

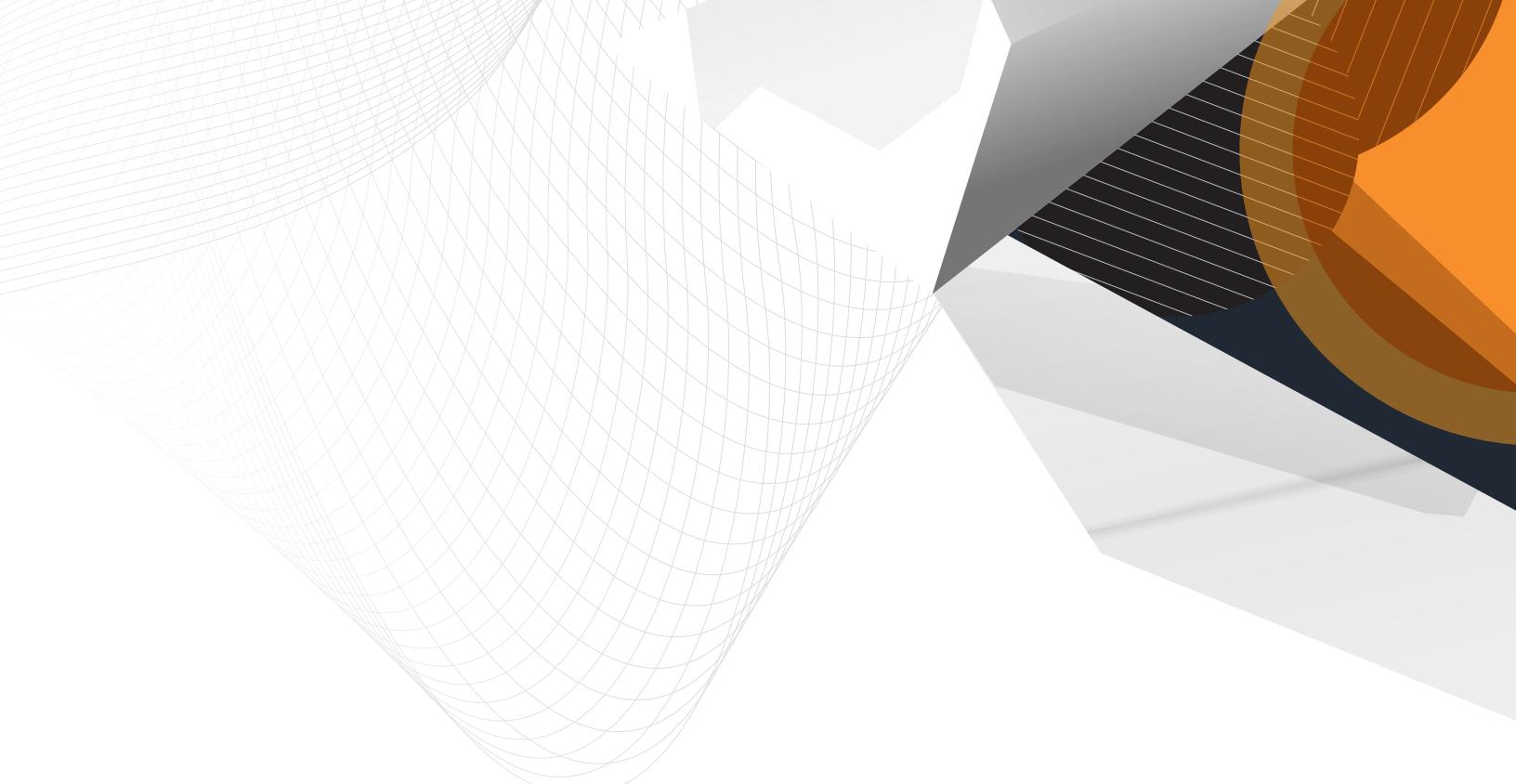
## **SUSPECTED IRANIAN INFLUENCE OPERATION**

Leveraging Inauthentic News Sites and Social Media Aimed at U.S., U.K., Other Audiences



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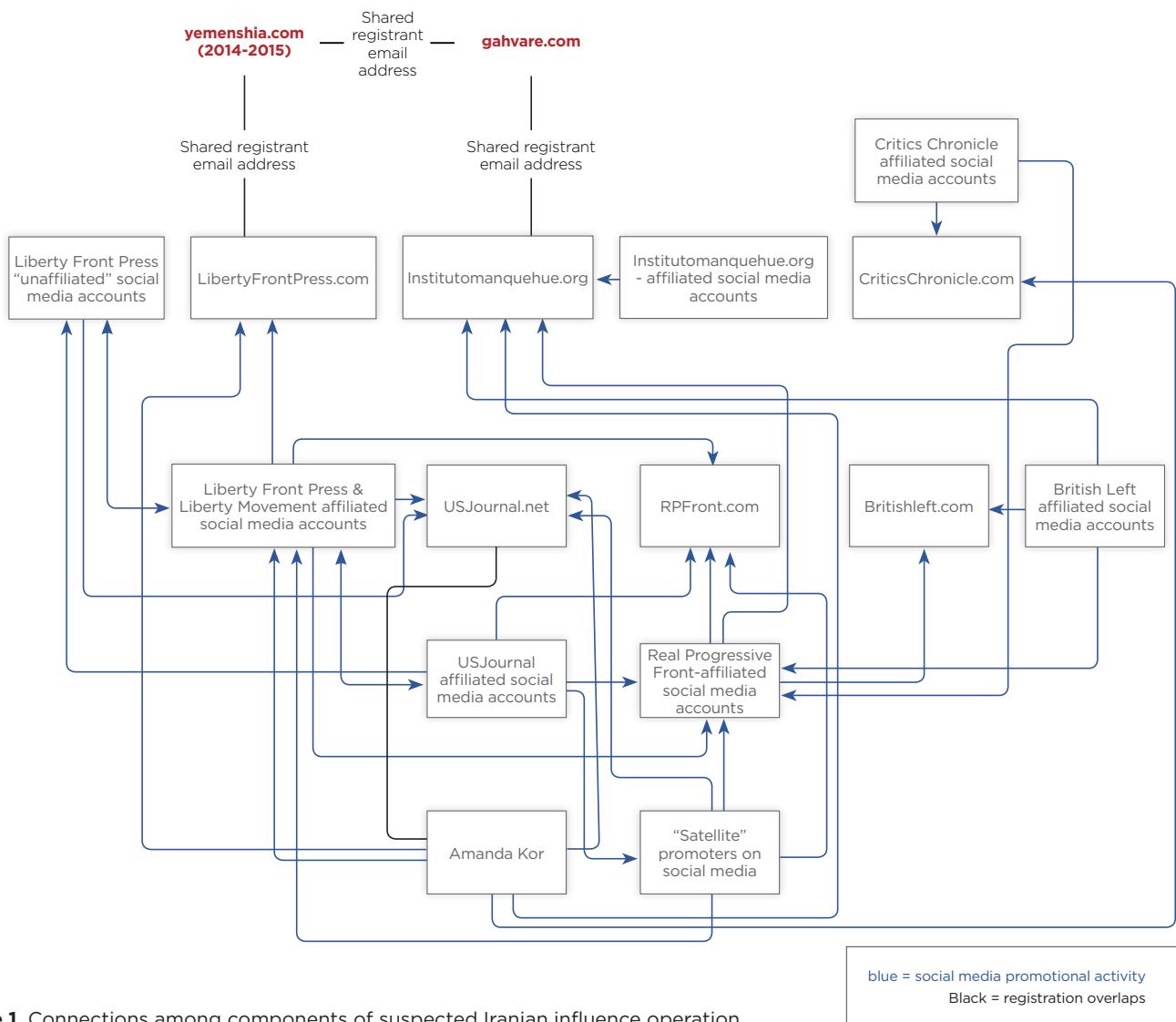
**FIREYE HAS IDENTIFIED** a suspected influence operation that appears to originate from Iran, aimed at audiences in the U.S., U.K., Latin America, and the Middle East. This operation is leveraging a network of inauthentic news sites and clusters of associated accounts across multiple social media platforms to promote political narratives in line with Iranian interests. These narratives include anti-Saudi, anti-Israeli, and pro-Palestinian themes, as well as support for specific U.S. policies favorable to Iran, such as the U.S.-Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA). The activity we have uncovered is significant, and demonstrates that actors beyond Russia continue to engage in and experiment with online, social media-driven influence operations to shape political discourse.

## What Is This Activity?

Figure 1 maps the registration and content promotion connections between the various inauthentic news sites and social media account clusters we have identified thus far. This activity dates back to at least 2017. At the time of publication of this blog, we continue to investigate and identify additional social media accounts and websites linked to this activity. For example, we have identified multiple Arabic-language, Middle East-focused sites that appear to be part of this broader operation that we do not address here.

We use the term “inauthentic” to describe sites that are not transparent in their origins and affiliations, undertake concerted efforts to mask these origins, and often use false social media personas to promote their content. The content published on the various websites consists of a mix of both original content and news articles appropriated, and sometimes altered, from other sources.

### PROMOTIONAL AND REGISTRATION CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SUSPECT IRANIAN INAUTHENTIC SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA



**Figure 1.** Connections among components of suspected Iranian influence operation.

## Who Is Conducting This Activity and Why?

Based on an investigation by FireEye Intelligence's Information Operations analysis team, we assess with moderate confidence that this activity originates from Iranian actors. This assessment is based on a combination of indicators including site registration data and the linking of social media accounts to Iranian phone numbers, as well as the promotion of content consistent with Iranian political interests. For example:

- Registrant emails for two inauthentic news sites included in this activity, 'Liberty Front Press' and 'Instituto Manquehue,' are associated with advertisements for website designers in Tehran and with the Iran-based site gahvare[.]com, respectively.
- We have identified multiple Twitter accounts directly affiliated with the sites, as well as other associated Twitter accounts, that are linked to phone numbers with the +98 Iranian country code.
- We have observed inauthentic social media personas, masquerading as American liberals supportive of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, heavily promoting Quds Day, a holiday established by Iran in 1979 to express support for Palestinians and opposition to Israel.

We limit our assessment regarding Iranian origins to moderate confidence because influence operations, by their very nature, are intended to deceive by mimicking legitimate online activity as closely as possible. While highly unlikely given the evidence we have identified, some possibility nonetheless remains that the activity could originate from elsewhere, was designed for alternative purposes, or includes some small percentage of authentic online behavior. We do not currently possess additional visibility into the specific actors, organizations, or entities behind this activity. Although the Iran-linked APT35 (Newscaster) has previously used inauthentic news sites and social media accounts to facilitate espionage, we have not observed any links to APT35.

Broadly speaking, the intent behind this activity appears to be to promote Iranian political interests, including anti-Saudi, anti-Israeli, and pro-Palestinian themes, as well as to promote support for specific U.S. policies favorable to Iran, such as the U.S.-Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA). In the context of the U.S.-focused activity, this also includes significant anti-Trump messaging and the alignment of social media personas with an American liberal identity. However, it is important to note that the activity does not appear to have been specifically designed to influence the 2018 US midterm elections, as it extends well beyond US audiences and US politics.

## Conclusion

The activity we have uncovered highlights that multiple actors continue to engage in and experiment with online, social media-driven influence operations as a means of shaping political discourse. These operations extend well beyond those conducted by Russia, which has often been the focus of research into information operations over recent years. Our investigation also illustrates how the threat posed by such influence operations continues to evolve, and how similar influence tactics can be deployed irrespective of the particular political or ideological goals being pursued.

# THREAT DETAIL

The following sections detail the components of this operation, how they are linked, and why we suspect Iranian actors to be responsible. Again, given that this type of activity is meant to deceive and blend in with legitimate activity, some possibility remains that the activity could originate from elsewhere, was designed for alternative purposes, or includes some small percentage of authentic online behavior.



# Liberty Front Press

“Liberty Front Press” ([libertyfrontpress.com](http://libertyfrontpress.com)) describes itself as an “independent media organization... comprised of independent journalists, activists, and anyone who wants to shape the direction of our world toward a better future.” Liberty Front Press publishes primarily political news stories related to the U.S., and language used by social media accounts affiliated with the site portray it as operated by individuals based in the United States. Much of the content on the site has been appropriated from other sources, including Politico, RawStory, and CNN. Content that appears to be original to the Liberty Front Press site contains poorly written English. At the time of writing, the Liberty Front Press website has not published any new content since June 18, 2018 (over 60 days).

Figure 2. Liberty Front Press main page.

## Site Registration History and Connections

- The libertyfrontpress.com domain was registered on May 1, 2017, using the email address majazi.1392@live.com. On May 20, 2017, the registrant email was changed to libertyfrontpress@mail.com, and an individual named “Alton Ryan,” purportedly located in San Jose, California, was listed as the site owner.
- The majazi.1392@live.com email address is associated with several advertisements for website designers in Tehran from 2014 (Figure 3).
- Historical Whois records show that in September 2014, the majazi.1392@live.com email address was also used to register the domain yemenshia.com, a news site active in 2014 and 2015 that provided political news analysis on Iran, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, and Bahrain.

۳ مهر ۹۳ - استان تهران در وبسایت طراح آگهی

**اپراتوری وب**

۱. طراح مسلط به HTML و CSS آشنای نرم افزار مدیریت محتوا و فتوشاپ، ۲. اپراتور وب جهت جمع آوری و درج محتوا، ۳. برنامه نویس وب (بهینه سازی و سلو) بصورت تمام وقت نیازمندیم. ارسال نام خالوادگی به سامانه پیامکی ڈیل 44033690, 2144033690

**Www.IranEstekhdam.Ir**

**طراح سایت مسلط به mysql و php**

آشنا به cms جوملا و وردپرس توانایی تغییر و ساخت افزونه ها ارسال رزومه به majazi.1392@live.com  
09358325885

**Figure 3.** Sample advertisement associated with the email address majazi.1392@live[.]com.

- The yemenshia.com registrant email was itself changed in October 2014 to kavehkhaleghi@hotmail.com, which was also used to register the Persian-language website gahvare.com in August 2015. The gahvare.com site promotes Shiite Islam, and is titled “Followers of Hazrat Ali Asghar” (میلت حضرت علی اصغر), a reference to a Shiite religious figure who died in the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD. Gahvare.com can also be linked to the Latin America-focused inauthentic news site institutomanquehue.org via the registration email address institutomanquehue@gmail.com, which was listed as the gahvare.com registrant email between August 2014 and August 2015, prior to it switching to kevehkhaleghi@hotmail.com (see section “Instituto Manquehue”).

**Table 1.** Liberty Front Press-affiliated Twitter accounts.

Current Account Name	Current Display Name	Previous Account Name	Previous Display Name	Creation Date	Listed Location	Linked Phone Number Country Code
@berniecratss	Berniecrats	@libertyfrontpr	liberty front press	4/15/2017	United States	+98
@riseagainstr	RiseAgainstTheRight	@libertyfrontp	liberty front press	4/15/2017	California, USA	+98
@PalestinianRes	Palestinian Resistance	@LFPressPalestin	LFPressPalestine	5/28/2017	United States	+98
@LFPressYemen	LFPressYemen	N/A	N/A	5/28/2017	United States	+98
@LFPressSyria	LFPressSyria	N/A	N/A	5/30/2017	United States	+98
@LFPressVenezuel	LFPressVenezuela	N/A	N/A	5/31/2017	N/A	+98
@lfpressargentin	LFPress Argentina	N/A	N/A	5/31/2017	N/A	+98
@LFPressBahrain	LFpressBahrain	N/A	N/A	May 2017 (day unknown - suspended as of June 2018)	United States	Unknown
@VoiceofQuds	Voice of Quds	@QudsPalestine	Palestine.mylove	9/3/2017	East Palestine, OH	+98
@LFPressBahrin	LFPressBahrain	N/A	N/A	7/13/2018	Bahrain	None
@LFPressQatar (Suspected Affiliation - No Overt Affiliation Displayed)	LFPressQatar	N/A	N/A	7/13/2018	Qatar	None

## Liberty Front Press Affiliated Social Media Accounts; Some Rebranding as American Liberals

Liberty Front Press has maintained social media accounts on multiple platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Google Plus, and YouTube (Table 1 and 2). On Twitter, we have identified at least 11 accounts that at some point have claimed—or implied via use of the site's imagery or links to the site—affiliation with Liberty Front Press; however, some of these have since dropped these direct affiliations and rebranded. Most of these Twitter accounts are linked to phone numbers with the Iranian +98 country code, despite listing their locations as being within the U.S. Many were created on the same day as at least one other account.

**Table 2.** Other Liberty Front Press-affiliated social media accounts.

Platform	Name	URL
Facebook	Liberty Front Press	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/LibertyFrontPress/">https://www.facebook.com/LibertyFrontPress/</a>
Facebook	Berniecratss	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Berniecratss-411835119323408/">https://www.facebook.com/Berniecratss-411835119323408/</a>
Instagram	berniecratss (formerly liberty_front_press)	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/berniecratss/">https://www.instagram.com/berniecratss/</a> (formerly <a href="https://www.instagram.com/liberty_front_press/">https://www.instagram.com/liberty_front_press/</a> )
Instagram	Ifpressargentina	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/ifpressargentina/">https://www.instagram.com/ifpressargentina/</a>
Instagram	Ifpressbahrain	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/ifpressbahrain/">https://www.instagram.com/ifpressbahrain/</a>
Instagram	palestine.mylove	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/palestine.mylove/">https://www.instagram.com/palestine.mylove/</a>
Instagram	Ifpressyemen	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/ifpressyemen/">https://www.instagram.com/ifpressyemen/</a>
Instagram	Ifpress.venezuela	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/ifpress.venezuela/">https://www.instagram.com/ifpress.venezuela/</a>
Instagram	Ifpress.syria	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/ifpress.syria/">https://www.instagram.com/ifpress.syria/</a>
Google+	liberty front press	<a href="https://plus.google.com/101229326245579916098">https://plus.google.com/101229326245579916098</a>
YouTube	liberty front press	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTAw7vhKcLzuWgj6aFk2TWQ">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTAw7vhKcLzuWgj6aFk2TWQ</a>

**LFPRESS Argentina** (@lfpresArgentina) - Profile picture: Red circle with white 'L' and 'FrontPress'. Bio: "An independent news media organization we aim to inspire action on the likes of social justice & human rights & advocate transparency in politics." Statistics: Tweets 341, Following 2,894, Followers 1,343, Likes 4,859.

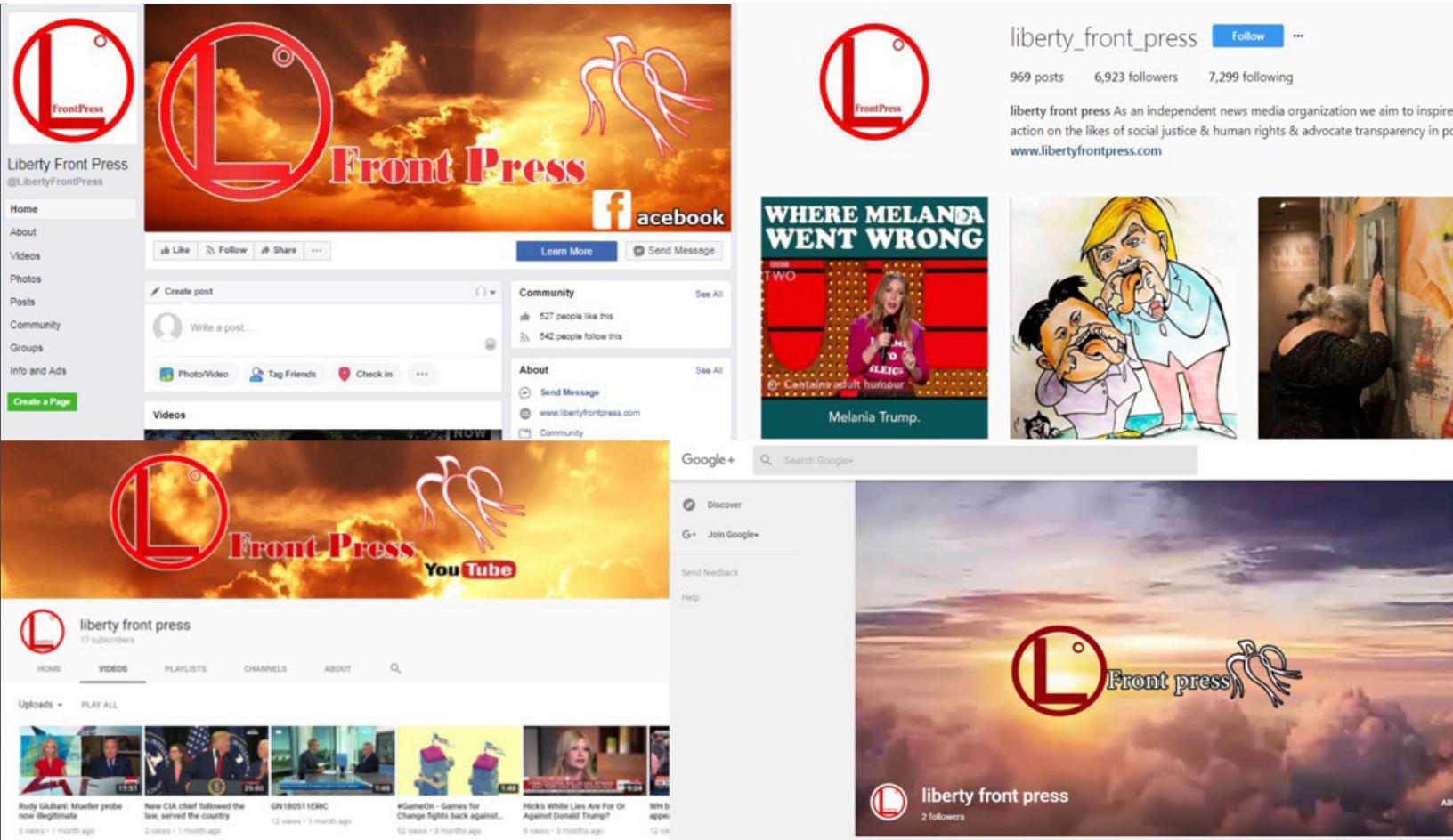
**LFPRESS Yemen** (@LFPRESSYemen) - Profile picture: Red circle with white 'L' and 'FrontPress'. Bio: "As an independent news media organization we aim to inspire action on the likes of social justice & human rights & advocate transparency in politics." Statistics: Tweets 1,500, Following 4,705, Followers 3,871, Likes 5,772.

**LFPRESS Syria** (@LFPRESSSyria) - Profile picture: Red circle with white 'L' and 'FrontPress'. Bio: "As an independent news media organization we aim to inspire action on the likes of social justice & human rights & advocate transparency in politics." Statistics: Tweets 942, Following 3,536, Followers 1,656, Likes 5,631.

**LFPRESS Bahrain** (@LFPRESSBahrain) - Profile picture: Red circle with white 'L' and 'FrontPress'. Bio: "lfpresbahrain As an independent news media organization we aim to inspire action on the likes of social justice&human rights &advocate transparency in politics." Statistics: Tweets 7, Following 14.

**LFPRESS Iran** (@LFPRESSIran) - Profile picture: Red circle with white 'L' and 'FrontPress'. Bio: "The #World knows that the #UnitedStates has created many bases around Iran But there are few people who object to this behavior. Just imagine a moment, the situation was reverse.What was the reaction of #America? #StopMeddlingIran" Statistics: Tweets 341, Following 2,894, Followers 1,343, Likes 4,859.

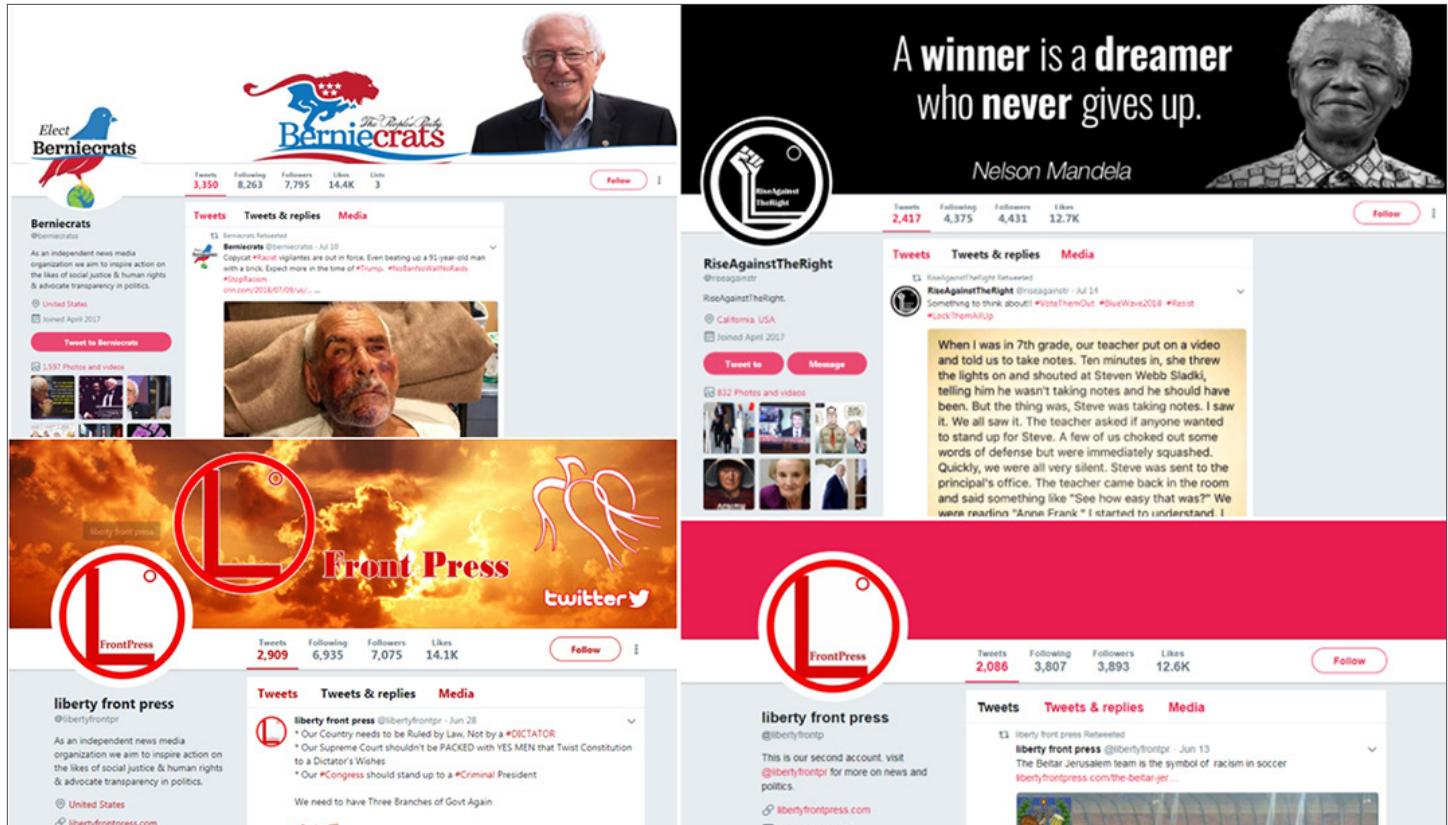
**Figure 4.** Sample Twitter accounts affiliated with Liberty Front Press.



**Figure 5.** Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Google+ Liberty Front Press accounts.

Most of the Liberty Front Press site's affiliated social media accounts appear orientated toward particular countries or regions. Of the accounts focused on the Middle East, for example, three of the Twitter accounts we have identified focus on Palestinian themes, and others are focused on Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, and potentially Qatar (suspected affiliation only). These accounts have pushed content in line with Iranian interests. For example:

- The @LFPressBahrain Twitter account, seemingly created in response to the suspension of the @LFPressBahrain account, lists libertyfrontpress.com as its website and has expressed support for the Shiite opposition in Bahrain.
- The @lfpressargentin Twitter account retweeted a @berniecratss (formerly @libertyfrontpr) tweet linking to a video on comments by the head of Iran's Quds Force, Major General Qassem Soleimani, in response to a Donald Trump tweet regarding Iran.
- Multiple regionally focused Liberty Front Press Twitter accounts have retweeted content from the original affiliated Twitter accounts (@libertyfrontpr and @libertyfrontp) that contained, for example, anti-Saudi, anti-Israel, pro-Palestine, and anti-Trump sentiments.



**Figure 6.** Liberty Front Press-affiliated Twitter accounts @libertyfrontpr and @libertyfronp switch personas to @berniecratss and @riseagainststr, respectively.

The site's original Twitter accounts, @libertyfrontpr and @libertyfrontp, began tweeting content in April 2017 that included American-themed material, such as photographs of the Statue of Liberty. The two accounts, which linked to the Liberty Front Press website in their bios, also used language to suggest U.S. origins, such as the use of "our country" in reference to the United States. In mid-July 2018, we observed these two accounts drop their direct affiliation with Liberty Front Press and rebrand under the pretense of being operated by American liberals.

- @libertyfrontpr changed its account name to @berniecratss (display name: "Berniecrats") and changed its profile and header images to those promoting the elections of individuals aligned with U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders. The account's header image also incorporated a picture of the Senator. The account published tweets in support of Sanders following the change

in username; however, previously, some of @libertyfrontpr's tweets linked to an article posted to the Liberty Front Press website that described Sanders as "an accessory to terror at the Gaza border," suggesting that the @libertyfrontpr/@berniecratss account has not always been supportive of the senator (Figure 7). Additionally, the interface language for the account, while previously set to English under the @libertyfrontpr account name, was recently changed to Farsi (Persian) following the account name change.

- @libertyfrontp changed its account name to @riseagainststr (display name: "RiseAgainstTheRight").
- We also observed that Liberty Front Press' main Instagram account (originally named "liberty\_front\_press") was renamed "berniecratss," and that on July 22, 2018, a "berniecratss" Facebook page was also created.

**Table 3.** Top 10 hashtags used by the previously Liberty Front Press-affiliated Twitter accounts @berniecratss and @riseagainstr.

@libertyfrontpr/@berniecratss (Sample: June 3 – July 31, 2018)	@libertyfrontp/@riseagainstr (Sample: June 7 – July 31, 2018)
#Trump	#InternationalQudsDay2018
#InternationalQudsDay2018	#QudsDay4Return
#Resist	#FreePalestine
#StopTrump	#SavePalestine
#NotMyPresident	#QudsDay2018
#EuropeanQudsPlatform	#Trump
#QudsDay4Return	#DeleteIsrael
#VoteBlue2018	#StopTrump
#US	#Resist
#LockHimUp	#NotMyPresident

A review of hashtags promoted by the @libertyfrontpr/@berniecratss and @libertyfrontp/@riseagainstr Twitter accounts from recent samples of 1,000 tweets from each account reveals that both accounts heavily promoted Quds Day, a holiday established by Iran in 1979 to express support for Palestinians and opposition to Israel that takes place on the last day of Ramadan, and also tweeted general opposition to the Trump administration (Table 3). In July 2018, two other Palestine-focused Liberty Front Press-affiliated accounts, @LFPressPalestin and @QudsPalestine, changed their account names to @PalestinianRes (display name: “Palestinian Resistance”) and @VoiceofQuds (display name: “Voice of Quds”), respectively. Collectively, pro-Palestine, anti-Israel, anti-Saudi and anti-Trump themes appear to be common across most of the Liberty Front Press-affiliated social media accounts, irrespective of their purported regions and areas of focus.

**Bernie Sanders: An Accessory to Terror at the Gaza Border**

The Gaza border conflict is being fought on two battlefields simultaneously. One is the battle at the border fence, where the aggressors use Molotov cocktails, pipe bombs, rocks, slingsh...

libertyfrontpress.com

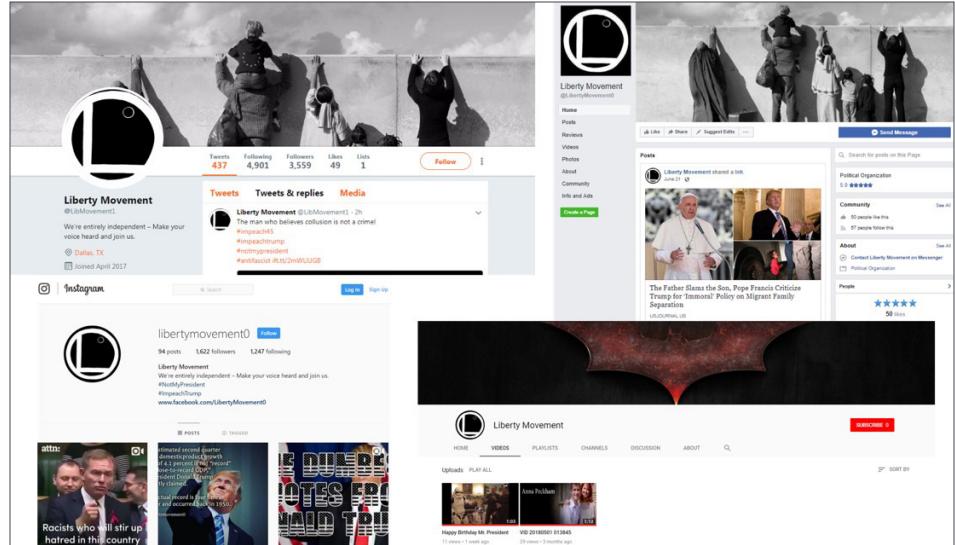
12:23 PM - 26 May 2018

2 Retweets 14 Likes

**Figure 7.** @berniecratss Twitter Account Previously Promotes Liberty Front Press Content Critical of Bernie Sanders (Originally Tweeted Under the Account Name @libertyfrontpr).

## Liberty Movement

We have identified a set of “Liberty Movement”-branded social media accounts (Table 4) promoting not only Liberty Front Press, but also the inauthentic news sites US Journal (usjournal.net) and Real Progressive Front (rppfront.com), as well as social media accounts related to those sites (see sections “US Journal” and “Real Progressive Front”). These accounts use the same logo as Liberty Front Press in their profile pictures (Figure 8) and appear to push similar content and narratives consistent with Iranian political interests. The Twitter account @LibMovement1 is linked to a phone number with the +98 Iranian country code—despite listing its location as Dallas, Texas, and was created on April 26, 2017, 11 days after the creation of the original Liberty Front Press Twitter accounts, @libertyfrontpr and @libertyfrontp. The Twitter account @PalestinianLM (display name: “Palestinian Liberty Movement”), was created on Feb. 23, 2018, and is also linked to a phone number with the +98 Iranian country code—despite listing its location as the United States.



**Figure 8.** “Liberty Movement”-branded Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube accounts.

**Table 4.** “Liberty Movement”-branded social media accounts.

Platform	Name	URL
Twitter	@LibMovement1	<a href="https://twitter.com/LibMovement1/">https://twitter.com/LibMovement1/</a>
Twitter	@PalestinianLM (formerly @LMPalestine)	<a href="https://twitter.com/usresistance1">https://twitter.com/usresistance1</a> (formerly <a href="https://twitter.com/LMPalestine">https://twitter.com/LMPalestine</a> )
Facebook	Liberty Movement	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/LibertyMovement0/">https://www.facebook.com/LibertyMovement0/</a>
Instagram	libertymovement0	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/libertymovement0/">https://www.instagram.com/libertymovement0/</a>
YouTube	Liberty Movement	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRkMNZHukue72EbPUu3tM7g/">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRkMNZHukue72EbPUu3tM7g/</a>

## Unaffiliated Twitter Accounts Posing as Americans Promoting Liberty Front Press

In addition to the social media accounts affiliated with Liberty Front Press, we have identified a network of at least 32 Twitter accounts, some with corresponding Instagram or Facebook accounts, that we assess with moderate confidence were created to promote the site (Table 5). These accounts, purporting to be Americans, do not claim affiliation with Liberty Front Press, but appear to primarily like and retweet Liberty Front Press material while publishing some original content of their own. The original tweets we have observed from these accounts have often consisted of poorly written English. Multiple accounts have also tweeted identical original messaging simultaneously (Figure 10). Many of the accounts follow and are followed by each other, and they also follow the Liberty Front Press-affiliated Twitter accounts discussed previously. Five of the accounts are linked to phone numbers with the +98 Iranian country code.

These accounts, created since July 2017, use profile pictures appropriated from various online sources, including photographs of individuals found in student and employee biographies on various websites. The accounts have similar user descriptions, with many listing a one-word profession such as "journalist" or "lawyer." Most of the accounts list a U.S. state or city as their location. The corresponding Instagram and Facebook accounts we have identified have few to no visible posts.



**Figure 9.** “Unaffiliated” Liberty Front Press Twitter accounts posing as Americans.



**Figure 10.** Multiple “Unaffiliated” Liberty Front Press Twitter accounts have tweeted identical original messaging simultaneously.

Additionally, we have observed Liberty Front Press-affiliated, Liberty Movement-affiliated, and “unaffiliated” Liberty Front Press accounts promote material from the Iranian media organization Quest 4 Truth (Q4T), which has been linked to the Iranian state-owned media organization Press TV. Q4T material promoted by Liberty Front Press-affiliated and unaffiliated accounts has included anti-Trump messaging, as well as posts promoting Quds Day.

**Table 5.** “Unaffiliated” Twitter accounts promoting Liberty Front Press.

Twitter Account Name	Display name	Creation Date	Listed Location	Linked Phone Number Country Code	Identified Corresponding Instagram/Facebook Accounts
@nickjac35517487	Nickjackson	6/26/2018	live in US, Ohio, Cleveland	+98	N/A
@zarasmi75452578	zarasmith	6/26/2018	Ohio, USA	None	N/A
@sheliaosburne	sheliaosburne	6/21/2018	live in US, Alabama	None	N/A
@jacksymi06053938	jack smith	6/13/2018	Fremont, CA	None	N/A
@Tomjohn14125178	Tomjohnson	6/12/2018	Texas, USA	None	N/A
@michele83998016	Michele	6/9/2018	San Francisco, CA	+98	N/A
@NICOLAT67691218	NICOLATURNER	5/24/2018	live in TEXAS, DALAS	None	N/A
@elizagorden	elizagorden	5/12/2018	California, USA	None	N/A
@AMideltun	Anna Mideltun	5/12/2018	California, USA	+98	N/A
@carpenterjoe5	Joe Carpenter	1/10/2018	Pennsylvania, Philadelphia	None	N/A
@emilyhoffman021	Emily Hoffman	1/10/2018	California, Los Angeles	+98	N/A
@davidja75179613	David James	1/9/2018	Chicago	+98	N/A
@MichailGilbert	Michael Gilbert	1/9/2018	Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/michail.gilbert/">https://www.instagram.com/michail.gilbert/</a>
@NinaHanderson	Nina Handerson	1/9/2018	Texas, San Antonio	None	N/A
@jennifersm1th1	Jennifer Smith	1/8/2018	Florida, Orlando	None	N/A
@julialala36325998	julia lambert	12/30/2017	Arizona, Phoenix	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/iulialambert/">https://www.instagram.com/iulialambert/</a>
@annawillson1695	Anna Willson	12/30/2017	New York City	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/annawillson1695/">https://www.instagram.com/annawillson1695/</a>
@jOnsonnm	mike jonson	12/30/2017	Atlanta	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/jOnsonnm/">https://www.instagram.com/jOnsonnm/</a>
@daniilsanderson	daniel anderson	12/30/2017	Washington, Seattle	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/daniilsanderson/">https://www.instagram.com/daniilsanderson/</a>
@alekjacksun	alex jackson	12/30/2017	Oregon, Portland	None	N/A
@Jack50Jonathan	jack jonathan	8/10/2017	Atlantic City, NJ	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/jonathan.jack500/">https://www.instagram.com/jonathan.jack500/</a>
@BitaBergius	Bita Bergius	8/1/2017	Fremont, CA	None	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/bita.bergius.7">https://www.facebook.com/bita.bergius.7</a>
@InariAlesia	Alesia Inari	8/1/2017	NJ	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/inari.alessia/">https://www.instagram.com/inari.alessia/</a>
@sal_zapatero	Salkko Zapatero	8/1/2017	Mountain View, CA	None	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/salkko.zapatero.5">https://www.facebook.com/salkko.zapatero.5</a>
@chaknavarian	daniel chaknavarian	7/29/2017	Tabriz	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/chaknavarian/">https://www.instagram.com/chaknavarian/</a>
@gellyclark	gellyclark	7/12/2017	N/A	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/gellyclark/">https://www.instagram.com/gellyclark/</a>
@noahgorman3989	noahgorman	7/9/2017	N/A	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/noahgorman3989/">https://www.instagram.com/noahgorman3989/</a>
@tedvalovits	tedvalovits	7/8/2017	N/A	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/ted.valovits/">https://www.instagram.com/ted.valovits/</a>
@ricktims1414	ricktims	7/6/2017	N/A	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/rick.tims/">https://www.instagram.com/rick.tims/</a>
@jessvarris	jessvarris	7/6/2017	N/A	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/jessvarris/">https://www.instagram.com/jessvarris/</a>
@amygaleki	amygaleki	7/6/2017	United States	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/amy.galeki/">https://www.instagram.com/amy.galeki/</a>
@mathewviky1625	mathewviky	7/6/2017	United States	None	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/mathew.viky/">https://www.instagram.com/mathew.viky/</a>

# ÜS Journal

"US Journal" ([usjournal.net](http://usjournal.net)) describes itself as "a genuinely independent online media outlet dedicated to strengthening and supporting independent journalism, and to improving the public's access to independent information sources." The website prominently features material pertinent to Iranian interests; for example, the site's "Around The World" section, situated prominently at the top of the homepage, displays subsections titled "Yemen Crisis," "Syrian Civil War," "Bahrain Revolution," and "Palestinian Cause."

# US JOURNAL

HOME REGIONS RIGHTS IN DEPTH OPINION

## Around The World

HUMAN RIGHTS - 17 hours ago

### Unprecedented Lack of Funding Threatens Critical Assistance for Palestinians, UN Agency Says

by USJ Staff

## Latest News

NEWS LINE - July 25, 2018

#### 40 Activists From Around the World On Board to Set Sail toward Gaza to Break the 10-Year Israeli Blockage

WAR & PEACE - July 25, 2018

#### Moscow's Ambassador to Beijing "Russia, China Retaliate U.S. Missile System in Asia"

WAR & PEACE - July 24, 2018

#### North Korea to Dismantle Key Missile Testing Site, a Win for Trump?

SOUTH ASIA - July 24, 2018

#### Islamic Emirate Spokesman Reacts to American General Nicholson's Remarks

WAR & PEACE - July 24, 2018

**Figure 11.** US Journal main page.

## Site Registration History and Connections

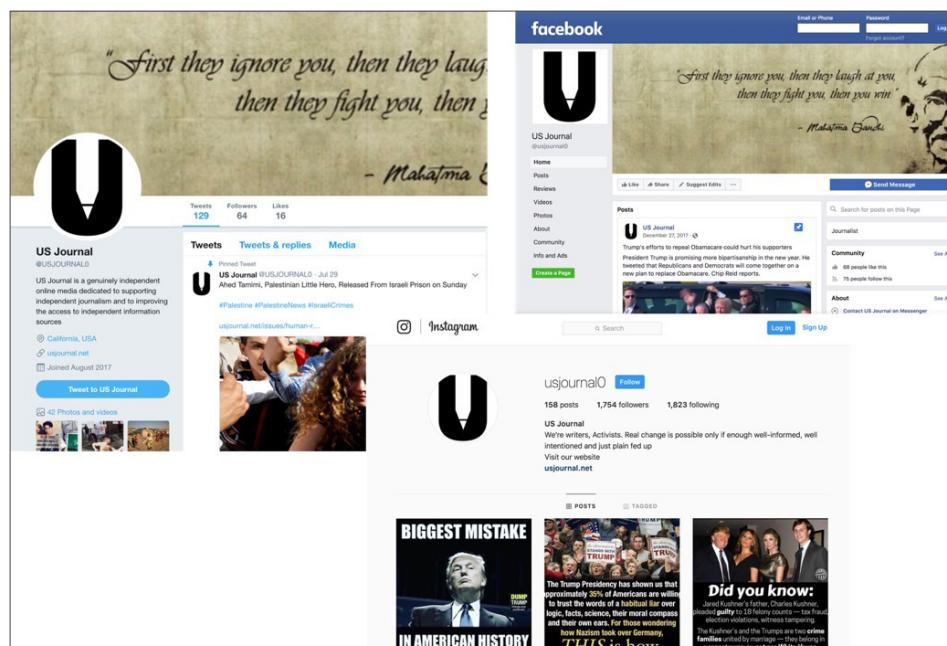
- usjournal.net was initially registered in 2013 using the email address usjournal@hotmail.com.
- On Aug. 7, 2017, registrant information was changed to the email address usjournal@mail.com, with the domain allegedly being registered by an individual named “Amanda Kor” in Palo Alto, California. We identified a Facebook profile for Amanda Kor (<https://www.facebook.com/amanda.kor.7>) that has promoted material from US Journal, Liberty Front Press, criticschronicle.com (see section “Critics Chronicle”), and institutomanquehue.org (see section “Instituto Manquehue”), as well as from additional sites and social media accounts that we continue to investigate as potentially related to this broader set of influence activity. Additionally, the “likes” of the “Amanda Kor” Facebook page include Facebook pages for Liberty Front Press, Liberty Movement, several Real Progressive Front pages, and Critics Chronicle (see sections “Real Progressive Front” and “Critics Chronicle”), in addition to other pro-Palestinian pages.
- As of July 3, 2018, registrant information for the usjournal.net site was no longer available.

## US Journal-Affiliated Social Media Accounts and Personas

US Journal has maintained social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (Table 6). The site’s official Twitter account was created on Aug. 19, 2017, and lists California, USA, as its location, but it is linked to a phone number with the +98 Iranian country code. While the US Journal Facebook page does not appear to have posted any content since March 2018, the Instagram account continued to post content recently. Liberty Front Press-affiliated Twitter accounts including @riseagainstr, @berniecratss, @PalestinianRes, @LFPRESSYria, and @LFPRESSYemen, the Liberty Movement-branded Twitter account @PalestinianLM, and some of the “unaffiliated” Liberty Front Press social media accounts purporting to be Americans, have all also promoted articles published on usjournal.net. Likewise, the US Journal-affiliated Twitter accounts @USJOURNALO and @BethTacher (see below) have both promoted tweets by the Liberty Movement-branded Twitter accounts @LibMovement1 and @PalestinianLM, as well as content from Real Progressive Front (see below), demonstrating notable promotional overlap between the various clusters of activity. @BethTacher has also promoted messaging from the Iranian media organization Q4T.

**Table 6.** US Journal-affiliated social media accounts.

Platform	Name	URL
Twitter	@USJOURNALO	<a href="https://twitter.com/USJOURNALO">https://twitter.com/USJOURNALO</a>
Facebook	US Journal	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/usjournal0/">https://www.facebook.com/usjournal0/</a>
Instagram	usjournal0	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/usjournal0/">https://www.instagram.com/usjournal0/</a>



**Figure 12.** US Journal-Affiliated Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram Accounts.

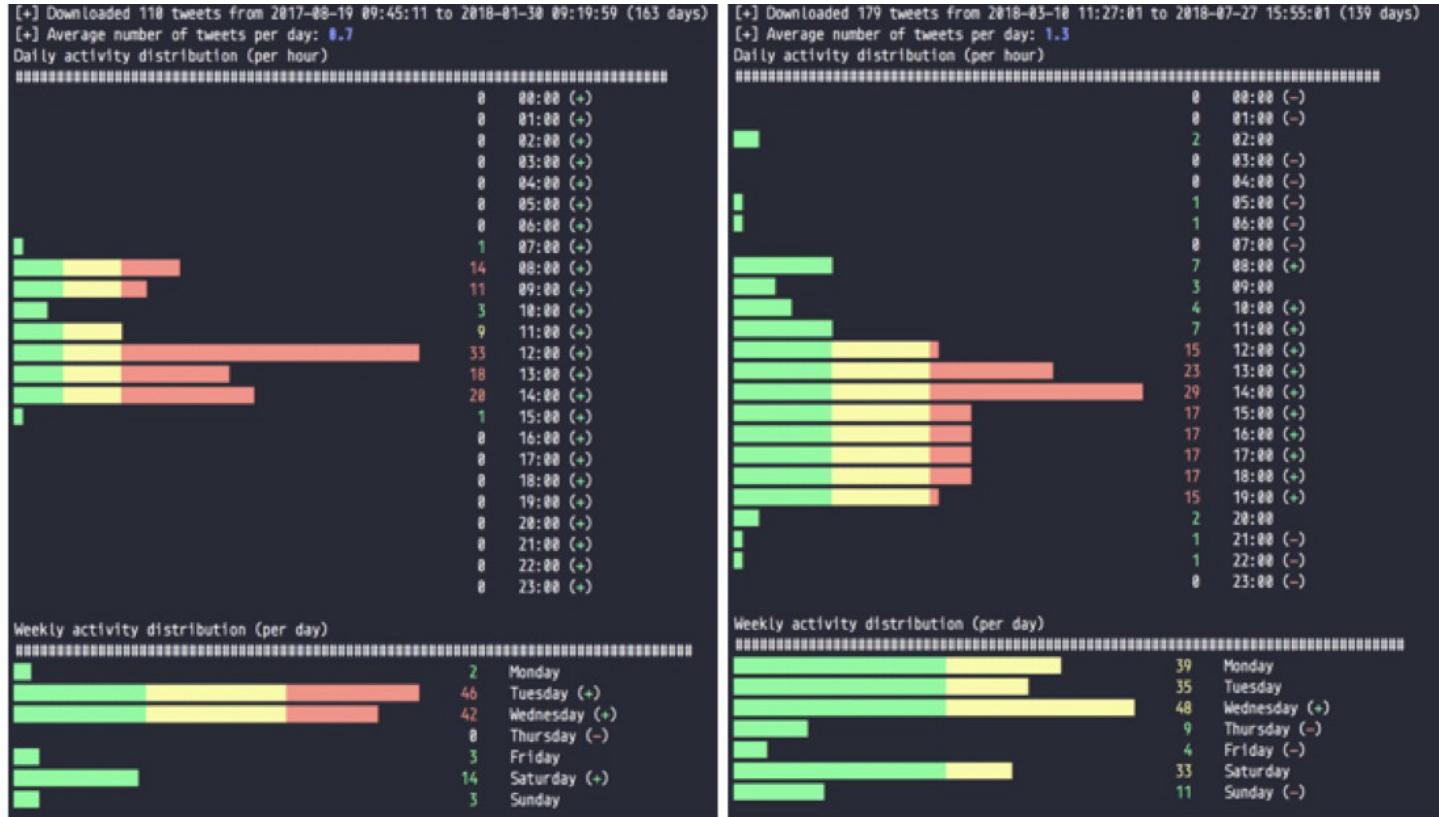


**Figure 13.** US Journal purported writer Twitter accounts @BethTacher and @LiamJayCampbell1.

Prior to July 2018, usjournal.net listed three individuals as writers for the site. One of these appears to be a genuine individual working as a translator and freelance journalist, based on her social media history and internet presence. However, we have seen indications that the two other journalists listed at that time may be fabricated personas created to promote US Journal material:

- The “Elizabeth Tacher” persona’s Twitter (@BethTacher) and usjournal.net profile pictures are taken from a French actress. The persona also has a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/elizabeth.tacher.988>) that lists US Journal and Liberty Movement pages among its favorites, along with several pages advocating for the impeachment of U.S. President Trump. The @BethTacher Twitter account was created on March 3, 2018, lists its location as Mexico, and is not linked to a phone number.

- The “Liam Jay Campbell” persona claims to be “a journalist and English MA graduate from Sacramento” and claims to have attended California State University. The persona maintains a Twitter account (@LiamJayCampbell1) that was created on Dec. 13, 2017, as well as a Reddit account (<https://www.reddit.com/user/liamjaycampbell>) that has been used to post both political and apolitical content, including two usjournal.net articles: an article on a GOP Senate candidate and an article on the war in Yemen. The @LiamJayCampbell1 Twitter account is linked to a phone number with the +98 Iranian country code. @LiamJayCampbell1 has published only a handful of tweets, most of which have expressed opposition to U.S. Republicans and support for Democrats. One tweet, however, reported on a call for the suspension of Saudi Arabia from the UN Human Rights Council by two UK human rights lawyers, and linked to a usjournal.net article on the lawyers’ request.



**Figure 14.** Tweet activity distribution for @USJOURNALO (left) and @BethTacher (right)  
 (Source: tweets\_analyzer by x0rz ([GitHub link](#))).

In late July 2018, we observed the addition of four authors to US Journal’s roster as listed on its website, all of whom appear to be genuine individuals. While at least one author has tweeted about his featured work on US Journal and Real Progressive Front (see section “Real Progressive Front”), it is unclear whether the remaining listed authors are aware that their work has been featured on usjournal.net and that their names and bios are listed on the site.

Using the open-source tool “tweets\_analyzer” by x0rz ([GitHub link](#)) to examine the activity patterns of the US Journal-affiliated Twitter accounts, we observed that the @USJOURNALO and

@BethTacher accounts were relatively quiet on Thursdays and Fridays—days that correspond with the Iranian weekend—but were very active on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and to a lesser extent, Saturdays (Figure 14). Content published by these two accounts has generally consisted of links to usjournal.net articles and political material opposing U.S. President Trump. However, the accounts have also tweeted on topics more clearly pertinent to Iran; for example, as of July 27, 2018, @USJOURNALO’s most tweeted hashtag was #Arbaeen, in reference to a Shiite religious holiday.



# Real Progressive Front

"Real Progressive Front" (rpfrc.com) describes itself as "a progressive NGO that aims to support people's movements for freedom, peace and justice, reaffirm civil rights and reduce the influence of money in politics—among other things—through a government of the people, by the people and for the people." The rpfrc.com website publishes political news stories pertaining primarily to the U.S. and Middle East, including both plagiarized and original content. This content reflects narratives in line with Iranian political stances. For example, articles featured on the site have included op-eds protesting a new Israeli law declaring Israel to be "the

historic homeland of the Jewish people... [who] have the exclusive right to national self-determination in it" and pieces depicting the Trump administration negatively, such as those criticizing the administration's immigration policies. Real Progressive Front claims to employ some of the same individuals as US Journal, and site content includes some material authored by genuine individuals. While the site's primary Twitter account, @RPFront, lists its location as the United States, additional social media accounts affiliated with the site focus on the UK, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Bahrain, and Syria.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Real Progressive Front website. At the top left is the site's logo, a stylized bird in flight within a circular emblem. To the right of the logo is the site's name, "Real Progressive Front", written in a flowing, cursive script. On the far right of the header are a search bar, a magnifying glass icon, and social media links for Twitter and Facebook. Below the header is a navigation menu with links to "HOME", "U.S.", "WORLD", "POLITICS", "SOCIAL JUSTICE", "HUMAN RIGHTS", and "INTERVIEWS". The main content area features a large, high-resolution photograph of President Donald Trump sitting at a desk, looking slightly to his left. In the background, the American flag is visible. To the left of the photo is a smaller version of the site's logo. To the right of the photo is a white rectangular box containing an article. The article is dated "23 July 2018" and has the title "Twitter Users Troll Trump By Using His All-Caps Words On Iran To Air Their Own Grievances". Below the title is a quote: "NEVER, EVER LEAVE THREE WEEK OLD YOGURT IN THE FRIDGE AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE". At the bottom of the page, there is a horizontal navigation bar with five small black dots.

**Figure 15.** Real Progressive Front main page.



## Site Registration History and Connections

- The rfront.com website was registered on May 8, 2017, using the email address realprogressivefront@gmail.com. The domains rfront.org and rfront.us were also registered using this email. The registrant name provided was “realprogressive front,” and the address provided—a street in Houston, Texas—appears to have been falsified based on an incorrect ZIP Code. The phone number provided did not have the appropriate number of digits for a U.S. phone number.
- In January 2018, registrant information for rfront.com was changed, listing an individual with the name “reyaz ali,” an address in “Jammu and Kashmir,” and an Indian phone number, although the registered email address was not changed.
- As of July 5, 2018, registrant information for the site became unavailable

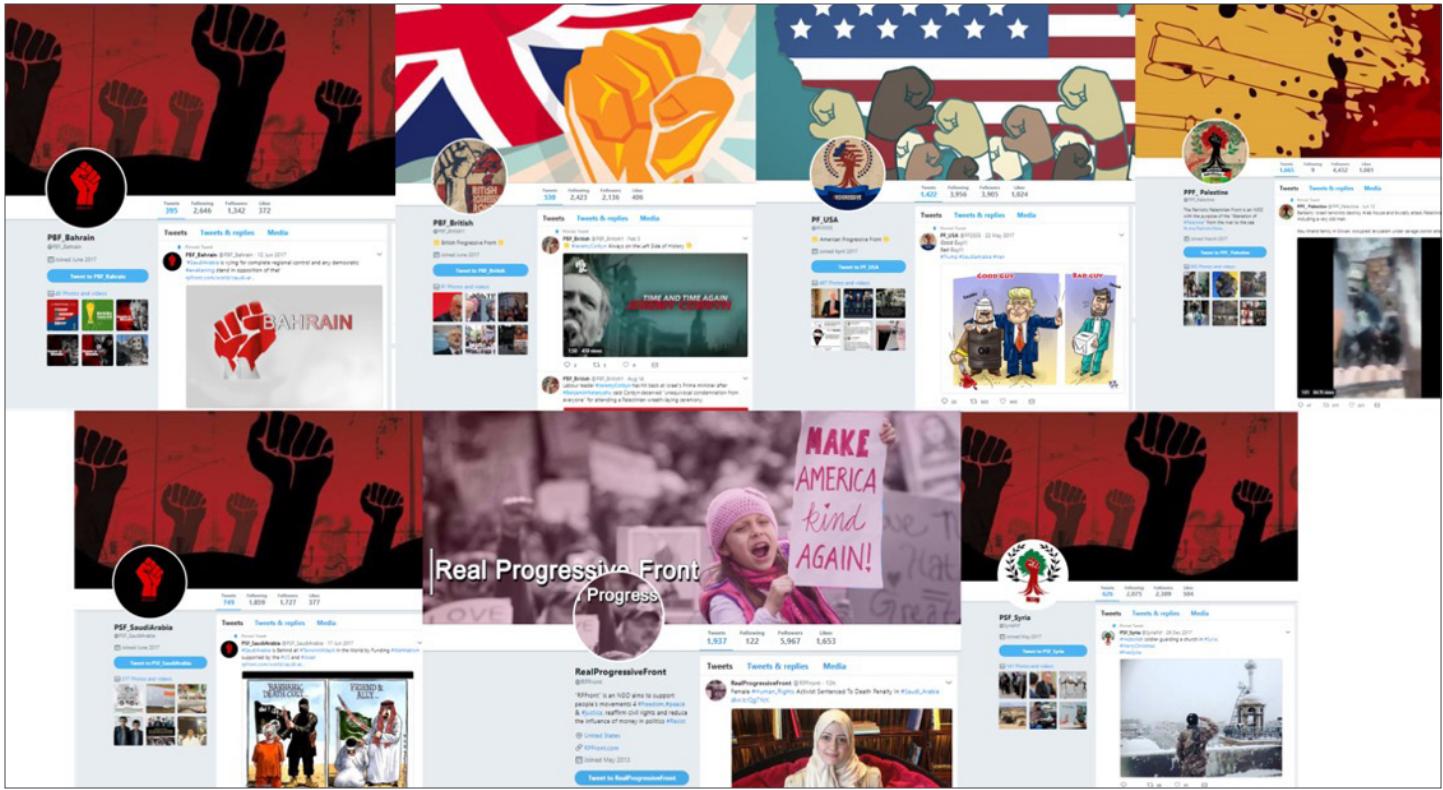
## Real Progressive Front-Associated Social Media Accounts

We identified numerous social media accounts associated with Real Progressive Front across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Google+ (Tables 7 and 8). On Twitter, we have identified seven accounts; while all but one of these do not directly list rfront.com as their website, they tweet primarily rfront.com material and retweet other Real Progressive Front accounts. The display names and bios of these accounts also self-identify as some variation of “Progressive Front,” and all of the accounts were created either shortly before, or shortly after, rfront.com’s registration, with the exception of @RPFront, which was created on May 1, 2013. This specific account’s observable history, however, suggests that it did not start tweeting until May 21, 2017, and it is possible the account used a different name prior to this date. All of the identified Twitter accounts are linked to phone numbers with the +98 Iranian country code.

Similar to the social media accounts affiliated with Liberty Front Press, most of the Real Progressive Front-associated social media accounts have adopted branding related to specific geographies, including the U.S., Britain, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Bahrain, and Syria. Most of the Real Progressive Front-associated accounts also use similar imagery of a raised fist against various backdrops for their profile (and often header) pictures, while some use an image of a bird or other images (Figures 16 and 17).

**Table 7.** Real Progressive Front-associated Twitter accounts.

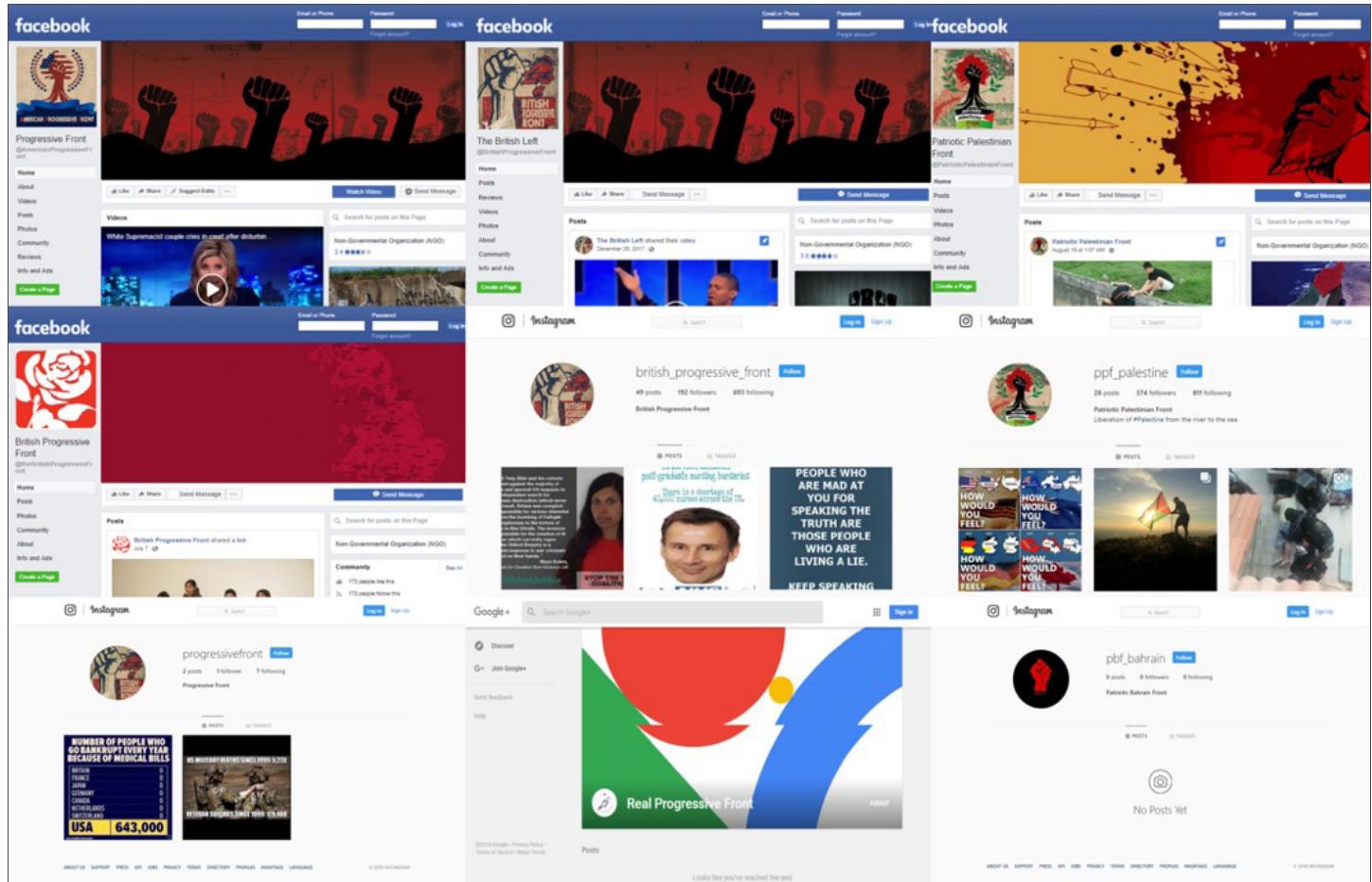
Twitter Account Name	Display name	Twitter Bio	Creation Date	Listed Location	Registered Phone Number Country Code
@RPFront	RealProgressiveFront	“RPFront” is an NGO aims to support people’s movements 4 #freedom, #peace & #justice, reaffirm civil rights and reduce the influence of money in politics #Resist	5/1/2013	United States	+98
@PF2035	PF_USA	American Progressive Front	4/29/2017	N/A	+98
@PBF_British1(@PBF_British suspended)	PBF_British	British Progressive Front	6/9/2017	N/A	+98
@PSF_SaudiArabia	PSF_SaudiArabia	N/A	6/9/2017	N/A	+98
@PPF_Palestine	PPF_Palestine	The Patriotic Palestinian Front is an NGO with the purpose of the “liberation of #Palestine” from the river to the sea <a href="https://t.co/DnKu7lvi2O">https://t.co/DnKu7lvi2O</a>	3/1/2017	N/A	+98
@PBF_Bahrain	PBF_Bahrain	N/A	6/2/2017	N/A	+98
@SyriaPsf	PSF_Syria	N/A	5/20/2017	N/A	+98



**Figure 16.** Real Progressive Front-associated Twitter accounts.

**Table 8.** Real Progressive Front-associated Facebook, Instagram, and Google+ accounts.

Platform	Name	URL
Facebook	Real Progressive Front	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/RPFront/">https://www.facebook.com/RPFront/</a>
Facebook	Progressive Front (American Progressive Front)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/AmericanProgressiveFront/">https://www.facebook.com/AmericanProgressiveFront/</a>
Instagram	progressivefront (Progressive Front)	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/progressivefront/">https://www.instagram.com/progressivefront/</a>
Instagram	british_progressive_front (British Progressive Front)	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/british_progressive_front/">https://www.instagram.com/british_progressive_front/</a>
Instagram	pbf_british (PBF British)	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/pbf_british/">https://www.instagram.com/pbf_british/</a>
Facebook	The British Left	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/BritishProgressiveFront">https://www.facebook.com/BritishProgressiveFront</a>
Facebook	British Progressive Front	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/theBritishProgressiveFront/">https://www.facebook.com/theBritishProgressiveFront/</a>
Instagram	ppf_palestine (Patriotic Palestinian Front)	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/ppf_palestine/">https://www.instagram.com/ppf_palestine/</a>
Facebook	Patriotic Palestinian Front	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/PatrioticPalestinianFront">https://www.facebook.com/PatrioticPalestinianFront</a>
Instagram	pbf_bahrain (Patriotic Bahrain Front)	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/pbf_bahrain/">https://www.instagram.com/pbf_bahrain/</a>
Instagram	psf_syria (Patriotic Syrian Front)	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/psf_syria/">https://www.instagram.com/psf_syria/</a>
Google +	Real Progressive Front	<a href="https://plus.google.com/118371566763986476941">https://plus.google.com/118371566763986476941</a>



**Figure 17.** Sample Real Progressive Front-associated Facebook, Instagram, and Google+ accounts.

A Facebook page called “British Progressive Front” (<https://www.facebook.com/theBritishProgressiveFront/>), while sharing only a name in common with other “Progressive Front” pages, links to the Manquehue Institute for Strategic Studies website in its ‘About’ section (see section “Instituto Manquehue”).

A Facebook page called “The British Left,” which shares imagery in common with other “Progressive Front” pages, links to a website also called “The British Left” ([britishleft.com](http://britishleft.com)) in its ‘About’ section (see subsection “The British Left”).

Liberty Front Press/Liberty Movement-affiliated Twitter accounts, including @VoiceOfQuds and @PalestinianLM, have recently promoted rfront.com material.

**Table 9.** Top Ten Hashtags Used by Each Real Progressive Front-associated Twitter account (For accounts with fewer than 1,000 total tweets, all tweets were reviewed).

<a href="#">@RPFront (Sample: 02/08/18-07/31/18)</a>	<a href="#">@PF2035 (Sample: 09/03/17-07/30/18)</a>	<a href="#">@PBF_British1 (Sample: 06/09/17-07/30/18)</a>	<a href="#">@PSF_SaudiArabia (Sample: 06/09/17-07/30/18)</a>	<a href="#">@PPF_Palestine (Sample: 11/13/17-07/31/18)</a>	<a href="#">@PBF_Bahrain (Sample: 06/02/17-07/26/18)</a>	<a href="#">@SyriaPsf (Sample: 05/20/17-07/30/17)</a>
#Trump	#Trump	#JeremyCorbyn	#SaudiArabia	#FreePalestine	#Bahrain	#Syria
#fucktrump	#US	#UK	#Yemen	#Palestinian	#Bahraini	#ISIS
#Israel	#DonaldTrump	#TheresaMay	#Saudi	#Israel	#AhlulBayt	#US
#notmypresident	#ImpeachTrump	#Brexit	#Israel	#Palestine	#Israel	#Iraq
#impeachtrump	#NotMyPresident	#Corbyn	#US	#Gaza	#SaudiArabia	#USA
#ImpeachTrump	#USA	#London	#SaudiaArabia	#Israeli	#Bahrainis	#Syrian
#Syria	#TrumpIsAMoron	#Britain	#AhlulBayt	#QudsDay4Return	#BahrainUprising	#AhlulBayt
#NRA	#ISIS	#British	#USA	#GreatReturnMarch	#HumanRights	#Kurdistan
#ISIS	#DumpTrump	#Labour	#YemenCrisis	#QudsCapitalOfPalestine	#US	#SyrianArmy
#Donald_Trump	#Impeach45	#Israel	#NoWarInYemen	#Palestinians	#SheikhIshaQassim	#Israel

A review of the top hashtags used in samples of the most recent 1,000 tweets from each of the Real Progressive Front-associated Twitter accounts illustrates their emphasis on promoting region-relevant political content (Table 9). Additionally, as with Liberty Front Press and US Journal-affiliated accounts, Real Progressive Front-affiliated Twitter accounts have promoted material from Q4T promoting Quds Day, including messaging with Quds Day-related hashtags.



# The British Left

We believe that the site “The British Left” ([britishleft.com](http://britishleft.com)) is affiliated with Real Progressive Front based on social media promotional activity and overlaps in naming conventions and imagery. The British Left describes itself as “a non-governmental news organization completely independent of any advertisers, funders, companies, political organisations, or political parties.” Content on the site again appears to align with Iranian political interests. For example, an article titled “Saudi Arabia executes and crucifies a man while attacking human rights violations in Canada,” is illustrative of anti-Saudi narratives promoted by the site.

The screenshot shows the homepage of The British Left. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a red 'Home' button, dropdown menus for 'World', 'U.K.', 'U.S.', 'Politics', 'Opinion', 'Human Rights', 'Video', 'Comedy', and 'About Us', and a search icon. Below the navigation, there's a large image of Jeremy Corbyn. To his right, a dark box contains the headline "OCCUPY LONDON JUST BECAME THE LATEST PRO-PALESTINE PAGE TO DISAPPEAR FROM FACEBOOK" with a publish date of "August 18, 2018" and a five-star rating. Further down, another dark box displays the headline "LABOUR LEADER SAYS HE IS DETERMINED TO ‘ERADICATE ANTI-SEMITISM COMPLETELY’ FROM HIS PARTY" with a publish date of "August 20, 2018" and a five-star rating. To the right of these boxes, there are two smaller images: one of a man and one of a woman. A central white box contains the message "This page isn't available" followed by a small note about a broken link. At the bottom right, there's a "Like" button icon and the date "AUGUST 18, 2018".

**Figure 18.** The British Left Main Page.

- The site britishleft.com was registered on Aug. 30, 2017, under the name Alfonso Zayas and using the email Alfonso.zayas@mail.com. The registered address, a location in Sheffield, UK, appears to be a residential building. As of July 16, 2018, registrant information for the site was no longer available.
- The website's "About US" section describes an "Alfonso Zayan" as its founder and editor-in-chief. Notably, this last name ("Zayan") differs by one letter from that provided as the site registrant ("Zayas"). We identified a Facebook profile for an "Alfonso Zayan" (<https://www.facebook.com/alfonso.zayan>) that promoted The British Left material, American Progressive Front material, and an article from the Manquehue Institute (see section "Instituto Manquehue"). In this Facebook profile, Alfonso Zayan claims to reside in Ashburn, Virginia.
- In addition to Zayas, the britishleft.com lists an "Elena Kowalsky," allegedly from Liverpool, UK, as an author. In the "About the Author" section of the site, this name is spelled two different ways: "Kowalsky" and "Kowalski." We identified a corresponding Twitter account, @kowalski\_elena, that is linked to a phone number with the +98 Iranian country code and uses a profile picture appropriated from a photo collection on the website weheartit.com. In addition to tweeting anti-Trump content, the @kowalski\_elena Twitter account has promoted content from both rfront.com and britishleft.com, as well as mainstream media reporting from outlets such as thehill.com, usatoday.com, and cnn.com.
- Material from britishleft.com has been promoted by various Real Progressive Front-affiliated social media accounts, such as the Twitter account @PBF\_British1 and the Facebook page British Progressive Front.

**elena.k**  
@kowalski\_elena  
Feminist  
Joined June 2018

**Tweet to elena.k**

103 Photos and videos

**TRUMP'S TIES TO RUSSIA**

The diagram illustrates the complex web of connections between Donald Trump, his campaign members, and Russian officials. Key nodes include:

- CAMPAIN MEMBERS:** Michael Flynn, Jeff Sessions, J.D. Gordon, Carter Page, Roger Stone, Paul Manafort.
- RUSIAN OFFICIALS:** Vladimir Putin, Sergey Kislyak, Sergei Yatsenko, Wilbur Ross, Dmitry Rybolovlev, Oleg Deripaska, Victor Vekselberg, and others.
- COMPANIES AND GROUPS:** Rosneft, Gazprom, Bank of Cyprus, Guccifer 2.0, WikiLeaks, Spectrum Health, Vnesheconombank, and others.
- PERSONAL CONNECTIONS:** Donald Trump is connected to many of these entities through his campaign members and business associates.

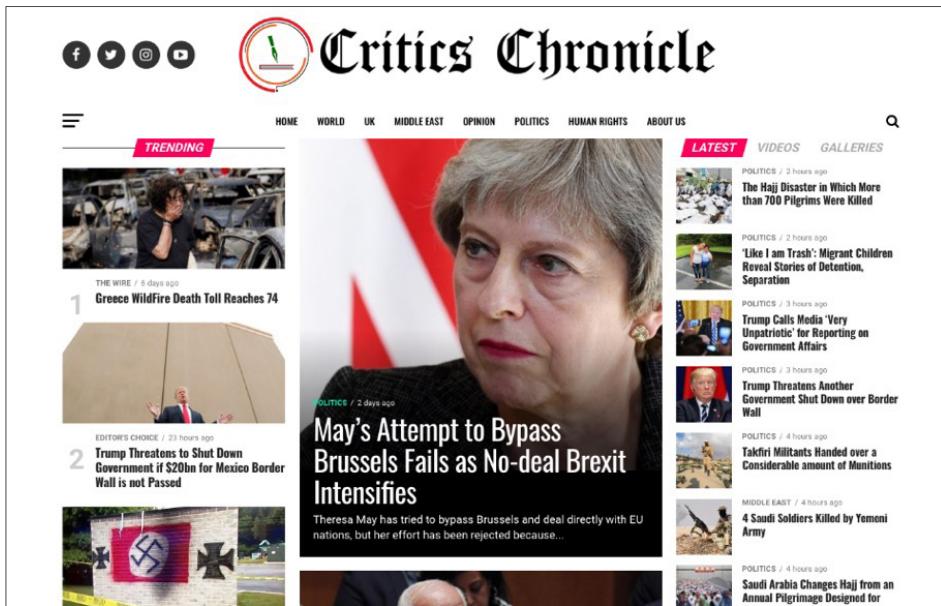
**Figure 19.** Inauthentic britishleft[.]com Twitter Persona @kowalski\_elena.

# ••• Critics Chronicle

“Critics Chronicle” ([criticschronicle.com](http://criticschronicle.com)) describes itself as “an independent news outlet located in Birmingham” (United Kingdom). The website’s content again appears to align with Iranian political interests. For example, criticschronicle.com articles include those with anti-Saudi, anti-Israeli, and pro-Palestinian themes, as well as material repurposed from the Iranian state-owned media network Press TV. For example, one article alleges that Saudi Arabia is “violating almost all of the humanitarian laws” in its involvement in the Yemen conflict. The site also includes material plagiarized from Western media outlets, such as an article from the UK newspaper The Independent reporting on an increase in insults against Muslim women in the UK following comments made by British politician Boris Johnson.

## Site Registration History and Connections

- criticschronicle.com was initially registered in 2013. On Oct. 8, 2017, registrant information was changed to the email address [criticschronicle@gmail.com](mailto:criticschronicle@gmail.com), with the domain allegedly registered by an individual named Jack Avery located in Birmingham, UK. The Birmingham address provided, appearing to be that of a residential building, contained an incorrect postal code.
- As of July 14, 2018, registrant information for the criticschronicle.com site was no longer available.



**Figure 20.** Critics Chronicle main page.

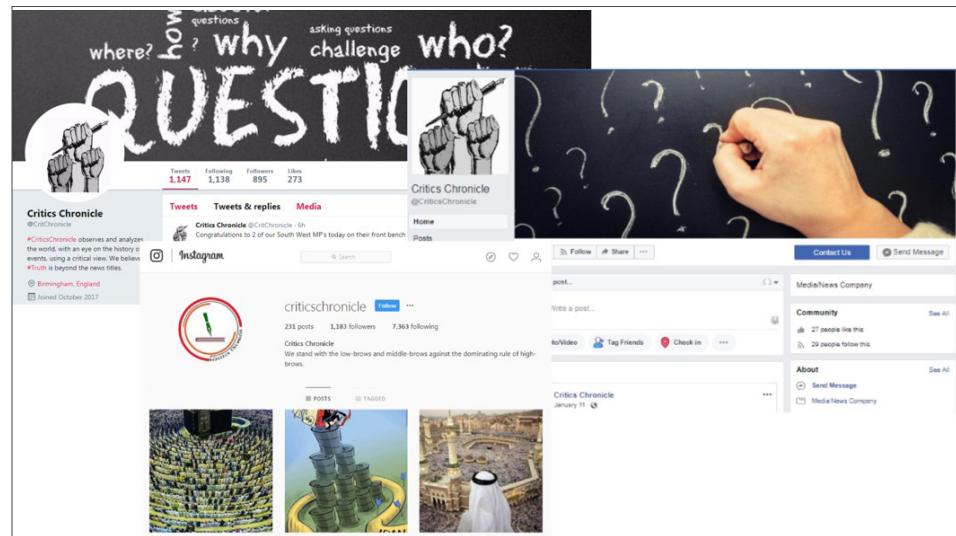
## Critics Chronicle-Affiliated Social Media Accounts and Personas

Critics Chronicle maintains accounts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (Table 10). The site's official Twitter account, @CritChronicle, lists Birmingham, England, as its location, but it is linked to a phone number with the +98 Iranian country code. While the "Critics Chronicle" Facebook page does not appear to have posted public content since January 2018, the other Critics Chronicle social media accounts remained active as of August 2018.

**Table 10.** Critics Chronicle-Affiliated Social Media Accounts.

Platform	Name	URL
Twitter	@CritChronicle	<a href="https://twitter.com/CritChronicle">https://twitter.com/CritChronicle</a>
Facebook	Critics Chronicle	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/CriticsChronicle/">https://www.facebook.com/CriticsChronicle/</a>
Facebook	Critics Fighters	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/LFighters/">https://www.facebook.com/LFighters/</a>
Instagram	Critics Chronicle	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/criticschronicle/">https://www.instagram.com/criticschronicle/</a>

Critics Chronicle-affiliated social media accounts have promoted material in line with Iranian political interests through the promotion of criticschronicle.com articles and other material, such as mainstream news articles, memes and cartoons, and general commentary. For example, the accounts have promoted the celebration of Quds Day; anti-Israel, pro-Palestine, and anti-Saudi material; and content pertaining to a conference held in Tehran on countering extremism. They have also promoted posts by social media accounts affiliated with Real Progressive Front, as well as by a Q4T-affiliated social media account. Likewise, "Amanda Kor," one of the personas affiliated with US Journal, has promoted Critics Chronicle-affiliated social media content.



**Figure 21.** Critics Chronicle-affiliated social media accounts.



# Instituto Manquehue

The Latin America-focused “Instituto Manquehue,” or “Manquehue Institute” ([institutomanquehue\[.\]org](http://institutomanquehue[.]org)), describes itself as “a genuinely independent civic organization that pursues both the development of strategic views on main topics related to Latin American countries aimed at the local people, and projecting a faithful image of this region to the world.” The website’s mission statement further asserts that “the voices of the peoples of Latin America have often times been hijacked by foreign influences of West and East,” and that “Manquehue Institute supports the free thoughts of the people of the region.”

Instituto Manquehue material again appears to coincide with Iranian political stances and interests. For example, articles on Latin America have included pieces in support of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and Bolivian President Evo Morales,

two countries that enjoy friendly relations with Iran. Additional Instituto Manquehue material has included articles regarding accusations that Israel is arming terrorists in Syria against Iran, Iran’s fulfillment of its obligations under the nuclear deal, and IRGC Major General Qassem Soleimani’s statements in response to comments made by Donald Trump regarding Iran. Instituto Manquehue has also posted articles from the Iranian state-owned media network Press TV.

[institutomanquehue\[.\]org](http://institutomanquehue[.]org) includes both Spanish- and English-language sites, with the English-language site located at [en.institutomanquehue\[.\]org](http://en.institutomanquehue[.]org). The Spanish-language site lists 12 individuals as writers. While

several of these appear to be genuine individuals, we suspect that at least two are fabricated personas that are also responsible for the majority of the content published on the site; the “Mas Pourk” (English translation: “More Pork”) persona and the “mikle” persona. Neither persona has corresponding biographical information listed or stylized portrait images consistent with those of the other listed contributors. While the English-language site has not published new material since May 2017, the Spanish-language site and its affiliated social media accounts have remained active.

Líder terrorista a Rusia: Cortamos piernas de los que pisen Idlib  
Así lo anunció el miércoles Abu al-Fath al-Farghal... MAS POURK

Morales condena presencia de James Mattis en América Latina  
Lula pide que el pueblo pueda decidir sobre las elecciones brasileñas  
Líder terrorista a Rusia: Cortamos piernas de los que pisen Idlib  
Se registran fuertes choques en protesta anti-Duque en Colombia

Federico Acosta Rainis  
Macri y "la grieta" argentina... Federico Acosta Rainis  
Cómo Barrick Gold ataca contra... Anthony J. Hall

Figure 22. Instituto Manquehue main page.

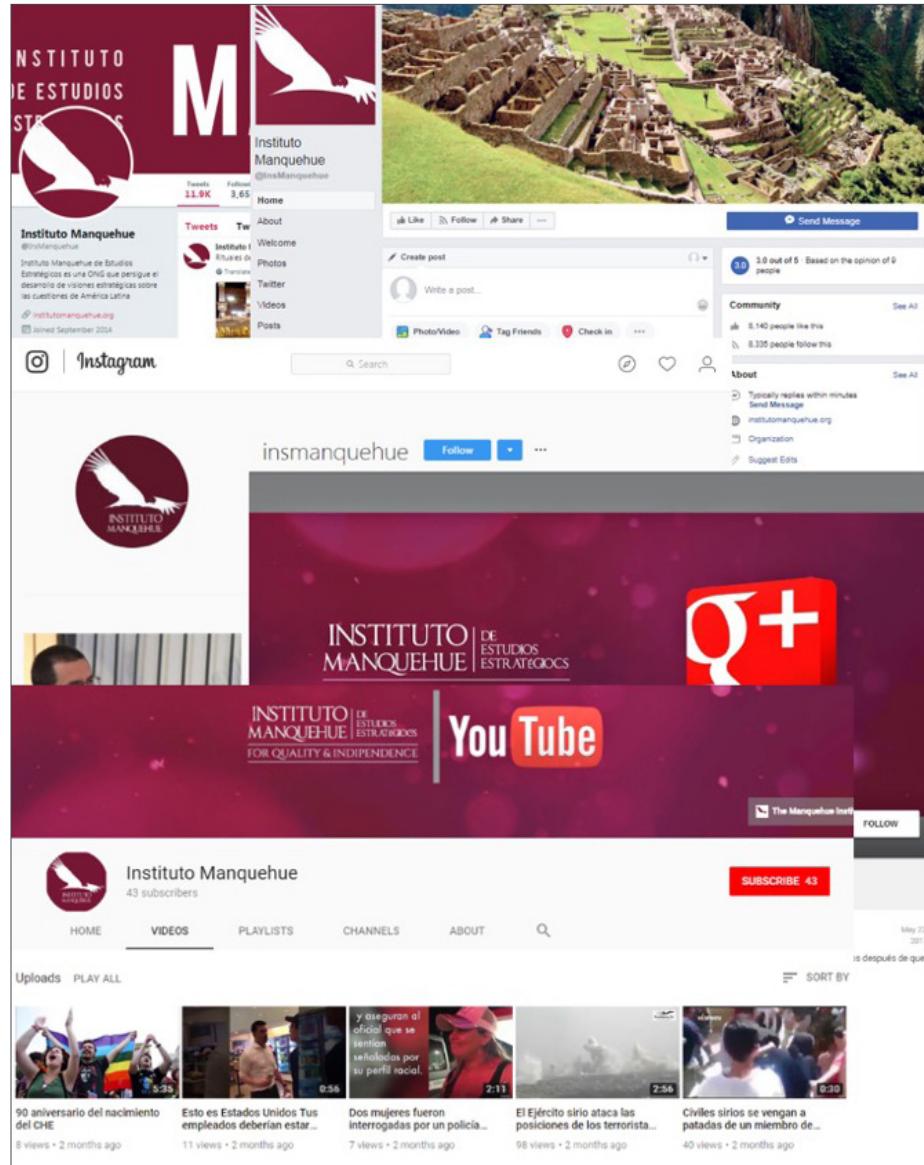
## Site Registration History and Connections

- The institutomanquehue.org domain was registered on July 12, 2014, using the email address institutomanquehue@gmail.com. This email address was also the registrant email for the Persian-language site gahvare.com from August 2014 to August 2015, as mentioned previously in the “Liberty Front Press” section. gahvare.com promotes Shiite Islam. The main page is titled “Followers of Hazrat Ali Asghar” (رغصا ایلע ترضح تیه), a reference to a Shiite religious figure who died in the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD. gahvare.com currently redirects to gahvare.com/domains.blog.ir and has not been updated since 2016.

- The registrant email for gahvare.com was changed to the email address kavekhkaleghi@hotmail.com on Aug. 27, 2015. This email address was also used as the registrant email for a number of other sites. Among these, as mentioned previously in the “Liberty Front Press” section, was the website yemenshia.com, which was registered under the email address majazi.1932@live.com between September and October 2014, before being switched to kavekhkaleghi@hotmail.com in late October 2014. majazi.1932@live.com was later used to register the Liberty Front Press site in 2017.

- institutomanquehue.org, at the time of its creation on July 12, 2014, used the Iranian name servers damavand.atenahost.ir and alvand.atenahost.ir. These name servers were the same as those used by yemenshia.com in early September 2014. In September and October 2014, the name servers for yemenshia.com and institutomanquehue.org were changed to the more generic ns1.hostmk.biz and ns2.hostmk.biz.

- As of May 25, 2018, registrant information for institutomanquehue.org was no longer available.



**Figure 23.** Sample social media accounts affiliated with Instituto Manquehue.

## Instituto Manquehue-Affiliated Social Media Accounts and Persona

Instituto Manquehue maintains social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Google+, and YouTube (Table 11). While some of these have been inactive, others have continued to post both original content and material from Instituto Manquehue.

The site's official Twitter account, @InsManquehue, was created on Sept. 24, 2014, and is linked to a phone number with the +98 Iranian country code.

Instituto Manquehue material has been promoted by social media accounts associated with other clusters of activity discussed earlier. For example, "Amanda Kor" and "Alfonso Zayan," personas detailed in the sections on US Journal and The British Left respectively, both promoted Instituto Manquehue material on their Facebook pages. Real Progressive Front-affiliated social media accounts have also promoted Instituto Manquehue articles.

In addition to material pertaining to Latin America, particularly that supportive of Maduro and Morales, Instituto Manquehue-affiliated social media accounts have promoted material directly supportive of Iran. For example, the Instituto Manquehue YouTube channel includes a video promoting alleged Iranian attacks against ISIS positions in Syria, as well as videos from the Iranian-operated Spanish-language news channel HispanTV and the Iranian state-owned Arabic-language media channel Al-Alam News Network.

**Table 11.** Instituto Manquehue-affiliated social media accounts.

Platform	Name	URL
Twitter	@InsManquehue	<a href="https://twitter.com/InsManquehue">https://twitter.com/InsManquehue</a>
Twitter	@attheantipodes	<a href="https://twitter.com/attheantipodes">https://twitter.com/attheantipodes</a>
Facebook	Instituto Manquehue	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/insmanquehue/">https://www.facebook.com/insmanquehue/</a>
Instagram	INSTITUTO MANQUEHUE	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/insmanquehue/">https://www.instagram.com/insmanquehue/</a>
Instagram	Instituto Manquehue	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/institutomanquehue/">https://www.instagram.com/institutomanquehue/</a>
Google Plus	Instituto Manquehue	<a href="https://plus.google.com/+InstitutomanquehueOrgEs">https://plus.google.com/+InstitutomanquehueOrgEs</a>
Google Plus	Instituto Manquehue	<a href="https://plus.google.com/+InstitutoManquehue">https://plus.google.com/+InstitutoManquehue</a>
YouTube	Instituto Manquehue	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt3DVSUUkyPC-7H302dtMDQ">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt3DVSUUkyPC-7H302dtMDQ</a>

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# “Satellite” Social Media Promoters

In addition to the social media accounts affiliated with, or closely tied to, the various inauthentic news sites, we identified other Twitter and Facebook accounts adopting the personas of North America- and U.K.-based individuals that we assess with moderate confidence were created to promote the inauthentic news sites and associated material (Table 12). Some of these accounts not only promote material published by the inauthentic news sites, but also post content more broadly supportive of Iranian interests, including content from mainstream news sources, political memes, and cartoons. Beyond the examples discussed below, we are currently investigating numerous other accounts across various social media platforms that have adopted the personas of individuals located in the Middle East targeting Arabic-language audiences, as well as additional accounts targeting U.S. audiences.

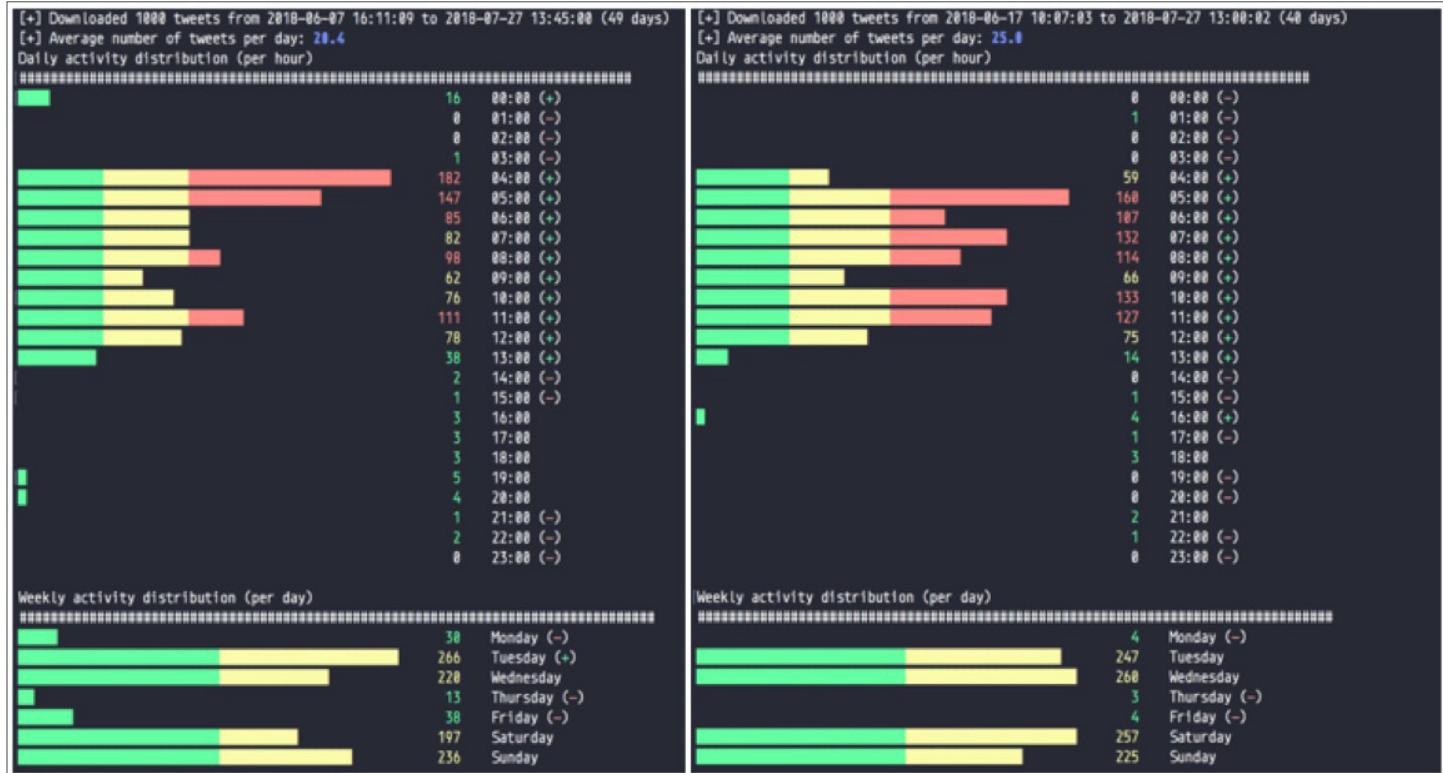
**Table 12.** ““Satellite” social media promoters.

Platform	Name	URL
Twitter	@RealRozaSanchez	<a href="https://twitter.com/RealRozaSanchez">https://twitter.com/RealRozaSanchez</a>
Twitter	@usresistance1	<a href="https://twitter.com/usresistance1">https://twitter.com/usresistance1</a>
Twitter	@lili33150873	<a href="https://twitter.com/lili33150873">https://twitter.com/lili33150873</a>
Facebook	The Agitators	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/TheAgitatorsO/">https://www.facebook.com/TheAgitatorsO/</a>
Facebook	Margaret Lillian	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/MargaretLillianO">https://www.facebook.com/MargaretLillianO</a>

The Twitter accounts @RealRozaSanchez and @usresistance1 pose as left-leaning Americans and share a strong overlap in tweet content. Both accounts were created in April 2018 and are linked to phone numbers with the +98 Iranian country code. @RealRozaSanchez's profile picture has been appropriated from an individual whose picture is present on a website dedicated to hairstyles, while @usresistance1's picture consists of a generic graphic calling for the impeachment of Donald Trump. An analysis of the accounts' tweet patterns indicates that they have been comparatively inactive on Thursdays and Fridays—days that correspond with the Iranian weekend; account activity also appears to generally fall between 0400 UTC and 1300 UTC, a time period that roughly corresponds to the Iranian work day (Figure 25). The accounts have promoted content in line with Iranian political interests, including messaging posted by Q4T surrounding Quds Day, and support for (and opposition to) specific U.S. politicians based on those individuals' stances toward the U.S.-Iran nuclear deal.



**Figure 24.** Sample tweets by @RealRozaSanchez and @usresistance1.



**Figure 25.** Tweet activity distribution for @RealRozaSanchez (left) and @usresistance1 (right)  
(Source: tweets\_analyzer by xOrz ([GitHub link](#))).

The Twitter account @lili33150873 was created at the end of June 2018, began tweeting in early July, and is linked to a phone number with the +98 Iranian country code—despite listing its location as Liverpool, England. Material promoted by the account includes that supportive of the British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, as well as anti-Trump, anti-Israel, and anti-Saudi themes. One tweet from the account called for a boycott of the

hajj, stating that the “Saudi government uses the large amounts of money to kill and displace people, as is the case currently in Yemen,” accompanied by a cartoon of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. We subsequently observed the Twitter account @NICOLAT67691218, which we identified earlier as one of the “unaffiliated” accounts created to promote Liberty Front Press, publish a nearly identical tweet one week later (Figure 26).

**@lili33150873 · Jul 31**

It is time to "boycott the Hajj," as Saudi government uses the large amounts of money to kill and displace people, as is the case currently in Yemen.

#FromMasjidAlHaram  
#من\_المسجد\_الحرام  
#از\_مسجد\_الحرام

**NICOLATURNER @NICOLAT67691218 · Aug 7**

It is time to "boycott the #Hajj," as Saudi government uses the large amounts of money to kill and displace people, as is the case currently in #Yemen.

#FromMasjidAlHaram

**Figure 26.** Near-identical tweets criticizing Saudi Arabia published by @lili33150873 and Liberty Front Press promoter @ NICOLAT67691218.

"The Agitators" (<https://www.facebook.com/TheAgitators0/>) is a Facebook community page that appears to espouse left-leaning U.S. political narratives. Originally created on April 22, 2017 under the name "Pray For America," the page name was subsequently changed to "The Agitators" on June 15, 2017. The page's profile picture incorporates a raised fist with word "Resist" that is strikingly similar to the iconography used by a number of the Real Progressive Front-Affiliated social media accounts.

The page generally consists of anti-Trump material, in line with a seeming American liberal persona, however, it has also posted material such as a video on the Shiite religious holiday Arbaeen, posts celebrating Quds Day, a video comparing Trump to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, and posts praising Jeremy Corbyn. The page has also linked to US Journal content and has itself been promoted on Facebook by the US Journal-linked personas "Amanda Kor" and "Elizabeth Tacher".

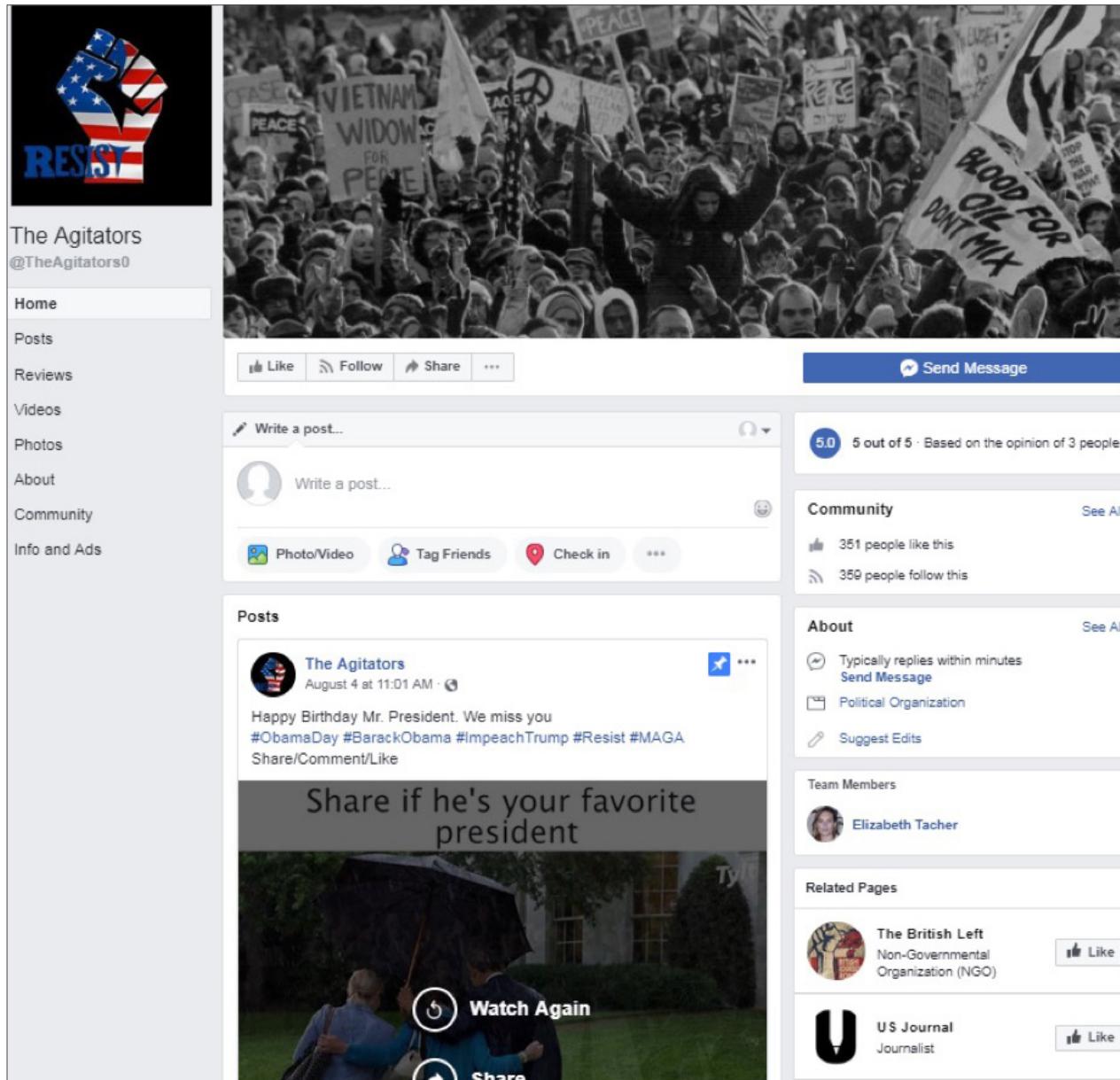


Figure 27. "The Agitators" Facebook page.

The Facebook persona “Margaret Lillian” (<https://www.facebook.com/MargaretLillian0>) claims to be from, and to reside in, Toronto, Ontario. The page’s cover photo is appropriated from a Shutterstock photo used in a number of online news articles, including a CBC article on human trafficking. The account appears to have begun making public posts to other Facebook pages on June 21, 2017, the first of which involved the promotion of Liberty Front Press articles to various groups, including some

with left-leaning political themes; during subsequent months, the account also began promoting content from US Journal. The account’s “likes” include Liberty Front Press, Liberty Movement, US Journal, Real Progressive Front, and The Agitators, along with a number of anti-Trump and pro-Bernie Sanders Facebook groups. The account’s “Friends” include the US Journal-linked persona “Amanda Kor.” The account does not appear to have made any publicly visible posts since March 2018.

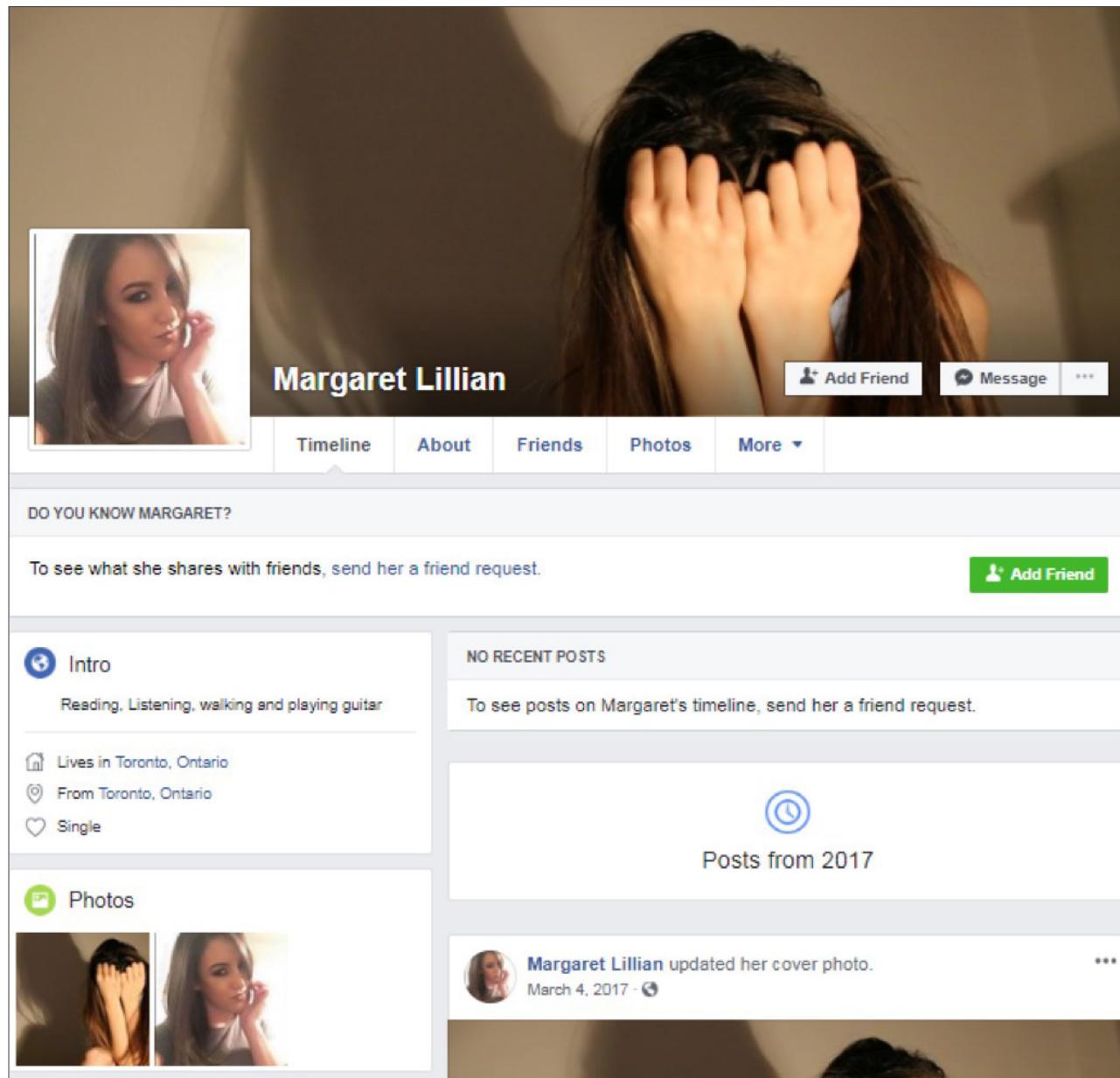


Figure 28. “Margaret Lillian” Facebook page.

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