



THE SAMIR KASSIR FOUNDATION

ANALYSIS OF THE DIGITAL HATE CAMPAIGN AGAINST RAGHEB ALAMA

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INTRODUCTION

On December 23, 2024, Lebanese artist Ragheb Alama became the target of a coordinated social media campaign. This campaign followed the release of a video allegedly containing derogatory remarks against former Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, killed by Israel on September 27, 2024. Despite Alama's swift denial, he was aggressively attacked. A property he owns—the Saint George School in Beirut's southern suburbs—was vandalized with pro-Nasrallah graffiti, stormed, and set on fire, causing significant damage. This incident highlights the alarming trend of orchestrated digital hate campaigns being weaponized to fabricate artificial popular support and incite real-world violence.

Methodology

This report analyzes 63 posts selected from over 9,000 posts on X, under the hashtag [#راغب_علامة](#) to evaluate the campaign's orchestration. Posts were chosen based on the following criteria:

- **Timing and frequency of publication:** The selected posts represent a spectrum of activity clustered around key moments of the campaign—from the initial leak to the most intense periods of amplification. This criterion helped identify posts that significantly contributed to the campaign's momentum.
- **Language and narrative consistency:** Posts were examined for recurring phrases, terminology, and themes to evaluate the degree of alignment in messaging. This included identifying derogatory terms such as "النذل," "ابن حرام," and "لوطي," which respectively translate to "bastard," "scoundrel," and "gay." These terms dominated the narrative, signaling possible coordination.

- **Amplification techniques:** We took repost patterns, mentions, and quote posts into consideration to assess how certain posts gained disproportionate reach. Posts that were disproportionately shared or amplified by key accounts were prioritized for inclusion.
- **Thematic frames dominating the narrative:** Posts that reinforced overarching themes—such as portraying Alama as a threat or targeting his family—were selected to understand how framing shaped public perception. This also included identifying visual elements like circulated images and videos.
- **Geographical and political backgrounds** of the accounts participating in the campaign.

The aim of applying these criteria was to identify patterns indicative of coordination and to assess the implications of such campaigns on public discourse and offline violence. By narrowing the focus to these key factors, we could better illustrate the strategies employed to manufacture outrage and escalate harm against Alama.

Limitations

Tracking posts proved challenging due to the dynamic nature of content removal on X. Approximately two days after the campaign escalated, the number of posts under the hashtag [#راغب_علامة](#) began to decline noticeably.

ANTI-ALAMA CAMPAIGN UNFOLDING

Campaign Trigger



The campaign was initiated by a pro-Hezbollah account, @allouush, with a history of involvement in digital hate campaigns. On December 23, 2024, at 5:36 PM, the user leaked the video from a secondary account (@allouush2) and promoted it through their main account. The post quickly went viral, amassing 2.4 million views. Simultaneously, the hashtag #راغب_علامة gained traction.



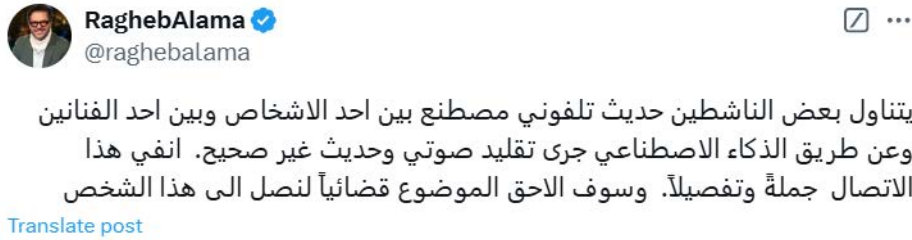
Within 45 minutes, nine accounts amplified the post, including:

- **Leb_now:** A digital media outlet primarily disseminating news from a pro-Hezbollah perspective, posting just six minutes after the initial leak.
- **Bissan Tarraf:** A journalist at Al Mayadeen TV, posting seven minutes after the initial leak.
- **Hassan Illaik:** A pro-Hezbollah journalist, posting at 6:08 PM.



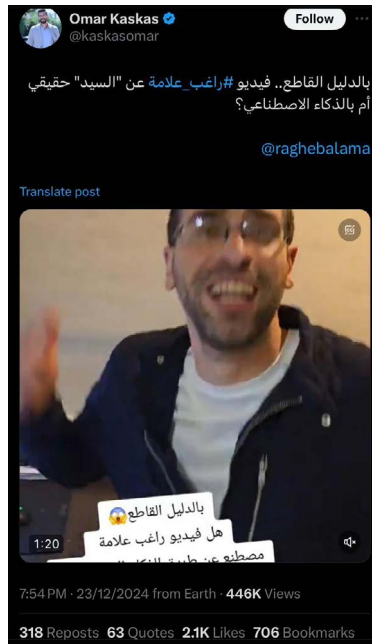
The remaining six accounts, affiliated with Hezbollah, posted between 5:55 PM and 6:22 PM. These posts contained explicit hate speech and incitement to violence against Alama and his family.

Clarification



At 6:29 PM, Alama released a statement dismissing the allegations, describing the purported phone call in the video as fabricated using artificial intelligence (AI) and pledging legal action.

Refutation by an Alleged AI Specialist



At 7:54 PM, a verified account belonging to Omar Kaskas, who is reportedly a senior editor at “This is Lebanon” and a journalist specializing in social media posted a video in which he uploaded the link of the leaked video to an AI detection tool. The tool returned a negative result, suggesting that the video was not altered using generative AI.

INVESTIGATING THE CAMPAIGN

For context, a leaked video captured a phone call between Abdullah Bilkhair, an Emirati artist, and the Lebanese singer Ragheb Alama. During the call, Alama made derogatory remarks about Nasrallah, which were recorded by Bilkhair with his phone on speaker.

To further investigate the claims made by Kaskas regarding the video's alteration, we consulted Mr. Ahmad Karout, a digital security expert and co-founder of Kazamedia/ITvism. He reviewed the methods Kaskas used to assess the video and highlighted several limitations. He said that Kaskas relied on one tool to check for deepfakes, while noting that the assessment tackled the overall audio of the video recorded by the cameraman and not Alama's voice in the call thus its ability to detect any voice alteration in the audio recorded in the leaked video is minimal. Mr. Karout concluded that the analysis presented by Kaskas lacked depth and could not provide a definitive judgment on whether the voice in the leaked call was generated using AI. His analysis underscored the need for a more rigorous and technical evaluation to establish the video's authenticity. We have provided a link to a snippet of Mr. Karout's reflection on the incident, which he shared on his [Instagram](#) account.

Despite these uncertainties, Kaskas's video quickly went viral, driven in part by mass promotion from prominent figures affiliated with pro-Hezbollah media outlets or those holding relatively favorable stances toward Hezbollah. For instance, [Zeinab Awada](#), a journalist and TV presenter at Al Manar, amplified the post just 28 minutes after it was shared. Similarly, [Amani Geha](#), a presenter at Al Araby TV, posted about the video only 10 minutes after Awada, alongside numerous other reposts that followed. This rapid amplification significantly extended the video's reach, fueling the broader campaign against Alama.

Essence of the Violation

Beyond the authenticity of Ragheb Alama's video, the focus must shift from whether the voice was AI-generated to the broader implications of the campaign. At the core of this issue are Alama's digital rights and privacy, especially if the statements in the recording were captured without his consent. This violation of privacy—exacerbated by doxing and the circulation of personal photos of his family members—demonstrates malicious intent.

Additionally, the central issue lies in defending Alama's right to express his opinions and condemning the double standards applied by his detractors. Notably, just a week prior, [Hezbollah invoked freedom of speech](#) to defend journalists and influencers summoned for posts critical of MTV. Yet, the same audience mobilized against Alama, exposing a stark inconsistency in their stance on free expression.

زينب عواضة @Zelnab_Awada

بشهادة المختصين فيديو #راغب_علامة صحيح وغير مقلد وهذا أمر مؤسف لكنه ليس بجديداً لأن السيد رحمه الله لم يحبه إلا كل شريف سواء اتفق معه أو اختلف.. حبه شرف لا يناله السفهاء والتاعبين والمتسلقين.. لا يناله إلا الشرفاء!!!

Translate post



From **Omar Kaskas**

8:28 PM · 23/12/2024 from Earth · 342K Views

375 Reposts 26 Quotes 2.7K Likes 349 Bookmarks

أماني جحا @amanie_geha

بالدليل القاطع هل فيديو راغب علامة مصطنع عن طريق الذكاء الاصطناعي



From **Omar Kaskas**

8:38 PM · 23/12/2024 from Earth · 6.8K Views

6 Reposts 3 Quotes 99 Likes 9 Bookmarks

مصدر مسؤول @fouadkhreiss

راغب علامة ينفي المقطع الصوتي المسرّب له ويقول انه جرى عبر طريق الذكاء الاصطناعي تقليد صوته.

ولكن المتخصص بلذكاء الاصطناعي عمر قصص يؤكد بالدليل القاطع أنّ المقطع المسرّب صحيح وليس كما ادعى راغب.

Translate post



8:30 PM · Dec 23, 2024 · 107.6K Views

29 87 577 71

Before delving into the on-ground escalation, we observed that 10 posts in our sample actively spread the video that counters Alama’s claim regarding the use of generative AI in his leaked conversation. In addition to the three cases detailed earlier, we identified two more instances involving a journalist and two media platforms.



As the campaign progressed, at least four posts in our sample included doxing and incitement to violence against Alama’s properties that were clearly used as template posts.





ON-GROUND ESCALATIONS

At 8:54 PM, a post circulated showing graffiti defacing the walls of Saint George School. By 9:57 PM, another post explicitly hinted at a further escalation, stating that “more is going to happen soon.” Later that evening, videos emerged showing the school being stormed and attacked with Molotov cocktails. Although we were unable to determine the exact timing of these incidents, a post from one of the participating outlets the following day reported that the attack occurred around 9:40 PM.



Notably, 52 out of the 63 posts in our sample were disseminated between 5:49 PM and 9:40 PM, highlighting the rapid and intense frequency of content circulation during this critical period. This temporal clustering underscores the deliberate nature of the campaign, aimed at maximizing its impact within a short timeframe.

Almost all of these posts include personal photos of Alama with his family, which backs up our premise that this campaign was orchestrated and the content that was being disseminated was prepared beforehand.

Public Figures Amplifying the Campaign

 **Chadi Mansour**   

@chadiman

لوهلة اعتقدت أنّ الفيديو نُقِّد بالذكاء الاصطناعي ، اذ لا يمكن أن أصدق أن يوصل فنان لهيدي الدرجة من الوضاعة والتملق والنفاق.

راغب علامة صديق الطبقة السياسية اللبنانية وموائدها وسهراتها ، يلي بيضحكها بالوجه وبيطعنها بالظهر، يلي رزقو وخيرو ومصالحو وبييتو بالضاحية، هالرجل بجسد أشبع الناس أيّ من يفتاب الآخرين وينمّ عليهم والغيبة والنميمة من كبائر الذنوب!

لا عتب على الفنان الاماراتي عبدالله بالخير المعروف بعفويته، العتب على ابن البيئته يلي خيرو منها وبيستحي فيها.

كنا عارفين أنّك خسيس، هلّق تاكدنا، تفه..

#راغب_علامة #لبنان #الامارات #عبدالله_بالخير #مصر #العراق #السعوديه_البحرين

[Translate post](#)

6:49 PM · 23/12/2024 from Earth · 788K Views

75 Reposts 15 Quotes 951 Likes 384 Bookmarks

 **د.أحمد عباس ياسين || ...Ahmed A**  

@ahmedyassine30

راغب علامة مثال صارخ عن الارتزاق والدونية وعبودية المال. راغب علامة لاعمق احذية السلاطين منعدم الشرف والحس الانساني، كما انه متلون كالحرباء يميل كما يميل الدولار. يشمت بشهادة اعظم قائد في التاريخ المعاصر ويدوس على مشاعر ملايين الناس من محبي الشهيد الاقدس.

[Translate post](#)

6:40 PM · 23/12/2024 from Earth · 17K Views

70 Reposts 4 Quotes 556 Likes 7 Bookmarks

 **Maen Khalil**  

@Maen_Khalil

راغب، المتلون والمتلوي الذي لا خير فيه لأهله، ولا كرامة. كلامك اليوم كشف النقاب عن وجهك الحقيقي؛ الوجه الذي لم يكن يوماً منتماً لأرض **#الضاحية** ولا لأهلها. لقد كنت دوماً تمارس فن التلون والتلوي، ترتدي الأقنعة وتتنقل بين المواقع كمن يبيع نفسه لمن يدفع أكثر.

اليوم، بلسانك الطويل الذي لم يكن إلا أداة للتبعية والتملق، أظهرت للعالم مدى الحقارة التي تعيشها. مكانك الطبيعي ليس بين الشرفاء، بل في بيئة الحقارة التي اخترتها بنفسك، حيث لا كرامة تُطلب.

ما تفوهت به ليس سوى انعكاس لحقدك الدفين الذي كنت تخفيه عن الجميع. لكن الحقيقة أن المجاري لفظتك، وها أنت تطفو على السطح لثُظهر قذارتك أمام الجميع.

قد يقول البعض إن الرد عليك لا يستحق عناء مسؤول، لكنني أرى من الواجب أن يواجه أمثالك بحقيقة ما اقترفوه، ليعرفوا أن لسانهم الطويل لا يعفيهم من المسؤولية ولا يحميهم من العواقب.

اخترت طريقك، فارحل إليه، وابقَ في مستنقعك، فقد انتهى مكانك بين أهل الكرامة والشرف.

[#راغب_علامة #راغب_علامة @raghebalama](#)

[Translate post](#)

8:02 PM · Dec 23, 2024 · 87.4K Views

99 141 1.1K 20

MAIN FINDINGS

Among the 62 analyzed posts, 35 originated from users that show support of Hezbollah, including at least five users based in Iraq. Thirteen posts were shared by journalists, media professionals, and self-identified “media specialists,” alongside content from five media platforms. Additionally, four posts came from influential pro-Hezbollah accounts [Zahraa Kobeisi](#), [Mohamad Mohsen](#), [Fouad Khreis](#), and [@sourcescredible](#). Three posts from public figures, i.e., [Maan El Khalil](#), General [Mounir Shehadeh](#), and [Michel Elefteriades](#). Two users [@LibanAyla](#) and [@liZeina](#) displayed affiliation with the Free Patriotic Movement, while the final user [@RalphChemaly1](#) showed affiliation with Marada Movement.

A Pattern of Mimetic Behavior

Aside from attacking Alama, when examining the data we found that 26 of the 62 users were involved in a separate information manipulation campaign, spreading unverified reports accusing Syrian Islamist militias of committing violence against Christian and Alawite minorities in Syria. The credibility of the information disseminated by these users remains questionable. While some [fact-checking](#) organizations have added context to certain [materials](#)—exposing them as [false](#) news with some going back to earlier events in Syria or misleading given the use of [deceptive captions](#)—it is still difficult to verify the extent of disinformation utilized given their haphazard spread.

This observation suggests that some users exhibited quasi-mimetic online behavior on multiple topics and across different campaigns. This suggests coordinated efforts by networks promoting pro-Hezbollah propaganda, as the posts exhibit a consistent narrative, similar linguistic patterns, and almost identical displayed content.





Amplification Tactics and Implications

This report analyzes a small sample of tweets that contributed to amplifying the anti-Alama campaign’s narrative. These tweets employed the following tactics:

- 1. **Temporal clustering:** A significant number of posts were concentrated within the first 24 hours after the video’s circulation. This spike indicates a deliberate effort to amplify the narrative quickly, ensuring widespread visibility before counter-narratives could emerge.
- 2. **Language and narrative alignment:** The majority of analyzed posts exhibited uniform language and themes, suggesting pre-coordination. Uniform derogatory terms and insults were prevalent, framing Alama as a threat to collective values and fueling hostility.

3. Amplification techniques:

- High retweet ratios: posts showed disproportionately high retweet ratios compared to original tweets, suggesting inorganic boosting.
- Network dynamics: Prominent accounts with large followings consistently amplified smaller, seemingly unaffiliated accounts, indicating a potential hierarchical network.

4. **Potential use of automation:** Uniform posting intervals, a common indicator of bot activity, suggest that automation may have played a role in driving engagement.

5. **Call to action and offline violence:** Several posts explicitly encouraged offline retaliation, directly linking the digital campaign to the subsequent vandalism at Saint George School. This escalation underscores the capacity of digital hate campaigns to incite real-world violence.

Broader Implications

This campaign exemplifies how orchestrated hate campaigns dominate digital spaces: Similar to patterns we found in our previous report, **Online Incitement, Real-World Consequences for Journalists in Lebanon**, these findings highlight key mechanisms:

- **Narrative control:** Consistent messaging helps orchestrators sway public perception and suppress dissenting voices.
- **Echo chambers:** Amplification tactics ensure the narrative reaches targeted audiences, reinforcing pre-existing biases within echo chambers,
- **Escalation:** As demonstrated in Alama's case, digital campaigns can escalate to physical threats and property damage, amplifying the harm to the target.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings underscore the urgent need to address orchestrated digital hate campaigns as a significant societal issue. These campaigns distort public discourse and heighten the risk of violence against individuals. To counter such tactics, we recommend:

- **Enhanced detection:** Policymakers, social media platforms, and civil society organizations must reinforce mechanisms to identify and mitigate coordinated inauthentic behavior.
- **Promoting digital literacy:** Efforts should focus on equipping users to recognize and resist manipulative campaigns.
- **Accountability:** Individuals and entities inciting violence must face appropriate legal consequences to deter future incidents.

This case serves as a stark reminder of the digital sphere's potential to amplify hate and incite harm, necessitating a coordinated response to safeguard individuals and protect public discourse.