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META

Removing Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior in UAE, Nigeria, Indonesia and Egypt

October 3, 2019



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By Nathaniel Gleicher, Head of Cybersecurity Policy

We removed multiple Pages, Groups and accounts that were involved in coordinated inauthentic behavior on Facebook and Instagram. We found three separate operations: one of which originated in the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Nigeria, and the other two in Indonesia and Egypt. These three campaigns we removed were unconnected, but each created networks of accounts to mislead others about who they were and what they were doing. We have shared information about our findings with industry partners.

We're constantly working to detect and stop this type of activity because we don't want our services to be used to manipulate people. We're taking down these Pages, Groups and accounts based on their behavior, not the content they posted. In each of these cases, the people behind this activity coordinated with one another and used fake accounts to misrepresent themselves, and that was the basis for our action.

We are making progress rooting out this abuse, but as we've said before, it's an ongoing challenge. We're committed to continually improving to stay ahead. That means building better technology, hiring more people and working closer with law enforcement, security experts and other companies.

What We've Found So Far

We removed 211 Facebook accounts, 107 Pages, 43 Groups and 87 Instagram accounts for engaging in coordinated inauthentic behavior that originated in the UAE, Egypt and Nigeria. There were multiple sets of activity, each localized for a specific country or region, primarily in the Middle East and Africa, and some in Europe, North and South America, South Asia and East Asia, and Australia. The people behind this network used fake accounts – some of which had already been disabled by our automated systems — to run Pages, post in Groups, disseminate their content and artificially increase engagement. They managed Pages — some of which changed names over time — sharing local news in targeted countries and promoting content about UAE. The Page admins and account owners primarily posted videos, photos and web links related to local events and issues in a particular country, and some content on topics including elections and candidates; UAE's activity in Yemen; the first Emirati astronaut; criticism of Qatar, Turkey, and Iran; the Iran nuclear deal, and criticism of the Muslim Brotherhood. Although the people

behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities, our investigation found links to three marketing firms — Charles Communications in UAE, MintReach in Nigeria and Flexell in Egypt.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 211 Facebook accounts, 107 Pages, 43 Groups and 87 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* Less than 1.4 million accounts followed one or more of these Pages, less than 100 accounts joined one or more of the Groups and less than 70,000 accounts followed at least one of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Less than \$150,000 spent on Facebook ads paid for primarily in US dollars, Emirati dirham and Indian rupee.

We identified these accounts as part of our follow-on investigation into the coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region we had previously removed.

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



USA Thoughts

July 10 · 🌐



Qatari Developed 'Hate App' Comes In Top 100 Download List

<https://thecrystaleyes.com/qatari-developed-hate-app-comes.../>



THECRYSTALEYES.COM

Qatari Developed 'Hate App' Comes in Top 100 Download List

Continuing to create chaos and unrest in the world, another Qatari nation...



Namibia Engage

May 20 · 🌐



When will my country look like this 🤔🤔. I want to travel. The United Arab Emirates. Visit UAE





Elections Comores

March 24 · 🌐



**votez sagement! vote pour
Azali Assoumani**

azali2019 #azaliassoumani



The Crystal Eyes

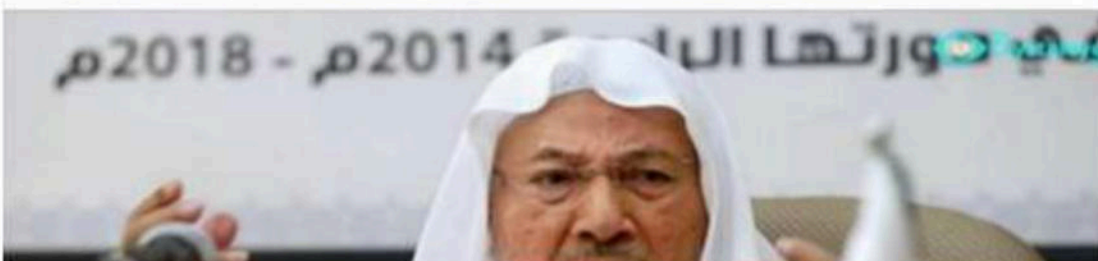
September 21 at 12:03 AM · 🌐

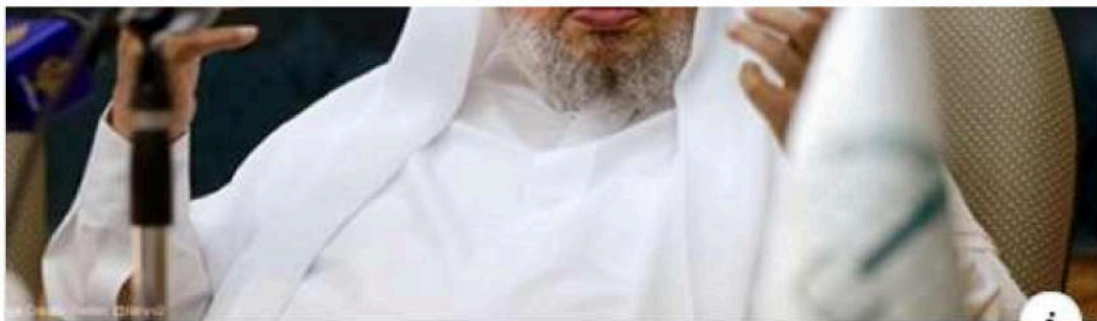


Qatar Charity's multi-million donations as backing for Mosques and Muslim Brotherhood in the UK and Europe

The Muslim Brotherhood that's started in Egypt in 1928 is already banned in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE and is soon to be included in the US's list of prohibited organizations.

#UK #Europe #MuslimBrotherhood #Christians #MOSQUES #trust #Qatar
<https://www.thecrystaleyes.com/qatar-charitys-multi-millio.../>





THECRYSTALEYES.COM

Qatar Charity's multi-million donations as backing for Mosques and Muslim Brotherhood in UK and Europe - The Crystal Eyes

We also removed 69 Facebook accounts, 42 Pages and 34 Instagram accounts that were involved in domestic-focused coordinated inauthentic behavior in Indonesia.

The people behind this network used fake accounts to manage Pages, disseminate their content and drive people to off-platform sites. They primarily posted in English and Bahasa Indonesia about West Papua with some Pages sharing content in support of the independence movement, while others posting criticism of it. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities, our investigation found links to an Indonesia media firm InsightID.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 69 Facebook accounts, 42 Pages and 34 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* About 410,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages and around 120,000 accounts followed at least one of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* About \$300,000 spent on Facebook ads paid for primarily in Indonesian rupiah.

We identified these accounts through ongoing investigations into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region.

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



West Papua Indonesia

August 26 · 🌐



The riots were triggered by intentional hate speech and discrimination done by several parties to West Papuan students in Surabaya (08/17).

Initially, the act of solidarity in West Papua proceed peacefully. However, due to provocation from the Free Papua extremist group, people went violent.

Location : West Papua... [See More](#)



I am not afraid! I am not scared to die for Indonesia.
I am not afraid to die for Indonesia. Note that! Note that!



Papua West

July 31 · 🌐



Papua patut bangga! [REDACTED], putra asli Papua asal Manokwari menggagas ojek online, Oke Jack di Papua. [REDACTED] melihat banyak kota-kota besar di Indonesia yang sudah memakai sistem transportasi online, sementara di Papua belum masif sehingga ia melihat peluang bisnis dari sini.

#WestPapuaIndonesia #WestPapua #PapuaIsland #PapuaIndonesia
#ExplorePapua #Infrastructure #TransPapua #EconomyPapua #Education

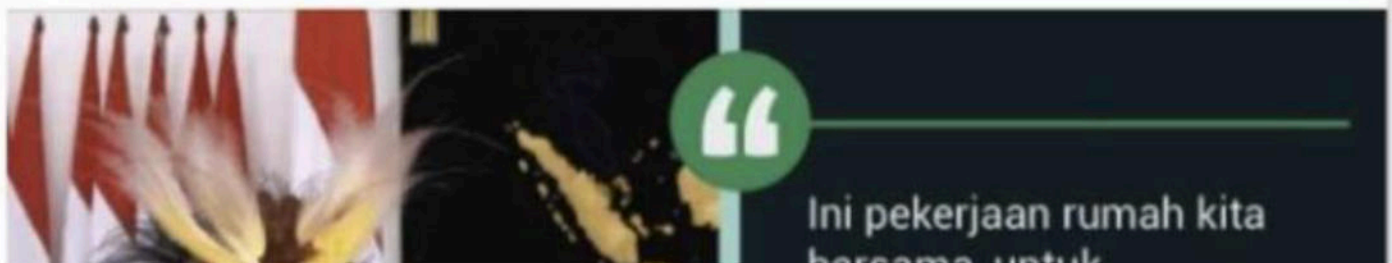


Papua West

September 12 at 10:14 AM · 🌐



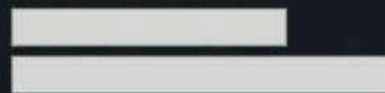
Ini pekerjaan rumah kita bersama, untuk menyempurnakan undang-undang agar tidak tumpang tindih dan tidak ada ketimpaan agenda radikalisme dan intoleransi.





bersama, untuk menyempurnakan undang-undang agar tidak tumpang tindih dan tidak ada ketimpaan agenda radikalisme dan intoleransi.

Tersurat dan tersirat di dalam undang-undang Otsus agar visi Bapak Presiden Republik Indonesia tidak ada halangan dalam implementasi dan benar-benar dirasakan manfaatnya oleh masyarakat di Papua.



Finally, we removed 163 Facebook accounts, 51 Pages, 33 Groups and 4 Instagram accounts that were involved in coordinated inauthentic behavior originating from Egypt that focused on Somalia, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, Tunisia, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon and Qatar. The people behind this activity used fake accounts — some of which had previously been disabled by our automated systems — to manage Pages posing as independent local news organizations, post in Groups, amplify their content and drive people to off-platform domains. Some of these Pages appear to be purchased and some changed names over time. The Page admins and account owners typically posted about domestic news and political topics including content in support of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt; criticism of Qatar, Iran, and Turkey; and Yemen's southern separatist movement. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities, our investigation found links to an Egyptian newspaper El Fagr.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 163 Facebook accounts, 51 Pages, 33 Groups and 4 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* Around 5.6 million accounts followed one or more of these Pages, less than 3,000 accounts joined one or more of the Groups and less than 3,000 accounts followed at least one of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Less than \$31,000 spent on Facebook ads paid for primarily in US dollars and Egyptian pounds.

We identified these accounts through ongoing investigations into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region.

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



365 الخليج

19 hrs

Like Page



وزير الداخلية السعودي يلتقي الرئيس الأفغاني في جدة

See Translation



GULF365.CO

وزير الداخلية السعودي يلتقي الرئيس الأفغاني في جدة

.. ي وزير الداخلية السعودي الأمير عبد العزيز بن سعود بن نايف، في جدة اليوم الأحد، محمد أشرف غني

Translation: Saudi interior minister meets with the Afghan president in Jeddah



Elfagr Fann - الفجر الفني

9 hrs

Like Page



اليوم.. مؤتمر صحفي للإعلان عن تفاصيل الدورة الثالثة لمهرجان الجونة السينمائي

See Translation



ELFAGR.COM

اليوم.. مؤتمر صحفي للإعلان عن تفاصيل الدورة الثالثة لمهرجان الجونة السينمائي

.. مؤتمر صحفي للإعلان عن تفاصيل الدورة الثالثة لمهرجان الجونة السينمائي الإثنين 26/

Translation; Today ... press conference to announce details on the third edition of the Elgouna Film Festival



راديو اليمن العربي

August 24 at 10:20 PM

Like Page



#راديو_اليمن_العربي | بين التهدئة والتصعيد.. تصريحات تكشف ازدواجية خطاب إيران

[See Translation](#)



بين التهدئة والتصعيد تصريحات تكشف ازدواجية خطاب إيران

ظريف أكد في تصريحات صحفية بأنه هناك مقترحات على الطاولة مع الرئيس الفرنسي وسنعمل عليها

طهران كشفت في الوقت نفسه عن منظومة جديدة للدفاع الماروخي محلية الصنع في أحدث حلقة من مسلسل الاستفزازات الإيرانية

وزير الخارجية الإيراني أعلن عن استعداد بلاده للعمل على المقترح الفرنسي بشأن الاتفاق النووي

يستعرض روحاني عضلات إيران العسكرية في تناقض مع حديث وزير خارجيته عن مساعٍ لدراسة مقترحات التهدئة مع واشنطن

الرئيس الإيراني زعم أن المنظومة لديها القدرة على التعرف على مائة هدف بوقت واحد ومواجهة الأهداف بـ 6 أسلحة مختلفة

إيران في موازنة للحديث الدبلوماسي أظهرت استفزازا جديدا للعالم بعدما كشفت عن منظومة للدفاع الماروخي

Translation: #Radio_Arab_Yemen | Between deescalation and escalation ... statements reveal ambivalence in Iranian rhetoric



انقذوا الصومال

April 16, 2018 ·



#QatarTampersWithSomaliasSecurity

#قطر_تعْبث_بأمن_الصومال

يد الإمارات



البيضاء في الصومال

تولت الامارات مسؤولية بناء مؤسسات الدولة الصومالية

تولت تدريب المؤسسات الامنية والخدمية وتاهيل العاملين فيها

عملت على تحديث الجيش والشرطة والمستشفيات والمدارس والبنية التحتية في العديد من المناطق



Translation: #QatarTampersWithSomaliasSecurity (Text below): The helping hand of the Emirates in Somalia: – The Emirates has taken responsibility for building Somali state institutions – [The Emirates has] trained security and aid organizations and trained their workers – [The Emirates has] worked to modernize the army, police, hospitals, schools, and infrastructure in several regions

Category: Integrity and Security

Tags: Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior, Security News



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