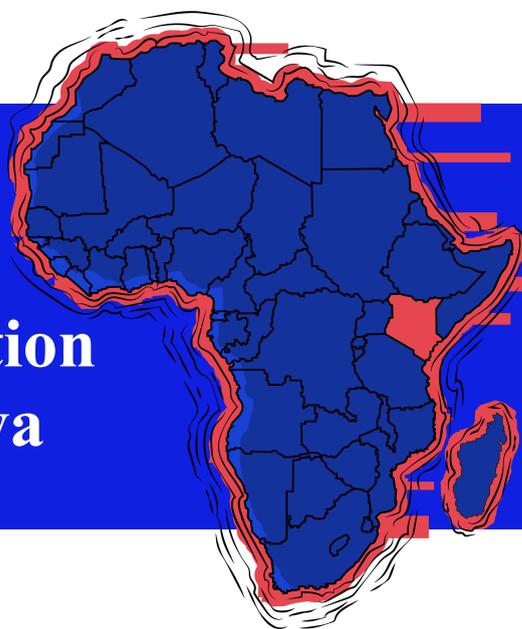


Pulse Report

Biweekly overview of information manipulation & interference in Kenya



*This **PULSE Report** is a biweekly analysis of coordinated online hate speech, cyberbullying and trolling, information manipulation, and other online harms, as well as the abuse of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to target vulnerable communities or subvert public discourse in Kenya. It also identifies weaponised narratives and the key actors undermining information integrity. It analyses the tactics or techniques used to subvert or polarise local audiences.*

1. Executive summary

Kenya's youth-led protests were met with violence, manipulated information campaigns and digital intrusion. Between 25 June and 12 July 2025, Kenya's wave of anti-government protests was met with a coordinated campaign of repression and disinformation, widely seen as state-linked. The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) reported an attack on its offices by alleged hired thugs ahead of a major planned protest, while civil society groups, eyewitnesses, and survivors documented multiple incidents of sexual violence targeting female protesters. Online, coordinated hashtag campaigns such as [#LordOfViolence](#), [#ArrestTerroristActivists](#), and [#FinancersOfChaos](#) tried to delegitimise the protests by framing them as ethnically motivated or foreign-funded. In response, [#WeAreAllKikuyus](#) emerged to challenge tribal narratives and defend the legitimacy of the protests as a nationwide, youth-led movement. Amid the unrest, Kenya's [vote](#) in support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) rights at the United Nations (UN) triggered a backlash, with critics accusing president William Ruto, a self-declared devout Christian, of hypocrisy. Meanwhile, the discovery of a website allegedly selling citizens' personal data raised fresh concerns about data privacy.

Notable narratives and incidents

A narrative is a technique for presenting or understanding a situation or series of events, promoting a particular viewpoint. Information manipulators develop 'persistent' narratives that play on emotions, fears, or pre-existing beliefs to inject an ideological spin on the facts, manipulate public perceptions, and exploit cognitive biases that shape public opinion.

- a. **The state is repressing and silencing dissent:** X posts accused the government of using violence and intimidation to silence dissent. Users described the attack on the KHRC offices on 06 July 2025 as a state-sponsored move to silence calls for justice. Reports of state-enabled [sexual violence](#) against female protesters also emerged, which many social media users saw as an effort to intimidate demonstrators and undermine the protest movement.
- b. **Ruto is a hypocrite for voting for LGBTQ+ rights:** Kenya's vote supporting LGBTQ+ rights at the UN on 07 July 2025 saw Ruto labelled a hypocrite for promoting LGBTQ+ rights while claiming to be a devout Christian.

- c. **Kenyans' personal data is not safe** : An X post exposed datakenya.shop, a now-defunct website allegedly selling Kenyans' personal data, raising concerns about the efficacy of the Data Protection Act 2019.
- d. **Tribal fires stoked by politicians**: Between 25 June and 12 July 2025, a coordinated X campaign alleged that politicians from the Mount Kenya region were fuelling violence during protests for political gain. A counter-campaign rejected the ethnic framing, defending the protests as a unified call for justice and accountability amid shared economic grievances.
- e. **Activists, protest leaders, and independent journalists are foreign-funded to destabilise Kenya**: Within the same period, two coordinated hashtag campaigns on X, #FinancersofChaos and #ArrestTerroristActivists, accused activists leading protests of receiving foreign funding to instigate chaos and violence.

County radar: The notable emerging incidents or campaigns at the county level

This section provides a concise overview of notable incidents, campaigns, and insights into emerging trends and issues in the information landscape within the focus counties (Busia, Homa Bay, Lamu, Mombasa, Nairobi, and Nakuru). It aims to inform readers about the emerging conversations shaping public discourse in these countries.

- a. **Gendered attacks on women politicians**: From 25 June to 08 July 2025, gendered social media attacks targeted women in politics in Busia, Lamu, and Nairobi counties. Former women representative Florence Mutua was [attacked](#) for her Kamba ethnicity, while Lamu East member of parliament (MP) Ruweida Obo and a female activist faced [misogynistic](#) insults. Nairobi women representative Esther Passaris was also insulted for advocating for a bill that sought to ban protests within 100 metres of important state institutions.

Key actors

An actor is a person, group, company, or nation-state that acts with deliberate purpose. Information manipulators are considered bad actors who purposely and repeatedly engage in manipulative or disruptive behaviour, which is usually to radicalise, polarise, or subvert the public.

- a. **Individual actors**: Two actors, [Cyprian Nyakundi](#) and [@VictorMuta54071](#), shaped protest narratives on X, with Nyakundi also launching [#ByeByePassaris](#) to criticise Nairobi women's representative Passaris. Meanwhile, [@VictorMuta54071](#) amplified [#ArrestTerroristActivists](#), framing activists as donor-influenced saboteurs.

Noteworthy tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs):

TTPs describe the behaviour and strategies threat actors use, focusing on the structured frameworks or infrastructure they use for executing cyberattacks. Using TTPs to diagnose information manipulation allows investigators to develop early warning systems. It also allows watchdogs to identify vulnerabilities in influence operations that can be used to disrupt the attack.

- a. **Develop AI-generated images (Deepfakes)**: This [tactic](#) was evident in an AI-generated [deepfake image](#) depicting Ruto dressed in a rainbow-coloured outfit and wearing pink and orange lipstick and earrings, portraying him as a supporter of the LGBTQ+ community.
- b. **Create hashtags and search artefacts**: The hashtags #FinancersOfChaos and #ArrestTerroristActivists were used to accuse protest leaders of receiving foreign funding, while #ByeByePassaris was deployed to attack Passaris.

- c. **Reframe context:** This [tactic](#) was used in the #LordofViolence campaign to reframe the protests as a Kikuyu-led uprising orchestrated by Mt Kenya political figures.

2. Weaponised words: the narratives and incidents shaping public discourse

This section highlights amplified ‘meta’ narratives, citing specific examples and listing a selection of the most noteworthy incidents or narratives.

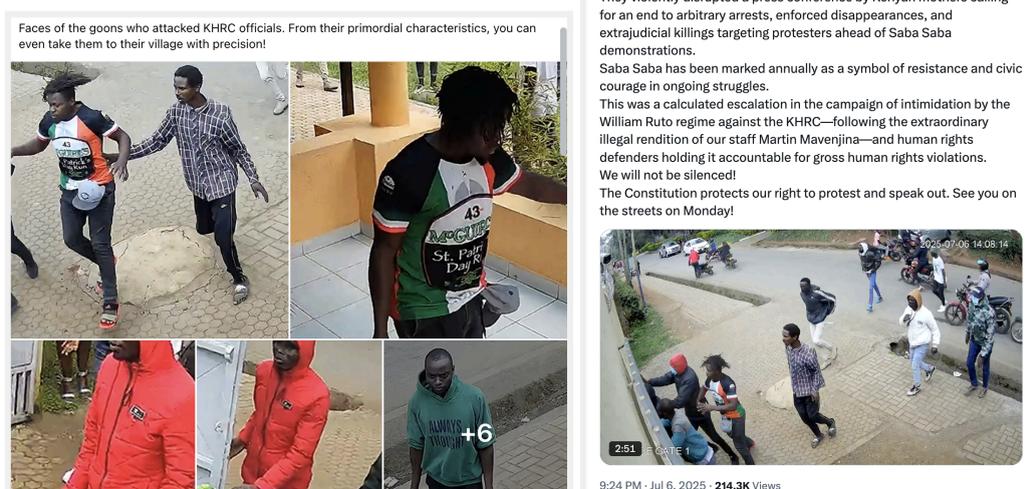
a. The state is repressing and silencing dissent

A major narrative on social media accused the government of using violence, intimidation, and state apparatus to suppress civil society, human rights defenders, and citizens following three waves of anti-government protests in June and July 2025.

i. Government accused of using thugs to silence calls for justice for killed protesters

On 06 July 2025, [KHRC](#) reported that suspected state-sponsored goons [stormed](#) its offices to disrupt a press conference. The event, organised by mothers demanding an end to arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings of protesters, was held ahead of protests planned for 07 July 2025 to mark the 35th anniversary of the 1990 pro-democracy Saba Saba uprising. Security footage showed the attackers arriving on motorcycles, vandalising property, and stealing from journalists and other attendees. In a statement on X, the commission condemned the raid as a calculated escalation in state intimidation. It linked the incident to the recent extraordinary rendition of Martin Mavunjina, a human rights defender working for the organisation, accusing the government of intensifying its crackdown on civic actors exposing rights violations.

Between 25 June and 08 July 2025, there were 23 mentions ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)) of ‘KHRC’ and ‘goons’ or ‘thugs’ on X, which generated 10,600 views. During the same period, there were 537 mentions of these terms on Facebook ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)), receiving 4.5 million views and 32,463 reactions. Analysis showed that 88.9% of the mentions were [negative](#), while 11.1% were [neutral](#). One X [post](#) condemned the attack, calling it state-sanctioned violence on human rights defenders, while [another](#) called it an attack on peaceful assembly and free speech.



Screenshots of a [Facebook](#) and [X](#) post showing thugs attacking the KHRC event (Source: CfA using Facebook and X)

ii. State-enabled sexual violence used to suppress dissent

Protesters, survivors, and civil society actors reported widespread sexual violence against women during and after the 25 June 2025 protests, held to mark the one-year anniversary of the deadly 2024 anti-tax demonstrations. Accounts described women being forcibly pulled from motorcycles, gang raped, and robbed during protest dispersals. Njeri wa Migwi, a frontline [gender rights defender](#) and founder of [Usikimye](#), an NGO that addresses gender-based violence, [posted on X](#) that she received distress calls from women and was coordinating emergency medical response for sexual violence survivors. A Nairobi-based support centre for sexual violence survivors received over [20 cases](#) on the evening of the protests. Endfemicideke, a [social movement](#) raising awareness about femicide, [confirmed](#) that such violence extended beyond Nairobi. Between 07 June and 11 July 2025, conversations about protest-related sexual violence generated 4,456 mentions, 526,508 views, and 32,808 engagements on X.



Screenshot of [Endfemicideke](#) saying protest-related sexual violence occurred across multiple towns (Source: CfA using X)

Some X users suggested the attacks were part of a [state-backed](#) effort to use sexual violence as a weapon of [repression](#). They argued this violence was meant to punish dissent, [discredit](#) the protest movement, and weaken public support by linking protesters to chaos and crime. Posts also shared [videos](#) of alleged hired thugs moving freely near police vehicles. While the footage did not show sexual assaults, users [claimed](#) it proved security forces allowed or enabled the violence to achieve political goals.



Screenshot of an X [post](#) accusing the state of enabling violence to discredit protests (Source: CfA using X)

In response, several X users expressed solidarity with survivors, condemning the gendered violence and [sharing](#) resources, including guidance on accessing Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), prophylaxis for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and emergency contraception.

Several X users [described](#) the sexual violence as part of a historical pattern in which women's bodies are weaponised during political unrest. They called for recognition of these acts as deliberate human rights violations rather than protest fallout.



Screenshot of X [post](#) linking protest sexual violence to a systemic failure to protect African women (Source: CFA using X)

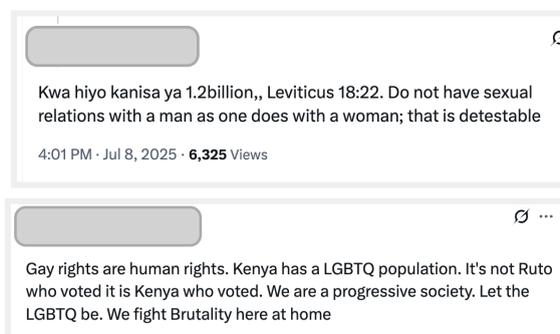
However, some users dismissed the reports as fabricated or donor-driven, demanding medical proof before believing survivors. Some users [mocked](#) or minimised the incidents, framing them as exaggerated or limited to certain ethnic communities.

b. Ruto is a hypocrite for voting for LGBTQ+ rights

On 07 July 2025, Kenya [voted](#) in favour of renewing the UN Human Rights Council's mandate to uphold and protect LGBTQ+ rights globally for another three years. The resolution passed with 29 votes in favour, backed by other countries including Chile, Germany, and South Africa, while several African states and Qatar opposed it.

In Kenya, where homosexuality is widely opposed on cultural and religious grounds, the country's vote saw users accuse Ruto of [hypocrisy](#) for [supporting](#) LGBTQ+ rights while promoting himself as a 'God-fearing' leader and embedding Christianity in government spaces. As part of the argument, users cited a 03 July 2025 [report](#) that said Ruto was building a Kes 1.2 billion (\$9.2 million) church inside state house grounds, questioning the separation of church and state. Ruto [defended](#) the new church project, saying the current iron-sheet structure was 'undignified'. Others called the vote unconstitutional and a betrayal of African cultural values.

The vote drew 2,790 mentions and 504,000 views on X between 07 and 08 July 2025, with 93.6% of posts expressing negative sentiment, 3.9% remaining neutral, and 2.5% showing positive sentiment. Most neutral and positive posts focused on [reporting](#) Kenya's vote at the UN. One [post](#) described Kenya as a progressive society with an existing LGBTQ+ community, arguing that LGBTQ+ rights are not the primary concern for most citizens, who are instead focused on addressing police brutality.

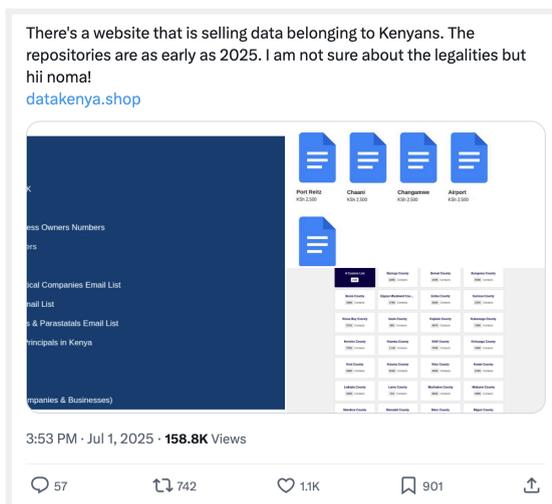


Screenshots of sample posts criticising Ruto and Kenya's UN vote ([top](#), [bottom](#)) (Source: CFA using X)

c. Kenyans' personal data is not safe

On 01 July 2025, an [X post](#) drew attention to [datakenya.shop](#), a website that purportedly sells personal data belonging to Kenyans. Although the site has since gone offline, an [archived version](#) on the Wayback Machine showed datasets organised by county, with a sample file linked at the top. The website's description promoted access to 'high-quality, pre-verified contact databases and targeted email lists for marketing, outreach, and lead generation', and claimed to help users 'reach real people, boost conversions, and grow your business faster'.

The post generated 3,740 engagements and 202,000 views on X, sparking public concern over privacy violations and the potential illegality of such data sales. The post stated that the listed repositories included information as recent as 2025 data and included screenshots to support the claim. A repost of the original message [questioned](#) whether Kenya's Data Protection Act of 2019 was still being [enforced](#).



Screenshots of X posts mentioning a website selling personal data in Kenya ([left](#), [right](#)) (Source: CfA using X)

d. Tribal fires stoked by politicians

Between 25 June and 12 July 2025, two opposing hashtag campaigns, [#LordOfViolence](#) and [#WeAreAllKikuyus](#), created conflicting narratives on X regarding the nature and leadership of the protests.

i. #LordOfViolence

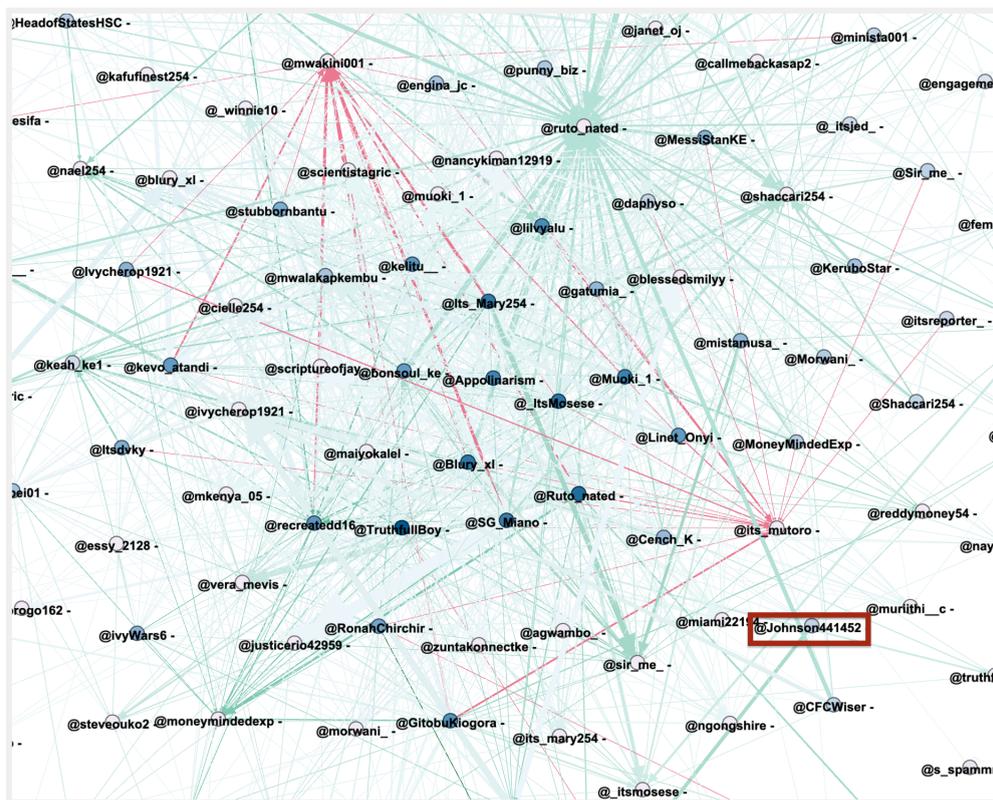
Between 25 June and 08 July 2025, the [#LordOfViolence](#) coordinated campaign emerged on X, generating 4,360 mentions, 153,000 views, and 4,190 engagements. Over the same period, there were 17 posts featuring the hashtag on [Facebook](#), collectively garnering 18,800 views and 262 interactions.

The X account [@Johnson441452](#), which has 147 followers, published the [first post](#) featuring the hashtag on 26 June 2025. It included an image with a caption calling Meru politician Mithika Linturi

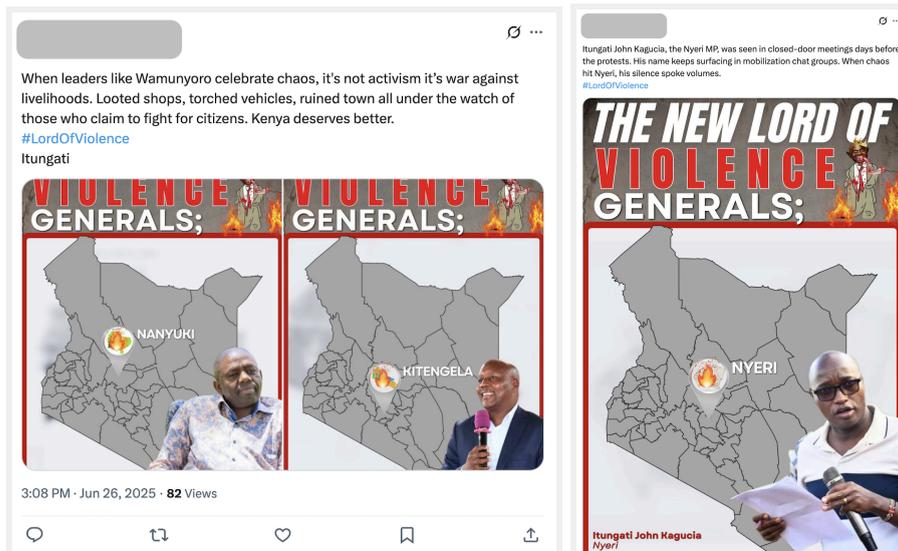
‘Itungati Mithika Linturi’. The caption said that where there were protests, the politician was close by. Posts in the campaign used the Kikuyu word itungati (meaning self-appointed guardians of Kikuyu identity and values) to criticise politicians from the Mt Kenya region, including the Embu, Kikuyu, and Meru communities.

These leaders were accused of [hijacking](#) the protests and stirring up violence for their own gain. The posts claimed that they were manipulating young people's anger to get media attention and advance personal agendas. [Named](#) figures included former deputy president Rigathi Gachagua and others like Naivasha MP [Jayne Kihara](#), Kajiado senator [Samuel Seki Lenku](#), Member of County Assembly (MCA) [Fanya Mambo Kinuthia](#), Mukurweini MP John Kagucia, Laikipia senator [John Kinyua](#), and Manyatta MP John Gitonga Mukunji, who was accused of putting on a performance of anger for the cameras instead of genuine activism.

Another [post](#) claimed the unrest was not a people’s revolution but ‘orchestrated destruction’, suggesting that politicians had used the protests as a platform to settle political scores and boost their profiles. One user [argued](#) the demonstrations were driven by ‘optics and numbers’ rather than justice, while [another](#) accused the ‘Itungati’ of using young protesters as pawns. Visuals accompanying some of these posts depicted maps in flames and linked some of the named individuals to protest hotspots, branding them ‘regional commanders of chaos’.



Screenshot of network graph showing major influencers of the hashtag #LordOfViolence (Source: CFA using Gephi)

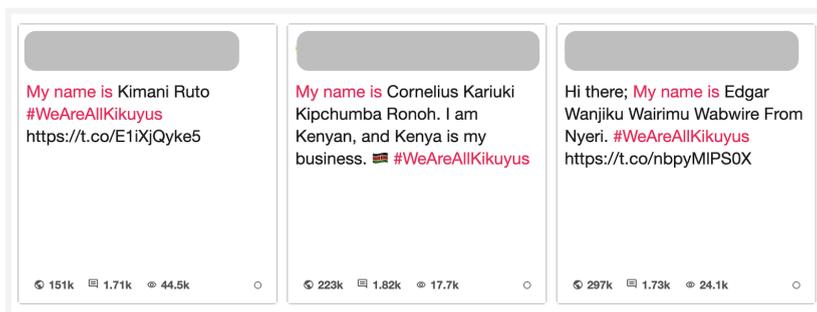


Screenshots of posts under #LordOfViolence campaign (left and right) accompanied by visuals accusing Mt Kenya politicians of perpetuating protest violence (Source: CFA using X)

ii. #WeAreAllKikuyus

In response to the #LordOfViolence campaign, the counter-campaign #WeAreAllKikuyus emerged between 07 and 12 July 2025, gaining 512,940 mentions, 48.9 million views, and 1.93 million engagements on X. In a symbolic act of defiance, multiple users adopted Kikuyu names to express solidarity, declaring that if calls for justice and dignity were being labelled as Kikuyu issues, then ‘we are all Kikuyus’. Posts using the hashtag affirmed the protests as a citizen-led movement rooted in national, not ethnic, demands for justice and accountability. Posts on X argued that tribalism was a political distraction used to deflect attention from economic hardships affecting all Kenyans. Some posts argued that ethnic identity did not offer protection from economic grievances such as rising costs of living, inaccessible healthcare, or unaffordable education, which had partially fuelled the protests.

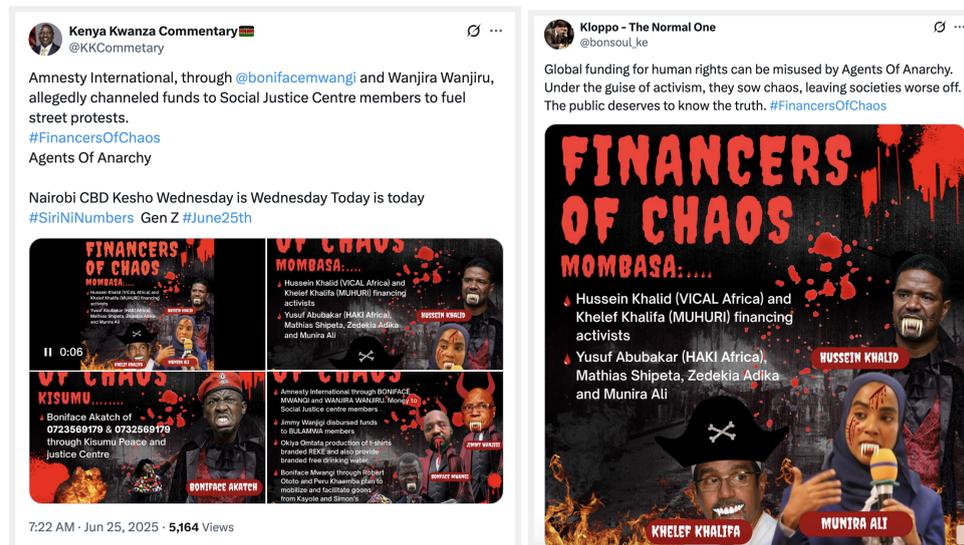
Some posts on X mocked the ethnic narrative, suggesting that Kenyans from other regions and ethnicities had also taken part in the protests, effectively ‘becoming Kikuyu’. Some noted that younger generations were increasingly resistant to political manipulation based on ethnicity, describing tribal framing as a relic of outdated political strategies.



Screenshots of sample X posts (left, centre, right) showing users adopting Kikuyu names to counter ethnic framing of the protests (Source: CFA using Meltwater)

e. **Activists, protest leaders, and independent journalists are foreign-funded to destabilise Kenya**

Between 25 June and 12 July 2025, a coordinated network of X posts pushed disinformation campaigns under the hashtags [#FinancersOfChaos](#) and [#ArrestTerroristActivists](#), targeting civil society leaders, protest organisers, and journalists. These campaigns framed activists as foreign-funded agitators responsible for violence during the protests, using [sensational](#) imagery like blood, flames, vampire fangs, and coordinated messaging.



Screenshots of sample posts ([left](#), [right](#)) claiming that NGOs and international organisations are paying activists to fuel unrest (Source: CFA using X)

The hashtag [#FinancersOfChaos](#) generated 5,510 mentions, 59,600 views, and 4,750 engagements on X, while [#ArrestTerroristActivists](#) drew 3,439 mentions, 299,663 views, and 5,547 engagements. [Facebook](#) also carried 10 posts under these hashtags with 17,288 views and 338 interactions. Analysis of campaign overlap revealed that 39 accounts were involved in both [#LordOfViolence](#) and [#FinancersOfChaos](#), 29 in both [#LordOfViolence](#) and [#ArrestTerroristActivists](#), and 8 in both latter campaigns. Four accounts participated in all three, showing a tight coordination network.

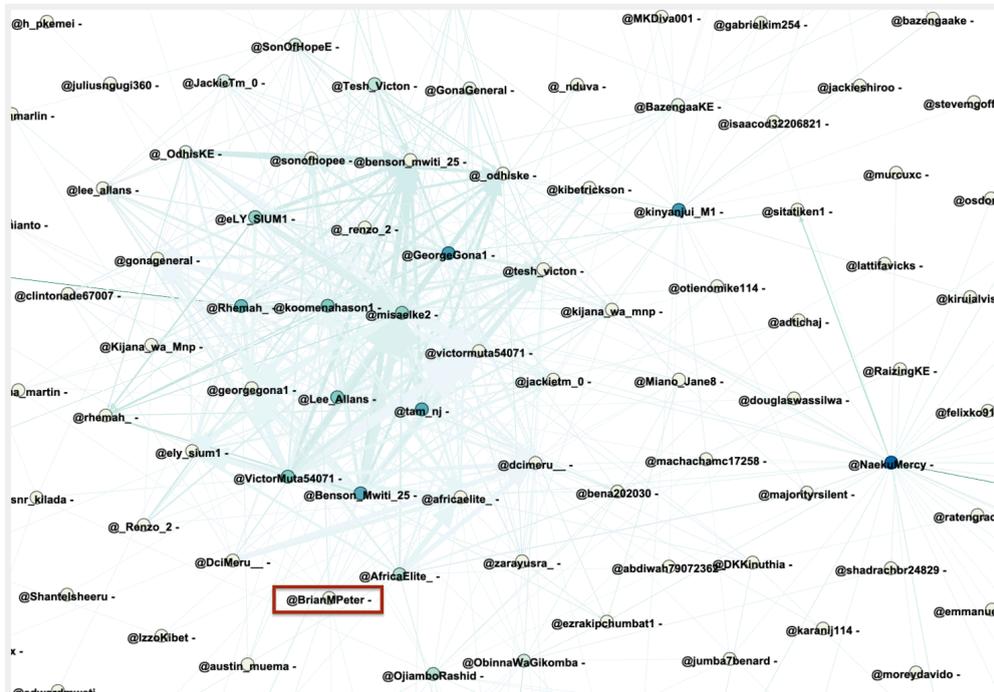
The campaigns targeted prominent [activists](#), including Boniface Mwangi, Wanjira Wanjiru, Hanifa Adan, Hussein Khalid, Khelef Khalifa, and others, accusing them of [channelling](#) foreign funds to incite unrest and vandalism. Activists were labelled as ‘Agents of Anarchy,’ ‘goon masters,’ and ‘terrorist activists,’ with some posts alleging they had organised logistics like printed placards and transportation for protesters. Others accused them of provoking violence but failing to take responsibility when looting occurred. Between 25 June and 11 July, such claims framing activists as orchestrators of violence totalled 1,016 mentions, 130,325 views, and 1,888 engagements on X. Posts linking them to donor funds added another 153 mentions, 41,365 views, and 340 engagements.

A parallel set of posts accused businessman and political strategist [Jimmy Wanjigi](#) of financing the Bunge La Mwananchi (in Swahili, meaning People’s Parliament) grassroots social justice movement, while Busia senator [Okiya Omtatah](#) was accused of supplying water and materials to protesters.

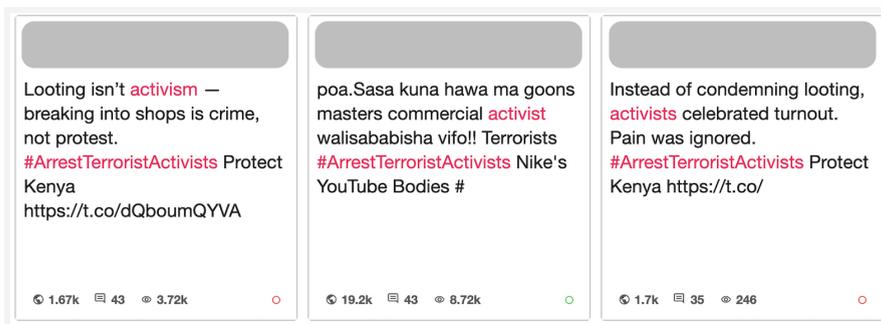
Several posts using [#FinancersOfChaos](#) also accused journalists and media houses of fuelling unrest. Royal Media Services journalists Waqo Salla and Steve Ndungu were [accused](#) of colluding with Farsafi to manipulate public opinion, while RMS and Standard Group (SG) were accused of biased

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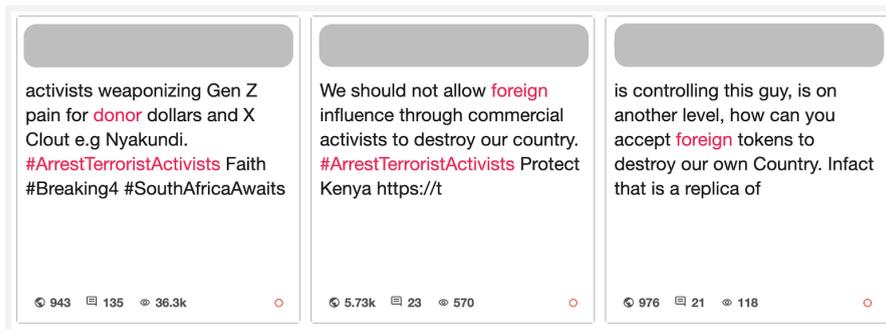
reporting. Other [posts](#) accused Mwangi, Al Jazeera’s Simon Boazman, and former public service cabinet secretary Justin Muturi of spreading ‘explosive content’ disguised as journalism. One post claimed [Boazman](#) was producing a documentary on Kenya’s security with Muturi, the former General Service Unit (a paramilitary police wing) officer George Musamali, and Mwangi. Washington Post journalist Rael Mboru was accused of scripting rather than reporting unrest.



Screenshot of network graph showing major influencers coordinating the hashtag #ArrestTerroristActivists on X (Source: CFA using Gephi)

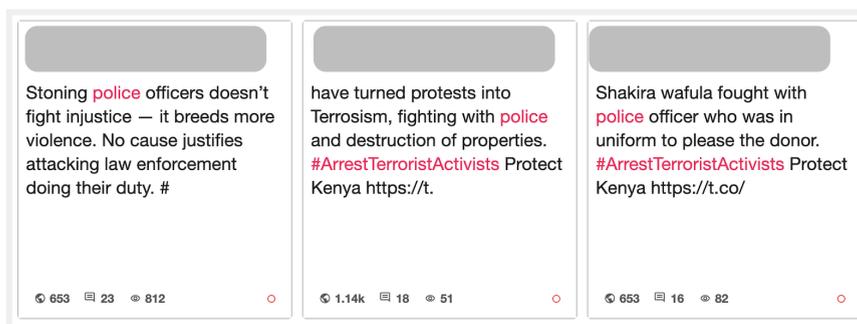


Screenshot of sample X posts (left, center, right) framing activists as instigators of looting and unrest during protests (Source: CFA using Meltwater)



Screenshot of sample X posts (left, centre, right) alleging activists were motivated by donor money or under foreign influence (Source: CFA using Meltwater)

Another narrative within the campaign portrayed activists as violent aggressors against law enforcement. Some posts argued that activists encouraged confrontations with the police, such as by stoning officers, which they claimed escalated the violence. Other users framed activists as responsible for burning down police stations, arguing that such acts disrupted service delivery to citizens. Prominent activists such as Shakira Wafula were named, with posts accusing her of physically confronting uniformed officers and calling for her arrest. Another post claimed that Gen Z protesters beat a police officer and stole his gear, linking the act to broader activist influence. Posts pushing this sub-narrative garnered 97 mentions, 10,360 views, and 166 engagements on X.



Screenshots of sample X posts (left, centre, right) framing activists as responsible for inciting violence against police and damaging law enforcement infrastructure (Source: CFA using Meltwater)

3. County radar: notable emerging incidents or campaigns from the county level

This section provides a concise overview of notable incidents, campaigns, and insights into emerging trends and issues in the information landscape within the focus counties. It aims to inform readers about the emerging conversations shaping public discourse in these counties.

Gendered attacks on women politicians

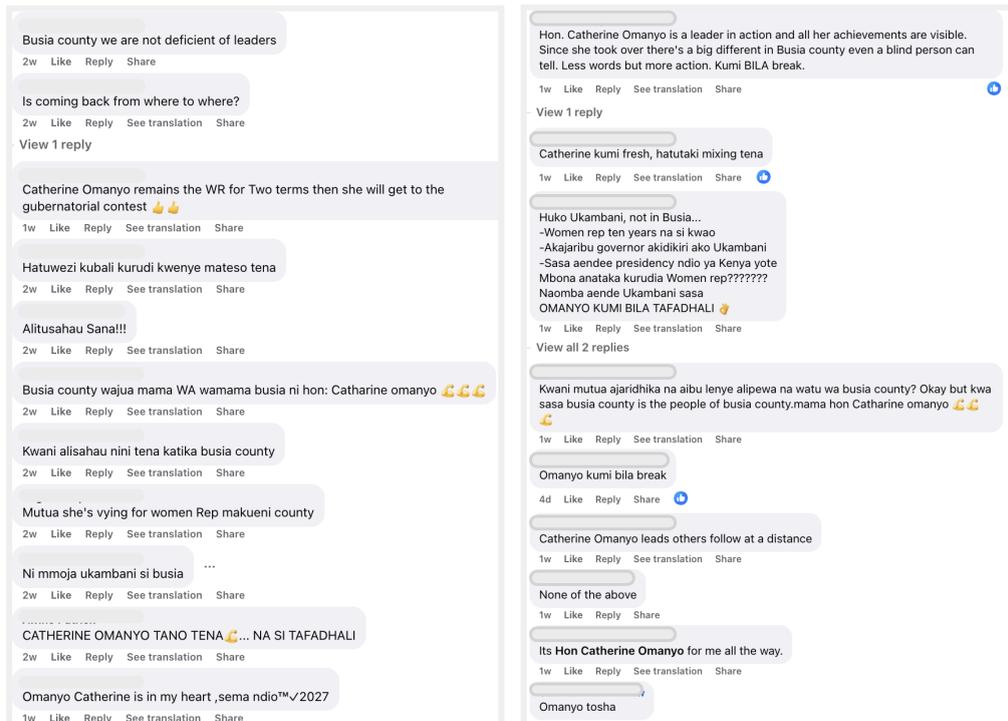
Between 25 June and 08 July 2025, gendered attacks targeting women in politics and outspoken female voices were documented across Busia, Lamu, and Nairobi counties.

a. Busia county: Ethnic politics

In Busia, Mutua, popularly known as ‘Mama ni mmoja’ (in Swahili, meaning There is only one mother), is returning to politics, seeking to reclaim the women's representative seat she held from 2013 to 2022. Although she has a track record of public service, some users argue that leadership in

Busia, predominantly inhabited by the Luhya community, should be reserved for individuals indigenous to the region, pointing to Mutua’s Kamba ethnic background.

Between 25 June and 08 July 2025, news about her candidacy generated 14,147 views and 388 interactions on Facebook. Many users [supported](#) current women's representative Catherine Omanyo, advocating for her re-election and a future gubernatorial run. Some users urged Mutua to contest in Makueni, her home county, while others criticised her for seeking her former seat after a failed gubernatorial bid. CfA will continue monitoring these conversations.

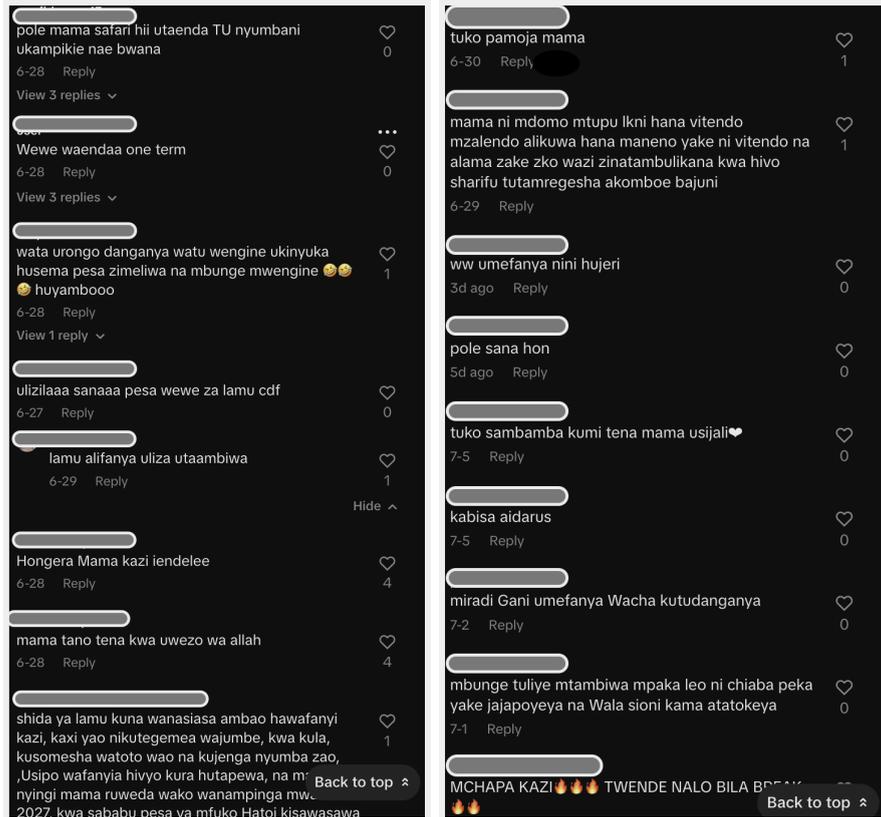


Sample comments on Mutua’s women representative bid ([left](#), [right](#))(source: CfA using Facebook)

b. Lamu county: Cultural pushback against women vocal in politics

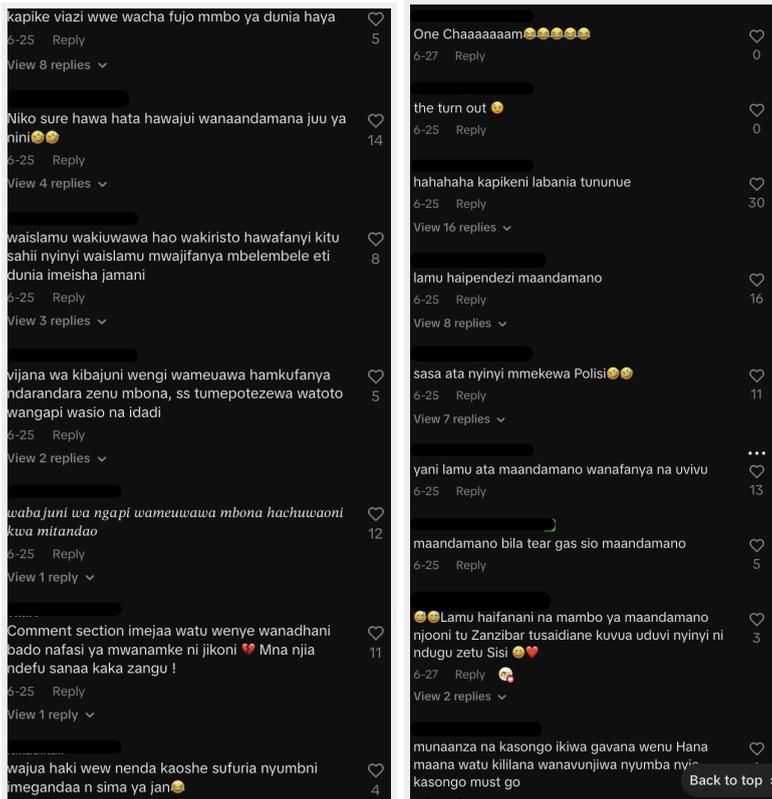
In Lamu, two posts highlighted the backlash faced by vocal women in public life. On 27 June 2025, TikTok account [@captain_ruweida005](#), posted a [video](#) featuring Lamu East MP Obo, speaking about the need for an accountable allocation of funds for road construction and electricity projects during a parliamentary address. The account, which has 1,861 followers, is a clear supporter of Obo as it primarily posts content promoting the MP and her contributions. This post garnered 10,200 views and 503 interactions.

Some users praised the MP’s remarks, commending her leadership and backing her for a second term. Other users accused her of mismanaging constituency development funds and dismissed her efforts as largely rhetorical with little tangible impact. Another urged her to return home and tend to her husband.



Screenshots of sample [comments](#) on the TikTok post about Obo (Source: CFA using TikTok)

A [TikTok video](#) posted during the 25 June 2025 demonstrations by @captain_rafikiy saw a female protester in Islamic attire condemn police brutality and demand justice for victims. Some commenters told the women to ‘go home and wash dishes’ or ‘cook’. Other users accused the woman of selective activism, questioning her silence during past killings of Lamu youth by the Al Shabaab militant group. One user asked whether Muslims would protest if the victims were Christian. The video was one out of 11 captured about the protests and posted by the account @captain_rafikiy. The videos cumulatively garnered 124,322 views and 4,847 interactions.



Screenshots of sample comments criticising the female protesters ([left](#), [right](#)) (Source: CFA using TikTok)

c. Nairobi county: Anti-protest bill weaponised to attack Passaris

On 05 July 2025, the hashtag [#ByeByePassaris](#) emerged on X, criticising Passaris and demanding her recall after she introduced a bill to restrict protests near crucial state buildings. Between 05 and 08 July 2025, the hashtag had 38,200 mentions and generated an engagement of 142,000 and 6.61 million views on the platform. The initial [post](#) came from blogger [Nyakundi](#) on 05 July 2025, who called for her recall. Nyakundi was also the top author under the hashtag, with 25 posts ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)). Some of the posts used gendered insults, with [one](#) referring to Passaris as ‘kamalaya kazee’ (in Swahili, meaning old prostitute), while [another](#) branded her a ‘socialite bimbo’.



Screenshots of X posts using the hashtags [#ByeByePassaris](#) and [#NiEstherTuu](#). (Source: CfA using X)

4. Actor spotlight: the people and organisations amplifying toxic content

This section highlights the key accounts, entities, or actors involved in amplifying toxic online content in Kenya and provides an in-depth assessment of their identities and motivations.

a. Individual actors

i. Cyprian Nyakundi

The X account [@C_NyaKundiH](#), which was created in November 2012 and has one million followers, initiated the hashtag [#ByeByePassaris](#), criticising the legislator and demanding her recall. He was the top author with 25 posts between 25 June and 08 July.

ii. [@VictorMuta54071](#)

This [X account](#), created in May 2025, was an active participant in the [#ArrestTerroristActivists](#) campaign. Posts under this hashtag from the account generated 305 mentions, 3,423 views, and 466 engagements. In one [post](#), the account criticised the logic behind burning businesses to demand jobs saying that ‘activists said we are burning businesses which created jobs to demand for jobs how is that possible?’ Across multiple posts, the user linked activism to donor influence and violent disruption, arguing that protesters posed a threat to national stability and law enforcement. The account has since been suspended.

5. Tactics and techniques: unveiling the actors’ modus operandi

This section outlines the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) used by actors in the identified narratives. It focuses on strategically disseminating content and coordinating its online presence.

a. Develop AI-generated images (Deepfakes)

According to the DISARM framework, this [tactic](#) refers to the use of deepfakes to depict an inauthentic situation by synthetically recreating an individual’s face, body, voice, and physical gestures. An AI-generated image portrayed Ruto dressed in a rainbow-coloured outfit and wearing pink and orange lipstick and earrings, appearing to participate in an LGBTQ+ pride parade. The intent

was to associate him with the LGBTQ+ community and frame him as a supporter, following Kenya's backing of the UN's renewal of the LGBTQ+ rights mandate.



Screenshot of a [deepfake](#) depicting Ruto as a supporter of LGBTQ+ rights (Source: CFA using X)

b. Create hashtags and search artefacts

The DISARM framework [defines](#) this tactic as launching hashtags or searchable terms to frame a narrative to manufacture legitimacy, allowing campaigns to trend, attract attention, and influence public conversation.

This tactic was used in the #FinancersOfChaos and #ArrestTerroristActivists coordinated campaigns, both of which aimed to reframe the protests as illegitimate, externally driven, and violent. The campaigns portrayed civil society actors, NGOs, and media professionals as orchestrators of chaos, driven by foreign agendas.

Similarly, #ArrestTerroristActivists was launched to shift the focus from citizens' grievances to allegations of violent activism, foreign funding, and police endangerment.

Similarly, the hashtag [#ByeByePassaris](#) was used to demand Passaris's recall.

c. Reframe context

The DISARM framework [defines](#) this tactic as removing an event from its original context in order to distort its meaning rather than denying that the event occurred. This approach was evident during the #LordofViolence campaign on X, where protests were reframed not as a nationwide youth-led movement demanding economic accountability, but as a Kikuyu-led insurrection.

Multiple posts shifted focus away from the broader social and economic grievances driving the unrest, instead portraying Mt Kenya politicians as the architects of the chaos. The hashtag became a vehicle for assigning blame to individuals seen as representing Kikuyu interests, reframing the protests through an ethnic lens.

This narrative was reinforced by consistent messaging that highlighted Kikuyu identity, unrest in the central region, and supposed tribal motivations. While the campaign did not rely heavily on bots or visual propaganda, the steady volume and uniformity of the messaging suggest a coordinated attempt to reshape public perception of the protests.

6. Conclusion

Kenya's recent wave of civic repression, from the violent attack on KHRC to allegations of sexual violence against protesters, reveals a systematic attempt to silence dissent. Coordinated disinformation campaigns, including #LordOfViolence and #FinancersOfChaos, sought to discredit the June/July 2025 protests by framing them as tribal or foreign-funded, while hashtags like #ByeByePassaris targeted female leaders with gendered abuse. Tactics such as deepfakes and data privacy breaches have further eroded public trust. Yet, counter-narratives like #WeAreAllKikuyus and growing community solidarity with survivors of violence highlight the public's resistance. There is an urgent need to defend civic space, tackle gender-based violence, and demand accountability for human rights abuses.

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Do you know of incidents of suspected information manipulation, coordinated influence operations or other forms of disinformation or weaponised toxic content that you think we should investigate? Share your leads with us, securely, on ilab@codeforafrica.org.



*This report contributes to a growing knowledge base that documents African-focused information manipulation, influence operations, and weaponised disinformation. The knowledge base is curated by the **African Digital Democracy Observatory (ADDO)**. The research in this specific report was produced by analysts attached to ADDO member Code for Africa (CfA), including CfA's **CivicSignal** media monitoring lab, its **iLAB** forensic investigation unit, and its **PesaCheck** fact-checking team.*