Ad hoc report *28 Oct 2026*

Digital Pulse: How the NCIC is discussed online ahead of 2027



This snapshot looks at how the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) was discussed on YouTube and TikTok between May and October 2026: whether the conversation was critical or supportive, what drove it and who was speaking. It is part of a planned series of social media analytical reports by zKe and its local partners that seek to support an integrated online/offline approach to peacebuilding and conflict prevention ahead of the 2027 elections.

1. Executive Summary

The following are the main findings of zKe's analysis of 248 YouTube and TikTok posts that named the NCIC in their title or caption between 1 May and 28 October 2026:

Key Finding 1: **Most posts reported the NCIC's own work, and when a post took a side, it was almost always critical.**
Of the 248 posts, 75% (187) were neutral reports of summonses, warnings and peace campaigns, 76% of them (143) carrying the commission's own statements. Of the 61 posts that took a position, 95% (58) were critical, and they drew 99% of the views these posts received. Only three posts defended or praised the commission, two of them its own statements.

Key Finding 2: **Criticism came from both sides of politics, and government figures drew the most views.**
Government and ruling coalition figures were behind 13 critical posts, which drew 41% of all views of critical posts (~80,000), more than opposition figures (27%) or the media (28%). Of these views, 80% went to posts about Health CS Aden Duale's refusal to appear before the commission unless Rigathi Gachagua was summoned first.

Key Finding 3: **Politicians who refused or put conditions on summonses drove the conversation and raised doubts about the commission's authority.**
July and August, when Duale, MP Peter Kaluma and Gachagua each declined or put conditions on NCIC summonses, accounted for 52% of posts (129) and 76% of views. Broadcasters and commentators responded by asking whether the NCIC is "toothless", a question that was still being asked in October.

Key Finding 4: **Each camp accused the NCIC of favouring the other.**
Ruling coalition figures demanded that the commission summon Gachagua before Duale and urged it to punish opposition leaders, while Kalonzo Musyoka accused it of shielding government allies and targeting opposition MPs. Of the 16 posts about selective justice, 12 were critical, and they drew ~68,000 views.

Key Finding 5: **The commission's first rulings in October did not settle the criticism.**
When the NCIC cleared MP Peter Kaluma and Governor Paul Otuoma on 1 October, an NTV headline called it "A Slap On The Wrist". When it found CS Geoffrey Ruku and MP John Kaguchia guilty of divisive remarks a week later, Kaguchia refused to apologise and his party backed him. Posts about rulings drew ~49,000 views, against ~323,000 for posts about summonses and probes.

2. Background and context

The NCIC was set up after the violence that followed the 2007 election to promote national unity and to investigate hate speech and ethnic discrimination. A new team of commissioners, chaired by Bishop Kepha Omae, was sworn in on 20 May 2026 as campaigning for 2027 was getting under way. The main events in the period were:

- **25 May:** the NCIC opened an investigation into UDA Secretary General Hassan Omar's alleged hate speech against Mount Kenya communities.
- **24 to 28 July:** the NCIC began investigating Health CS Aden Duale over his remarks. Duale refused to appear unless Gachagua was also summoned, and the commission announced investigations into Gachagua, Duale and eight other politicians.
- **18 to 24 August:** the NCIC summoned MP Peter Kaluma after violence at a Homa Bay rally, then summoned Gachagua. Kaluma defied his summons and Gachagua declined his, while MP John Kaguchia appeared on 24 August.
- **25 August:** the NCIC launched its roadmap to a violence-free 2027 general election.
- **15 September:** political parties rejected the NCIC's peace and accountability charter.
- **1 and 7 October:** the NCIC cleared Kaluma and Governor Paul Otuoma, then found CS Geoffrey Ruku and MP John Kaguchia guilty of divisive remarks.

3. Methodology

The analysis used Common Data, a social media observatory that monitors YouTube, TikTok, Bluesky, Telegram and podcasts. It collected all posts in Common Data's index that mentioned the NCIC by its abbreviation, its English name or its Swahili name between 1 May and 28 October 2026, the six months of data the platform holds, searching both the text of posts and automatic transcripts of what is said in videos.

This returned 1,066 YouTube and TikTok videos. Of these, 77% (816) mentioned the commission only in passing, in speech or in a long description, or referred to a US police database that is also called NCIC. The analysis focuses on the 248 posts that named the Kenyan commission in their title or caption (221 on

YouTube and 27 on TikTok, ~567,000 views), in which the commission is the subject; 69% of them (171) came from channels on the project's Kenya election monitoring lists. Each post was reviewed and classified by tone towards the NCIC, speaker and issue.

Bluesky added 28 posts about the Kenyan commission, almost all from automated headline feeds with no more than two likes each, and one Kenyan podcast episode mentioned it in passing. Neither is analysed further.

How was each post classified?
Critical: questions the NCIC's effectiveness, independence or fairness, calls it toothless or inactive, or rejects or defies its summonses and rulings.
Supportive: defends the NCIC, praises its work or backs its initiatives, including the commission's own rebuttals of criticism.
Neutral: reports the NCIC's activities, warnings or rulings, or calls on it to act, without judging it.
Speaker: the person or group whose view the post carries, usually the politician quoted in the title.

The analysis has the following limitations:

- Common Data does not cover Facebook, X, Instagram or WhatsApp, where much of Kenya's political conversation takes place, and Telegram was not available to this account.
- Posts were classified from their titles and captions, not from the full video or the comments beneath it, so the reaction of viewers is not measured.
- Six broadcasters (Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, KBC, K24 and Inooro TV) posted 208 of the 221 YouTube posts. Their headlines usually report what a politician or the commission said, so the tone measured is mostly that of the person quoted.
- Posts reporting that a politician refused a summons are counted as critical, because they reject the commission's authority. This raises the critical count for July and August.
- Each post was classified once, by a single reviewer, without a second check.

4. Key findings

Finding 1: **Most posts were neutral, but almost every post that took a side was critical**

Of the 248 posts, 75% (187) reported the NCIC's work without judging it, and 58% (145) carried the commission's own messages: summonses, warnings to politicians, verdicts and peace campaigns such as its roadmap to a violence-free election. Of the 61 posts that took a position, 95% (58) were critical. They drew ~197,000 views, against fewer than 3,000 for the three supportive posts.

Two of the three supportive posts were the commission's own. Its chair, Bishop Kepha Omae, said "We have begun biting, it will be done fairly, but without any favour", and the NCIC defended its decision to clear Kaluma and Otuoma. The third reported that Busia religious and civil society groups backed its "Noma Free" initiative. No politician from either side appeared in a post defending the commission.

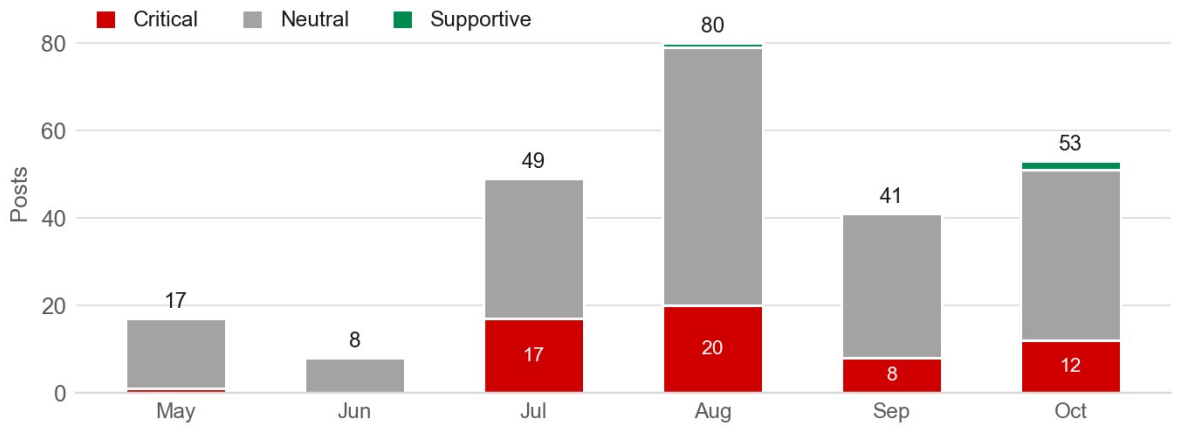


Figure 1: Posts about the NCIC by month and tone, May to October 2026 (Source: YouTube and TikTok via Common Data)

Finding 2: **Criticism came from both camps, with government figures drawing the most views**

Criticism of the NCIC did not follow party lines. Government and ruling coalition figures were behind 13 critical posts, which drew ~80,000 views (41% of all views of critical posts), and 80% of those views went to a single dispute. Health CS Aden Duale set conditions for appearing before the commission, demanding that Gachagua be summoned first (20,847 views), and said he would not honour any summons otherwise. CS Geoffrey Ruku backed him, Speaker Moses Wetang'ula urged the NCIC to be active all year and not just during elections, and in October Aaron Cheruiyot said "NCIC are sleeping on their job, we need a peaceful elections." (5,467 views).

Opposition figures were behind 16 critical posts (~53,000 views). Gachagua challenged the probe into his remarks and later declined a summons, MP John Kaguchia said his side would work to disband the NCIC, and his lawyers clashed with commissioners over whether he faced an investigation or a hearing (20,100 views on TikTok). Media and commentators added 17 critical posts (~55,000 views), mostly asking whether the commission has the power to act.

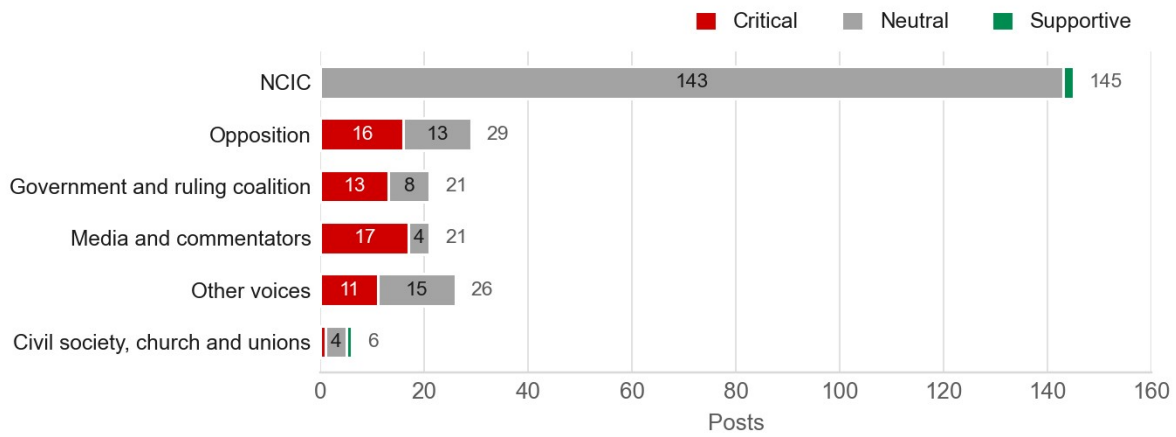


Figure 2: Tone of posts about the NCIC by who is speaking, May to October 2026 (Source: YouTube and TikTok via Common Data)

Finding 3: **Refused summonses made July and August the busiest months and raised the question of whether the NCIC is "toothless"**

July and August accounted for 52% of posts (129) and 76% of views. After Duale's refusal, NTV reported that the commission was "under fire" (8,440 views) and KTN asked "Is NCIC Toothless?". In August Kaluma defied his summons over the Homa Bay rally violence (8,000 views) and Gachagua skipped his, citing a foreign trip (8,963 views). The commission threatened arrest warrants for politicians who ignored its summonses, and NTV asked "Je, wahuni wameilemea Serikali na NCIC?" (Have goons overwhelmed the government and the NCIC?), drawing 12,143 views.

The commission's own explanations did little to change this framing. Its chair told the public "We can't act on TikTok clips. Report cases of incitement to us", and in October Commissioner Jerusah Mwaathime said Kenyans were not conversant with its mandate. The same month NTV ran an interview with her under the headline "NCIC: A Dog With No Teeth?", and Citizen TV asked "NCIC: LOST AT SEA?" (7,997 views).

Finding 4: **Each camp accused the commission of favouring the other**

Of the 16 posts about selective justice, 12 were critical, drawing ~68,000 views, and the accusations ran in both directions. Duale and Ruku argued that Gachagua should be summoned first, Mombasa leaders accused the NCIC of selective justice, and UDA leaders urged it to punish opposition figures over hate speech. From the other side, Kalonzo Musyoka accused the commission of shielding government allies and targeting opposition MPs, Gathoni Wamuchomba asked why it had not acted against Duale ("Is he above the law?"), and Senator Daniel Maanzo said "It is not enough for Kaluma and Wanga go to NCIC. If Kaguchia was prosecuted, then they should also be prosecuted for worse crimes."

Finding 5: **The October rulings did not settle the criticism**

On 1 October the NCIC cleared Kaluma and Otuoma, saying there was no evidence that Kaluma planned the rally violence and that Otuoma's remarks bordered on incitement but lacked intent. NTV headlined the decision "Demagogues Get A Slap On The Wrist", and Josphat Kamanya said on Spice FM that "NCIC is creating room for verbal and physical violence, putting Kenyans at risk".

A week later the commission found CS Geoffrey Ruku and MP John Kaguchia guilty of divisive remarks and ordered them to apologise publicly. Kaguchia rejected the ruling, saying he would apologise only after his court case was decided, and his party, the DCP, backed him (4,819 views). The rulings drew far less attention than the confrontations before them: posts about rulings drew ~49,000 views, against ~323,000 for posts about summonses and probes.

5. What to watch

- **Compliance:** the commission's standing online depends on whether politicians comply. Watch whether Ruku and Kaguchia withdraw their remarks, and whether Duale appears before the commission, as it said in October that he would.
- **Even-handedness:** both camps already accuse the NCIC of favouring the other, so each new summons or ruling is likely to be read through that lens. Setting out the evidence behind each decision matters as much as the decision itself.
- **Reach of peace messaging:** the commission's 73 posts about hate speech warnings and peace campaigns drew ~57,000 views, against ~323,000 for its disputes with politicians. Its peace messages are not reaching the audiences its confrontations reach.
- **Party buy-in:** political parties rejected the NCIC's peace charter in September. Whether they sign it before campaigns formally open will test the commission's standing.