DETAILED REPORT

July 2020 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report

FACEBOOK



We're constantly working to find and stop coordinated campaigns that seek to manipulate public debate across our apps. In 2019, we took down over 50 networks worldwide for engaging in coordinated inauthentic behavior (CIB), including ahead of major democratic elections. You can find more information about our previous enforcement actions <u>here</u>.

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?

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 (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.

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 JULY 2020 FINDINGS

This month, we removed nine networks of accounts, Pages and Groups. We <u>reported</u> the removal of four of these networks at the beginning of July, and we're sharing the remaining five today. We have shared information about our findings with law enforcement, policymakers and industry partners.

More than half of these networks focused on domestic audiences in their own countries, including in the United States, Brazil, Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Yemen. Much of the activity we removed in July was linked to commercial entities and individuals associated with political campaigns and political offices. We've seen and taken action against domestic political figures using CIB in the past, and we know they will continue to attempt to deceive and mislead people. Domestic campaigns like these raise a particularly complex challenge by blurring the line between healthy public debate and manipulation. Our teams will continue to find, remove and expose these coordinated manipulation campaigns, but we know these threats extend beyond our platform and no single organization can tackle them alone. That's why it's critical that we, as a society, have a broader discussion about what is acceptable political advocacy and take steps to deter people from crossing the line.

- Total number of Facebook accounts removed: 798
- Total number of Instagram accounts removed: 259
- Total number of Pages removed: 669
- Total number of Groups removed: 69

NETWORKS REMOVED IN JULY 2020:

- NEW Romania: We removed 35 Facebook accounts, 3 Pages and 88 Instagram accounts. This activity originated in Romania and focused on the US. We found this network as part of our investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior ahead of the 2020 election in the US.
- 2. NEW Global: We removed 303 Facebook accounts, 181 Pages, 44 Groups and 31 Instagram accounts. This network operated from many regions around the world including the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Germany, the UK, Finland and France. It targeted primarily English and Chinese-speaking audiences globally and Vietnam. We found this activity as part of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior with some links to the network we removed in December 2019. Our investigation linked this network to Truth Media, a digital media outlet, which is now banned from our platforms.
- 3. NEW Iraq and Switzerland: We removed 135 Facebook accounts, 222 Pages, 4 Groups and 1 Instagram account. This activity originated in Iraq and Switzerland and focused on Iraq. We found this network as part of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior that exhibited some links to the network we removed in September 2019. Our investigation linked this network to individuals in Iraq and individuals associated with a Switzerland-based NGO called AI-Rafidain International Center for Justice and Human Rights.
- 4. NEW The Democratic Republic of Congo: We removed 66 Facebook accounts, 63 Pages, 5 Groups and 25 Instagram accounts in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This network focused on domestic audiences. We identified the full scope of this activity after investigating information shared with us by researchers at the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensics Research Lab. Our assessment also benefited from public reporting by independent fact-checkers at AFP and France 24. Our investigation linked this activity to Force des Patriotes, a political party in DRC.
- NEW Yemen: We removed 69 Facebook accounts, 28 Pages, 15 Groups and 10 Instagram accounts in Yemen. This network focused on domestic audiences. We found this activity as part of our investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region.

- 6. Canada and Ecuador: We removed 38 Facebook accounts, 76 Pages and 55 Instagram accounts. This activity originated in Canada and Ecuador and focused on El Salvador, Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela, Ecuador and Chile. We found this network as part of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region. Our investigation found links to political consultants and former government employees in Ecuador and Estraterra, a Canada-based PR firm. Estraterra is now banned from our platforms. (Originally <u>announced</u> on July 8, 2020)
- 7. Brazil: We removed 33 Facebook accounts, 14 Pages, 1 Group and 37 Instagram accounts in Brazil. This network focused on domestic audiences. We found this activity as part of our investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in Brazil reported by press and referenced in recent congressional testimony in Brazil. Our investigation found links to individuals associated with the Social Liberal Party and some of the employees of the offices of Anderson Moraes, Alana Passos, Eduardo Bolsonaro, Flavio Bolsonaro and Jair Bolsonaro. (Originally announced on July 8, 2020)
- 8. Ukraine: We removed 65 Facebook accounts, 32 Pages and 8 Instagram accounts in Ukraine. This network focused on domestic audiences. We identified this activity as a result of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in Ukraine. Our assessment benefited from public reporting in Ukraine. Our investigation linked this activity to Postmen DA, an advertising agency in Ukraine. (Originally announced on July 8, 2020)
- 9. US: Finally, we removed 54 Facebook accounts, 50 Pages and 4 Instagram accounts in the US. This network focused on domestic audiences. We first started looking into this network as part of our investigation into the Proud Boys' attempts to return to Facebook after we had banned them from the platform. We identified the full scope of this network following the recent public release of search warrants pertaining to the investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller in response to a joint petition from The New York Times, CNN, the Associated Press, The Washington Post and Politico. Our investigation linked this network to Roger Stone and his associates. (Originally announced on July 8, 2020)

We are making progress rooting out this abuse, but as we've said before, it's an ongoing effort. 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.

We removed 35 Facebook accounts, 3 Pages and 88 Instagram accounts for violating our policy against <u>foreign interference</u>, which is <u>coordinated inauthentic</u> <u>behavior</u> on behalf of a foreign entity. This activity originated in Romania and focused on the US.

The people behind this network used fake accounts — some of which had already been detected and disabled by our automated systems — to pose as Americans, amplify and comment on their own content, and manage Pages including some posing as President Trump fan Pages. This network posted about US domestic news and events, including the upcoming November election, the Trump campaign and support for the campaign by African Americans, conservative ideology, Christian beliefs, and Qanon. They also frequently reposted stories by American conservative news networks and the Trump campaign.

We found this network as part of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior ahead of the 2020 election in the US.

- Presence on Facebook and Instagram: 35 Facebook accounts, 3 Pages and 88 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* About 1,600 accounts followed one or more of these Pages and around 7,200 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.

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







We removed 303 Facebook accounts, 181 Pages, 44 Groups and 31 Instagram accounts for violating our policy against <u>foreign interference</u> which is <u>coordinated inauthentic behavior</u> on behalf of a foreign entity. This network operated from many regions around the world including the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Germany, the UK, Finland and France. It focused primarily on English and Chinese-speaking audiences globally and on Vietnam.

This network relied on a combination of authentic, compromised and fake accounts – some of which had been detected and disabled by our automated systems – to evade enforcement, drive people to off-platform sites, comment on their own and other people's content, and manage Groups and Pages posing as regional news entities. They also spammed Groups with their content, likely using automation. Some of these accounts have gone through name changes over time.

The people behind this activity posted about global news and events including geopolitics and political figures, the Hong Kong protests, the US administration's policies towards China, the Falun Gong movement, criticism of the Chinese government, the ongoing US protests and conspiracy theories about who is behind them. They also posted about the coronavirus pandemic. Some of the content posted by this network had already been taken down for <u>Community Standards</u> violations including health-related misinformation. The people behind this activity also frequently shared videos and images of animals, children and nature, as well as content by the Sound of Hope, the Epoch Times and New Tang Dynasty TV (NTD). This network showed some links to on-platform activity by Epoch Media Group and NTD. We found this activity as part of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior that showed some links to the network we <u>removed</u> in December 2019. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation linked this network to Truth Media, a digital media outlet. Truth Media is now banned from our platforms.

- Presence on Facebook and Instagram: 303 Facebook accounts, 181 Pages, 44 Groups and 31 Instagram accounts.
- *Followers:* About 2 million accounts followed one or more of these Pages, around 146,000 accounts joined one of more of these Groups and about 7,000 people followed one of more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Around \$216,000 in spending for ads on Facebook paid for primarily in Vietnamese dong, Hong Kong dollars, pounds, Canadian dollars and US dollars.









This guy is going to need a lot of support because the mob may be gunning for him and his family $% \left(f_{\mathrm{supp}}^{\mathrm{T}}\right) =0$

Major League Baseball "MLB" is "BLM" spelled backward, and they really lived up to that name during the Giants-Dodgers game.

Every single player, manager, and coach took a knee during the National Anthem...except for one guy.

One San Fransisco player gets it. Giants pitcher Sam Coonrod refused to kneel before the Black Lives Matter movement.

Coonrod says his religion and what he's read about BLM won't allow him to "bend the knee."

Good for this guy, he's brave.

But he's going to need a lot of support ...

Sports

One MLB Player Refused to "Take a Knee" Last Night, Says He Can't Get "On Board" With BLM



Coonrod stood – bravely – behind first base while all his teammates kneeled

We removed 135 Facebook accounts, 222 Pages, 4 Groups and 1 Instagram account for violating our policy against <u>foreign interference</u> which is <u>coordinated inauthentic behavior</u> on behalf of a foreign entity. This activity originated in Iraq and Switzerland and focused on Iraq.

This network relied on compromised and fake accounts posing as Iraqi locals to post content and manage Pages masquerading as independent news entities and official town Pages in Iraq. The majority of these accounts appeared to have been purchased after they were self-compromised by sharing their credentials in return for free followers. They posted primarily in Arabic about domestic news and current events including social and political issues in western Iraq and Baghdad, praise of recent Iraqi protests and criticism of the Iranian government and its alleged proxies in Iraq.

We found this network as part of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior that showed some links to the network we <u>removed</u> in September 2019. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation linked this network to individuals in Iraq and individuals associated with a Switzerland-based NGO called Al-Rafidain International Center for Justice and Human Rights.

- Presence on Facebook and Instagram: 135 Facebook accounts, 222 Pages, 4 Groups and 1 Instagram account.
- *Followers:* About 1.16 million accounts followed one or more of these Pages and less than 10 people joined one or more of these Groups, and around 270 people followed this Instagram account.
- *Advertising:* About \$7,600 in spending for ads on Facebook paid for primarily in US dollars.



Translation:

Page title: Wikileaks Baghdad

Caption: An Iranian militia provides agricultural and economic inducements to the people of Deir Al-Zour ... The goal is "malicious"

Image: Iranian Militias support farmers - Deir Al-Zour.



Translation:

Page title: Iraqi Government Scandals



Translation:

Page Title: Fox News Al-Anbar

Shared page name: "Center for Environment and Development, Disaster and Crisis Administration"

Caption: #The_New_Iraq the Health Minister, who belongs to the Sadrist movement, informs all Baghdad hospitals of the need to put up pictures of Muqtada al-Sadr and his father in every hall and while distributing food. This is in order to increase blessings and get rid of the #Coronavirus"

We removed 66 Facebook accounts, 63 Pages, 5 Groups and 25 Instagram accounts that engaged in <u>coordinated inauthentic behavior</u>, originating in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This network focused on domestic audiences.

The people behind this activity used duplicate and fake accounts to create fictitious personas, post in Groups, drive people to off-platform sites and manage Pages posing as independent news and fact-checking entities. They also impersonated opposition and political candidates and reposted their exact content, likely to build an audience. Some of these Pages appear to have been purchased and have gone through significant name changes over time. The Page admins and account owners posted primarily in French about news and current events, including politics, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, government officials, political candidates, criticism of the opposition and the People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy. Most recently, they posted about the coronavirus pandemic, using it to build an audience before switching to political themes.

We identified the full scope of this activity after investigating information shared with us by researchers at the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensics Research Lab. Our assessment also benefited from public reporting by independent fact-checkers at AFP and France 24. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation linked this activity to Force des Patriotes, a political party in DRC.

- Presence on Facebook and Instagram: 66 Facebook accounts, 63 Pages, 5 Groups and 25 accounts on Instagram.
- Followers: About 1.18 million accounts followed one or more of these Pages, about 4,000 followed one or more of these Groups and around 23,000 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.

• *Advertising:* About \$29,000 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for primarily in euros and US dollars.

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





Grass'd- vérité. updated their profile picture. March 27 · 𝔅 •••

Urgent. Urgent.

Dr. Raoult just won the battle against coronavirus by healing 100 people a day.

Dr. Raoult says: I have won the battle, The is finally allowed to be required for treatment of Covid-19 in France and around the world. Didier Raoult, the doctor who had claimed the use of the drug antimalarial to treat the-19, welcomed it on social media, including hundreds of personalities on twitter.

Use chloroquine to cure this virus, please share in 10 Facebook groups.

🌣 · See original · Rate this translation





Translation:

Page title: "Grass'd-Truth."

Translation:

Page Title: "TRUTH"

We removed 69 Facebook accounts, 28 Pages, 15 Groups and 10 Instagram accounts that engaged in <u>coordinated inauthentic behavior</u>, originating in Yemen. This network focused on domestic audiences.

This network used fake accounts — some of which had been detected and disabled by our automated systems — to post content and comments, drive people to off-platform sites and manage Pages masquerading as news outlets. Some of these accounts purported to be located in Syria. Some of these Pages impersonated various government, civil society and news entities, and engaged in inauthentic amplification by offering cash rewards for sharing this network's content. They primarily posted comments about local news and events including politics, positive commentary about the former prime minister of Yemen, criticism of the United Arab Emirates, the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council of Yemen and the Houthis.

We found this activity as part of our investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region.

- *Presence on Facebook and Instagram:* 69 Facebook accounts, 28 Pages, 15 Group and 10 Instagram accounts.
- Followers: About 84,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages, around 185,000 accounts joined one or more of these Groups and about 1,100 people followed one of more of these Instagram accounts.
- *Advertising:* Around \$700 in spending for ads on Facebook paid for in US dollars.



Translation:

#The_UAE_leaves_Aden

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. صفحة أنصار الطيب أردوغان اعجاب للصفحه لنصل إلى مليون معجب May 19, 2020 7:26pm · 🕲

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Translation:

Page title: Page for Supporters of Erdogan, Like the Page So It Gets to a Million Fans

Caption: Now Turkish ships and battleships are heading towards the Libyan coast to destroy the criminal Haftar's bases

Translation:

Page Title: Saudi Labor Ministry

Caption: Saudi Arabia shocks foreign residents by announcing the development of a new system. The result is the exclusion of millions of guest workers! Details in the link.

Originally <u>announced</u> on July 8, 2020: We removed 38 Facebook accounts, 76 Pages and 55 Instagram accounts for violating our policy against <u>foreign</u> <u>interference</u> which is <u>coordinated inauthentic behavior</u> on behalf of a foreign or government entity. This activity originated in Canada and Ecuador and focused on El Salvador, Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela, Ecuador and Chile.

This network relied on a combination of authentic and inauthentic accounts, some of which had already been detected and disabled by our automated systems. This operation — which was also active on other internet platforms — activated around civic events such as elections, at times posting on both sides of the political debate, and then abandoned or paused its activity. They used fake accounts to pose as locals in countries they targeted, post and like their own content, drive people to off-platform sites, and manage Pages posing as independent news in countries they targeted. Some individuals behind this activity created multiple duplicate accounts under their own name. This network posted about domestic news in the countries it targeted, including topics such as politics, activism, praise and criticism of political candidates, elections, the government of Venezuela, both support and criticism of the President of Ecuador, political parties in the region including Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front in El Salvador, Peronist party in Argentina, and the Progressive party in Chile.

We found this network as part of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in the region. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to political consultants and former government employees in Ecuador and Estraterra, a Canada-based PR firm. Estraterra is now banned from our platforms.

- Presence on Facebook and Instagram: 38 Facebook accounts, 76 Pages and 55 Instagram accounts.
- Followers: About 262,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages and around 70,000 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- Advertising: About \$1.38 million in spending for ads on Facebook paid for primarily in US dollars.



Translation:

Page Title: VE Economics

Caption: "British Newspaper Financial Times asks for an end to sanctions against Venezuela"



Translation:

Caption: "Leaked chat : Assemblymen Mendoza and Arteage wan



Translation:

Caption: "It is false that in every year that ends in 20 of each century there is a new pandemic"

Originally <u>announced</u> on July 8, 2020: We removed 33 Facebook accounts, 14 Pages, 1 Group and 37 Instagram accounts that were involved in <u>coordinated</u> <u>inauthentic behavior</u> in Brazil. This network focused on domestic audiences.

This network consisted of several clusters of connected activity that relied on a combination of duplicate and fake accounts — some of which had been detected and disabled by our automated systems — to evade enforcement, create fictitious personas posing as reporters, post content, and manage Pages masquerading as news outlets. They posted about local news and events including domestic politics and elections, political memes, criticism of the political opposition, media organizations and journalists, and most recently they posted about the coronavirus pandemic. Some of the content posted by this network had already been taken down for <u>Community Standards</u> violations including hate speech.

We found this activity as part of our investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in Brazil reported on by press and referenced in recent congressional testimony in Brazil. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation found links to individuals associated with the Social Liberal Party and some of the employees of the offices of Anderson Moraes, Alana Passos, Eduardo Bolsonaro, Flavio Bolsonaro and Jair Bolsonaro.

- Presence on Facebook and Instagram: 33 Facebook accounts, 14 Pages, 1 Group and 37 Instagram accounts.
- Followers: About 883,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages, around 350 accounts joined this Group and about 918,000 people followed one of more of these Instagram accounts.
- Advertising: Around \$1,500 in spending for ads on Facebook paid for in Brazilian reais.



Translation:

Page Title: Political Game

Caption: "Segio Moro is Cancelled online"



Translation:

Caption: Communist Doctrine: accuse others of what you are



Translation:

Caption: Globo Lies

Text Overlay on Video: Globo is fabricating the coronavirus deaths/death rate

Originally <u>announced</u> on July 8, 2020: We removed 65 Facebook accounts, 32 Pages and 8 Instagram accounts that were involved in <u>coordinated inauthentic</u> <u>behavior</u> in Ukraine. This network focused on domestic audiences.

The people behind this activity used fake accounts — some of which had already been detected and disabled by our automated systems — to create fictitious personas, post in Groups and on Pages, comment on their own content, evade enforcement, and manage Pages. Some of this network's accounts had also been removed for hate speech and impersonation. This network was particularly active during the 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine. Some of its accounts have gone through significant name changes over time. The Page admins and account owners posted political memes, satire and other content including about Crimea, NATO, economic policies in Ukraine, domestic politics, elections, criticism and support of various candidates, including Volodymyr Zelensky, Yulia Tymoshenko, and Petro Poroshenko.

We identified this activity as a result of our internal investigation into suspected coordinated inauthentic behavior in Ukraine. Our assessment benefited from public reporting in Ukraine. Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities and coordination, our investigation linked this activity to Postmen DA, an advertising agency in Ukraine.

- Presence on Facebook and Instagram: 65 Facebook accounts, 32 Pages and 8 accounts on Instagram.
- Followers: About 480,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages and around 2,500 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- Advertising: About \$1.91 million in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for primarily in US dollars.



Translation:

Page Title: Betrayal/Victory

Caption: Ukraine returns to Europe

Video Caption: "Why do you support Poroshenko?"



Translation:

Page Title: Stop Yulia



Translation:

Page Title: Goat

Caption: Press LIKE if you want to press the button (of a lavatory)

Image Caption: We need to flush everyone

Originally <u>announced</u> on July 8, 2020: Finally, we removed 54 Facebook accounts, 50 Pages and 4 Instagram accounts that were involved in <u>coordinated inauthentic behavior</u> in the US. This network focused on domestic audiences.

The people behind this activity used fake accounts — some of which had already been detected and disabled by our automated systems — to pose as residents of Florida, post and comment on their own content to make it appear more popular than it is, evade enforcement, and manage Pages. Several of these Pages had links to Proud Boys, a hate group we banned in 2018. Some Pages appeared to have acquired followers from Pakistan and Egypt to make themselves seem more popular than they were. This network, which was also active on other internet platforms, was most active between 2015 and 2017. Since then, the majority of these accounts have been dormant, and some were permanently deleted by the users. The Page admins and account owners posted about local politics in Florida, Roger Stone and his Pages, websites, books, and media appearances, a Florida land and water resources bill, the hacked materials released by Wikileaks ahead of the US 2016 election, candidates in the 2016 primaries and general election, and the Roger Stone trial.

We first started looking into this network as part of our investigation into the Proud Boys' attempts to return to Facebook after we had banned them from the platform. We identified the full scope of this network following the recent public release of search warrants pertaining to the investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller in response to a joint petition from The New York Times, CNN, the Associated Press, The Washington Post and Politico. Our investigation linked this network to Roger Stone and his associates.

- Presence on Facebook and Instagram: 54 Facebook accounts, 50 Pages and 4 accounts on Instagram.
- Followers: About 260,000 accounts followed one or more of these Pages and around 62,000 people followed one or more of these Instagram accounts.
- Advertising: Less than \$308,000 in spending for ads on Facebook and Instagram paid for in US dollars.





