

MAY 2021

DETAILED REPORT

May 2021 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report

FACEBOOK



We're constantly working to find and stop coordinated campaigns that seek to manipulate public debate across our apps.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Over the past three and a half years, we've shared our findings about [coordinated inauthentic behavior](#) we detect and remove from our platforms. As part of our regular CIB reports, we're sharing information about all networks we take down over the course of a month to make it easier for people to see progress we're making in one place.

WHAT IS CIB?

We view CIB 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-government campaigns and 2) coordinated inauthentic behavior on behalf of a foreign or government actor.

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.

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.

CONTINUOUS ENFORCEMENT

We monitor for efforts to re-establish a presence on Facebook by networks we previously removed. Using both automated and manual detection, we continuously remove accounts and Pages connected to networks we took down in the past.

SUMMARY OF MAY 2021 FINDINGS

Our teams continue to focus on finding and removing deceptive campaigns around the world — whether they are foreign or domestic. In May, we removed two networks from three countries — Russia, Sudan and Pakistan. We have shared information about our findings with industry partners, researchers, law enforcement and policymakers.

We know that influence operations will keep evolving in response to our enforcement, and new deceptive behaviors will emerge. We will continue to refine our enforcement and share our findings publicly. We are making progress rooting out this abuse, but as we've said before — it's an ongoing effort and we're committed to continually improving to stay ahead. That means building better technology, hiring more people and working closely with law enforcement, security experts and other companies.

Here are the numbers related to the new CIB networks we removed in May:

- **Total number of Facebook accounts removed: 123**
- **Total number of Instagram accounts removed: 77**
- **Total number of Pages removed: 55**
- **Total number of Groups removed: 12**

NETWORKS REMOVED IN MAY 2021:

1. **Russia, Sudan:** We removed 83 Facebook accounts, 30 Pages, six Groups and 49 Instagram accounts operated by local nationals in Sudan on behalf of individuals in Russia. This network targeted primarily Sudan. We found this activity after reviewing information about its portion shared by an independent open source researcher. Our investigation uncovered some connection to the network we [removed](#) in October 2019 and we linked this latest activity to individuals associated with past activity by the Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA).
2. **Pakistan:** We removed 40 Facebook accounts, 25 Pages, six Groups and 28 Instagram accounts that originated in Pakistan and targeted primarily domestic audiences in Pakistan, in addition to also focusing on English, Arabic and Pashto-speaking audiences globally. We found this activity as part of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior with some links to the network we [removed](#) in April 2019. We linked this latest operation to individuals associated with AlphaPro, a Pakistan-based PR firm.

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We removed 83 Facebook accounts, 30 Pages, six Groups, and 49 Instagram accounts for violating our policy against [foreign interference](#) — which is [coordinated inauthentic behavior](#) on behalf of a foreign actor. This network was operated by local nationals in Sudan on behalf of individuals in Russia. It targeted primarily Sudan.

The people behind this activity used fake accounts — some of which were already detected and disabled by our automated systems — to post, comment on their own content, and manage Pages and Groups. Some of the accounts used photos likely generated using machine learning techniques like generative adversarial networks (GAN). This network appeared to operate across multiple social media platforms.

They posted in Arabic about pan-African news and current events in the region, including politics in Sudan, tensions in Chad, Ethiopia and Palestine, and supportive commentary about the Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and the relief aid initiatives in Sudan by Russian financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin, who was [indicted](#) by the US Justice Department. Most recently, the operation's posts began to criticize the Health Ministry of Sudan and claim that Prigozhin's aid is being blocked from entering the country.

We began looking into this campaign after reviewing information about a portion of its activity shared by an independent open source researcher. We found some links between this operation and the network we [removed](#) in October 2019. Although the people behind it attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to individuals associated with past activity by the Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA).

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 83 Facebook accounts, 30 Pages, 6 Groups and 49 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* About 440,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages, around 4,300 people joined one or more of these Groups, and about 50,000 accounts followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Around \$500 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for primarily in Qatari rials and US dollars, and also in Russian rubles.

Below is a sample of the content posted by some of these accounts and Pages.



عالم الأخبار بكلمات بسيطة
3d · 🌐

...

Translation

Russia is ready to send humanitarian aid, but there are people in their right to the market, workers are making this issue very difficult. They also put pressure on the revolutionary committees that supported last time in the distribution of humanitarian aid.

🌐 See original · ⚙ Rate this translation



👍❤️ 13

Page Name: World News in Simple Words



انصار تجمع المهنيين
April 12 · 🌐

...

Translation

Distribution of humanitarian aid for the month of Ramadan presented by a Russian businessman

🌐 See original · ⚙ Rate this translation



👍❤️ 3

4 Shares

Page Name: Supporters of the association of professionals



نظرة انثى
6d · 🌐

Hamdok is with us and what concerns us

🌟 See original · Rate this translation

...

Translation

Page Name: A Female Look



👍 1

3 Shares

02

We removed 40 Facebook accounts, 25 Pages, six Groups and 28 Instagram accounts for violating our policy against [coordinated inauthentic behavior](#). This network originated in and targeted primarily domestic audiences in Pakistan, in addition to also focusing on English, Arabic and Pashto-speaking audiences globally.

The people behind this activity relied on the use of fake accounts — some of which were already detected and disabled by our automated systems — to post content, manage Pages, and drive people to their off-platform website and other social media channels. Some of these Pages posed as international news entities and frequently shared what appears to be original video content. This network appeared to be active across multiple internet services and posted about news and current events in the region, including the ongoing global pandemic; criticism of India and its treatment of Muslims, particularly in the Kashmir region; and also supportive commentary about Pakistan. Some of this network’s Pages had been previously removed for Community Standards violations, including hate speech.

We found this activity as a result of our internal investigation into the suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior with some links to the network we [removed](#) in April 2019. Our assessment benefited from information shared with us by researchers at Graphika. Although the people behind it attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to individuals associated with AlphaPro, a Pakistan-based PR firm.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 40 Facebook accounts, 25 Pages, 6 Groups and 28 Instagram accounts
- *Followers:* About 800,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages, around 1,200 people joined one or more of these Groups, and about 2,400 accounts followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Around \$40,000 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for primarily in US dollars.

Below is a sample of the content posted by some of these accounts and Pages.

CJ Post
February 4

India illegally occupied Kashmir on 27 October 1947. Since then, it has maintained a tight grip through its armed forces and draconian laws.

CJ Post Arabic
January 5, 2020

مودي يعلن الحرب على المسلمين الهنود.
Modi declares war on Indian Muslims.

Hide original · Rate this translation

Aik Minute Aik Khabar
February 22

پاکستان کو تنہا کرنے والا بھارت دنیا میں خود تنہا ہو رہا ہے
India , which isolated Pakistan , is becoming alone in the world itself .

Hide original · Rate this translation