

WhatsApp offers tips to spot fake news after India murders

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WhatsApp took out full-page advertisements in Indian newspapers Tuesday offering "easy tips" to identify fact from fiction after a slew of

recent murders spurred by hoaxes shared on its platform.

The Facebook-owned messaging service has been under immense pressure to curb the spread of misinformation in India after the lynching of more than 20 people accused of [child abduction](#) in the last two months.

Most recently a mob surrounded and killed five men in Maharashtra state denounced as child kidnappers, a pernicious rumour blamed for similar murders in at least 11 Indian states.

WhatsApp said it was "horrified" by the violence and promised swift action but Indian authorities have accused the social media giant of acting irresponsibly in its largest market.

The slick adverts in leading English and Hindi language newspapers, entitled "together we can fight false information", listed 10 tips for users seeking to sort truth from rumour.

"Do not pay attention to the number of times you receive the message. Just because a message is shared many times, does not make it true," offer one of the tidbits of advice.

It also suggested users cross-check information against reputable news sources and not share the messages further if they doubt their authenticity.

WhatsApp will soon launch a new feature on its platform in India that will clearly identify whether a message has been forwarded or written by the user.

Indian officials said the company could not "evade accountability and responsibility".

WhatsApp has said it can block spam but cannot read the content of messages for privacy reasons, including potentially problematic content spreading in user chats.

Rumours on WhatsApp about child kidnappers saw eight men killed in eastern India last year but the same information has since resurfaced.

Spam messages warning parents about child kidnapping gangs have sprung up in multiple regional languages in India in recent months, sometimes accompanied by gruesome videos of [child](#) abuse.

Police in several states have denied the existence of such criminal groups.

India is WhatsApp's largest market, with an estimated 200 million users sending a billion encrypted messages each day.

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