

# (Video) Facebook Revealed the Latest in a Series of Mass Takedowns of Deceptive Content Originating in Iran

*Khamenei responded to a nationwide uprising by stating that the MEK had “planned for months” to facilitate protests and popularize anti-government slogans.*

PARIS, FRANCE, October 17, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The National Council of Resistance of Iran \(NCRI\)](#), reported that Facebook recently released the findings of its September report on coordinated inauthentic behavior and revealed the latest in a series of mass takedowns of deceptive content originating in Iran. The report specified that 93 Facebook accounts and 194 Instagram accounts had been removed for being part of the network in question, along with 14 distinct pages and 15 groups.



(NCRI) and (PMOI / MEK Iran): Facebook provided screenshots as examples of the relevant inauthentic behavior in its disclosures on Monday. In one, the account owners took aim at the leading pro-democracy opposition group, the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran.

These numbers appear modest in comparison to the thousands of accounts that have been removed by both Facebook and Twitter over the past several years, but they underscore the fact that the Iranian regime’s disinformation is a recurring feature of the social media landscape, and that efforts to fight against it have so far been only intermittently successful.

Various other reports on online security have concluded that Iran’s methods are growing more sophisticated in multiple areas, including cyberespionage and the coordination of inauthentic behavior on social media. The September Facebook report acknowledges the high level of that coordination by noting that the leaders of the given Iranian network were specifically identified as members of the country’s hardline paramilitary, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. It was reportedly the first network to be identified as such, and also the first to focus its efforts almost entirely on a domestic Iranian audience.

Facebook provided screenshots as examples of the relevant inauthentic behavior in its disclosures on Monday. In one, the account owners took aim at the leading pro-democracy opposition group, [the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran \(PMOI / MEK Iran\)](#), and repeated familiar allegations about its lack of popular support inside Iran. The post claimed that the group, which was formed prior to the 1979 revolution and later opposed the formation of a theocratic regime by Ruhollah Khomeini, is aging out of relevance, with most members being elderly and hundreds have died during the previous year.



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This message, however, was undermined years in advance by none other than Khomeini's successor to the regime's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, who responded to a nationwide uprising in January 2018 by stating that the (PMOI / MEK Iran) had "planned for months" to facilitate protests and popularize anti-government slogans.

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NCRI

The uprising featured a wide range of Iranian demographics, with substantial representation of the nation's youth, and was comprised of gatherings in well over 100 cities and towns. Less than two years later, in November 2019, the (PMOI / MEK Iran) was credited with the leadership of another nationwide uprising, this one extending to nearly 200 municipalities.

In the wake of both uprisings, Iranian officials have been unusually forthright about their concerns of growing (PMOI / MEK Iran) influence. Almost immediately following the outbreak of the 2019 uprising, regime authorities

opened fire on crowds in numerous cities, killing 1,500 people in a matter of days. At the time, the current president of the regime, Ebrahim Raisi was serving as head of the judiciary, and his role in the crackdown served to reinforce his legacy as the "butcher of 1988," a moniker he acquired as a result of his leading role on the Tehran "death commission" that oversaw [the execution of 30,000](#) political prisoners, mainly (PMOI / MEK Iran) members.

The massacre of 1988 stands as a symbol of the Iranian regime's lifelong conflict with the (PMOI

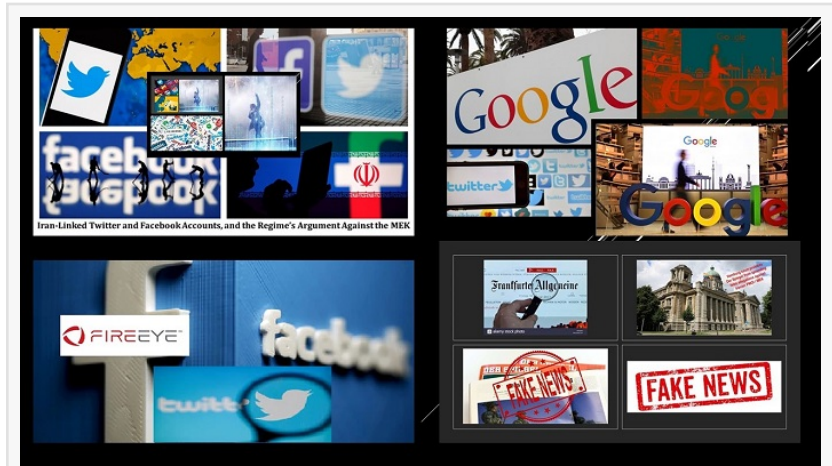
/ MEK Iran), and Raisi's appointment to the presidency suggests that this is still a priority in spite of efforts by propaganda networks to claim that the (PMOI / MEK Iran) poses no serious threat to the theocratic system. The intervening 33 years have seen a near-constant outpouring of such propaganda, with varying levels of effectiveness.

During a 12-month period between 2016 and 2017, the regime published at least 14 books defaming the PMOI, and between 2019 and 2020, state media outlets aired more than 300 movies and television series for the same purpose. The regime also maintains a monthly print magazine and more than a dozen websites dedicated to issues related to the PMOI. All of this, of course, further undermines the IRGC's claim on social media that the organization is nearing obsolescence.

The domestic focus of recent strategies in both traditional media and social media has not, however, prevented the regime from disseminating propaganda beyond its borders. In fact, its domestic and international disinformation often work hand-in-hand as part of a feedback loop whereby state media talking points fuel the infiltration of foreign media, leading to publications that the Iranian regime may then cite as "independent" verification of its libelous claims.

Aspects of this feedback loop were outlined in February in a letter by Hadi Sani-Kani, a former member of the (PMOI / MEK Iran) who admitted to being recruited by the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security to write false stories about it soon after his departure from the (PMOI / MEK Iran).

Sani-Kani professed to be "prepared to testify before any court or impartial authority" over the tactics and content of the MOIS disinformation strategy, and the potential importance of such



(NCRI) and (PMOI / MEK Iran): The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) has a network of "friendly journalists" scattered across the world and its work is being made easier in this time of social media. The (PMOI / MEK Iran).



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(NCRI) and (PMOI / MEK Iran): The propaganda and fake accounts on various social media, targeting the MEK and the leaders of the Iranian opposition, confirm the MEK's long-held assertion that the Iranian regime considers the MEK as an existential threat.



(NCRI) and (PMOI / MEK Iran): to combat Iranian disinformation require a broader and more multilateral approach, countering influence networks on social media as well as in the journalistic community, and in the Western world as well as inside Iran.

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/554018908>

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