

Facebook nukes hundreds of “inauthentic” accounts “tied to Iran”



Enlarge / The Facebook logo is displayed at the 2018 CeBIT technology trade fair on June 12, 2018, in Hanover, Germany.

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39 with 31 posters participating

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Facebook said Thursday that it had removed 783 pages, groups, and accounts for “engaging in coordinated inauthentic behavior tied to Iran.”

According to the social media giant, some of the accounts date as far back as 2010.

“This activity was directed from Iran, in some cases repurposing Iranian state media content, and engaged in coordinated inauthentic behavior targeting people across the world, although more heavily in the Middle East and South Asia,” Nathaniel Gleicher, the company’s head of cybersecurity policy, wrote.

The announcement came the same day that Twitter disclosed similar findings.

- Facebook released this as an example of an “inauthentic” Arabic-language post.
- “Iranian foreign minister: UAE is entering a new phase of unacceptable behavior”
- “How is Syria resisting Israel with the support of Russia.”
- This post says: “We are all Maryam. Al Quds is Palestine’s eternal capital.”
- More than 300 women went out on a march in Saudi in a campaign called “Hiking Saudi” to encourage women to join sports.
- “I do not recognize Israel at all.”

In a press call with reporters on Thursday afternoon, Gleicher said it was not clear whether the pages were directed by the Iranian government itself or merely individuals who wanted to amplify Iranian-state-run news in Arabic, Hebrew, French, and other languages.

“We’re not in a position to directly assert who the actor is in this case,” he said. “We’re asserting what we can prove.”

Facebook noted that this action comes just five months after the company removed another set of hundreds of accounts also emanating from Iran.

Unlike some of the events believed to have been coordinated by Russia in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election, there

do not appear to have been many real-world events organized: just eight were hosted.

“The first was scheduled for May 2014, and the most recent was scheduled for May 2018,” Gleicher wrote. “Up to 210 people expressed interest in at least one of these events. We cannot confirm whether any of these events actually occurred.”

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