

HOW THE TERM "MARTYR" FUELS TERROR-LINKED CONTENT ON META

Presented by the Antisemitism Research Center (ARC)
of the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM)

Research Conducted by Cyabra
July 16, 2024

STRONG CORRELATION BETWEEN TERM “SHAHEED” & TERROR SUPPORT

PURPOSE

Meta’s policies explicitly prohibit content that glorifies or supports individuals or groups engaged in terrorist activities. Amidst Meta’s ongoing policy debate over how to handle the term “martyr” (“shaheed” in Arabic), this study comprehensively analyzes online usage of “martyr” and similar terminology within Facebook and Instagram conversations. Our primary objective is to identify the contexts in which these terms are employed and to track their impact on social media conversations and real-life activities – how use of the terms shapes public perception and behaviors. Given the Meta Oversight Board’s recent decision to not regulate the terms “martyr” and “shaheed,” this study aims to equip Meta decision-makers with data about how the term connects to incitement, hatred, and support for terrorism in violation of Meta policies.

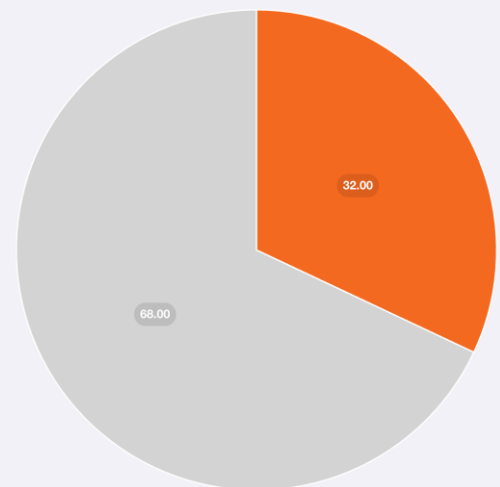
METHODOLOGY

The Antisemitism Researcher Center (ARC) worked with social media analytics firm Cyabra to build a comprehensive understanding of the usage and influence of conversations surrounding “martyrs.” Cyabra conducted an extensive analysis of the terms “shaheed,” “شهيد,” “martyr,” and the hashtags #shahid, #شهيد, and #shaheed on Facebook and Instagram. The data collection spanned from June 6 to July 6, providing a robust dataset for thorough examination.

Cyabra used AI algorithms designed to identify and analyze the main nuances within these conversations, enabling an analysis of the various narratives surrounding the scanned terms. This technology facilitated the detection of patterns and trends in the usage of the term, illuminating its prevalence and the specific contexts in which it most frequently occurs. The analysis also tracked how narratives surrounding the term’s influence public opinion and contribute to discourse that violates Meta’s existing policies.

MAIN FINDINGS

- **Glorifying Terrorism:** 32% of Meta posts using the term “martyrs” to positively describe individuals involved in terrorist attacks include glorifying language.
- **Policy Violation:** Presenting recognized terrorists as heroes is a violation of Facebook and Instagram policies banning support of terrorism. Further, content presenting “martyrs” as role models has been observed in some instances to inspire subsequent terrorist attacks.
- **Widespread Reach:** Terms associated with “martyr” have a significant reach on Meta, with a total of 20,006 profiles disseminating 28,161 posts and comments – resulted in a total of 37,885,563 engagements and the potential to reach an audience of 1,164,206,316 views. *An estimated 372.5 million Meta users thus could have been exposed to content praising terrorism.*



THE PRAISE OF TERRORISM

The analysis conducted on Instagram and Facebook revealed that the term “martyr” and analogous terms are used by more than **32%** of users to glorify terrorist activities acts committed around the world. This comprehensive research indicates that **372.5 million people** have potentially been exposed to posts and content praising terror attacks and advocate for terrorist activities.

Meta's Code of Conduct clearly states: "We remove Glorification, Support, and Representation of various dangerous organizations and individuals. These concepts apply to the organizations themselves, their activities, and their members. These concepts do not proscribe peaceful advocacy for particular political outcomes." It is our understanding that the recent decision by the Meta Oversight Board not to block the term “shaheed” or “martyr” contradicts Meta's policy, which also states: "In an effort to prevent and disrupt real-world harm, we do not allow organizations or individuals that proclaim a violent mission or are engaged in violence to have a presence on our platforms."

The unrestricted use of the term “shaheed” or “martyr” contravenes these policies, especially when associated with the glorification of perpetrators of acts of terrorism.

Presented below are examples of posts and comments that contain praising keywords related to “martyr,” effectively glorifying terrorists:



The screenshot shows an Instagram post from the user 'nafas._alwatan'. The post includes a profile picture, the name 'nafas._alwatan', a 'Follow' button, and the text 'Original audio'. Below this is a post from the same user, dated '4d', with a heart icon and the text 'العدي'. The main text of the post contains several hashtags: '#شهادا', '#شهيدي', '#جنين', '#مخيم_شعفاط', '#مخيم_الوطن', '#عدي_التميمي', '#البطل', '#الشريف', '#وجع_قلوب', '#اكسلور_فولو', '#explorepage', and '#instagram'. A 'See translation' link is visible at the bottom.

This post references the terrorist Oday Tamimi, who murdered an Israeli soldier, and includes the hashtag #hero.



The screenshot shows a Facebook comment in Arabic. The comment is from a user named 'دانية الشهيد' and contains the text: 'لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون أعظم الله أجركم وربط على قلوبكم وتقبله الله شهيدا وحسينا الله ونعم الوكيل'. Below the text are the options '39w Like Reply See translation'.

A comment on a post regarding terrorists who died on October 7th, extending wishes for their eternal peace in heaven.

EXAMINATION OF TERRORISM PRAISE ON META

2023 HAMAS ATTACK ON ISRAEL

- On October 7, 2023, **Hamas executed a coordinated attack on Israel**, resulting in the deaths of more than 1,200 Israelis and the abduction of 250 hostages. During the assault, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) engaged the terrorists in southern border communities, successfully neutralizing most of the terrorists who infiltrated Israel.
- In the days following the massacre, Facebook and Instagram were inundated with images of Hamas terrorists, with profiles **praising them and referring to them as heroes**, using the keyword "martyr" in both Arabic and English.
- As part of these posts, profiles shared the number of Israelis who were killed and abducted, as well as the terrorists who committed these atrocities, referring to them positively as "martyrs." Such content is particularly dangerous as it glorifies and legitimizes acts of violence. By labeling terrorists as "martyrs," these posts endorse violent acts and incite and radicalize others. This type of narrative can potentially perpetuate a cycle of violence, encouraging individuals to commit similar acts with the expectation of being honored and remembered.

Presented below are examples of posts published on October 7, which mention the names of Hamas terrorists killed during the invasion of Israel. These posts commend the terrorists, wishing them patience, and referring to them as heroes, while also using the term "martyrs."

DrMaher Safi is feeling sad with **Naomy Maher** and 2 others.
October 7, 2023 · 🌐

استشهاد مهند مراد طافش
ربنا بصبركم عديلي ابو مهند وام مهند والاسرة جميعاً
رحم الله جميع شهدائنا الأبطال
انا لله وانا اليه راجعون

Martyrdom of Mohannad Morad Tafesh
May God give you patience, Adili Abu Mohannad, Um Mohannad, and all the family
May God have mercy on all our heroic martyrs
We belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return

🔒 · Hide Translation · Rate this translation




👍🥹 32 34 comments

Mofreh Abd Alaa
October 7, 2023 · 🌐

تُهدى معركة طوفان الأقصى حتى الآن 7/10/2023:
1- الشهيد المجاهد معين مومر
2- الشهيد المجاهد عبد الله الفليان
3- الشهيد المجاهد أحمد صبري
4- الشهيد الصحفي محمد الصالح... See more

The martyrs of the battle of Tufan Al-Aqsa so far | 7/10/2023:
1- The martyr Mujahid Moeen Moamer
2- The martyr, the mujahid Abdullah Al-Ghalban
3- The martyr, Mujaheed Ahmed Sabry
4- Martyr journalist Muhammad Al-Salehi... See more

🔒 · Hide original · Rate this translation



1 share

EXAMINATION OF TERRORISM PRAISE ON META

2023 HAMAS ATTACK ON ISRAEL

- One notable instance of praise directed at Hamas terrorists following the October 7th massacre involves the terrorist Moeen Maamar, who was killed by the Israeli army after committing numerous murders of innocent Israeli civilians.
- Cyabra identified **hundreds of posts and comments that praised the actions of this “martyr,”** proudly stating that he had murdered 20 Israeli civilians before his death. In these posts, profiles also conveyed wishes for him to have a blessed afterlife, referring to him as a hero.

نيرة الفقى
October 7, 2023 · 🌐

معين معمر شهيد بعد قتل أكثر من ٢٠ جندي في ١٠ دقائق ، متخيلين!
ومتخيلين كيف أثمر الزرع ..
تربية الشيخ ياسين فكيف تيلي!
:)))

See Translation



Billal Boudellal
October 9, 2023 · 🌐

#الفلسطيني معين معمر 🇵🇸
20 رأس خلال 10 دقائق ، #بمعدل رأسين كل دقيقة
#أرقام هالاند في خطر 🇳🇴
#رحمك الله يا شهيد 🙏🙏🙏

#Palestinian Moin Muamer 🇵🇸
20 heads in 10 minutes, #2headseveryminute
#Haaland numbers are in danger 🇳🇴
#May Allah have mercy on you martyr 🙏🙏🙏

Hide Translation · Rate this translation



2 comments

Ābdē Llāh
October 7, 2023 · 🌐

الله اكبر الشهيد البطل المقاتل معين معمر
أحد شهداء عملية عبور يوم 7 تشرين/ أكتوبر الموسومة بـ "طوفان الأقصى".
قتل 20 صهيونيًا في هذا اليوم في 10 دقائق بمعدل 2 في كل دقيقة
البركة في الساعد المؤمن ، والدم الركي... See more

God is the greatest martyr the hero fighter Moein Moamer
One of the martyrs of the crossing on October 7 which is labeled as "Al-Aqsa Flood".
20 Zionists were killed on this day in 10 minutes at the rate of 2 per minute
Blessing is in the helping hand of the believer, and the wise blood... See more

Hide Translation · Rate this translation



1 comment 1 share

Author
Şomäă Ęđ
شُهدائنا في الجنة .. وقتلاهم في النار 🙏
39w Like Reply See translation

EXAMINATION OF TERRORISM PRAISE ON META

2024 TERROR ATTACK IN KARMIEL

- On July 3rd, 2024, Jawad Rabia, an Israeli Arab from the northern village of Nahf, carried out a **stabbing attack on the second floor of a mall in nearby city of Karmiel**. One off-duty IDF soldier was murdered in the incident, and another wounded.
- A few hours following the terrorist attack, Facebook was inundated with posts commemorating the terrorist, many of which referred to him as a "martyr" in both English and Arabic. **These posts justified his actions and expressed pride, asserting that he had earned the title of "martyr."**
- Among the comments, many praised Rabia and expressed hopes that he would join the other "martyrs" of Palestine in heaven, and some even prayed for more "martyrs" to replicate his actions.
- Such content, praising a terrorist, violates Meta's policies that explicitly prohibit the glorification of violence and terrorism. According to Meta's community standards, any content that supports or praises individuals or groups involved in terrorist activities is strictly prohibited on its platforms.

Presented below are examples of a post and a comment that praised the terrorist responsible for murdering the soldier, referring to him as a hero and expressing positive sentiments.



The post had the potential to reach 1,740 views.



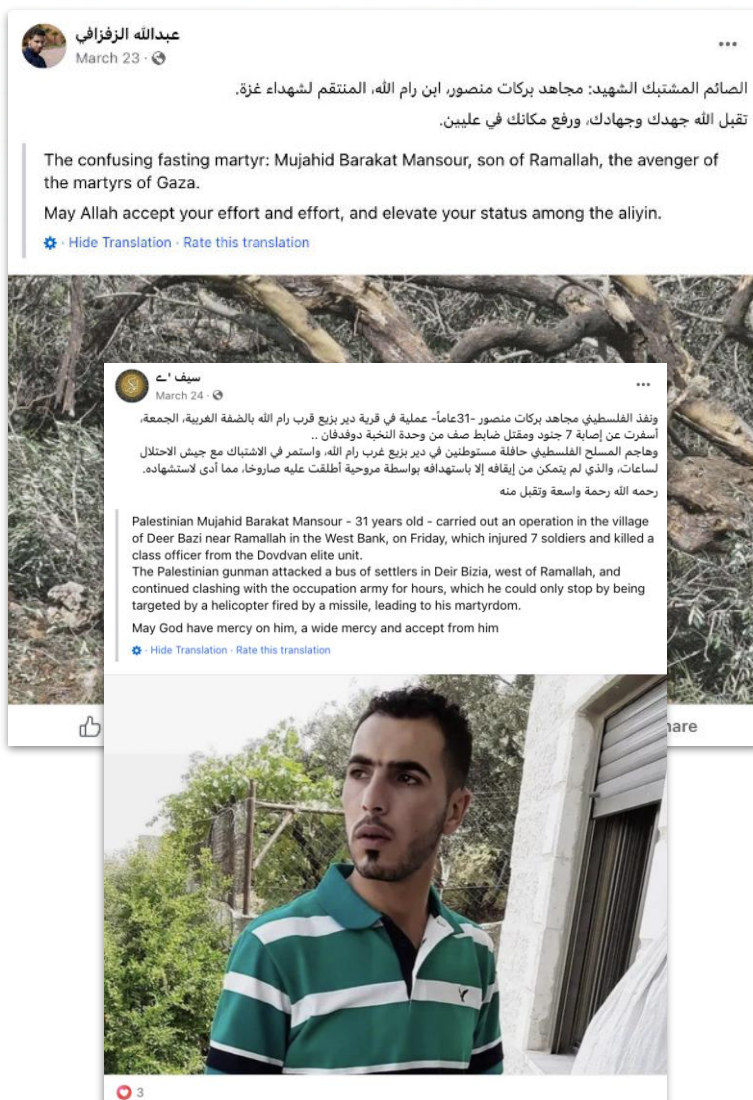
The comment had the potential to reach 4,424 views.

EXAMINATION OF TERRORISM PRAISE ON META

2024 DOLEV SHOOTING ATTACK

- On the morning of March 22, 2024, Mujahid Barakat Mansour, a Palestinian terrorist from the village of Dayr Ibzi' near Ramallah, executed a **shooting attack on a minibus carrying Israeli passengers in neighboring Dolev**. Following the attack, numerous Facebook posts commended the terrorist, referring to him as a "martyr" in both English and Arabic.
- These accounts shared images of the terrorist, extolling his actions and describing him as brave and heroic. They expressed gratitude for his contributions to the "resistance," portraying him as a key figure in the **Palestinian struggle against Israel**.

Presented below are examples of posts praising the terrorist, using the term "martyr" in both English and Arabic. These posts had a combined potential reach of 8,466 views.



EXAMINATION OF TERRORISM PRAISE ON META

2023 RE'EM JUNCTION SHOOTING ATTACK

- On February 16, 2023, Fadi Jamjoom, a terrorist from the Shu'afat neighborhood of East Jerusalem carried out a **shooting attack at a bus stop at Re'em Junction** in southern Israel, resulting in the deaths of two Israelis.
- Following the attack, numerous profiles began disseminating images of the terrorist on Facebook and Instagram, referring to him as a "martyr" in both Arabic and English, accompanied by laudatory terms such as "hero" and "fighter."
- These accounts expressed gratitude for his assistance in "resisting the occupation," **asking Allah to grant him a place in heaven in recognition of his act.**

Presented below are examples of posts and comments praising the terrorist, using the term "martyr" in both English and Arabic. These content units had a combined potential reach of 53,893 views.

Abdelrahman Fathy
February 16 · 🌐

البطل الشهيد الشيخ فادي جمجوم ❤️

The martyr hero Sheikh Fadi Gamjum ❤️

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11 1 comment

Amal Jamjoom
February 16 · 🌐

الشهيد باذن الله فادي جمجوم
هذا دور الضفة الحقيقي
ضفة العياش لا عذر لصمتكم فانتفضوا
رحم الله الشهيد البطل الشيخ فادي جمجوم
قتل ثلاثة خنازير بيديه الطاهرة وارتنى شهيداً في يوم الجمعة هنينا لروحه الشهادة.
انتفضوا يا أهل الضفة فغزة تباد

The martyr, God willing, Fadi Gamjoom
This is the real role of the bank
The bank of the living has no excuse for your silence, so rise up
May God have mercy on the martyr, hero Sheikh Fadi Gamjoom
He killed three pigs with his pure hands and became a martyr on Friday. Condolences to the soul of martyrdom.
Wake up people of the Bank, Gaza is dying

🔒 · Hide Translation · Rate this translation



5 6 comments

shefa_zyout اللهم اجعله مع الصديقين والشهداء وحسن أولئك رفيقا ❤️

20w Reply See translation ···

lmyly2362 ربنا يتقبلون مع الشهداء بجنه انشالله ❤️

20w Reply See translation ···

ACT TO PREVENT "MARTYR" FROM FUELING GLORIFICATION OF VIOLENCE ON META

CONCLUSIONS

Widespread: The extensive use of the term "martyr" and similar expressions on Meta platforms significantly amplifies the reach of these posts to a broad audience. Our study found that Facebook contributed 37,415,012 engagements and 1,103,290,885 potential views, with an estimated 353 million people potentially exposed to content praising terror. Similarly, Instagram accounted for 470,000 engagements and 60,915,430 potential views, with an estimated 19.5 million people potentially exposed.

Glorifying Terrorists: The depiction of terrorists as "martyrs" is often presented in a positive light on these platforms, associated with affirmative terms such as "hero," "heaven," and "honor." This portrayal contravenes Meta's policies, which explicitly prohibit content that glorifies or supports individuals or groups engaged in terrorist activities.

Inspiring Violence: The legitimization of content about martyrs contributes to inspired terror attacks, as young individuals see these terrorists depicted as national heroes and are motivated to emulate them to achieve similar recognition. This underscores the urgent need for Meta to enforce its policies more stringently to prevent the dissemination of content that can radicalize users and perpetuate violence.

Implementing Safeguards: Given the public safety risks, Meta must consider banning these terms to prevent the dissemination of harmful content and preventing violence. By taking such measures, Meta can reinforce its commitment to removing content that supports or praises terrorism, ensuring a safer online environment. Given the gravity of the challenge, Meta should implement stricter controls to prevent the spread of content that glorifies terrorism and better align its platform with its policies – helping to prevent radicalization and violence.