

# The scramble for narrative control

Unpacking Ethiopia's civil war social-media  
discourse

Feb 2022

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World Health Organization



# The scramble for narrative control

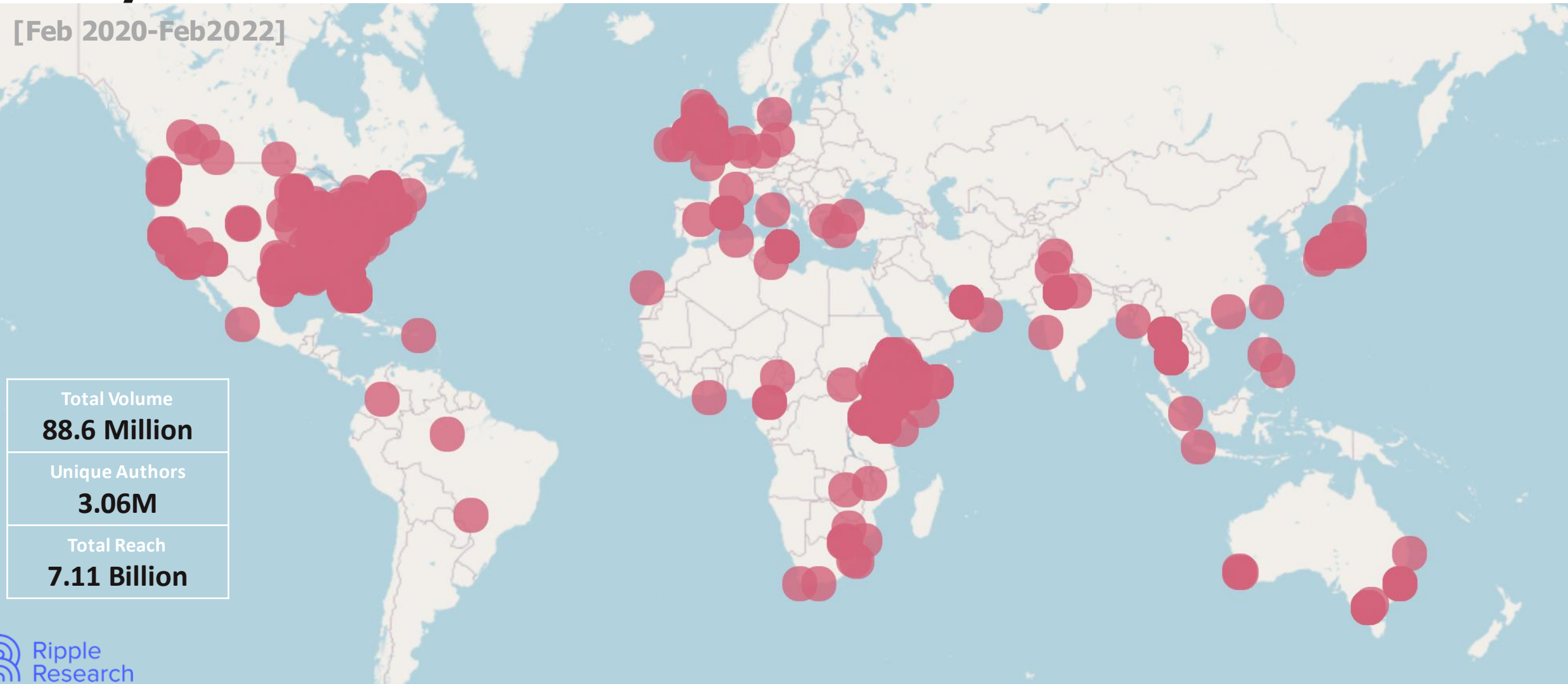
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# We have assembled and analysed a custom-built dataset of 88 million messages on social media over two years

[Feb 2020-Feb2022]

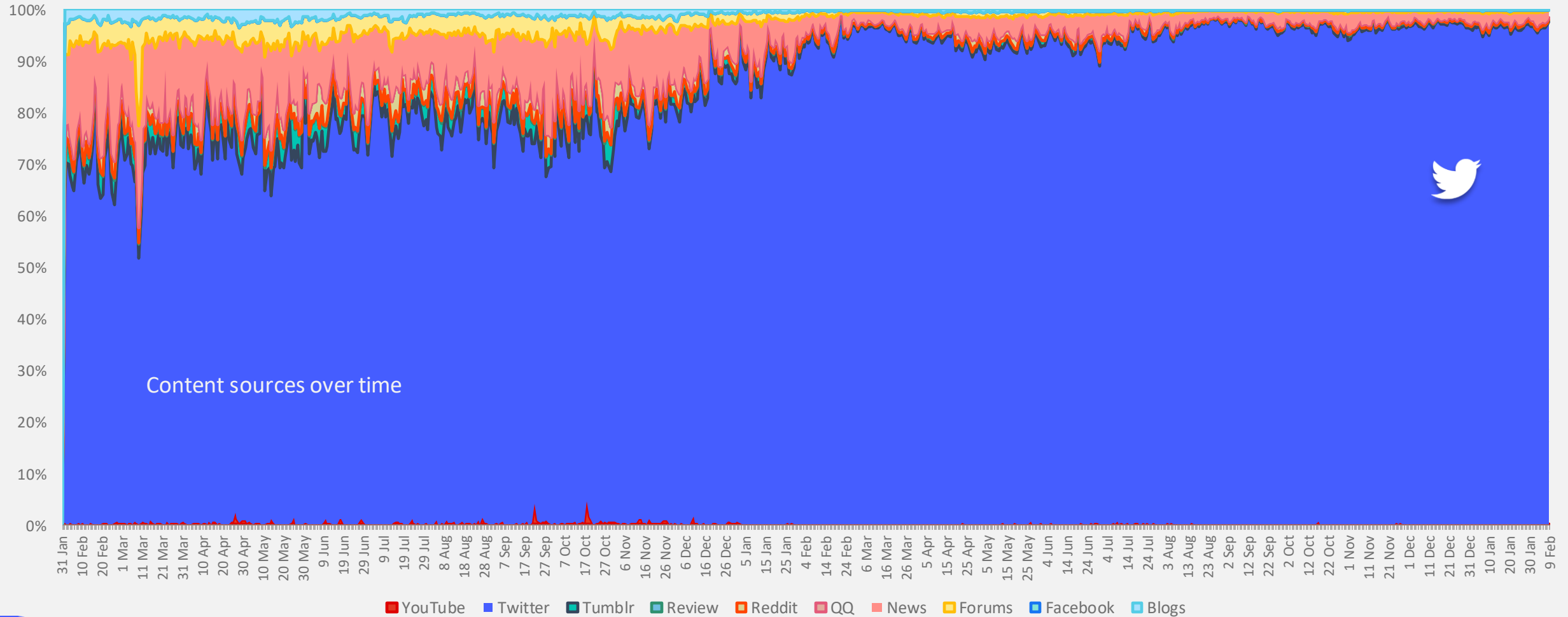




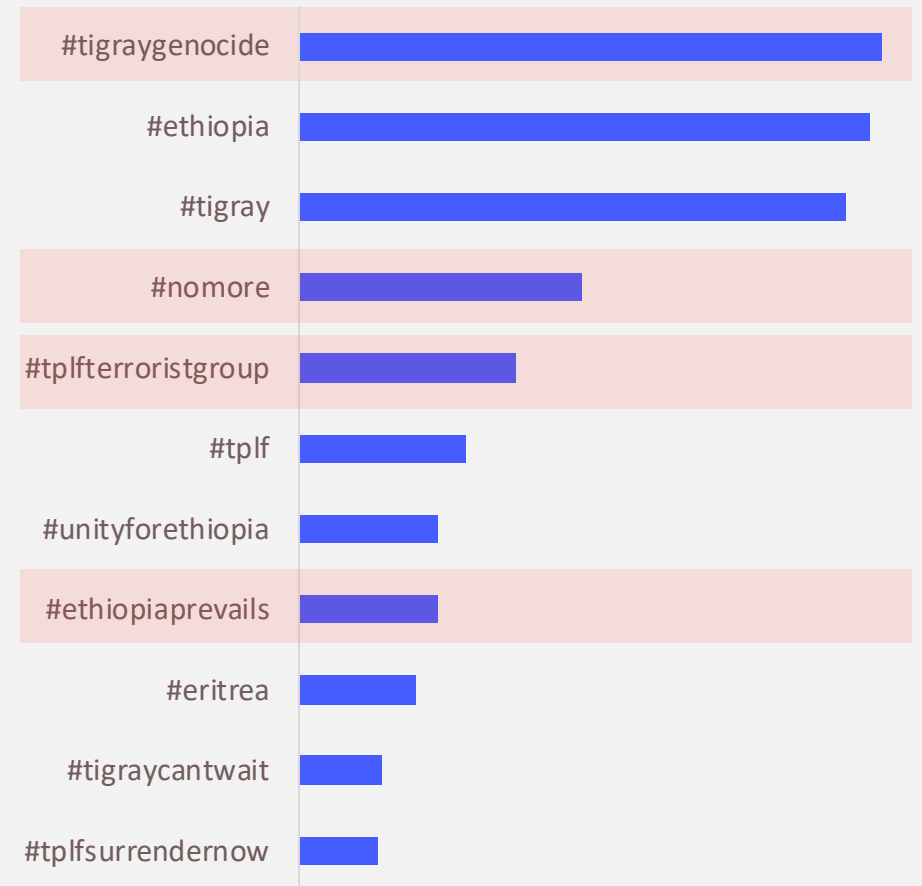
# Social-media trends tracked through a custom-built lexicon to reflect the conflict context in Ethiopia



# Twitter has been the dominant online ideological battlefield

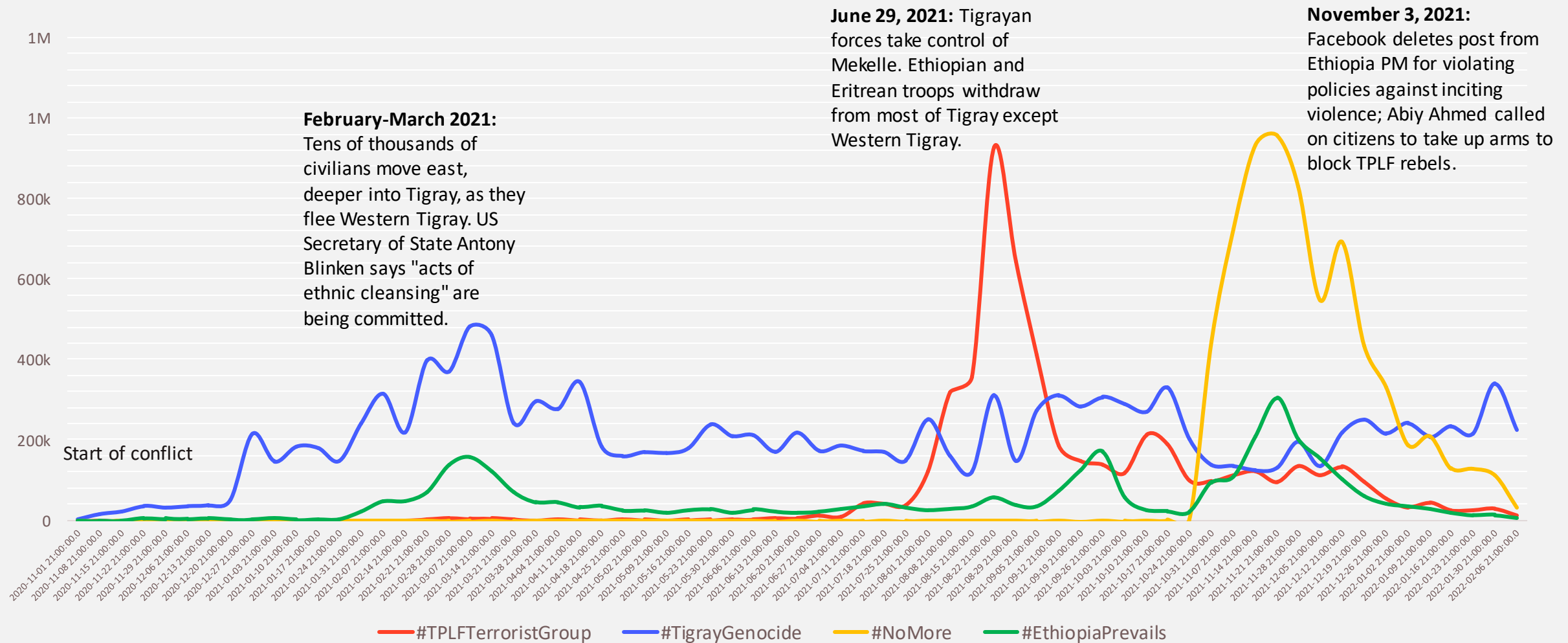


# Our Acoustics tool has identified the top narratives within the conflict-conversation dataset.



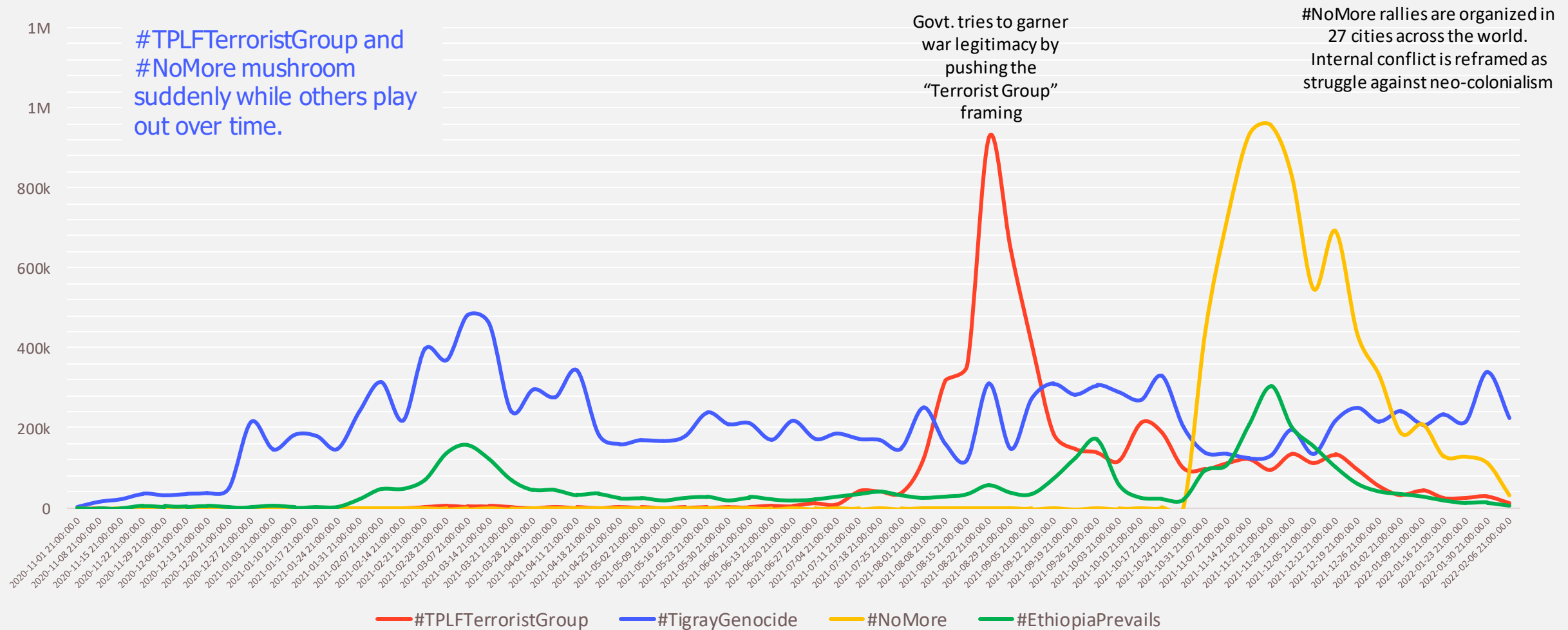
For this case study, we focus on four priority narratives selected from both sides of the conflict.

# The four selected narratives have different evolution-arcs as the conflict progresses.

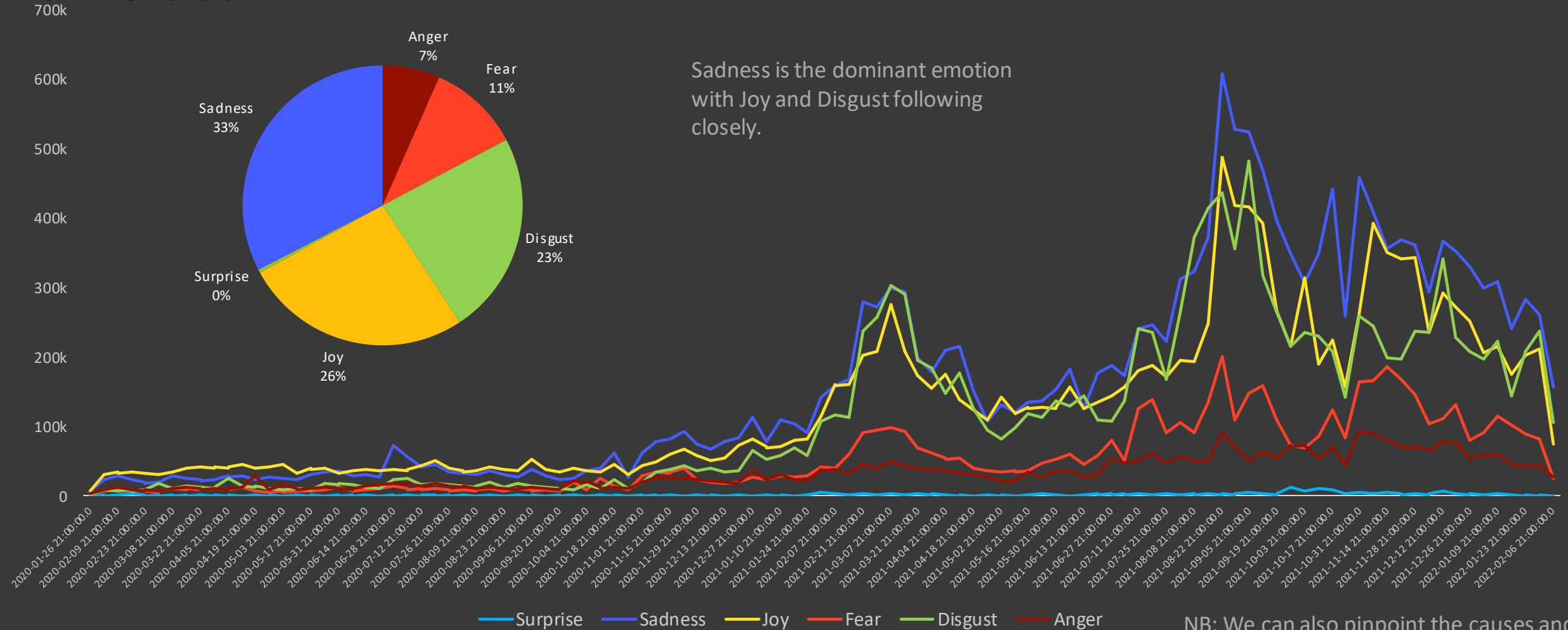




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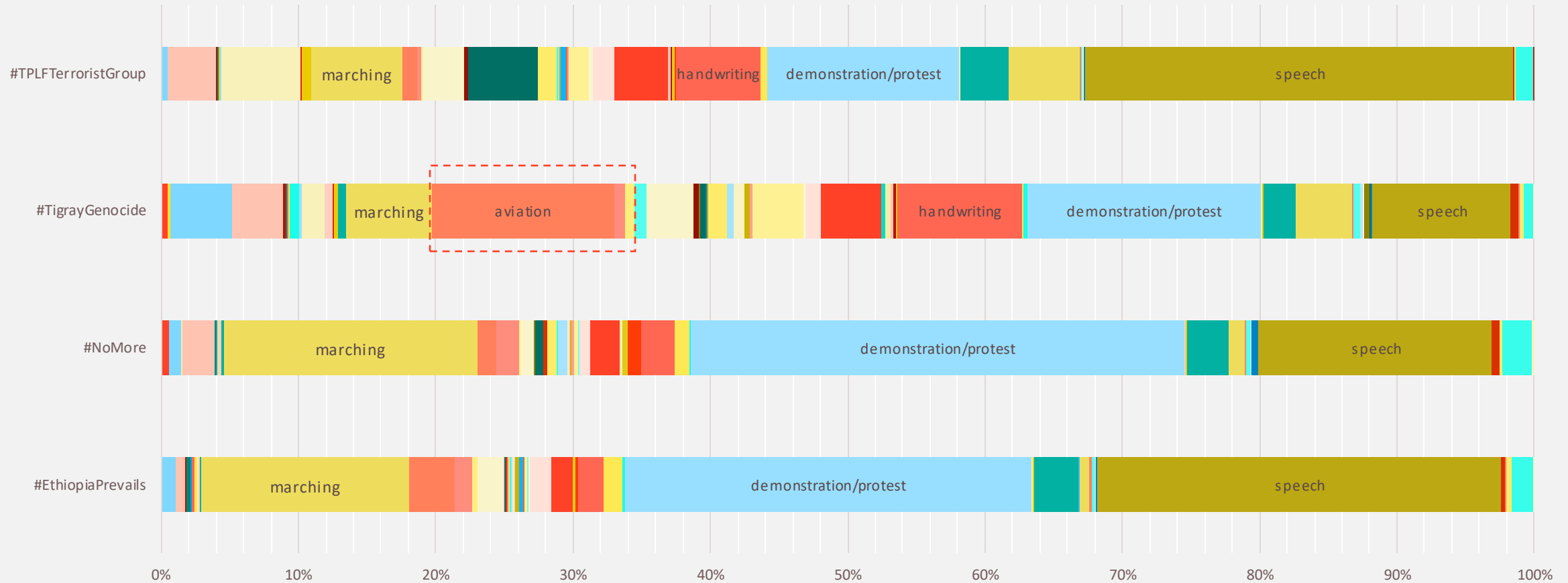


# We conducted an NLP-based emotions analysis to identify psychological states as the conflict unfolded.



NB: We can also pinpoint the causes and triggers of these emotions

# We apply our state-of-the art machine vision analysis to understand how imagery is deployed to aid the narrative



"Aviation" images from the Tigray side contain mostly pictures of Drones and air strikes conducted by the govt. Whereas the Govt. narratives show images of Ethiopian airlines, Ethiopian military planes, etc.





# What's next?

1. Our data and insights can provide not only a retroactive overview of events, but also forward-looking key information for various decision makers.
2. For example, we can drill down to various geographies within Ethiopia to understand hyper-local sentiments, perceptions and narratives.
3. This conflict in Ethiopia has far reaching implications for foreign policy and diplomacy across various countries like the US, China, Turkey as well as those within the region like Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Kenya.
4. Using this data, we can gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of various stakeholders and their specific needs at real-time speeds.
5. We can channel other open source data to complement our social-data to bring in additional dimensions and bottom-up intelligence. For example, satellite imagery and socio-economic indicators.
6. There are a whole range of applications beyond conflict settings where our tools and methodology can be readily used. From impact evaluations to beneficiary needs assessments to new program development to policy design.



# Thank you!

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