

October 7 Denial:

The Online Attempt to Erase Mass Sexual Violence Against Israeli Women

October 7, 2023, marked the bloodiest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel, brutalizing and slaughtering over 1,200 civilians and abducting hundreds more into Gaza. Furthermore, **Hamas deliberately used sexual violence and rape as a weapon to torture, terrorize, and humiliate women and girls.** Despite Hamas terrorists documenting their atrocities and livestreaming and uploading videos and photos onto social media platforms, **extremists on social media quickly began denying the very fact of the sexual assault – narratives that gained traction and continue to be spread online today.**

The denial of rape is an attempt to rewrite history - to obfuscate the deliberate crimes committed against women and redirect sympathy away from the victims and toward justification and celebration of their attackers. On this International Women's Day, CyberWell is sounding the alarm as a wake-up call for social media platforms. **Social media platforms must be a safe space for women – all women – and not allow the dissemination of content that denies the experiences of victims of sexual assault and applauds their abusers – the Hamas terrorists.** Platforms must enforce their existing hate speech and sexual violence policies, recognize denial of October 7 sexual assault as prohibitive content, and remove these posts at scale.

Rape Denial Narratives

No Proof

No rape survivor has personally recounted her experience, therefore there was no sexual assault.

Witnesses are Lying

Survivors of the terrorist attack and first responders testifying to acts of sexual violence that they witnessed or identified are lying, and news outlets that report on this issue are spreading fake news.

Lying for Profit

Israel is falsely accusing Hamas of rape for its own gain – to justify invading Gaza and to demonize the Palestinian resistance.

Muslims Don't Rape

As Hamas members are driven by religious Muslim ideology, they would not rape a woman.

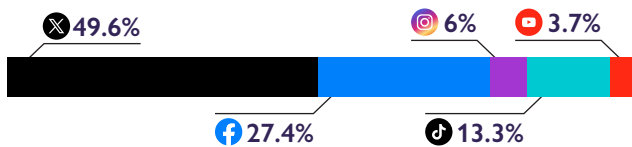
Israel "Did It"

Hamas didn't rape civilians, Israelis raped their own people.*

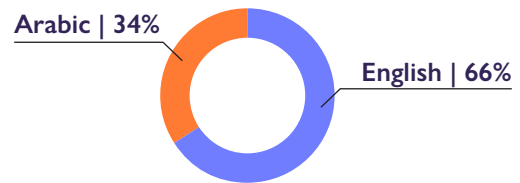
Note: Some October 7 deniers flip the narrative entirely, claiming that Hamas did not rape Israeli women, but rather that the IDF is raping Palestinian women. Regardless of the veracity of these claims, the rape of one group of women never negates the rape of another.

*In an interview frequently cited by rape deniers, an Israeli officer says that "civilians did it (rape)." In the original Hebrew video, the officer refers to Gazan civilians who crossed into Israel after Hamas, but rape deniers mistranslate his words and claim he refers to Israeli civilians as the rapists.

Platform Breakdown

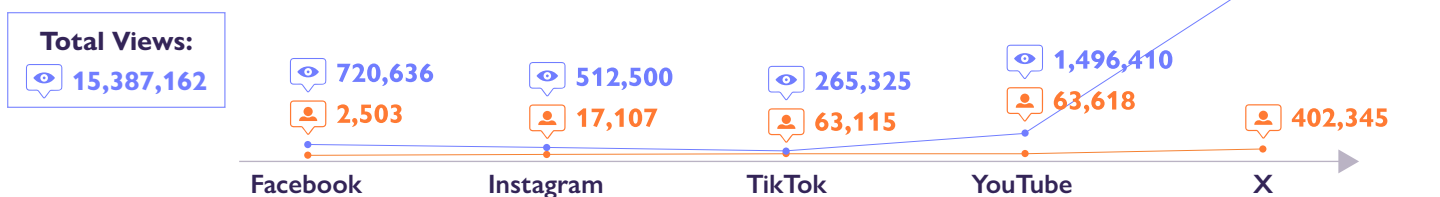


Language Breakdown



Engagement & Views

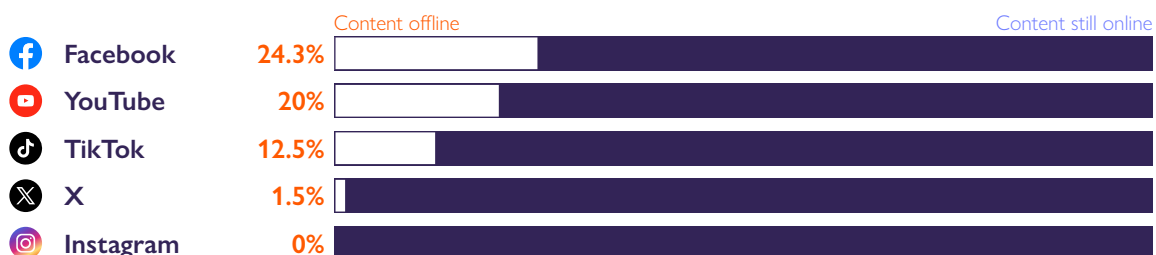
Views Engagement



Views on Meta platforms are calculated for videos/reels only.

Engagement across platforms is calculated as a sum of Likes, Shares, and Comments. For X, engagement also includes the number of Retweets.

Rates of Removal



X limited visibility flag: 4% of the tweets in this dataset received a label of limited visibility

*Total Dataset: 135 posts

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