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News Item

In Kenya, Influencers Are Hired to Spread Disinformation | WIRED

By Odanga Madung
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> On May 18 of this year, the insidious hashtag #AnarchistJudges appeared on Kenyan Twitter timelines. Apparently driven by a number of faceless bots, and retweeted by a series of sock puppet accounts, the deluge of tweets cast suspicion on both the competence and integrity of senior High Court of Kenya judges that had just shot down the Constitutional Amendments Bill of 2021. Many falsely claimed the judges were involved in narcotics dealings, bribery, and political partisanship. It quickly became one of the country's top trending topics.
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> Such malicious, coordinated disinformation attacks are rapidly growing in Kenya, my Mozilla Foundation colleague Brian Obilo and I have found in a new investigation. Through a series of interviews with influencers involved in these campaigns, we reviewed evidence of a booming, shadowy industry of social media influencers for political hire in Kenya. Members of civil society and journalists alike have increasingly come under disinformation attacks that seek to silence them, muddy their reputations, and stifle their reach.
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> Twitter, which strongly influences the country's news cycle and has exploitable features like its trending algorithm, has been central to these operations.
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Source: In Kenya, Influencers Are Hired to Spread Disinformation | WIRED