Iranian Influence Operations July 17, 2020 – Part 1

MOIS US Election Influence Operation – Part 2

Contents

Context

A dozen years ago, Treadstone 71 shifted adversary targeting from strictly cyber jihadist activity to include Iran. We tracked movements of the earliest hacking groups following their activities from low-level defacements to repurposing Stuxnet to become a recognized global power in cyber and influence operations. Treadstone 71 specializes in monitoring Iranian cyber operations, infiltration, and analyzing the cyber activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We monitor Iranian cyber and influence operations, research hacking groups, and regularly post information and intelligence on their activities. We publish this information on cybershafarat.com (https://cybershafarat.com/?s=Iran). Many posts describe the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) cyber activities, organizational structures, internal recruiting methods, educational activities, cyber conferences, information on malware, and threat actors and their capabilities. We continuously seek patterns and trends within those patterns. We examine adversary tendencies in online forums, blogs, and social media sites. In the run-up to the 2020 U.S. presidential election, we focused on social media and looked for possible infiltrations that would affect voters. In this observation, we came across activities that were different and, at the same time, related. The findings led us in a direction we did not expect. We found activities of a different yet related type we intend to describe in the following pages. As with many strategic intelligence analysis efforts, collected data is the evidence driving the findings. The findings herein led us down a path we did not expect.

On July 17, 2020, we noticed spikes in Twitter activity surrounding specific hashtags. The primary hashtag[1] (مریم_رجوي_█_خورد) targeted Maryam Rajavi. Maryam Rajavi is the President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), an umbrella organization of Iranian opposition groups dedicated to the Iranian government's overthrow. The central part of the NCRI is the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI, AKA Mujahedin-e Khalq or MEK).[2] We asked ourselves why we would see such a spike on this day and why would we care. Our research led us to the #FreeIran2020 Global Summit online for the NCRI scheduled for July 17, 2020.

The below report is our assessment of an Iranian influence operation targeting the #FreeIran2020 event (Part 1). Part 2 is another operation involving a self-proclaimed T.V. personality posing as an Iranian dissident. The two findings represent planned cyber influence and deception operations showing maturity in Iranian cyberspace capabilities. Some of the planning is apparent, while most are highly likely performed in person and through internal Iranian communications. Part 1 is a short-term tactical operation as a component of a much larger strategic initiative. Part 2 demonstrates a growing use of 'dissidents' to control dissident messaging and influence Iranian citizens during times of financial, medical, and political stress.

Assessment - Iranian Influence Operations July 17, 2020 – Part 1

Treadstone 71 assesses with high confidence that the Iranian government, most likely the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), in conjunction with the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), using Basiji cyber team members, executed an influence operation targeting the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and their July 17, 2020, online conference, demonizing Maryam Rajavi, the President-elect of the NCRI. The action violates Twitter rules and requires appropriate action by Twitter

---

[1] We removed the actual expletive used in the tweets

[2] Maryam Rajavi biography https://www.maryam-rajavi.com/en/biography

to ensure a healthy social environment. Here are some key parameters that indicate the Iranian government's involvement.

Key remarks

- At least 35 to 45% of accounts participated in this campaign from inside Iran (non-inclusive of the likely Iranian participants using VPNs and Proxies)
- The total number of fake accounts active in the campaign (All under 100 followers) 11,294 makes 46% of the campaign's users.
- 39% of accounts participated via retweets and did not make any tweets (5936)
- Accounts not existing after the campaign (out of 11294 accounts with low followers) 3,453.
- Accounts becoming inactive after the July 2020 event (in addition to the 3453 non-existing) 1,168.

Since Twitter is filtered inside Iran, a campaign with such size coming from Iran must use Basiji Cyber Team members. Other primary details, including but not limited to the fact that nearly half of accounts were fake with low-followership and almost 20% are not existing or have been entirely inactive ever since, specifications showing an Iranian government's influence operation.

> Campaign Specs
> The results of the campaign analysis show:
> - At least 35 to 45% of accounts participated in this campaign from inside Iran (non-inclusive of the likely Iranian participants using VPNs and Proxies)
> - The Revolutionary Guards Cyber Unit (RGCU) led the well-organized influence operation. According to the data, nearly 46% of accounts engaged in the campaign were fake and spam accounts, including:
>   - 11,294 accounts out of 24,631 accounts active used in the campaign were low-follower, newly created, or dormant accounts, indicating that the campaign likely used bots to propagate the messaging along with zombie accounts
>   - The RGCU enrolled 1,622 Twitter accounts in June and July, within one month of the online conference.
>   - After the campaign, of 11,294 accounts with low followers, 3,453 accounts no longer exist, and 1168 accounts became inactive after the July 2020 event

Total Tweets	111,770
Average Tweets per day for the first three days (60.67 hours)	35,860
Average Tweets per minute during the 60.67 hours	29.55
Tweets	19,658 (17.59%)
Retweets	80,948 (72.42%)
Replies	11,164 (9.99%)
Total Contributors (tweeted, retweeted, replied)	24,631
Total under 100 followers	11,294
Total contributors participating via retweets	5936 (39.28%)
Accounts created in 1st half of 2020 (out of 14,800[3] with low followers)	3,994
Accounts not existing after the campaign (out of 14,800 with low followers)	3,453
Accounts become inactive after the July 2020 event (out of 14,800 with low followers)	1,168
Population of Iran	82,000,000 (82 Million)
Percent of People in Iran with Internet Access	~70% (57,400,000)
Tweets in Farsi	102,203
Tweets in English	2,999
Tweets in Arabic	2048

Table 1 Tweet Timeline Statistics

---

[3] Total accounts with under 500 followers

Campaign Core Users

برنامه ناشناس
@BChatBot

برنامه چت ناشناس ، چت ناشناس در گروه ها . گپ ناشناس با افراد مختلف

At least four Revolutionary Guard Cyber Unit (RGCU) Twitter users played an essential role in managing the campaign to ensure the hashtag trending in Iran. At least nine other accounts belonging to IRGC Cyber Units helped manage and expand the campaign in different social environments.

The latter, most with high followership, portrayed themselves as "monarchist," "reformist," or "regime change advocates" on various social media platforms. A significant feature of these accounts is young women's personas disguising themselves while attracting and luring unsuspecting users for messaging expansion and potential collaboration. The RGCU launched the primary campaign on July 17 at 15:59, immediately after the speech by Maryam Rajavi, starting the process of audience involvement, account mobilization, and hashtag repetition. The coordinated launch helped to create identifiable Twitter trending. The RGCU expanded the campaign by distributing and republishing influential core members' tweets and content. The republishing triggered thousands of bots and fake accounts with low followership belonging to Basij Cyber Units.

The campaign was continued for 60.6 hours by the RGCU using thousands of low paid Basij accounts resembling a Dunbar's Number concentric circles of trust throughout the country. The intent of the 111,770 tweets likely included:[4]

- The need to present malicious content about the NCRI during the summit.
- Preventing in-country Iranian citizens from seeing NCRI content.
- Causing chaos and confusion amongst NCRI sympathizers and Iranian citizens.
- Emphasize divisions amongst content viewers.
- Hashtag cloning to control the narrative.

We found the following Twitter accounts as leaders for the influence operation:

- o Kaf_aleff, kayotrara, akavish1, aammiiirrmedus (amirmedusa), ghasembashiri, hozak75, nahiid_1975, afsoon1976, _marmari_, mrs_ferlock, maryas5499, fatishunam (callmemori_), and maryamoone, which we will cover in more detail later in the report.
- @Mrs_ferlock – July 15, 2020 start of the visible net call[5] and Operations Order[6]
  - o BChatBot and BiChatBot, referenced by Iranian actors, is likely another method of communication, albeit anonymous.
  - o Hashtag and tweet content repeated across one hundred forty-seven Twitter accounts
    - The repetition seems to be a test for the readiness of the network.
    - Next level of the Dunbar's Number circle of trust
- @Akavish1, July 17, 2020, 14:59 GMT- @Akavish1 tweets with original tweet content followed by full campaign activity.
- This activity continues with a high pace, directing users on how to use the given hashtag and reporting on its status till 21:57 GMT (2:30 am IRST)

---

[4] Treadstone 71 tracked the campaign through September 2, 2020
[5] We state visible since tracking is via Twitter and Telegram. The operation likely began using confidential means of communication and planning including in-person, phone (secure), and in-Country methods.
.

- 60.6 hours – One hundred seven thousand, five hundred eighty-two tweets critical of the MEK.

Why the IRGC?

The IRGC consists of hackers and skilled technical staff target adversaries for website hacking, denial of service, ransomware attacks, infiltration of organizations, extraction of sensitive information, and computer systems destruction. (Kronenfeld, 2013)

The Basij Cyberspace Council concentrates on online propaganda, misinformation, disinformation, and populating the internet with content favorable to the regime and hostile to all others. (T71, 2019) Basij Cyberspace Council leadership states the:

> *Basij reportedly founded the "Basij Cyber Council" in 2010 to recruit hackers to infiltrate particular websites and emails under the direct supervision of IRGC experts. In November 2010, Hossein Hamedani, Former Commander of Tehran IRGC, reported that 1,500 "cyber commandos" had been trained by the Basij Cyber Council. That number has grown significantly since 2010.* (Khabarban, 2019)

> The head of the Basij announced thousands of cyber battalions in cyberspace as of September 2019.

The Basij Cyberspace Council trains recruits in trollist operations for psychological warfare in cyberspace, much like the influence operation of July 17, 2020. Many female recruits participate in training meant to seduce and provoke the enemy to engage in unauthorized or unbecoming behavior. The recruits write content, blog, post, tweet, retweet, and reply on the Internet and social media platforms. The model is parallel to Iran's human wave attacks against Iraq in the 1980s. (MillitaryHistoryNow, 2019) In their own words:

> *The Cyber Council Committee comprises seven "battalions" – politics, culture, social concerns, media, economics, women's issues, and Islamic jurisprudence – each of which deals with issues "targeting the West in Iran's soft war against its adversaries."* (Khabarban, 2019)

The IRGC effort appears disjointed but, in fact, is a highly coordinated disinformation campaign. The program involves many fake accounts posting hundreds of tweets during a specific time. The posts use hashtags and direct targeting of political figures to gain maximum attention, and subsequently, more retweets.

Low paid Basij members likely drive the campaign. Their manipulation of the message on Twitter makes it difficult for the typical Internet user to separate truth from fiction. The campaign violates Twitter rules, especially those related to information operations. More specifically, they seem to break Twitter rules related to the "Platform manipulation and spam policy, the Impersonation policy, and the Synthetic and manipulated media policy.

Their motivation is intent on driving chaos and confusion globally while controlling the message locally. During the periods of chaos come opportunities for added exploitation of dissenting groups. Dissenting groups made up of dissident Iranian groups critical of the current regime. The IRGC exploits the divisions creating perceived and real division within these groups.

بانو با گربه ی ملوسش
@Mrs_ferlock

#مریم_رجوی ████ که از هشتگ ما استفاده کرد.
مریم رجوی و طرفداراى کثافتش یادشون نره، ما یه گرم از خاک این مملکت رو به مزدور خود فروخته ی کثافتی مث شما نمیدیم.
بازم میگم مریم رجوی و هرخری که به مجاهدین مربوطی، غلط میکنی از هشتگ مردمی ما استفاده میکنی کثافت.
#اعدام_نکنید

Translate Tweet
3:15 PM · Jul 15, 2020 · Twitter for Android

Figure 1 @Mrs_ferlock signal

Campaign Overview and Analysis Based on Available Data and Research

• The IRGC intended to influence and drowned out the spread of MEK's messaging throughout Iran via social media by creating a flood of negative messaging using propaganda.

• Using tweets, mentions, and retweets, IRGC proxy groups call out to spread the messaging beyond proxies to unsuspecting Twitter users

• The campaign used a series of bots to create buzz and increase usage.

• Anonymous communications occurred via @BChatBot and @BiChatBot non-inclusively on Telegram for communication purposes between Cyber Units, to prevent Twitter from realizing an organized campaign and implementation of restrictions on the accounts.

• The Nejat Society (the brainchild of the Ministry of Intelligence) simultaneously used all its social media accounts, publishing messages with negative connotations about Iranian dissidents creating a negative narrative. (The active participation of Nejat Society affiliated with the MOIS in this campaign clarifies the operation's nature).

• The IRGC cyber chain-of-command likely coordinated communication between the various Cyber Units. Social media post content created identifiable patterns, trackable trends, and clear user tendencies.

Treadstone 71 believes the operation violates many Twitter rules related to the "Platform manipulation and spam policy," the "Impersonation policy," and the "Synthetic and manipulated media policy."

IRGC Anti-MEK Campaign through Twitter Accounts – a bulleted summary
- Influence operations targeting the MEK and other dissident groups.
  - The intent to cause confusion and chaos, emphasize divisions, control the messaging, and execute information operations with an influence campaign.
- The IRGC focused on MEK's FreeIran2020 Global Summit (July 17, 2020).
  - The IRGC targets anniversaries associated with important dates in recent Iranian political history.
- The IRGC used a core team of proxy accounts, likely Basiji cyber teams, to trigger the messaging and lead the campaign. They developed accounts with large followership, usually using female personas that present themselves as critics of the government but more critical of the MEK.

- - The command-and-control structure ensured the protection of IRGC Twitter accounts (The leading accounts in particular).
    - Once triggered, the IRGC accounts remained quiet to prevent account suspension by Twitter
    - In this campaign, many of the core accounts deleted their Tweets after the campaign, and some had changed usernames to secure critical accounts given the possible punitive actions by Twitter.
- The IRGC uses targeted hashtags to signal the start of the social media flood of tweets.
  - Hashtags used to demean and make fun of the MEK and its members.
  - Hashtags shifted throughout the time of the campaign.
  - The IRGC uses hijacked hashtags used by MEK affiliated and dissident accounts, controlling the narrative with their messaging redirecting content to IRGC websites and social media accounts.
- Other MOIS proxy groups, under the guise of Monarchists, helped promote the campaign.
- Websites driven from netajngo.org (A creation of the MOIS with a focus on demonizing and destroying MEK based in Albania) propagated messages using negative terms towards the MEK:
  - Evil, cult, mentally and physically captured, offended, terror cult, broken relationships, camps, separation of children. Note: The IRGC uses the word cult to describe the MEK.
- While using favorable terms for the Nejat Society and the current Iranian government:
  - "Nejat – undeniable documents and evidence" Nejat warm humanitarian – condemns violence, denies contact with organizations that use violence –honorable, beloved, defectors,
  - Hashtags and messaging projected the current regime as powerful and helping the oppressed.
- Other proxy accounts likely from lower-skilled Basiji teams joined in to mention and retweet the targeted hashtags.
  - The IRGC likely directed Basij Student units from their various resistance areas around Tehran, although we cannot directly align these units' activities.
  - The IRGC model resembles a Dunbar's Number concentric circles of trust.
    - Twitter accounts outside the core group expendable for Twitter removal.
- The flood of negative messaging towards the MEK and its members aimed to influence and drowned out the event and anniversary messaging of the MEK.
  - Over approximately 48 hours, over one hundred thousand tweets used the targeted hashtags.
  - IRGC proxy groups use tweets, mentions, and retweets, to call out usernames of political figures to spread the messaging beyond proxies to unsuspecting Twitter users.
  - Nearly 50% of accounts used in the campaign were low-follower, newly created, or dormant accounts, indicating that the campaign likely used bots to propagate the messaging along with zombie accounts.
  - The campaign used Telegram bots to communicate anonymously to those following the Telegram bot, likely with undetermined keywords.
- The tweets' messages included old and non-credible claims and referenced websites and social media platforms damaging to the MEK and its members.
- The messages harnessed current conspiracy theories to gain more traction and retweets.

October 28, 2020

- The content included disinformation and misinformation.
- They used internal Iranian messaging intended to stifle any MEK content through propaganda while controlling the narrative.
  - Iran uses Dezhfa[7] to block external content and control anti-government content from reaching internal-Iranian citizens.
  - Iranian citizens use virtual private networks and proxy software to bypass Iranian government controls, mostly via smartphone wireless.
- Possible anonymous communications occurred via @BiChatBot and BChatBot non-inclusively on Telegram. BiChatBot and BChatBot are confidential communications bots[8]. Anyone may access the bot, but our assessment shows likely keywords used to activate campaign-related communications.
- The campaign highly likely violated Twitter policies such as the Platform manipulation and spam policy, the Impersonation policy, and the Synthetic and manipulated media policy.
- We experienced gaps in identifying verified locations via internet protocol addresses.

Our assessment is supported by information that varied in scope, quality, and sourcing. We believe our analysis is based on high-quality data, making it possible to make a solid judgment. This judgment is not a certainty and still carries a risk of being wrong.

Data and Information Analysis – Flow of the Influence Operation

Initially, nearly 30,000 accounts participated in this campaign. About 35% of which have already been suspended by Twitter or "no longer exist." Nearly 50% of the accounts were non-credible accounts, with low followership (less than 100 followers), a large proportion created in 2020, and over 1,500 created within weeks of the campaign.

We base the current analysis on 111,770 tweets tweeted by the remaining 24,631 accounts (tweeted, retweeted, replied to the main hashtag) from July 17 to 21st, 2020.

The first hashtag posted by @Mrs_ferlock signaled (Figure 1 to the above) the sequential call chain two days before the event. @Mrs_ferlock initiated the tweet content for the core team response. (Note: UTC is four hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)). The timeline for all Tweets for this hashtag is below in Figure 2, showing the flood of messaging from the beginning of July through August 31, 2020

The @Mrs_ferlock net call started a sequential response from over one hundred forty core members (Figure 3 Influence Operations below). It seems that the first attempt on July 15 was a test for the core network.
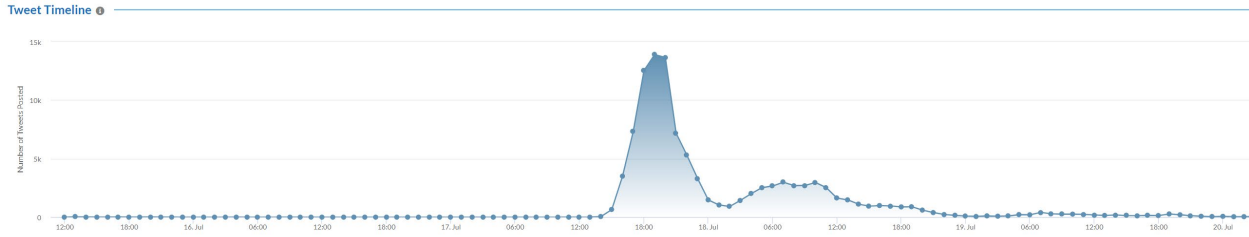
---

[7] NATIONAL INFORMATION NETWORK SECURITY SHIELD https://cybershafarat.com/2019/12/18/dezhfa-dejafa/
[8] https://t.me/Bichatbot برنامه ناشناس

Figure 2 Twitter Timeline

Flowchart labels:

Planning and confidential communications prior to visible social media final triggers

Begin Operational Activities

Fereshteh1978
7/15/2020
12:57:45 PM UTC

Sequential Net Call
Call chain
Circle of Trust Confirmation

Signal to start the Net Call Operations Order

Mrs_ferlock
7/15/2020
13:15:28 PM UTC

End Net Call – Team Validated Operation Order Trigger Communicated

Date/Time	Username
15 Jul 2020 13:19:01	meysamiranzad
15 Jul 2020 13:20:08	Samaiismm
15 Jul 2020 13:20:28	Aly_alef
15 Jul 2020 13:21:11	oliviaf_bensonf
15 Jul 2020 13:22:28	xkimiyax
15 Jul 2020 13:23:06	Navid279
15 Jul 2020 13:25:41	PowerOfReVenge1
15 Jul 2020 13:28:11	SeReNDPT76
15 Jul 2020 13:31:02	zadeyepayiiiiz
15 Jul 2020 13:31:11	_Mrpast_
15 Jul 2020 13:32:36	ThePrpleDreamer
15 Jul 2020 13:33:31	bervanlo
15 Jul 2020 13:35:23	ChaperonRouge_
15 Jul 2020 13:35:28	JasUichi
15 Jul 2020 13:37:19	parmidaas94
15 Jul 2020 13:38:26	_nasixa_
15 Jul 2020 13:40:10	Fatemenr1
15 Jul 2020 13:41:29	ze_919
15 Jul 2020 13:47:48	AsgharDiesel
15 Jul 2020 13:48:04	AminFghih
15 Jul 2020 13:48:51	masihnp_
15 Jul 2020 13:48:51	WW_Heisenberg__
15 Jul 2020 13:50:02	chiikaa03
15 Jul 2020 13:50:19	mahi__goli
15 Jul 2020 13:52:10	lyranity
15 Jul 2020 13:53:17	iamasalli
15 Jul 2020 13:54:55	sarastanli
15 Jul 2020 13:54:58	dr_ebrahim49
15 Jul 2020 13:55:12	faribaa1376
15 Jul 2020 13:57:47	paradoxirani
15 Jul 2020 13:58:19	SsanazBr
15 Jul 2020 14:00:23	YaldaKhanomam
15 Jul 2020 14:01:26	itsjustmahbod
15 Jul 2020 14:01:48	withoutmev
15 Jul 2020 14:01:51	SedighiAki
15 Jul 2020 14:04:38	sukratisss
15 Jul 2020 14:05:23	Athena10Minerva
15 Jul 2020 14:06:56	Theblue94
15 Jul 2020 14:32:29	sanie58
15 Jul 2020 14:33:11	dadasheasghar
15 Jul 2020 14:36:08	_theoutlawtorn
15 Jul 2020 14:37:40	uniii_corrrn
15 Jul 2020 14:42:35	Pilot30813047
15 Jul 2020 14:43:56	Feresht33912865
15 Jul 2020 14:47:13	khorshid07
15 Jul 2020 14:50:14	Azadehs6
15 Jul 2020 14:51:36	nooshinof
15 Jul 2020 14:54:13	fati_f1994
15 Jul 2020 15:04:05	tanparvanehapir
15 Jul 2020 15:12:29	amirh9797
15 Jul 2020 15:15:31	s0mebodysme
15 Jul 2020 15:21:39	AdrehSajad
15 Jul 2020 15:21:45	hei_senberg7575
15 Jul 2020 15:23:01	hamihamedhami
15 Jul 2020 15:24:49	pM3IjJ69maadTfA
15 Jul 2020 15:25:47	1984fairytale
15 Jul 2020 15:35:48	khanekharab
15 Jul 2020 15:50:12	poskhodmoni1
15 Jul 2020 15:56:21	YaarDabirestani
15 Jul 2020 15:56:35	sarvestan61
15 Jul 2020 15:59:54	september8941
15 Jul 2020 16:00:30	hheidham__
15 Jul 2020 16:03:55	Alcoholpidem
15 Jul 2020 16:12:06	Farveh00
15 Jul 2020 16:13:55	mr_shiri
15 Jul 2020 16:14:01	potterriiii
15 Jul 2020 16:34:01	Sanazbbb
15 Jul 2020 16:44:26	2ndravanparish
15 Jul 2020 16:45:27	fmpanbeh
15 Jul 2020 16:46:21	pariiiiiish72
15 Jul 2020 16:47:50	maryamoone
15 Jul 2020 16:48:58	minimaminimal
15 Jul 2020 16:58:30	special_n9ne
15 Jul 2020 17:03:51	mrnobody771
15 Jul 2020 17:11:25	parvaz711422931
15 Jul 2020 17:11:46	Hajsnoop
15 Jul 2020 17:12:09	Shuichii79
15 Jul 2020 17:13:53	Mihantag
15 Jul 2020 17:15:12	Dorsmohammadi
15 Jul 2020 17:16:17	big_head_che
15 Jul 2020 17:16:41	gis_oo_parishon
15 Jul 2020 17:18:27	sibederakhti
15 Jul 2020 17:25:39	noxnox000
15 Jul 2020 17:26:37	FEB6th1958
15 Jul 2020 17:28:33	sh_golmoradian
15 Jul 2020 17:31:20	mostafa_qolami
15 Jul 2020 17:31:45	SaeedDalirian
15 Jul 2020 17:36:11	shkmpp14
15 Jul 2020 17:37:33	greenliiii
15 Jul 2020 17:40:27	gharaessiot
15 Jul 2020 17:40:45	Mandozma
15 Jul 2020 17:42:25	Amin182311
15 Jul 2020 18:04:42	___Sophi____
15 Jul 2020 18:06:23	Hanieh_adb
15 Jul 2020 18:20:15	sraheleh
15 Jul 2020 18:20:18	nfszmnzdh
15 Jul 2020 18:47:00	lalena57102754
15 Jul 2020 19:07:14	sonosaja
15 Jul 2020 19:16:48	NafisMf
15 Jul 2020 19:20:03	fanoosshab
15 Jul 2020 19:30:07	Makondo38Markez
15 Jul 2020 19:36:44	Sgfee5444
15 Jul 2020 19:37:18	MoavenK
15 Jul 2020 19:37:45	Sgfee5444
15 Jul 2020 19:38:45	ialirzaw
15 Jul 2020 19:40:05	Aa777P
15 Jul 2020 19:47:29	seven089
15 Jul 2020 19:57:30	castacortaa
15 Jul 2020 19:57:38	janjani021
15 Jul 2020 20:01:41	soosooi189
15 Jul 2020 20:05:42	bgh_Amir
15 Jul 2020 20:11:27	shari_jana
15 Jul 2020 20:16:07	arshavin_sh
15 Jul 2020 20:27:16	mahdye_mm
15 Jul 2020 20:28:29	murakamishoon
15 Jul 2020 20:32:40	amirabshenasan
15 Jul 2020 20:33:27	tir_tapar
15 Jul 2020 20:42:50	Bihoodebidar
15 Jul 2020 20:43:49	rrsrp__
15 Jul 2020 20:44:12	capitanamir
15 Jul 2020 20:45:06	ice__moon_
15 Jul 2020 20:49:31	Sana_Khatti
15 Jul 2020 20:58:50	mr_narouei78
15 Jul 2020 21:05:05	Arezoo__abs
15 Jul 2020 21:02:30	ShivaAmiri6
15 Jul 2020 21:13:50	fateme_ghanavat
15 Jul 2020 21:28:03	na16071389
15 Jul 2020 21:42:05	e_lhaam
15 Jul 2020 21:48:44	nadia29721815
15 Jul 2020 22:08:00	Yasi__S
15 Jul 2020 22:08:47	he_jimii
15 Jul 2020 22:52:09	Nus1562
15 Jul 2020 23:12:55	ShahAbb50064119
15 Jul 2020 23:18:22	9Strider6
16 Jul 2020 00:21:25	heyehannane
16 Jul 2020 00:23:43	_maroone_
16 Jul 2020 01:00:09	JwMHjcLTfxS05VQ
16 Jul 2020 02:11:30	arash940
16 Jul 2020 02:42:56	yalda40000
16 Jul 2020 04:04:48	trve_farid
16 Jul 2020 04:31:02	ManOomadam
16 Jul 2020 04:45:01	smhtie

Figure 3 Influence Operations

A close study of the accounts involved in this campaign signifies the following accounts to be the campaign's core leading team. Those in the net call may not be the entire team (given many have deleted their tweets and some have changed their usernames), but certainly, the main accounts leading the campaign.

Cyber Operative Account Types

The accounts used by the IRGC cyber network use different personas (Figure 4 Hiding personas) to hide their activities as regime operatives and pose as monarchists[9], reformists, hardliners, 'restart' or apolitical.

---

[9] Iranian monarchism is the advocacy of restoring the constitutional monarchy in Iran, which was abolished after the 1979 Revolution

In this specific campaign, the cyber operatives posed as monarchists, reformists, or apolitical while sharing the same messaging during the targeted timeframe, and in particular, context against the online event. Analysis of select operational members found the following groups:

Monarchist influencers
- @phalange81
- @0x__dead
- @Afsoon1976
- @IranNovin2020 (was Bashahzadeh1)
- @Nazanin_ban002 (no longer exists)
- @Mina_elizabeth_
- @tiliittt
- @FreddieJPatriot
- @DJ_PashmackZzz

Influencers from the Basiji Cyber Army
- @stivek9 (no longer exists – now soyflanco)
- @esprso11
- @asayesh75 (was asayesh74)
- @Ana_tajik (was anaa_tajik)
- @bbbanooie
- @amrab62 (was amrab_62)
- @Sholokhof2
- @khanome_n (was paradox98765) has a second account @paradox_97_
- @mahshidtavakoli
- @khanoomijanam (was khanumijanam)
- @notkaaafnooon
- @aa_nayebi
- @a8n3s
- @ryr931
- @__jeneral__
- @roshanaiiii
- @zohreh_zk
- @aliamini79

Active users with actual personas
- behroozrezaei60
- chimigii
- itspersephoneh
- ThisIsNazanin
- shaddzzo
- userinadaram
- srmahnd
- mahnaz_mjo
- hamsaayeh
- ebrahimheidari
- avandfardi
- marii_abdi
- javanmardpeyman

Figure 4 Hiding personas

The posts contained links to the main accounts (Figure 5 Leading accounts below) leading the campaign, attacking the MEK while masquerading opposition to the ruling government.
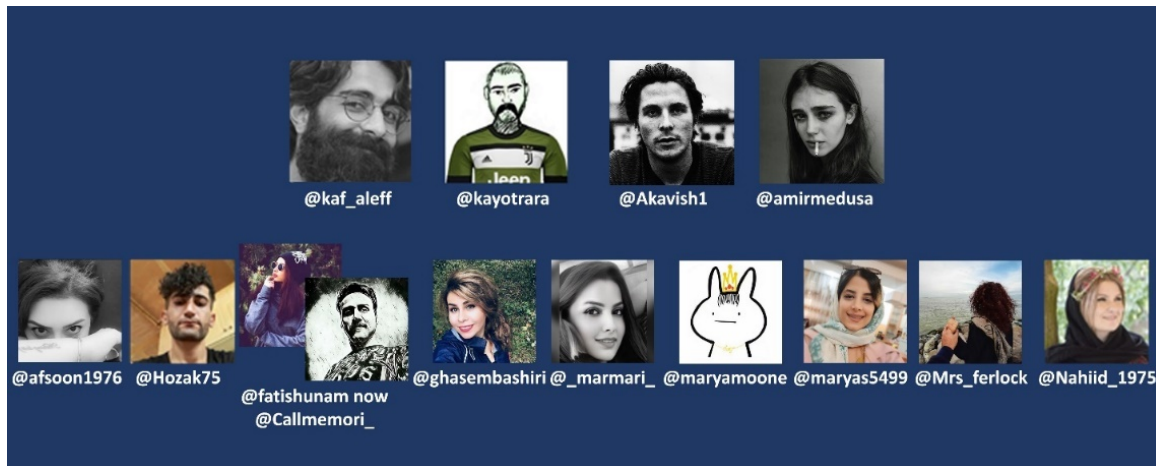
Figure 5 Leading accounts behind the IRGC cyber chain

@Akavish1 started the operation on July 17, 2020, at 14:59 GMT, tweeting the message from Figure 6 left with original tweet content followed by full campaign activity. Day one, the campaign ended with 67,341 tweets, retweets, and replies. Day two resulted in 36,157, while day three faded off at 4,081. The first three days of the campaign resulted in 107,582 tweets, retweets, and replies, or an average of 1773 mentions per hour. Table 1 below lists statistics related to the campaign.

Figure 6 Operation Start

Most Engagements – Tweets – Impressions

As part of our review, we examined all influencers for the July 17 operation, listing the Top 20 in Table 2 below by *Impressions*:

Akavish حمسحد
@Akavish1

كاسه ليساى صدام حسين تصور نكنن مى تونن از آب گل آلود
ماهى بگيرن شما كارنامه تون از ج.ا سياه تره بيخود خودتونو
قاطى مردم نكنيد
#مريم_رجوى_
#نه_به_اعدام
#اعدام_نكنيد

Translate Tweet

4:59 PM · Jul 17, 2020 · Twitter Web App

BY MOST IMPRESSIONS	Tweets	Followers	Engagements	Impressions	BY MOST TWEETS	Tweets	Followers	Engagements	Impressions
ghasembashiri	43	22,930	5,910	986,674	Akavish1	50	4,225	1,796	211,633
kayotrara	15	65,481	15,333	984,601	ghasembashiri	43	22,930	5,910	986,674
kaf_aleff	26	27,017	29,840	708,042	zohreh_zk	33	7,209	1,176	238,145
ROSHANAIIII	26	17,144	1,068	445,948	Iranobegard	30	9,043	871	271,396
hozak75	10	42,925	1,715	429,596	kaf_aleff	26	27,017	29,840	708,042
bbbanooie	10	36,356	3,728	364,278	ROSHANAIIII	26	17,144	1,068	445,948
farnazam	13	27,066	328	351,917	maryamoone	26	10,126	1,538	263,624
asayesh75	10	34,798	538	348,090	aliamini79	24	8,685	282	208,463
callmemori_	7	48,105	3,972	337,259	JavanmardPeyman	19	11,246	488	213,764
amirmedusa	9	31,030	12,504	281,402	kayotrara	15	65,481	15,333	984,601
Iranobegard	30	9,043	871	271,396	farnazam	13	27,066	328	351,917
maryamoone	26	10,126	1,538	263,624	s3p1d3	12	16,134	854	193,699
afsoon1976	9	27,247	1,284	245,484	hozak75	10	42,925	1,715	429,596
zohreh_zk	33	7,209	1,176	238,145	bbbanooie	10	36,356	3,728	364,278
Nahiid_1975	4	54,718	3,962	219,492	asayesh75	10	34,798	538	348,090
JavanmardPeyman	19	11,246	488	213,764	amirmedusa	9	31,030	12,504	281,402
MarMari	6	35,567	760	213,461	afsoon1976	9	27,247	1,284	245,484
Akavish1	50	4,225	1,796	211,633	callmemori_	7	48,105	3,972	337,259
aliamini79	24	8,685	282	208,463	_MarMari_	6	35,567	760	213,461
s3p1d3	12	16,134	854	193,699	Nahiid_1975	4	54,718	3,962	219,492

Table 2 Top 20 Influencers by Impressions and by Tweets

Over the period analyzed, we found 24,631 contributors to the narrative with the potential for 176.7 million potential impressions. An impression means a tweet delivered to a Twitter user's timeline, whether read or not. We can confirm that 26.4 million tweets did reach Twitter accounts.

October 28, 2020

Watching the process

Of the participants in the July 17 influence operation are two observers with the largest number of followers. The Iran Project[10] and Jedaaal (Ali Alizadeh, an Iranian based in London (Instagram, Aparat, Telegram, YouTube (JedaalTV), a staunch and public advocate for the Iranian government. Although they tweeted two times total during the operation, they were nonetheless active participants in the event. Their total followers of 313,271 show great reach and influence. @Iran tweeted the following "Hey you! Listen and Repeat:" (followed by the main expletive used throughout the campaign as a hashtag). @Jedaaal tweeted the following:

Operational Tempo

The July 15 net call confirmed all next level, subordinate units' concurrence with the operation, signaling

Figure 5 @jedaaal tweet

their readiness to execute. Variations of the hashtag and added hashtags appeared throughout the 60.6 hours. As with any deception operation, the deceiver maintains awareness of target responses to determine the effectiveness of the operation. The deceiver makes modifications along the way to maintain currency and operational effectiveness while changing the tempo of the campaign as required.

What is the Dunbar's Number?

The theory of Dunbar's number holds that we can only really support about 150 social connections at once. Dunbar's number is a suggested cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships—relationships in which an individual knows who each person is and how each person relates to every other person.

(Wikipedia, n.d.)

For this operation, we also add the criteria of trust. The innermost circle of the Dunbar's number circle of trust is very small, with each concentric circle expanding the number of social connections while reducing the level of trust. The cyber foot soldiers occupying the outermost rings of the circle, standing for the most expendable in the operation. The PermaDunbar Spiral image below closely resembles such a circle of trust as the likely layers of trust for this operation.
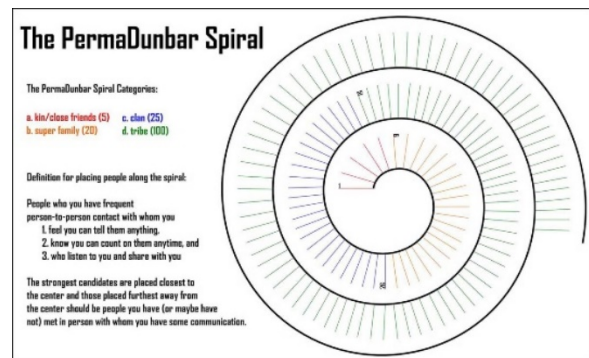
The first one hundred fifty in this operation represent the trigger and associated net call. If we expand the circle with those on the net call, each creating a specific circle of trust for 150, and repeat that model, we set up an influence operation of significant proportion.

NOTE: Twitter removed some accounts for purposes other than this report.

---

[10] The Iran Project is an Iranian funded news outlet know for staunch support of the government while posting articles, comments, and information condemning Iranian dissidents and the West. The site claims to be unaffiliated but has direct ties to Iranian intelligence organizations.

Inside the diagram:

maryamoone	YafinMf	Pilot30813047
maryamoone	Navid279	pMsljsHnsadlFA
mashhp_	ahssmazdn	poshkodmoali
Mihantag	nooshitof	potterriili
mrshnamirismail	noonoo000	PowerOfRaNerpe1
Maureen£	Yas1562	ROSHANAIII
mostafa_golami	olivief_benamf	rrsrp__
mr_narcose78	banugoliss	sümebodysme
mrnobody775	paradoxirani	SooseDaliriar
murdianismoon	ganiiisb72	Saznislmin
na1607339	parmidsaan94	Sana_Khatti
nadia29221835	parvaz71422931	Soezrbbb

@ghasembashiri
@hozak75
@nahiid_1975
@afsoon1976

Trusted

2   1   3

@kaf_aleff
@kayotrara
@akavish1
@aammiiirrmedus

@_marmarl_
@mrs_ferlock
@maryas5499
@fatishunam
@callmemori_

september8941	fanoosshab
___Sophi____	fariisaa1376
_bart__o_	Farnazam
MarMari	Farveh00
maroone	fateme_ghanavat
Mrpast	Fatemenr1
nasixa	fati_l1994
_theoutlawtorn	FEB6th1958
1984fairytale	Feresht33912865
2ndravanparish	fmpanbeh
9Strider6	gharaessiot
Aa777P	gis_oo_parishon
AdrehSajad	Hajsnoop
Alcoholpidern	hamihapedhani
Aly_alef	Hanieh_adb
AminFghih	he_jimii
amirabshenasan	hcychennano
amirh9797	hheichem__
arash940	laiirawi
arshavin_sh	lamasalli
Asayesh75	ice__moon_
Athona10Minerva	Iranobegard
Azadehs6	Itsjustmahbod
bbbanooie	janjani021
bervanlo	JasUlchi
bgh_Amir	JavanmardPeyman
big_head_che	JwMrl-jcLTfsS0SVQ
Bihoodebidar	khanekharab
capitanamir	khorshid07
ChaperonRouge_	lalena57102754
chiika03	lyronity
dadasheasghar	mahdiye_mm
dr_ebrahim49	mahi__goli
e_lhaam	Makondo38Markez
	Mandozme
	ManOomadam

Confidential operational planning and instructions

saniz58	Shuichii79	true_farid
unrastanii	sibederakhti	urFil_corrm
umrestun61	smitjie	visior_EL
SeckjsiAki	sooooo1B9	wthoutiner
SeReNOPT76	special_nSne	WW_Heisenberg__
seven083	srahelah	xklmqsx
Ngfsrk444	haanaHe	YaarTalorettaral
Ngfsrk444	salrantien	yalds400X0
sh_golmoradran	staporvanehapir	YaldaKhanomm
shari_jana	hrrblueu94	Yosl_5
Shivahnin6	ThePripleDreamer	zaeeyozayiiliz
sh-knopi4	ijir_kasper	az_819
		azhreh_ak

Dunbar's Number – Layers and Levels of Trust

Operational Leadership

Kayotrara

@kayotrara joined Twitter on February 5, 2015, posting 14,316 Tweets, following 218 accounts with an estimated 26% fake followers tweeting entirely from Twitter for Android. @kayotrara averages around 1.5 Tweets per day with 64,333 followers.

As one of the core members of the operation, Kayotrara posted updates on the campaign every hour, encouraging hashtag use

@kayotrara followers joined Twitter in the following years:
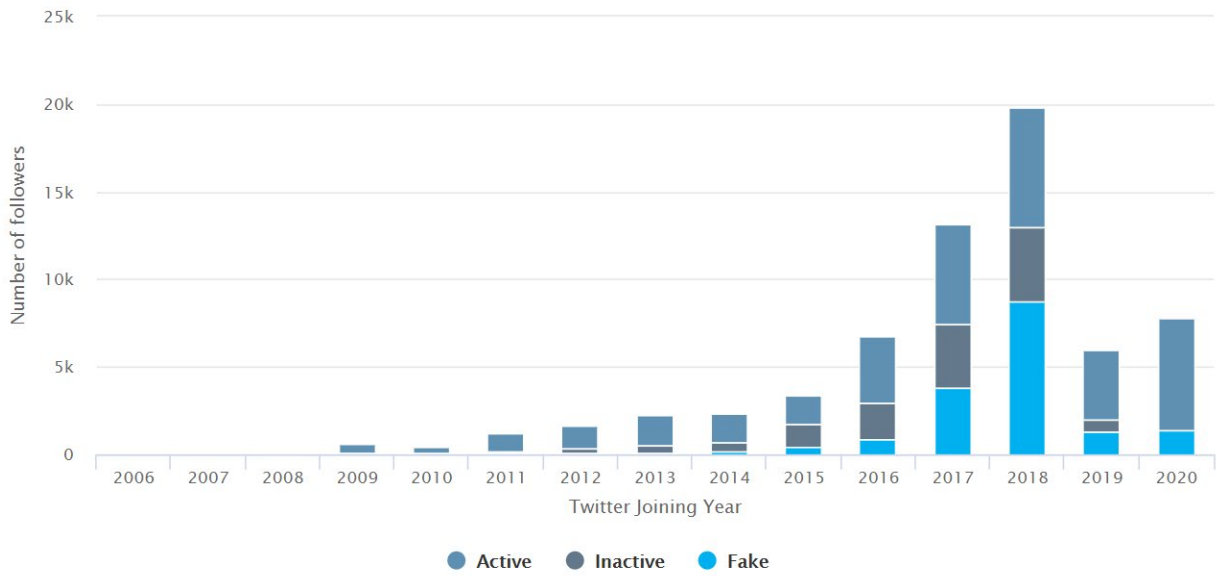
@kayotrara follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
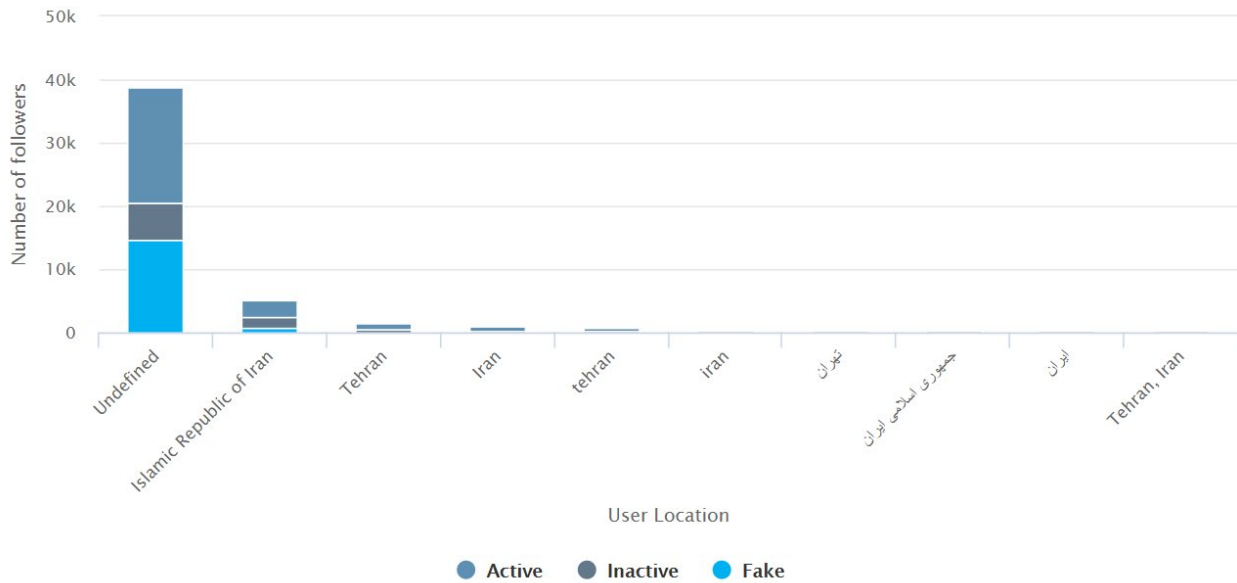
Kayotrara metrics for users most retweeted, replied to, and mentioned during his full Twitter lifecycle is as follows:

⇄ Users most retweeted

@Meqdadlocation	3	@imanbrando	3
@zat_ara	3	@darvizh	2
@MehranBotParast	2	@HichkasOfficial	2
@Hamid_wood	2	@xacheek	2
@ShahedAlavi	2	@mardood1	2
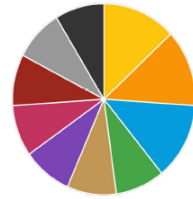
💬 Users most replied to

@mardood1	86	@Meqdadlocation	64
@homayonii	57	@imanbrando	42
@Hosseien	33	@Rdshemir	30
@kayotRaRa	29	@Xerxesss	26
@ali_ahmadnia	25	@tg_iuom	22

@ Users most mentioned

@mardood1	102	@homayonii	61
@Meqdadlocation	47	@imanbrando	42
@Hosseien	38	@Vahid_crazy	31
@Xerxesss	26	@ali_ahmadnia	25
@xmangamma	21	@tg_iuom	21

The most hashtags used by Kayotrara are:

Hashtags most used

#اعدام_نکنید	23	#مریم_رجوی_گوه_خورد	15
#قبول_نکرد	2	#دخترآبی	2
#تاسف	2	#مصطفی_صالحی	2
#الشارع_بس	1	#فقد	1
#فقط_تو	1	#هتریک_قهرمانی	1
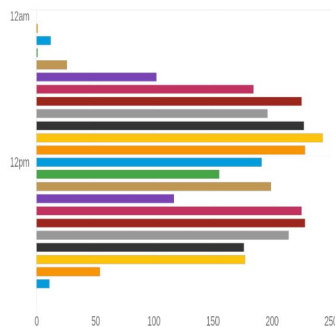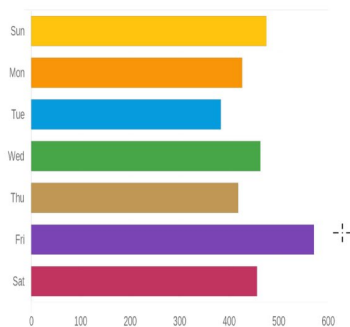
Kayotrara maintains operational security over his Internet location, although we assess the most likely geolocation is Iran. Kayotrara maintains accounts on Telegram, Instagram, and other social media sites. Kayotrara links to ALIrezanouri via a Github

October 28, 2020

site with Python script used to scrape and analyze Twitter. The ALIrezanouri/alirezatest repository on Github also uses automate retweets and follows as a method to propagate tweets. The likelihood of using bots to propagate tweets is high but difficult to detect since they are legal and do not appear since they run through the Twitter account using the bot as a service. The interesting examples (image below) show ALIrezanouri using Kayotrara as one of his testbeds--the eight files below found at:

https://github.com/ALIrezanouri/alirezatest/tree/master/following).

Github Files (8)

following/Pepper0nii.csv	following/___saraab___.csv
following/hosseintanha89.csv	following/hpordr.csv
following/mahsaee.csv	following/maryami3.csv
following/nakhodakhorshid.csv	whotwitts_train.vw

Iranian hacker circles know of kayotrara. Mohammad Jorjandi references and retweets kayotrara (s7az2mm on Twitter, Telegram, Instagram, etc. and behind the webamoozir website and periodic webcasts on YouTube and TwitchTV.) Jorjandi is known for actively taking part with the Kheshtak Security Team.

Kaf_Aleff

@kaf_aleff joined Twitter on December 08, 2018, posting 40,880 Tweets, following 12,533 accounts with an estimated 2.06% fake followers tweeting entirely from Twitter for Android. @kaf_aleff averages around 5 Tweets per day with 26,360 followers.

@Kaf_aleff represents the operational lead during the campaign. He directs users on how to use the hashtag and adjusts incorrect spellings. He presents operational changes to the extent of giving an update at 22:00 GMT (2:30 am IRST)

@kaf_aleff followers joined Twitter in the following years:
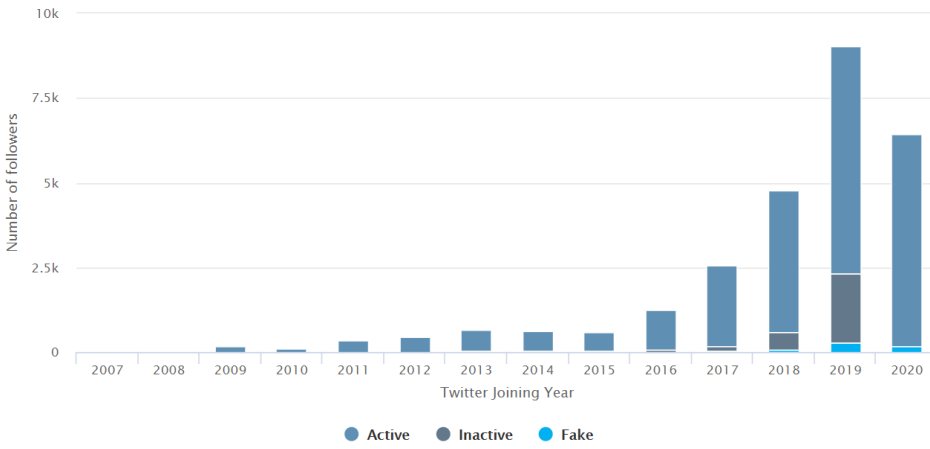
@kaf_aleff follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
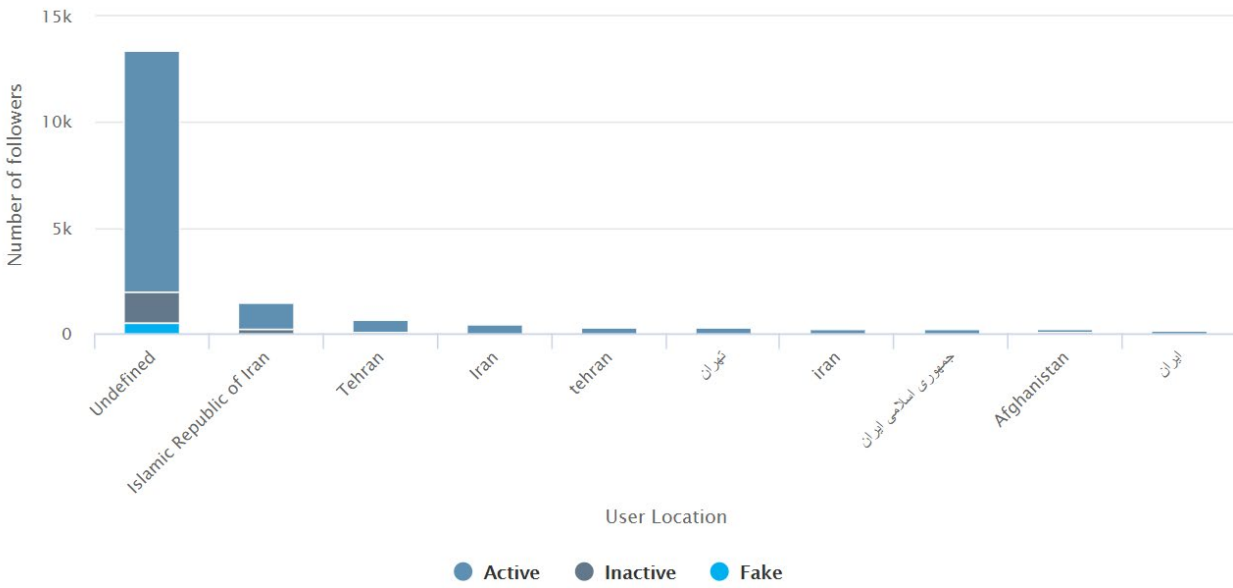
⇅ Users most retweeted

@AmirtohidF	5	@Moh_ebrahimi	3
@sepehr_khorami	3	@inja77812395	3
@Saraydeldar	3	@Tamanna923	3
@2mohammadmosaed	3	@fifi_movi	3
@mikeypleystart	2	@cold_bons	2

💬 Users most replied to

@kaf_aleff	34	@mohajer__bird	23
@Ngld_66	22	@saeedeh52	19
@Peymankhan83	19	@happybookseller	18
@Akavish1	18	@tiliittt	17
@3abaii	17	@masaccio_a	14

@ Users most mentioned

@ghasembashiri	99	@Ngld_66	27
@Hozak75	23	@fifi_movi	22
@3abaii	22	@mohajer__bird	21
@tiliittt	20	@saeedeh52	20
@Peymankhan83	19	@Akavish1	19

Hashtags most used

#اعدام_نکنید	104	#گوه_خورد	69
#جاج	35	#لغو_فوری_اعدام	22
#مریم_رجوی_گوه_خورد	20	#فیروزه	14
#فروش_ایران_ممنوع	11	#بورس	9
#نوید_افکاری	8	#سلامت_دانشجو	8
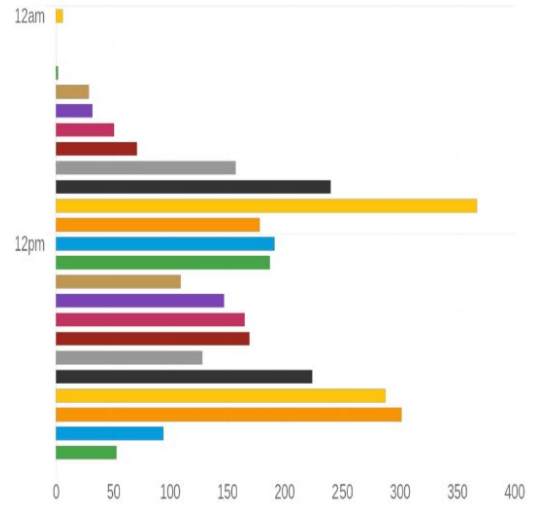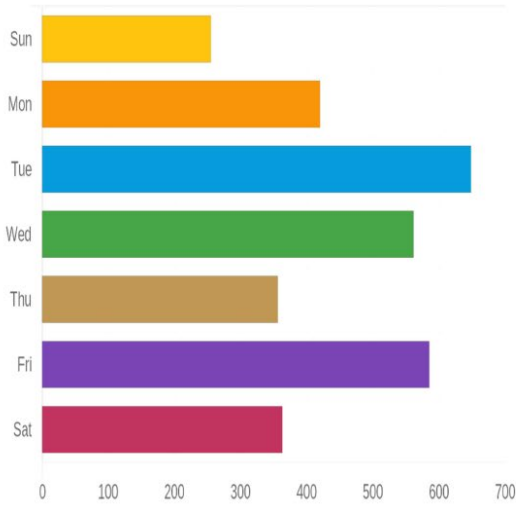
Kaf_aleff is a more prolific tweeter posting, on average, five tweets per day (instead of about 1.5 for Kayotrara). In the less than two years on Twitter, kaf_aleff tweeted over 41,000 times compared to about 15,000 tweets in 5.5 years for Kayotrara. Kaf_aleff tweeted much more during NCRI events and anniversaries with a couple of one to two-week breaks during the targeted time. He also mentions himself more than others in the target group.

Ghasembashiri

@ghasembashiri Twitter on March 4, 2016, posting 131,473 Tweets, following 875 accounts with an estimated 14.9% fake followers tweeting almost entirely from the Twitter for iPhone. @ghasembashiri averages around 18 Tweets per day with 22,930 followers.

Serving in a campaign leadership role, @ghasembashiri corrected members' misspelling hashtags with different spelling while commenting on influencers, persuading them to broaden the campaign.

@ghasembashiri followers joined Twitter in the following years:
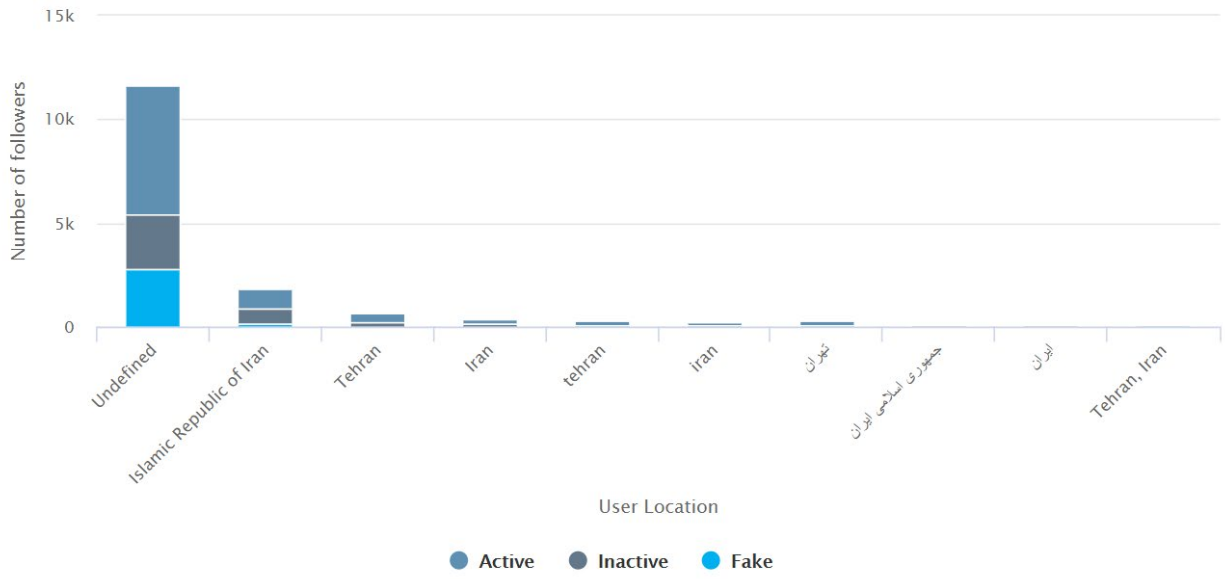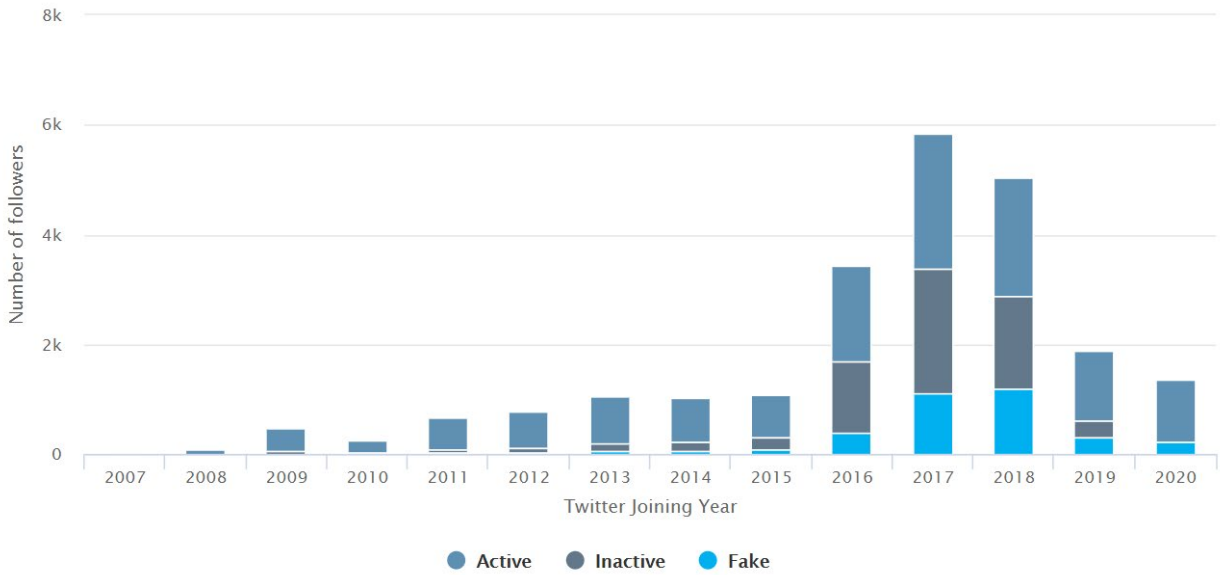
October 28, 2020

⇅ Users most retweeted

User		User	
@msfenderski	7	@PedoOoL	6
@Miss_ShiMaaa	4	@aQaGorGe	4
@marzie_25	4	@k_a_n_i_k	3
@FAEZEHDEHGHAN	3	@heizram_	3
@gh0lch0magh	3	@OCPersianMVideo	3
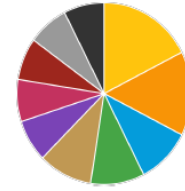
💬 Users most replied to

User		User	
@Miss_ShiMaaa	31	@msfenderski	30
@ghasembashiri	15	@Maahaaraajaan	15
@aQaGorGe	13	@JavadiNilgoon	11
@SalarMousavi	11	@DDarioo0	10
@1TANKHUNTER	9	@SepiSky	9
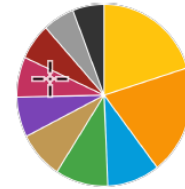
@ Users most mentioned

User		User	
@Miss_ShiMaaa	41	@msfenderski	36
@Maahaaraajaan	17	@aQaGorGe	15
@JavadiNilgoon	14	@SalarMousavi	14
@marzie_25	11	@behnam2k	11
@1TANKHUNTER	10	@SepiSky	10

Hashtags most used

Hashtag		Hashtag	
#مردان_علیه_مردان	3	#چرا_دوبار_زدی	2
#دو_دهنه_مغازه	2	#همه_متجاوز_نیستن	1
#کیوان_امام	1	#از_سربازی_بگو	1
#newprofilepic	1	#جدی	1
#روح_الله_حسینیان	1	#اعدام_نکنید	1
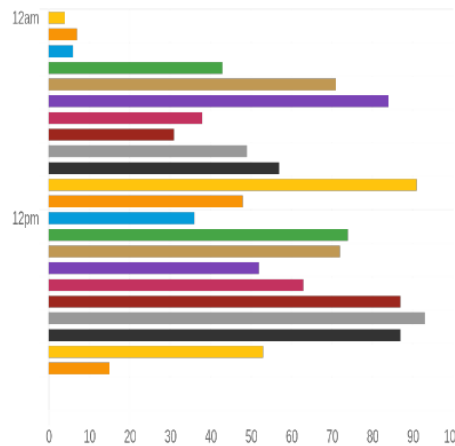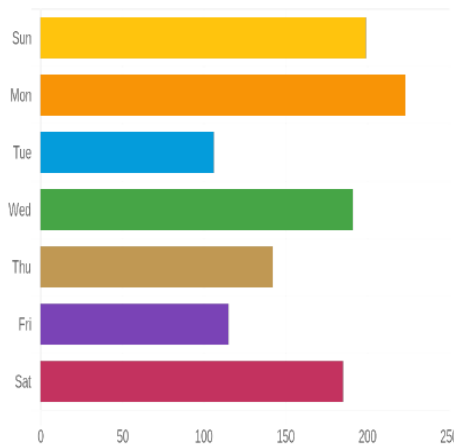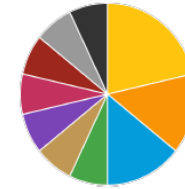
Akavish1

@Akavish1 joined Twitter on August 9, 2011, posting 38.7k Tweets, following 3,696 accounts with an estimated .23% fake followers tweeting entirely from the Twitter Web App. @Akavish1 averages around 80 tweets per day with 4,263 followers.

Akavish1 launched the operation. His activity included posting 50 tweets during the first 24 hours directing the campaign, including:

- اعدام_نکنید# (don't execute) will not trend in any way. Its toll rises but will not trend, think this hashtag has a good message, from now we have to set some oppositions straight. مریم_رجوی_█_خورد#
- Use the hashtag with a higher number مریم_رجوی_█_خورد#
- Who would have thought one day' regime overthrowers' and 'hardliners' unite in using one hashtag مریم_رجوی_█_خورد#

Shifting the narrative throughout the campaign, Akavish1 openly converses with leadership (kaf_aleff) implying that only @kaf_aleff may create a hashtag that unites basijis, hardliners and those who oppose the regime.

At 21:57 GMT (2:27 am in Iran) he posted a report of the operation (3 minutes before a similar tweet being posted by @Kaf_aleff

@Akavish1 followers joined Twitter in the following years:
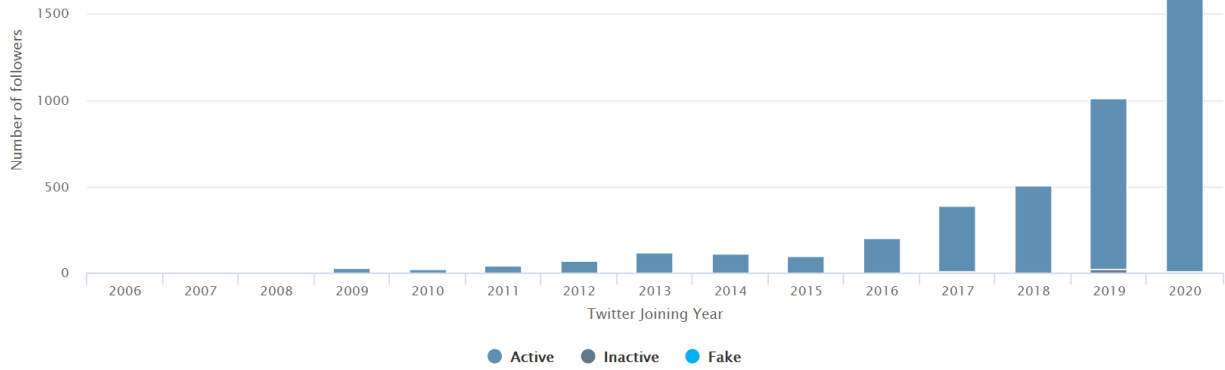
@Akavish1 follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
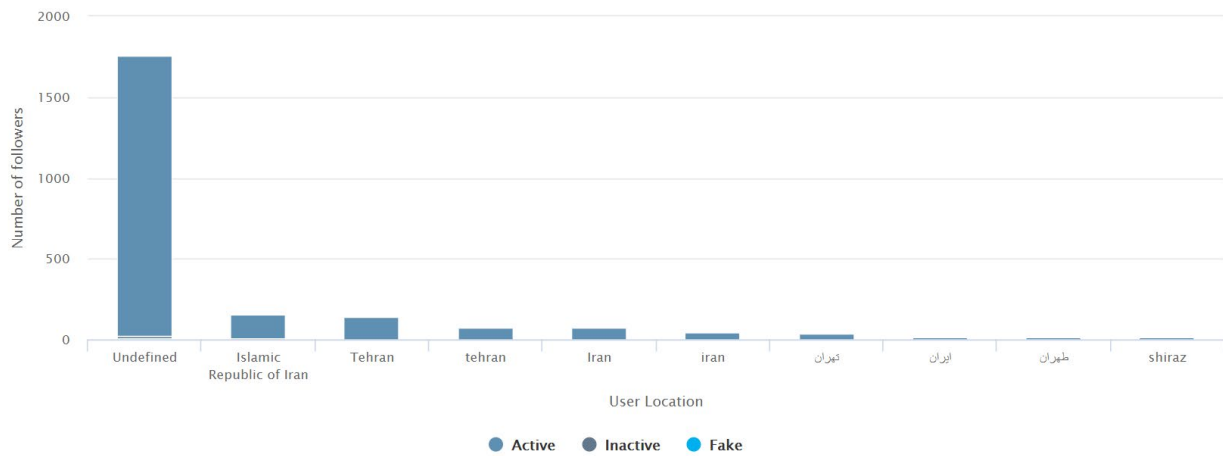
↻ Users most retweeted

@Abol_TheGreat	1		@SIRMohammadRez1	1	
@Akavish1	1		@MinooPocahontas	1	
@afsoon1976	1		@mrizadii	1	
@MeysamNoori1968	1		@AvandFardi	1	
@StrategistQQ	1				

💬 Users most replied to

@StrategistQQ	49		@mrnj_39	47	
@Hamedsa1981	44		@russellzparadox	41	
@Lavitae50684328	40		@AliTehrani9	35	
@mbnbhmn	35		@Nafas_Typing	34	
@lashhgod	34		@2ndravanparish	34	

@ Users most mentioned

@StrategistQQ	61		@Hamedsa1981	52	
@mrnj_39	47		@russellzparadox	44	
@AliTehrani9	43		@Lavitae50684328	42	
@mbnbhmn	38		@afsoon1976	36	
@2ndravanparish	36		@lashhgod	35	

October 28, 2020

Hashtags most used

Hashtag	Count		Hashtag	Count
#vote2020	2		#مهرداد_سپهری	2
#fuck_china	2		#جهان_نژادیان	1
#نوید_افکاری	1		#halamadrid	1
#elclásico	1		#مهراد_سپهری	1
#انسولین_نیست	1		#نوستالوژی	1
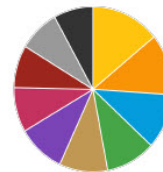
📅 Days of the week
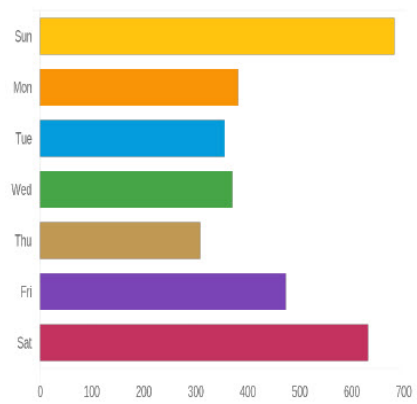
⊙ Hours of the day (UTC)
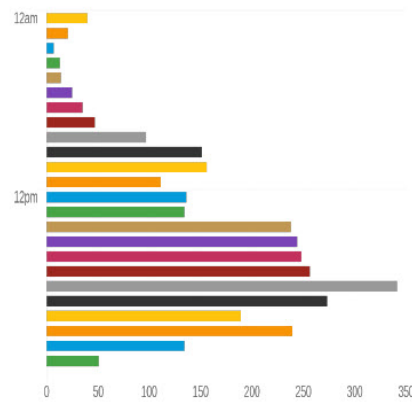
Amirmedusa

@amirmedusa joined Twitter on May 19, 2019, posting 123.5k Tweets, following 6,490 accounts with an estimated 2.7% fake followers tweeting mostly from Twitter for Android with a few from the Twitter Web App. @amirmedusa averages around 200 Tweets per day.

@amirmedusa followers joined Twitter in the following years:
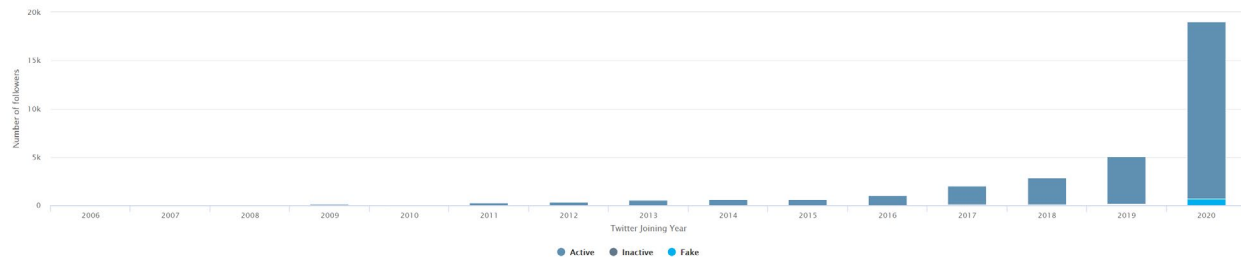
@amirmedusa follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
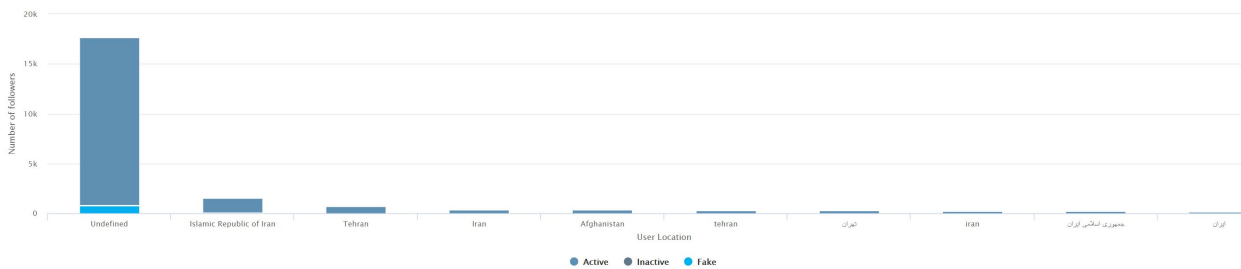
⇅ Users most retweeted

@smallpartisan	2	@_Hiich	2
@sharifimoon	1	@ghatel22	1
@masihgarakani	1	@hallellujahw	1
@Jordan_B_P	1	@gholbaghe	1
@RKOTOfficial	1	@Sarindokht	1

💬 Users most replied to

@Henahyerr	83	@sabaFrhadi	78
@nagaaeedam	56	@holymoly_2000	54
@FtiNegin	48	@kamyar___	41
@david_nakam	31	@bebanddahaneto	28
@salek_hastm	28	@talayeh___	27

@ Users most mentioned

@sabaFrhadi	108	@Henahyerr	101
@holymoly_2000	91	@nagaaeedam	69
@FtiNegin	54	@kamyar___	51
@david_nakam	50	@bebanddahaneto	41
@salek_hastm	35	@talayeh___	34
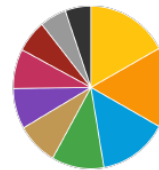
Hashtags most used

#هه	8	#لواسون	1
#مدوسا_نصرالدین	1	#شاخ	1
#یگان_توییت_عاشقانه_یزنیالا	1	#کیر_تو_کامی	1
#فالوبک	1	#گنگ	1

📅 Days of the week

Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
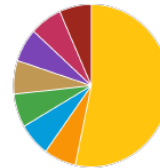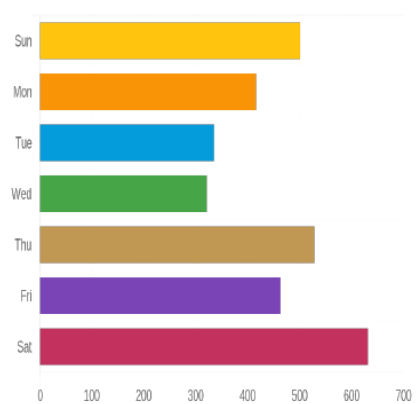
🕐 Hours of the day (UTC)
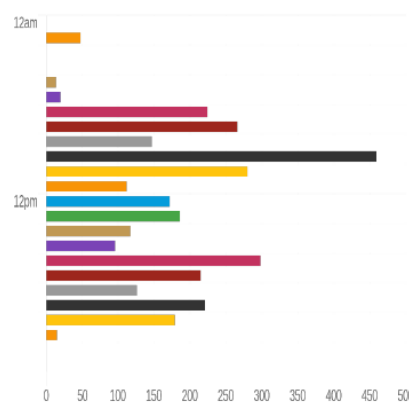
@amirmedusa actively uses the BChatBot on Telegram offering anonymous discussions requiring membership with the RazKom group for conversational access and identification to the Farzane Instagram account and a BChatBot start command with a unique source identifier (…start=sc-181055-1VGfC3H).

Hozak75

@hozak75 joined Twitter on January 4, 2018, posting 218k Tweets, following 35,940 accounts with an estimated 2.27% fake followers tweeting entirely from Twitter for Android. @hozak75 averages around 138 Tweets per day with 44,117 followers.

@hozak75 followers joined Twitter in the following years:
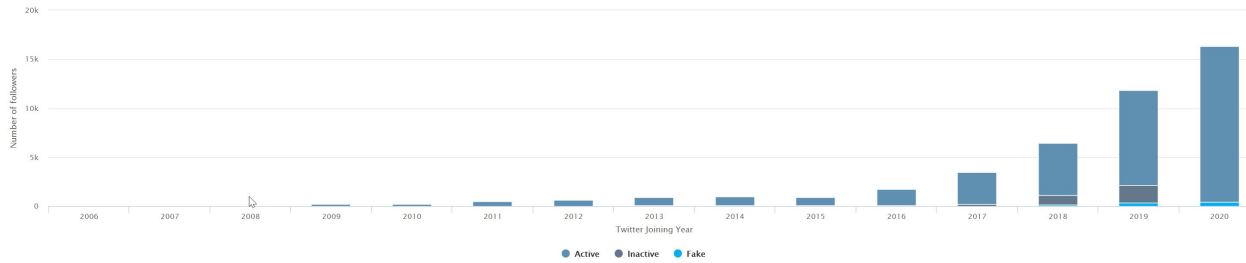
@hozak75 follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
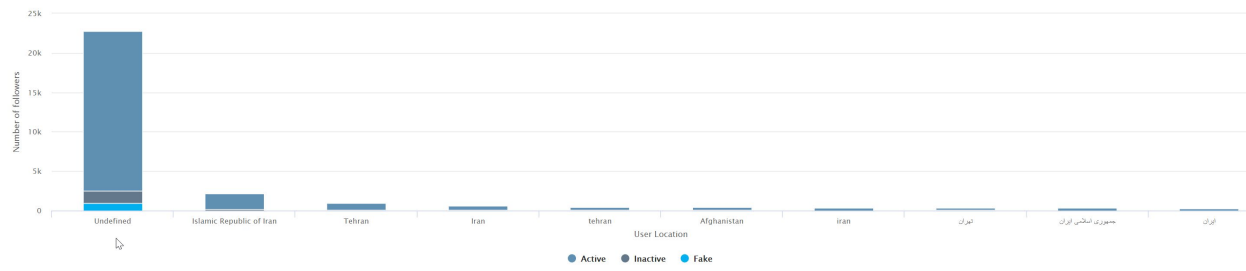
↻ **Users most retweeted**

@symphony0_0	26		@MrSubtitle	25
@millieeiliish	25		@sirmuhmdsh	22
@symphony9__	18		@ghr_rhg00	17
@Hoseintaherii	16		@Anahhid36	16
@NavidPirozi	13		@Y_losi	13

💬 **Users most replied to**

@yasi__htt	40		@miss_mim_am	37
@sirmuhmdsh	29		@shumayetwitt	22
@symphony0_0	22		@_dou_ble_A	19
@vikopn	17		@mahnessa93	16
@titi12es	16		@DerakhshanAzimi	15

@ **Users most mentioned**

@sirmuhmdsh	59		@shumayetwitt	44
@miss_mim_am	37		@yasi__htt	34
@Lanatiebaba	28		@symphony9__	22
@_dou_ble_A	19		@Anahhid36	17
@FtillX	17		@titi12es	17
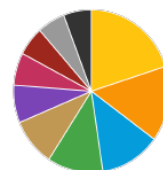
Hashtags most used

#جان_پدر_کجاستی   2   #من_دهاتی_هستم   1
#گوه_خوردن   1   #دهاتی   1
#نان#   1   #کولبری   1
#محسن_مین_یاشی   1   #کودک_کار   1
#کولبر_نکشید   1   #صابر_بهبودی   1
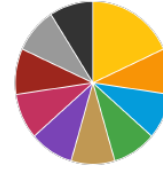
📅 Days of the week
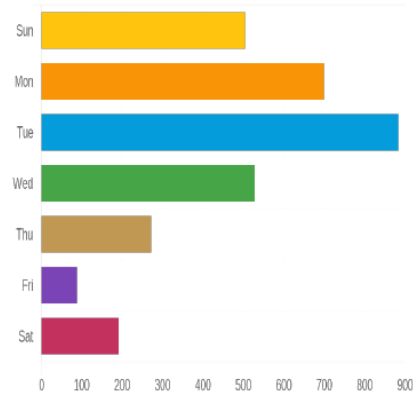
🕐 Hours of the day (UTC)
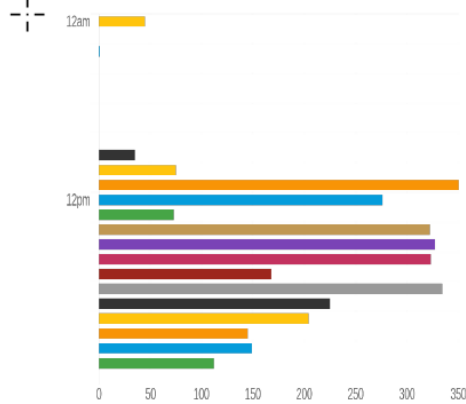
marmari

@_marmari_ joined Twitter on June 26, 2017, posting 88.5k Tweets, following 26,485 accounts with an estimated 2.21% fake followers tweeting entirely from Twitter for iPhone. @_marmari_ averages around 66 Tweets per day with 36,863 followers.

@_marmari_ followers joined Twitter in the following years:

Followers Based on Twitter Joining Year
The below graph shows the percentage/number of fake, inactive and active followers of the Twitter account based on their Twitter joining year.
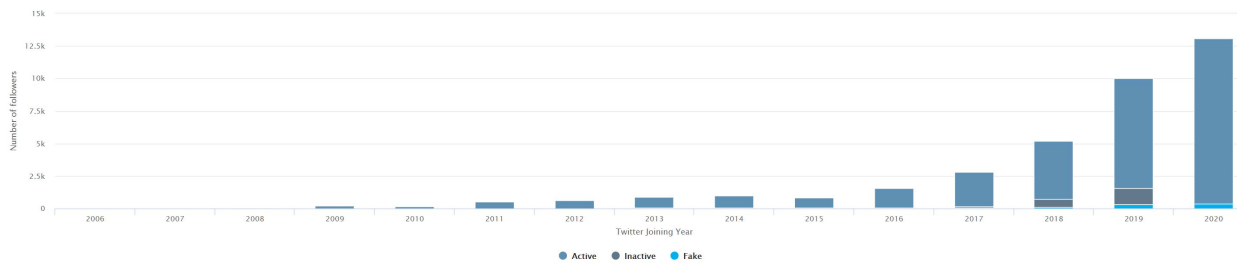
@_marmari_ follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
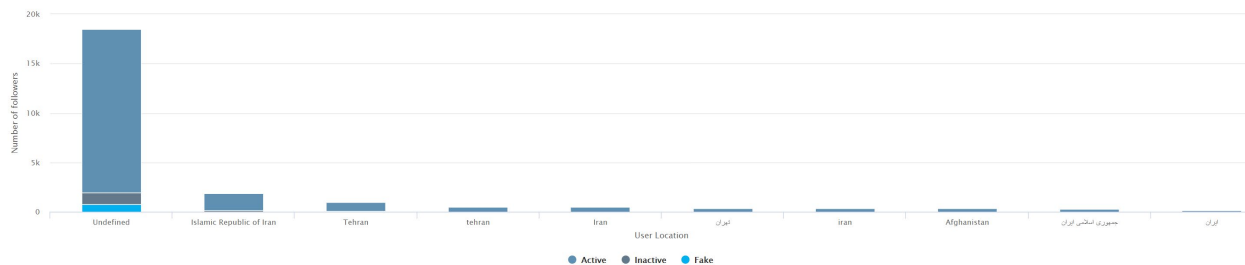
⇄ Users most retweeted

@imaniiiik	94	
@kiahaat	60	
@ROSHANAIIII	50	
@khanome_n	44	
@amiralisimpson	42	

@banafsh__honari	62	
@AmirHosein9191	52	
@Anahhid36	46	
@maass1113	44	
@Amanj_emw	38	
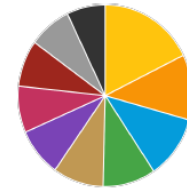
💬 Users most replied to

@shahram63mohmkn	57	
@Masoud_snns7	24	
@__gelaris__	19	
@metti_fergi	13	
@Nicho6_9	11	

@dokhishahrivari	26	
@pink_floyd90	19	
@ROSHANAIIII	14	
@Hamed_y_k_	11	
@birahmane_Ziba	10	
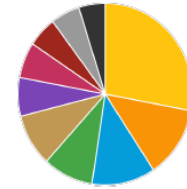
@ Users most mentioned

@shahram63mohmkn	61	
@__gelaris__	35	
@baharmal4_bahar	25	
@ROSHANAIIII	14	
@Hamed_y_k_	12	

@dokhishahrivari	38	
@Masoud_snns7	32	
@pink_floyd90	20	
@biomarshal	12	
@metti_fergi	11	
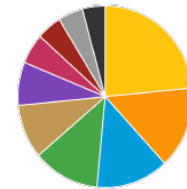
Hashtags most used

#جهان_نژادیان_متجاوز	1	
#دختر_آبادانی	1	
#مظلوم	1	

#استاد_شجریان	1	
#ظالم	1	
#پریا_قاسمی_پور	1	

📅 Days of the week
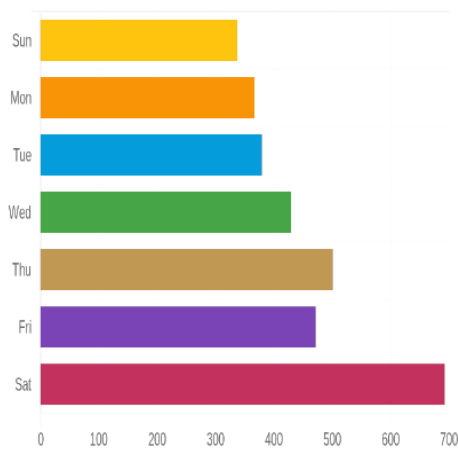
🕒 Hours of the day (UTC)
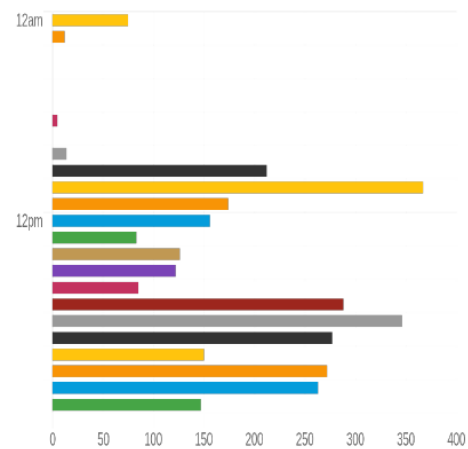
Maryas5499

@maryas5499 joined Twitter on April 20, 2017, posting 7.4k Tweets, following 1,622 accounts with an estimated 1.93% fake followers tweeting entirely from Twitter for Android. @maryas5499 averages around 26 Tweets per day with 2,790 followers.

@maryas5499 followers joined Twitter in the following years:
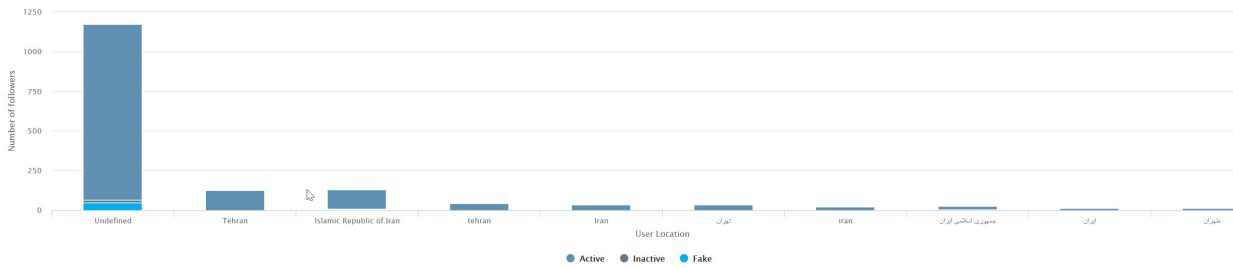
@maryas5499 follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
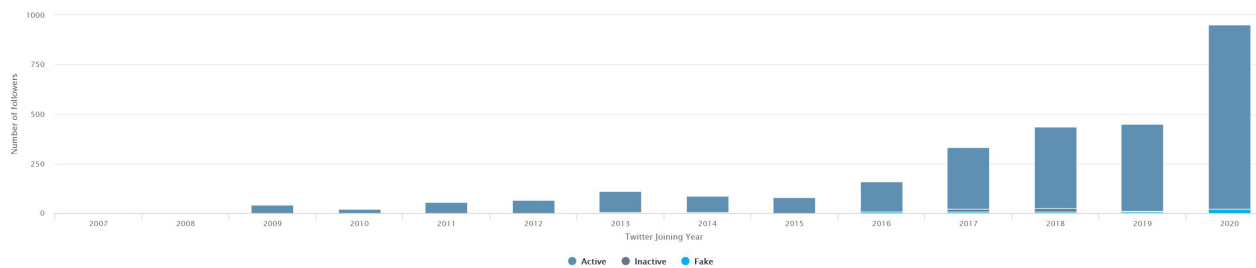
⇄ Users most retweeted

@laaawyer	3	@geomatics_gis	1	
@HadiNili	1	@Pariparvaneh2	1	
@asieh_am	1	@voria21	1	
@AfsharMahnaz	1	@a62_mahboob	1	
@amirmedusa	1	@ManotoNews	1	

💬 Users most replied to

@shahram1989	43	@Hamidreza_Byt	43	
@ghazalbanakaar	43	@Rmin001	34	
@behroozrezaei60	34	@Gallager15	31	
@rezakhaani	29	@geomatics_gis	21	
@pheebzz_buffay	21	@babak_farokhian	20	

@ Users most mentioned

@ghazalbanakaar	48	@shahram1989	47	
@Hamidreza_Byt	46	@Rmin001	35	
@behroozrezaei60	34	@Gallager15	32	
@rezakhaani	29	@Perspolisi2020	28	
@geomatics_gis	28	@pheebzz_buffay	21	

Hashtags most used

#اعدام_نکنید	495	#ایران_فروشی_نیست	487
#مریم_رجوی_گه_خورد	280	#مریم_رجوی_گوه_خورد	208
#دلبر	15	#مهرداد_سپهری	4
#جهان_نژادیان	3	#مولانا	2
#shameonyou	1	#بندرعباس_من_کجاست	1
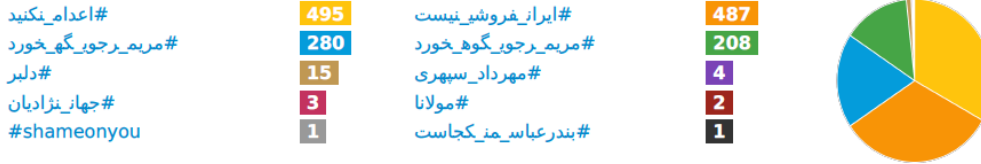
🗓 Days of the week
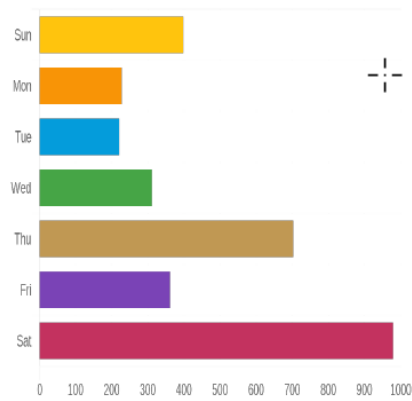
⏰ Hours of the day (UTC)
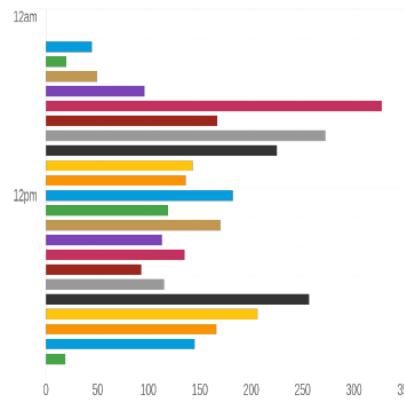
Nahiid_1975

@Nahiid_1975 joined Twitter on August 6, 2018, posting 201k Tweets, following 10,622 accounts with an estimated 5.81% fake followers tweeting entirely from Twitter for Android. @Nahiid_1975 averages around 110 Tweets per day with 55,817 followers.

@Nahiid_1975 followers joined Twitter in the following years:
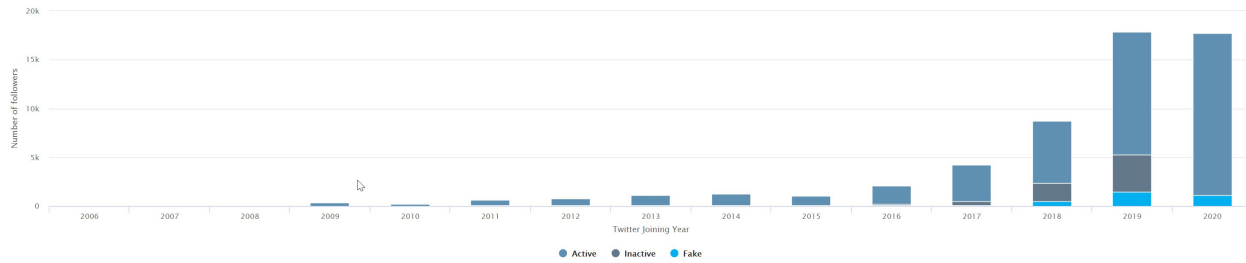
@Nahiid_1975 follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
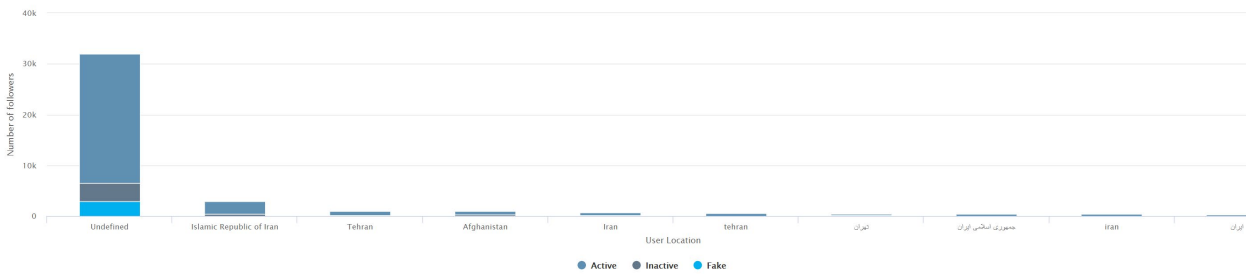
Afsoon1976

@afsoon1976 joined Twitter on January 3, 2019, posting 68.8k Tweets, following 24,313 accounts with an estimated 1.73% fake followers tweeting entirely from Twitter for Android. @afsoon1976 averages around 152 Tweets per day with 29,184 followers.

@afsoon1976 followers joined Twitter in the following years:
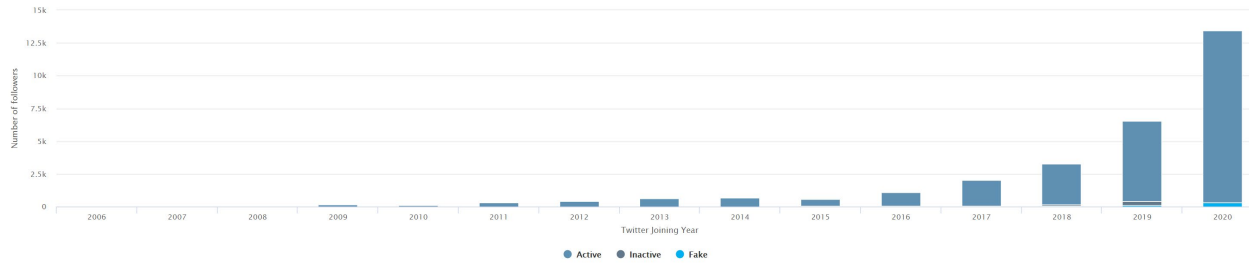
@afsoon1976 follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
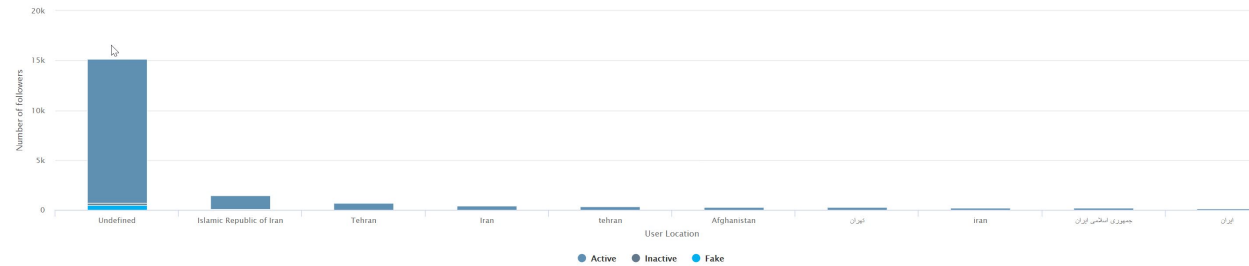
⇅ Users most retweeted

@vahid_ontime	26	
@kamand2003	17	
@ramin_rasaei	11	
@alirezalad11	11	
@_Tonnimontana_	9	

@alirezaa6424	19	
@mehrrnooosh0906	16	
@AmirHosein9191	11	
@doki__ar	10	
@red_flower1985	8	

💬 Users most replied to

@Vafa_1	124	
@esprso11	37	
@nucky2019	30	
@KianShz18	29	
@khayyati_zhina	26	

@SedighiAki	40	
@tata_celin	30	
@CaptArmanM	29	
@ALEXIRANI19	28	
@salvador_h__5	24	

@ Users most mentioned

@Vafa_1	132	
@esprso11	44	
@khayyati_zhina	39	
@tata_celin	31	
@ALEXIRANI19	28	

@SedighiAki	46	
@nucky2019	39	
@KianShz18	36	
@CaptArmanM	29	
@khanome_n	25	

Hashtags most used

#دهاتی	2	#تجربه	1	
#کرونا	1	#ذکر	1	
#پند	1	#دانشگاه_کابل	1	
#وین	1	#کودکان_کار	1	
#همسرم	1	#اقتدار	1	

📅 Days of the week

Sun
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thu
Fri
Sat

0   100   200   300   400   500   600

🕐 Hours of the day (UTC)

12am

12pm

0   50   100   150   200   250   300
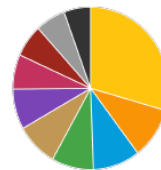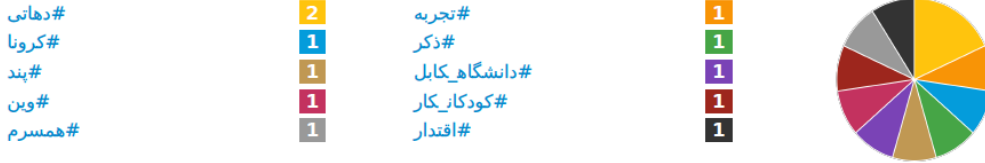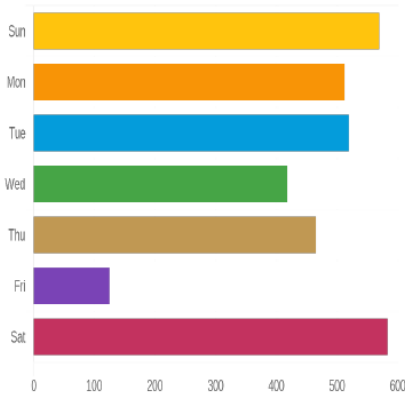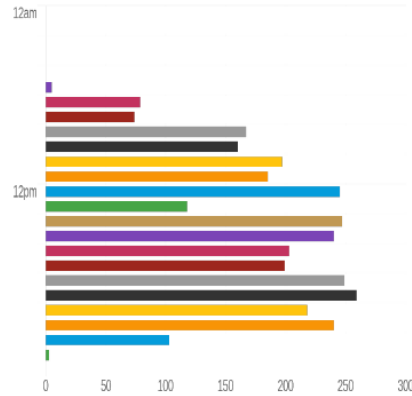
Callmemori (AKA Fatishunam)_

@callmemori_ joined Twitter on December 25, 2018, posting 66.4k Tweets, following 20,704 accounts with an estimated 2.59% fake followers tweeting entirely from Twitter for Android. @callmemori_ averages around 117 Tweets per day with 48,294 followers.

It is noteworthy that this Twitter user changed its name and persona over four times within three months, going from @fatishunam (a woman) to a few random names, then becoming Morteza (a man) and then changing to callmemori_

فأطیْشؤنم
@fatishunam Follows you
والا به من گفتن بیو نزار اینجا همه تورو با حرفات خواهند شناخت
Translate bio
یک روح سرکش به همه‌جا 📍
📅 Joined December 2018

مرتضی
@d1f5h2k7ow8z5g2
📅 Joined December 2018
21,1K Following   47K Followers

مرتضی
@gvjonb
📅 Joined December 2018
21.2K Following   47.1K Followers

MoRi
@callmemori_
Twitter.Com/search?q=from:...
going well   Joined December 2018
20.7K Following   **48.2K** Followers

@callmemori_ followers joined Twitter in the following years:
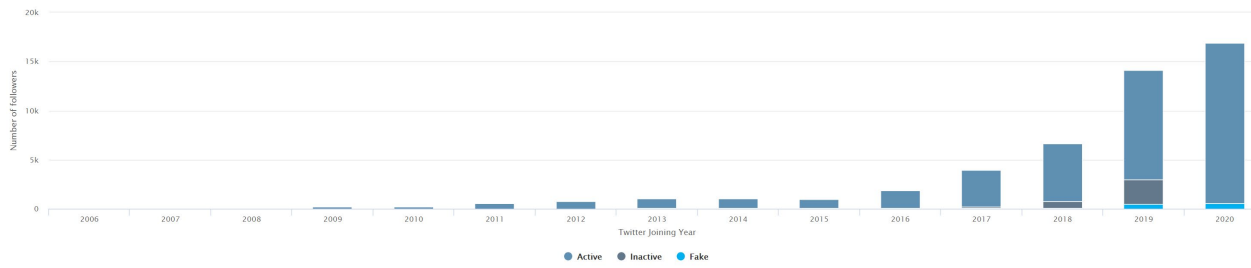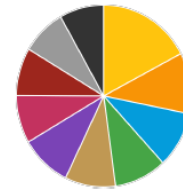

@callmemori_ follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:
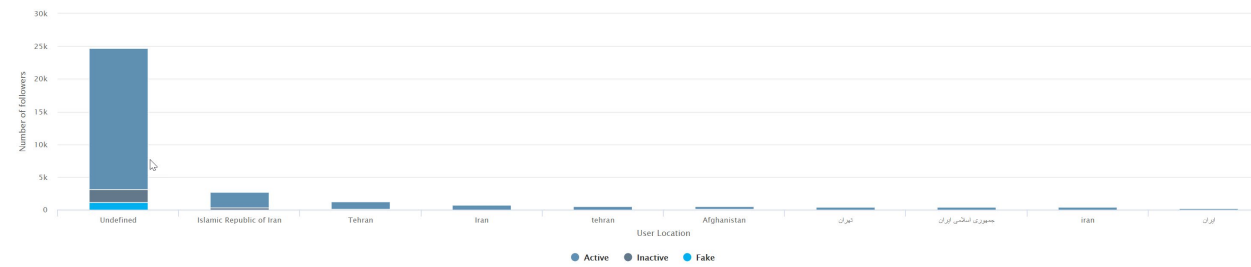
⇄ Users most retweeted

@Anahhid36	**59**	
@imaniiiik	**34**	
@kiahaat	**32**	
@AmirHosein9191	**29**	
@Lanatiebaba	**28**	

@_Nafas_kabiriNk	**37**	
@DELARAMESEPEHRI	**33**	
@mahnaz_mjo	**32**	
@alirezalad11	**29**	
@arvin_madrid	**28**	

💬 Users most replied to

@Anahhid36	**43**
@Farhadesham	**23**
@mehrava8493	**10**
@_fallgirl_	**8**
@mahmoudkhalvat	**8**

@Fatima_pn	**26**
@Lanatiebaba	**18**
@Sevilll591616	**9**
@sahele_shahabii	**8**
@_Nafas_kabiriNk	**7**
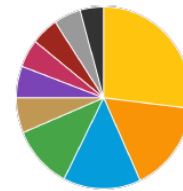
@ Users most mentioned

@Anahhid36	**52**
@Lanatiebaba	**25**
@Sevilll591616	**13**
@Farhadesham	**12**
@mehrava8493	**10**

@Fatima_pn	**26**
@Pedarkhandeh_n	**15**
@DELARAMESEPEHRI	**13**
@mahmoudkhalvat	**10**
@AmirHosein9191	**9**
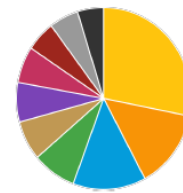
Hashtags most used

#جهان_نژادیان	**3**
#آبان98	**1**
#دختر_آبادان	**1**
#ریتوییت	**1**

#دختر_آبادانی	**2**
#شب_بخیر	**1**
#شیفة_شب	**1**
#بارسا	**1**

📅 Days of the week

🕐 Hours of the day (UTC)

October 28, 2020
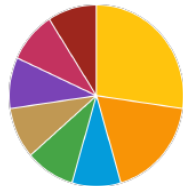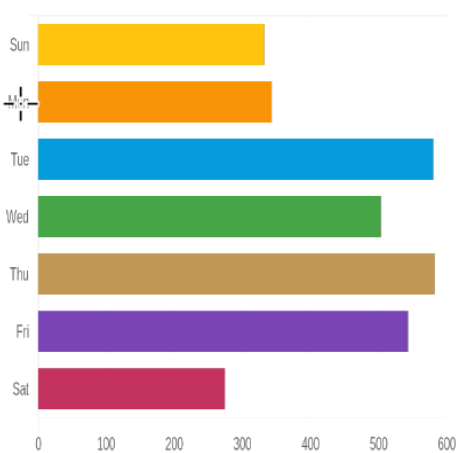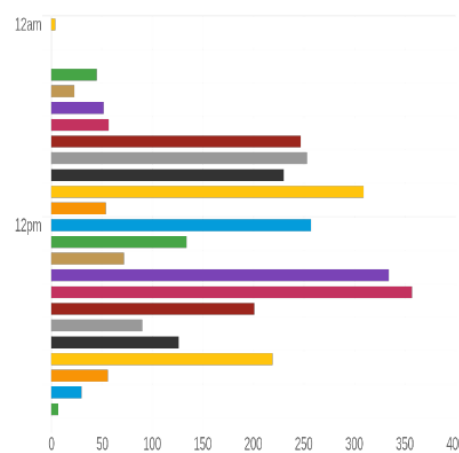
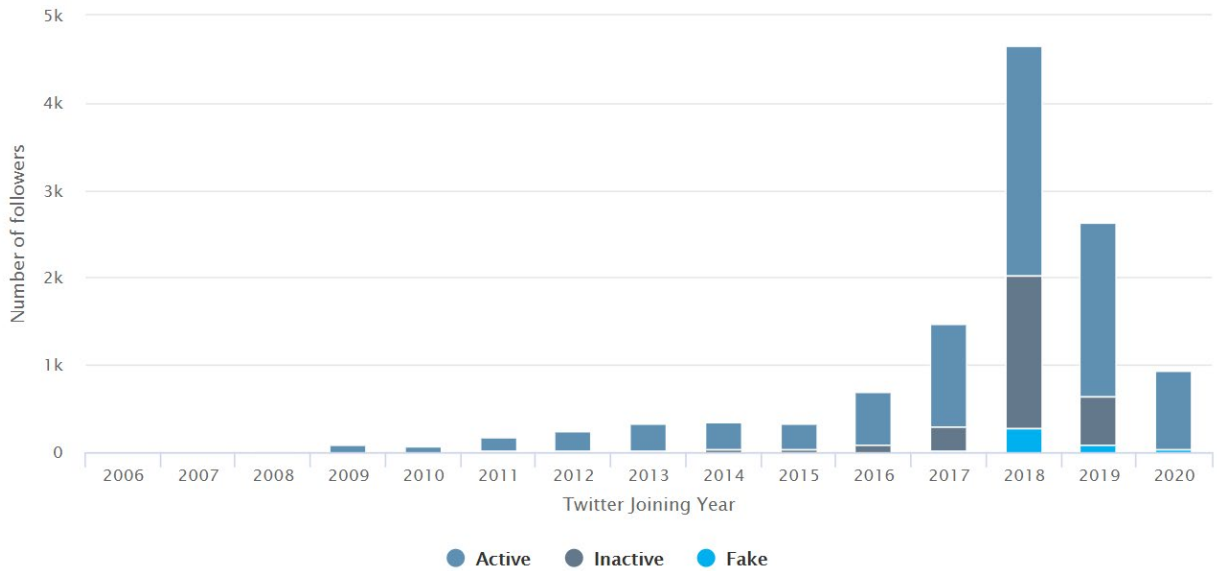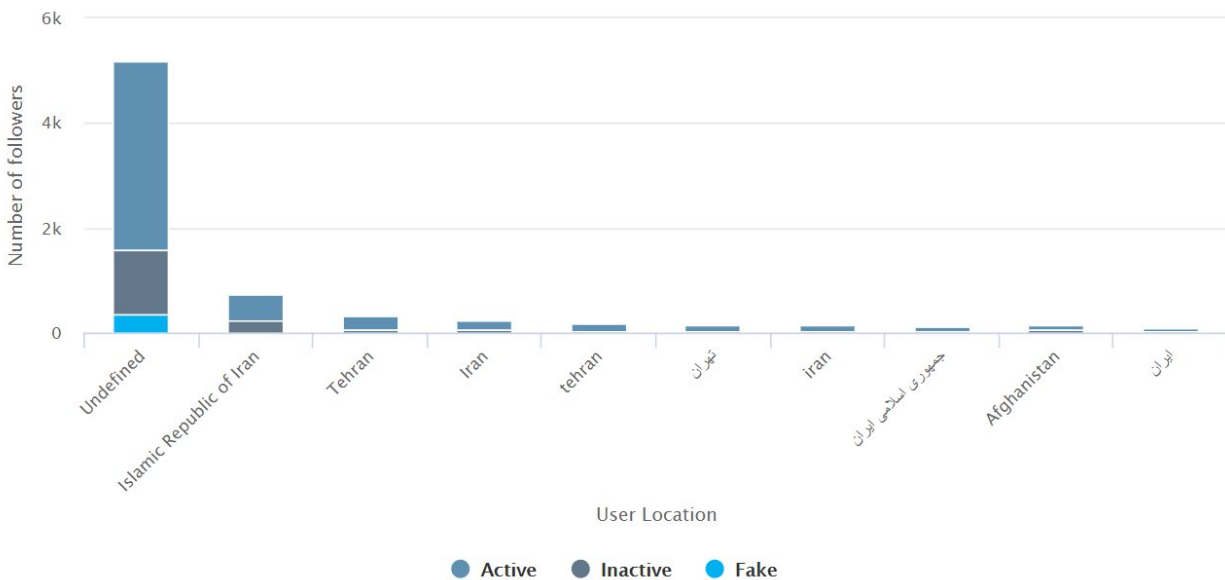## Mrs_ferlock

@Mrs_ferlock joined Twitter on December 30, 2017, posting 23.2k Tweets, following 9,096 accounts with an estimated 3.41% fake followers tweeting entirely from Twitter for Android. @Mrs_ferlock averages around 14 Tweets per day with 11,917 followers.

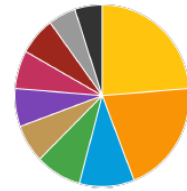@Mrs_ferlock followers joined Twitter in the following years:

@Mrs_ferlock follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:

↻ Users most retweeted

@Nahiid_1975	14		@kaf_aleff	12	
@2ndravanparish	6		@MRjizjiz	5	
@afsoon1976	4		@dokhiastam	4	
@bitarazaqi	4		@uniii_corrrn	4	
@Cuttlasvii	3		@Thyme_tim	3	

💬 Users most replied to

@Mrs_ferlock	108		@uniii_corrrn	68	
@venusiii20	67		@dokhiastam	56	
@2ndravanparish	36		@AGHAsazegar	35	
@mahi__goli	30		@yas_emad	30	
@Abtin95565361	30		@zadeyepayiiiiiz	28	
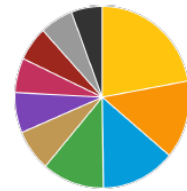
@ Users most mentioned

@dokhiastam	59		@venusiii20	57	
@2ndravanparish	42		@shahab7452	35	
@zadeyepayiiiiiz	30		@yas_emad	30	
@Abtin95565361	30		@fahime06509845	28	
@khayatbashi_	25		@Paradisam_	25	

Hashtags most used

#اعدام_نکنید	77		#نه_به_اعدام	40
#اعدام‌نکنید	11		#stopexecutionofiranianprotestors	9
#مریم_رجوی_گوه_خورد	8		#درخانه_نمی‌مانیم	5
#ریتوییت_لطفا	3		#گوه_خورد	3
#stopexecutionsiniran	3		#زاگرس_در_آتش	3

🗓 Days of the week

🕐 Hours of the day (UTC)

The Nejat Society

Treadstone 71 data and analysis led to the Nejat Society, created by the Ministry of Intelligence. The Nejat Society is a counter-MEK site posting negative and false content across Twitter, Facebook Blog sites, Telegram, Instagram, YouTube, RSS Feeds, and subscription newsletters non-inclusively. The Nejat Society publishes content in Albanian, English, and Farsi. The content is extremely critical of the MEK in Albania. The Nejat Society, funded by the Iranian government, claims to be a non-governmental organization.[11]

The @nejatngo Twitter account references the prominent influencers for this campaign (@ghasembashiri, @callmemori_) using the prominent two hashtags:

> ⟲ **Nejat Society Retweeted**
>
> سرهنگ قاسم بشیری 🐢🧀🦕
> @ghasembashiri
>
> Replying to @bbckalbasi
>
> همینه که هست بایدم پوشش بدید :(((((
> #مریم_رجوی_█_خورد
> #اعدام_نکنید
>
> Translate Tweet
>
> 3:12 PM · Jul 17, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

> ⟲ **Nejat Society Retweeted**
>
> MoRi @callmemori_ · Jul 17
>
> این زیر یه جمله ساده با هشتگ #مریم_رجوی_█خورد منشن کنید 😌
>
> 💬 285   ⟲ 191   ♡ 1.5K

@netajngo references the مریم_رجوی_█خورد hashtag between July 18 and 27 several times:

خورد █_رجوی_مریم# رجوی در یک ادعای مضحک می گوید ما هم ترند جهانی شدیم# https://t.co/t1YF6iJB0j
RT @kazemiiiii: You heard #اعدام_نکنید , you will hear #مریم_رجوی_█ خورد too https://t.co/WpeSHTn4Zj
RT @Mashti505: #مریم_رجوی█ خورد She is not what Iranians want https://t.co/91bOOh5id3
RT @realJohnAhl: Maryam Rajavi does not speak for the Iranian people!#مریم_رجوی█ خورد https://t.co/W2qm49t5YN
RT @Mahboub89: خائنین خلق #مریم_رجوی_گوه_خورد █ خورد https://t.co/Q7O9C6uhcv
RT @Mahjonia: خورد/ایران اینتر نشنال هم █ خورد #خورد_رجوی_مریم#بابا جفتش تو لغت نامه دهخدا امده █ . https://t.co/SX...
RT @MissWolf2696: #رجوی_مریم █ خورد دوباره تاکید میکنیم که https://t.co/D0uep5CwTN
#مریم_رجوی█ خورد es trending topic en Twitter en todo el mundo @trendingtopicsm https://t.co/G4aGT7DyGt
RT @fatishunam: #رجوی_مریم █ خورد منشن کنید این زیر یه جمله ساده با هشتگ 😊
RT @SolmazAzhdari: خورد مزدوران سعودی اینترنشنال ر به نظرم منشن کنید اونا هم این█ رجوی_مریم# خورد یا حتی █رجوی_مریم█ خورد...
RT @pooriast: #رجوی_مریم_(:چیزی که ترند شده اینه، از یک املا استفاده کنیم █ خورد https://t.co/dYCLYVt2hS
RT @ghasembashiri: @bbckalbasi همینه که بایدم پوشش بدید ((((: #رجوی_مریم █ خورد نکنید_اعدام#

39

RT @kazemiiiii: You heard #اعدام_نکنید , you will hear #مریم_رجوی‮ ‬خورد█ too https://t.co/WpeSHTn4Zj

RT @RezaHingani: #اعدام_نکنید#مریم_رجوی█ خورده‌اند رسیده قابل قبولی سیاسی بلوغ یک به ایرانیان داد نشون#بیش_باد

RT @sahandiranmehr: اعدام_تر فرقه ماجرای و نکنید...█ بودم مشترک نقاط بر تاکید هواداران از همیشه. نداره حاصلی تفرقه. در هم هفته این تو خوشحالم#اعدام_تر

RT @FarnazMiri: مورد در هم با تایملاین کل میاد خوشم خیلی #اعدام_و نکنید #مریم_رجوی█ حتا و خورد #مریم_رجوي█ هستن یک‌صدا و متحد خورده

RT @EideLuo: @RudyGiuliani مریم_رجوي#شو_خفه_رجوي_مریم#اعدام_نکنید#https://t.co/6fOvFBaZzh1399 نجات انجمن گردهمایی صوتی فایل – تیر

RT @Zvej1988: @chipsikolang I can't breathe #اعدام_نکنید#مریم_رجوي█ خورده She is terorist اعدام_نکنید#خورده█ رجوي_مریم

RT @qolidust: @Maryam_Rajavi Who the█ are you?!Our people?!You are not with us...Shut da█ off█ 👌👌👌#اعدام_نکنید #مریم_رجوی...

RT @qolidust: @Setek70305745 @Legion___1 @RudyGiuliani We all hate them#مریم_رجوی█ خورده #اعدام_نکنید

RT @ghasembashiri: @bbckalbasi بدید پوشش بایدم هست که همینه :(((((#مریم_رجوی█ خورد #اعدام_نکنید
https://t.co/bd5zBZg6lw اعدام_نکنید#رجوی# مجاهدین_خلق# در پیترو سن ساحل #کیشوت دون و آلبانی #ایران مقاومت

The Nejat Society represents an Iranian government-funded and run series of social media accounts and websites intent on delivering a positive view of the Iranian regime while portraying anything to the contrary as negative and evil.

The @nejatngo Twitter account metrics include 190 followers while following 583 accounts. @netajngo tweeted 11.6k times starting on July 28, 2009. We estimate 3.16% of @nejatngo followers to be fake and 21.58% to be inactive. @nejatngo followers joined Twitter in the following years:
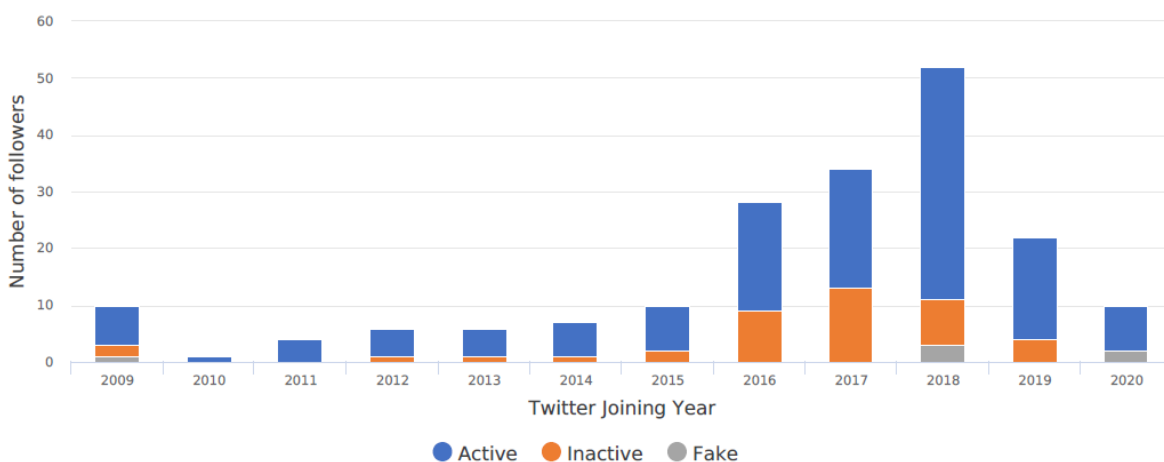
@netajngo follower locations based on the estimated number of fake, inactive, and active followers:


40

October 28, 2020
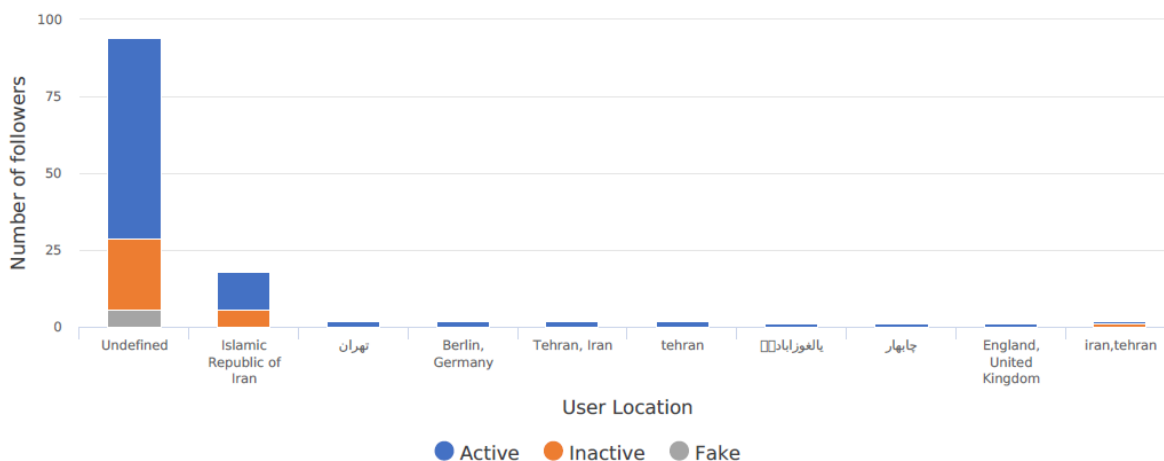
⇅ Users most retweeted

@ma_khodabandeh	18	@OlsiJ	11
@IranInterlink	9	@Feraghnews	6
@Ali_Gharib	4	@RezaGhazwini	3
@iPouya	3	@NegarMortazavi	3
@alizadeh1343	3	@qolidust	3

💬 Users most replied to

@mikeypleystart	5	@RezaGhazwini	4
@OlsiJ	3	@SharareMishavam	2
@shab_zadeh_	1	@amirakbariorg	1
@Alist1077	1	@BBCKasraNaji	1
@nejatngo	1	@m_movahed313	1
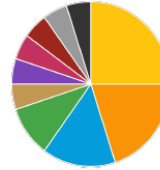
@ Users most mentioned

@RezaGhazwini	5	@IranIntl	3
@HaBahrami	3	@OlsiJ	3
@DanielLarison	3	@SharareMishavam	2
@RudyGiuliani	2	@John_Bolton	1
@BBCKasraNaji	1	@AmbJohnBolton	1

Hashtags most used

#مجاهدین_خلق	887	#رجوی	450
#mek	346	#آلبانی	281
#حقوق_بشر	273	#مریم_رجوی	268
#pmoi	234	#فرقه_رجوی	209
#خانواده	199	#mko	193
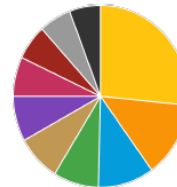
📅 Days of the week
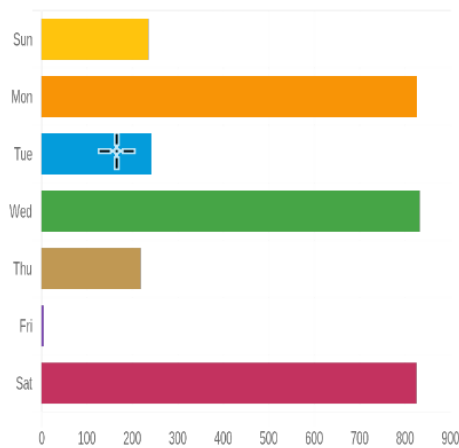
⏱ Hours of the day (UTC)
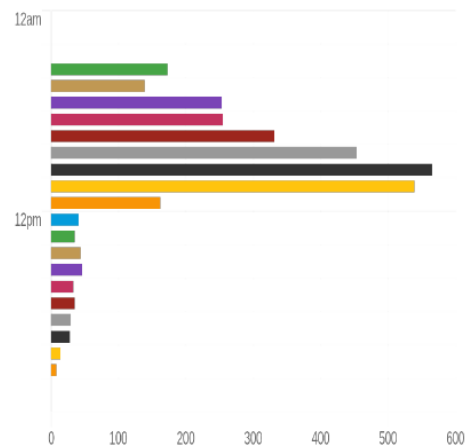
| | Twitter Web App | **1160** | | Google | **883** | |
| | Twitter Web Client | **630** | | twitterfeed | **500** | |
| | dlvr.it | **10** | | | | |

Twitter and Hashtag Locations

We were able to derive other locations from Twitter accounts, as listed in the Locations chart. *NOTE: Locations are a point in time view of geolocations based on hashtags and Twitter accounts. Twitter blocks I.P. addresses. Of note is the high volume of postings from Smartphones.* We estimate most accounts, proxy accounts, and participants originated from Iran:

- Approximately 35 to 45% from Iran (non-inclusive of the likely Iranian participants using VPNs and Proxies)
- Approximately 26 to 30% from the United States (many likely VPN and Proxies)
- Approximately 10% from Europe (many likely VPN and Proxies)
- Approximately 6% from Canada (many likely VPN and Proxies)

Twitter removed approximately 35% of the core campaign members, not due to this report.

Other Locations Derived from Twitter Accounts
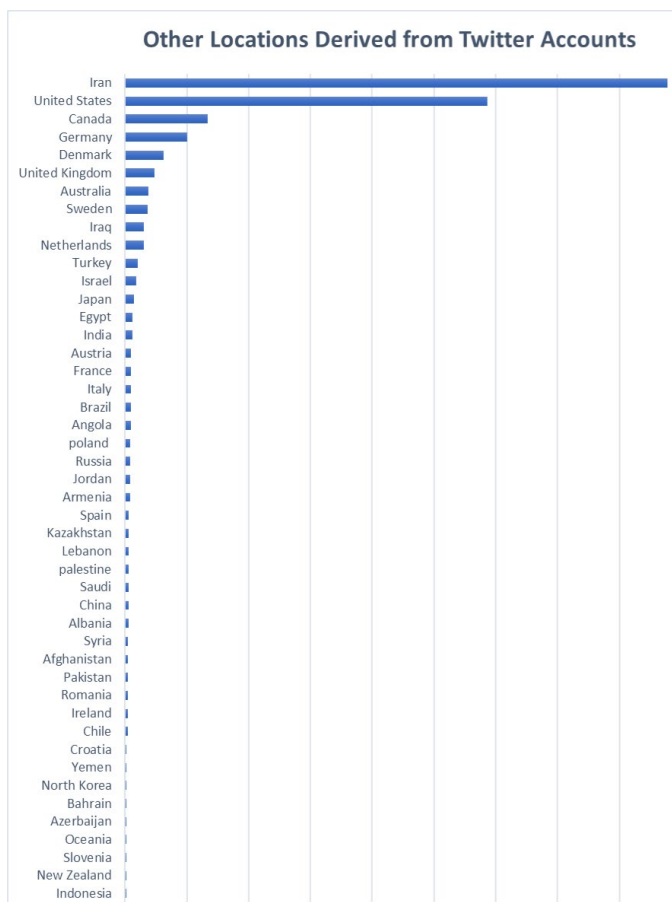
Difference with Cyber 'Flash Mob'

Cyber flash mob: the seemingly random act of thousands of Twitter accounts tweeting, retweeting, and replying to the same content with precision sequencing, but the data available on this specific campaign make it highly unlikely considering the level of organization viewed. Cyber flash mob events occur suddenly without planning to perform some unusual activity at a pointless period of time, then quickly disperse, and would not last over 60 hours.

Strategic Narrative

Led by the IRGC, the campaign coincided with opposition events and anniversaries trying to cloud event messaging. The effort casts doubt and negative sentiment towards the National Council of Iran and associated groups, particularly the President-elect of the NCRI,

Maryam Rajavi. The IRGC campaigns openly violate social media platform rules and policies. The ongoing removal of accounts combined with new accounts' continued creation makes the battle continuous. We could not figure out most personas' I.P. addresses due to limitations imposed by social media platforms.

The IRGC use hashtags that demean and make fun of the opposition using well-known phrases such as "Don't talk nonsense." Meaning, "eat shit." Manipulators find ways to make their opponent look ridiculous. The negative messaging relieves the target audience of the responsibility to think seriously about why the message makes them uncomfortable (dissonance). Manipulators measure their audience to make sure that their joke does not sound like sour grapes, instead driving negative aspects of a regime under the opposition. They push for chaos and confusion.

IRGC messaging also presents the Iranian regime as powerful and one of strength. By managing the regime's perception as strong against the "Great Satan," they help the oppressed worldwide in Lebanon, Yemen, and Venezuela. Included in this narrative are images of the decadence, corruption, and failure of life in America.

Other unsuspecting Twitter users repeat the messages as well, not realizing their role in the manipulation. The use of unsuspecting Twitter users is highly likely an intended result of the IRGC. Getting Twitter users to retweet and repeat the messaging from established accounts that do not look anything like a cyber persona since they do not make it difficult to link the operation to the IRGC and remove these accounts difficult.

The Iranian regime realizes they cannot compete with the flow of information unless they limit that information. The building of the Iranian Intranet with global filters attempted removal of virtual private networks, and proxies used to bypass Dezhfa[12] serve to control the domestic narrative. They realize they could not survive without this control. The regime desires to force each Iranian to identify with the Islamic Revolutionary ideals, the theocracy, and their fight against Zionism, the United States, and their Sunni enemies.

---

[12] Dezhfa - https://cybershafarat.com/2019/12/18/dezhfa-dejafa/

Assessment - MOIS US Election Influence Operation – Part 2
Restart Leader – MIGA "Make Iran Great Again"

Treadstone 71 judges with moderate confidence that the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (Iranian MOIS) directly supports the voiceofrestart.com website and associated social media accounts. Through the 'restart' organization, the MOIS continuously targets Iranian dissidents such as the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI/MEK) using Twitter, YouTube, Websites, Blogs, and Telegram non-inclusively. *A video from August 13, 2013, directly shows Hosseini that he has ties to the MOIS (1:05:24 start).*[13] While appearing on a television show, Hosseini admitted the MOIS contacted him in UAE. The MOIS offered him an opportunity to launch a television show. The MOIS agents said, "We will provide you with news that would serve your interest. You will also be able to curse at us. If you're worried about your image, we will fix all that for you". "Hosseini, you either take this money from us… or we use a tenth of this money to make sure you fail. It's your decision. You will set up the Television, we will provide the advertisement, and we'll make sure the news is all critical [of the regime].'"

Using several high-profile accounts, the MOIS consistently posts negative information about Iranian dissidents in parallel with the United States Presidential election. Many posts reference Donald J. Trump (@realdonaldtrump), QAnon, QAnon conspiracy theories, Secretary Pompeo (@SecPompeo), Benjamin Netanyahu, and recognized world leaders seeking rapid recognition and message repetition. Twitter accounts @restartleader, @restartmiga, and @semahos, form the primary accounts propagating misinformation and disinformation about Iranian dissidents using hashtags and content supporting the Trump Administration. The voiceofrestart.com website, YouTube channel, and Facebook page uses the taxonomy (Figure 7 to the right) and content on the website to severely rebuke the MEK and Democrats while proselytizing optimism about the GOP and Donald Trump. The MOIS follows with Pasto News on Telegram, continuing the messaging with over sixty-one thousand followers.

In contrast, the MOIS driven accounts post negative information using Obama, Clinton, Biden, Kerry, Kamala Harris hashtags and @ portraying them as supporters of terrorism. @restartleader shifted from primarily Farsi language posts on August 1, 2020, targeting English language followers. The accounts use hashtags and @ such as:
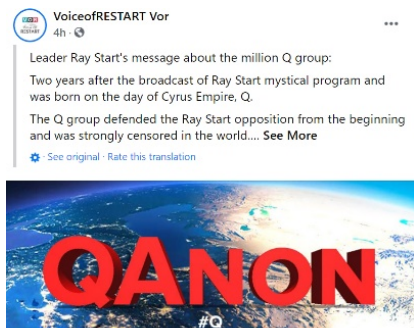
Figure 8 VoiceofRestart Facebook

#Iranians_Hate_PMOI_RezaPahlavi

#RestartMIGA[14]	#Iranians_Hate_PMOI_RezaPahlavi
#BidenCorruption	#Israel
#BLITZ	#MAGA #MIGA
#Constitution of Cyrus	#Make_Iran_Great_Again
#Cyrus_I	#Patriots
#Iran #USA #IRAN	#Pompeo
	#Restart
	#Restart is the only way out
	#restart_opposition
	#Restart_opposition
	#RestartLeader
	#Restartleader

Figure 7 VoiceofRestart.com Taxonomy List

---

[13] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EObbE_Dn3uo).

[14] MIGA – Make Iran Great Again

#RestartMIGA
#Rise of the Cyrus Empire
#TheCyrusEmpire
#Trump
#Trump2020
#TRUMP2020ToSaveAmerica
#TrustTrump
#WWG1W

October 28, 2020

The accounts repeat many slogans and content taken directly from @realDonaldTrump targeting globalism, socialism, and mail-in voting (easiest way to cheat).

Regular postings to antagonize Iranian government opposition groups targeting United States leadership. Postings support Donald Trump and his administration while propagating QAnon conspiracy theories through various retweets meant to drive new postings using 'like' hashtags. The campaigns exploit divisions in the U.S. while posting misinformation and disinformation on Iranian dissidents and anti-regime groups.

Seyed Muhammad Hosseini

Mr. Hosseini is an Iranian exile living in Huntington Beach, California presenting himself as a savior for the Iranian people. A self-proclaimed reality T.V. star, showman, director, and writer (Lake, 2018), Hosseini stars in his videos on YouTube and throughout the Restart movement.

Hosseini's activities resulted in removal from Telegram in the past. Hosseini propagates al-right, QAnon, and Infowars' content support Trump claiming that Iran needs its own Fourth of July. (Cobb, 2019). Hosseini accounts on Twitter @hosseiniTV, and Instagram is either suspended or gone, while his showmantv accounts on Telegram and the associated website are defunct.

Darknet Content

Our research leads to at least one darknet site voicing the same content:

Billions of dollars of dictatorial money have been spent on Biden to come to power and divide America
A huge and sincere #congratulations on this American success to the American nation and friends of the American nation and specifically to @POTUS @realDonaldTrump.
God bless president Trump
God bless America
#RestartLeader
#Trump2020
#Cyrus_I #Alexander_II

#Cyrus_is_coming
#Alexander_is_coming
Q_Restart_new_life retweeted
Q_Restart_new_life
@Restartnewlife1

Replying to @RealMadDadMAGA @Cernovich @RealCandaceO @TheOfficerTatum @DiamondandSilk @MarkDice @DarlaShine @DonaldJTrumpJr @TuckerCarlson @Tom_Laipply
We are Persian Patriots
#Restart_opposition support American Patriots and president Trump
Billions of dollars of dictatorial money have been spent on Biden to come to power and divide America
We want make America and Iran Great Again

(http://nitterlgj3n5fgwesu3vxc5h67ruku33nqaoeoocae2mvlzhsu6k7fqd.onion)

Figure 9 Restartleader Twitter and @PastoNews on Telegram

Dirty Tricks

At the same time, they target political leaders and leadership of dissident groups using many of the 'dirty tricks' we discuss in this YouTube video. The MOIS uses non-credible claims with sources against their adversaries, whether linking to their news and postings or modifying existing content (Wikipedia). They use unsourced and false claims against their targets. They reference old and non-credible claims building on the lie and, they harness conspiracy theories. The MOIS also uses social media platforms' popularity to erode trust in any messaging contrary to revolutionary ideals.

The MOIS uses any possible political organization in the United States to propagate their message and stir discord. By doing so, their message gets repeated on various social media platforms. The content tends to be misleading, biased both for and against a topic, while cherry-picked to drive the desired message. Their content aligns with existing narrative from the likes of:

Celebrities, government organizations, heads of state, political leaders in the United States, Australia, Canada, Israel, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria, Turkey, various country ministers, presidents, prime ministers, representatives, president-elect, and world leaders.

Who is Restart?

Treadstone 71 views the Restart group as a fringe group like many others assessed. We assess that Restart is a creation of the Iranian Ministry of

Figure 10 November 1 @RestartLeader Twitter Favorites snapshot

Intelligence and Security (MOIS) developed to oppose the MEK and splinter Iranian regime opposition groups. Restart embraces QAnon and Infowars conspiracy theories (Tabatabai, 2020), while its mission is a return to a modern-day version of the Cyrus Empire[15]. The MOIS run site likely uses anti-regime and anti-MEK/PMOI content to flesh out Iranians who do not believe in the revolutionary ideals. The deception operation actively posts across multiple platforms inciting violence. Telegram muted two of their sites in the past. (Iranwire, 2018)

Another likely motivation is stifling any internal Iranian dissent by shutting down free speech while flooding the airwaves with their propaganda and messaging.

Data and Information Analysis

@RestartLeader Bot Sentinal Ratings

The Bot Sentinal supports our analysis that over three thousand two hundred followers of @restartleader are fake, and over one thousand seven hundred followers are inactive. Ratings by Bot Sentinal of these levels typically warrant Twitter scrutiny if not removal.

Bot Sentinal:

Accounts that are classified as disruptive often engage in malicious tweet activity. Some disruptive accounts harass other accounts and use offensive language. Disruptive accounts periodically share misinformation and can frequently spam hashtags. Inauthentic accounts and toxic trolls regularly receive a disruptive rating, so we recommend you exhibit caution when interacting with disruptive accounts.[16]

@RestartMIGA

@restartmiga Restart MIGA
1,598 tweets   **536** following   **3,508** followers   **3** listed
Joined Twitter on September 25, 2018 as user #1044646791465947137
#Cyrus the Great and #Rumi are two of us. #FreeIran #Cyrus_Empire #RESTART_OPPOSITION #RestartMIGA #MAGA #MIGA #IRAN #PERSIA #PATRIOTS
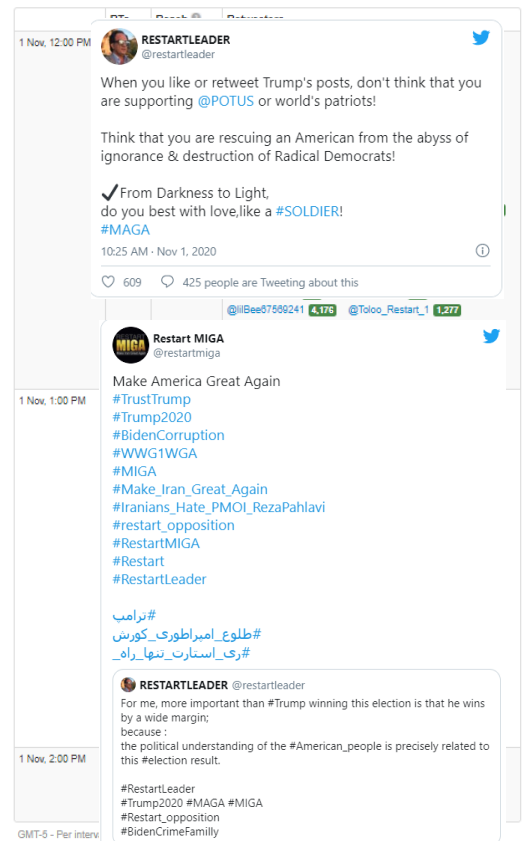فارسی   **6.54** followers/following   **0.86** listed/1,000 followers

---

[15] Cyrus the Great was the founder of the Achaemenian Empire. His empire, stretching from the Aegean Sea to the Indus River, was the largest that had ever existed at the time of his rule. Cyrus pieced his kingdom together using a mixture of conquest and diplomacy, attesting to his skills as a warrior and a statesman. www.britannica.com/biography/Cyrus-the-Great

[16] https://botsentinel.com/ Bot Sentinel is a free non-partisan platform developed to classify and track inauthentic accounts and toxic trolls. The platform uses machine learning and artificial intelligence to classify Twitter accounts, and then adds the accounts to a publicly available database that anyone can browse.
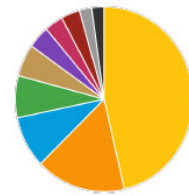
📊 Tweet history

🔁 Users most retweeted

@restartleader	512
@gregreese	20
@restart9026891	7
@Mitra131	5
@restart313	3

@restartmiga	71
@Shima_rst	8
@SecPompeo	6
@intheMatrixxx	3
@simorgh1989	3
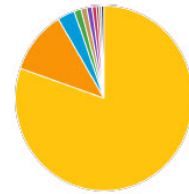
💬 Users most replied to

@restartmiga	82
@restartleader	16
@Matthew69Man	10
@SecPompeo	6
@White_hat66	4

@USAdarFarsi	29
@realDonaldTrump	13
@gregreese	7
@StormIsUponUs	6
@Saba7sr	4

@ Users most mentioned

@Pastonews	106
@restartleader	72
@SecPompeo	24
@alizandifar	6
@Peyali3	5

@USAdarFarsi	102
@realDonaldTrump	66
@gregreese	12
@StormIsUponUs	6
@nemesis_rst	5
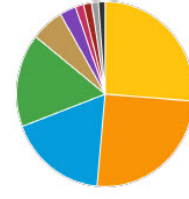
Hashtags most used

#restartmiga	252
#restart	197
#قانون_اساسی_کورش	129
#ری_استارت_تنها_راه_نجات	77
#inviterestartleadertowarsaw	67

#restart_opposition	198
#ری_استارت	169
#make_iran_great_again	95
#iranians_hate_pmoi_rezapahlavi	68
#persianempire	63

Bibliography and Links

Bibliography

Cobb, A. (2019, July 6). *Troll watch: Make Iran Great Again*. Retrieved from Forensic News:
https://forensicnews.net/2019/07/06/troll-watch-make-iran-great-again/

Iranwire. (2018, January 11). *Daily Beast*. Retrieved from The App Powering the Uprising in Iran, Where Some Channels
Pushed for Violence: https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-app-powering-the-uprising-in-iran

Kharbarban. (2019, September 18). *Basij is the flagship of the cyberspace nationalization movement*. Retrieved from
Khabarban: https://khabarban.com/a/25157416

Kronenfeld, G. S. (2013). *Iran and Cyberspace Warfare.* Military and Strategic Affairs.

Lake, E. (2018, January 3). *The Iranian Game-Show Host Urging His Fans to Burn Mosques*. Retrieved from Bloomberg
Opinion: https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-01-03/the-iranian-game-show-host-urging-his-
fans-to-burn-mosques

Mahoutchi, F. (2020, June 18). *People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran*. Retrieved from The implications of House Res.
374 for Iran: https://english.mojahedin.org/i/us-house-representative-h-res-374-iran-protests-20200618

MillitaryHistoryNow. (2019, March 26). *The Iran-Iraq War – 10 Facts About the Deadliest Conflict of the 1980s*. Retrieved
from Military History Now: https://militaryhistorynow.com/2019/03/26/the-iran-iraq-war-10-essential-facts-
about-the-first-persian-gulf-conflict/

T71. (2019, September 25). *Cyber Battalion Empowerment Courses in Abali – Iranian Basij Cyber Battalions*. Retrieved
from The Cyber Shafarat: https://cybershafarat.com/2019/09/25/cyber-battalion/

Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Dunbar's number*. Retrieved from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunbar's_number

The Cybershafarat – Links on Iranian Activity

- https://cybershafarat.com/2020/04/18/establishment-of-a-cyberspace-headquarters-in-masoumiyah-theological-higher-education-institute-data-laundering/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2019/09/25/cyber-battalion/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2019/10/23/the-basij-cyber-%e2%80%8b%e2%80%8bbattalions-are-working-to-counter-enemy-attacks-in-cyberspace-names-and-cadre-for-some-of-the-basij-resistance-areas-around-tehran/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2019/10/09/forming-cyber-battalions-and-service-teams-is-one-of-the-core-plans-of-the-basij/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2019/07/22/tekide-unveiled/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2019/05/03/mois-iran/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2019/03/27/offseconf19/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2019/03/10/cyber-war-and-iranian-cyber-army-in-the-name-of-ashrar-an-article-by-ashrar-team/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2015/09/07/gerdab-ir-oppress-your-people-basij-turn-on-your-own-the-new-savak-pasdaran-and-basij-rules-of-oppression-reporting/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2020/09/21/mohammad-reza-espargham/
- https://cybershafarat.com/2020/05/12/farzin-karimi/
- https://cybershafarat.com/category/basij/

October 28, 2020