



Media Monitoring Report on **HATE SPEECH**

18 June 2023



PEACEBUILDING
FUND



KONRAD
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"Genocide is a process. The Holocaust did not start with the gas chambers. It started with hate speech."



H.E Adama Dieng

Former UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

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About Us

We are a non-profit, non-partisan organisation that aims to strengthen democracy by promoting anti-corruption, freedom of expression and transparency.

We specialise in:

- Investigative journalism
- Media monitoring and factchecking
- Data journalism
- Media and information literacy, including digital literacy
- Capacity building.

About our media monitoring

.....
Our organisation operates a specialised division committed to monitoring and combating hate speech and disinformation. We diligently gather and analyse data, disseminate informative articles, and offer comprehensive training programs aimed at promoting fact-checking and addressing harmful and prejudiced language.

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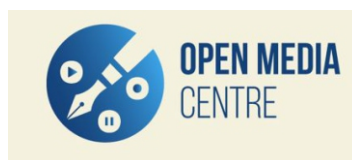
Adkonekt Consulting

Acknowledgement

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- Our media monitoring exercise conducted during the election was possible thanks to the **Media monitoring in The Gambia** project (2021-2022), funded by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). It was through this support that we launched the media monitoring unit.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The election of mayors and area council chairpersons in May 2023 wrapped up The Gambia's first post-dictatorship national election cycle (2021-2023). The three-year long exercise started with the presidential election in December 2021, followed by the National Assembly election in April 2022 and election of ward councilors in March, 2023.

The outcome points to a growing vibrancy of multi-party politics in the country. The ruling National Peoples Party (NPP) had won the presidential election with a significant margin. However, the opposition came out strong in the legislative and local government contests.

The electoral cycle as a whole has been largely peaceful. With the exception of the presidential elections in which the main opposition party, UDP, has rejected and challenged the results, there were no significant disputes over the outcomes of the legislative and local government elections.

However, the level of hate speech and dis/misinformation was alarming. Politicians across the political spectrum uttered and promoted hateful messages and dis/misinformation with impunity.

This was perhaps anticipated. Research on hate speech conducted in the run up to the presidential elections presented a cause for concern². Hate speech and the associated risk for hate crimes had reached worrying levels³. Another study shows that one in six Gambians reported to have experienced discrimination or harassment based on their ethnic identity, covering the

period 2019 to 2020⁴. People reported to be discriminated against based on their last names. Ethnic tensions and 'ethno-politics' were also on the rise⁵.

The prevailing socio-economic and political conditions that fuelled polarisations based on ethnic, religious, and regional cleavages, have been nurtured and exploited throughout the 2021-2023 election cycle. This is evidenced in the hate narratives that emerged in the face of 'bad actors who seek political advantage by pitting tribes, religious affiliation against one another using inflammatory language, hate speech and even incitement to violence.'⁶

Journalists have been given a rather delicate task: 'to expose hate speech for what it is and not amplify its message'⁷.

Malagen has carried out media monitoring during the election period. What started as a factchecking exercise soon developed into something bigger. As we tracked and countered dis/misinformation, we saw an urgent need to respond to the issue of hate speech, which always has the potential, perhaps more than dis/misinformation to discredit elections, and worse, trigger violent conflict.

This media monitoring report provides insight into hate speech in the context of the 2021-2023 electoral cycle. Serious cases of hate speech that are not related to the election were also flagged and countered during the period. The monitoring was carried out by a unit dedicated to tracking and countering of dis/misinformation, hate speech and dangerous speech.

In carrying out media monitoring, our objective was to promote accountability and responsibility in the elections. By tracking and

countering hate speech, we hoped to 'expose hate speech for what it is', name and shame perpetrators, and raise public understanding of the menace.

Our monitoring results show that hate narratives were rampant throughout the election cycle. The presidential election was particularly rife with hate narratives. But by April 2022 when National Assembly Elections were conducted, the tensions had eased especially as opposition parties regained some of the grounds lost in the previous contest. The local government election surprisingly witnessed an escalation of tensions as the ruling party struggled to recover from the losses in the legislative election.

The media monitoring report provides quantitative and qualitative analysis of hate speech incidents that were flagged and countered as part of our monitoring, covering a period of 20 months

(October 2021 to May 2023). The results show the number of incidents of hate speech incidents, which may seem low, but is in fact a drop in the ocean, considering the high standard we set for countering hate speech. After all, on matters of speech, one comment is one too many. Just one hateful comment is enough to cause irreparable damage.

The report also highlights the perpetrators and targets of hate speech in terms of their party and ethnic affiliations. We have provided analysis of the platforms that were used to spread hate speech. In some instances, hate speech articles have triggered some public reaction. We have provided analysis of those reactions to paint a picture of public understanding of hate speech, and how they react to hate speech incidents.

1 *Independent Electoral Commission. 2022. Election Calendar 2021-2023. IEC, 19 July 2020. Available at <https://iec.gm/download/electoral-calendar-021-2023/> [Accessed 17 May 2023].*

2 *JAMMEH, Saikou. 2021. 'Research on hate speech in The Gambia. GPU-UTG September, 2021.*

3 *JOOF D. Emmanuel. 2021. "Worrying Concerns about the levels of bigotry and political intolerance in the country." NHRC [Banjul], 5 July 2021. Available at <https://www.gm-nhrc.org/download-file/3a452d77-e3cc-11eb-86ec-022a5fa1767e>. [Accessed 17 May 2023]*

4 *JAW, Sait Matty, and ISBELL, Thomas. 2020. "All in this together? Social tensions in the post Jammeh Gambia,." Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 404, 2020, p. 2. Available at <https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/ad404-all-together-social-tensions-post-jammeh-gambia/>. [Accessed 17 May 2023].*

5 *UNDP. 2019. "Conflict and Development Analysis Updated June 2019. UNDP June 2019, 2019, p. 7.h <https://gambia.un.org/sites/default/files/2020> [Accessed 17 May 2023].*

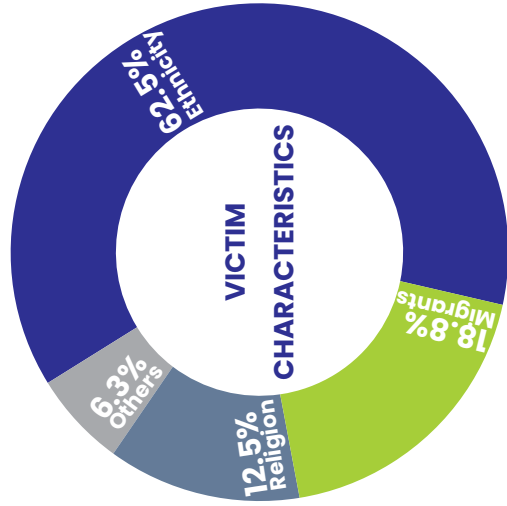
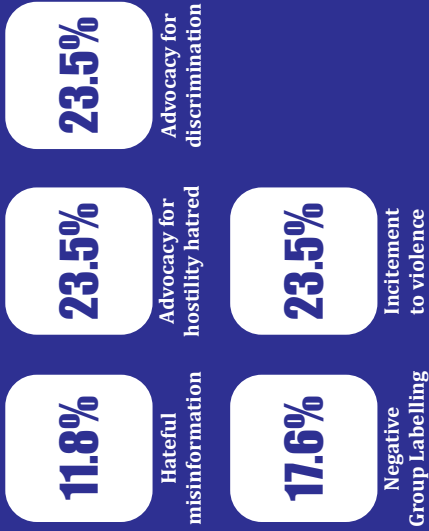
6 *WAKANA, Seraphine. 2022. "UN Resident Coordinator's Statement on The Capacity Building of Media Professionals on Conflict Sensitive Journalism and Countering Hate Speech." UN [Banjul], 07 February 2022. Available at <https://gambia.un.org/en/177607-un-resident->*

7 *As n 7 above.*

DASHBOARD

Hate Speech Incidents 16

TYPE OF HATE SPEECH INCIDENTS



WHO SPEAKS HATE

PARTY AFFILIATION



ETHNIC AFFILIATION



PUBLIC REACTION



RESPONSE TO HATE SPEECH

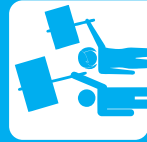
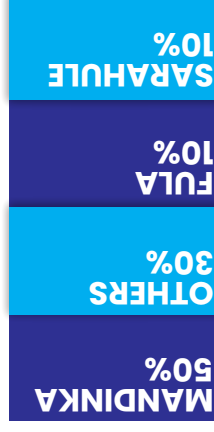


TARGETS OF HATE SPEECH

PARTY AFFILIATION



ETHNIC AFFILIATION



56.3%
POLITICAL RALLY



18.3%
SOCIAL MEDIA



6.3%
MEDIA



6.3%
RELIGIOUS GATHERING



1%
OTHERS

PLATFORMS USED FOR HATE SPEECH

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In October 2021, we convened a technical meeting of *Malagen* staff and media experts. Key outputs include developing media monitoring tools and a working definition of hate speech and dangerous speech.

This was important given the gaps in the legal framework. Research shows that hate speech has not yet been legally defined or prohibited by law in the country. However, there are aspects of the criminal code that directly connect to hate speech, for example, incitement to violence and false publication.

In terms of hate speech, we have adopted the definition provided by the UN:

"any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor."⁸

In terms of dangerous speech, we have adopted the definition provided by Susan Benesch, Founder and Executive Director of the Dangerous Speech Project:

... is any form of expression (speech, text, or images) that can increase the risk that its audience will condone or participate in violence against members of another group.

Between October 2021 and May 2023, we have tracked and countered hate speech, dangerous speech, and dis/misinformation. We have monitored:

1. *a compressive list of media houses and media programmes*
2. *social media handles run by parties and party leaders*
3. *campaign rallies*

In putting together this media monitoring report, we have compiled and analysed the data of articles published by the media monitoring over the period. With this, we have highlighted the scope of hate speech in the context of the elections, identified perpetrators and targets, classified the incidents according to form, type of content and medium used.

⁸ António Guterres. 2019. "United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech." UN, 18 June 2019. Available at <https://www.un.org/en/hate-speech/un-strategy-and-plan-of-action-on-hate-speech>. [Accessed 17 May 2023].

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

The *Malagen* media monitoring focuses on hate speech in the context of the 2021-2023 election cycle. Even though we have flagged cases that are not related to the elections, we did not include cases that fall outside of the three sets noted above.

Our aim was to monitor the campaigns of every candidate/party in every national election. This was not possible even for the presidential election. We have limited capacity in terms of human and financial resources. This means we could not have reporters on the ground for most of the political rallies or go through every recorded speech.

In countering hate speech, two considerations have been made: has the speech gone viral? We defined viral content as any content that was widely circulated either on social media or mainstream media. Other considerations for flagging was the prominence of the source of the content, context and where possible the intent. For example, we monitored opinion leaders because their content or the content they promote are more likely to go viral. This means that other hate speech incidents have gone unreported as the standard set for flagging and countering is quite high.

With the methodological limitations outlined, it is safe to say that while the data and analysis contained in this report are authoritative, it may not be used to determine the scope of hate speech in The Gambia. More comprehensive research, like the one conducted by the GPU, will more accurately establish the scope of hate speech in the country.

ANALYSIS OF MONITORING RESULTS

I. An overview

Hate speech and hate crimes tend to increase during general elections. The climate was rife for the phenomenon throughout the 2021-2023 election cycle. A total of 16 hateful comments have been flagged and countered during the monitoring period.

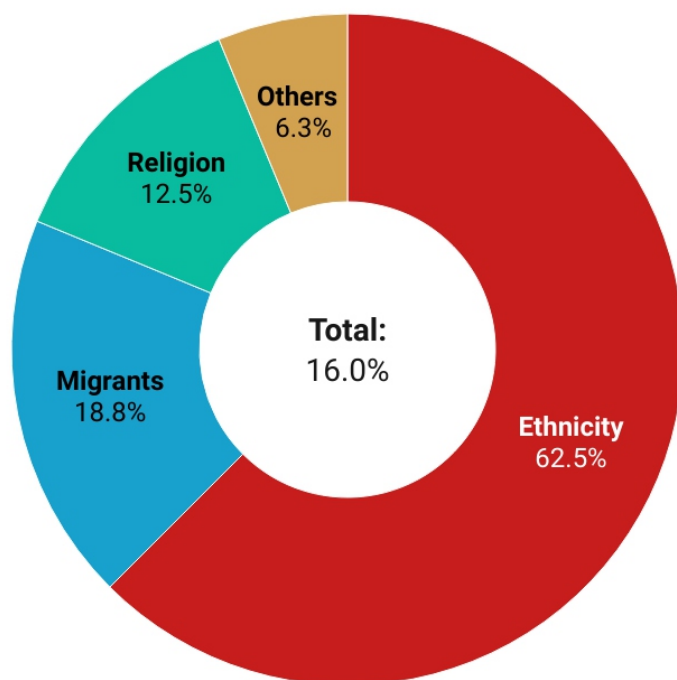
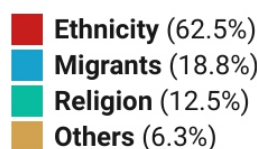
The monitoring results show that individuals and groups have been targeted simply for who they are. Hate narratives that emerged during the election were most often aimed at ethnicity. Regardless of the target, the goal was to create a hostile environment for the target, instil fear in the people, divide communities, or deny people recognition or enjoyment of their fundamental human rights. Hate narratives were most often issued at organised mass campaign meetings, creating inflammatory atmospheres. The speakers are often cheered for making hate speech.

II. Victim characteristics

Hate speech based on ethnicity is the most common form in the review of cases flagged and countered, representing 62.5%. Ethnicity is followed by migrants (18.8%), Religion (12.5%) and others (6.3%).

There are strong claims of the prevalence of gender-based hate speech during elections. Previous research reveals commonness of hate speech on the basis of gender and sexual orientation¹⁰. This media monitoring exercise however did not register cases of this nature. A possible explanation could be the low participation of women in the election contests.

This chart shows the category of people targeted by hate speech. It shows hate speech based on ethnicity is the more common form of hate narratives.



Examples of hate speech

Example 1: Addressing a gathering in Jarra Soma on his 'traditional outreach', the commissioner of police mobile traffic unit, Lamin King Colley, said:

¹⁰ JAMMEH, Saikou. 2021. 'Research on hate speech. GPU-UTG September, 2021, p. 23.

¹¹ JEFFANG, Kebba. 2022. "Lamin King Colley's anti-immigrant comment." Malagen [Banjul], 31 May 2022. Available at <https://malagen.org/factchecking/hate-speech-alert-lamin-king-colleys-anti-immigrant-comment/>. [Accessed 17 May 2023].

"You [parents] give your [commercial] vehicles to non-Gambians, leaving at home your sons who can drive. It is not allowed by law. King Colley does not say that. That is the law and let us stop it. You would see a Momodou Salieu Jallow who owns a shop and decides to buy a vehicle for commercial purposes. Instead of giving the car to a Gambian to operate, he would bring his brother from Guinea or Guinea Bissau, get him the alkalo's certificate and eventually obtain a [driver's] license.

"I am going to fight against this and I will not retreat. Whoever wants to take me anywhere, including Mali, I don't care. I am King Colley, known to this community. I don't brag but I believe in God. That's why I mentioned Farafenni and Jarra Soma where it is rampant. It is not true to have Momodou Bah, a Gambian to come from Jarra Soma. He was not born here."¹¹

This is an example of hate speech made outside of electioneering but was serious enough to warrant countering. It is also an example of hate speech targeted at migrants. The hateful comments perpetuate the dangerous narrative that migrants are responsible for the country's socio-economic challenges, including youth unemployment. It targets people from the Fulani ethnic group, perpetuating the narrative that the Fula are non-Gambians. In flagging and countering the speech, we highlighted the status of Mr Colley as a senior police officer and the potential of his comments to incite citizens against migrants, as had happened in other countries like South Africa.

Example 2: Addressing a political rally in Basse in October 2021, in the run up to the presidential election, the leader of main opposition United Democratic Party, Ousainou Darboe said:

"...they [the Serahules] want to make Adama Barrow and the NPP [National Peoples Party] a Serahuli property. And the truth is, Serahuli people, you did not vote for Adama Barrow in 2016. In 2016, if it were for only you [Serahuli ethnicity], Adama Barrow would not have won. But today you are behaving as if you own NPP."¹²

This is an example of hate speech based on ethnicity. In flagging and countering this speech, we made note of Darboe's status as one of the most influential people in The Gambia whose comments have the potential to divide communities and expose the Serahules to attack or hostility from other ethnic groups. We made reference to the UN definition of hate speech, which states that any attack on an individual and group based on their ethnicity using discretionary language constitutes hate speech.

Example 3: Speaking at a campaign rally in Nov. 21, the national president of ruling NPP, Dembo Bojang, said:

"So, Fulas you are in trouble. Jolas you are in trouble. Serer you are in trouble. Karoninka you are in big trouble. If President Adama Barrow loses this election, we will see ourselves in big trouble. Fulas you will pack your belongings and leave this country. Jolas, they will pack you up and send you out of the country. Any ethnicity that is not Mandinka, you will all pack up your belongings and leave if we lose Adama Barrow. Listen to me carefully and accept my words."¹³

This is another case of hate speech based on ethnicity. In flagging and countering this speech, we made

¹² JEFFANG, Kebba. 2021. "UDP leader's remarks towards Serahuli community." Malagen, 12 Nov. 2021. Available at <https://malagen.org/election-hub/dangerous-speech-alert-udp-leaders-remarks-towards-serahuli-community/>. [Accessed 17 May 2023].

¹³ JEFFANG, Kebba. 2021. "NPP National President incites other tribes against UDP, Mandinkas." Malagen, 1 December 2021. Available at <https://malagen.org/factchecking/hate-speech-alert-npp-national-president-incites-other-tribes-against-udp-mandinkas/>. [Accessed 17 May 2023]

¹⁴ JEFFANG, Kebba. 2021. "Essa Faal is Ahmadiyya, Serahules should deny him vote." Malagen, 21 November 2021. Available at <https://malagen.org/factchecking/hate-speech-alert-essa-faal-is-ahmadiyya-serahules-should-deny-him-vote/>. [Accessed 17 May 2023].

note of Mr Bojang's status as one of the most influential people in The Gambia. He is an NPP figurehead and an adviser to President Barrow. His comments constitute incitement to discrimination and hatred and have the potential to divide communities and expose the Mandinka people to attack or hostility from other ethnic groups.

Example 4: Addressing an NPP campaign rally in Basse in Nov. 21, in the run up to the presidential election, the leader of Gambia Action Party, Musa Yali Batchilly, said:

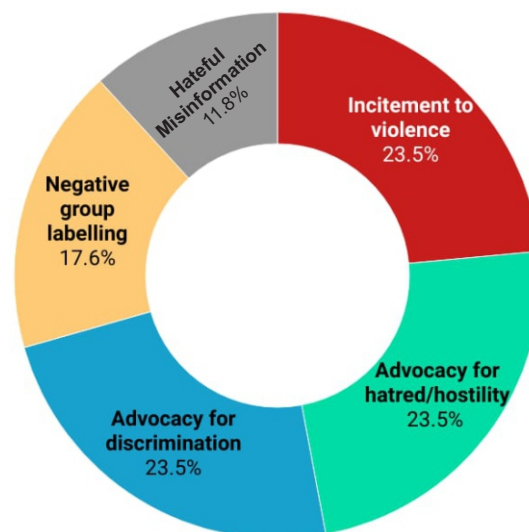
"Essa Fall is finished because he goes against the Prophet. He is Ahmadiyya. With all his activities around the country, he is being sponsored by the Ahmadiyya. Gambians and Soninke [Serahuli] should know that the independent candidate Essa Faal is an enemy to the prophet, and you should not give him your votes. His problem is that he claims he is educated, he travelled around the world, yet he was complaining about the vehicle saga as the richest man in The Gambia. He goes to the Ahmadiyya and claims he is a Muslim leader."¹⁴

This is an example of hate speech based on religion, even though it happened in the context of elections. In flagging this speech, we made note of Batchilly's influence as a political party leader, his attack on Mr Faal [and the Ahmadis] as enemies of the Serahule people. Ahmadis, a minority religious group in Gambia, are targets of hate speech and hate crimes and comments like this constitutes an advocacy for discrimination and hatred.

iii. Type of hateful content

Per the definition adopted by this media monitoring, hate speech has three constitutive elements, namely, advocacy for hatred/hostility, advocacy for discrimination, and incitement to violence. But hate speech is also manifested in different forms, including insults, hateful misinformation, negative group labelling and misogyny.

In the review of cases flagged and countered, increment to violence, advocacy for hatred/hostility and advocacy for discrimination each represent 23.5%, followed by negative group labelling (17.6%) and hateful disinformation (11.8).



Example 1: Writing on Facebook in April, in the run up to the National Assembly elections, youth leader Dembo Kambi said:

"Dear Militants and supporters of the United Democratic Party, For defending our election process means everything to us. Stop every illegitimate voter from voting in this election. Use every means humanly possible. The Gambia so far is very much proud of you our galant young men and women for standing by The Gambia. Destroy, wound, maim and dismantle any person, institution and object that stands in your way to defend your national flag. I individually take responsibility for all your actions."¹⁵

This is an example of hate narrative against migrants. The comments meet the criteria for flagging because of the status of Mr Kambi as a youth leader, a former chairman of the National Youth Council. The comments perpetuate the narrative that non-Gambians (migrants) interfered in the election, and therefore could

¹⁵ JEFFANG, Kebba. 2022. 'Destroy, maim and dismantle' 'non-Gambian voters.'" Malagen, 9 April 2022. Available at <https://malagen.org/factchecking/dangerous-speech-alert-destroy-maim-and-dismantle-non-gambian-voters/>. [Accessed 17 May 2023].

¹⁶ JEFFANG, Kebba. 2021. "Coalition Sacks All Non-Mandinkas From Top Gov't Jobs." Malagen, 8 November 2021. Available at <https://malagen.org/factchecking/fact-check-coalition-sacks-all-non-mandinkas-from-top-govt-jobs/>. [Accessed 17 May 2023].

¹⁷ KANURI, Ben. 2016. 'UN Advisor condemns Yahya Jammeh over genocide remarks'. Africa News, 11 June, 2026. Available at <https://www.africanews.com/2016/06/11/un-adviser-condemns-yahya-jammeh-over-genocide-remarks/> [accessed 18 May, 2023].

¹⁸ JEFFANG, Kebba. 2022. "Imam Fatty attacks ahmadis." Malagen, 6 June, 2022. Available at <https://malagen.org/factchecking/hate-speech-alert-imam-fatty-attacks-ahmadis/> [accessed 18 May, 2023].

expose them to hostility, especially as he apparently incites violence against them.

Example 2: Addressing a GDC campaign rally at his native Kanilai village in Nov. 2021, through an online call, former president Yahya Jammeh, said:

"As soon as the Coalition came into power, they [government] dismissed all the civil servants, senior civil servants, managing directors that are not Mandinka...Because all the ministers were appointed by UDP, ambassadors were appointed by UDP, the security services are all headed by Mandinkas, the ministers are Mandinkas, all the ambassadors, maybe except a few are all Mandinkas."¹⁶

This is an example of hateful disinformation that constitutes incitement to hostility/hatred towards the Mandinkas. The comments meet the criteria for flagging because of the status of Jammeh. The hateful misinformation perpetuates the narrative that the UDP is a Mandinka party that is out to suppress minority ethnic groups. Jammeh has a track record of making such hateful comments, the most infamous being when he threatened to eliminate the Mandinka ethnic group.¹⁷

Example 3: Addressing a religious gathering in June, 2022, the influential imam Abdoulie Fatty said:

"Ahmadis are troublesome people. People become rude when they accept this religion and that is why all of you should prepare for them because only Allah knows what comes next. You should train yourselves in Kung Fu and judo skills and many different other skills because only God knows how this will end. All the imams should learn these skills and I am ready to take the challenge."¹⁸

This is an example of negative group labelling as a form of hate speech, but also qualifies for advocacy for hostility and incitement to violence. In countering the hate speech, we made note of Imam Fatty's status and influence, his track record of making hate speech based on sexual orientation and against minority religious groups.

In a viral WhatsApp audio obtained by *Malagen*, politician Bakary Jaiteh, known as Baxo, said:

"The no-to-alliance people believe that Talib is a good, respectful, and honourable man and their intention is to vote for him. They are only doing it because of the hate they have for Fabakary Tombong Jatta. Talib Bensouda is among those who created the #GambiaHasDecided. He is such a bad rat. He is worse than a rat. He's a hypocrite and a hater of [Yahya] Jammeh. No-to-alliance people, don't empower your enemies because if you do, what they will do to you we will all see it. Please, do not do this."

"Bakary Badjie is a Jola. All the KMC natives, people of Kombo and the Gambian citizens have all shown support for him and it is only his relatives from Jola ethnicity who are refusing to support him just because of the hate you have for Fabakary Tombong Jatta. You want to empower that 'sula ganarr' [a derogatory term used to refer to people from North Africa] who came from Lebanon or I don't know where his blood appeared in the Gambia is the one you guys want to vote for."¹⁹

This is an example of hate speech originally made on WhatsApp but reproduced on social media and has gone viral enough to meet the standard for flagging and countering. It is an example of advocacy for discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and of origin.

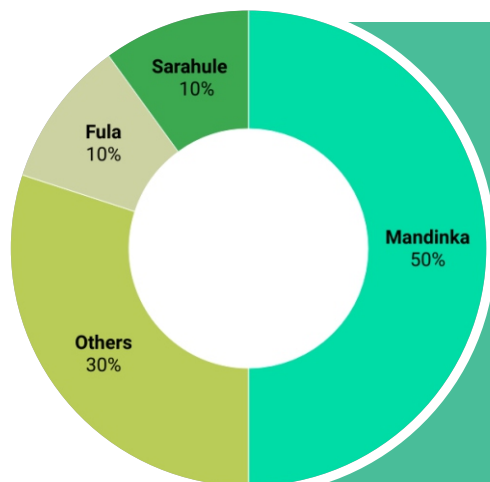
iv. Who speaks hate

About 13 out of 16 hate speech incidents flagged and countered occurred in the context of the election. Five political parties and an independent candidate participated in the presidential election. The parties NPP, UDP, GDC, and PDOIS all led an alliance, and are described based on their alliances.

¹⁹ JEFFANG, Kebba. 2023. "Talib Bensouda is a rat with Lebanese blood." *Malagen*, 8 March 2023. Available at <https://malagen.org/factchecking/hate-speech-alert-talib-bensouda-is-a-rat-with-lebanese-blood/>. [Accessed 17 May 2023].

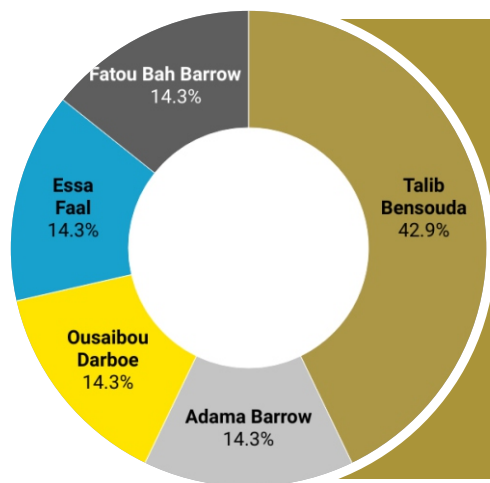
v. Targets of hate speech

Ethnic and religious groups have come under attack in the review of hate speech cases flagged and countered. Attack on the basis of ethnicity is the most common form. In this regard, at least 63% of the total



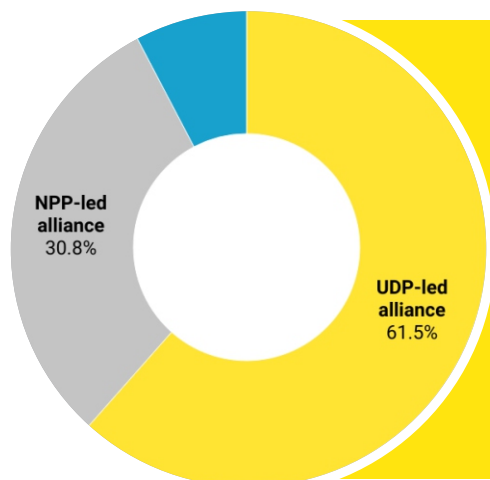
a) Attack on the basis of ethnicity

In terms of attacks on ethnicity, the Mandinka ethnic group has been targeted the most, representing 50%, followed by Others 30%, Fula and Sarahule each 10%. Curiously, most of the hateful comments towards Mandinkas were made by fellow ethnic Mandinkas. In terms of attacks on religious groups, 100% of the cases flagged and countered were made towards the Ahmadiyya muslim group. The Other category includes the likes of Talib Bensouda, who were attacked for their origin/ethnicity.



b) Political affiliation of targets of hate speech

In terms of the political affiliation of the targets of hate speech, the UDP-led alliance and its members received more attacks (61.5%), followed by NPP (30.8%), and independent candidate Essa Faal (7.7%). The attacks on Mayor Talib Bensouda represent the majority of the attacks on the UDP.



c) Hate speech targeting individuals

Hate speech comments were also directed at individuals for who they are. Out of 16 hate speech comments flagged and countered by *Malagen*, 7 were directed at individuals. In this category, Talib Bensouda faced more attacks than any other.

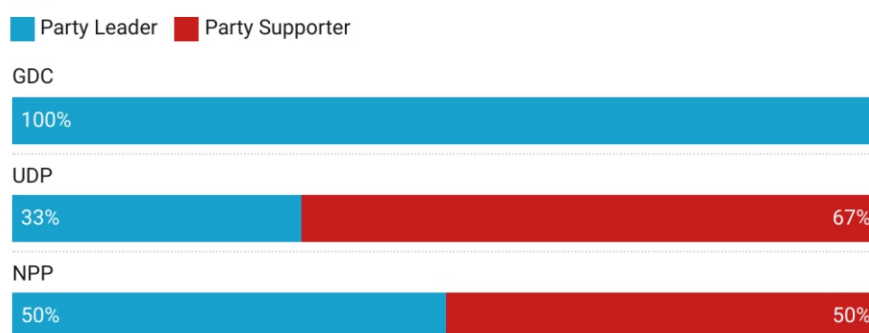
a) Party leaders vs party supporters

Data collected shows that political party leaders have made more hateful comments than even their supporters. Former President Yahya Jammeh leads in this category, uttering 100% of the hate speech cases for the GDC-led alliance.

Our media monitoring registered zero hate speech incidents for other contestants, including PDOIS-led alliance, Independent Candidate Essa Faal, and National Unity Party.

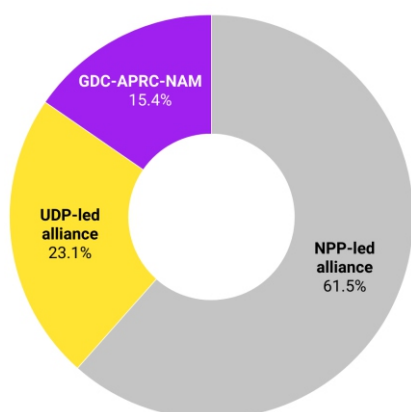
Party leader here means those in senior leadership positions of the parties. That is why besides President Barrow, other political leaders like Dembo (By Force) Bojang and Hamat Bah have been categorised as party leaders in the NPP-led alliance. In the case of UDP, party supporters made more hate speech than the leadership where only Ousainou Darboe's comments were flagged for UDP.

This graph shows that party leaders made more hateful comments than party supporters.



b) Party affiliation of perpetrators

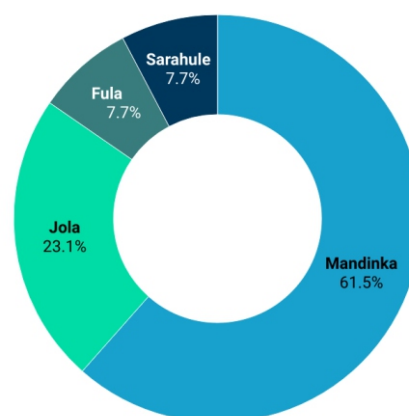
We have studied the party affiliation of the people whose comments have been flagged and countered. The monitoring results show that the ruling NPP-led alliance by some distance made more hate speech (61.5%), followed by UDP-led alliance (23.1%) and GDC-led alliance (15.4%).



c) Ethnic affiliation of perpetrators

We have studied the ethnicity of those whose hateful comments were flagged as well as

the ethnicity of the targets of hate speech. With regards the former, monitoring results show that those who identify as Mandinkas make the most hate speech, representing 61.5%, followed by Jola (23.1%), Fula and Sarahule each (7.7%). In total, 13 individuals have made hate speech in the cases flagged and countered. It is important to note that even though President Barrow's ethnicity is a

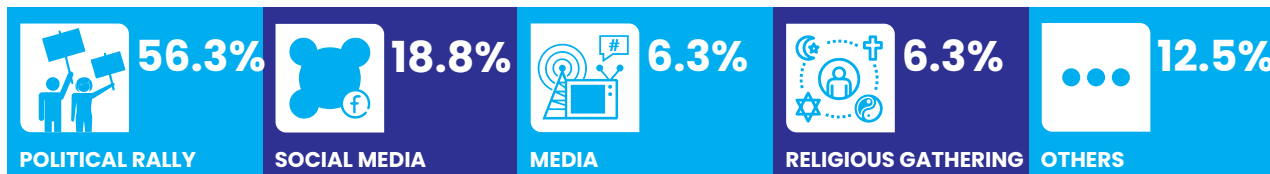


subject of debate, this research categorised him Mandinka as stated by him in The Standard Newspaper publication²⁰.

20 BAH, Omar. 2019. "Barrow said he's a Mandinka." *The Standard*, 5 Nov. 2019. Available at <https://standard.gm/barrow-says-he-is-a-mandinka/> [Accessed May 18, 2023].

vi. Platforms used

The hate speech incidents that have been flagged and countered are originally made on different platforms. Review of cases shows that more hateful comments were made at mass political rallies (56.3%), followed by social media (18.8%).



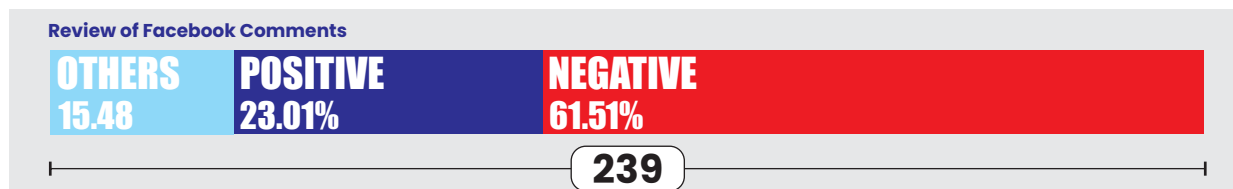
vii. Public reaction to media monitoring

In this section, we have provided analysis of how the public/reader has reacted to the flagging and countering of hate speech. We have reviewed the number of views on the website where the media monitoring articles are published and on Facebook where the articles are shared.

The analytics show that the articles on hate speech have registered a total of 16,302 views on the website. On Facebook, the reach is 102,211, and 239 comments in total.

Beyond the numbers, we have reviewed the comments on Facebook. The results show that the majority of the comments received are negative, representing 62%. Negative means the people who made comments on the articles have sided with the perpetrator. Positive on the other hand means people who agree that the people being flagged and countered are wrong.

It is not all the articles that have received more negative than positive reaction. Some articles have attracted more positive than negative comments. The public reaction seems to depend on the polarising nature of the issue. For example, the article countering hate speech by Imam Fatty against the Ahmadis attracted the most comments (117), out of which only 8 are positive, compared to 82 negative comments.



IX. Response to hate speech incidents

What happens when someone makes a hateful expression! Available data points to impunity. There is a general lack of interest from the government, political parties, or the civil society to address hate speech.

At party level, leaders are found to be perpetrators of hate speech. They also condone it from their supporters. Political rallies are fertile ground for hateful misinformation. More than half of contents flagged by media monitoring were made at political rallies. Hundreds of party supporters are often in attendance, and they react to hateful misinformation by their leaders with laughter and applause. Monitoring results show that there was only one case of clarification and apology out of 16 cases of hate speech flagged and countered. That is the one involving the police commissioner, Lamin King Colley, who has publicly apologised and withdrew his comments²⁷.

Our monitoring did not register any condemnation by any of the political parties as targets or as perpetrators. Nor has the Independent Electoral Commission or the Inter-Party Committee (IPC) publicly condemned any of the hate speech incidents flagged and countered.

Our monitoring did not register any condemnation or reaction from the mainstream or organised civil society. The only civil society response to a hate speech incident was made by a pro-Serahule group, The Team, in response to UDP leader's attack on Serahules²².

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is a notable exception to the apathy towards hate speech. The NHRC has occasionally responded by public condemnation. In the run up to the presidential election, the Commission published an advisory addressing hate speech²³.

The Commission has condemned 'disturbing political audio messages' in the run up to the election of mayors and chairpersons.²⁴

Response to Hate Incidents	4		
Type of Response			
Clarification & Apology	Condemnation by Political Parties	Condemnation by Civil Society	
1	0	1	
Arrest & Detention	Condemnation by Religious group	Condemnation by IEC/IPC	Others
1	0	0	1

III. Hate speech and the media

a. Media As Original Source Of Hate Speech

Hate speech is quite associated with journalism. However, review of hate speech incidents shows that the media is the original source of only 1 out of 16 cases. This is by several Senegalese media outlets that published hateful misinformation targeting the UDP leader Ousainou Darboe.

b. Media as a conduit hate speech

While the journalists in The Gambia may not be the original source of the hate speech incidents flagged and countered, there is still a cause for concern. The media have served as a conduit for the spread of hate speech during the election. A good number of hateful comments that were flagged and countered were published by the media. Some incidents were broadcast LIVE on radio, TV, and online. While some hate speech incidents were event based, for example, political rallies, there are instances where some media houses voluntarily reproduced hate speech from other sources without any context and in a manner that amplifies the hate message.

c. Media as a tool for combating hate speech

Malagen media monitoring has attracted some of the existing media platforms. For example, the Mandinka News Hour host on King FM, Ebrima Jarra, appears to have taken keen interest in the articles, airing almost all the hate speech monitoring articles in the local Mandinka language. The Standard Newspaper has also reproduced some of the articles, attracting much wider public reaction.

This effort by those media houses with a wider audience is significant. They expose the menace to a wider audience, contribute to the naming and shaming of perpetrators and raise public understanding of what constitutes hate speech.

21 GAGIGO, Buba. 'Commissioner King Colley: I withdraw my statement.' *Kerr Fatou*, May 31, 2022. <https://www.kerrfatou.com/commissioner-king-colley-i-withdraw-my-statement/> [accessed May 20, 2023].

22 FATU NETWORK. 2021. 'Group issues statement over Darboe's attack on Sarahules'. Available at <https://www.fatunetwork.net/group-issues-statement-over-darboes-attack-on-sarahules/> [accessed May 20, 2023].

23 NHRC. 2021. 'Worrying Concerns about the levels of bigotry and political intolerance in the country'. [accessed May 20, 2023]. Available [file:///Users/malagen/Downloads/Statement-on-the-political-climate-of-The-Gambia%20\(1\).pdf](file:///Users/malagen/Downloads/Statement-on-the-political-climate-of-The-Gambia%20(1).pdf)

24 THE POINT. 2023. 'NHRC condemns disturbing political audio messages ahead of May 20 elections.' *The Point Newspaper*, May 5, 2023. Available at <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/>

I do receive a lot of reactions, mostly positive. Many see it as an accountability mechanism to bring sanity to our national politics. A case in point was the article countering Bakary Jaiteh. He was remorseful about the act and throughout the campaign, he did not indulge in such again.

Ebrima Jarra

RECOMMENDATIONS

Political parties should address hate speech:

- Political parties should tackle hate speech. Parties should establish disciplinary committees and implement the code of conduct for election campaigns. Parties should institute and implement a policy of publicly condemning hate speech especially when made by party members.
- The Inter-Party Committee should uphold its MoU and enforce its terms in achieving its objective of decent policies.
- Election stakeholders, inclusive of IEC and election observers, should develop tools for early warning and detection of online harmful content during elections.
- The IEC should enforce the electoral laws especially on the conduct of political parties, and their leaders and supporters.

Strengthening of data collection and reporting

- The Gambia Police Force should effectively collect data on hate crimes, and the ministry of interior should periodically report to the National Assembly.
- Civil society and media organisations should be strengthened to effectively collect data on hate incidents and dis/misinformation.
- There is a need for more collaboration in the area of data collection on hate speech, as well as sharing of expertise and coordination of activities.

Strengthening of content moderation

- Media and civil society organisations should work closely with social media platforms, including Meta, Twitter, YouTube and TikTok, for effective content moderation.
- The Media Council of The Gambia should adopt a proactive approach to addressing hate speech in the media. The Council should not wait to receive complaints on hate speech in the media. It should actively monitor hate speech content in the media, carry out its own investigations and make decisions on the conduct of journalists. The Council should develop a comprehensive ethical guidelines for media and hate speech, and carryout media training programmes to equip journalists with skills and tools to address hate speech.

Individual responsibility:

Each and every individual must realise his or her duty to refrain from indulging in hate speech or sharing hateful content over any medium. This responsibility includes educating others about hate speech with the purpose of curbing the practice.

Malagen

[mala-gen] noun.

Malagen means truth

Malagen is a choice made consciously and conscientiously, keeping in mind the history of our peoples and our Republic and our firm belief in the Pulitzer creed that "Our Republic and its Press will rise and fall together."



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