had recognized Rigathi Gachagua for promotion, for his role in the decimation of the Kikuyu separatist forces in Molo.

This false information takes advantage of the actual 1992 Molo clashes that were primarily between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin communities where land ownership was cited as one of the key reasons for the conflict (Akiwumi 1999).

Social media users pushed that if Rigathi and Ruto made it to power there would be chaos and the leadership would be a dictatorship because of Rigathi's past.

A document analysis to verify authenticity revealed that the text was added recently to the document/brown paper. The image below shows an analysis of the compression artifacts in the image with lossy compression.



In the dark image, the text stands out from the black background showing that the image has undergone digital modification where the text is the modification.

In addition to the document above, there was another image that also made rounds on Facebook and Twitter, supporting the 1992 massacre narrative. The image has Rigathi in his District Officer uniform and three black and white images depicting affected communities in Molo. [See below](#)



A closer inspection shows that the three images have been lifted from a 2007 report by the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) titled *"Massive Internal displacements in Kenya due to politically instigated ethnic clashes"* [See link in Reference section.](#)

Rigathi's image is also lifted from an older image where he is standing next to the late former president Daniel Moi in what looks like an official event. This [real image](#) was shared widely by media outlets during president Moi's funeral on February 12<sup>th</sup> 2020. [See below.](#)



Rigathi's image was lifted and added to the doctored report titled dark memories ,1992. The white border on Rigathi's image is a common indicator in doctored images<sup>2</sup>.

Further analysis also shows the bottom right of the image has a gray streak that appears to be a covering something in the image.

When the full image is put under compression artifact analysis, we see that it has been highly doctored.



The interaction that this narrative received points to the need for more media literacy work and focus on initiatives that debunk false narratives which can be used to catalyze violent conflict.

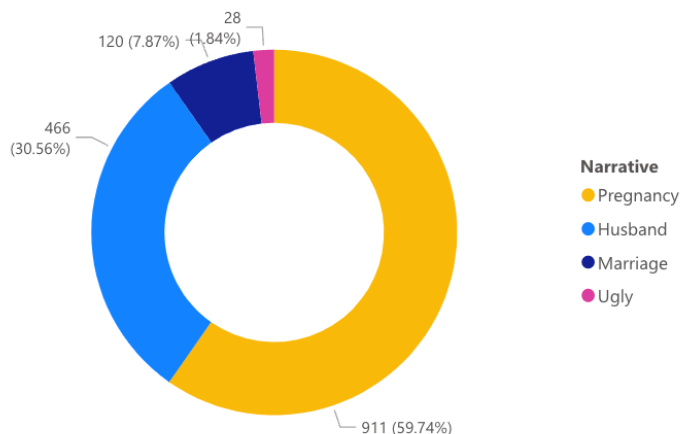
<sup>2</sup> A common indicator in doctored images is the white border that runs throughout Rigathi's image. This is done when the image is lifted from a busy background and the editor wants to place the image against a plain color (e.g., black) background. Cutting an image like Rigathi's photo from a busy background is difficult and the editor might end up making some mistakes that make it obvious that the image was cut from another picture so they apply the white halo like effect to covers any errors that appear on the image borders and gives it a smooth border line



## Broad summary- Martha Karua

When Raila announced that Martha Karua would be her running mate, multiple narratives targeting her emerged on social media platforms. While Rigathi was targeted with one narrative across various platforms that focused on his position and role when he was in power, Martha Karua was targeted by four narratives that focused on her gender, marital status and appearance<sup>3</sup>.

Volume of emerging narratives targeting Martha Karua



Martha Karua's marital status was highly questioned. Users argued that if she had no husband, she could not lead Kenyans and that she needed to first get a husband.

This was closely linked to the narrative about her marriage. Social media users cited that she was a divorcee and this was a huge problem. They argued that she did not uphold family values due to her divorce and therefore was not fit to rule. Another narrative targeted her physical appearance, calling her ugly and old and that she would scare people in meetings because she did not look good.

A common narrative that had a significant level of engagement was that she was pregnant. This narrative was somewhat different from the other three. In one version, users said that Raila had gotten Martha Karua pregnant. In another version, the narrative was a post accompanied with a link. The post read "Martha Karua is Pregnant!" and the link was for a pornographic site.

This strategy has been seen in instances where a word association is used to deploy a smear campaign<sup>4</sup>.

### Sample posts

In martha Karua's biography they are avoiding to mention his husband at age of 65 how comes she is single?we are not safe in hands of a devosee

KARUA, you can not occupy Deputy President's residence without a husband! A taboo!

I still respect Karua, career-wise. But we want a Family woman. Kamala alijua anataka Siasa, married at 50. Waiguru wanted respect ya Wana Kirinyaga, remarried at 50. Kihika alijua anataka Senate, married at 46. Our single Shosh left her hubby to frolic with priests and Judges

**Translation:** I still respect Karua, career-wise. But we want a Family woman. Kamala knew she wanted politics and married at 50, Waiguru wanted the respect of Kirinyaga residents and remarried at 50. Kihika knew she wanted the senate and married at 46. Our single grandmother....

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that narratives were selected based on the number of interactions that they received. If a narrative had 1000 or more people interacting with it, it was included in the report. As such there exists other narratives that had less engagement online but are not included in this report.

<sup>4</sup> Word association smear campaigns: The name of a candidate or person of interest is used next to a link with disturbing and/or disgusting content. A user reads the name of interest and decides to click the link and it opens the disturbing content, they close it immediately and this makes them weary of future links that are used next to the names of interest even when the links are legitimate. This ultimately reduces the number of people that would read legitimate links about the person of interest.

Kenyans avoid martha karua she is not married.

MARTHA KARUA NI SURA MBAYA TENA HANA BWANA.

**Translation:** Martha Karua is ugly and she has no husband

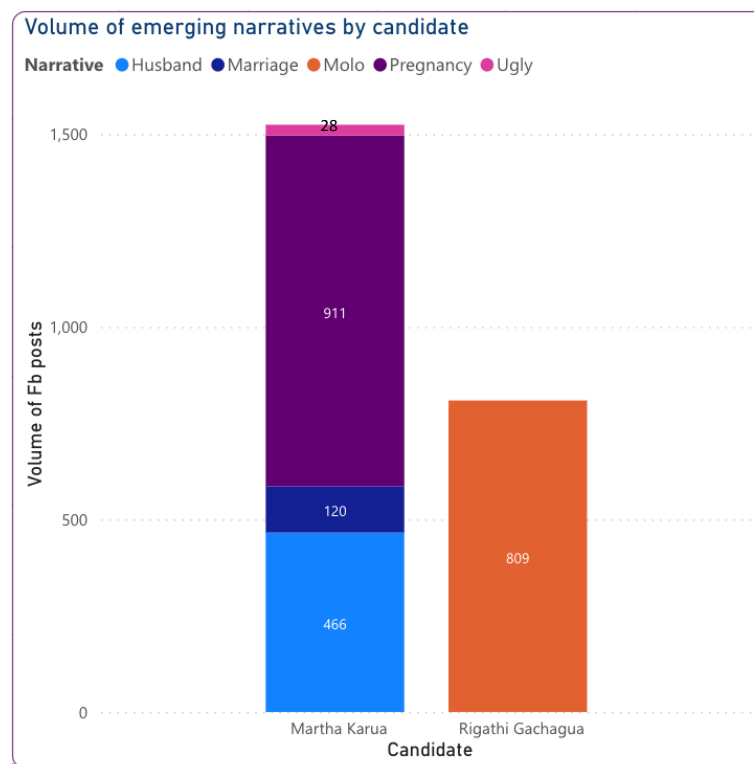
RAILA NI MZEE MAE MARTHA KARUA AKO NA SURA MBAYA HAO WATU  
HAWAWEZI KUTUONGOZA

**Translation:** Raila is old and Martha Karua is ugly, these people cannot lead us

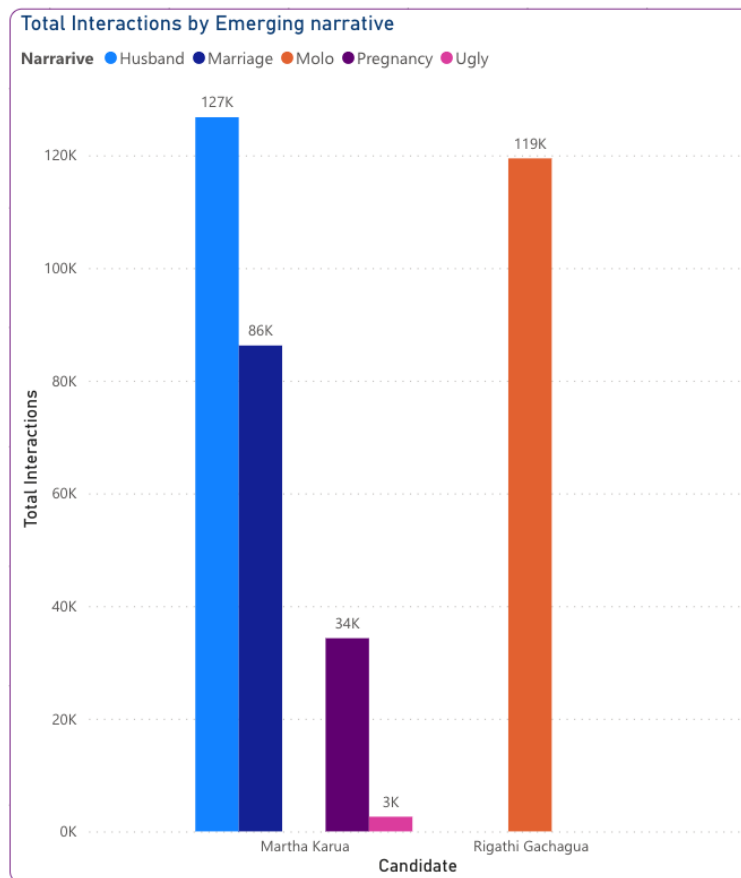
Martha Karua is pregnant

Martha Karua Is Pregnant 🤰 Raila Have Already Done Something 🍆🍌🐱🐱

A comparative analysis between narratives targeting Martha and Rigathi shows that Martha was significantly targeted more than Rigathi both in the number of narratives and the volume of each narrative. See graph below.



While the pregnancy narrative had the most posts (911) the husband narrative received the most interactions on Facebook (127,000), followed by the marriage narrative (86,000). The molo massacre narrative also received a lot of interaction (119,000). See image below



The interaction levels around the husband, marriage, pregnancy and ugly narratives point to a need for more work around social and technical media literacy and sensitization to gender based bullying and harassment.

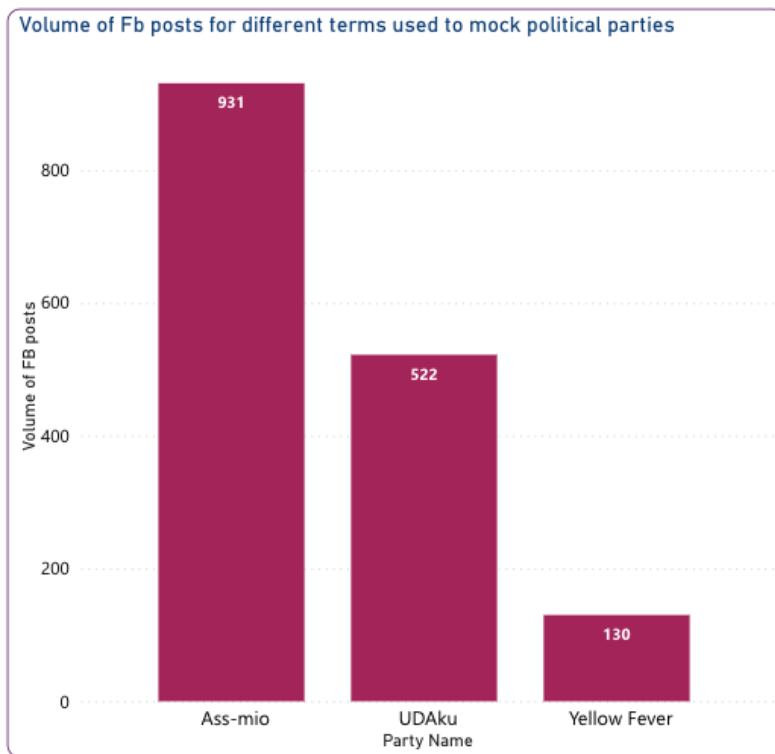
## Other noticeable trends

- Mocking of political party names:** In May, our analysis saw the mockery of political party names, where political parties were given names to mock, make fun and insult the party supporters. For instance, Ass-mio was used to target Azimio la Umoja, while UDA was called Udaku which means gossip, and was also being called Yellow Fever in reference to the party color scheme which is predominantly yellow<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that while these terms are not inflammatory or hateful by themselves, they are commonly found to be used with harmful content. For instance, the monitoring effort that generates these monthly and weekly reports identified the prevalence of these terms when monitoring for harmful content i.e. hate speech and mis/disinformation online.



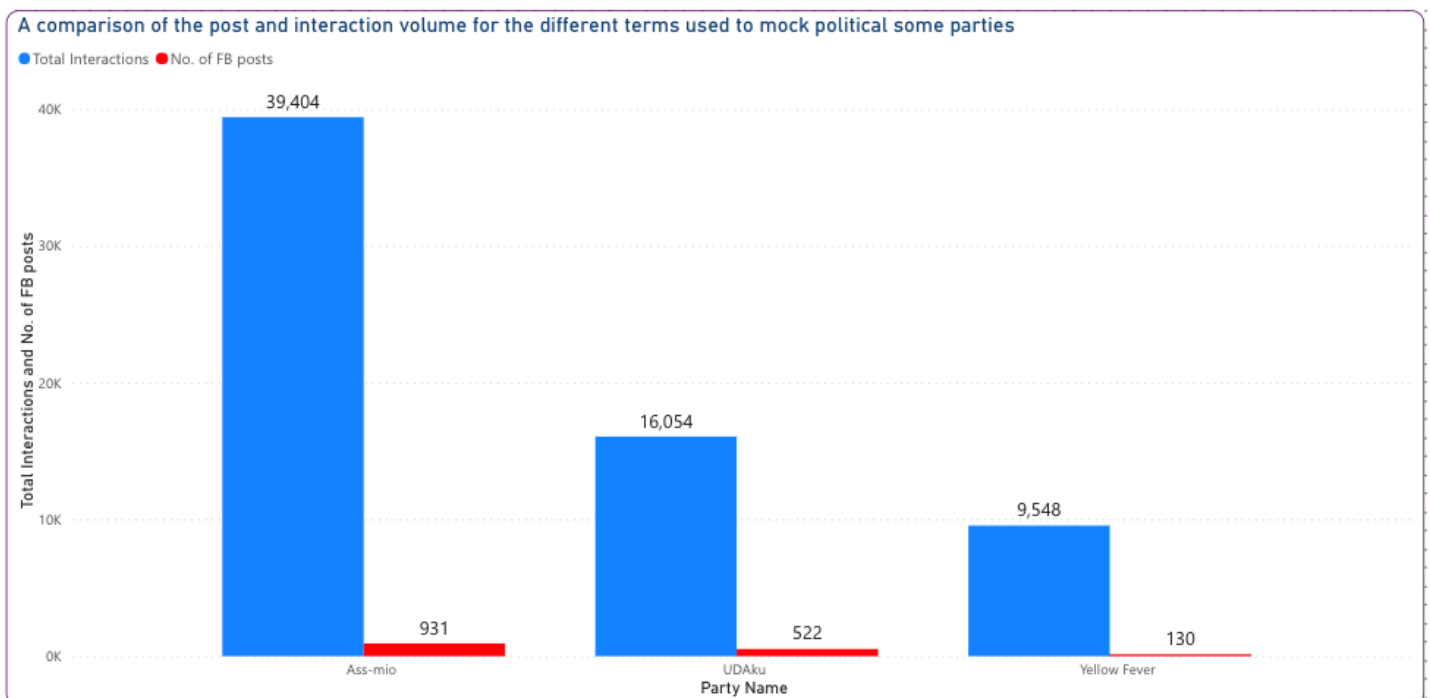
The May analysis reveals that Ass-mio was the term mostly used on Facebook. The UDA party was also given other terms such as “Matako Juu” (buttocks up) party in mockery of the bottoms up economics that the party has been campaigning on. This was however more common in previous months but was not as prevalent in May.



The Yellow fever term while not frequently used in May, is a bit more problematic. While the term was initially being used in a satirical way, it is now being used to negatively target individuals wearing yellow clothing.

Conversations with partner organizations that have been engaging with communities directly, revealed that communities are avoiding wearing yellow clothes for fear of being linked with and/or viewed as UDA supporters and in other instances being targeted in a negative way e.g. by insults.

When looking at the interaction levels that posts containing these terms have received, we realize that significant number of Facebook users are engaging with this content.



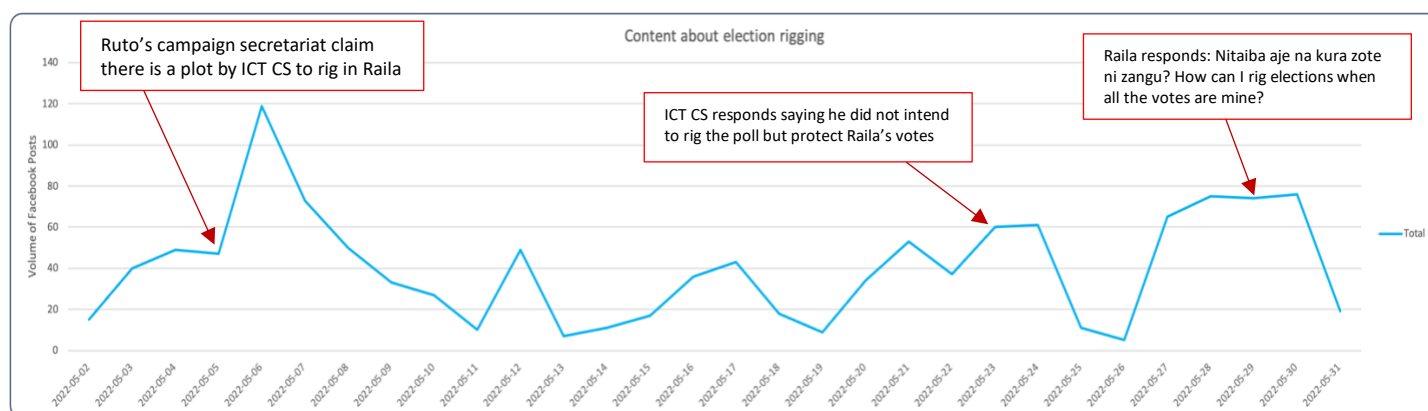
## Sample posts:

Narok is Azimio zone we don't tolerate with yellow fever including Arap kimwarer and broker Arap Ntutu

Atleast 107 Countries will face food shortage, high debts, increased Fuel prices etc. And some UDAku dimwits will continue blaming President Uhuru Kenyatta and handshake!

I'm still doing a research to find out why Brain stops working when one Joins Assmio

- b. Election Rigging:** Another trend in May that was picked up from the monitoring focused on election rigging. There was an increased volume of polarized conversations that centered on the IEBC and Ministry of ICT rigging the 2022 presidential elections.



Looking at the trend graph, the conversation peaked on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May. This is a day after the Ruto's campaign secretariat claimed that there was a plot to rig the August 9<sup>th</sup> polls in favour of Raila Odinga and the plot was led by the ICT Cabinet Secretary Joe Mucheru. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> of May we see another significant spike in this trend caused by CS Joe Mucheru's response when he said that he did not intend to rig the poll but protect Raila's votes.

Later in the month, Raila responded to these accusations stating that, *the UDA people know that they will lose the election and that is why they are saying that people are planning to rig the election, there is no need to rig. How can I rig when all the votes are mine?*

This trend on election rigging resulted in **743 posts** on Facebook which generated **255,000** interactions. This points to how political leaders shape conversations on social spaces especially on sensitive topics like election rigging. The interactions were highly polarized as individuals on Facebook supported one candidate or the other. There is also a normalization of rigging that is seen in the comments where social media users noted that it is expected that both parties will rig the election and that the results depend on who rigs better.

These conversations point to a much-needed intervention by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to come out strongly and assure Kenyans a free and fair electoral process.

## Twitter

- a. **Political based hate:** In May, our twitter analysis focused on a theme that is often mentioned but rarely analyzed when discussing inflammatory content around Kenyan politics; political affiliation hate. In the April report, we covered key terms that were trending and insulting groups based on their ethnicities. While this trend is still ongoing, we also identified content that was insulting groups based on their political affiliation. A quick Twitter analysis shows terms such as wajinga (stupid), idiots and fools are used to describe supporters of the major political parties. See examples:

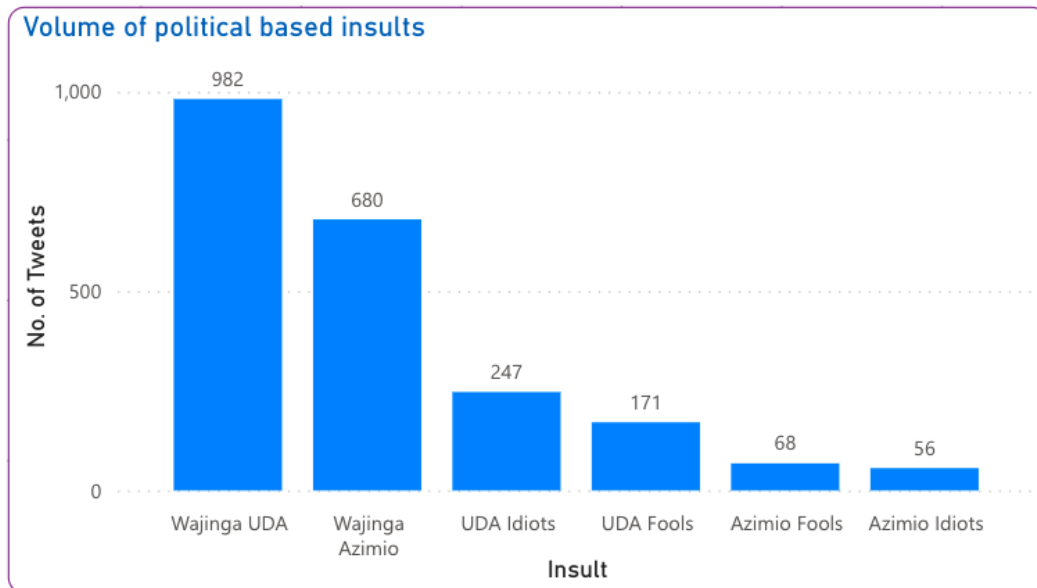
@BulleJR3 @Madoka\_Ke So kiamokama and bonchari are in Luo nyanza . Yenyewe uda ni ujinga party wajinga.wamejaa uko vichwa ndio kubwa akili akuna

**Translation:** So kiamokama and bonchari are in Luo Nyanza. Truly uda is the stupidity party stupid people. They are many there, their heads are big but with no brains.

@Belive\_Kinuthia li Azimio yenu ya ujinga iko na wajinga tupu....

**Translation:** Your aspiration for stupidity has stupid people only...

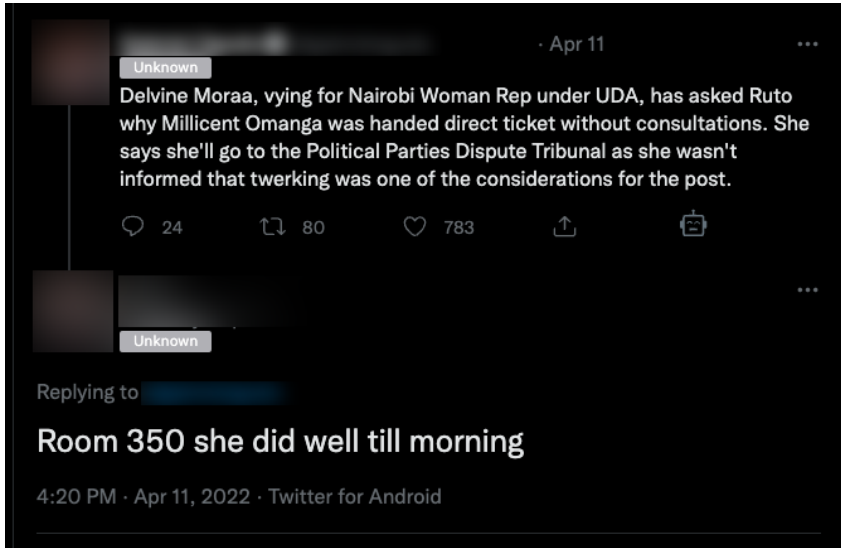
In our analysis we looked at a few insults that were using common Swahili and English terms and did not look into terms in sheng or vernacular language. Tweets targeting UDA supporters were significantly higher compared to the other terms that we monitored in May. See visual.



This trend is not new to Kenyan politics; however, it has been rarely explored in various forums in favour of trends that focus on ethnic based insult and hate. It is nonetheless important to pay attention to content that targets groups by political affiliation because in other contexts, this content has been used to advance violent conflict. While these terms highly polarize online discourse, none of them were in the NCIC hate lexicon that was released in April. While some can argue that these words are not inflammatory by themselves and the contexts of their usage is what determines that, our analysis shows that when used together with a party name and in their plural form, the terms were in reference to party supporters in an insulting way majority of the time.

- b. Subtle messaging targeting women (April-May):** In our April report we also covered how women politicians are targeted on online and harassed and bullied. One of the key findings that emerged from the analysis is how subtle messaging plays a role in advancing the bullying of women. Specifically, around the used of the phrase “Room 350”. For instance, a comment under a post of a female politician reading “room 350” would not be immediately clear what that means.

Room 350 is a phrase referencing a room at Weston hotel where female politicians have to visit and have sex with their male counterparts in exchange for a position in government or a political party. The term is mainly used to target female politicians within the UDA party, because the Weston hotel has been linked to the Deputy President in the past. This explanation is based on semantic analysis and engagement with Kenyan social media users based in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu.



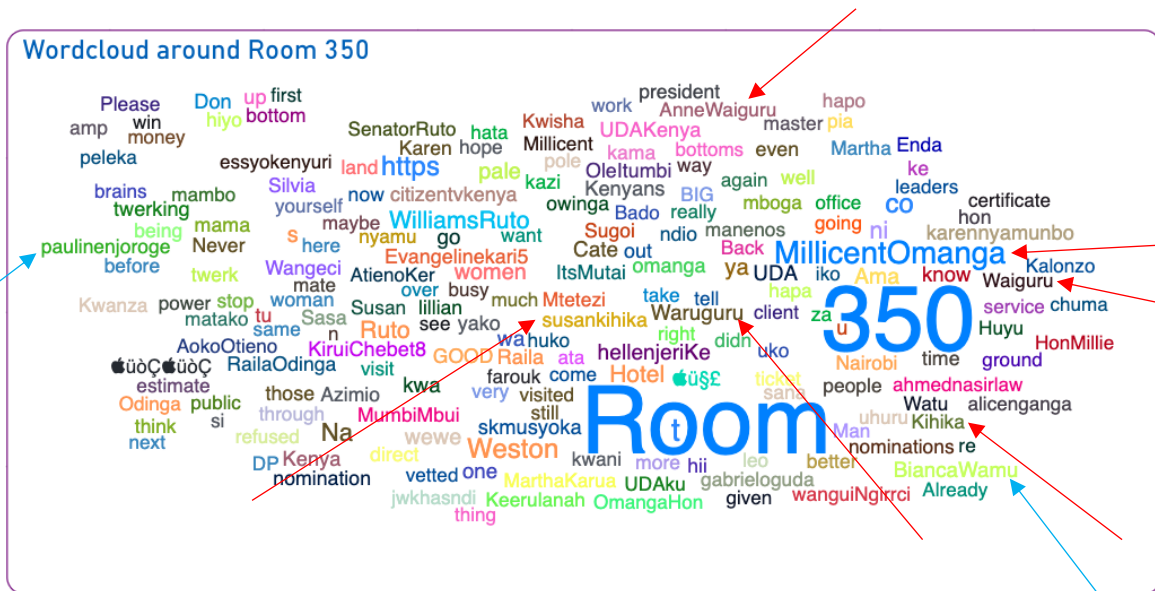
April- May saw 1541 tweets referencing the phrase in a derogatory and bullying manner towards women.

Tweet threads similar to this one on the left, are quite common when bullying women using the phrase “Room 350”. A tweet mentioning a female politician will begin the thread as seen in this example. The tweet is simply describing an ongoing situation involving the position of the Women Representative within the UDA party.

A person then replies to the tweet implying that Millicent Omanga, who is vying for the Women's Rep position on a UDA ticket was handed a direct ticket because of Room 350

where she did well till morning. The use of the coded language enables bullies to get away with harassment as it is not immediately clear what the coded language means.

A look at the wordcloud from the tweets that use the phrase shows the names of female politicians such as **Millicent Omanga, Anne Waiguru, Susan Kihika and Waruguru** that are targeted. It's also important to note that the term is slowly being used to target female social media influencers e.g., **Bianca Wamu, Pauline Njoroge** that engage in political discourse online.



c. **#NoRailaNoPeace:** In May we came across the hashtag no raila no peace. This hashtag has been present in the past months but on May 13<sup>th</sup> there was a spike and the hashtag began trending in the upwards of over 2000 tweets using the hashtag. The use of the hashtag continued slightly on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of May and gradually reduced towards the end of May. While the hashtag seems to have a clear message, further analysis shows that it is used by multiple actors online in different ways.

1. The first user type is seen using it to advocate for a Raila presidency

Do you think it's a lie? #NoRailaNoPeace. Politicians have made a mockery of our democracy in 07, 013 and 017. In 2022, RAO will reign supreme, he has never lost, he'll never loose

2. The second type of user is seen condemning it the hashtag and even suggesting that people have been paid to share the hashtag

#NoRailaNoPeace is a crappy HashTag. Tweeps, ata kama mmrlipwa you are taking this too far. Beware of unintended consequences.

#NoRailaNoPeace is a threatening hash tag. Should be pulled down

**Translation of first tweet:** *Tweeps, even if you have been paid.....*

3. The third type of user is condemning the hashtag by targeting Raila as leader prone to violence

Raila Odinga thrives in violence. Demonstrations, teargas, destruction of public and private land and more so death have been the center of his political career. Am not surprised by #NoRailaNoPeace

Raila ran #NoRailaNoPeace and 41 against 1 and now thinks we have forgotten. In the famous words of uncle Willi, Kuna upungufu ya wanjinga Kenya hii.

**Translation of second tweet last section:** *There is a deficiency of idiots in Kenya.....*

4. The fourth type of user is stating that UDA bloggers have been paid to push the hashtag to blind Kenyans from their internal party challenges.

UDA has decided to trend #NoRailaNoPeace to distract us from the Kenya Kwanza power sharing bogus deal.

Sema kimeumana

UDA minions running #NoRailaNoPeace thinking it will save them from their mess. Ruto will not become president.

The fifth is non other than @RailaOdinga <https://t.co/iEdViSboEt>

5. The fifth type of user takes advantage of the trending hashtag to market their product or service. This is common in Kenya where marketers will jump on a trending hashtag to get their product or service in front of social media users.

Rabbits on sale

+254

#NoRailaNoPeace Kubali matokeo <https://t.co/PAOjOp7Dht>

RETWEET WIDELY MY CLIENT MIGHT BE ON YOUR TL!!

TASTY CHICKEN AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE #EdchickFarms 🍗🍗

#NoRailaNoPeace Sema Kimeumana #UDAKwanza Willy Katuicheza Karua #BitcoinCrash #RawDealForMtKE #RawDeal4MtKenya Friday the 13th #MasculinitySaturday Amerix

Hashtags whether sponsored or organic can have multiple narratives embedded within each use of the hashtag. This can easily mislead social media users to assume that one narrative is trending based on how the hashtag reads. With this understanding, digital peacebuilders can explore these complexities within hashtags to identify actors that push back against harmful narratives and amplify their voices. This amplification moves away from hashtag activism that aims to create a “counter hashtag” to address the one already trending online.

## Methodology

This report is part of a broader initiative to analyze online discourse and specifically monitor hate speech in Kenya in the lead up to the general elections in order to help mitigate the threat of hateful language in fueling violence offline. Hate speech in this context is defined using section 13 of the National Cohesion and Integration Act, where the threshold is underlined by proof that the speech or expression threatens, abuses or insults others based on their ethnicity, and must be intended to stir up ethnic hatred, OR, under section. 62, inciting ethnic hatred, hostility or violence. The report also acknowledges the role of “dangerous speech,” which is a heightened form of hate speech that can catalyze mass violence.

The report provides an analysis of digital and social media discourse related to the electoral process over a 30-day period, including search trends on digital platforms, social media conversations and popular digital news content. Content is tracked using different newsgathering tools that are centered and deployed by a media monitoring tool called Phoenix. Twitter is monitored through its API, Facebook and Instagram are monitored through the Crowdtangle platform and the Facebook API, WhatsApp insights are gathered through anecdotes from community networks and from third party fact checking reports. Telegram is monitored via TGStat API, YouTube is also monitored through its API, while TikTok content is scraped directly from the platform.

The resulting monitoring loop (keywords and selected tools) allows the process to track relevant online discourse data including social media posts, comments or articles. Data collected is analyzed to identify harmful content and developing themes or trends related to the elections and is analyzed for volume, engagements generated, networked patterns, sentiment of conversation user comments and reactions. Where sentiment and tone analysis are included, they are gathered and generated by humans.

Due to the sensitivity, utility and relevance of the content and context, the report is scaled to only show a snapshot of Facebook and Twitter trends. If you are receiving the full report with Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube that includes the network analytics it's because you have subscribed to receive the full analysis content.

For any comments or questions about this report, or to be removed from the distribution list, please contact Caleb Gichuhi at [caleb@howtobuildup.org](mailto:caleb@howtobuildup.org)



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