

How Facebook Helps Terrorists and Hate Groups  
Network on its Website

# RADICAL CONNECTIONS

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*Warning: This Report Contains Graphic Images*

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## Executive Summary

Facebook has repeatedly cited its crackdown on terrorist content to assuage concerns about potential terrorists networking on its social media website. These assertions to the public and shareholders are highly misleading. As described below, Facebook's efforts to stamp out terror content have been weak and ineffectual. Of even greater concern, Facebook itself has been creating and promoting terror content with its "auto generate" technology.

In April 2018, Facebook announced that with the help of advanced artificial intelligence and a growing team of human reviewers, the company had removed 1.9 million pieces of content related to ISIS and Al Qaeda and could now block 99% of terrorist activity before it was reported by users.<sup>1</sup>

"One thing that I'm proud of is our AI tools that help us take down ISIS and Al Qaeda-related terror content," CEO Mark Zuckerberg told investors on a quarterly earnings call that month.<sup>2</sup>

A survey of terror content on Facebook found that, despite the company's public claims, far more extremist content remains on the platform than is blocked. Less than 30% of the profiles of "Friends" of terrorist groups had been removed from the platform over the five-month period studied, despite obvious violations of Facebook standards. Only 38% of the profiles of Friends of terrorist groups that featured the symbols of those terrorist groups had been removed.

Similarly, Facebook has never publicly divulged that it actively promotes terror content across the website via its auto-generated features. The auto-generated terror content we identified appears to be assisting individuals who profess sympathy for extremist groups in finding and networking with one another.

We began our survey by searching Facebook for the English and Arabic name for several groups that the United States has designated as transnational terrorist groups, including ISIS and Al Qaeda. The searches turned up hundreds of results for people who listed jobs, names, or other profile attributes affiliating them with a terror group.

To study the issue in closer detail, we selected a dozen profiles of self-identified terrorists who had publicly accessible Friends lists and reviewed their 3,228 Friends for a deeper understanding of how widely terror content has spread on Facebook. Those "Friends" of self-declared terrorists span the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and Latin

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<sup>1</sup> Press Release from Monika Bickert, Dir. of Glob. Policy Mgmt. and Brian Fishman, Counterterrorism Policy Mgmt., *Hard Questions: How Effective Is Technology in Keeping Terrorists off Facebook?*, Facebook (Apr. 23, 2018), available at <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/04/keeping-terrorists-off-facebook/>.

<sup>2</sup> *First Quarter 2018 Results Conference Call*, Facebook Inc. (Apr. 25, 2018), available at [https://s21.q4cdn.com/399680738/files/doc\\_financials/2018/Q1/Q1-18-Earnings-call-transcript.pdf](https://s21.q4cdn.com/399680738/files/doc_financials/2018/Q1/Q1-18-Earnings-call-transcript.pdf).

America, and many openly identified as terrorists themselves and shared extremist content.

The ease with which we found these individuals exposes several major failures in Facebook's content review process. The company's AI only targets two groups out of the dozens of designated terrorist organizations: ISIS and Al Qaeda. Even then, it fails to catch most permutations of their names. We found similar extremist content from self-identified Nazis and white supremacist groups in the United States that went unchallenged. While Facebook banned the far-right extremist group "Proud Boys" in October 2018, it has allowed dozens of other Nazi and white supremacist groups to continue to operate openly.

As alarming – and not previously reported in the press – is the role Facebook plays in actively *enabling* networking among these individuals by auto-generating pages, logos, promotional videos and other propaganda and networking tools for them.<sup>3</sup>

For example, Facebook auto-generates "Local Business" pages for terrorist groups to support the job designations in some profiles that list the groups in their "work" experience. On those pages, Facebook also auto-filled terror icons, branding and flags that appear when a user searches for members of that group on the platform.

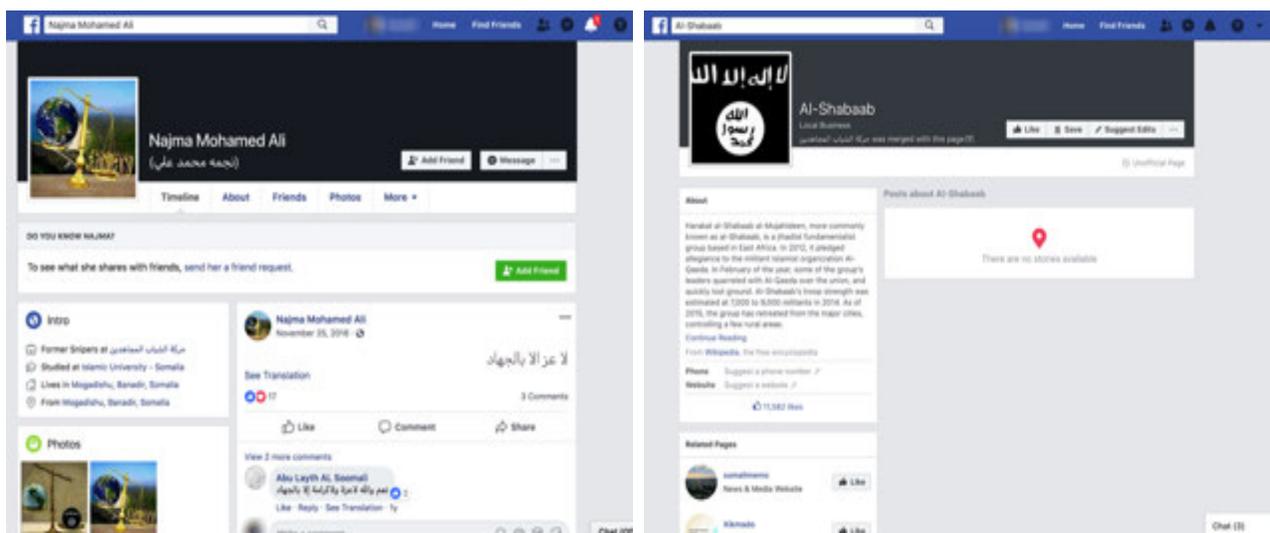


Figure 1: (Left) Profile listing job experience as "Former Sniper" at Al Shabaab, a terrorist group in Somalia. (Right) Facebook auto-generated "business" page for the terrorist group Al Shabaab, includes logo of ISIS, the terrorist group that Al Shabaab has pledged allegiance to.

<sup>3</sup> Facebook identifies its auto-generated pages with an icon under the cover photo space that notes "Unofficial Page." Hovering over the icon will bring up Facebook's disclaimer about Unofficial Pages: "This unofficial Page was created because people on Facebook have shown interest in this place or business. It's not affiliated with or endorsed by anyone associated with [Name of Page]." Facebook also clearly identifies their auto-generation of Wikipedia descriptions on these pages. At the bottom left of the auto-generated page Facebook includes the Wikipedia logo with a note that states, "Content from the Wikipedia article [Name of Article] (contributors) licensed under CC-BY-SA."



Figure 2: Facebook auto-generated "business" page for the Syrian terrorist group Hayat Tahrir Al Sham. The page had nearly 4,500 Likes as of February 8, 2019.

- Some of these terrorist-affiliated "business pages" have escaped Facebook scrutiny for so long that they have generated thousands of "Likes," such as the Al-Shabaab page which had 11,582 "Likes" (see Figure 1). These likes appear to serve as a veritable database of terror sympathizers, and these pages seem to be spaces that self-professed terror groups are utilizing to identify potential recruits.
- Facebook created "Celebration and "Memories" videos for the self-identified terrorists, helping them spread auto-generated videos of terrorist iconography and militant activity across their networks (see Figure 2).

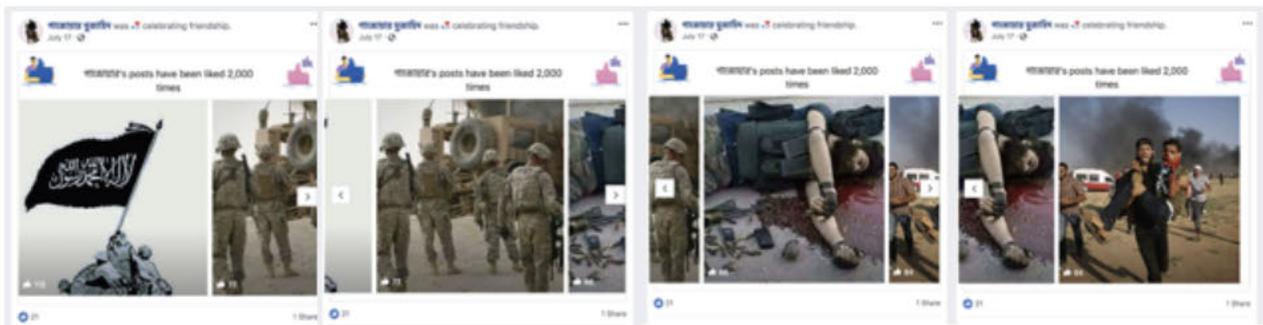


Figure 3: User shared Facebook's auto-generated "celebration" post highlighting his images of graphic violence and insurgency gaining over 2,000 Likes.

- Facebook’s “Frame” feature allows users to design graphics that can be imposed over their profile photos. We identified multiple instances of terror-associated iconography created through the Frames feature and disseminated across the platform. This feature requires review by a Facebook-employed moderator before

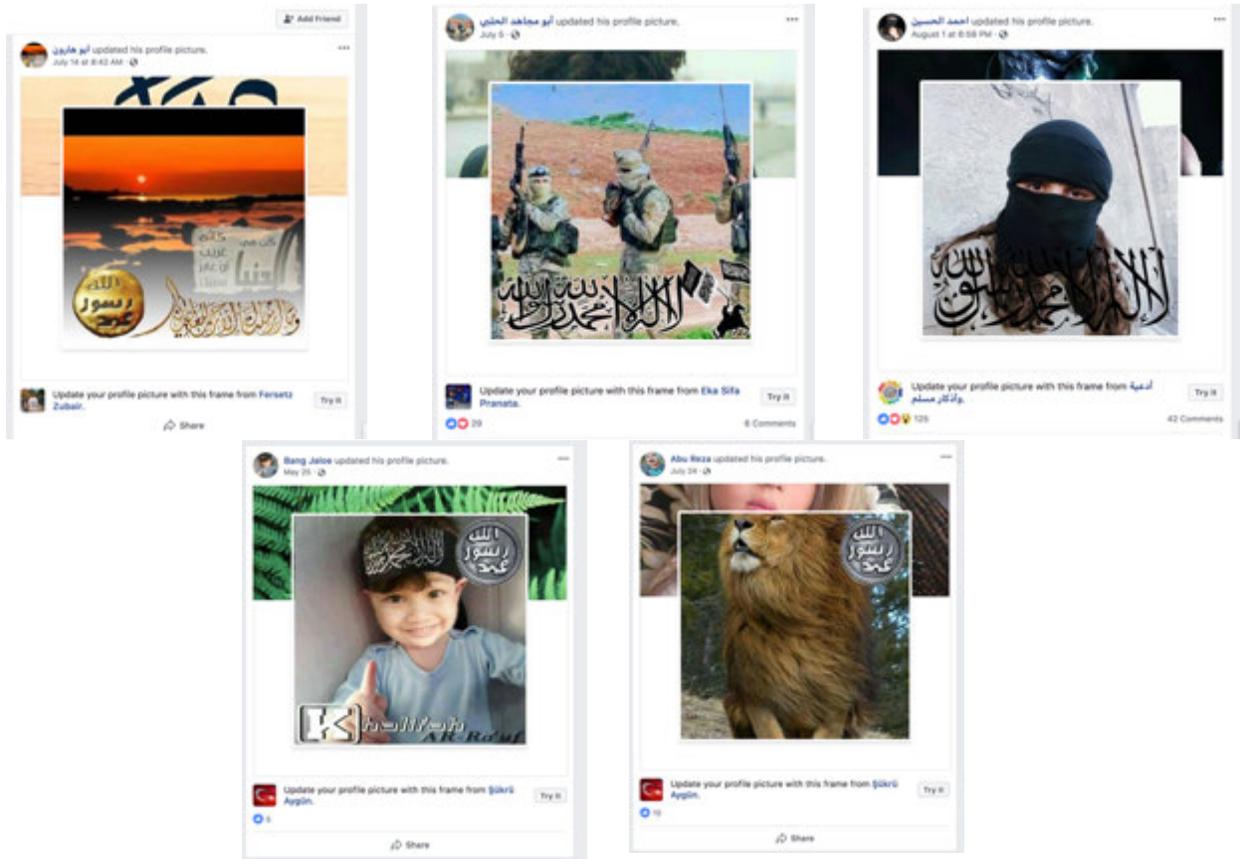


Figure 4: Five different types of profile photo frames associated with extremist groups. Each of these frames was approved by Facebook’s human content reviewers and disseminated on Facebook. All five of these frames were still accessible for public use as of August 9, 2018.

a frame can be used publicly, suggesting the platform’s human review efforts are as flawed as its AI (see Figures 3 and 4).

- To verify the existence of self-identified members of terror groups, we provided a Syrian NGO with a sample of 63 profiles who “liked” the auto-generated Facebook Page for Hay’at Tahrir Al Sham (HTS), a Syrian Salafist militant group also known as Al Qaeda in Syria. Using its human intelligence network in Syria’s Idlib province, the NGO was able to confirm that 31 of the profiles matched known individuals in the region. (Neither we nor the NGO could confirm the individuals’ membership in HTS, information that is not publicly available.)
- Moreover, some of these individuals had previously been linked by the NGO to the illicit trade in antiquities, which allegedly is a source of funding for HTS. In the Idlib region, the group not only taxes individuals conducting these operations, but

also issues permits to looters who are digging in areas under their control as a source of financing.

- Facebook has auto-generated similar pages for Nazi and white supremacist groups in the United States. Our research identified at least 31 different pages and locations that were auto-generated by Facebook for Nazi and white supremacist groups. Among them are pages associated with New Aryan Empire, a criminal white supremacist group targeted by the Department of Justice in February 2019 for their involvement in racketeering, drug trafficking, kidnapping, and attempted murder.<sup>4</sup> One NEA elder posted calls to action and proclamations of loyalty through his public Facebook profile, which lists his job as “stomp down HONKY.” Facebook auto-generated a page for “stomp down HONKY” as a “work position” (see Figure 5).<sup>5</sup>

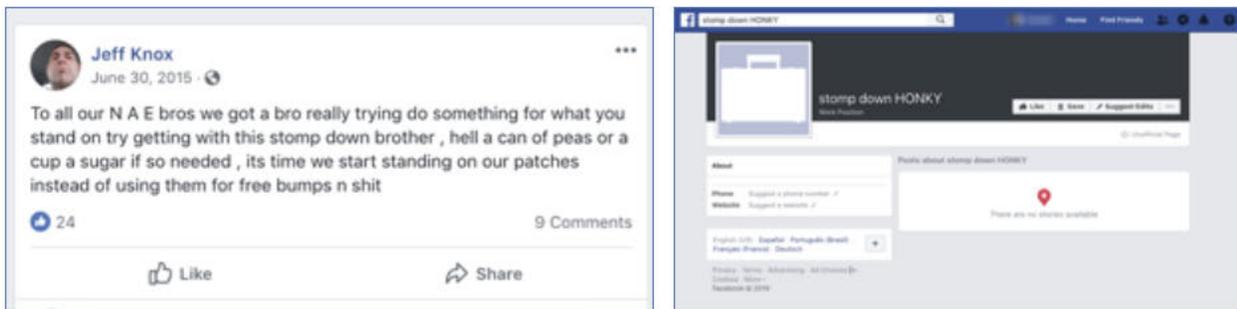


Figure 5: Facebook auto-generated a work page for New Aryan Empire elder Jeff Knox, who used Facebook for calls to action for his white supremacist group.

Facebook executives have suggested in the past that such content – and the potential deaths resulting from acts of terrorism or violence that may be encouraged or facilitated by Facebook – are simply a cost of doing business for the social network. In a March 2018 company memo, Facebook Vice President Andrew Bosworth said:

Maybe someone dies in a terrorist attack coordinated on our tools. And still we connect people. The ugly truth is that we believe in connecting people so deeply that anything that allows us to connect more people more often is *\*de facto\** good.<sup>6</sup>

That view may not be surprising given the unique legal protections enjoyed by Facebook and other social media companies. Victims of terrorism around the world have tried in numerous instances to hold Facebook and other social media websites

<sup>4</sup> *U.S. vs. Millsap*, No. 4:17CR00293 BSM (E.D. Ark. Feb. 5, 2019), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1131401/download>.

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/stomp-down-HONKY/731958313563083?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=%2Cd-%5C-R&eid=ARAbXed2EGNuDY8Y4YfhIGoanfKnTn2Hbt0ek31PogPX\\_rbCZs661I5K1aLumWwOviWjF3BIYMwsOeZk](https://www.facebook.com/pages/stomp-down-HONKY/731958313563083?__tn__=%2Cd-%5C-R&eid=ARAbXed2EGNuDY8Y4YfhIGoanfKnTn2Hbt0ek31PogPX_rbCZs661I5K1aLumWwOviWjF3BIYMwsOeZk).

<sup>6</sup> Avi Selk, 'Maybe someone dies': Facebook VP justified bullying, terrorism as costs of netowkr's 'growth,' WASH. POST (Mar. 30, 2018), available at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/03/30/maybe-someone-dies-facebook-vp-justified-bullying-terrorism-as-costs-of-growth/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.92ed2a69c6a8](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/03/30/maybe-someone-dies-facebook-vp-justified-bullying-terrorism-as-costs-of-growth/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.92ed2a69c6a8).

responsible by alleging that the sites allow terrorists to recruit and coordinate attacks, only to be blocked in court.

Facebook has repeatedly and successfully cited Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) to shield itself from liability. The provision states that, “No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.”<sup>7</sup> The law grants Facebook broad immunity for the content that users generate on its platform.

But that immunity does not extend to the extremist content generated by Facebook that is highlighted in this report.

Facebook’s defensive wall appears to be crumbling on several fronts.

In an April 2018 appearance before a congressional panel, Zuckerberg acknowledged the company’s responsibility for what is being disseminated on its platform: “When people ask if we’re a media company what I heard is, ‘Do we have a responsibility for the content that people share on Facebook,’ and I believe the answer to that question is yes.”<sup>8</sup> And in testimony before Congress in September, COO Sheryl Sandberg reluctantly said the company was open to discussing limits on that immunity.<sup>9</sup>

In light of the evidence presented below, Facebook should be held to account for its role spreading extremist content online.

## Facebook’s Efforts to Counter Terrorist Content

Facebook first began making headlines for terrorism-related issues in 2014 following the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). ISIS became internationally known as a result of its vicious tactics amplified by its young, tech-savvy fighter base, who utilized the global reach of social media to recruit new members.

In November 2014, Facebook was served with an FBI search warrant for a user’s account after a Virginia woman posted her “love” of ISIS on Facebook and listed her work description as “jihad for the sake of Allah.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> 47 U.S.C § 230.

<sup>8</sup> Yonah Jeremy Bob, *Did Mark Zuckerberg Make Facebook Vulnerable to Anti-Terrorism Lawsuits*, THE JERUSALEM POST (Apr. 22, 2018), available at <https://www.jpost.com/International/Did-Mark-Zuckerberg-make-Facebook-vulnerable-to-anti-terrorism-lawsuits-551396>.

<sup>9</sup> *Foreign Influence and Social Media*, S. Comm. on Intl., 115th Congress (Sept. 5, 2018), available at <https://www.c-span.org/video/?450990-1/foreign-influence-social-media&live>.

<sup>10</sup> David Kravetz, *Woman posts “love” of ISIS on Facebook, charged with “promoting” terrorism*, ARS TECHNICA (Nov. 18, 2014), available at <https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2014/11/woman-posts-love-of-isis-on-facebook-charged-with-promoting-terrorism/>; Matt Zapotosky, *Virginia woman accused of attempting to aid Islamic State*, WASH. POST (Nov. 17, 2014), available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/va-woman-accused-of-attempting-to-support->

Facebook has since publicly promised reform and hailed its own progress countering extremist content, while in the courts it has fought aggressively to avoid responsibility.

In 2016, Facebook announced that it was partnering with Twitter, YouTube, and Microsoft to create the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT).<sup>11</sup> As part of its efforts for the GIFCT, Facebook said it would contribute to a “shared industry database of ‘hashes’ — unique digital ‘fingerprints’ — for violent terrorist imagery or terrorist recruitment videos or images that we have removed from our services.”<sup>12</sup> According to the GIFCT website:

The database now contains more than 50,000 hashes. It allows member companies to use those hashes to identify and remove matching content — videos and images — that violate our respective policies or, in some cases, block terrorist content before it is even posted.<sup>13</sup>

In late 2016, Facebook said it had started actively removing terrorist-related content from its platform.<sup>14</sup> By 2017, the company claimed that the majority of terror content it removed was proactively flagged before users reported it.<sup>15</sup> While Facebook claims its targeting is improving, it still fails to incorporate terrorist groups beyond ISIS, Al Qaeda and their affiliates.<sup>16</sup>

Instead, the company has relied heavily on reassuring rhetoric that it takes the problem seriously. In June 2017, Facebook laid out its stance on terrorism content in its “hard questions.”

Our stance is simple: There’s no place on Facebook for terrorism. We remove terrorists and posts that support terrorism whenever we become aware of them. When we receive reports of potential terrorism posts, we review those reports urgently and with scrutiny. And in the rare cases when we uncover evidence of

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[isis/2014/11/17/060c250c-6e8b-11e4-893f-86bd390a3340\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.bcb7736e0d61](https://www.facebook.com/isis/2014/11/17/060c250c-6e8b-11e4-893f-86bd390a3340_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.bcb7736e0d61).

<sup>11</sup> *The vision of the GIFCT is to prevent terrorists from exploiting our platforms*, GLOBAL INTERNET FORUM TO COUNTER TERRORISM, available at <https://gifct.org/>.

<sup>12</sup> Press Release from Monika Bickert, Dir. of Glob. Policy Mgmt. and Brian Fishman, Counterterrorism Policy Mgmt., *Hard Questions: How Effective Is Technology in Keeping Terrorists off Facebook?*, Facebook (Apr. 23, 2018), available at <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/04/keeping-terrorists-off-facebook/>.

<sup>13</sup> *Progress on Hash-Sharing and our Partnership Structure*, GLOBAL INTERNET FORUM TO COUNTER TERRORISM, available at <https://gifct.org/partners/>.

<sup>14</sup> Press Release, *Partnering to Help Curb Spread of Online Terrorist Content*, Facebook (Dec. 5, 2016), available at <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2016/12/partnering-to-help-curb-spread-of-online-terrorist-content/>.

<sup>15</sup> *The vision of the GIFCT is to prevent terrorists from exploiting our platforms*, GLOBAL INTERNET FORUM TO COUNTER TERRORISM, available at <https://gifct.org/>.

<sup>16</sup> Vernon Silver and Sarah Frier, *Terrorists Are Still Recruiting on Facebook, Despite Zuckerberg’s Reassurances*, BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK (May 10, 2018), available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-05-10/terrorists-creep-onto-facebook-as-fast-as-it-can-shut-them-down>.

imminent harm, we promptly inform authorities. Although academic research finds that the radicalization of members of groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda primarily occurs offline, we know that the internet does play a role — and we don't want Facebook to be used for any terrorist activity whatsoever.<sup>17</sup>

In January 2018, the Senate Commerce Committee held hearings on the issue of terrorism content on Facebook and whether the social media giant and other technology companies were doing enough to combat it.<sup>18</sup> During the hearing, Facebook said it has been employing artificial intelligence as the primary means of combating terrorist content.

Sensing that approach was inadequate, Facebook announced four months later that it would increase its human review capabilities by boosting the size of its counter-terrorism team from 150 to 200.<sup>19</sup> But with 1 billion active daily users, the company efforts continue to rely heavily on AI.

When Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg appeared before Congress in April 2018, he noted that Facebook was “proud” of how well it removes terrorism content from the platform:

I think that you would probably agree that we should remove terrorist propaganda from the service. So that, I agree. I think it is — is clearly bad activity that we want to get down. And we're generally proud of — of how well we — we do with that.<sup>20</sup>

On an earnings call that same month, Mark Zuckerberg again touted the company's success with AI monitoring, noting, “One thing that I'm proud of is our AI tools that help us take down ISIS and Al Qaeda-related terror content, with 99 percent of that content being removed before any person flags it to us.”<sup>21</sup>

Later that month, Facebook released the company's official definition of terrorism, defining it as “Any non-governmental organization that engages in premeditated acts of

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<sup>17</sup> Press Release from Monika Bickert, Dir. of Glob. Policy Mgmt. and Brian Fishman, Counterterrorism Policy Mgmt., How We Counter Terrorism, Facebook (June 15, 2017), *available at* <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2017/06/how-we-counter-terrorism/>.

<sup>18</sup> Press Release, Committee Announces Hearing To Examine Extremist Propaganda on Social Media Platforms, Sen. Comm. on Com., Sci., and Transp. (Jan. 9, 2018), *available at* <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/1/committee-announces-hearing-to-examine-extremist-propaganda-on-social-media-platforms>.

<sup>19</sup> Press Release from Monika Bickert, Dir. of Glob. Policy Mgmt. and Brian Fishman, Counterterrorism Policy Mgmt., Hard Questions: How Effective Is Technology in Keeping Terrorists off Facebook?, Facebook (Apr. 23, 2018), *available at* <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/04/keeping-terrorists-off-facebook/>.

<sup>20</sup> *Transcript of Mark Zuckerberg's Senate Hearing*, WASH. POST (Apr. 10, 2018), *available at* [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/04/10/transcript-of-mark-zuckerbergs-senate-hearing/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.365a594899c1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/04/10/transcript-of-mark-zuckerbergs-senate-hearing/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.365a594899c1).

<sup>21</sup> *First Quarter 2018 Results Conference Call*, Facebook Inc. (Apr. 25, 2018), *available at* [https://s21.q4cdn.com/399680738/files/doc\\_financials/2018/Q1/Q1-18-Earnings-call-transcript.pdf](https://s21.q4cdn.com/399680738/files/doc_financials/2018/Q1/Q1-18-Earnings-call-transcript.pdf).

violence against persons or property to intimidate a civilian population, government, or international organization in order to achieve a political, religious, or ideological aim.”<sup>22</sup>

That definition encompasses a broad number of groups, including domestic hate groups and fringe extremist groups that may not yet have been declared terrorist organizations by the United States government.

Facebook’s Community Standards also claim to draw a hard line on content from groups that meet that definition: “we do not allow any organizations or individuals that are engaged in [terrorist activity] to have a presence on Facebook... We also remove content that expresses support or praise for groups, leaders, or individuals involved in these activities.”<sup>23</sup>

While its definition of terror groups is exceedingly broad, Facebook has acknowledged that its actions are extremely narrow: In its April update on the company’s counter-terrorism efforts, Facebook said its AI focuses on “enforcement against ISIS, Al Qaeda, and their affiliates.”<sup>24</sup>

## Legal Challenges

Victims of terrorism have repeatedly attempted to hold Facebook accountable for allowing terror groups to operate on its platform, with little success. Virtually all such civil lawsuits have been thrown out by judges citing Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act.

Shurat HaDin Israel Law Center was the first plaintiff to sue social media companies for inciting terrorism.<sup>25</sup> In October 2015, Shurat HaDin filed a landmark case, *Cohen v. Facebook*, claiming that terrorists “were motivated to commit their heinous crimes by incitement to murder they read on Facebook.”<sup>26</sup> The case was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York on behalf of 20,000 Israelis who “live in fear

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<sup>22</sup> Press Release from Monika Bickert, Dir. of Glob. Policy Mgmt. and Brian Fishman, Counterterrorism Policy Mgmt., Hard Questions: How Effective Is Technology in Keeping Terrorists off Facebook?, Facebook (Apr. 23, 2018), available at <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/04/keeping-terrorists-off-facebook/>.

<sup>23</sup> *Community Standards: Violence and Criminal Behavior*, FACEBOOK, available at [https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/violence\\_criminal\\_behavior](https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/violence_criminal_behavior).

<sup>24</sup> Press Release from Monika Bickert, Dir. of Glob. Policy Mgmt. and Brian Fishman, Counterterrorism Policy Mgmt., Hard Questions: How Effective Is Technology in Keeping Terrorists off Facebook?, Facebook (Apr. 23, 2018), available at <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/04/keeping-terrorists-off-facebook/>.

<sup>25</sup> *THE FACEBOOK FILE*, SHURAT HADIN, available at <https://israellawcenter.org/cases/the-facebook-file/>.

<sup>26</sup> Henry Austin, *FACEBOOK HIT WITH US LAWSUIT FOR IGNORING THE 'INCITEMENT AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST ISRAELIS'*, THE INDEPENDENT (Oct. 28, 2015), available at <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/facebook-hit-with-us-lawsuit-for-ignoring-the-incitement-and-encouragement-of-violence-against-a6711361.html>.

of their personal safety” in response to a wave of attacks on Jews that began in 2015, which were allegedly incited through Facebook.<sup>27</sup>

The Plaintiffs in the *Cohen v. Facebook* case did not seek any monetary damages, but did seek to hold the company responsible for allowing widespread coordination among alleged Palestinian terrorists on its platform. The lawsuit sought an injunction that would require Facebook to remove the posts considered “incitement” and to pro-actively remove and block future content identified as inciting terroristic violence.<sup>28</sup>

Roughly eight months after filing *Cohen v. Facebook*, Shurat HaDin filed a second case, *Force v. Facebook*, in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, seeking \$1 billion in damages for Facebook’s role as a “tool for engaging terrorism.”<sup>29</sup> The case was filed on behalf of five victims of a Hamas terrorism attack and, noting that Hamas has been officially declared a “Foreign Terrorist Organization” by the U.S. government, it sought compensatory damages under the U.S. Antiterrorism Act. *Cohen v. Facebook* was moved to the District Court for the Eastern District of New York to join the *Force v. Facebook* case.

In November 2016, Facebook filed a motion to dismiss both cases brought by Shurat HaDin. The company cited Section 230 of the CDA, under which the company’s lawyers argued that Facebook is not responsible for content posted on its platform by third-parties.<sup>30</sup> CDA Section 230 states that, “No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.”<sup>31</sup>

In May 2017, the court sided with Facebook and dismissed both suits filed by Shurat HaDin, pursuant to the protections of CDA Section 230.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the ruling, plaintiffs have continued to file cases against Facebook and other social media and tech companies, blaming them for their roles in enabling and inciting terrorism. For example, in May 2018, Facebook was accused of facilitating terrorist networking through its algorithm for “suggested friends.”<sup>33</sup> However, Facebook’s

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<sup>27</sup> *THE FACEBOOK FILE*, SHURAT HADIN, available at <https://israellawcenter.org/cases/the-facebook-file/>.

<sup>28</sup> *Attorney Sues Facebook over Palestinian Incitement*, CBN NEWS (Nov. 6, 2015), available at <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/insideisrael/2015/November/Attorney-Sues-Facebook-over-Palestinian-Incitement>.

<sup>29</sup> *THE FACEBOOK FILE*, SHURAT HADIN, available at <https://israellawcenter.org/cases/the-facebook-file/>; Rim Elbelkacemi, *Facebook Sued for \$1 Billion for Being a ‘Tool for Engaging in Terrorism,’* MOROCCO WORLD NEWS (July 13, 2016), available at <http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2016/07/191192/facebook-sued-for-1-billion-for-being-a-tool-for-engaging-in-terrorism/>.

<sup>30</sup> *Cohen v. Facebook, Inc.*, 252 F. Supp. 3d 140 (E.D.N.Y. May 18, 2017); Russell Spivak, *Facebook Immune from Liability Based on Third-Party Content*, LAWFARE (May 23, 2017), available at <https://www.lawfareblog.com/facebook-immune-liability-based-third-party-content>.

<sup>31</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 230.

<sup>32</sup> *NY court drops suit against Facebook over Palestinian incitement*, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL (May 19, 2017), available at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ny-court-drops-palestinian-incitement-suit-against-facebook/>.

<sup>33</sup> Martin Evans, *Facebook accused of introducing extremists to one another through ‘suggested friends’ feature*, THE TELEGRAPH (May 5, 2018), available at

algorithms were operating from content generated or created by third parties, thus, its actions again likely fall under the purview of Section 230's protections.

## Terror Survey

Our survey of extremist content on Facebook, conducted between August and December 2018, found that self-professed terror groups are still operating openly on the platform. It remains easy to find content associated with ISIS and Al Qaeda, and simple searches for the names of terror groups like Boko Haram, Al Shabaab, Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham, and others, uncover pages, jobs, and profiles linked to those extremist groups.

Using a simple search in English and Arabic for known terror groups, our survey initially identified the public profiles of 12 users who self-identified as terrorists by either (1) listing a terrorist organization in the "employment" experience section of their profile or (2) explicitly identifying themselves as terrorists in the text of their profile.

Each of these 12 users allowed public access to their Friends list on Facebook, granting us the ability to take a further look into the networks of users who knowingly "friended" someone who identifies as a terrorist. While fake accounts seemed to be peppered throughout some of the friends lists, the history of personal content on many users' timelines appears to be genuine.

We then studied the public profiles of 3,228 of these "Friends" of self-identified Terrorists (the "Friends" group). While it was impossible to determine how many members of this group are terrorists, many appeared to share an ideological affiliation. Hundreds of individuals within this group publicly and openly shared images, posts, and propaganda of ISIS, Al Qaeda, the Taliban and other known terror groups. Others shared photos or video of their militant activity. The Friends group represented a diverse cross-section of global society, including a mix of men and women, young and old, who lived in a wide geographic area, spanning from Asia, to Africa, to South America.

We found that 317 profiles in the Friends group contained a flag or other symbol of a terrorist group in their profile images, cover photo, or featured photos (the "Friends with Terrorist Group Symbols" group). We also found hundreds of individuals who publicly and openly shared images, posts, and propaganda of ISIS, Al Qaeda, the Taliban and other known terror groups. Others shared photos or video of their militant activity.

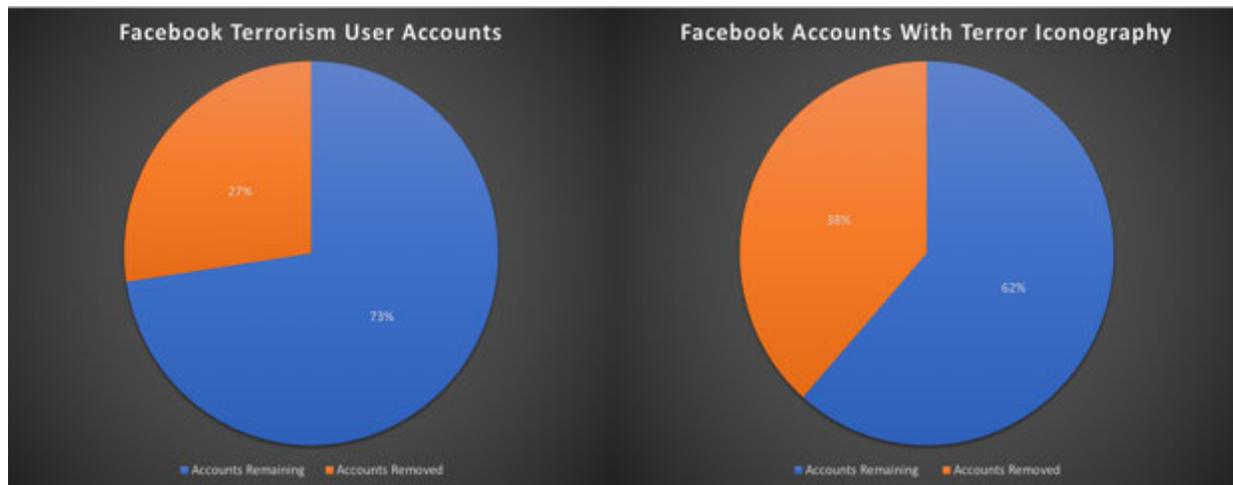
Facebook appeared to have made some effort to remove profiles of the individuals we identified. The 3,228 profiles in the Friends group were revisited in December 2018, five months

after they were initially surveyed. In that five months, Facebook removed or deactivated 884 accounts – under 30%. Of the 317 profiles in the Friends with Terrorist Group Symbols group, 122 were removed or deactivated – roughly 38%.

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<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/05/facebook-accused-introducing-extremists-one-another-suggested/>.

While Facebook continues to tout AI as the solution to terrorism content, our study reveals that Facebook’s counter-terrorism efforts failed to remove even half of the profiles identified with blatant terrorism imagery, let alone profiles that share propaganda or promote militant activity (see *Figure 6*).



*Figure 6: Analysis of the terrorism-affiliated accounts surveyed which still remained active at the end of the study.*

Despite the company’s public claims, far more extremist content remains on the platform than is blocked.

## ISIS and Al Qaeda Slipping Through AI Cracks

As previously discussed, to date, Facebook’s counter-terror efforts have focused on ISIS, Al Qaeda and their affiliates. Our survey found the company has made some effort to block those terrorist group names in searches. When searching for individuals on Facebook based on their place of work, for example, users are blocked from searching for the formal Arabic or English names for ISIS. If a user types the name of ISIS into the workplace search bar, no selection pops up for the user to click, thereby preventing them from executing the search.

The scope of that ban, however, is extremely limited. Thus far, ISIS under its formal name appears to be the only terror group blocked. Even Al Qaeda affiliates appear relatively free to operate on Facebook. A search for profiles with jobs at Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (تنظيم القاعدة في جزيرة) finds that not only is the group searchable, but Facebook itself has created a job page for the terror group – in English no less (see *Figure 7*).

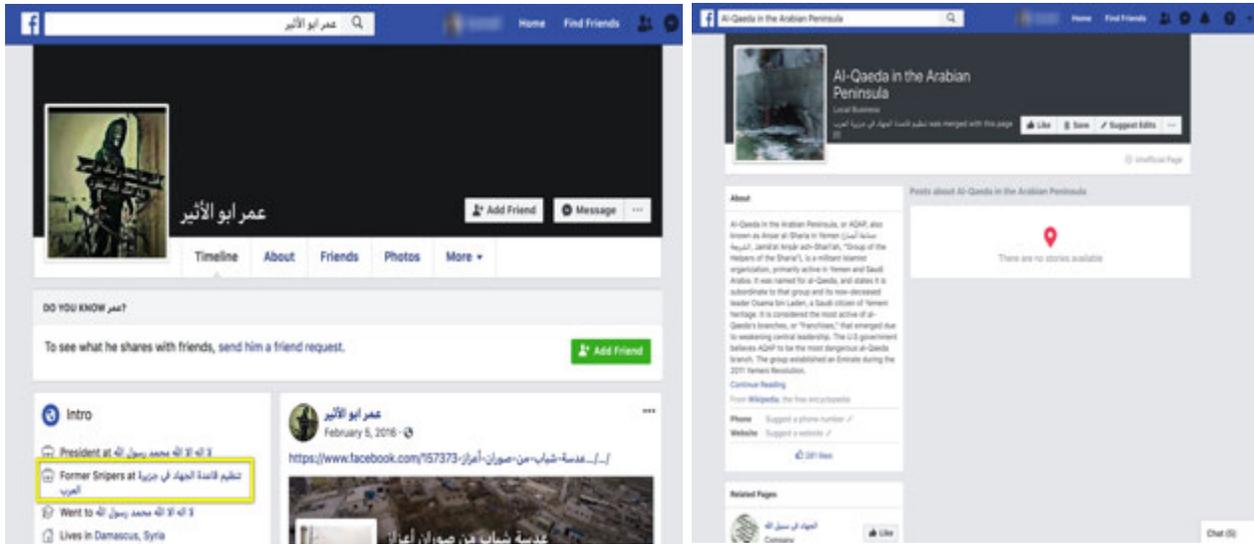


Figure 7: (Left) Profile of a user who lists his work experience as “Former Sniper at [Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula].” (Right) The local business page auto-generated by Facebook for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which was merged with the Arabic version of the same page.

For ISIS members, getting around these checks has proven inconsequential. To defeat Facebook’s AI, one user simply listed himself as working at the “Islamic State of Syria and Iraq”<sup>34</sup> – reversing the order of “Iraq” and “Syria” in the ISIS name to make it ISSI.



Figure 8: (Left) Facebook user Ramadan Kareem lists Islamic State of Syria and Iraq as his employment. (Right) Facebook auto-generated job page for Islamic State of Syria and Iraq.

And while Facebook does not allow users to input the Arabic name for ISIS in the work section of profile searches, it still auto-generates pages for the group, in this case

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100012213698825&ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100012213698825&ref=br_rs).

“ISSI”.<sup>35</sup> This particular business page has 18 Likes, compared to thousands of Likes on pages for terror groups other than ISIS (see *Figure 8*). This indicates that Facebook’s AI may routinely pull this page down. Yet in our review, it remained operational from July through December 2018.

Another profile simply used “Islamic State” (دولة إسلامية) as his place of work rather than employer and listed himself as a doctor with the group.<sup>36</sup> As in other cases, Facebook then auto-generated a Page for “Islamic State.”<sup>37</sup> However, this particular page described it as a political ideology, rather than a location or local business (see *Figure 9*).

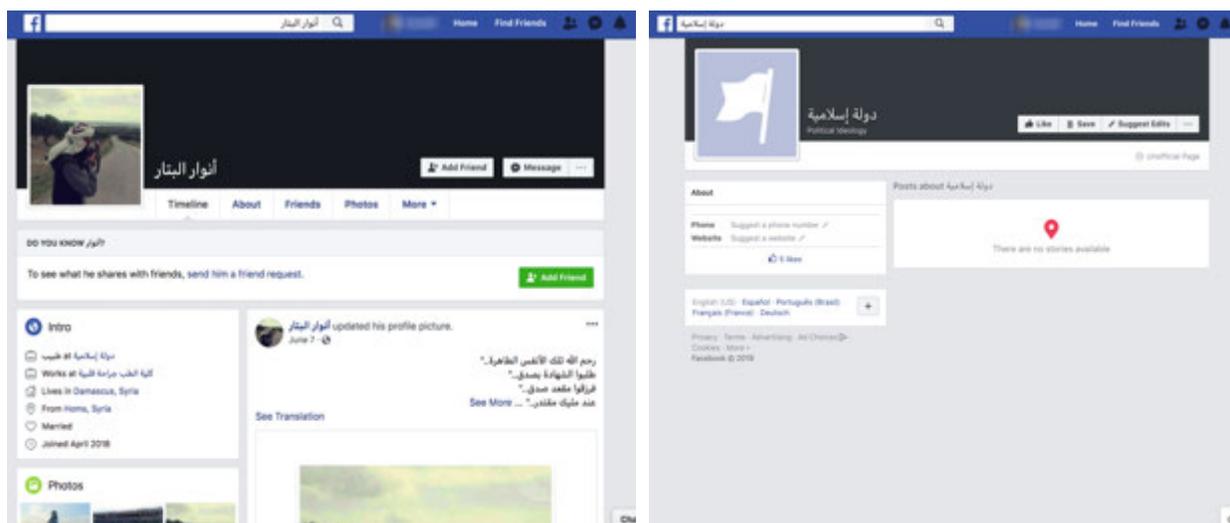


Figure 9: (Left) Facebook user Enour Al Batar lists Islamic State as his place of employment. (Right) Facebook auto-generated job page for Islamic State, describing it as a political ideology.

The profile photo for another user, Mustafa Adel, featured the ISIS logo and nothing else as his main image. His cover photo was a weapon.<sup>38</sup> Another user chose to highlight the ISIS-Facebook connection by having a cover image that said “ISIS Facebooke” (see *Figure 10*)<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%87-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82/1257048724365168?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100012213698825&fref=tag](https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%87-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82/1257048724365168?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100012213698825&fref=tag).

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100025493597494&fref=pb&hc\\_location=friends\\_tab](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100025493597494&fref=pb&hc_location=friends_tab).

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/589066431448314?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100025493597494&fref=tag](https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/589066431448314?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100025493597494&fref=tag).

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100027017050202&fref=pb&hc\\_location=friends\\_tab](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100027017050202&fref=pb&hc_location=friends_tab).

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/auelgqs?fref=pb&hc\\_location=friends\\_tab](https://www.facebook.com/auelgqs?fref=pb&hc_location=friends_tab).

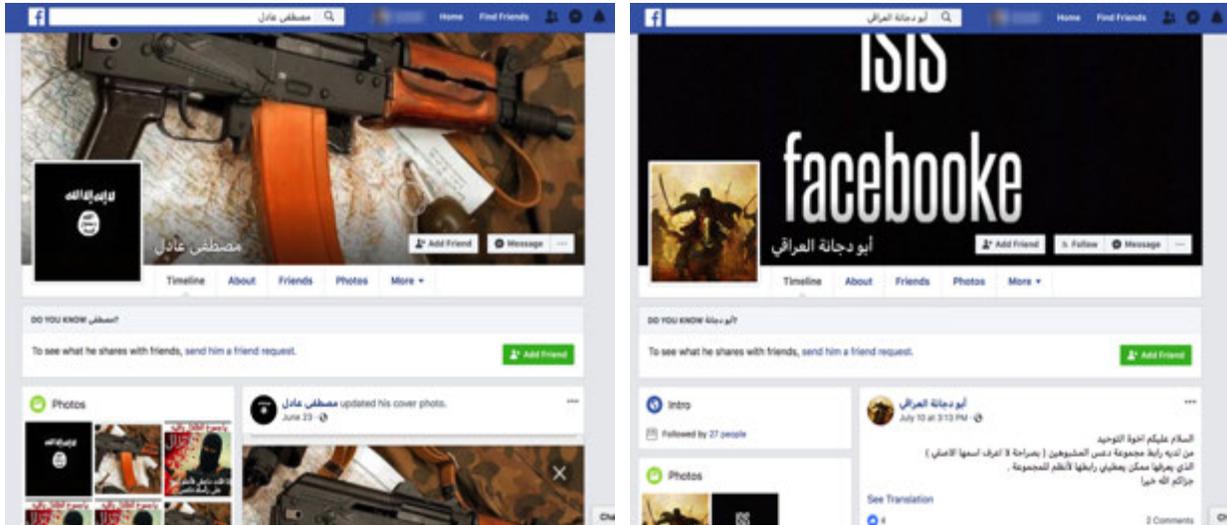


Figure 10: (Left) Facebook user has the ISIS logo as his primary profile picture. (Right) Facebook user has “ISIS Facebooke” text embedded into an image used as his cover photo.

Some profiles embed the names of the terror group in images to avoid text recognition, like this profile that had a cover photo stating “The Islamic State” (see Figure 11).<sup>40</sup>

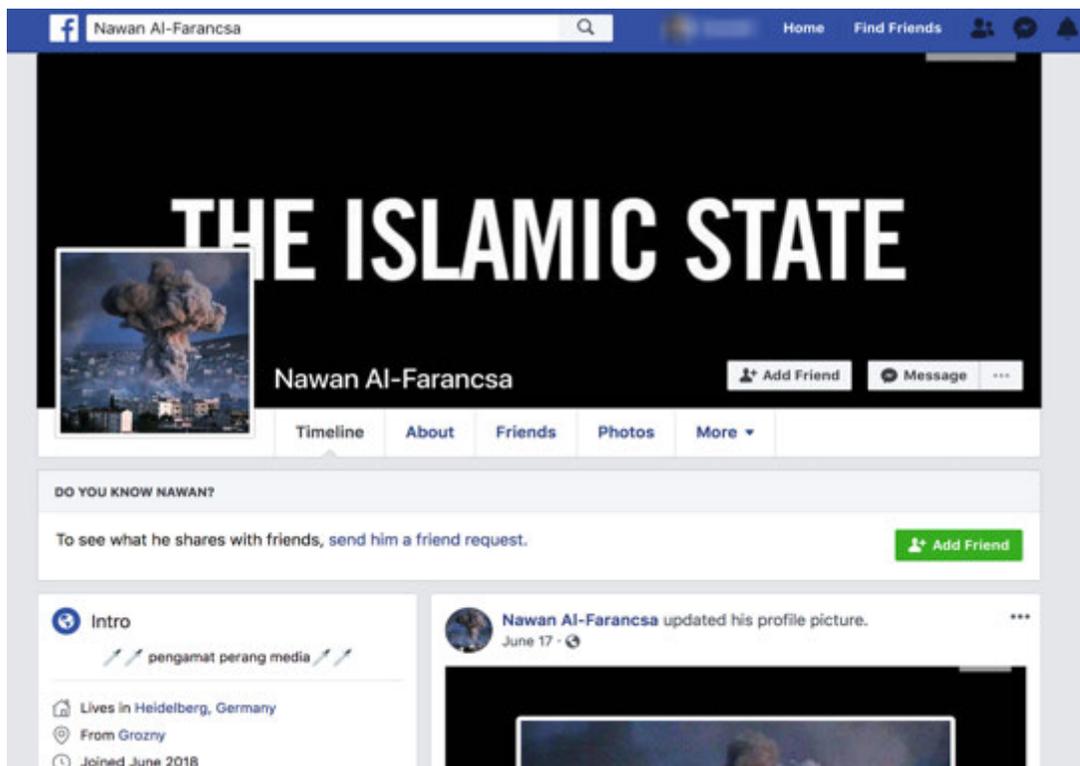


Figure 11: A Facebook user who identified himself as living in Germany, a country which has suffered multiple ISIS attacks since 2015, embedded “The Islamic State” into an image for his profile cover photo.

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/adalwine.adalwine.3192?fref=pb&hc\\_location=friends\\_tab](https://www.facebook.com/adalwine.adalwine.3192?fref=pb&hc_location=friends_tab).

The above terror content illustrates how hollow Zuckerberg’s claims are that AI is the answer to Facebook’s most pressing content challenges.<sup>41</sup> Both profiles that included ISIS and Facebook in their cover photos remained on the platform as of December 2018 and were not among the 884 accounts that were removed (see Figures 10 and 11).

## Facebook’s Auto-Generated Pages for Terrorist Groups

Facebook appears to be actively helping individual self-professed members of terror groups find each other online with the help of its auto-generated networking features.

Facebook’s platform is programmed to auto-generate business pages or locations whenever someone notes a particular place or group on their profile or elsewhere on the platform. These auto-generated pages also automatically fill in information about the place or group from Wikipedia. Furthermore, if Facebook recognizes that the Pages for a group or place may have been generated in multiple languages, it will also auto-merge those pages together and include a note mentioning that the Pages were merged (see Boko Haram example in chart).

Facebook auto-generated business pages for the terror groups listed on the profiles of the self-identified terrorist reviewed in our study– even pulling in a Wikipedia description of the relevant group when available. In other cases, Facebook automatically connected the user to existing community Pages or Facebook Groups for that particular terrorist organization. Our survey of the 12 self-identified terror profiles and their Facebook Friends allowed us to identify at least 10 of these business pages – though it is likely that many more exist.

Screen Shot of Facebook Page	Group Name	Existing or Auto-Generated	Number of Likes	Type
	Boko Haram (بوكو حرام)	Auto-generated	8,550	“Local Business” Page

<sup>41</sup> Drew Harwell, *AI will solve Facebook's most vexing problems, Mark Zuckerberg says. Just don't ask when or how.*, WASH. POST (Apr. 11, 2018), available at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/04/11/ai-will-solve-facebooks-most-vexing-problems-mark-zuckerberg-says-just-dont-ask-when-or-how/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.971ebb0b7121](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/04/11/ai-will-solve-facebooks-most-vexing-problems-mark-zuckerberg-says-just-dont-ask-when-or-how/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.971ebb0b7121).

	<p>Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham (هيئة تحرير الشام)<sup>42</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>4,457</p>	<p>"Community Organization" Page</p>
	<p>Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام)<sup>43</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>"Local Business" Page</p>
	<p>Hakrat Al Shabaab Mujahideen (حركة الشباب المجاهدين)<sup>44</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>11,582</p>	<p>"Local Business" Page</p>

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85/237269353391307?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100024780319808](https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85/237269353391307?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100024780319808).

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%87-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82/1257048724365168?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100012213698825](https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%87-%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82/1257048724365168?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100012213698825).

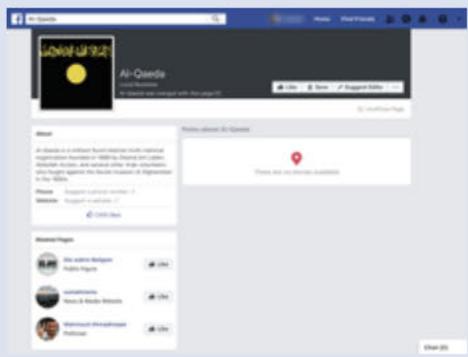
<sup>44</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Al-Shabaab/410174865702823?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100012043004651&rf=484974651657798](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Al-Shabaab/410174865702823?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100012043004651&rf=484974651657798).

	<p>Ansar Islam (أنصار الإسلام)<sup>45</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>384</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Khalid Ibn Walid Army جيش خالد بن الوليد)<sup>46</sup></p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>1,762</p>	<p>Community Page</p>
	<p>Nusrat Islam (نصرة الإسلام)<sup>47</sup></p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>237</p>	<p>Community Page</p>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ansar-al-Islam/108289382526167?rf=594997767269264>.

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pg/%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AF-140149553214146/community/>.

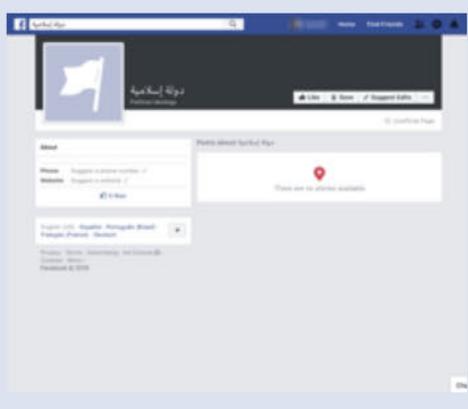
<sup>47</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pg/nosrteislam/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/nosrteislam/about/?ref=page_internal).

	<p>“Jihad for the sake of Islam” (الجهاد في سبيل الله)<sup>48</sup></p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>42,908</p>	<p>Community Page</p>
	<p>Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula<sup>49</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>281</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Al Qaeda<sup>50</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>7,410</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>

<sup>48</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-197925453628061/?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100025604602972&fref=tag](https://www.facebook.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-197925453628061/?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100025604602972&fref=tag).

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Al-Qaeda-in-the-Arabian-Peninsula/145215492158522?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100010056947891&fref=tag&fb\\_dtsg\\_ag=Ady70leoEOUY4EqKuZctrBj94mh-Zsglo1tpCENDoValA%3AAAdy4lgO\\_XM1zQfWNR3AOVs77qV4lB4kBGnHSSH3qtyepQw&rf=819431871437407](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Al-Qaeda-in-the-Arabian-Peninsula/145215492158522?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100010056947891&fref=tag&fb_dtsg_ag=Ady70leoEOUY4EqKuZctrBj94mh-Zsglo1tpCENDoValA%3AAAdy4lgO_XM1zQfWNR3AOVs77qV4lB4kBGnHSSH3qtyepQw&rf=819431871437407).

<sup>50</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Al-Qaeda/109695409050210?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100008404145913&fref=tag&fb\\_dtsg\\_ag=Ady70leoEOUY4EqKuZctrBj94mh-Zsglo1tpCENDoValA%3AAAdy4lgO\\_XM1zQfWNR3AOVs77qV4lB4kBGnHSSH3qtyepQw&rf=112184595464973](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Al-Qaeda/109695409050210?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100008404145913&fref=tag&fb_dtsg_ag=Ady70leoEOUY4EqKuZctrBj94mh-Zsglo1tpCENDoValA%3AAAdy4lgO_XM1zQfWNR3AOVs77qV4lB4kBGnHSSH3qtyepQw&rf=112184595464973).

	<p>Afghanistan Taliban<sup>51</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>9,942</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Islamic State (دولة إسلامية)<sup>52</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>“Political Ideology” Page</p>

Some of the group business pages, such as the one for Al Shabaab, have been active so long that they had generated thousands of Likes. Even an auto-generated business page for Al-Qaeda, a group which Facebook’s AI allegedly targets, is complete with the group’s logo and has generated over 7,500 Likes.

Other groups, like “Jihad for the sake of Islam,” are not exclusively followed by terrorist sympathizers. However, these Pages were notable because they were listed as a “workplace” in the profiles of those professing sympathy or allegiance with extremists. Some of these user profiles even listed their position at these workplaces as “sniper” or “fighter” to make clear their alleged militant role within those groups.

## Beyond ISIS

By studying the profiles of users who have “Friended” the self-identifying terrorists we were able to determine how many of the friends within their network were also openly either identifying themselves as terrorists or indicating affiliation with or support for a

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Afghanistan-Taliban/111808948838889?eid=ARDjGpQvsbXKvg8asrtZkuRjBwVrge\\_K0t0d1OHYbLQbnOtSabW8c7- eaESbwBMeGpBmBPR2p1vKJq9q&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100009921007001&fref=tag&rf=1577164882550117](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Afghanistan-Taliban/111808948838889?eid=ARDjGpQvsbXKvg8asrtZkuRjBwVrge_K0t0d1OHYbLQbnOtSabW8c7- eaESbwBMeGpBmBPR2p1vKJq9q&timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100009921007001&fref=tag&rf=1577164882550117).

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/589066431448314>.

terrorist group somewhere on their profiles. The friends network of just one of the 12 profiles we sampled identified more than 120 individuals who had ISIS or other terrorist iconography explicitly displayed in their public profile photo or cover image.

While ISIS content is allegedly targeted by Facebook's AI, it was not the only terrorist group represented in the friends networks we examined. Terrorist groups both new and old were prevalent across the profiles examined in the survey.

### Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham

Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham (هيئة تحرير الشام), commonly referred to as HTS, is a Syrian-based terrorist group that was founded in January 2017. The group was formed out of the union of five Islamist groups and has grown strong in western Syria as it seeks to overthrow Bashar Al Assad and implement Shariah law.<sup>53</sup>

Searches for the group's Arabic name found that some users listed their profile employment experience as working for the terrorist group by name.<sup>54</sup> One user explicitly listed هيئة تحرير الشام (Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham) as his place of employment. The text of the terror group listed under the employment section of his profile was hyperlinked to an auto-generated "community organization" page.<sup>55</sup> In the case of HTS, the auto-generated page even pulls in an Arabic description of the terror group from Wikipedia (see Figure 12).



Figure 12: (Left) Facebook user Mohamed Abu Nashmi lists himself as working at Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham (in Arabic). The job is hyperlinked to a listing. (Right) Auto-generated work page by Facebook for Syrian terrorist group Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham - complete with Wikipedia listing.

<sup>53</sup> Ben Brimelow, *A new terrorist group is popping up in Syria and capitalizing on ISIS' defeat*, BUSINESS INSIDER (Apr. 19, 2018), available at <https://www.businessinsider.com/syria-terrorist-group-hayat-tahrir-al-sham-2018-4>.

<sup>54</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/mahmed.nazal?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/mahmed.nazal?ref=br_rs).

<sup>55</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85/237269353391307?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100024780319808&fref=tag](https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85/237269353391307?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100024780319808&fref=tag).

The HTS community organization page created by Facebook has over 4,400 “Likes.” When scrolling over the “unofficial page” disclaimer on the right, the icon notes, “This unofficial Page was created because people on Facebook have shown interest in this place or business.”

### Boko Haram

Boko Haram (بوكو حرام), an ISIS-affiliated terrorist group based in Nigeria, has also been listed as a place of work by Facebook users.<sup>56</sup> Not only has Facebook auto-generated a business page for Boko Haram, it has recognized that both Arabic and English language versions of the auto-generated business page existed, and merged them together. The merged Boko Haram business page has more than 8,500 Likes (see Figure 13).<sup>57</sup>

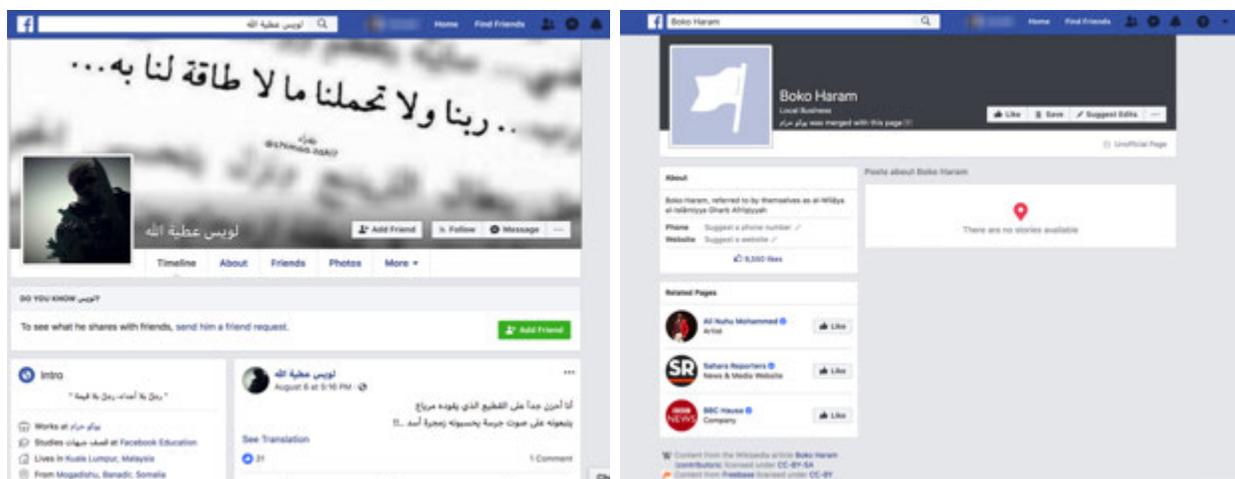


Figure 13: (Left) Facebook user lists himself as working at Boko Haram (in Arabic). The job is hyperlinked to a listing. (Right) Auto-generated work page by Facebook for Boko Haram including note that the English and Arabic language business pages for the group have been merged.

Upon identifying multiple profiles that listed Boko Haram as a job, our survey expanded to search “بوكو حرام” (Boko Haram) in the “Work” section of Facebook’s people search feature. The search revealed that Facebook doesn’t just auto-generate business pages, it also auto-fills icons or flags for the relevant group being searched.

### Al Shabaab

For Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, commonly known as Al Shabaab, a Somali-based terror group that was founded in 2006, Facebook auto-filled the ISIS flag icon as

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100027178365339&lst=100006525695250%3A100027178365339%3A1532371412>.

<sup>57</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Boko-Haram/1635261926701729?timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100027178365339&fref=tag&rf=1500845926802597](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Boko-Haram/1635261926701729?timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100027178365339&fref=tag&rf=1500845926802597).

the logo for the group. Apparently, Facebook's AI knows that Al Shabaab declared allegiance to ISIS in 2015.<sup>58</sup>

When a user begins typing a business into the “work” section of the search, Facebook will recommend places and preview their logos as the user types his or her search (see Figure 14).

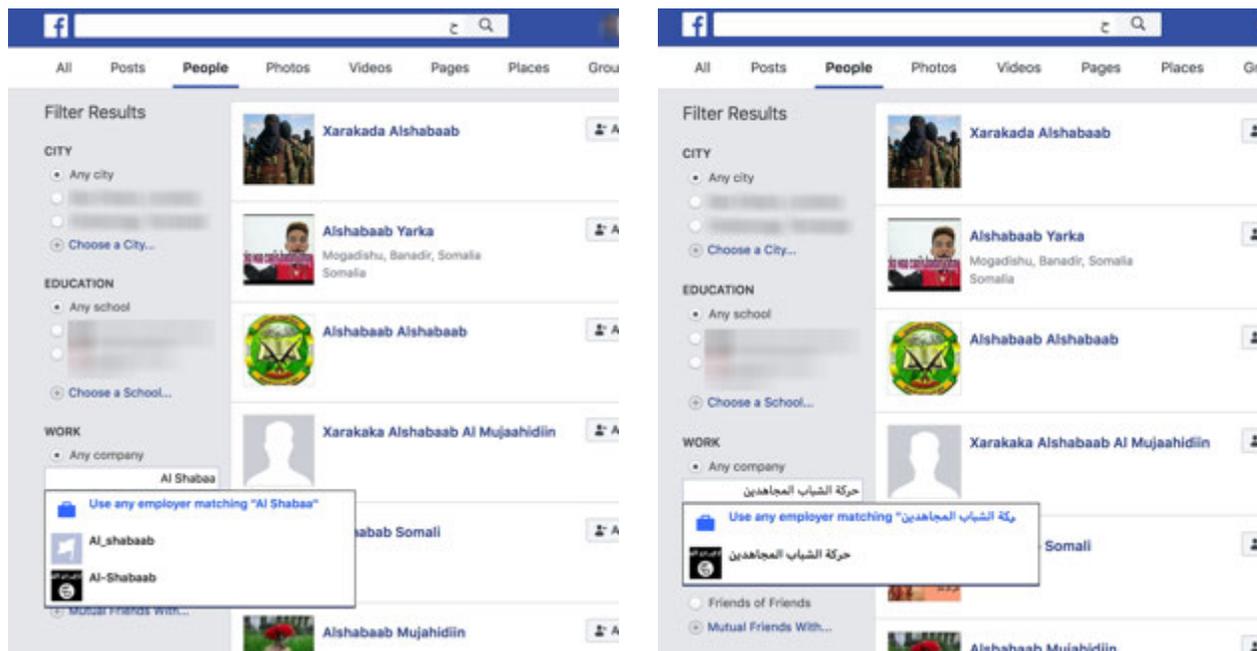


Figure 14: (Left) Typing "Al Shabaab" in English into the work search suggests two 'businesses,' one showing the ISIS flag. (Right) Typing in the Arabic name of Al Shabaab into the work search also suggests a 'business,' in this case both the Arabic and English versions show the ISIS Flag as Facebook has auto-merged the English and Arabic business pages it auto-generated for the terrorist group.

## Verified Profiles Associated with Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham

In an effort to verify the existence of self-identified members of terror groups, we conducted additional research on a sample of profiles who “liked” the auto-generated Facebook Page for Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham (HTS), the Syrian Salafist militant group also known as Al Qaeda in Syria.

We shared 63 of these profiles with a Syrian non-governmental organization that operates in Syria's Idlib region – an area heavily occupied by Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Robyn Kriel & Briana Duggan, *Al-Shabaab faction pledges allegiance to ISIS*, CNN (Oct. 23, 2015), available at <https://www.cnn.com/2015/10/22/africa/al-shabaab-faction-isis/index.html>.

<sup>59</sup> Louisa Loveluck, *Syrian offensive against rebel enclave more likely after al-Qaeda-linked fighters take control*, WASHINGTON POST (Jan. 19, 2019), available at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/syrian-offensive-against-enclave-more-likely-after-al-qaeda-linked-fighters-take-control/2019/01/19/0ced22f0-142b-11e9-ab79-30cd4f7926f2\\_story.html?nore](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/syrian-offensive-against-enclave-more-likely-after-al-qaeda-linked-fighters-take-control/2019/01/19/0ced22f0-142b-11e9-ab79-30cd4f7926f2_story.html?nore).

The NGO used its human intelligence network of local activists, academics, and members of civil society with extensive knowledge of the local population to match profiles from the sample to known individuals.<sup>60</sup>

Using this approach, the NGO was able to confirm that 31 of the 63 Facebook profiles matched known individuals operating on the ground in the Idlib region. While the NGO is not able to confirm membership in HTS, several of the confirmed profiles use terrorist iconography in their Facebook profiles, and one lists his employment as “mujahid,” or soldier for Allah. (The results for the remaining 32 profiles were inconclusive, as the Facebook profiles did not match any *known* individual identifiable to the intelligence network. This lack of verification does not necessarily mean that these profiles are fake.)

The NGO also provided insights into the offline activities of some of these verified individuals. Several were known to the NGO from investigations they conducted into the illicit looting and trafficking of antiquities, an activity that HTS regulates and taxes in the region as a source of terror-financing, according to the intelligence network.

Hay’at Tahrir Al Sham has coordinated every level of the antiquities looting process in the Idlib region since 2016, according to the NGO and other sources. In the Idlib region, the group not only taxes individuals conducting these operations in their territory, but also issues permits to looters who are digging in areas under their control, as a source of financing.

Indeed, some of the same verified individuals who liked the auto-generated HTS page are also members of Facebook antiquities groups created for the trafficking of illicit antiquities in the Middle East. To this extent, they are apparently aiding and abetting the financing a known terrorist group.

For example, one individual who liked the HTS page uses a Facebook profile photo featuring the Black Standard flag (commonly utilized by various jihadist groups). This same individual is also a member of two different antiquities trafficking groups on Facebook. Another verified individual from our sample is a member of two Facebook antiquities trafficking groups that offer gold coins and valuable artifacts for sale.

## Facebook’s Image Problem

In 2017, Facebook’s press release on its counter-terror content efforts singled out its technology for image recognition:

Image matching: When someone tries to upload a terrorist photo or video, our systems look for whether the image matches a known terrorism photo or video.

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<sup>60</sup> The identity of the NGO is not included in this report for security reasons. Additional details are available upon request.

This means that if we previously removed a propaganda video from ISIS, we can work to prevent other accounts from uploading the same video to our site. In many cases, this means that terrorist content intended for upload to Facebook simply never reaches the platform.<sup>61</sup>

While Facebook does not describe what it defines as a “known terrorism photo or video,” it does indicate that the company’s technology is capable of recognizing imagery. Recent reports suggest that Facebook has created such sophisticated image recognition, that its AI may be able to auto-generate captions for images.<sup>62</sup> With advanced image recognition technology, the company should have no problem recognizing the symbols of known terrorist groups as a means of 1) identifying content for removal, and 2) identifying and monitoring and/or removing individuals from the platform.

However, our research found that Facebook allows users to operate openly with terrorist iconography in their profiles, including iconography from groups that Facebook claims to explicitly target.

An examination of the Friends lists of the 12 self-identified terrorists on Facebook found trends in the types of networks forming around varying terror ideologies.

We collected data on those who listed themselves as members of terrorist groups by way of their job description or other profile descriptors. For instance, one user listed his name (in Arabic) as “Bin Laden of Yemen” and had the logo of the Islamic State superimposed over his profile photo. This user has over 1,000 Facebook friends – all of whom would likely be aware of his affiliation, given that the information is presented clearly in his public profile.

Our survey found that networks, such as the one following Bin Laden of Yemen, do not appear to be closely monitored by Facebook. Some of the profiles go back as far as 2010 (per the “joined Facebook” dates listed by some users on their public profiles) suggesting they have been sharing and engaging with terrorism content for years.

In fact, one profile shared an auto-generated video from Facebook celebrating nine years on the platform. The Facebook “celebration” video featured images of an individual who appeared to be the user in a militant mask and an image of weapons featuring the black flag commonly associated with jihadi groups, taken from his profile (see *Figure 15*).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Press Release from Monika Bickert, Dir. of Glob. Policy Mgmt. and Brian Fishman, Counterterrorism Policy Mgmt., How We Counter Terrorism, Facebook (June 15, 2017), available at <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2017/06/how-we-counter-terrorism/>.

<sup>62</sup> Mallory Locklear, *Facebook trained image recognition AI with billions of Instagram pics*, ENGADGET (May 2, 2018), available at <https://www.engadget.com/2018/05/02/facebook-trained-image-recognition-ai-instagram-pics/>.

<sup>63</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/kaylie.chaisson?fref=pb&hc\\_location=friends\\_tab](https://www.facebook.com/kaylie.chaisson?fref=pb&hc_location=friends_tab).



Figure 15: (Left) Image of a militant's weapons from 2017 posted in his profile "celebration" video that was created by Facebook. (Right) Celebration video image of a militant in his mask.

Many of the profiles associated with Bin Laden of Yemen and affiliated with ISIS, HTS, or other terror groups, did not mask their terrorism affiliation or sympathies. Among the "Friends" data collected from Bin Laden of Yemen, 127 users had blatant terrorist iconography featured in their profile and/or cover photos — all of which were still active as of August 9, 2018.

## Celebrating Terror

In some instances, Facebook will generate celebratory posts for users whose posts have generated a high number of likes. One user, a Friend of one of the 12 profiles studied, frequently shared terrorist iconography on his public profile. On July 17, 2018, this user shared Facebook's auto-generated celebration posts to highlight the "achievement" of his photos receiving over 2,000 likes. The posts that Facebook "celebrated" showed violence, militancy, and death (see Figure 16).

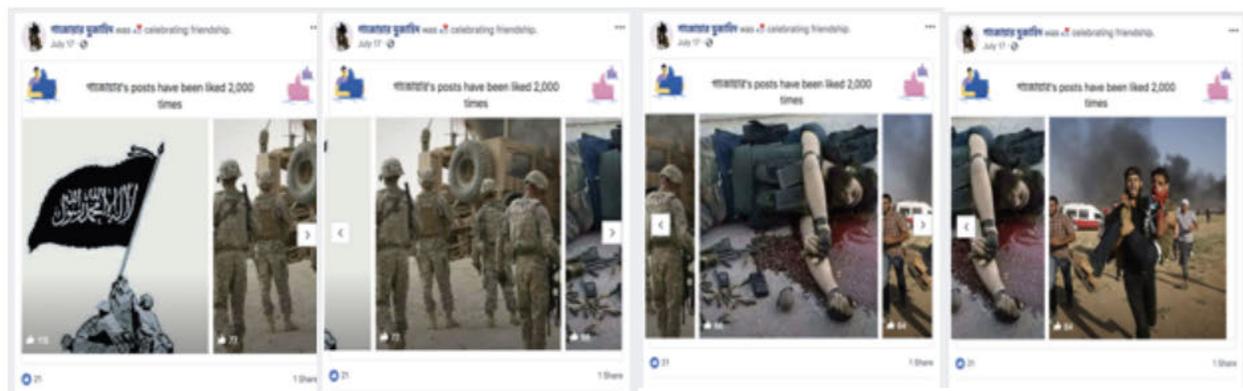


Figure 16: A user shared Facebook's auto-generated "celebration" post that highlighted his images of graphic violence and insurgency and gained over 2,000 Likes.

## Human Reviewed Photo Frames

Not only user-uploaded imagery includes terrorist icons. Users can develop profile “photo frames” that can be custom designed and then disseminated for use by others on Facebook.<sup>64</sup>

Facebook’s “Frame Studio” teaches users how to create these frames in three simple steps.<sup>65</sup> The final of these three steps is the review process, where a frame must be reviewed by Facebook’s employees before it can be used and distributed, according to Facebook’s public statements. Facebook’s photo frame description in the Facebook Help Center states that images created need to adhere to the company’s community guidelines.<sup>66</sup> Our survey identified five different Frame Studio designs that were used by militants and extremists (see Figure 17).

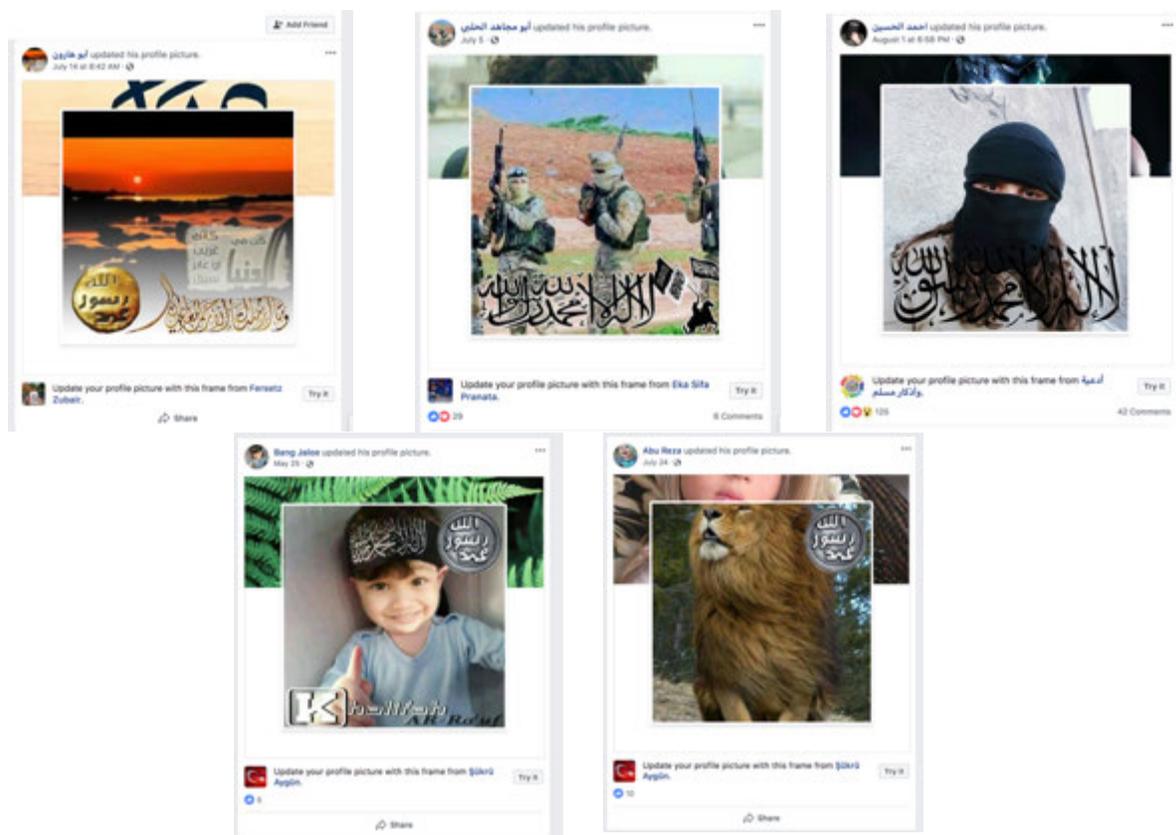


Figure 17: Five different types of profile photo frames associated with jihadi groups. Each of these frames was approved by Facebook’s human content reviewers and disseminated on Facebook. All five of these frames were still accessible for public use as of August 9, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> Sarah Perez, *Facebook's new tool lets anyone create custom profile frames*, TECHCRUNCH (2017), available at <https://techcrunch.com/2016/12/08/facebooks-new-tool-lets-anyone-create-custom-profile-frames/>.

<sup>65</sup> *Inspire the world around you.*, FACEBOOK FOR DEVELOPERS, available at <https://developers.facebook.com/products/frame-studio>.

<sup>66</sup> *Help Center: What guidelines should I follow when creating a frame?*, FACEBOOK, available at <https://www.facebook.com/help/1545149052447664/?ref=u2u>.

Our analysis found multiple photo frames that violate the company’s terrorism policies, codes of conduct for users, and their content, as outlined in Facebook’s Community Standards. This demonstrates that terror content is not only slipping past the review capabilities of its AI, but also by the company’s human review process. After approval, these frames become available to all Facebook users and subsequently are promoted for distribution through links to the frames on existing terror-related profiles. For example, examining the data within the 3,228 Friends, we identified at least five different photo frames representing ISIS or the black flag of jihadi groups.

Aside from individuals with profile photos featuring terror symbols, hundreds of other users associated with Bin Laden of Yemen had photos featuring live conflict or images of masked militants holding up the “number one” signal with their finger, a sign often used to demonstrate affiliation with the Islamic State. While many of these users had militancy images, photos of themselves or individuals who appeared to be affiliates, posing with weapons or in active conflict, others had graphic imagery featured on their public profiles – both in video and photo form (see *Figure 18*). Many of the images ranged from mutilation and animal abuse, to images and videos of beheadings and heads on spikes.



Figure 18: Facebook user who has a featured image on their profile of severed heads on spikes to the left, and a cover image of a militant giving instructions to other masked militants. The leader is holding up the “number one” gesture commonly associated with jihadi groups.

**Note:** The left image in Figure 18 has been redacted due to its graphic nature. The original image was provided to the SEC in our confidential filings.

## Finding Friends



Figure 19: A user's cover photo features a bouquet of ISIS flags.

terrorism efforts indicate that the company is aware that terror groups operate in clusters:

Removing terrorist clusters: We know from studies of terrorists that they tend to radicalize and operate in clusters. This offline trend is reflected online as well. So when we identify Pages, groups, posts or profiles as supporting terrorism, we also use algorithms to “fan out” to try to identify related material that may also support terrorism. We use signals like whether an account is friends with a high number of accounts that have been disabled for terrorism, or whether an account shares the same attributes as a disabled account.<sup>67</sup>

However, our research indicates that these clusters are still present, surrounding terrorist organizations, specifically targeted by Facebook's AI, such as ISIS and Al Qaeda.

While 47 of “Bin Laden of Yemen's” friends whom were identified by our study in August 2018, had their profiles removed by December, nearly three times as many of his friends with terrorist iconography in their profile images still remained on the website.

In May 2018, a report from the Counter Extremism Project revealed that Facebook was enabling terrorist networks to connect with one another through their “suggested friends” feature.<sup>67</sup>

While our study did not make attempts to “Friend” or connect with the terrorists we identified, it was clear through data analysis that multiple users had similar networks of “Friends.” The Friends lists of the 12 profiles we surveyed included several of the same individuals from profile to profile.

Facebook's previous reports on its

<sup>67</sup> *Guide to Online Propagandists: Executive Summary*, COUNTER EXTREMISM PROJECT, available at <https://www.counterextremism.com/content/guide-online-propagandists>; Martin Evans, *Facebook accused of introducing extremists to one another through 'suggested friends' feature*, THE TELEGRAPH (May 5, 2018), available at <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/05/facebook-accused-introducing-extremists-one-another-suggested/>.

<sup>68</sup> Press Release from Monika Bickert, Dir. of Glob. Policy Mgmt. and Brian Fishman, Counterterrorism Policy Mgmt., *How We Counter Terrorism*, Facebook (June 15, 2017), available at <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2017/06/how-we-counter-terrorism/>.

## White Supremacist Groups

Facebook's auto-generation of pages is not limited to Islamic terrorist groups or to the Arabic language. The company has also generated dozens of pages connected to Nazis, white supremacist groups, and related criminal gangs.

Our research identified at least 31 different pages and locations that were auto-generated by Facebook for Nazi and white supremacist extremist groups.

Of the "political party" and "local business" white supremacist pages created by Facebook, 13 contained Wikipedia descriptions. Some pages, like the one for the American Nazi Party, even provided direct links to the group's website.

The auto-generated pages also provided suggestions to other pages that had been set up by hate groups. On the American Nazi Party page, which has over 1,100 Likes, related pages include two chapters of the hate group "Odin's Children" and another page that features Pepe the Frog, a frequent symbol used by white-supremacist groups (see Figure 20).

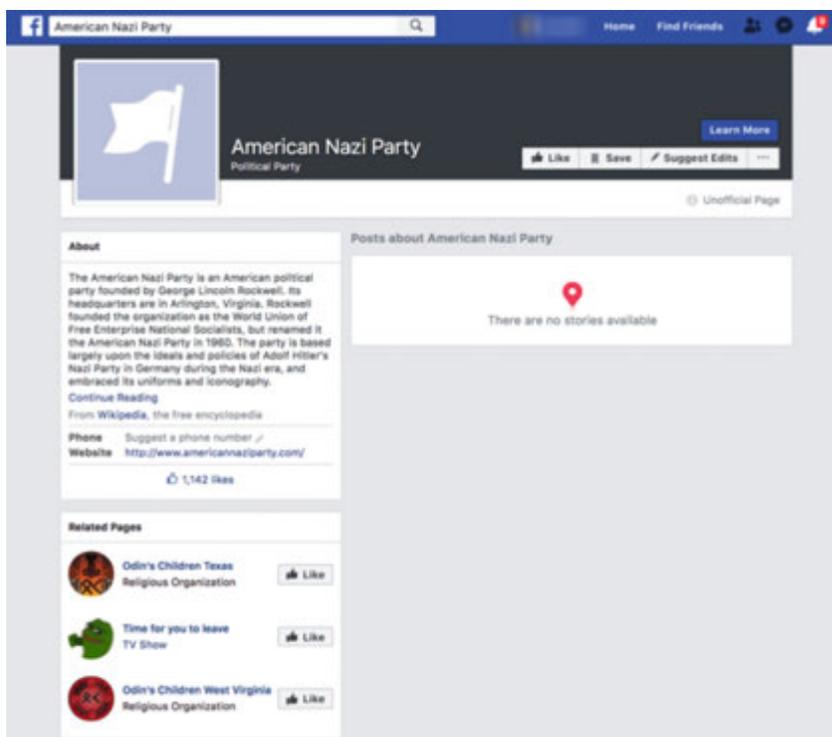


Figure 20: Auto-generated Page for the American Nazi Party. The Page includes a link to the group's official website.

The company has also generated location pages for headquarters of groups like the Aryan Brotherhood (see Figure 21). While some location pages described the hate group sites as "clubhouses" or "homes," others generated by Facebook grossly mislabeled the type of location. For example, the auto-generated location page for the

Soldiers of Odin Ontario Provincial Clubhouse was listed by Facebook as a “crisis prevention center.”

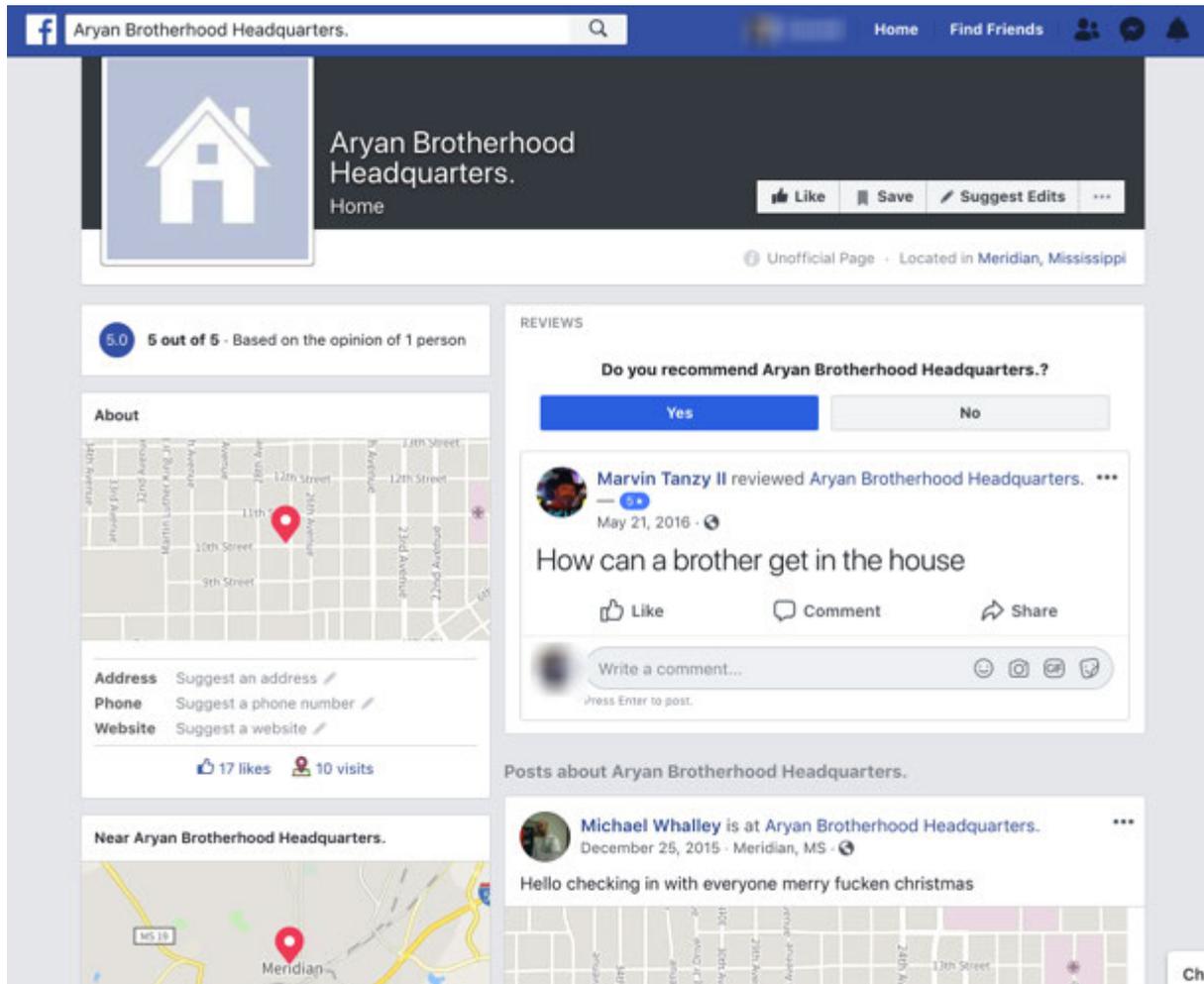


Figure 21: White supremacist users try to make connections through an auto-generated location page for the Aryan Brotherhood headquarters in Mississippi.

The auto-generated location pages for white supremacist groups provide a window into the way in which pages created by Facebook could be used by extremists to connect with one another. These location pages often include dialogue from users, demonstrating exactly how individuals from extremist groups may be using Facebook’s auto-generated pages to connect with one another. For example, one user on the Aryan Brotherhood headquarters location page inquired how he could get into the hate group’s house (see Figure 21).

### *New Aryan Empire on Facebook*

On February 5, 2019, the Department of Justice indicted 54 members of an Arkansas white supremacist criminal organization known as the New Aryan Empire (NAE). The case, filed in the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Arkansas, Little Rock

Division, exposed the extent of the gang's criminal activities: racketeering, drug trafficking, kidnapping, and attempted murder.<sup>69</sup>

A review of NAE activity on Facebook shows the group coordinated with gang members and like-minded groups using the social media platform.

For example, Jeffrey L. Knox, a white supremacist described as an NAE elder in court documents, posted NAE calls to action and proclamations of loyalty through his public Facebook profile.<sup>70</sup> Knox's profile lists his job as "stomp down HONKY," and as a result of this listing, Facebook auto-generated a page for "stomp down HONKY" as a "work position" (see Figure 22).<sup>71</sup>

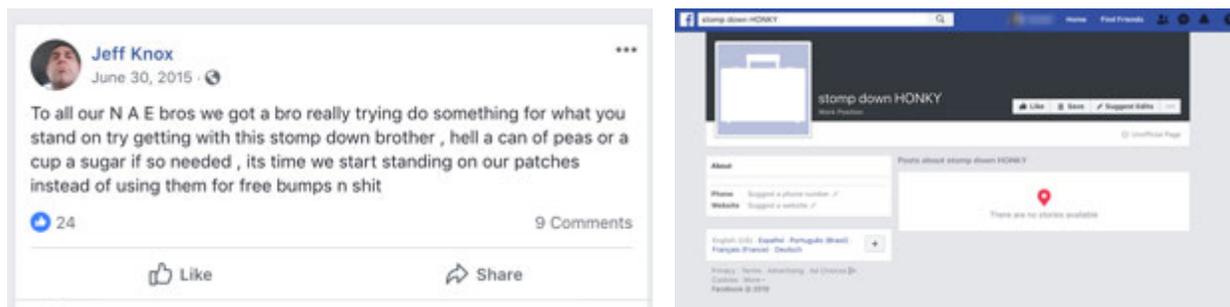


Figure 22: Jeffrey L. Knox's Facebook profile lists his job as "stomp down HONKY."

Several of the group's members shared images of the NAE logo and other white supremacist symbols like the Nazi swastika, SS lightning bolts, and imagery of Hitler. Joseph D. Pridmore, an NAE member who was charged with methamphetamine distribution, shared an album of white supremacist and Nazi iconography in 2014, the year case filings note that the distribution ring started (see Figure 23).<sup>72</sup>

Another NAE defendant, Andrew R. Syverson, embedded the NAE slogan in his profile photo and a white supremacist logo with the word "skinhead" in his cover photo. His profile description includes the lightning bolt emojis, meant to represent the SS, and the phrase "234," outlined in the court filings as a code for the NAE's loyalty pledge "to the dirt" (see Figure 23).

<sup>69</sup> *U.S. vs. Millsap*, No. 4:17CR00293 BSM (E.D. Ark. Feb. 5, 2019), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1131401/download>.

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/jeff.knox.3975/posts/443180469189903>;  
[https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009775025668&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=%2CdC-R-R&eid=ARDVS2B4OjR9TqETB1clUnYXdLVxY3ni1A7BLW7MitRIKU3UzDSNU9219XdRvE7Cfq7UW8ZBp0jvDcZhB&hc\\_ref=ARQ\\_ZUPgIBP1oHPv8BSZndMLIAEyrGOBh314VJHCN\\_N\\_x8j1INrF4wyiWxPPa5kvmml&fref=nf](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009775025668&__tn__=%2CdC-R-R&eid=ARDVS2B4OjR9TqETB1clUnYXdLVxY3ni1A7BLW7MitRIKU3UzDSNU9219XdRvE7Cfq7UW8ZBp0jvDcZhB&hc_ref=ARQ_ZUPgIBP1oHPv8BSZndMLIAEyrGOBh314VJHCN_N_x8j1INrF4wyiWxPPa5kvmml&fref=nf).

<sup>71</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/stomp-down-HONKY/731958313563083?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=%2Cd-%5C-R&eid=ARAbXed2EGNuDY8Y4YfhIGoanfKnTn2Hbt0ek31PogPX\\_rbCZs661l5K1aLumWwOvIWjF3BIYmwsOeZk](https://www.facebook.com/pages/stomp-down-HONKY/731958313563083?__tn__=%2Cd-%5C-R&eid=ARAbXed2EGNuDY8Y4YfhIGoanfKnTn2Hbt0ek31PogPX_rbCZs661l5K1aLumWwOvIWjF3BIYmwsOeZk).

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/jodypridmore/posts/787324277986915>; *U.S. vs. Millsap*, No. 4:17CR00293 BSM (E.D. Ark. Feb. 5, 2019), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1131401/download>.

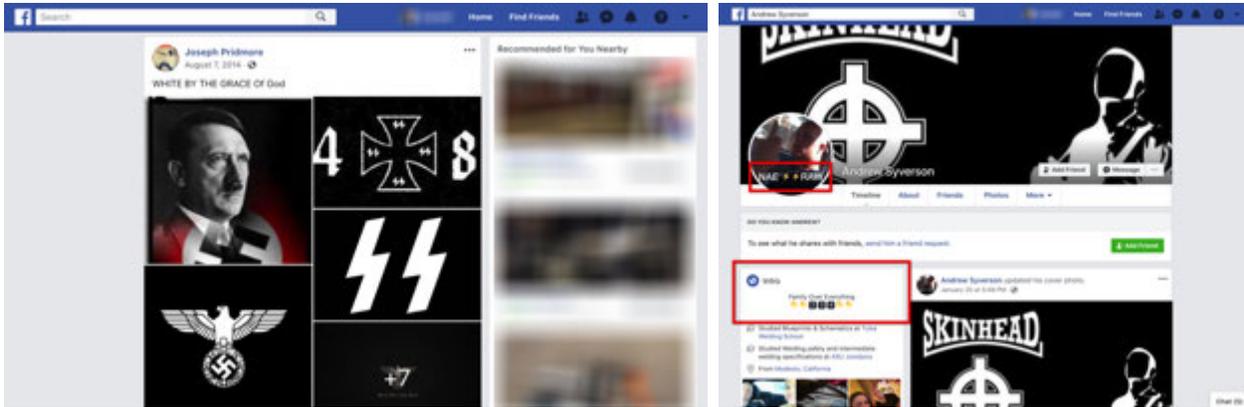


Figure 23: (Left) Joseph P. Pridmore’s Facebook profile featuring white supremacist iconography. (Right) Andrew R. Syverson’s Facebook profile featuring white supremacist iconography.

While Syverson makes his allegiance clear through his profile images, some of his Facebook friends in his network of white supremacist affiliates display their allegiance through their workplace listing. One of Syverson’s friends lists himself as a “soldier” in the Aryan Brotherhood,<sup>73</sup> and another listed as working at the “White Aryan Resistance”<sup>74</sup> – both affiliate groups of the NAE, according to court documents (see Figure 24).

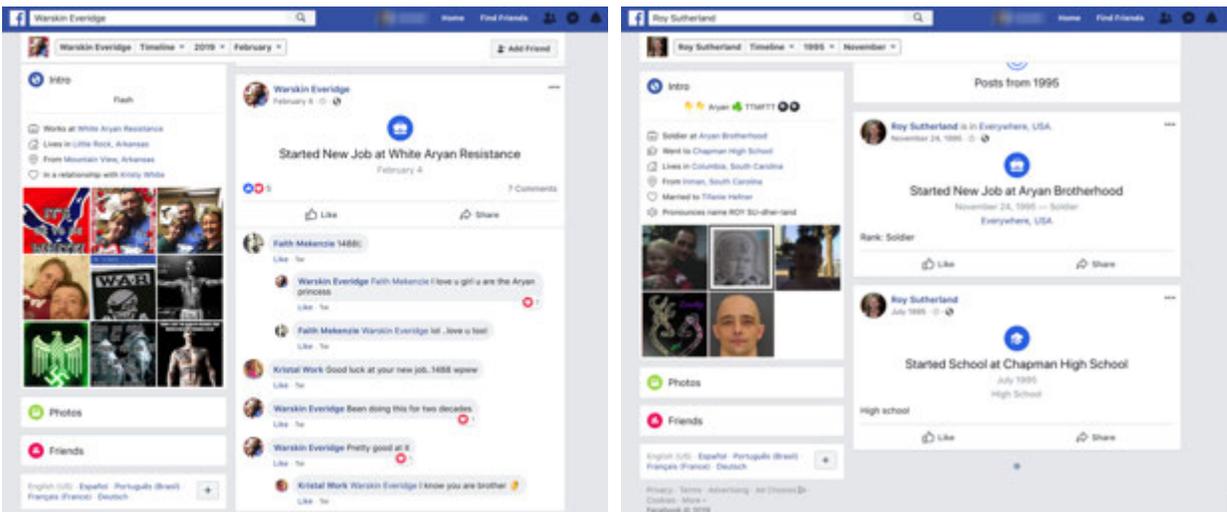


Figure 24: (Left) One of Syverson’s Facebook friends lists himself as a “soldier in the Aryan Brotherhood.” (Right) One of Syverson’s Facebook friends lists himself as working for the “White Aryan Resistance.”

Facebook amplified the NAE and its related gangs like the Aryan Brotherhood by auto-generating content for the groups. The website auto-generated a “College and University” page for the New Aryan Empire<sup>75</sup> as well as local business pages for the

<sup>73</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/roy.sutherland.9400?fref=pb&hc\\_location=friends\\_tab](https://www.facebook.com/roy.sutherland.9400?fref=pb&hc_location=friends_tab).

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/warskin.everidge>.

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/New-Aryan-Empire/146419555850195>.

White Aryan Resistance<sup>76</sup> and Aryan Brotherhood.<sup>77</sup> Its auto-generated business page for the White Aryan Resistance and Aryan Brotherhood have generated 596 Likes and 3,731 Likes respectively.

In recent years, Facebook has met backlash for the prominence of hate groups on its platform. In September 2018 the company was accused of content moderation policies that actually enable white supremacists and white nationalists.<sup>78</sup> The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law sent a letter to Facebook urging it to change its policies on white extremism.<sup>79</sup> Among other accusations in the letter to Facebook, the Lawyers' Committee pointed out, "Your stance on white nationalism and white separatism allows content that violates Community Standards to remain on the platform."<sup>80</sup>

The formula that Facebook utilizes to instruct content moderators on their method of identifying hate speech is broken down to just two elements: protected category + attack = hate speech.<sup>81</sup> But Facebook users like the NAE defendants in this case do not always have direct references to Facebook's protected categories (i.e. race, sex, gender identity, religious affiliation, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation and serious disability/disease) or attacks. The NAE and other white supremacist gangs, like the Aryan Brotherhood, use coded language – such as the "234" and "to the dirt" slogans – as a calling card to other gang members and display of loyalty, thereby getting past the moderator's oversight.

Facebook's failure to moderate white supremacist groups has enabled criminal gangs like the NAE to network openly through the platform.

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<sup>76</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/White-Aryan-Resistance/135629199803318?eid=ARCtcUkIS2lmn9PM59AwwkS5exBZei1GzsYK7IKIZ\\_Aq3BLcPU5GaVVDfoyiiXALZxZB9n2DvdFON1Us&fref=tag](https://www.facebook.com/pages/White-Aryan-Resistance/135629199803318?eid=ARCtcUkIS2lmn9PM59AwwkS5exBZei1GzsYK7IKIZ_Aq3BLcPU5GaVVDfoyiiXALZxZB9n2DvdFON1Us&fref=tag)

<sup>77</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Aryan-Brotherhood/108493619174256?eid=ARD5aEubVBuQHfvXU7J5k7vRcf8rmKDVpNZLiPmeX-ZiqJYWj73KkIB7pssYIA9qPM7Az0sleaQ0WTIR&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_type=intro\\_card\\_work&timeline\\_context\\_item\\_source=100033107182255&fref=tag](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Aryan-Brotherhood/108493619174256?eid=ARD5aEubVBuQHfvXU7J5k7vRcf8rmKDVpNZLiPmeX-ZiqJYWj73KkIB7pssYIA9qPM7Az0sleaQ0WTIR&timeline_context_item_type=intro_card_work&timeline_context_item_source=100033107182255&fref=tag).

<sup>78</sup> Press Release, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law Sends Letter Demanding Facebook Revise Policies Empowering White Supremacists and White Nationalists, Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (Sept. 20, 2018), available at <https://lawyerscommittee.org/lawyers-committee-for-civil-rights-under-law-sends-letter-demanding-facebook-revise-policies-empowering-white-supremacists-and-white-nationalists/>; Julia Angwin, et al., *Facebook's Secret Censorship Rules Protect White Men From Hate Speech But Not Black Children*, PROPUBLICA (June 28, 2017), available at <https://www.propublica.org/article/facebook-hate-speech-censorship-internal-documents-algorithms>.

<sup>79</sup> Letter from Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law to Facebook (Sept. 20, 2018), available at <https://lawyerscommittee.org/lawyers-committee-for-civil-rights-under-law-sends-letter-demanding-facebook-revise-policies-empowering-white-supremacists-and-white-nationalists/>.

<sup>80</sup> Letter from Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law to Facebook (Sept. 20, 2018), available at <https://lawyerscommittee.org/lawyers-committee-for-civil-rights-under-law-sends-letter-demanding-facebook-revise-policies-empowering-white-supremacists-and-white-nationalists/>.

<sup>81</sup> *Facebook's Secret Censorship Rules Protect White Men From Hate Speech But Not Black Children*, PROPUBLICA (June 28, 2017), available at <https://www.propublica.org/article/facebook-hate-speech-censorship-internal-documents-algorithms>.

## Proud Boys Ban

Facebook's failure to regulate NAE related content stands in contrast to its actions with the group "The Proud Boys." Its actions in the latter case have shown it is capable of cracking down on white supremacist groups when it chooses to.

On October 31, 2018, Facebook banned members of the far-right extremist group "Proud Boys" from the platform after the group received widespread media attention for brawling with anti-fascist groups outside a Manhattan club.<sup>82</sup>

Prior to that ban, Facebook had generated "business pages" for Proud Boys groups in the same manner as it did for Islamic terrorist organizations. Facebook even recommended other Proud Boys accounts from the auto-generated page (see Figure 25). The pointed difference between the two instances is that following the announcement of Facebook's ban on Proud Boys accounts, the company's AI removed the auto-generated pages for the group – something that Facebook's AI for tracking Al Qaeda accounts appears to have been unable to do.

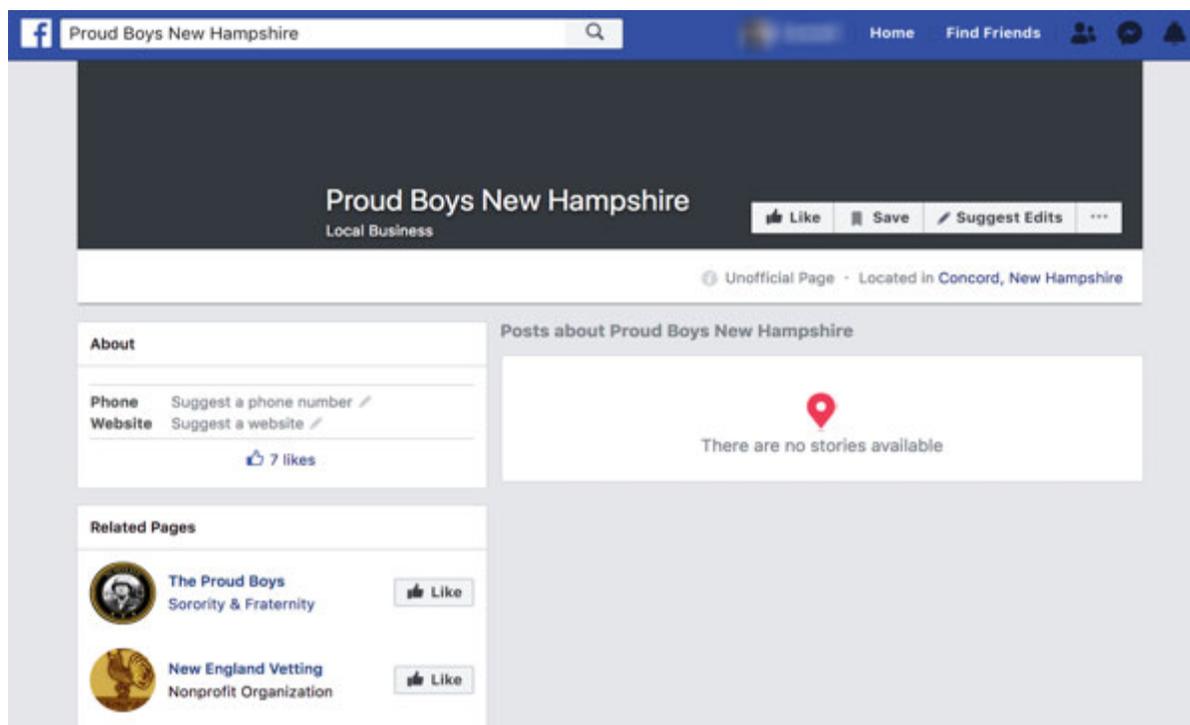
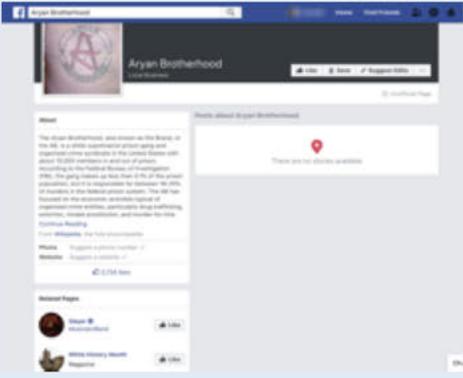
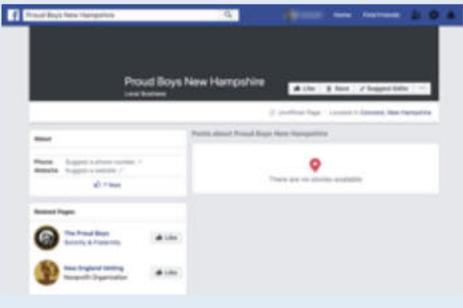


Figure 25: A Proud Boys New Hampshire business page that was auto-generated by Facebook, prior to the October 2018 ban on the group.

<sup>82</sup> Ashley Southall & Tyler Pager, *Proud Boys Fight at G.O.P. Club Spurs Calls for Inquiry; Cuomo Blames Trump*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct 14 2018), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/14/nyregion/proud-boys-nyc-antifa-fight.html>.

## Auto-generated White Supremacist and Nazi Groups on Facebook

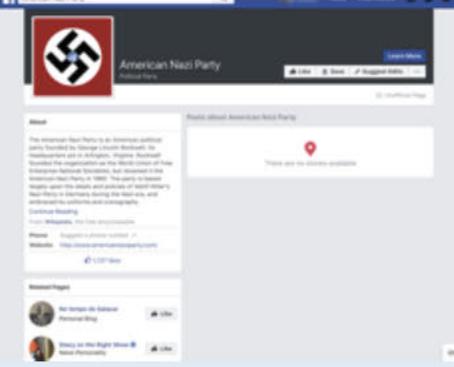
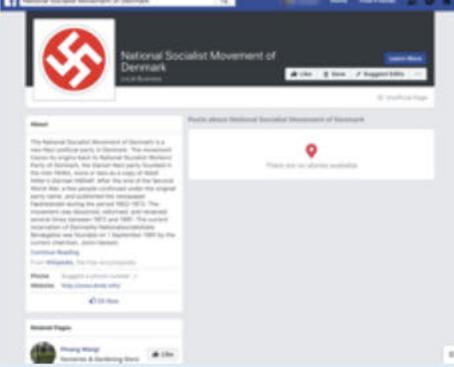
Our survey identified more than 30 additional Nazi-affiliated and white supremacist groups on Facebook for which the platform auto-generated pages and content, as demonstrated in the following chart:

Screen Shot of Facebook Page	Group Name	Existing or Auto-Generated	Number of Likes	Type
	Aryan Brotherhood <sup>83</sup>	Auto-generated	3,734	“Local Business” Page
	Proud Boys New Hampshire <sup>84</sup>	Auto-generated	7	“Local Business” Page
	Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan <sup>85</sup>	Auto-generated	N/A	“Local Business” Page

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Aryan-Brotherhood/108493619174256>.

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Proud-Boys-New-Hampshire/1309377375777727>.

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Southern-Knights-of-the-Ku-Klux-Klan/339652606103549>.

	<p>White Patriot Party<sup>86</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated; merged with Carolina Knights of the Ku Klux Klan page</p>	<p>86</p>	<p>“Political Party” Page</p>
	<p>American Nazi Party<sup>87</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>1,127</p>	<p>“Political Party” Page</p>
	<p>National Socialist Movement of Denmark<sup>88</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>53</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/White-Patriot-Party/103728399665878>.

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Nazi-Party/106225522741206>.

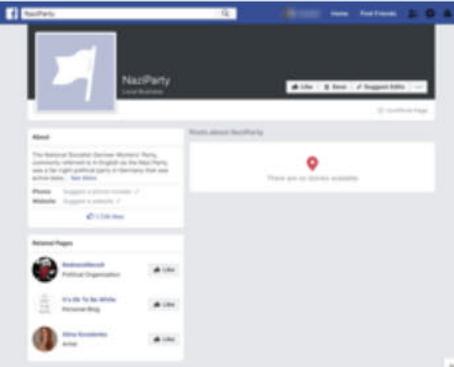
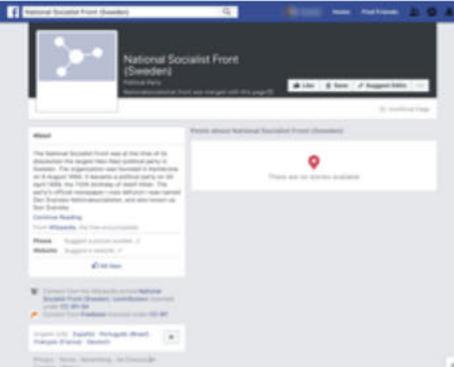
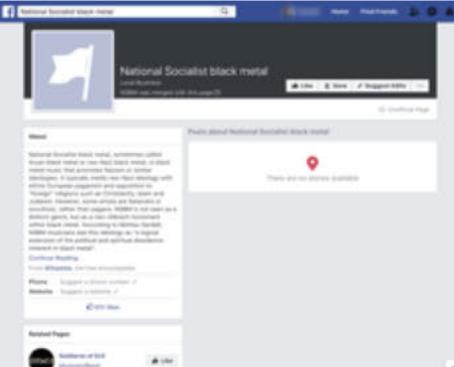
<sup>88</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Socialist-Movement-of-Denmark/103103086396858>.

	<p>World Union of National Socialists<sup>89</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>76</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Sudeten German Party<sup>90</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Nazi Party of Australia<sup>91</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/World-Union-of-National-Socialists/135741789790332>.

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sudeten-German-Party/137590676261588>.

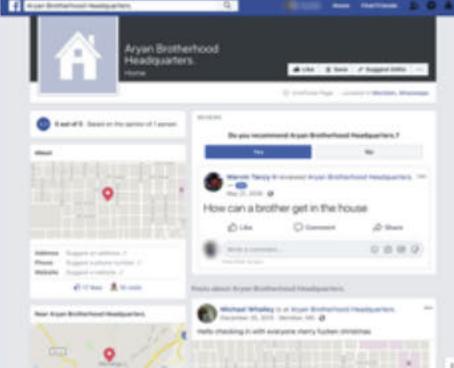
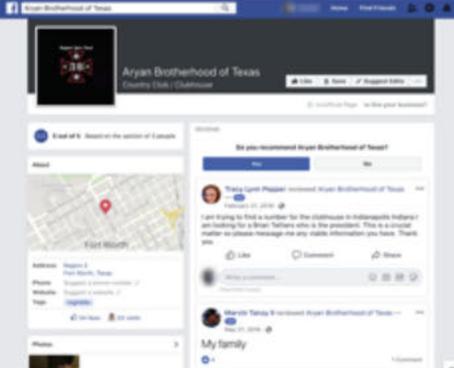
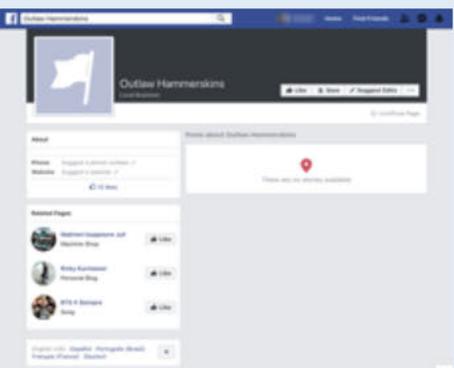
<sup>91</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nazi%20Party%20of%20Australia/1407611832789308/>.

	<p>Nazi Party<sup>92</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>1,726</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>National Socialist Front (Sweden)<sup>93</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>56</p>	<p>“Political Party” Page</p>
	<p>National Socialist Black Metal<sup>94</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>631</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/NaziParty/101884719852584>.

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nationalsocialistisk-front/106571722713522?rf=114598371889997>.

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Socialist-black-metal/107687622593827?rf=536686923140171>.

	<p>Aryan Brotherhood Headquarters (Mississippi)<sup>95</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>“Home” Location</p>
	<p>Aryan Brotherhood of Texas<sup>96</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>54</p>	<p>“Country Club / Clubhouse” Location</p>
	<p>Outlaw Hammerskins<sup>97</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Aryan-Brotherhood-Headquarters/386886831415431>.

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Aryan-Brotherhood-of-Texas/1115924921759454>.

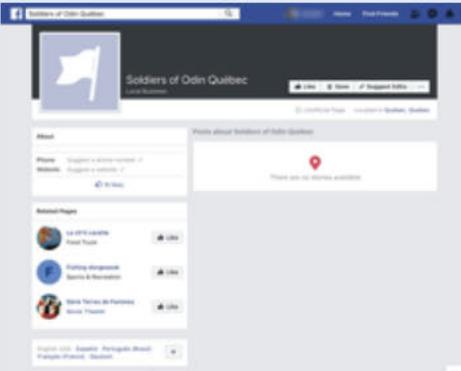
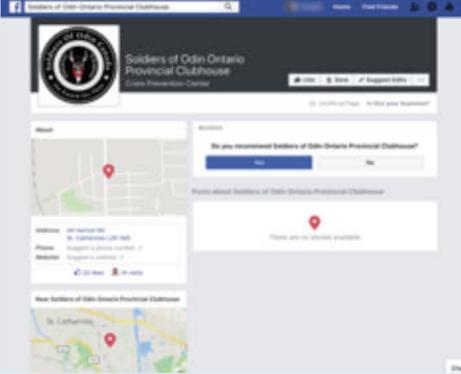
<sup>97</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Outlaw-Hammerskins/177398495691397>.

	<p>Sharkhunters International<sup>98</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>“Publisher” Location</p>
	<p>North Georgia White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan<sup>99</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Bayou Knights of the Ku Klux Klan<sup>100</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sharkhunters-International/1038487332868308>.

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/North-Georgia-White-Knights-of-The-Ku-Klux-Klan/1618717901744760>.

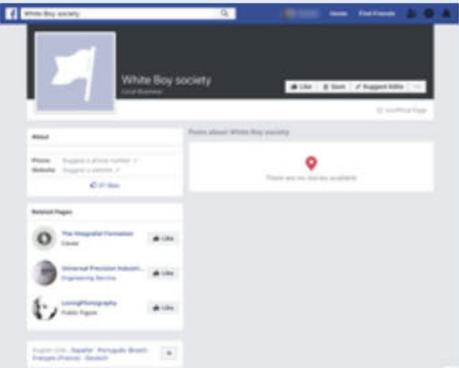
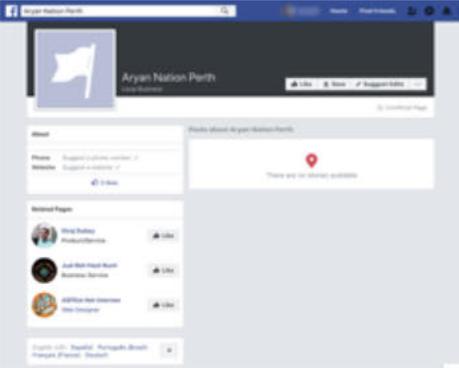
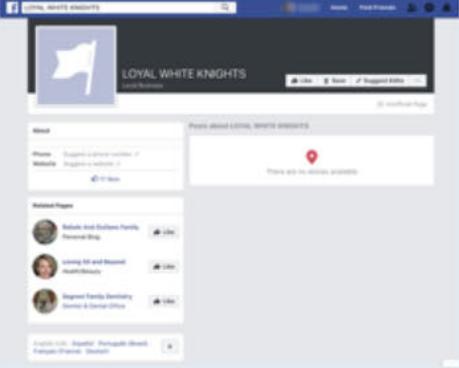
<sup>100</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bayou-Knights-of-The-Ku-Klux-Klan/157545777590585>.

	<p>Soldiers of Odin Quebec<sup>101</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Soldiers of Odin Germany and Worldwide<sup>102</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>256</p>	<p>“Community Organization” Location</p>
	<p>Soldiers of Odin Ontario Provincial Clubhouse<sup>103</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>33</p>	<p>“Crisis Prevention Center” Location</p>

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Soldiers-of-Odin-Qu%C3%A9bec/997829540291620>.

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Soldiers-of-Odin-Germany-Worldwide/1196541830363782>.

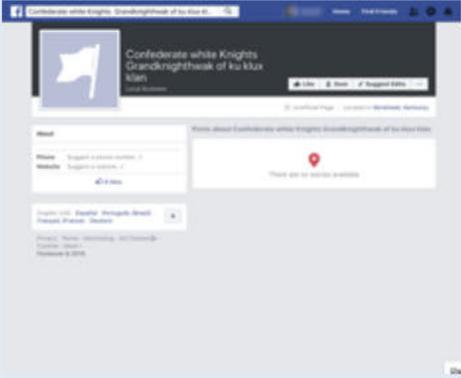
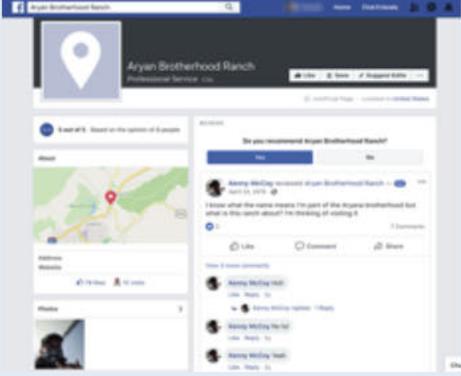
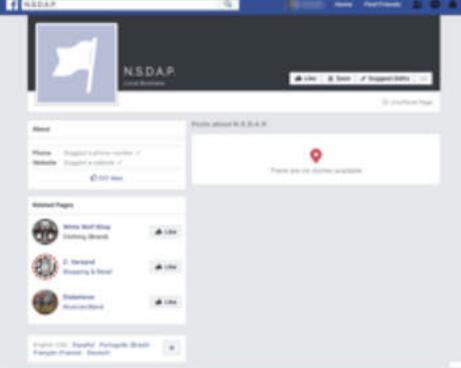
<sup>103</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Soldiers-of-Odin-Ontario-Provincial-Clubhouse/649310438561199>.

	<p>White Boy Society<sup>104</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>37</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Aryan Nation Perth<sup>105</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Loyal White Knights<sup>106</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/White-Boy-society/394158867311506>.

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Aryan-Nation-Perth/581127358735758>.

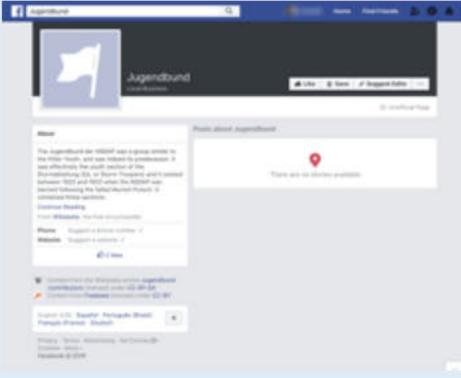
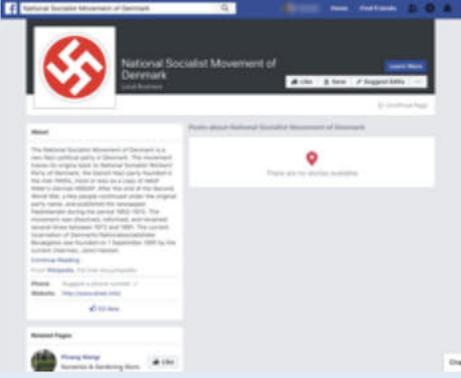
<sup>106</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/LOYAL-WHITE-KNIGHTS/354810694545901>.

	<p>Confederate White Knights Grandknighthwak of the Ku Klux Klan<sup>107</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Aryan Brotherhood Ranch<sup>108</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>79</p>	<p>“Professional Service” Location</p>
	<p>NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party)<sup>109</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>531</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Confederate-white-Knights-Grandknighthwak-of-ku-klux-klan/572504086241154>.

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Aryan-Brotherhood-Ranch/631855736858845>.

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/NSDAP/101671016577913>.

	<p>Jugendbund<sup>110</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>National Socialist Movement of Denmark<sup>111</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>53</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
	<p>Traditionalist Workers Party<sup>112</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated</p>	<p>43</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jugendbund/104016839636085>.

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Socialist-Movement-of-Denmark/103103086396858>.

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Traditionalist-Workers-Party/856165191155909>.

	<p>Swiss Nationalist Party<sup>113</sup></p>	<p>Auto-generated; merged with PNOS page</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>“Local Business” Page</p>
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<sup>113</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Swiss-Nationalist-Party/12303477777934?fref=mentions&rf=158338934179727>.