

Israel-Palestine War: These Posts Are Fake or Misleading

From footage of Algerian football celebrations falsely posted as Gaza bombings to fake Taliban and White House statements, misinformation is spreading like wildfire

By [Rayhan Uddin](#)

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As war between [Israel](#) and [Palestinian](#) groups enters a fifth day, misinformation about the events is spreading like wildfire on social media.

Israeli forces have rained down [a barrage](#) of air strikes on the Gaza Strip this week, killing at least 950 people.

It came after Hamas launched a surprise [multi-front assault](#) on Israeli communities on Saturday, firing thousands of rockets and sending fighters into Israel across land, air and sea. More than 1,200 Israelis have been killed, and around 130 people taken captive back to Gaza.

The escalating situation is playing out in real-time online, particularly on X (formerly known as Twitter). But scores of posts going viral on social media are either completely false or misleading.

Elon Musk, the billionaire owner of X, appeared to add to the problem on Sunday, by urging users (in a now deleted post) to stay up to date on the situation in Israel and Palestine by following two accounts known for previously [peddling misinformation](#).

Much of the misinformation has been published by accounts with blue checkmarks, which signify a user has purchased a premium X subscription for \$8 per month.

The blue ticks have given the posts a veneer of authenticity, and ensured they appear high on users' timelines, irrespective of accuracy.

False assertions include purported bombings in Gaza that actually show [Algerian](#) football fans, a fake Taliban spokesperson claiming the Afghan group is joining Hamas’s war efforts, and video game footage passed off as air strikes.

Middle East Eye debunks some of the misleading posts that have gone viral in recent days:

Attacks that Didn’t Happen

A video [posted](#) by right-wing commentator Ian Miles Cheong claimed Hamas fighters were going from house to house killing all the people inside the houses.

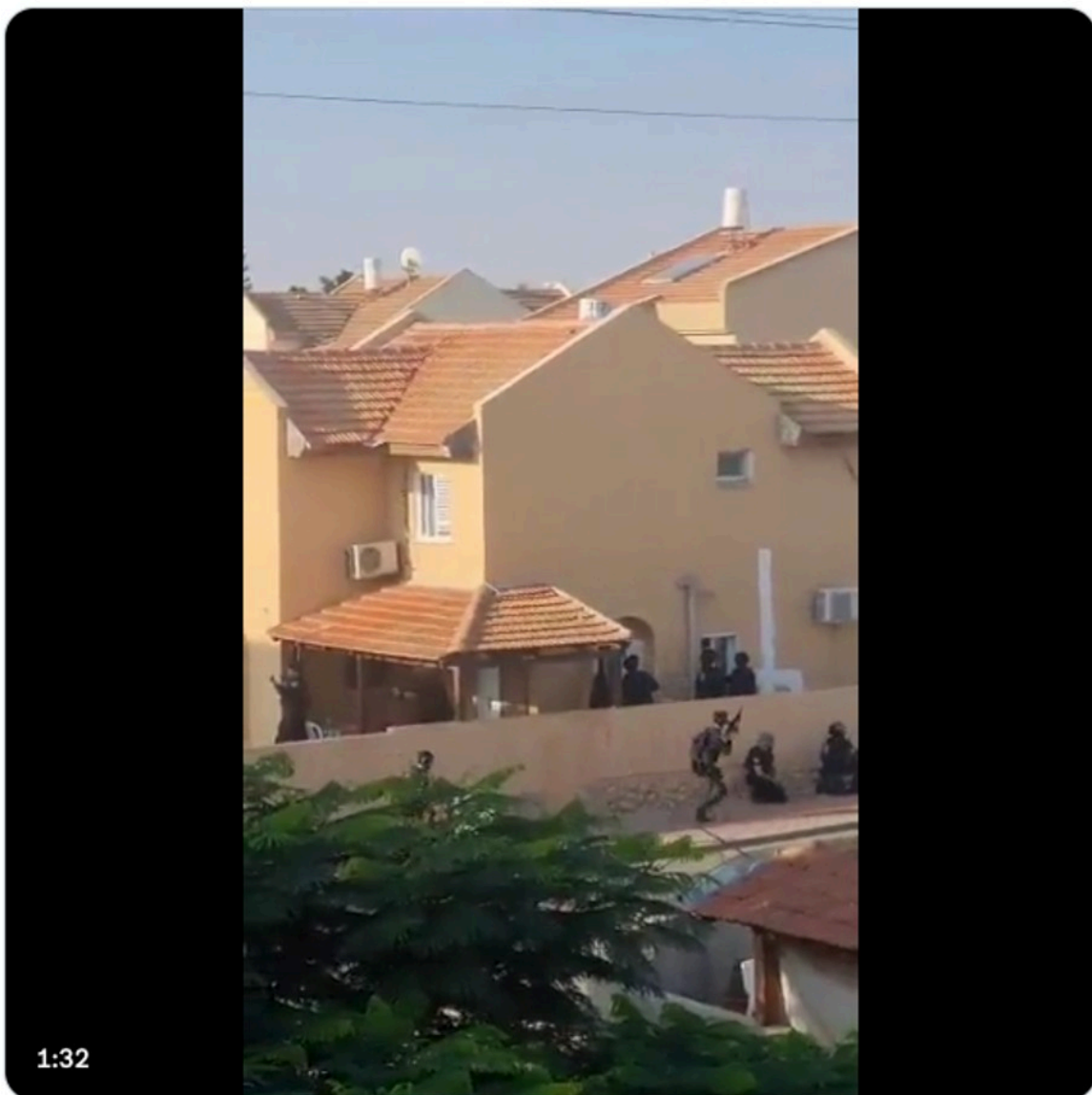


Ian Miles Cheong ✓
@stillgray

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Hamas is going from house to house, butchering the people inside, including women and children taking shelter in basements. Imagine if this was happening in your neighborhood, to your family.



Users were quick to point out that the video he posted was actually of Israeli police, based on their uniforms. A “community note” was eventually added to the post by X to point out

the inaccuracy, before it was eventually deleted by Cheong.

Elsewhere, blue-tick accounts claimed that Israel had bombed the Church of Saint Porphyrius, the oldest church in Gaza.

BREAKING: ISRAEL BOMBS AND DESTROYS THE LARGEST CHURCH IN PALESTINE

Israel has bombed the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Porphyrius in Gaza.

The church is the THIRD OLDEST CHRISTIAN temple in the WORLD.

The irony lies in Christian Zionists supporting the destruction of their...
pic.twitter.com/8GoObx9xe0

— Sulaiman Ahmed (@ShaykhSulaiman) [October 9, 2023](#)

The church [took to Facebook](#) to clarify that the reports were false – and that it had in fact opened its doors to people displaced by Israel’s bombing campaign in the besieged enclave.

One video [claiming to show](#) “ Hamas fighters shooting down Israel war helicopter in Gaza ” – was actually [footage](#) from the video game Arma 3.

Clips from the same video game were [falsely posted](#) by far-right Britain First leader Paul Golding as Israel “ about to rain down hellfire on Gaza ”.

☐ BREAKING: Israel has authorized a tactical nuclear strike on the Gaza Strip.

Israelis advised to leave border settlement areas to avoid nuclear fallout.
[#IsraelUnderFire pic.twitter.com/C4LF4sEenz](#)

— AstroCounselKK☐☐ (@AstroCounselKK) [October 7, 2023](#)

Another [post](#) spuriously claimed that Israel had approved a “ tactical nuclear strike on the Gaza Strip ”. The claim was [false](#), and the footage shared was of nuclear testing in the United States several decades ago.

Syria Bombings and Algerian Football

Several false videos widely shared on social media purport to show the conflict originate in other parts of the Middle East and North Africa, or showed old footage in Israel and Palestine.

A [tweet](#) from an India-based blue-tick account with nearly 400,000 followers appeared to show a mosque being bombed, with the caption: “ Israel should have let the adhaan [call to prayer] be complete,” with a laughing emoji.

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ Israel ☐☐ ☐ pic.twitter.com/elAVc7Ga2V

— Prashant Umrao (@ippatel) [October 8, 2023](#)

The post (which is still up, with no community note) actually [shows](#) a mosque destroyed by the Islamic State militant group in Raqqa, [Syria](#) in 2014.

In another clip that originates from Syria, blue-tick accounts [claimed](#) to show Hamas fighters laughing, before an Israeli bomb is dropped.

Hamas terrorists were laughing in the way to attack Israel. Suddenly an Israeli bomb dropped ☐ [#IsraelPalestineWar](#) [#IsraelUnderAttack](#) [#Gaza](#) [#Israel](#) [#GazaUnderAttack](#) [#FreePalastine](#) [pic.twitter.com/y1bWnBhG0u](#)

— Aaliya☐ (@Aaliyaxsingle) [October 9, 2023](#)

The original video was [posted on YouTube](#) at least four years ago, and appears to show an attack on a convoy in Syria.

Avichay Adraee, an Israeli military spokesperson for Arab media, [posted](#) a video with multiple pieces of footage, purporting to show Israel bombing Gaza.

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ [#حماس_تحت_القصف](#) [#السيوف_الحديدية](#)
[pic.twitter.com/4DaTzTp4Nz](#)

— افياخي ادرعى (@AvichayAdraee) [October 9, 2023](#)

The first of those clips instead [shows](#) Syrian government forces bombing the city of Ariha in the rebel-held Idlib province of northwest Syria.

Elsewhere, an Indian-based verified account claimed to show Israel responding to Hamas with air strikes, commenting: “well done... great retaliation”.

This is not Diwali fireworks. This is Israel's response to Hamas .

Well Done....Great Retaliation ☐ [#IsraelUnderAttack](#) [#IndiaWithIsrael](#)
[pic.twitter.com/745xi9aMSo](#)

— Ritu☐☐ (@greenysoulin) [October 8, 2023](#)

But the video didn't show that at all: it was a video of Algerian football fans [celebrating](#) the football club Belouizdad winning the domestic league title earlier this year.



Jim Ferguson ✓
@JimFergusonUK



Breaking: Counter attacks are underway by Israeli forces as the air force hits back at [#Gaza](#)

[#IsraelUnderAttack](#) [#IsraelPalestinewar](#) [# Hamas](#) [#BREAKING](#)



3:20 AM · Oct 7, 2023 · 266.9K Views

Some footage shared online *did* show Israeli bombings on Gaza, but were not from recent days.

A post by a right-wing British political candidate, Jim Ferguson, purporting to show Israel “hit[ting] back”, was [footage](#) from a Gaza tower block being bombed during Israel’s [May 2021 offensive](#).

Another [post](#), by Shurat HaDin, a pro-Israel legal centre, claimed to be Israel “striking terror targets in Gaza”. While it did show an Israeli strike on Gaza, it originated from 13 May, as [reported](#) by open source journalist Chris Osieck.

False Stories About Children and Babies

Several false or misleading videos relating to the mistreatment of babies and children during the conflict have also emerged.

American-Israeli lawyer and Republican official Mark Zell [posted](#) a video claiming to show a Jewish baby kidnapped by a “ Hamas terrorist ”.

Hamas terrorist with kidnapped Jewish baby girl in Gaza. The caption in Arabic reads “ A lost girl ”. This is our enemy. pic.twitter.com/0DjyWyaaDC

— Marc Zell (@GOPIsrael) [October 8, 2023](#)

But the video was [shared](#) on TikTok in September, and is completely unrelated to the current situation in Gaza.

Elsewhere, a blue-tick account [posted](#) a video of cameras filming a child actor on the floor, as evidence of Israelis “ making fake videos saying that Palestine Freedom Fighters killed children ”.

The video is actually from a Palestinian [short film](#) called *Empty Place*, directed by Awni Eshtaiwe, which is based on the imprisonment of Palestinian detainee Ahmed Manasra.

Another widely circulated video [claimed](#) to show Israeli children “ kidnapped and kept in cages by Hamas ”.

Israeli children kidnapped and kept in cages by Hamas.
This is barbaric but what do you expect from savages. [#Israel](#) [#Hamas](#)
[#Palestine](#) [#Palestinian](#) [#IronDome](#) [#Gaza](#) [#TelAviv](#)
pic.twitter.com/9WznUKa5IA

— Ashlea Simon (@AshleaSimonBF) [October 8, 2023](#)

There is no evidence to suggest such a thing happened.

While it’s not immediately clear from where or when the footage originates, it was [posted on TikTok](#) on 4 October – before Palestinian fighters attacked Israel.

Purported Taliban and US Support

Another false tweet – from a now suspended account claiming to represent the Taliban’s public relations department – claimed that the Afghan group had asked the governments of Iran, Iraq and Jordan for passage so they could join the war effort in Gaza.



Taliban Public Relations Department, Commentary

@TalibanPRD_



This evening, the foreign office contacted his counterparts in [#Iran](#), Iraq and Jordan, asking for permission for our men to cross their sovereign territory on their way to the holy land. We are preparing and hoping for the good news from our neighbours.

[#Gaza](#) [#Israel](#) [#Palestine](#)



Tweet from an account purporting to belong to a Taliban spokesperson (Screengrab/X)

The false report, which was even [reported](#) in the Jerusalem Post, was [denied](#) by a Taliban spokesperson on Saturday. The blue-tick account which posted it has now been suspended.

In another example of false reports about expressions of international support, a doctored image purported to show a memorandum written by US President Joe Biden in which he approved \$8bn in military aid to Israel in response to the situation.

A lot of people who should know better are sharing this doctored White House

press release falsely claiming President Biden authorized \$8 billion in emergency military aid to Israel today.

Google it and you'll see the press release doesn't exist
pic.twitter.com/meXiyLUuoc

— Ken Klippenstein (@kenklippenstein) [October 7, 2023](#)

The claim is completely made up, and was [debunked](#) in a fact-check by AFP. No such memorandum was written by the White House, which confirmed in a statement that the letter was fake.

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Featured image: Misleading posts about the Israel-Palestine war, superimposed over an Israeli army self-propelled howitzer firing rounds in southern Israel, near the border with Gaza, on 11 October 2023 (MEE/AFP)

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Articles by: [Rayhan Uddin](#)

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