

U.S. social media suppressing pro-Palestine content



New York, October 20 (RHC)-- Social media users have accused U.S. companies Instagram and Facebook of deliberately suppressing pro-Palestinian content, even suspending accounts that show the suffering of Palestinians and highlight the war crimes of Israel.

Social media users said content showing the plight of Gazans, who have been displaced, injured or killed by Israeli bombardment, was being hidden by Instagram. Others reported that Facebook suppressed

accounts that called for peaceful protests in different cities across the world.

Meta which owns both Instagram and Facebook claimed there was no purpose in censoring of Palestine-related content and the issue was because of a technical bug.

According to New York Times investigative reporter Azmat Khan, her Instagram account was shadow-banned after she posted an Instagram story about the war in Gaza. "Many colleagues and friends have reported the same," Khan said.

Less popular accounts also faced the same problem. Fizza, an Instagram user from Australia, complained that her stories were not receiving regular views signaling the account was restricted as she was regularly posting pro-Palestine content.

The Hampton Institute think tank has accused Instagram and Facebook of "actively blocking posts about the factual history of Israel/Palestine."

Nadim Nashif, the executive director and co-founder of 7amleh: The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, a Palestinian digital rights group, said that "7amleh has repeatedly documented how Palestinian content gets overly moderated and overly scrutinized by major online platforms," Arab News reported.

He added: "In the most recent context, for example, we noticed a double standard in how Meta hid the search results on an all-encompassing Arabic hashtag ... associated with the recent escalation but did not take similar action on the parallel hashtag in Hebrew because that was mainly used by state actors who get treated preferentially."

Since the Palestinian resistance group Hamas launched "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm" on October 7 following the recurrent desecration of al-Aqsa Mosque and the rising violence against Palestinians, social media platforms especially X have been spreading fake and misleading posts even linking unrelated videos to the current conflict.

The accounts spreading fake news have hardly been facing any restrictions while violating the community guidelines of the social media platform. However, social media users highlighting the plight of Palestinian civilians and the atrocities committed by Israel are shadow-banned and banned showing double standards of the social media platforms.

Adnan Barq, a Palestinian public figure with 239K followers on Instagram, shared guidelines he was sent by Instagram, stating his content and profile could not be shown to non-followers.

"Blocked from going live. Stop your racism @Instagram and grow the hell up," Barq captioned the Instagram update.

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