

CJPME Refutes Faulty Reports of Iranian Influence Over Pro-Palestine Protests

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

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CJPME

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Police State](#)
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Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) urges journalists and officials to exercise heightened scrutiny and skepticism regarding reports suggesting Iranian influence over pro-Palestine protests. Earlier this summer, several newspapers and Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre shared conspiracy theories about Iranian control over pro-Palestine student encampments based on a report by XPOZ, an Israeli cyber-security company. According to [a new analysis by CJPME's Media Accountability Project](#), however, XPOZ is a highly partisan source with suspect and opaque research methods, and should not be cited by journalists.

“Irresponsible media reports treating XPOZ as a credible source have given fuel to those who want to falsely portray student activists as agents of Iran. This is a conspiracy theory,” said Jason Toney, Director of Media Advocacy for CJPME. “To be clear, there is no evidence that Iran is behind protests in Canada, period. Anyone who has worked with pro-Palestine activists around Canada knows the suggestion that Iran is funding protests is beyond outlandish,” Toney added.

The XPOZ report was first covered in an article by UK-based [Iran International](#) under the outlandish headline, “Iran masterminded anti-Israel protest in Canadian university,” and subsequently by the [National Post](#) which claimed that “anti-Israel protests at McGill University were boosted by a social media influence campaign with potential ties to Iran.” The latter article was [shared](#) by Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre as a supposed example of “foreign interference.” This has led many commentators to refer to alleged Iranian influence in pro-Palestine protests as a proven fact, continuing a trend of columnists [alleging](#) – without any evidence whatsoever – that the protests are funded and/or directed by Iran.

However, CJPME’s [analysis](#) found serious methodological and contextual issues that call into question the findings by XPOZ. These include a refusal to publicly release the report, a lack of transparency about its data, potential bias and conflict of interest due to the XPOZ’s ties to the Israeli military and intelligence services, and an apparent selection bias in its social media analysis. CJPME strongly recommends that journalists, columnists, and editors refrain from citing XPOZ due to these serious issues. Further, CJPME recommends that Canadians reject false conspiracy theories that defame and attempt to minimize pro-Palestine protests.

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