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 **THE HAMAS “INFLUENCER INTIFADA”

*OCTOBER 7 WAS ALSO A SURPRISE WEB ATTACK AGAINST ISRAEL***

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When Hamas launched its attack against southern Israel on October 7 it not only caught Israel off guard -- it also caught Israel and its global supporters flat-footed in the all too crucial information wars.

Within hours of its attack Hamas’ Qatar-based politburo web operatives flipped the switch on a slickly produced global social media disinformation campaign calculated to trigger an outpouring of pro-Palestinian/anti-Israel sentiment across global social media platforms to amplify (and justify) Hamas’ terror.

The initial disinformation flood was in Arabic directed at Arab social media sites to create sympathy for Hamas for its “defense” of Jerusalem’s Muslim holy places and its “justified” struggle to free Palestinian prisoners jailed in Israel.  But its second phase unleashed tens of thousands of fake disinfo bots in other languages to push the Hamas anti-Israel/antisemitic narrative.**

**The Coalition for a Safer Web (CSW) discovered scores of new hashtags that were created in 13 languages and dialects by the bots.

For example, #ArmiestoAqsa is a Hamas recruitment video that flooded across Arab, Muslim, English, Italian, Spanish, and Russian platforms.

According to a**[Jerusalem Post investigation](https://www.jpost.com/business-and-innovation/tech-and-start-ups/article-767925?utm_campaign=OurCrowd%20Weekly%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=280301008&utm_source=hs_email)**conducted by Cyabra, an Israeli social media intel company, 1 in 4 social media users posting about the conflict is a fake account.  In the first two days of the conflict, over 40,000 fake bots superspreading**[false narratives](https://images.jpost.com/image/upload/f_auto%2Cfl_lossy/c_fill%2Cg_faces%3Acenter%2Ch_537%2Cw_822/558331)**and videos that Hamas has a right to slay Israelis.  A single bot (whether fake or not) can generate over 600 fake posts in 48 hours – something a human poster is unlikely to match on a one-by-one posting basis.

CSW captured evolving hashtags based on the slogan "From the river to the sea...:  “#fromtheriver2thesea” and its variations, as well as, #Free\_PalestinePS, and #GazaNow (had more than 4.9 million Facebook followers before it was banned) as well as and over 50,000 YouTube channel followers).

CSW traced the web offensive to Hamas and supportive servers operating in Pakistan, Qatar, and Iran by relying on our AI language interception/translation capacity.

Pakistan’s role in Hamas’ media offensive is noteworthy.  CSW uncovered a “Hamas central” social media operation in Pakistan that is channeling pro-Hamas/antisemitic/anti-Israel content onto Twitter/X, TikTok and other social media platforms.

For over two weeks following the attack a pro-Palestine Pakistan bot was disseminating false videos of the Israel Defense Force murdering Israeli hostages.  The link is no longer live, but it was ironically accompanied on Twitter by an ad for the World Jewish Congress – an example of digital ads randomly placed on trending content.**<https://twitter.com/hashtag/AlAqsaCallsArmies?src=hashtag_click&f=live>**.**

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| **One of the Pakistani-origin bot videos remains up on YouTube urging Pakistanis to join the jihad on behalf of Hamas to destroy Israel.  The YouTube video was not produced in some kid’s basement.** |
|   | [#gazacallspakarmy](https://www.google.com/search?q=%23gazacallspakarmy&client=safari&sca_esv=574891262&biw=1440&bih=755&tbs=qdr%3Ad&sxsrf=AM9HkKnZTuagvEyGhrMwAI0FZH3mPWW_hA%3A1697737262910&ei=LmoxZbeVN4z8ptQPyvKE8A8&oq=%23ga&gs_lp=Egxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcnAiAyNnYSoCCAAyBBAjGCcyBBAuGAMyBBAAGAMyBBAAGAMyBBAAGAMyCxAAGIAEGLEDGIMBMgUQLhiABDILEAAYigUYsQMYgwEyBRAAGIAEMgUQABiABEitVFDmDliBRnAFeAGQAQGYAYIBoAHDGKoBBDcuMjO4AQHIAQD4AQGoAhTCAgcQIxiwAxgnwgIKEAAYRxjWBBiwA8ICBxAjGIoFGCfCAggQABiKBRiGA8ICBxAjGOoCGCfCAhYQABgDGI8BGOUCGOoCGLQCGIwD2AEBwgIOEAAYigUYsQMYgwEYkQLCAggQABiKBRiRAsICExAuGIoFGLEDGIMBGMcBGNEDGEPCAg0QABiKBRixAxiDARhDwgINEC4YigUYxwEY0QMYQ8ICDhAuGIMBGLEDGIoFGJECwgIHEAAYigUYQ8ICERAuGIAEGLEDGIMBGMcBGNEDwgIREC4YigUYsQMYgwEYxwEY0QPCAhcQLhiKBRixAxiDARjJAxjHARjRAxiRAsICCBAAGIoFGJIDwgILEAAYigUYsQMYkQLCAggQABiABBixA8ICJhAuGIoFGLEDGIMBGMkDGMcBGNEDGJECGJcFGNwEGN4EGOAE2AEC4gMEGAAgQYgGAZAGCroGBggBEAEYC7oGBggCEAEYFA&sclient=gws-wiz-serp)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=812NWtN1txc> |   |

**We located a sampling of English language fake Hamas-loaded bots, and we identified a direct link between many of these false Hamas bots and European & North American "Generation Z" web influencers who collectively have millions of followers on Tik Tok, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.  These self-designated influencers are serving as web megaphones for Hamas.

Hamas bots zeroed in on TikTok influencers – a bastion of Generation Z influencers.  One Hamas video populating a chain of TikTok influencers showed what was purported to be a baby’s decapitated head.  On closer look the “baby” turned out to be a doll.  But Hamas-targeted influencers took the bait anyway…carpet bombing their followers’ news feeds with depictions of Israeli atrocities against Palestinian children – all intended to boost outrage.

CSW is unable to determine whether these influencers are compensated by a Hamas front organization, a Hamas allied state slush fund, motivated by anti-Israel sentiment, or mere opportunists who pounced on the supercharged Gaza information  war to juice the numbers of engagement.  These influencers know from becoming “influencers” in the first place that standing out in the crowd by generating strong reactions is rewarded with reach and more followers.

One major TikTok influencer CSW began following is Mia Khalifa – a Canadian Lebanese immigrant.  Ms. Khalifa became quite the transit hub from a Hamas server in Iran to her TikTok audience.  She posted fake Hamas content and listed pro-Hamas hashtags to ricochet false Hamas narratives beyond her own influencer base.

The influencer role continues unabated on TikTok and on "verified" Twitter accounts.

In recent days, CSW has intercepted a new series of Tik Tok bots targeting influencers with the following hashtags (identified views provided in parentheses; collectively amounting to over @1.16 million views so far):

#aqsacallsarmies
http://bit.ly/47tSSmh
831K views

#alaqsacallsmuslimarmies
https://bit.ly/3R1LVTi
252.4K views

#alaqsacallsarmies
https://bit.ly/46eDgBt
81.9K views

CSW also uncovered false videos from Hamas bots on far right and far left antisemitic accounts buried inside the mobile app Telegram that have, in turn, dispatched the content onto mainstream platforms.

The enormity of Hamas’ sophisticated targeting of western influencers reflects a dangerous and foreboding direction by banned terrorist and hate groups to flood social media platforms with content camouflaged by influencers whose accounts can take a terrorist organization’s bot output and flood the zone, so to speak before content moderation algorithms can intercept it.

There is nothing remotely comparable to Hamas’ slickly produced information war launched by Israel on social media platforms to refute, let alone generate support for Israel’s war of defense.

The battle for hearts and minds is not merely a battle between two adversaries, it has major consequences for the safety and security of America’s Jewish community.  Hamas has succeeded in escalating an unprecedented level of threats against Jews both at home and abroad.

Before October 7, the antisemitic web threat was principally from far-right extremist groups.  After October 7, that threat is now joined by a comparably dangerous threat from far-left antisemitic sources.

We repeat a refrain we have used before:  the Jewish community is paralyzed how to respond to this social media war on the home front.

New leadership is vitally needed immediately to face both frontal attacks.  There is an unused arsenal of web counter-offensive weapons sitting in the armory; they just need a new operational structure to deploy them.

Israel may be slowly wiping out Hamas militarily on the battlefield but into the 38th day of the war Israel and its allies remain woefully outgunned by Hamas on social media.**

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***The Coalition for a Safer Web is a 501(c)(3)***

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