FAKE IMAGES

AS DANGEROUS SPEECH: AN ADVISORY

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INTRODUCTION

Since the use of social media became widespread in Nigeria, there has been a rising concern on what is referred to as "fake news". Fake news is the creation of news reports or events that did not occur or the use of unrelated facts to illustrate or reinforce some events. In a sense, rumour is a classic example of fake news. A more particularly insidious form of fake news is the use of unrelated images and graphics to portray the occurrence of some events. The images or pictures could have been taken many years ago or in different places but are used to illustrate an incident that is said to have just occurred. That normally triggers unnecessary debate amongst people of different backgrounds, faiths, values, etc which in the long run gives hate speech the ground to flourish.

Fake news is bad itself but it becomes dangerous when it is used to embed and spread hate speech. Images and graphics are typical forms of fake news used to embed hate speech. In the last few years, such practice has been in the rise in Nigeria. Fake pictures are used in many conflict situations in the country and the result is that they often generate counter mobilizations that lead to a spiral of hate and violence.

Many of the conflicts in the pictures have either happened many years ago or occurred in different countries but were reproduced and circulated as images captured in recent conflict scenes in Nigeria. The purpose of such juxtaposition is to fuel more conflicts and create chaos.

Luckily, it is easy with simple technology tools to expose the fake connection between the images and the events they purport to represent. Using these tools, we have analyzed and verified a couple of those images that have been circulating in the Nigerian social media space, which we reproduced here. The pictures below were used by some conventional newspapers on their websites, online newspapers, blogspots, individual Twitter and Facebook user groups and pages on Facebook, etc. Different provocative captions were used to reinforce the images and ignite hate speech. A number of hate speeches were seen emerging as a result of the usage of the pictures. The captions and mediums are presented below. The two technology tools used for the verification and analysis were https://tineye.com/ and https://images.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl

The objectives of this publication are:
1. To draw attention to the fact that not all images and videos that we see are real or relate to the events they purport to illustrate
2. To raise awareness of the circulation of such fake images
3. To support the campaign of the inoculation of citizens against hate speech by drawing their attention to the fact that many of the narratives they see may not be true

THE CONCEPT OF FAKE IMAGES

Fake images, like fake news are often literally understood to mean that which is not true. However, this is a correct in the narrative sense of the use of the image. Images are what they are are representation of some reality. To that extent they have a reality of their own. In this sense, they cannot be fake. The concept of a Fake Picture is therefore not so much about whether a particular image is true or false but in the appropriateness or otherwise of the use to which it is put and the narrative it evokes. When a picture or image is taken out of context and used to illustrate or build a narrative of an event or situation for which it has no relationship or connection with, then it becomes a Fake Picture. The "fakeness" thus necessarily to the relation or connection being evoked, rather than the actuality of the image itself. It is thus deliberate effort to use images to create false connection that can mislead people. And when the creation is meant to mobilize or incite people to a violence reaction then the fake images become a dangerous speech act.

The concept of fake images is deployed in at least four distinct ways, depending on how they are evoked to establish narratives around events for which they are called to give witness to. These include:

1. Doctoring the Image: a picture can be photoshopped to add features and context that were not in the original image to illustrate a relationship with an event or situation for which it had no connection with. For example, a picture of a student demonstration in Kaduna taken years back can have the image of the national assembly superimposed to aid a narrative that the picture was taken during a demonstration by civil society organizations at the National Assembly.

2. A picture of an entirely different situation brought to illustrate another: here a picture of conflict or event in another country could be used to claim the picture is of an actual event that occurred in another country. A common example in the media in Nigeria is the deployment of images of Masai herdsmen in Kenya and Malian Tuarage as Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria

3. A picture of a past event brought to illustrate a recent happening: here, the image of an old conflict is brought to give visual evidence of a recent event. For example, a picture of the Maitatsine uprising could be published to purport that it was an image captured during a Boko Haram attack.

4. Artificial creation of images to build a certain false narrative: this is to selectively pick different elements and fuse them into one reality to create a visual representation of an event which probably never happened.

There are four basic approaches to revealing the fakeness of the narrative that the fake

image purports to build. These include:

1. Date of the Picture: picture, like all other data elements, have metadata embedded in them. Of these, elements of metadata are the data when the picture was taken, when it was uploaded and by who. By comparing the original data from the metadata and the date of the event for which the picture was deployed to illustrate the falseness of the relationship between the picture and the narrative can be exposed. 2. Historicity of the Picture: many online images that are often downloaded and used to help in building an artificial narrative have histories of their own, which give information on when they were first published by who and where and for what purpose. By unearthing this history and juxtaposing it with the event that the image called to give a narrative, the falseness of the relationship can be revealed.

3. Background Analysis: often images carry along with them the telltale of the background or context in which they are taken. They could be vegetation, scenery, nearby iconic buildings, etc. When these pictures are used for different realities those background information give the lie to the association the picture are call to give witness to.

4. Elemental analysis of the Picture: when a picture or an image is artificially created, it consists of different discrete elements that are brought together, each bearing its own background and metadata. An analysis of the picture can reveal these elements. A more detailed analysis can even show the sources of the different elements of the picture.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF IMAGES

Picture: 1
Caption: Pastor sets member on fire, claims God asked him to do it
Source: https://happenings.com.ng/pastor-sets-member-on-fire-claims-god-asked-him-to-do-it/
Published on 19th January 2016 by Mfonobong Akpan

Verification details: Vietnam monk on fire

Comment: The picture purports to show a church member set on fire by his pastor, but, contrary to the impression the image tried to create, the original picture was that of a Vietnam monk. In June 1963, Vietnamese Mahayana Buddhist monk, Thích Quang Duc, burned himself to death at a busy intersection in Saigon. He was attempting to show that to fight all forms of oppression on equal terms, Buddhism too, needed to have its martyrs. John F. Kennedy said in reference to a photograph of Duc on fire: "No news picture in history has generated so much emotion around the world as that one". Photographer Malcolm Browne captured the scene in Saigon for the Associated Press and the stark black and white image quickly became an iconic visual of the turbulent 1960s.

The point here is that, the above picture was captured 55 years ago in Vietnam, but happenings.com.ng brings the same image to justify an incident, which it claimed, happened in 2016 in Nigeria. The picture is therefore fake in the sense that the two scenarios are parallel.

Picture: 2

Caption:Kaduna: 12 dead, 1,000 shops burnt as Muslim, Christian youths fight over girls

Source: http://www.todaysecho.com/kaduna-12-dead-1000-shops-burnt-muslim-christian-youths-fight-girls/

Published February 28, 2018 by Dede Falana

Verification details: Bomb blast scene in Monday Market, Maiduguri

Comment: Originally, the above picture showed a bomb blast scene that occurred in late November 2014 in Monday Market situated in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, Nigeria, but it was three years later used by the above medium to depict a crisis scene in Kaduna state. The picture is clearly fake since its real origin is different from what the medium presented.

Picture: 3

Comment: As it can be seen, there are two pictures, even though it is one image. The first picture was given a wrong and fake caption by someone called Michael Chukwuka. It is obviously fake since it misled people into believing a false narrative. The picture as our verification revealed was originally an accident scene along Lagos-Ibadan Express Way but Mr. Chukwuka captioned it to say Fulani Herdsmen attacked the vehicle and killed the lying passengers.

Picture: 4

Caption: IED explosion from 'suspected Boko Haram members' kills one in Edo

Source: http://www.dailycorrespondents.com.ng/2018/01/ied-explosion-from-suspected-boko-haram-members-kills-one-in-edo/

Published January 17, 2018

Image verification details:Iceland volcano ash cloud

Comment: The image originally depicts a scene of a volcanic eruption that occurred in Iceland in 2010, but as it can be seen it was portrayed as a scene of explosion in Edo state, Nigeria in 2018. Comparatively the two incidents are parallel. It is therefore regarded as a fake picture since it did not tally with the narrative it sought to emphasize. The volcanic eruption caused enormous disruption to air travel across western and northern Europe over an initial period of six days in April 2010. Additional localised disruption continued into May 2010.

Picture: 5

Caption: Again, Herdsmen Attack Benue Communities, Kill 50
Source: https://independent.ng/herdsmen-attack-benue-communities-kill-50/
By Tor Vande-Acka, Igoniko Oduma

Published January 3, 2018

Image verification details: Malian bandits

Comment: Unlike what the caption of the picture purports to reinforce, the picture as established by the verification tools, originated from Mali and those in the picture are Malian Bandits not herdsmen. It is therefore a fake picture since the original scenery is ignored and a fake one created.

Picture: 6

1. Headline: Fulani Herdsmen Raze 12 Houses, Kill 3 In Plateau State

Source: https://firstpost.ng/fulani-herdsmen-raze-12-houses-kill-3-plateau-state/

Published on 27 Jan 2018 - 10:27pm

2. Headline:15 Persons Dead As Herdsmen, Farmers Clash In Adamawa
Source:https://www.naijanews.com/gist/40899-15-persons-dead-as-herdsmen-farmers-clash-in-adamawa

Published on January 6, 2018

Image verification details:
Picture Description: *war scene in Kaya, South Sudan*
County: Morobo County
State: Yei River State
Country: South Sudan

Kaya was a battle scene during the Second Sudanese Civil War and was conquered by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) on 10 March 1997.

Comment: As it can be noted, the above picture was used in two different occasions by two different platforms to tell a story, but, as the verification tools found, the picture does not in any way have connection with any Nigerian conflict scene, rather it originated from South Sudan as details proved above.

Picture: 7
Caption: Muslims, Christian Youths Clash in Kaduna Town
Published: 12thMay, 2014
Source:http://logbaby.com/news/muslims--christian-youths-clash-in-kaduna-town_19801.html

Verification details: Fire outbreak in Ghana

Comment: The above picture shows fire razing property in the clash between Muslims and Christians in Kachia town of Kachia local government area of Kaduna state, but the reality is that the picture is not depicting any conflict scene in Kachia. Rather, it was a fire outbreak scene in Ghana in 2014. It is therefore a fake picture, since it did not tally with what it purports to present. Statistics available at the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) indicate that domestic fires, which occurred from 2012 to 2015, represented 41.02 per cent of the fire outbreaks recorded nationwide in the same period. In all, 24,500 fires occurred in the country in the last four years out of which 10,051 were domestic fires, Dr. Albert Brown-Gaisie, the Chief Fire Officer at the Ghanian National Fire Service (GNFS) pointed out.

Credit: Modern Ghana

Picture: 8

Headline "Four kills as Fulani herdsmen strike in Nasarawa"

https://naijapary.com/2018/01/17/four-kills-as-fulani-herdsmen-strike-in-nasarawa/

Published January 17, 2018 By Alamu Tosin

Image verification details: Crisis scene in Plateau State 2001 conflict

Comment: The above picture as depicted by the medium is a crisis scene in Nasarawa state in 2018, but originally the picture showed people running away from a conflict scene during the Jos crisis in 2001. It is equally a fake picture since there is no agreement between the story and the picture as provided by the above medium.

Picture: 9

Caption: Fulani Herdsmen: Troubled spots awaiting govt's action-Vanguard Newspaper, 19th March, 2016

Source:https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/03/fulani-herdsmen-troubled-spots-awaiting-govts-action/

Image verification details: A South Sudanese herder.

Comment: The image is fake in the sense that it doesn't portray the Nigerian herdsman nor did it originate from Nigeria. Rather it displayed a South Sudanese herder. Dinka and Nuer, the two conflicting tribes in the country, have been living in hostility.

Conflict between Dinka and Nuer in South Sudan

The Dinka and Nuer, two rival pastoralist groups, have competed over grazing land and water for their cattle in the past. These clashes have usually taken place in a local context without causing massive amounts of fatalities. However, in 2013 the dismissal of the former vice president, Riek Machar, a Nuer, by the South Sudanese president, Salva Kiir, a Dinka, functioned as a catalyst for mass violence, claiming more than a thousand victims.

Picture: 10

Headline:The Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has called on President Muhammadu Buhari to declare armed herdsmen as terrorists.

Source:https://www.360nobs.com/2017/10/huriwa-group-calls-buhari-declare-armed-herdsmen-terrorists/

Published 9th October, 2017

Image verification details: Mundari cows in South Sudan

South Sudan is amongst the most unstable nations in the world. Amongst the internal conflict and human displacement, the Mundari continue to herd their cattle across the banks of the Nile. On their journey, they face the dangers of unexploded landmines and violent cattle raids from other tribes. Cattle are hugely important and symbolic: they represent wealth and status. The Mundari men stand watch over the cattle with guns to prevent rustling.

Picture: 11

Caption: Religious War in Kachia, Kaduna: Christians and Muslims clash, Churches and Mosques Burnt.
Source: https://naijagists.com/religious-war-in-kachia-kaduna-christians-muslims-clash-churches-mosques-burnt/
Published on 12th May, 2014

Image verification details: Imbaba Events

Comment: Unlike what the caption of the story says, the above picture originates from Egypt not Nigeria and it wasn't a scene of burning Churches and Mosques in Kachia, Kaduna state. Some Salafist groups attacked Church of the Virgin in the street of Wahda in the area of Imbaba, a district of Giza in Egypt in May 2011. The events began with the rumors that a Coptic girl had declared her conversion to Islam and that she was being held inside the Mary Mina Church on Luxor Street, demanding that she be taken out. The church pastors came to them, asserting that the church was not holding girls, but they refused to leave. Clashes began between some Christians and a number of Salafis were dispersed by army and police forces, but the gathered in the Arab Unity Street in front of the Church of the Virgin and set fire to it.

GENERAL ADVISORY

❖ Media regulatory agencies need to carefully monitor and apply sanction on mediums that unnecessarily promote such conflict-provoking images and footages.

❖ Media institutions should highlight and emphasize the practice of peace journalism in media spectrum to prevent dissent and chaos in the country.

❖ Media practitioners' bodies and media organizations need to be mindful of the images and footages they back their stories with. In clear terms, they are expected to avoid using pictures that originated from conflicts elsewhere to create unfavourable impression on audience and readers.

✠ Bloggers, administrators of groups and pages on Facebook should be sensitized on the dangers of using fake pictures to provoke hate speech.

❖ Bodies such as the National Orientation Agency (NOA) should widen their awareness creation to accommodate taming "fake pictures and hate speech", especially social media.

❖ Religious and traditional leaders should vehemently caution followers on circulating fake images that ignite hate speech.

❖ Social users should avoid liking, commenting or sharing such pictures or images.

❖ Traditional media audience/readers should resist the temptation of believing and /or reacting on the basis of these kinds of pictures.

❖ Social media users should also partake in the campaign against circulation of fake pictures that ignite hate speech and hate speech in general.

❖ Facebook, Twitter, etc users need to help the campaign against the hate speech by reporting its incidences (audio, text, image, video) to the platforms. To report, locate three dots on the top right of the post (on Facebook), click and select the appropriate option, click again and again to select more options until the report is submitted. Follow the same process on Twitter.

CONCLUSION

The publication and circulation of fake images (picture, graphics and videos) are a disturbing reality in Nigeria. The problem is not limited to social media only, as a number of newspapers also indulge in it where knowingly or not in the practice. These images are deliberately used to either blackmail or cause confusion. As we move closer to the 2019 general elections, the trend is likely to increase unless there is concerted effort to address it. One negative consequence of the circulation of fake images in the context of conflict and tension is that they undermine the possibility of mutual dialogue between parties in conflicts. They harden positions and increase the susceptibility of ordinary people to being mobilized to support violent responses or reactions to issues.

While the publication and circulation of fake images in newspapers can easily be addressed within existing media regulatory and legal frameworks, their distribution and circulation in social media is more difficult to deal with. This is because unlike print media, which are in the public domain, much of the circulation of fake images in social media takes place in the private domain, such as private whataspp groups, direct messaging in twitter, chatting in Facebook, emails, etc.

Consistent with our position as advocates of free press and the freedom of information, we oppose any initiatives that will derogate these freedoms either through the invasive use of technology to intrude into the privacy of individuals or through the deployment of unnecessary control of social media. We believe that fake images like fake news and other forms of dangerous speech are potent only if people are provoked by them. Once people refuse to be provoked by these, they then lose their capacity to catalyze into violence. To this extent, a regime of public inoculation to increase the citizens' threshold of tolerance and dissuade them from engaging in the circulation of fake images is more effective in dealing with the problem.

Leaving the circulation of fake pictures unchecked will undoubtedly continue to fuel hate speech, which will in the long run become a serious threat to peace efforts at different levels. The earlier awareness is created and the needful done the better. The issue of tolerance and the quest for peace should concern everybody and be supported by stakeholders at different levels. People must understand that their cooperation and efforts are pertinent in ensuring lasting peace in the society. It is, therefore, a

responsibility on all to understand there are a lot of untrue material especially on the internet, and people must be cautious not to act or get provoked by what they see or read. It is equally important to resist the temptation to utter hate speech. Consistent with this, we suggest the following:

1. Consistent Public Education: many people react to fake images without knowing that these are fabrications. People need to be made aware that not all the images they see in the media are true representations of what they purport to tell. There is therefore the need for stakeholders to step up public education to enlighten the people about the miss use of images. In particular, people need to be told that they need not to react to the provocation embedded in fake images and at the same time be cautioned about themselves serving as channels for the further circulation of such images.

2. Enforcement of Existing Media Regulations: current media regulations have provisions against both untruthful content and context meant to excite people to commit or otherwise condone violence. Many fake images are not only untruthful but also meant to support mobilization to violence. While these media regulations can deal with the purveyors of fake images in the social media, it can help to address their circulation in the print and electronic media.

3. Deployment of Moral Sanctions Against Purveyors of Fake Images: studies about countering hate speech have shown that deploying moral sanction against they who engage in hate speech has been an effective tool for getting people to stop indulging in hate speech. Same principle can be applied to people who indulge in the production and circulation of fake images.

4. Improving Transparency in Governance: as our monitoring of hate speech indicates, opacity in governance has been one of the key drivers of rumours and misinformation in the society. In the absence of genuine information from government, citizens create their own explanation of events, which could be mere fabrications. The availability of credible and verifiable information makes ease for rumours, fake images and disinformation to be dismissed.

About CITAD

CITAD (www.citad.org) is a capacity building civil society organization whose activities covers research, advocacy, training and publicity in all areas of ICTs. Its vision is; a knowledge-based democratic society free of hunger while its mission is; using ICTs to empower citizens for a just and knowledge-based society that is anchored on sustainable and balanced development.

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