



"Son of a Jew" as a Slur | **The Weaponization of Jewish Identity in Arabic Online Discourse**

May 19, 2026

Executive Summary

Across Arabic-language social media posts, the phrase "son of a Jew" is repeatedly used as a marker of treachery, corruption, cowardice, and moral inferiority, weaponizing Jewish identity. In some cases, this rhetoric escalates into explicit calls for violence against Jews, highlighting serious failures in platform enforcement. This report contextualizes the "Jew" and "son of Jew" slur in Arabic speaking spaces, analyzes the most prominent weaponization narratives, and shares recommendations for more effective moderation in online spaces.

History of "Jew" as a Slur in Arabic

In Arabic discourse, the term "Yahudi" ("Jew") has, in various historical and contemporary contexts, functioned not only as a descriptor of religious or ethnic identity but also as a derogatory epithet. Research¹ demonstrates that "the Jew" has been constructed in parts of Arab public discourse as a metaphorical figure representing evil, treachery, or subversion.² In this framework, the term "Yahudi" can serve to morally indict and delegitimize a target through associations with greed, deceit, disloyalty, and corruption.

The derogatory nature of the term is further intensified in formulations such as "son of a Jew", effectively labeling the mother of the targeted individual as a Jew. Research on Arabic insults and slang indicates that insults invoking family lineage carry heightened social stigma, as they extend dishonor beyond the individual to their family unit.³ Within

¹ Webman, Esther, "The 'Jew' as a Metaphor for Evil in Arab Public Discourse", *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 6, no. 3-4 (2015): 275-292.

² *ibid.*, 275

³ Lakusta, Valeriia, "Ways of Expressing Verbal Aggression in Egyptian Arabic", *Studies on Arabic Dialectology and Sociolinguistics: Proceedings of the 12th International Conference of AIDA Held in Marseille, May 30–June 2, 2017*, ed. Catherine Miller, Alexandrine Barontini, Marie-Aimée Germanos, Jairo Guerrero, and Christophe Pereira, (Aix-en-Provence: Institut de recherches et d'études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans, 2019), 512–517.



this context, attaching “Jew” to familial constructions transforms the phrase into a more explicit and socially damaging slur.

CyberWell’s review of Arabic-language social media posts found repeated use of the phrase “son of a Jew” as a derogatory insult. While the phrase may appear literal in isolation, contextual analysis shows that it is consistently used to demean targets by associating them with negative stereotypes historically attributed to Jews. In practice, the expression operates on two levels simultaneously: it insults the individual and the family of the individual while also **framing Jewish identity itself as inherently contemptible.**

Data Overview

CyberWell analyzed and vetted dozens of Arabic-language social media posts and confirmed them as antisemitic according to the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) Working Definition of Antisemitism](#). The posts were collected from **X, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook**, and all were reported to the platforms for violating platform policies.

Across the dataset, the Arabic phrase “son of a Jew” appeared in 100% of the analyzed posts and was used as a derogatory slur. This aligns with the second example of the IHRA Working Definition (hereinafter: “**IHRA Example 2**”), defined as:

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.

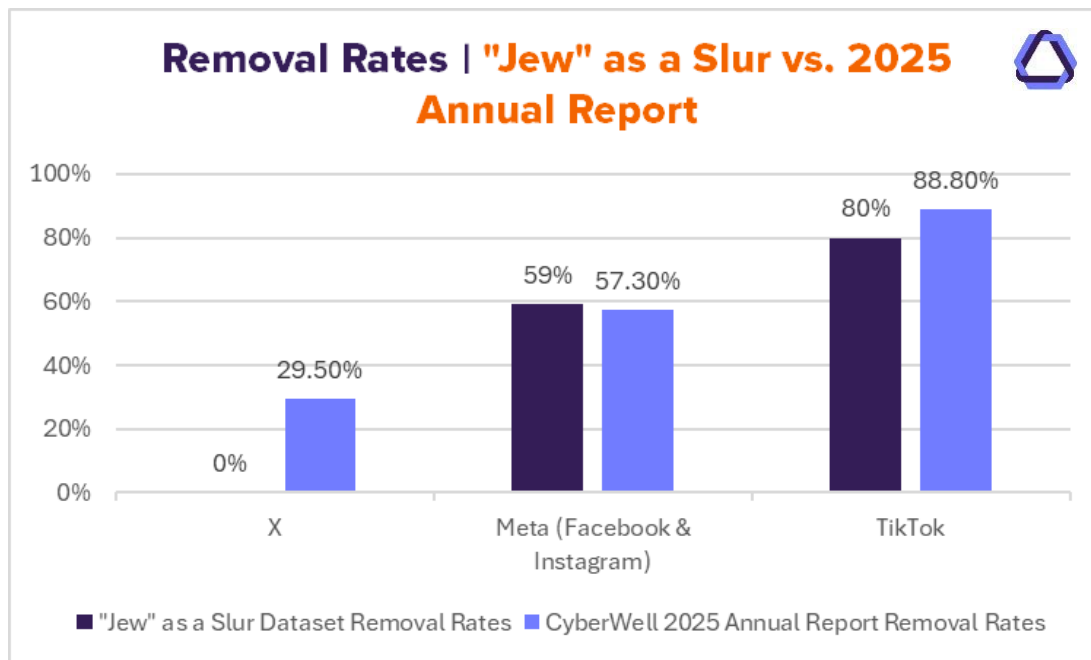
A notable aspect of the slur is that it was often directed at non-Jews. This is also covered by the IHRA Working Definition, which states that “rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property [...]”.

The second most common category identified in the dataset was the first example of the IHRA Working Definition (hereinafter: “**IHRA Example 1**”), which appeared in 12% of the posts. IHRA Example 1 – the most severe category identified in the dataset due to its association with violent rhetoric and incitement – is defined as:

Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.



Platform Enforcement Outcomes



Key Findings

- **TikTok recorded the highest removal rate in the dataset, at 80%.** This was broadly aligned with TikTok's 88.8% removal rate for antisemitic content documented in [CyberWell's 2025 Annual Report](#).
- **Meta showed a similar removal rate in the dataset, at 59%, compared with 57.3% in CyberWell's 2025 Annual Report.** However, a significant gap was observed between content involving IHRA Example 1 narratives, which Meta removed at a rate of 100%, and other forms of antisemitic hate, which were not removed as consistently. This suggests more consistent enforcement in cases involving explicit violent content.
- **X demonstrated a significant enforcement gap, with a 0% removal rate in the dataset compared with 29.5% in CyberWell's 2025 Annual Report.** While X increasingly relies on [visibility-limitation measures rather than removal](#), only 15% of posts in this dataset received visibility restrictions, indicating limited enforcement overall.
- **YouTube is regularly monitored by CyberWell, but content using "Jew" as a slur was not found on the platform during the collection of this dataset.** This may indicate either lower circulation of this specific phrase on YouTube or stronger prevention and enforcement mechanisms for this type of content.



Top Narratives Observed

The use of Jewish identity as an insult in Arabic discourse predates social media. However, as social media use in the Arab world has grown and antisemitism has surged over the past decade, this rhetoric has become more visible and widely circulated online. CyberWell identified posts dating back to 2014 in which Jewish identity was explicitly weaponized as a form of verbal abuse. The phrase gained particular visibility in 2014 during [the Gaza War](#), when Hamas spokesperson Abu Obaida [used](#) “son of a Jew” as an insult in a public statement. Its use in this high-profile political context contributed to the phrase’s broader circulation and normalization in contemporary online discourse. The fact that this hateful content remained online more than a decade later demonstrates that the phrase is not confined to a single political moment but reflects a recurring and enduring pattern in digital discourse.

Narrative 1: Using Jewish Identity as a Slur

The Facebook post below contains an image of a Gazan anti-Hamas militia leader, [Yasser Abu Shabab](#), alongside a caption celebrating his death while using Jewish identity in a derogatory manner. The user wrote in Arabic: “To hell, **you son of a Jew** [emphasis added]. God bless the resistance, the honor of the whole nation”. In this case the phrase “son of a Jew” is used as a direct insult, **weaponizing Jewish identity as a slur** and portraying Jewishness as inherently degrading or contemptible. This reflects a broader pattern in which “Jew” is not used descriptively, but symbolically – as a marker of corruption, betrayal, or moral deficiency.



Exhibit A — Facebook post using “son of a Jew” as a direct insult alongside imagery of Abu Shabab, a Gaza-based militant depicted in a humiliating manner.



In several instances within the dataset, this language was accompanied by hostile or violent rhetoric portraying Jews collectively as an enemy, moving beyond personal insult and reinforcing group-based animus.

The Instagram post below constitutes an explicit call to violence against Jewish people. It features graphic imagery of an attacker murdering a victim identifiable as Jewish by a Star of David and Orthodox Jewish appearance, accompanied by the Arabic text: “We’re coming for you, **O son of a Jew**” [emphasis added].



Exhibit B — Instagram post constituting an explicit call to violence: “We’re coming for you, O son of a Jew”. The graphic imagery targets individuals based on religious identity.

The Instagram post below constitutes an explicit call to violence against Jewish people and includes an antisemitic insult that uses the term “Jew” in a derogatory manner. The user shared an image depicting a figure wearing a keffiyeh and holding a knife while standing behind a Jewish person, with an [inverted red triangle](#) marking the Jewish individual as a target for attack. The post is accompanied by an Arabic caption: “My land is forbidden to you ▾ **you son of a Jew**” [emphasis added] 🌐 go to the settlements”.



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Exhibit C — Instagram post using “son of a Jew” as a derogatory slur alongside imagery of a keffiyeh-clad figure with a knife, with an inverted red triangle identifying the Jewish subject as a target.

Narrative 2: Glorifying a Hamas Slogan Incorporating the Slur

In addition to the organic use of “son of a Jew” as a slur in Arabic slang, CyberWell observed several posts supporting and glorifying a slogan popularized in a 2014 speech by Hamas spokesperson Abu Obaida: “You threaten us with what we await, you son of a Jew”. Hamas is responsible for the October 7 massacre, [the deadliest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust](#), and is designated as a terrorist organization by [multiple governments](#).

This phrase has been widely repeated and reposted across platforms, including several years after the original speech, often detached from its original context and repurposed as a chant or caption. The formulation uses Jewish identity as an insult directed at an adversary, **reinforcing the framing of “Jew” as synonymous with enemy, corruption, or moral inferiority**. Abu Obaida’s statement is antisemitic because it strips Jewish identity of its neutral meaning and deploys it as a term of degradation.

In the Instagram post below, the user shares an illustration resembling Hamas spokesperson Abu Obaida with his finger raised in a threatening gesture, paired with the Hamas slogan repurposed as a personal taunt and accompanied by the caption: “Do you



threaten me with deleting my account, **you son of a Jew??** [emphasis added] (In Abu Obaida’s voice)”.



Exhibit D — Instagram post pairing a drawing of a Hamas spokesperson with the caption: “Do you threaten me of deleting my account, **you son of a Jew??** (In Abu Obaida’s voice)”.

Narrative 3: Boycott Promotion Combining Both Narratives

CyberWell observed the development of a third narrative that merged the previous two patterns: the use of Jewish identity as a slur and the repetition of the Hamas slogan.

In these posts, users called for boycotts of Israeli products or companies perceived as pro-Israel. However, the slur “son of a Jew” was not directed at the products or companies themselves. Instead, **it was used to target individuals who purchased, used, or refused to boycott those products.** Consumers who did not participate in boycott efforts were publicly insulted and labeled with the slur as a form of social coercion.

Rather than focusing criticism on specific policies, corporate actions, or government decisions, the rhetoric shifted toward **degrading individuals through identity-based language.** By embedding antisemitic slang within boycott messaging, the discourse lowered the threshold for spreading hate speech online. The slur became integrated into activist content, allowing antisemitic language to circulate under the framing of political



advocacy while contributing to the broader normalization of hostility toward Jews as a collective.

The Instagram post below **uses Jewish identity in a derogatory manner to promote a boycott**. The post shows a screen recording in which someone searches: “What do we call someone who does not boycott companies that support Israel?” The video then cuts to a person stating the antisemitic slur in Arabic: “son of a Jew”.

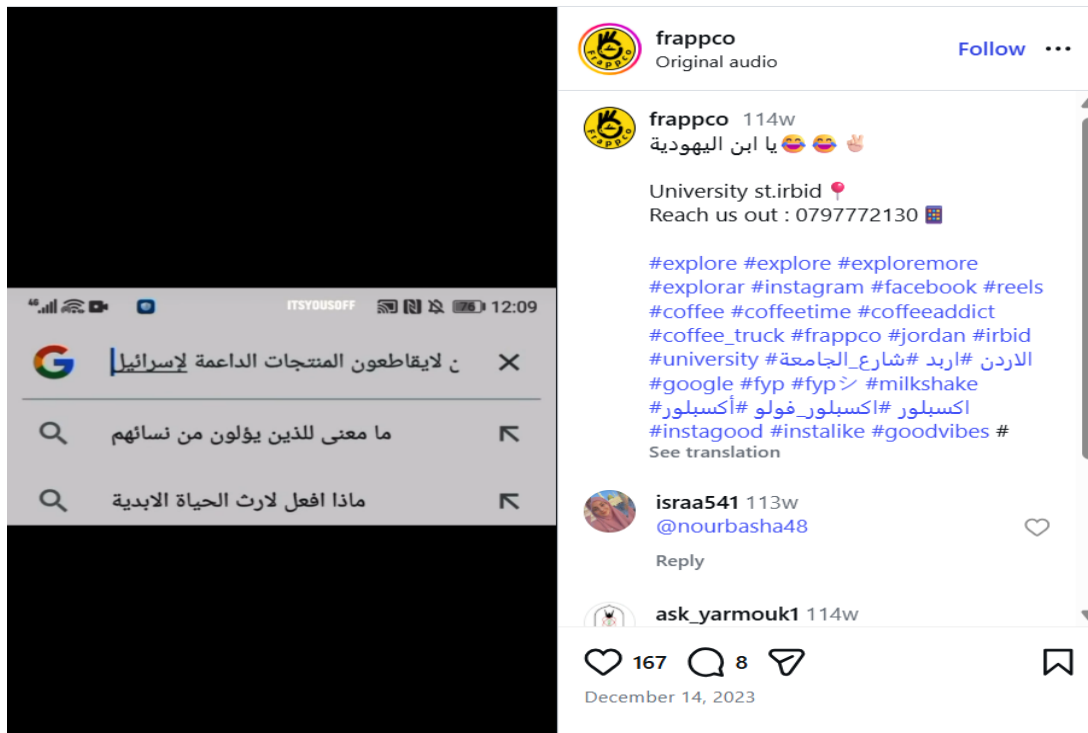


Exhibit E — Instagram post promoting a boycott, using “son of a Jew” to shame individuals who do not participate, weaponizing Jewish identity as a form of degradation and social coercion.

What’s Next

The narratives identified in this report illustrate how antisemitic language evolves and adapts within digital ecosystems. The repeated use of the phrase “son of a Jew” demonstrates how Jewish identity is being normalized as a term of degradation – not only in overt hate speech, **which in several instances within the dataset was accompanied by hostile or violent rhetoric**, but also within **political mobilization and boycott advocacy**. When identity-based slurs are embedded within broader social or political messaging, they become more difficult to detect and more likely to circulate without consequence.



This normalization has implications beyond online discourse. Language that frames Jewish identity as inherently contemptible or synonymous with betrayal contributes to an environment in which antisemitic hostility is trivialized and reinforced.

Addressing this pattern will require platforms to invest meaningfully in Arabic-language content moderation. This includes expanding moderation teams with linguists who understand regional slang, colloquial expressions, and the cultural contexts in which terms like “son of a Jew” function as slurs rather than neutral identifiers. Moderation systems that lack this contextual understanding will continue to miss harmful content.

Platforms should also work toward consistent enforcement standards that apply regardless of the political framing of the content in question. **Antisemitic language does not become acceptable simply because it appears within boycott messaging or political advocacy, and moderation policies should reflect that clearly.**

Finally, investing in early trend detection would allow platforms to identify the spread of slogans and phrases – such as the Hamas slogan documented in this report – before they achieve mass circulation. **Detecting harmful trends at an early stage is significantly more effective than responding after they have already reached millions of users.** Platforms that act early protect their communities; platforms that delay allow harm to compound.