

Meta can be sued in Kenya over posts related to Ethiopia violence, court rules

A Kenyan court has ruled that Facebook's parent company Meta can be sued in the East Africa country over its alleged role in promoting content that led to ethnic violence in neighbouring Ethiopia, a plaintiff in the case said.

By [Hereward Holland](#) 7 Apr 2025



The logo of Meta is seen at the entrance of the company's temporary stand ahead of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, 18 January 2025. Reuters/Yves Herman/File Photo

The landmark case, which stems from alleged hate speech on the platform during the 2020-2022 civil war in northern Ethiopia's Tigray region, could have implications for how Meta works with content moderators globally.

The company has argued that local courts do not have the power to hear cases against it where it is not registered as a company.

Kenya's High Court rejected that argument in its ruling on Thursday, said the Katiba Institute, which is a plaintiff in the case alongside two Ethiopian researchers.

"The court here has refused to shy away from determining an important global matter, recognising that homegrown issues must be addressed directly in our courts," said Nora Mbagathi, the institute's executive director.

A Meta spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



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The plaintiffs allege that Facebook's recommendation systems amplified violent posts in Ethiopia during the Tigray war.

Plaintiff Abraham Meareg alleges that his father, Meareg Amare, was killed in 2021 following threatening posts on Facebook. Fisseha Tekle, an Amnesty International researcher, says he faced online hate for human rights work in Ethiopia.

They are demanding that Meta create a restitution fund for victims of hate and violence and alter Facebook's algorithm to stop promoting hate speech.

Meta has previously said it invested heavily in content moderation and removed hateful content from the platform.

The case is the third to be brought against Meta in Kenya, where the company also faces lawsuits from content moderators employed by a local contractor who say they faced poor working conditions and were fired for trying to organise a union.

Meta has responded that it requires partners to provide industry-leading conditions.

The company, which had invested billions and hired thousands of content moderators globally over the years to police sensitive content, in January scrapped its US fact-checking program.

It also said at the time that it would stop proactively scanning for hate speech and other types of rule-breaking, reviewing such posts only in response to user reports.

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