

Facebook expands fact-checking to further countries in Africa

Facebook expands its third-party fact-checking programme to 10 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa.



Image source: Gallo/Getty.

Joining third-party fact-checking programmes in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon and Senegal, Facebook today announced the expansion of its Third-Party Fact-Checking programme to 10 additional African countries. In partnership with Agence France-Presse (AFP), the France 24 Observers, Pesa Check and Dubawa, this programme forms part of its work in helping assess the accuracy and quality of news people find on Facebook, whilst reducing the spread of misinformation on its platform.

Working with a network of fact-checking organizations, [certified](#) by the non-partisan International Fact-Checking Network, third-party fact-checking will now be available in Ethiopia, Zambia, Somalia and Burkina Faso through AFP, Uganda and Tanzania through both Pesa Check and AFP, Democratic Republic of Congo and Cote d'Ivoire through the France 24 Observers and AFP, Guinea Conakry through the France 24 Observers, and Ghana through Dubawa.

[Feedback](#) from the Facebook community is one of many signals Facebook uses to raise potentially false stories to fact-checkers for review. Local articles will be fact-checked alongside the verification of photos and videos. If one of our fact-checking partners identifies a story as false, Facebook will show it lower in News Feed, significantly reducing its distribution.

Kojo Boakye, Facebook Head of Public Policy, Africa, said: “The expansion of third-party fact-checking to now cover 15 countries in a little over a year shows firsthand our commitment and dedication to the continent, alongside our recent local language expansion as part of this programme. Taking steps to help tackle false news on Facebook is a responsibility we take seriously, we know misinformation is a problem, and these are important steps in continuing to address this issue.

“We know that third-party fact-checking alone is not the solution, it is one of many initiatives and programmes we are investing in to help to improve the quality of information people see on Facebook. While we've made great progress, we will keep investing to ensure Facebook remains a place for all ideas, but not for the spread of false news.”

When third-party fact-checkers fact-check a news story, Facebook will show these in [Related Articles](#) immediately below the story in News Feed, Page Admins and people on Facebook will also receive notifications if they try to share a story or have shared one in the past that's been determined to be false, empowering people to decide for themselves what to read, trust, and share.

Providing fact-checking in English and French across eight countries, Phil Chetwynd, AFP global news director said: “AFP is delighted to be expanding its fact-checking project with Facebook. We are known for the high quality of our journalism from across Africa and we will be leveraging our unparalleled network of bureaus and journalists on the continent to combat misinformation.”

Eric Mugendi, managing editor from Pesa Check who will provide fact-checking services in Swahili and English added: “Social networks like Facebook haven't just changed how Africans consume the news. Social media is often the primary access to digital content or the 'Internet' for many Africans. They shape our perceptions of the world, our public discourse, and how we interact with public figures.

“This project helps us dramatically expand our fact-checking to debunk claims that could otherwise cause real-world harm. The project helps us respond more quickly and directly. We're seeing real positive results in our interactions with both publishers and the public itself. The project also helps our fact-checks reach a far larger audience than we would otherwise. This has helped us better understand the information vacuum and other viral dynamics that drive the spread of false information in Africa. Our growing impact is a small but tangible contribution to better informed societies in Africa.”

Supporting the expansion to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Conakry and Cote d'Ivoire Derek Thomson, editor-in-chief of the France 24 Observers, said: “Our African users are constantly sending us questionable images and messages they've received via social media, asking us 'Is this true? Can you check it?' It's our responsibility as fact-checking journalists to verify the information that's circulating, and get the truth back out there. Participating in the Facebook programme helps ensure that our fact-checks are reaching the people who shared the false news in the first place.”

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