

Facebook Has Been a Disaster for the World | The New York Times

By Jamelle Bouie

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For years, Myanmar's military used Facebook to incite hatred and genocidal violence against the country's mostly Muslim Rohingya minority group, leading to mass death and displacement. It took until 2018 for Facebook to admit to and apologize for its failure to act.

Two years later, the platform is, yet again, sowing the seeds for genocidal violence. This time it's in Ethiopia, where the recent assassination of Hachalu Hundessa, a singer and political activist from the country's Oromo ethnic group, led to violence in its capital city, Addis Ababa. This bloodshed was, according to Vice News, "supercharged by the almost-instant and widespread sharing of hate speech and incitement to violence on Facebook, which whipped up people's anger." This follows a similar incident in 2019, where disinformation shared on Facebook helped catapult violence that claimed 86 lives in Ethiopia's Oromia region.

The news from Ethiopia comes at the same time as a report about a memo, written by Sophie Zhang, a former data scientist at Facebook. Obtained by BuzzFeed News, the memo shows the company's refusal to take action against governments and political parties that use fake accounts to spread propaganda, mislead citizens and influence elections.

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