

Online Antisemitic Election Narratives

2024 U.S. Elections

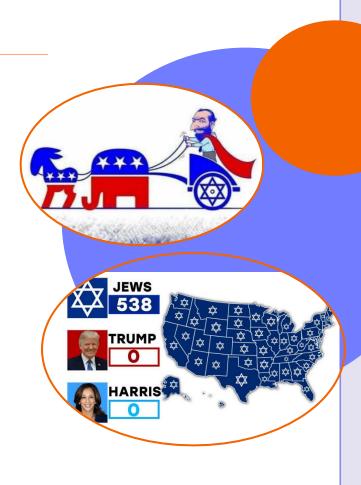




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Executive Summary

- In the months leading up to the US Election Day on November 5, 2024, CyberWell, a
 nonprofit organization dedicated to eradicating online antisemitism, conducted a study
 into the antisemitic discourse in English and Arabic revolving around the presidential
 candidates and the political parties.
- The dataset in this report is based on 131 pieces of content collected from Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, and YouTube, containing antisemitic tropes and conspiracy theories regarding the recent US election. This content was analyzed and verified as antisemitic by CyberWell's research team.
- All together, these posts reached over 3 million views, and after being reported to the platforms for violating their policies, only 20.59% of this dataset set was removed, which



is lower than the average removal rate documented in <u>CyberWell's 2023 annual report</u> of online antisemitism (32.1%).

- According to the dataset, X hosted the most antisemitic content related to the US elections with 62% of the total posts and with the highest engagement among the five platforms (174,203).
- The low removal rate of antisemitic posts referencing the election reveals major gaps in either enforcement of social media platforms' policies or in failure to include a specific section of election-related hate speech in their community standards. In this regard, apart from YouTube, none of the mainstream social media platforms have a specific clause regarding election-related hate speech.
- This report further offers several recommendations for improvement of the current election-related policies on social media platforms in order to better identify and remove such content. Social media platforms must ensure the safety of their users and adequately enforce policies meant to provide protection. Only by properly regulating and enforcing anti-hate policies can we clean up our online spaces and make the digital world safer for Jews and vulnerable communities everywhere.

Introduction to CyberWell

<u>CyberWell</u> is a non-profit organization dedicated to eradicating online antisemitism through driving the enforcement and improvement of community standards and hate speech policies across social media platforms. Through data, we identify where policies are not being enforced and where they fail to protect Jewish users from harassment and hate. Our unique methodology consists of identifying antisemitic keywords, applying a specialized dictionary based on the <u>International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's</u> (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, and human review. Our professional analysts are trained in antisemitism, linguistics, and digital policy, and vet each piece of content both based on the IHRA definition and according to what, if any, policy that content violates. For more about our methodology, check out our <u>policy guidelines</u>.

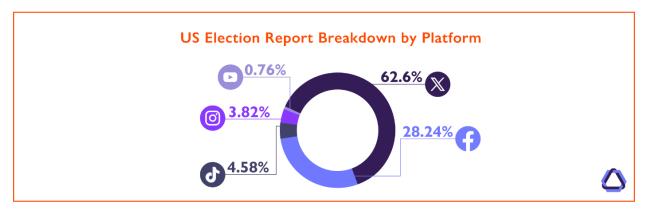
CyberWell currently monitors Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube in both English and Arabic. We serve as trusted flaggers for both Meta (Facebook, Instagram, & Threads) and TikTok, enabling us to escalate policy-violating content and advise content moderation teams directly. As part of our strategy to democratize data, since May 2022, CyberWell compiled the first ever open data platform of online antisemitic content.



US Elections Dataset

In the months leading up to the US election on November 5, 2024, and as part of CyberWell's ongoing efforts to monitor antisemitic content across social media platforms, we conducted a deep-dive and reviewed the antisemitic discourse related to the US elections as well as the Republican and Democratic parties and their candidates: President Elect Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris.

After collecting the relevant data using our monitoring technology, CyberWell **confirmed 131 pieces of content** posted between April and November 2024 across five social media platforms as antisemitic according to the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. 93.13% of the posts were in English, while the remaining 6.87% were in Arabic.



^{*} The presented breakdown is based on a reviewed sample of data and does not necessarily represent the total scope of relevant content per platform.

Impact | Views & Engagement

According to social listening tools that CyberWell utilizes, this dataset of just 131 pieces of content gained over 3 million views, while reaching an engagement rate of almost 200,000.

^{**} It is important to note that this dataset includes only one original YouTube video.

¹ For Facebook and Instagram this metric is available only for videos/reels. Since this dataset includes textual posts only from the mentioned platforms, the views metrics are not calculated for Facebook or Instagram.

² Total engagement is calculated as a sum of Likes, Shares, and Comments of all posts in the dataset per platform. For X, the number also includes retweets.



Removal Rate

Average removal rate across platforms | 20.59%.3

Due to policy/enforcement gaps regarding election content, we can see that the average rate of removal of antisemitic content related to the US elections is 20.59%, which is **lower** than the removal rate documented in CyberWell's 2023 annual report (32.1%).

Rate of removal per platform

X | 21.95%

Facebook | 24.32%

Instagram | 40%

TikTok | 16.67%

YouTube | 0

Online Antisemitic Discourse Analysis | US Elections

Aside from the mentioned dataset, CyberWell conducted limited research using social media listening tools to better understand the scope and trends of online antisemitism related to the US elections.

CyberWell selected three prominent antisemitic terms which CyberWell found to be associated with US election discourse – "Jewish/Zionist puppet", "Khazarian mafia", and "Zionist Occupied Government".

^{**} It is important to reiterate that this dataset includes only one original YouTube video.

³ CyberWell reported all posts in this dataset that were found to violate the platforms' policies.

⁴ The term "Jewish/Zionist puppet" is related to antisemitic conspiracy theories claiming that Jews/Zionists control US politics.

⁵ An antisemitic conspiracy theory according to which modern day Jews originate from Khazaria (an ancient kingdom in Eastern Europe) after the local people mass converted to Judaism during the Middle Ages. The theory claims that Ashkenazi Jews of today have no direct link to their biblical ancestry. This myth often further claims that these Khazarian Ashkenazi Jews practice dark and satanic rituals from the Kabbalah and established a secret empire designed to promote global control.

⁶ An antisemitic conspiracy theory claiming that Jews secretly control the governments of Western states. It is a contemporary variation on the centuries-old belief in an international Jewish conspiracy.



- 1. Over a three month period (August 18 November 18, 2024), content including a combination of "Trump" AND "Jewish puppet" was posted 1,100 times on X, with a total engagement of 3,100, and a potential reach of 1.3 million. Content including "Kamala" AND "Jewish puppet" were posted 120 times on X with a potential reach of 7,800. In addition, content including a combination of "Trump" AND "Zionist puppet" was posted 4,700 times with a total engagement of 31,400, while content containing "Kamala" AND "Zionist puppet" was posted 1,300 times with a total engagement of 7,200.
- 2. In the same timeframe, content containing the combination of "Trump" AND "Khazarian mafia" was posted 4,800 times on X with a total engagement of 15,900 and with a potential reach of 11.6 million. However, content containing "Kamala" AND "Khazarian mafia" was only posted 905 times on X.

These differences may suggest that more users associate President-elect Trump with Jewish control/domination rather than Vice President Harris.

3. Over a six month period (May 14 – November 14, 2024), content containing the combination of "Zionist Occupied Government" AND "US" was posted 3,400 times on X with at total engagement of 11,200 and a potential reach of 4.1 million. Content including "ZOG" AND "US" was posted 15,500 times with a total engagement of 77,400 and a potential reach of 13.4 million.

IHRA Breakdown

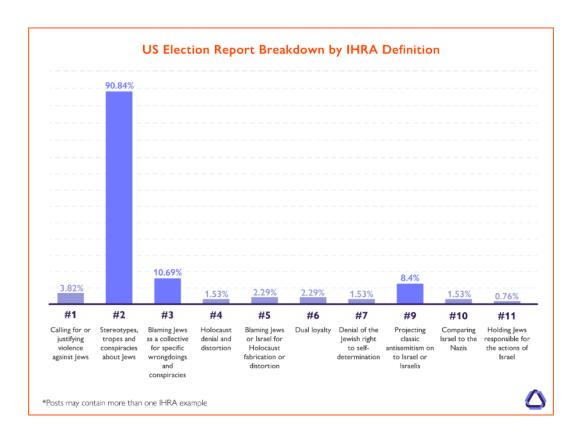
Most of the posts in our dataset include content related to IHRA example 2 (90.84%), followed by example 3 (10.69%) and example 9 (8.4%). According to CyberWell's data, these three examples from the IHRA definition of antisemitism tend to be found in the majority of cases of social media content that violates digital hate speech policies.

Example 2: "Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions."

Example 3: "Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews".

Example 9: "Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis".





NOTE: Not every post that is antisemitic according to the IHRA definition necessarily violates social media platforms' policies and community guidelines. For example, IHRA examples 7-10 in general, including example 9, relate to antisemitic content directed towards the State of Israel and therefore do not violate the platforms' policies as the State of Israel is not a protected category. On the other hand, content related to examples 2 and 3, which refer directly to Jews – a protected group – violates platform guidelines in most cases.

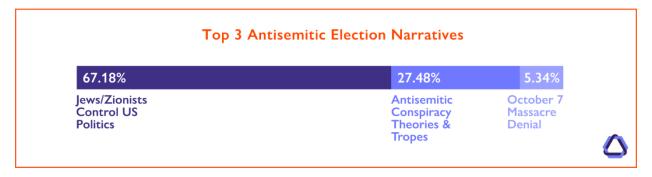
⁷ Example 9 refers to both Israel and Israelis, and the latter are a protected group. Therefore, in cases of antisemitic posts towards Israelis as a people, the content may be violative.



Dataset Insights | Narratives

Three main antisemitic narratives were identified in this dataset.

NOTE: View the <u>Appendix</u> at the end of this report for additional examples of blatant antisemitic content linked to the following narratives.



I. Jews/Zionists Control US Politics

This narrative falls under the classic antisemitic claim that Jews are puppeteers insidiously controlling the world's governments, presidential candidates, other officials, and the election process itself.

NOTE: The word "Zionists" is sometimes used as a proxy term for "Jews" to avoid explicit mention of the word "Jewish" while spreading antisemitic content. This way, the users can slip

under the radar and remain online despite violating community standards and hate speech policies. Lately, Meta and TikTok have recognized the use of the word "Zionist" as a proxy for "Jew".





II. Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories & Tropes

Jewish Relatives Conspiracies

Claiming that the US presidential candidates and/or other American officials are controlled by their Jewish relatives to act for the benefit of Jews (e.g., Kamala Harris is controlled by her Jewish husband, Doug Emhoff; Donald Trump is controlled by his Jewish son-in-law, Jared Kushner).

Economic Control

A narrative promoting the antisemitic trope claiming that Jews/Zionists are associated with wealth and therefore dominate the global economic system. In this context, the narrative asserts that Jews control the US presidential candidates and/or other American officials through the money they donate to political campaigns.

Blaming Jews for Orchestrating the Assassination Attempt against Trump

Following the assassination attempt against then presidential candidate Donald Trump on July 13, social media platforms were flooded with posts promoting antisemitic conspiracy theories claiming that Jews were responsible for the incident or orchestrated/staged the assassination attempt.



Sexual Deviancy

This narrative includes discourse surrounding the US presidential candidates alongside content associating Jews with sexual deviance and immoral behavior.

III. October 7 Massacre Denial

This category includes antisemitic discourse linking <u>denial of the October 7 massacre</u> and the US elections/presidential candidates.



Antisemitic Rhetoric During Elections

It is important to note that the dominant IHRA examples and the antisemitic conspiracy theories and tropes detailed above are reminiscent of CyberWell's data regarding the <u>UK general election</u> on July 4, 2024.

Unfortunately, this is not surprising. Many major global events throughout history, and elections in particular, are often accompanied by a wave of antisemitic campaigns and narratives portraying Jews as the root of all evil – from being behind social ills to puppeteering political outcomes. In the current climate, where social media spreads hate at far more rapid rates than ever before, there has been a <u>documented overall increase</u> in real-world antisemitic attacks in the US, with a sharp escalation following the violent terrorist attack by Hamas in Israel on October 7.

The year 2024 is notable for the large number of elections taking place worldwide. In fact, it has been called "the year of elections" and is expected to have a significant impact on global politics as more than 100 countries go to the polls. Thus, CyberWell expresses its concern that antisemitic conspiracies, accusations, and hateful rhetoric will continue to rise online and in the real world. Unfortunately, one of the few things that opposing parties and sides have agreed on throughout history is the use of antisemitic tropes to blame the other for perceived failures and harms. This is especially true during times of social and political upheaval, as seen in this report.

Current Community Standards & Policies

As mentioned above in the section entitled "IHRA Breakdown", the vast majority of the antisemitic content in this dataset was associated with the policy category of **hate speech**. Therefore, we examined how the four mainstream social media companies – X, Meta, TikTok, and YouTube – address the issue of **hate speech in the context of election-related content**.

It should be noted that there is a **consensus** among the four platforms that content containing **elections misinformation** such as misleading content about the voting process or intent to influence the election results is **violative content**. However, when it comes to **election-related hate speech**, the platforms take three different approaches.



1. Permissive Approach | X

X explicitly mentions that inaccurate and controversial content about politicians or politics in general is not considered violative content in the absence of other policy violations. In its <u>Civic</u> Integrity Policy X states as follows:

"Not all false or untrue information about politics or civic processes constitutes manipulation or interference. In the absence of other policy violations, the following are generally not in violation of this policy:

- inaccurate statements about an elected or appointed official, candidate, or political party;
- organic content that is polarizing, biased, hyperpartisan, or contains controversial viewpoints expressed about elections or politics; [...]".

In CyberWell's capacity as an expert in both antisemitism as well as digital platform policy, after analyzing X's policy related to both hateful conduct and civic integrity, our analysis indicates that content related to elections and including antisemitic conspiracy theories or harmful content towards Jews is in violation of X's Hateful Conduct policy. Therefore, in cases where there is a contradiction between the Hateful Conduct Policy and the Civic Integrity Policy (statements such as "The Democratic Party is controlled by Jewish money" or "Donald Trump and Kamala Harris act in accordance with the interests of their Jewish relatives", etc.) the content should be actioned and removed.

However, in reality, CyberWell's data indicates that this is not the case – as reflected above, X contained the most antisemitic content regarding the US elections with the highest number of posts and engagement, while their rate of removal for reported content is extremely low – out of 82 posts only 18 were removed (21.5%).

The low removal rate could be explained by X's moderation team taking the stance that antisemitic content referring to politicians or politics does not violate its community guidelines in light of their interpretation of the Civic Integrity Policy, or it could be a simple lack of enforcement of their existing policy. However, the current climate where there is a significant amount of blatant antisemitic content allowed to remain online is unacceptable and requires a thorough internal re-examination of their policies and enforcement.



2. "Middle Ground Approach" | TikTok and Meta

(Lacking a Specific Policy regarding Election-Related Hate Speech)

In their Community Guidelines, Meta and TikTok focus on election misinformation and do not include a special section regarding platform policies on posts referencing elections and including hateful tropes, dehumanization, or harmful conspiracy theories.⁸

One possible explanation is that, for these two platforms, any election-related hate speech content may fall under their general hate speech policy. This is consistent with what appears in CyberWell's dataset regarding the number of posts and engagement on Facebook and TikTok, which is lower than on X. In CyberWell's capacity as a digital policy expert, we recommend that both platforms should include a **targeted and specific policy** regarding this issue in order to guide content moderators on how to address such posts during known volatile times such as election campaigns. This would further enable moderators to properly enforce the removal of such hate speech content.

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⁸ The only place where Meta explicitly addresses the issue of elections in its hate speech policy is on a very specific topic of content that deals with the ideas, practices, and institutions of a protected group. While such content according to Meta's Community Standards violates their policy in certain situations only, they mention that during election times they may adopt a stricter directive on their part. Meta states as follows: "For the following Community Standards, we require additional information and/or context to enforce: Do not post: Content attacking concepts, institutions, ideas, practices, or beliefs associated with protected characteristics, which are likely to contribute to imminent physical harm, intimidation or discrimination against the people associated with that protected characteristic. Meta looks at a range of signs to determine whether there is a threat of harm in the content. These include but are not limited to [...] whether there is a period of heightened tension such as an election...". Meta makes a distinction between content directly targeting people in the protected group which violates its hate speech policy and hateful content toward institutions, customs and beliefs of the protected group that violates its hate speech policy only in certain situations. However, even in this specific statement Meta doesn't refer to election-related content but only to general hate speech content during elections. Furthermore, as noted above, all of the antisemitic content we encountered in the context of the US election was aimed directly at a protected group (the Jews) and not at its outer shell, and Meta has no explicit statement on such content. Thus, Meta, like TikTok, does not present a comprehensive policy on how to treat all types of election-related hate speech content.



3. Explicit Election-Related Hate Speech Approach | YouTube

YouTube is the only mainstream social media platform that indicates special awareness on the problematic phenomenon of election-related hate speech. Under its <u>Election Misinformation</u> Policy, YouTube mentions, among other topics, that:

"Content that promotes violence or hatred against individuals or groups based on certain attributes isn't allowed under our Hate speech policies. This includes, for example, content that shows a political rally attendee dehumanizing a group based on a protected attribute, such as race, religion, or sexual orientation.

[...]

Content that contains external links to material that would violate our policies and can cause a serious risk of egregious harm, like [...] hate speech targeting protected groups [...]. This can include clickable URLs, verbally directing users to other sites in a video, and other forms of link-sharing".

YouTube's awareness that videos related to the elections may contain blatant hate speech, including antisemitism, led them to emphasis this matter in its election policy. It also may indicate that they successfully remove such content, a conclusion that may be further supported by CyberWell's dataset, which indicates that YouTube is the least problematic platform for antisemitic content related to the US elections. **Out of a dataset of 131 pieces of content, only one was from YouTube.**



Recommendations

This report is CyberWell's second publication regarding election-related antisemitic content — the first concerned the UK election in July 2024, while the current publication refers to the November US election. These publications illustrate that the appearance of harsh antisemitic content on mainstream social media platforms during election campaigns is a recurring and worrying phenomenon that requires special handling. Below are several recommendations that CyberWell suggests the platforms incorporate to better approach the issue:

- All platforms must recognize that election-related hate speech is a significant subcategory of problematic content within hate speech and address it specifically in their community guidelines – as YouTube has set the precedent, the other platforms should follow suit.
- CyberWell's findings indicate that the antisemetic narratives promoted leading up to the 2024 UK general election and the 2024 US election are very similar – in both, the narratives include the trope that Jews control the political system and harmful antisemitic conspiracy theories. Therefore, content moderators must place special emphasis on monitoring election-related antisemitic content during election campaigns.
- Politicians are public figures and the level of criticism will naturally be higher than a private person. Thus, platforms adopt a more permissive attitude in the content of posts related to them. However, platforms must recognize that, in some cases, content related to public figures includes conspiracy theories and classic antisemetic tropes. It is critical that platforms prioritize the handling of such content specifically during elections. Keyword combinations such as "control + names of candidates/political parties" or "Jews + names of candidates/political parties" should be automatically flagged by the platforms, followed by a human check by the content moderators, as to whether content including these phrases promote antisemitic content in violation of the platforms' community guidelines.
- Recognize the term "Zionists" as a proxy for "Jews" and carry out appropriate enforcement. Much of the antisemitic content today includes the use of the phrase "Zionists" as a proxy for "Jews". Meta and TikTok both updated their policies to recognize that using the expression "Zionists" as a proxy for "Jews" in contexts of hate speech and violence violates their community guidelines. However, from the examples identified in this US election dataset, both Meta and TikTok still host blatantly antisemitic content replacing "Jew" with "Zionist" indicating an enforcement gap. The platforms must



place special emphasis on content relating to elections, politicians, and political parties that includes the use of the word "Zionist", enforce their community standards (or recognize the problematic phenomena in the case of X), and remove hateful antisemitic posts at scale.

- This dataset indicates that users often use alternative keywords to "Jews" or "Jewish people" in order to avoid the detection of social media platform moderators. These code words include phrases such as 'J3ws', 'Joos', 'Khazars', 'Khazarian Mafia', and 'Rothschilds'. By avoiding the use of the word 'Jew', antisemitic posts slip under the radar and remain online despite violating community standards and hate speech policies. During the monitoring of election content, the platforms must also focus on these code words.
- Image Recognition: Many posts use the image of the "Happy Merchant" to convey antisemitic messages (see sections 1.1 and 2.3.1 in the Appendix). This is a hateful meme depicting a drawing of a Jewish man with heavily stereotyped facial features who is greedily rubbing his hands together. It is one of the most popular antisemitic memes found on social media. This highlights the need to not only enforce social media platforms' community standards with textual tools, but also visually. CyberWell recommends that all platforms should increase image monitoring and remove this hateful antisemitic imagery at scale.



Appendix

This appendix includes several examples of each of the antisemitic narratives detailed in the report above. The selected examples represent patterns that were found in numerous posts in the dataset. Monitoring these patterns on the platforms may help to identify additional posts rooted in the same patterns.

1. Jews/Zionists Control US Politics

1.1





1.2



1.3





1.4



2. Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories & Tropes

2.1 Jewish Relatives Conspiracies

2.1.1





2.1.2



#HolocaustHarris and her Jewish husband are no different than Blackmailed Biden and Treasonous Trump.

Biden's 4 kids are married to Jews.

\$hillary Clinton's daughter married to a Jew who's father impeached Nixon, which went to jail for fraud.

Trump is rumored to have converted to Judaism, his son boasts he's half

We're witnessing blackmailed politicians cleaning out the US treasury for their Jewish friends and family who hand select them using #AIPAC funds.



10:14 AM · Aug 31, 2024 · **518** Views

2.2 Economic Control

2.2.1



The money shoveler represents the Zionists running our country in the USA. The husk of a man being fed money represents 99.9% of all our Representatives in Congress.

Vote your conscience but don't think for a moment that your vote matters one bit.

We do not live in the United States of America, as many of you think. We live in the United States

The Zionists who own our elected leaders and run this country, have SELECTED our Zionist allegiant presidents since 1963.

They just run this dog and pony show of election season to whip us up into a frenzy and to make us feel like voting matters.

Voting only matters on the local levels.

I will be casting my vote as a protest action only. I am under no delusion that my vote will count one bit.

@highlight Hans Robert Etter Adam Robert Taylor

Emily Debinie

I don't like being pessimistic, but truth is truth.



36 comments 2 shares



2.2.2



اختار المصرفيون اليهود من #حثالة_البشر العالمية (روتشيلد، سوروس، روكفلر، جي بي مورغان، جولدمان ساكس) دميتهم التالية (كامالا هاريس) للتشريع في الولايات المتحدة وحول العالم دفاعًا عن مصالحهم الاقتصادية اللامحدودة.

ذكرت في تغريدة سابقة أن (كامالا هاريس) هي الرئيس القادم لأمريكا. Translated from Arabic by Google

The Jewish bankers of the حثالة البشر world (Rothschild, Soros, Rockefeller, JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs) have chosen their next puppet (Kamala Harris) to legislate in the US and around the world in defense of their unlimited economic interests.

I mentioned in a previous tweet that Kamala Harris is the next president of America.





It's time for us all to unite around Kamala Harris and beat Donald Trump. She is the best and most qualified candidate we have. Long live the American Dream! #Harris2024





2.3 Blaming Jews for Orchestrating the Assassination Attempt against Donald Trump

2.3.1





2.3.2



Content Description: A YouTube video promoting an antisemitic conspiracy theory claiming that the assassination attempt against Trump was staged as part of a Jewish ritual.

Video Title: "Proof That The Trump Assassination Was A Jewish Ritual?"

Audio: "[...] Sent me this video here about a Jewish rabbi [...] A brother sent me this thing about the thing of the Donald Trump assassination [...] The current non-Jewish Messiah was chosen to be of service to the Jewish people and the Jewish Messiah. President Trump's right ear was grazed in a symbolic gesture of Exodus 21:6 where the Torah states that a servant who wants to remain with his master needs to have his right ear pierced [...] You mean it was staged?" - [00:29-01:50].

In addition, the user claims that the modern Jews aim to create a "new world order" and refers to them as enemies: "[...] They're pushing for a new world order run by the Jews [...]" - [07:36-07:40], "[...] The Jews are our enemies right now [...]" - [08:03-08:06].



2.3.3



2.3.4





2.4 Sexual Deviancy

2.41



2.42

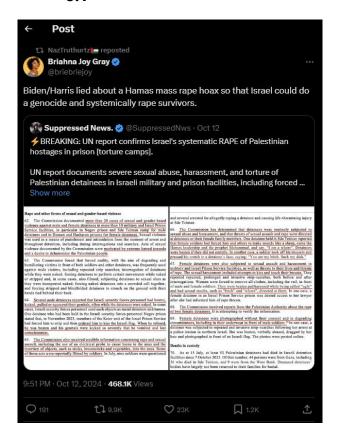
MUHAFIZ 💛 💙





3. October 7 Massacre Denial

3.1



3.2

