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META

Removing Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior From Georgia, Vietnam and the US

December 20, 2019

By Nathaniel Gleicher, Head of Security Policy

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Today, we removed two unconnected networks of accounts, Pages and Groups for engaging in foreign and government interference — which is coordinated inauthentic behavior on behalf of a government or foreign actor — on Facebook and Instagram. The first operation originated in the country of Georgia and targeted domestic audiences. The second originated in Vietnam and the US and focused mainly on the US, and some on Vietnam and Spanish and Chinese-speaking audiences globally. Each of them 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

Today, we removed 39 Facebook accounts, 344 Pages, 13 Groups and 22 Instagram accounts as part of a domestic-focused network that originated in the country of Georgia. The people behind this activity used fake accounts — some of which had been previously disabled by our automated systems — to increase engagement on their content and manage Pages. These Pages posed as news organizations and impersonated political parties, public figures, activist groups and media entities. The Page admins and account owners typically posted about domestic news and political issues such as elections, government policies, public officials, criticism of the opposition and local activist organizations. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation linked this activity to Panda, an advertising agency in Georgia, and the Georgian Dream-led government. ***Update on July 7, 2021 at 7:25PM PT: Panda has been banned from our platform.***

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 39 Facebook accounts, 344 Pages, 13 Groups and 22 accounts on Instagram.
- *Followers:* About 442,300 accounts followed one or more of these Pages, about 52,000 accounts joined at least one of these Groups and around 2,100 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Less than \$316,000 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for in US dollars. That includes the entirety of advertising activity by both inauthentic and authentic accounts removed as part of this network engaged in coordinated inauthentic behavior.

We identified these accounts through our investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region. Our investigation benefited from public reporting.

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



FastNews.ge

November 9 at 12:20 PM · 🌐



"ქუთაისში კეთდება საუნივერსიტეტო ქალაქი, რომელსაც, გასართობიც და სამეცნიერო ცენტრიც ადგილზე ექნება - ეს იქნება სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი," - აცხადებს „ქართული ოცნება-დემოკრატიული საქართველოს“ თავმჯდომარე ბიძინა ივანიშვილი ინტერვიუში, რომელიც ქუთაისის საერთაშორისო უნივერსიტეტის მშენებლობას ეხება. ინტერვიუს ქუთაისის საერთაშორისო უნივერსიტეტი ავრცელებს.

ივანიშვილის თქმით, საუნივერსიტეტო ქალაქის აშენება მისი დიდი ხნის სურვილია.

ბიძინა ივანიშვილი 2007 წელს თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივ...

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Translation: “There will be University city in Kutaisi that will also host scientific and leisure centres – this will be state university” – says chairman of “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” Bidzina Ivanishvili in the interview regarding building international university in Kutaisi. Interview is shared by international university of Kutaisi. Ivanishvili says, that building university city is his long time dream. In 2007 Bidzina Ivanishsvili..



■ ანრი ოხანაშვილი : პროკურატურის მრჩეველთა ჯგუფმა მიიჩნია, რომ არსებული მტკიცებულებები საკმარისია ხაზარაძის და ჯაფარიძის მიმართ ბრალდების წარსადგენად

ანრი ოხანაშვილი ხაზარაძე-ჯაფარიძის საქმეში არსებულ მტკიცებულებებზე საუბრობს და განმარტავს, რომ საქართველოს გენერალურმა პროკურატურამ, მაღალი საზოგადოებრივი ინტერესიდან გამომდინარე, მიიღო მნიშვნელოვანი გადაწყვეტილება, როდესაც პროცესი გახსნა და გახსნა იმ თვალსაზრისით, რომ პროცესში ჩართო საერთაშორისო ექსპერტები.

„ზოგადად მრჩეველთა ...
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Translation: Anri Okhanashvili: group of prosecutor’s advisors thinks, that existing evidence is enough to file charges against Khazaradze and Japaridze Anri Okhanashvili is talking about the evidence in the Khazaradze-Japaridze case and clarifies that general prosecutor of Georgia, due to the high public interest, made an important decision, when he decided to make the process open and he made it open so that international experts could participate as well. “Overall, advisors..



ეროვნული მედია

April 10 · 🌐



ეკა ბესელია: „მინიმალური ხარჯებია გაღებული“ - ვინ გადაიხადა 17 ათასი ლარი ფილარმონიის დასაქირავებლად?



Page Title: National Media. Post Translation: “Eka Beselia: “Spending was minimal.” – Who paid 17K laris for a philharmonic hall?”

We also removed 610 accounts, 89 Facebook Pages, 156 Groups and 72 Instagram accounts that originated in Vietnam and the US and focused primarily on the US and and some on Vietnam, Spanish and Chinese-speaking audiences globally. This activity primarily focused on The BL, a US-based media company, and its Pages, which were operated by individuals in the US and Vietnam. The people behind this activity made widespread use of fake accounts — many of which had been automatically removed by our systems — to manage Pages and Groups, automate posting at very high frequencies and direct traffic to off-platform sites. Some of these accounts used profile photos generated by artificial intelligence and masqueraded as Americans to join Groups and post the BL content. To evade our enforcement, they used a combination of fake and authentic accounts of local individuals in the US to manage Pages and Groups. The Page admins and account owners typically posted memes and other content about US political news and issues including impeachment, conservative ideology, political candidates, elections, trade, family values and freedom of religion.

Although the people behind this network attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation linked this activity to Epoch Media Group, a US-based media organization, and individuals in Vietnam working on its behalf. The BL-

focused network repeatedly violated a number of our policies, including our policies against coordinated inauthentic behavior, spam and misrepresentation, to name just a few. The BL is now banned from Facebook. We are continuing to investigate all linked networks, and will take action as appropriate if we determine they are engaged in deceptive behavior.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 610 Facebook accounts, 89 Pages, 156 Groups and 72 accounts on Instagram.
- *Followers:* About 55 million accounts followed one or more of these Pages (the vast majority of which were outside of the US), about 381,500 accounts joined at least one of these Groups and around 92,000 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Less than \$9.5M in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for primarily in US dollars, and some in Korean won, Vietnamese dong, Indonesian rupiah, Australian dollars, the New Taiwan dollars and Canadian dollars. That includes the entirety of advertising activity by both inauthentic and authentic accounts removed as part of this network engaged in coordinated inauthentic behavior.

We identified this activity through our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior. Our assessment benefited from open source reporting.

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



Vicki Beaton shared a link.

October 5 at 3:44 PM



THEEPOCHTIMES.COM

Elizabeth Warren's Campaign Fires Top Official Following Complaints of 'Inappropriate Behavior'



Bellezas de la Vida ▶ Noticias - BLES.com

Like Page



11:53 AM

November 16 at

"no one has had such a horrible process. There was no due process, and I think it's considered a joke ", trump said

⚙ See original · Rate this translation



BLES.COM

"La manipulación es cuando Schiff no nos deja tener testigos ni hablar", dice Trump a los periodistas



Erin Dugger ▸ Stand With President Trump 2020



THEBL.COM

Pelosi delegation visits Middle East without authority to negotiate with foreign leaders

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