FOREIGN EXTREMISTS INCITING DOMESTIC ANTI-SEMITIC/ANTI-ISRAEL VIOLENCE

New Research Tracking Bangladesh Troll Farm Dumping Extremist Content onto U.S. Social Media Platforms

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, DC, June 7, 2021. Within hours of the outbreak of the Israel/Hamas cross border conflict a torrent of pro-Hamas/pro-Palestinian social media lit up U.S. social media platforms condemning Israel's retaliation against Hamas.   Although a shaky ceasefire is holding for over two weeks, CSW has uncovered a foreign-based troll network still dumping bogus anti-Zionist/pro-Palestinian content onto U.S. social media platforms via the TELEGRAM mobile application – amplifying anti-Semitic content.

This particular network researched by CSW is located in Bangladesh and is churning out hundreds of fake accounts with fake photos of alleged Israeli atrocities via the mobile application TELEGRAM onto Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

CSW estimates that these fake accounts have been algorithmically amplified by domestic social media platforms to have now reached over 1 million U.S. social media accounts.

For example, "I am from Bangladesh and Support Palestine" was located with "Israel Crimes" on Facebook. In the search

chain of accounts at the end of the release they have the same hashtag sequence (1-19). To a knowledgeable social media

moderator, this search chain was not human generated, but machine generated by a bot in view of the exact similiarity in

working and font in each hashtag.

CSW tracked each of the hashtag accounts across Instagram and Facebook and found that the same sequencing of accounts was occurring right down to the placement of photos

purporting to show examples of Israeli "war crimes." The accounts claim to be from Bangladeshi persons, but their cookie-cutter symmetry suggests otherwise.

In 2018, Bangladesh-based troll farms piggy-backed onto Russian trolls stirring divisions within the U.S. in the run up to the 2018 mid-term elections. CSW was able to link slogans and verbiage between the two networks when conducting this research. Then, their objective was to latch onto American political passions to make a quick buck by hawking T-shirts embroidered with catchy political slogans. All in all, over 1700 separate Facebook pages were created --designed to look like individual accounts.

Unlike 2018, this Bangladeshi troll farm network is not hawking T-shirts, but hatred of Israel and Jewish Americans. The account production values are particularly sophisticated, raising suspicions that this Bangladesh-based troll farm network is likely run wittingly or unwittingly by Bengali subcontractors with a foreign tie. This mirrors the West-African-based troll farm funded by Russia's notorious Internet Research Agency (IRA) which was cited in Robert Mueller's report Russian interference in the 2016 election on behalf of Donald Trump.

CSW compared the Bangladeshi-originating content with other anti-Israel/pro-Palestinian content and found striking similarity to other anti-Zionist content originating from Eastern Europe and Turkey with the exact lead in: "I am from Ukraine and support Palestine;" "I am from Turkey and support Palestine, etc." The account content was the same we uncovered in the Bengali accounts.

Can a Russian tie to this Bengali troll operation be conclusively proven? Not without more sophisticated sleuthing. But in moments of international tension involving the U.S. and Israel (such as the Gaza conflict) official Russian disinformation networks have spewed out anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic content with the objective of sowing discord in the U.S. by way of social media via its OPERATION SIG -- the Kremlin's worldwide social media operation deployed to sow anti-Semitic discord in the U.S, throughout Europe and even in the Middle East. SIG is the Russian acronym for *Sionistskyiye Gosudarstva* (Jewish or Zionist Government).

Operation SIG is one part of Putin's broader global cyberwarfare and disinformation campaign aimed at weakening the U.S. and its allies, including Israel.

Under Operation SIG, Putin's IRA has also recruited Arab and Muslim social elites to incite hatred against Israel throughout the Arab and broader Muslim world by decrying Israel's alliance with the U.S.

The recent Gaza conflict has greatly exacerbated the proliferation of anti-Semitic social media-based incitement inciting violence against American Jews. Too much of this vile content remains online originating from state-sponsors of social media incitement. These extremists deviously rely on the mobile TELEGRAM App as a firehose to disseminate the content in the U.S.

Amb. Marc Ginsberg, President of CSW stated:

"Until TELEGRAM is forced to cease serving as a conduit of hate and incitement from foreign-based networks, the scourge of hate will have a willing social media platform enabler. YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter each need to examine why this extremist content via TELEGRAM is permitted to be uploaded and why it remains online in violation of their own terms of service is unacceptable.

More importantly, why major social media companies have not taken ANY action to curb TELEGRAM's devious capacity to infect its platforms with extremist content is a question demanding an answer."

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https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/israelicrimes

-- I'm from Bangladesh   and support Palestine

1. #StandforyoufromBangladesh
2. #PrayForPalestine
3. #SavePalestine
4. #savealquds
5. #standwithPalestine
6. #StandUpForPalestine
7. #PalestineWillBeFree
8. #FreePalestine
9. #AlAqsa
10. #RaiseYourVoiceForAlaqsa
11. #JusticeForPalestine
12. #IsraeliCrimes
13. #IsraelTerroristState
14. #Stop_Violence_Against_Palestinians
15. #Stand_For_Palestine
16. #Save_Palestinians
17. #Save_Al_Aqsa
18. #Save_Human_Lives
19. #DemandForPeacefulWorld

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Press inquiries:

Ambassador Marc Ginsberg

President, Coalition for a Safer Web

+1 (202) 352-1995

marc@coalitionsw.org

Eric Feinberg

SVP, Coalition for a Safer Web

+ 1 (917) 566-0661

Eric@coalitionsw.org