

DETAILED REPORT

March 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. As part of 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?

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 from how we counter foreign interference or domestic influence operations. We routinely take down less sophisticated, high-volume inauthentic behaviors like spam 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.

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.

SUMMARY OF MARCH 2020 FINDINGS

This month, we removed three networks of accounts, Pages and Groups engaged in **coordinated inauthentic behavior**. We **reported** the removal of one of these networks earlier this month, and we're sharing the remaining two today. We have shared information about our findings with law enforcement, policymakers and industry partners.

- **Total number of Facebook accounts removed:** 180
- **Total number of Instagram accounts removed:** 170
- **Total number of Pages removed:** 160
- **Total number of Groups removed:** 1
- **Continuous enforcement against networks we removed in the past:** We monitor for efforts to re-establish a presence on Facebook by networks we previously removed for coordinated inauthentic behavior. As part of our continuous enforcement, using both automated and manual detection, we removed 214 Facebook accounts, 435 Instagram accounts, 83 Pages, and 1 Group connected to networks we took down in the past, including the following: ***(Updated numbers on April 8, 2020 at 1:25PM PT: We noted in our original post that we'd update these numbers as more data for March became available. These new numbers reflect the complete data for this reporting period.)***
**Note: as we continue to refine our enforcement reporting framework, we estimate that our automated systems may undercount the number of enforcement actions by no more than 10%.*

- [March 2020](#)
- [February 2020](#)
- [December 2019](#)
- [October 2019](#)
- [October 2019](#)
- [August 2019](#)

- July 2019
- January 2019
- January 2019
- January 2019
- August 2018

NETWORKS REMOVED IN MARCH, 2020:

1. **NEW — France:** We removed 51 Facebook accounts, 9 Pages and 9 Instagram accounts. This domestic-focused activity originated in the Sete region of France.
2. **NEW — Egypt:** We also removed 81 Facebook accounts, 82 Pages, 1 Group and 76 Instagram accounts from Egypt. This activity focused on Arabic-speaking audiences and some Pages focused specifically on Egypt and the Gulf region. Although the people behind this network attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to Maat, a marketing firm in Egypt.
3. **Russia, Ghana, Nigeria:** We removed a network of 49 Facebook accounts, 69 Pages and 85 Instagram accounts. This network was in the early stages of building an audience and was operated by local nationals — some wittingly and some unwittingly — in Ghana and Nigeria on behalf of individuals in Russia. It targeted primarily the United States. Our investigation linked this activity to EBLA, an NGO in Ghana, and individuals associated with past activity by the Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA). **(Originally announced on March 12, 2020)**

01

We removed 51 Facebook accounts, 9 Pages and 9 Instagram accounts, for violating our policy against coordinated inauthentic behavior. This domestic-focused activity originated in the Sete region of France.

The individuals behind this activity used fake accounts — many of which had been previously detected and disabled by our automated systems — to post their content and manage Pages posing as local news entities. The people behind this activity posted in French about local news including topics like municipal elections, positive commentary about some candidates and criticism of others, and immigration. We found this activity as part of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 51 Facebook accounts, 9 Pages and 9 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* About 6,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages and around 160 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* About \$11 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for in US dollars and Euros.

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



Page Title Translation: François Commeinhes Get Out

Post Translation:

🚩🚩 SURVEY BROADCAST 🚩🚩

Thursday, February 11, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

On the site:



Post Translation: Why should you vote for Sébastien Pacull in the next municipal elections?

⚠️ All comments that have nothing to do with the question will be deleted.



Politico Sète

1 hr · 🌐

...

Pour le dernier jour de la campagne officielle [#RudyLlanos](#), [#SébastienPacull](#) ainsi que les entourages sont victimes à des appels au meurtre !

La campagne officielle se termine ce soir à minuit dans une ambiance délétère.

For the last day of the official [#RudyLlanos](#) campaign, [#SébastienPacull](#) as well as the backgrounds are victims of calls for murder!

The official campaign ends tonight at midnight in a harmful atmosphere.

⚙️ · Hide original · Rate this translation



We also removed 81 Facebook accounts, 82 Pages, 1 Group and 76 Instagram accounts that were involved in foreign interference — which is coordinated inauthentic behavior on behalf of a foreign entity. This activity emanated from Egypt and focused on Arabic-speaking audiences and some Pages focused specifically on Egypt and the Gulf region.

The people behind this network used fake accounts — some of which had already been detected and disabled by our automated systems — to share and comment on their own content, artificially increase engagement and manage Pages. Some of these Pages have changed names over time and some masqueraded as news outlets. They frequently posted in Arabic and shared content about local and regional news and topics including the civil war in Yemen and Libya, coronavirus, sports, positive commentary about the leadership of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, and criticism of Iran, Qatar and Turkey.

Based on a tip shared by Twitter, we conducted an investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region and identified this activity. Although the people behind this network attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to Maat, a marketing firm in Egypt.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 81 Facebook accounts, 82 Pages, 1 Group and 76 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* About 1.45 million accounts followed one or more of these Pages, about 10 accounts joined this Group and around 31,100 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* About \$930 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for primarily in Egyptian pounds.

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



Page Name Translation: Egyptian House

Post Translation: Italian newspaper: Egypt is the safest country for tourists in the year 2020
#Egypt #Tourism #Egyptian_House



Page Name Translation: Knights of the Gulf

Post Translation: International Peace Information Service (IPIS): Qatar threatens global stability and peace
#Qatar #Peace #Stability #Tamim #World #Terrorism
#Knights_of_the_Gulf



Page Name Translation: Tea and Coffee

Post Translation: The Emirates ranks first among the Arab countries in the 2020 World Happiness Report for the sixth year in a row
#Emirates #World_Happiness_Report #Tea_and_Coffee

03

Originally announced on March 12, 2020

Finally, we removed 49 Facebook accounts, 69 Pages and 85 Instagram accounts for engaging in foreign interference — which is coordinated inauthentic behavior on behalf of a foreign actor — on Facebook, Instagram and other internet platforms. This network was in the early stages of building an audience and was operated by local nationals — some wittingly and some unwittingly — in Ghana and Nigeria on behalf of individuals in Russia. It targeted primarily the United States.

The people behind this network engaged in a number of deceptive tactics, including the use of fake accounts — some of which had already been disabled by our automated systems — to manage Pages posing as non-government organizations or personal blogs, and post in Groups. They frequently posted about US news and attempted to grow their audience by focusing on topics like black history, black excellence and fashion, celebrity gossip, news and events related to famous Americans like historical figures and celebrities, and LGBTQ issues. This activity did not appear to focus on elections, or promote or denigrate political candidates. They also shared content about oppression and injustice, including police brutality. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their purpose and coordination, our investigation found links to EBLA, an NGO in Ghana, and individuals associated with past activity by the Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA).


We detected this network as a result of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior ahead of US elections. The network was linked to the activity we had previously removed and attributed to the IRA in April 2018, July 2018 and November 2018. Our assessment benefited from our subsequent collaboration with a team of journalists at CNN. We've shared information with our industry peers, policy makers and law enforcement and will continue working with others to find and remove this kind of behavior from our platform.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 49 Facebook accounts, 69 Pages and 85 accounts on Instagram.
- *Followers:* About 13,500 accounts followed one or more of these Pages and around 265,000 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts (about 65% of which were in the US).


- *Advertising:* Less than \$5 was spent on ads focused on people in the US, none of which were political or issue ads. Our systems repeatedly rejected attempts by this network to run issue or political ads in the US because the people behind it were not authorized to run political ads in the US. In total, we identified approximately \$379 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for in US dollars, the majority of which were run before this operation began by people who wittingly or unwittingly joined this network in the second half of 2019.

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 and accounts because this activity was linked to individuals associated with the IRA, an entity we had previously **banned** from Facebook. This network also used fake accounts and coordinated with one another to mislead people about what they were doing.

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







ebla_network • Follow

 ebla_network America should stand firm on what it preaches

Civil rights activism and racism are the products of slavery and imperialism. We live in a country where democracy is preached so much to be upheld, but we wake up each seeing and hearing of shootings and arbitrary arrest of the black people. Simple questions of where our democracy went are left unanswered. We juxtapose and act like hypocrites knowing very well that our systems are not working yet we preach to others to look at us and build their country. [#civilrights](#) [#martinlutherking](#) [#communityservice](#) [#news](#)

6w

51 views

JANUARY 22

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 **Blacks Facts Untold**
September 28, 2019 · 🌐

#BREAKING: 3 Stanford marching band members spotted taking a knee during the National Anthem of today's [#OREvsSTAN](#) game

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"#BREAKING: 3 Stanford marching band members spotted taking a kne...

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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 more closely with law enforcement, security experts and other companies.