

DETAILED REPORT

# February 2020 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report



We're constantly working to find and stop coordinated campaigns that seek to manipulate public debate across our apps. In the past year alone, we've taken down over 50 networks worldwide for engaging in coordinated inauthentic behavior (CIB), including ahead of major democratic elections.

#### **PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

Over the past three years, we've shared our findings about coordinated inauthentic behavior we detect and remove from our platforms. Starting this month, we will begin publishing information about all networks we take down over the course of a month as part of regular CIB reports to make it easier for people to see progress we're making in one place.

#### **WHAT IS CIB?**

While we investigate and enforce against any type of inauthentic behavior — including fake engagement, spam and artificial amplification — we approach enforcement against these mostly financially-motivated activities differently than how we counter foreign interference or domestic influence operations. We routinely take down high-volume inauthentic behaviors like spam which are much less sophisticated, and we do not announce these enforcement actions when we take them.

We view influence operations as coordinated efforts to manipulate public debate for a strategic goal where fake accounts are central to the operation. There are two tiers of these activities that we work to stop: 1) coordinated inauthentic behavior in the context of domestic, non-state campaigns (CIB) and 2) coordinated inauthentic behavior on behalf of a foreign or government actor (FGI).

#### **COORDINATED INAUTHENTIC BEHAVIOR (CIB)**

When we find domestic, non-government campaigns that include groups of accounts and Pages seeking to mislead people about who they are and what they are doing while relying on fake accounts, we remove both inauthentic and authentic accounts, Pages and Groups directly involved in this activity. We will share the removal of this activity as part of our monthly CIB report. However, if the accounts and Pages we remove are directly related to a civic event, pose imminent harm or involves a new technique or a new significant threat actor, we will share our findings at the time of enforcement and we'll also include them in our monthly report.

We continue to monitor for efforts to re-establish a presence on Facebook by networks we previously removed for CIB. As part of our continuous enforcement, using both automated and manual detection, we constantly remove accounts and Pages connected to networks we took down in the past. We will share these numbers as part of our monthly CIB reports moving forward.

#### **FOREIGN OR GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE (FGI)**

If we find any instances of CIB conducted on behalf of a government entity or by a foreign actor, we apply the broadest enforcement measures including the removal of every on-platform property connected to the operation itself and the people and organizations behind it. We will announce the removal of this activity at the time of enforcement and will also include it in our monthly report.

#### **SUMMARY OF FEBRUARY 2020 FINDINGS**

This month, we removed 5 networks of accounts, Pages and Groups engaged in foreign or government interference — which is coordinated inauthentic behavior on behalf of a foreign actor or government entity. We reported the removal of three of these networks earlier this month, and we're reporting the remaining two today. We have shared information about our findings with law enforcement, policymakers and industry partners.

- **Total number of Facebook accounts removed:** 467
- **Total number of Instagram accounts removed:** 1245
- **Total number of Pages removed:** 248
- **Total number of Groups removed:** 49
- **Ad spending:** About \$1.2 million
- **Continuous enforcement against networks we removed in the past:** We continue to monitor for efforts to re-establish a presence on Facebook by networks we previously removed for coordinated inauthentic behavior. As part of continuous enforcement, using both automated and manual detection, we removed 45 Facebook accounts, 25 Instagram, and 14 Pages connected to networks we took down in the past, including the following:
  - August 2018 Newsroom Post
  - August 2019 Newsroom Post
  - January 2019 Newsroom Post

- [March 2019 Newsroom Post](#)
- [May 2019 Newsroom Post](#)
- [October 2019 Newsroom Post](#)
- [December 2019 Newsroom Post](#)
- [February 2020 Newsroom Post](#)

#### NETWORKS REMOVED IN FEBRUARY, 2020:

- 1. India:** We removed a network of 37 Facebook accounts, 32 Pages, 11 Groups and 42 Instagram accounts. This activity originated in India and focused on the Gulf region, United States, United Kingdom, and Canada. Although the people behind this network attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to aRep Global, a digital marketing firm in India.
- 2. Egypt:** We removed a network of 333 Facebook accounts, 195 Pages, 9 Groups and 1194 Instagram accounts. This activity originated in Egypt and focused on countries across the Middle East and North Africa. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to two marketing firms in Egypt, New Waves and Flexell, which were behind the activity we removed in [August](#) and [October](#) 2019. Both of these companies and individuals associated with them have repeatedly violated our [Inauthentic Behavior policy](#) and are now banned from Facebook.
- 3. Russia:** We removed a network of 78 Facebook accounts, 11 Pages, 29 Groups and four Instagram accounts. This activity originated in Russia and focused primarily on Ukraine and neighboring countries. Although the people behind this network attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to Russian military intelligence services. (Originally [announced](#) on February 12, 2020)
- 4. Iran:** We also removed a small network of 6 Facebook accounts and 5 Instagram accounts that originated in Iran and focused primarily on the US. (Originally [announced](#) on February 12, 2020)
- 5. Myanmar, Vietnam:** Finally, we removed 13 Facebook accounts and 10 Pages operated from Myanmar and Vietnam, focused on Myanmar. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to two telecom providers, Mytel in Myanmar and Viettel in Vietnam, as well as Gapit Communications, a PR firm in Vietnam. (Originally [announced](#) on February 12, 2020)

# 01

**We removed 37 Facebook accounts, 32 Pages, 11 Groups and 42 Instagram accounts for violating our policy against foreign or government interference, which is coordinated inauthentic behavior on behalf of a foreign or government entity. This activity originated in India and focused on the Gulf region, United States, United Kingdom, and Canada.**

The individuals behind this activity used fake accounts — some of which had been previously detected and disabled by our automated systems — to manage Groups and Pages, and to drive people to off-platform websites masquerading as news outlets. Some of these Pages also posed as news organizations and some Pages focused on sports events in Qatar. A number of these accounts purported to be local in countries they targeted, and some posed as journalists and activists. The people behind this activity typically posted in English about local news and events including topics like Saudi Arabia's role in the Yemen conflict, the UAE and Saudi Arabia's human rights record, criticism of Manchester City, the Premier League soccer team, and praise for sporting events in Qatar. Although the people behind this network attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to aRep Global, a digital marketing firm in India.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 37 Facebook accounts, 32 Pages, 11 Groups and 42 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* About 29,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages, about 1,100 accounts joined at least one of these Groups and around 74,000 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Less than \$450 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for in US dollars, Indian rupee, and Bangladeshi taka.

We found this activity as part of our internal investigations into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the Gulf region.

Below is a sample of the content posted by some of these Pages:

**JUST SAY NO TO TV SOCCER PIRACY IN SAUDI ARABIA**



**sauudidissent** • Follow ...

**sauudidissent** Is the Premier League likely to make a stand on Saudi Arabia's human rights record, whether it be the alleged torture and assassination of political opponents, the persecution of LGBT communities or airstrikes in Yemen? It's certainly hard to imagine. After all, the U.K. exports almost \$3 billion of goods a year to Saudi Arabia. Why, the Premier League might ask, should it balk on principle when

5 likes  
6 DAYS AGO

Log in to like or comment.



**war\_journalist** • Follow ...

**war\_journalist** Human rights in Yemen  
Who is gonna defend Yemeni children?

#yemen #yemenwar #yemenconflict #saudi #saudiarabia #us #usa #uk #stoparmingsaudi #humanrights #yemenchildren #unitednations


2w

23 likes  
JANUARY 30

Log in to like or comment.

**Raven Tribune**  
January 18 at 1:46 PM · 🌐

Despite multiple human rights violations and involvement in Yemen Crisis, Saudi Arabia continues to enjoy privileges like protection from the US troops and efforts to improve its image as a country.  
<https://raventribune.com/saudi-paying-us-troops-real-motive/>



RAVENTRIBUNE.COM  
**What's the real motive behind Saudi paying for US Troops deployment?**

# 02

**We also removed 333 Facebook accounts, 195 Pages, 9 Groups and 1194 Instagram accounts that were involved in foreign interference emanating from Egypt that focused on countries across the Middle East and North Africa.**

The people behind this network used a combination of authentic and fake accounts — many of which had been continuously detected and disabled by our automated systems — to disseminate their content, comment in Groups, drive people to off-platform websites and artificially increase engagement. The accounts owners posed as locals and managed Pages, some of which appeared to have been purchased and changed names and admins, posing as local news organizations in targeted countries. They posted non-country specific memes in addition to content about local news and topics including alleged support of terrorism by Qatar, Turkey and the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord and positive commentary about UAE and its humanitarian activity in Yemen. They also posted about the war in Libya, the killing of Qassim Suleimani and Qatar's alleged role in it, the recent protests in Iran, the alleged spread of diseases in Qatar, criticism of Al Jazeera, migrant workers' rights in Qatar, women's rights in Turkey, protests in Iraq and other news events in countries across the Middle East.

We identified this activity as part of our follow-on investigation into the coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region we had previously removed in [August](#) and [October](#) 2019. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to two marketing firms in Egypt — New Waves and Flexell. Both these companies and individuals associated with them have repeatedly violated our [Inauthentic Behavior policy](#) and are now banned from Facebook.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 333 Facebook accounts, 195 Pages, 9 Groups and 1194 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* About 6.2 million accounts followed one or more of these Pages, about 3,800 accounts joined at least one of these Groups and around 305,900 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Less than \$48,500 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for primarily in UAE Dirham, US dollars, Egyptian pounds, and Canadian dollars.

Below is a sample of the content posted by some of these Pages:

 **Somalia light**  
February 17 at 7:32 AM Like Page ...

Sheikh Shaker: The forces that were trained by Turkey were used to suppress the Somali people  
Until now, we will not know what Farmajo Wayne Somalia's response will be to his work duties and his government's tasks  
#Somalia



October 9, 2019 ...

[#محمد\\_بن\\_زايد\\_قائدنا\\_الملمم](#)

[See Translation](#)



**Translation:** #Muhammad\_bin\_Zayed our inspiring leader

Feb 4, 2020

الجرب انتشر في دولتنا في ظل الإهمال الطبي الدائم وعدم الاكتراث لما لأحوالنا  
#ينتفسي\_الجرب\_في\_قطر

[Translate](#)



**Translation:** Scabies spreading in our country because of the continuing neglect of health and lack of care for our well-being #Spread\_of\_scabies\_in\_Qatar



# 03

**We removed 78 Facebook accounts, 11 Pages, 29 Groups and four Instagram accounts for violating our policy against foreign or government interference. This activity originated in Russia and focused primarily on Ukraine and neighboring countries.**

The individuals behind this activity posed as locals and used fake accounts — some of which had already been detected and disabled by our automated systems — to manage Groups and Pages, post and comment on various content. Some of these accounts represented themselves as citizen journalists and tried to contact policymakers, journalists and other public figures in the region. The Page admins and account owners typically posted content in Russian, English and Ukrainian about local and political news including public figures in Ukraine, Russian military engagement in Syria, alleged SBU leaks related to ethnic tensions in Crimea and the downing of the Malaysian airliner in Ukraine in 2014. Although the people behind this network attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to Russian military intelligence services.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 78 Facebook accounts, 11 Pages, 29 Groups and 4 accounts on Instagram.
- *Followers:* About 500 accounts followed one or more of these Pages, about 6,150 accounts joined at least one of these Groups and around 100 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.

We found this activity as part of our internal investigations into Russia-linked, suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region.

Below is a sample of the content posted by some of these Pages:

Президент Украины Зеленский  
Владимир Александрович  
May 31, 2019

May 31, 2019

Следственную группу по гибели МН-17 ждет жаркое лето?

"Власти Малайзии требуют доказательств того, что Россия несет ответственность за трагедию рейса МН17 Malaysia Airlines в 2014 году на Донбассе. Об этом заявил премьер-министр страны Махатхир Мохамад. По его словам, Малайзия согласилась с отчетом о расследовании в Нидерландах, но только до того момента, где указано, что самолет был сбит ракетой, выпущенной Россией:

"Они обвиняют Россию, но где доказательства? Мы знаем, что ракета, сбившая самолет, - это ракета российского типа, но она также может быть изготовлена в Украине", - отметил он".

А Нидерланды уже расслабили булки, как и весь "Цивилизованный мир", будучи уверенны, что эта катастрофа незаметно и тихо исчезнет с повестки дня, став лишь очередной тайной вроде убийства Кеннеди или теракта 11 сентября 2001. Доказали, не доказали, нашли, не нашли - какая разница? Про ОБЕЩАННЫЙ ТРИБУНАЛ все и так начали забывать... Уже выделено финансирование от трех стран на "расследование" аж до 2023 года, образованы "штаты" бюрократов, выстроившихся в очередь для освоения этих средств... В общем сидели, никого не трогали, получали бабло, имитируя бурную деятельность, и тут - на тебе! Опять все по новой искать, теперь РЕАЛЬНО уже... И какая муха укусила премьера Малайзии, одним лишь заявлением помножившего на ноль все "труды" и "достижения" 5 лет работы европейцев???)

Сдается мне, для кого-то лето будет жарким....

[See Translation](#)



KORRESPONDENT.NET

**МН17: Малайзия требует доказательств вины России**  
Сбившая самолет ракета российского типа, но она также могла...

**Translation:** Hot summer for the MH17 investigation team?"Malaysian authorities ask for the proof that Russia is to be responsible for the tragedy of the MH17 Malaysia Airlines in Donbass region in 2014, said the country's prime minister Mahathir bin Mohamad. According to him, Malaysia agreed with the investigation report made in Netherlands, but only until the clause which indicates that the plane was hit with a missile by Russia. "They blame Russia, but where is the proof? We know that the missile that hit the plane was of the Russian type, but it could also have been produced in Ukraine", he mentioned.Netherlands and all the "Civilized World" have already relaxed, being sure that this catastrophe will disappear from the agenda quietly and unnoticed, becoming just another mystery like Kennedy Assassination or the 9/11. Proved, didn't prove, found, didn't find - what's the difference? They already started to forget the PROMISED TRIBUNAL... The funding for the 'investigation' has been already issued by three countries up until 2023, teams of bureaucrats formed, all lined up to allocate the funds... So they just sat there, didn't bother anyone, got the bucks while having imitated the frenzied activity, and.. here you go! They have to write it anew, and this time for REAL.. And what has gotten into the Malaysian prime minister, who in one announcement nullified all the 5-year-long 'work' and 'achievements' of the Europeans???)It seems to me that this summer will be hot for some...

Ветеран АТО  
July 24, 2018

Like Page

Во время проверок в 46-м Объединенном центре обеспечения была обнаружена нехватка 200 тонн топлива и бракованные консервы

[See Translation](#)



RU.TSN.UA

**"Имена ВСУ": Полторак отобрал звание у военных из-за скандального хищения 200 тонн горючего**

**Translation:** Shortage of 200 tons of fuel and faulty canned goods found during the inspection in the 46th Unified Supply Center Link: "Treason of the Armed Forces of Ukraine": Poltorak revoked the grade title from military officers due to the scandalous embezzlement of 200 tons of fuel

October 29, 2015

))))))



# 04

**We also removed 6 Facebook accounts and 5 Instagram accounts that were involved in foreign interference as part of a small network originating in Iran that primarily focused on the US.**

The individuals behind this activity used fake accounts — some of which had been previously detected and disabled by our automated systems — to post in Groups and comment on content. Some of them attempted to contact public figures. They shared posts about political news and geopolitics including topics like the US elections, Christianity, US-Iran relations, US immigration policy, criticism of US policies in the Middle East and public figures as well as video interviews with academics, public figures and columnists on issues related to Iran and US elections.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 6 Facebook accounts and 5 accounts on Instagram.
- *Followers:* About 60 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.

We found this activity as part of our internal investigations into Iran-linked, suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior, which exhibited some links to the network we had removed in January 2019.

Below is a sample of the content posted by some of these Pages:

**Only Jesus Can Save**  
Jan 2, 2020 9:59am · 📍  
FB Post

Happy new year and God bless you. I don't know, Why some people are disingenuous and doesn't want to tell the truth? Do you know?  
Translate




BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

LIVE 6:03 pm PT

Trump's nonsense: Now, anybody that becomes president and they get have a Phone call, they get impeached!

**Jesus Christ Family**  
Jul 6, 2019 4:28pm · 📍



Putting aside the fact that John Bolton is a total ignoramus with regards to truth & historical reality confirming the title "Persian Gulf", he often childishly refers to it as "Arabian Gulf" at times when we want to make KSA happy & milk them even more. But, perhaps, if Iran paid more than KSA, this slave of gold would "somehow" change his mind!

Jan 2, 2020 6:30am · 📍



GOD

GRACE

MY LIFE

# 05

**Finally, we removed 13 Facebook accounts and 10 Pages for violating our policy against coordinated inauthentic behavior. This Myanmar-focused activity originated in Myanmar and Vietnam.**

The individuals behind this network used fake accounts to manage Pages posing as independent telecom consumer news sites. They also purported to be customers of some of the telecom providers in Myanmar posting critical commentary about those companies and their services. The Page admins and account owners typically shared content in English and Burmese about alleged business failures and planned market exit of some service providers in Myanmar, and their alleged fraudulent activity against their customers. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to two telecom providers, Mytel in Myanmar and Viettel in Vietnam, as well as Gapit Communications, a PR firm in Vietnam.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 13 Facebook accounts and 10 Pages.
- *Followers:* About 265,600 accounts followed one or more of these Pages.
- *Advertising:* Around \$1,155,000 in spending for ads on Facebook paid for in US dollars and Vietnamese dong.

We found this activity as part of our investigations into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region.





စာလံပြန်တော့ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ထုညှိပေးဟု

Fuck wave money

သတင်းပို့လိုက်ရင်တယ်မှန်အောင်ပေးပို့ပေးအတွက် လိုက်နာပါ



Like · Reply · 19h



Like · Reply · 18h · Edited



Like · Reply · 17h

