

# Critical Media Literacy

## Critique what you read!

Maram Hasanain, PostDoc

Fatema Ahmed, Research Assistant

Firoj Alam, Senior Scientist

Qatar Computing Research Institute

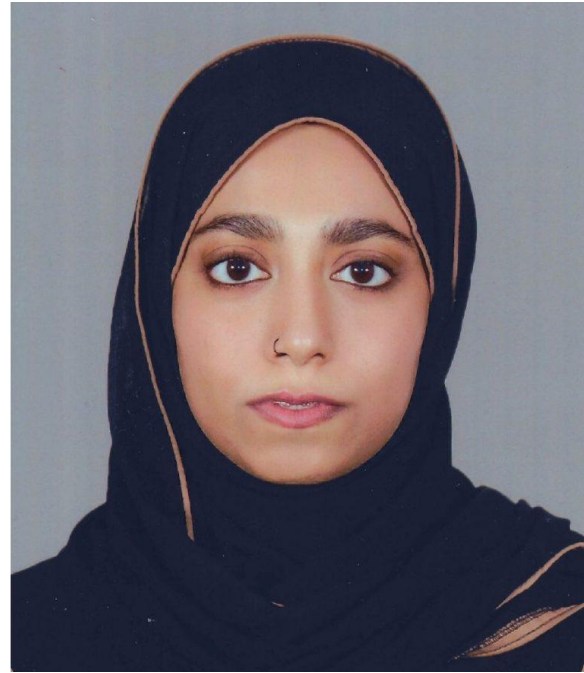
<http://digitqr.net/>



# Speakers



**Maram Hasanain**  
Post Doctoral Fellow,  
QCRI/HBKU



**Fatema Ahmed**  
Research Assistant,  
QCRI/HBKU



**Firoj Alam, Lead PI**  
Senior Scientist,  
QCRI/HBKU



# Breaking News! What would you do?



Share



Verify then  
Share





# Motivation

**Chris Randolph**  
@TrumpAF2024

Emir of Qatar :  
"If the bombing of Gaza doesn't stop, we will stop gas supply of the world."  
Remember under Trump when we were energy independent?  
Now our oil reserves have been drained.

Drill baby drill! Natural gas! We have enough for energy independence

#IsraelFightsBack

**مباشر الدوحة**

أمير قطر: أزمة اللجوء هي نتاج النزاعات الإقليمية والحروب الأهلية وعمليات التهجير على خلفيات عنصرية

لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم

وري الألمانى لكرة القدم.. لايزغ 4 - 5 بايرن ميونيخ، أوجسبورج 1 - 1 بروسيا دورتموند

Readers added context they thought people might want to know →

This is false.

[checkyourfact.com/2023/10/12/fac...](https://checkyourfact.com/2023/10/12/fac...)

Context is written by people who use X, and appears when rated helpful by others. [Find out more.](#)

6:29 PM · Oct 13, 2023 · 183K Views

**LogKa**  
@LogKa11

Nazi Ukrainians were arrested in Qatar after they drew swastikas on football posters.

**Three drunken Ukrainians were spreading Nazi symbols in Doha.**

0:10 / 0:46

**Stay informed**  
Manipulated media [Find out more](#)

11:22 PM · Nov 22, 2022

155 1K 2.2K 123

**WOULD YOU VOTE FOR CLINTON AS PRESIDENT?**

**57% SAY YES**

WASHINGTON POST/ABC NEWS POLL · NOV 28-DEC 2, 2012

**Translation:** when you think about all the opportunities you have for success but then you remember that you live in an Arab country

لما تتخيل فرص النجاح اللي قدامك بس بعدين تتذكر انك عايش بدوله عربيه

Arabian Memes @arabmemes



# **Disinformation**

False information that is spread, with intent to mislead

# **Misinformation**

False information that is spread, regardless of intent to mislead

# **Fake News**

News that is intentionally and verifiably false and could mislead readers

# **Satire**

Factually incorrect, but the intent is to call out, ridicule, or expose behavior that is shameful, corrupt, or bad

# **Propaganda**

Information—facts, arguments, rumours, half-truths, or lies— spread with the intent of influencing public opinion

# News Verification

# Online News Articles

aljazeera.com/economy/2024/8/26/airlines-suspend-flights-over-clashes-between-israel-and-hezbollah

ALJAZEERA

News ▾

Video

War on Gaza

US Election

Opinion

Sport

LIVE

Sign u

Economy | Aviation

Airlines suspend flights over clashes between Israel and Hezbollah

British Airways suspends flights until Wednesday, while Air France pauses services until Monday.

Advertisement

AD

صيف في عسير.. تراها تهـوّل

عسـير | الصيف | السعودية

DiscoverAseer.com

Workers look at a departures flight board at Ben Gurion airport on March 27, 2023 [Amir Levy/Getty Images]

26 Aug 2024

f

X

Multiple airlines have suspended flights to Israel after Israeli forces and Lebanese group Hezbollah engaged in their heaviest clashes since the start of Israel's war on Gaza.

British Airways said on Sunday that it would cancel all flights to and from Israel until Wednesday, while Air France announced the suspension of services to Tel Aviv and Beirut until Monday.





OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

# News Agency

- Is it well-known?
- Is it credible to you/has a reputation of publishing credible news?


aljazeera.com/economy/2024/8/26/airlines-suspend-flights-over-clashes-between-israel-and-hezbollah

ALJAZEERA News War on Gaza US Election Opinion Sport Video More

Economy | Aviation

## Airlines suspend flights over clashes between Israel and Hezbollah

British Airways suspends flights until Wednesday, while Air France pauses services until Monday.



Workers look at a departures flight board at Ben Gurion airport on March 27, 2023 [Amir Levy/Getty Images]

26 Aug 2024

Multiple airlines have suspended flights to Israel after Israeli forces and Lebanese group Hezbollah engaged in their heaviest clashes since the start of Israel's war on Gaza.

British Airways said on Sunday that it would cancel all flights to and from Israel until Wednesday, while Air France announced the suspension of services to Tel Aviv and Beirut until Monday.

Advertisement

AD

صيف في عسير..  
تراها تهـوّل

عسيرة | الصيف | السعودية  
Aseer  
DiscoverAseer.com







OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

URL

- Does the URL match the official domain of the news agency?
- Are the words in URL relevant to title?



**Hint:** find the “official” domain by looking for the agency on Wikipedia


aljazeera.com/economy/2024/8/26/airlines-suspend-flights-over-clashes-between-israel-and-hezbollah

ALJAZEERA News War on Gaza US Election Opinion Sport Video More

Economy | Aviation

## Airlines suspend flights over clashes between Israel and Hezbollah

British Airways suspends flights until Wednesday, while Air France pauses services until Monday.



Workers look at a departures flight board at Ben Gurion airport on March 27, 2023 [Amir Levy/Getty Images]

26 Aug 2024

Multiple airlines have suspended flights to Israel after Israeli forces and Lebanese group Hezbollah engaged in their heaviest clashes since the start of Israel's war on Gaza.

British Airways said on Sunday that it would cancel all flights to and from Israel until Wednesday, while Air France announced the suspension of services to Tel Aviv and Beirut until Monday.

Advertisement

AD

صيف في عسير..  
تراها تهـوّل

عسير | الصيف | السعودية  
Aseer  
DiscoverAseer.com





OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

# Headline

- Is it written in a serious/official style?
- Does it match the content of the article?


aljazeera.com/economy/2024/8/26/airlines-suspend-flights-over-clashes-between-israel-and-hezbollah

ALJAZEERA News War on Gaza US Election Opinion Sport Video More

Economy | Aviation

## Airlines suspend flights over clashes between Israel and Hezbollah

*British Airways suspends flights until Wednesday, while Air France pauses services until Monday.*



Workers look at a departures flight board at Ben Gurion airport on March 27, 2023 [Amir Levy/Getty Images]

26 Aug 2024

Multiple airlines have suspended flights to Israel after Israeli forces and Lebanese group Hezbollah engaged in their heaviest clashes since the start of Israel's war on Gaza.

British Airways said on Sunday that it would cancel all flights to and from Israel until Wednesday, while Air France announced the suspension of services to Tel Aviv and Beirut until Monday.

Advertisement

AD

صيف في عسير..  
تراها تهـوّل

عسیر | الصيف | السعودية  
Aseer  
DiscoverAseer.com







OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

## Author & Date

- Is the author name clear?
- Is there a date?
- Did the news really happen on or before that date?



**Hint:** Author name isn't always mentioned in big news agencies articles

aljazeera.com/economy/2024/8/26/airlines-suspend-flights-over-clashes-between-israel-and-hezbollah

ALJAZEERA News War on Gaza US Election Opinion Sport Video More

Economy | Aviation

### Airlines suspend flights over clashes between Israel and Hezbollah

British Airways suspends flights until Wednesday, while Air France pauses services until Monday.

Workers look at a departures flight board at Ben Gurion airport on March 27, 2023 [Amir Levy/Getty Images]

26 Aug 2024

Multiple airlines have suspended flights to Israel after Israeli forces and Lebanese group Hezbollah engaged in their heaviest clashes since the start of Israel's war on Gaza.

British Airways said on Sunday that it would cancel all flights to and from Israel until Wednesday, while Air France announced the suspension of services to Tel Aviv and Beirut until Monday.

Advertisement

AD

صيف في عسير..  
تراها تهـوّل

عسیر | الصيف | السعودية  
Aseer  
DiscoverAseer.com





OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

Image / Video

- Is the image/video of high quality?
- Is the image relevant to the news?

aljazeera.com/economy/2024/8/26/airlines-suspend-flights-over-clashes-between-israel-and-hezbollah



ALJAZEERA

News

War on Gaza

US Election

Opinion

Sport

Video

More

LIVE

Sign

Economy | Aviation

## Airlines suspend flights over clashes between Israel and Hezbollah

*British Airways suspends flights until Wednesday, while Air France pauses services until Monday.*



Workers look at a departures flight board at Ben Gurion airport on March 27, 2023 [Amir Levy/Getty Images]

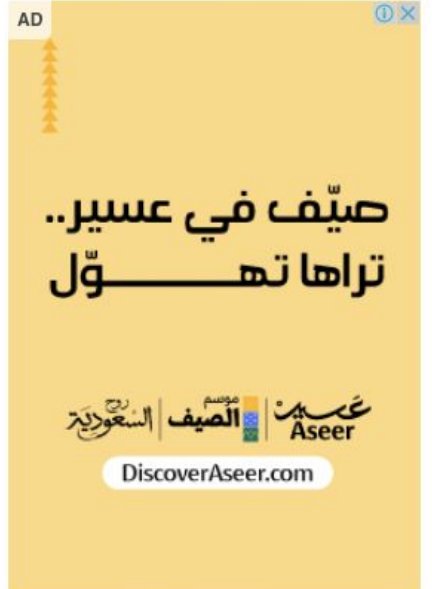
26 Aug 2024



Multiple airlines have suspended flights to Israel after Israeli forces and Lebanese group Hezbollah engaged in their heaviest clashes since the start of Israel's war on Gaza.

British Airways said on Sunday that it would cancel all flights to and from Israel until Wednesday, while Air France announced the suspension of services to Tel Aviv and Beirut until Monday.

Advertisement







OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

# Advertisements

- Is the advertiser a known entity (e.g., government-related, well-known retailer, etc)?
- Is the advertisement of “high quality”?
- Are there many advertisements?

aljazeera.com/economy/2024/8/26/airlines-suspend-flights-over-clashes-between-israel-and-hezbollah

ALJAZEERA News War on Gaza US Election Opinion Sport Video More

Economy | Aviation

## Airlines suspend flights over clashes between Israel and Hezbollah


British Airways suspends flights until Wednesday, while Air France pauses services until Monday.

Advertisement

AD

صيف في عسير..  
تراها تهـوّل

عيسى | الصيف | السعودية  
Aseer  
DiscoverAseer.com



Workers look at a departures flight board at Ben Gurion airport on March 27, 2023 [Amir Levy/Getty Images]

26 Aug 2024

Multiple airlines have suspended flights to Israel after Israeli forces and Lebanese group Hezbollah engaged in their heaviest clashes since the start of Israel's war on Gaza.

British Airways said on Sunday that it would cancel all flights to and from Israel until Wednesday, while Air France announced the suspension of services to Tel Aviv and Beirut until Monday.







## OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

Text

- Is it well-written (e.g., misspellings)?
- Does it sound sarcastic?
- Does it sound objective or is it expressing opinion?


aljazeera.com/economy/2024/8/26/airlines-suspend-flights-over-clashes-between-israel-and-hezbollah

ALJAZEERA News War on Gaza US Election Opinion Sport Video More

Economy | Aviation

# Airlines suspend flights over clashes between Israel and Hezbollah

British Airways suspends flights until Wednesday, while Air France pauses services until Monday.



Workers look at a departures flight board at Ben Gurion airport on March 27, 2023 [Amir Levy/Getty Images]

26 Aug 2024

Multiple airlines have suspended flights to Israel after Israeli forces and Lebanese group Hezbollah engaged in their heaviest clashes since the start of Israel's war on Gaza.

British Airways said on Sunday that it would cancel all flights to and from Israel until Wednesday, while Air France announced the suspension of services to Tel Aviv and Beirut until Monday.

Advertisement

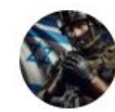
AD

صيف في عسير..  
تراها تهـوّل

عسیر | الصيف | السعودية  
Aseer  
DiscoverAseer.com



# Social Media

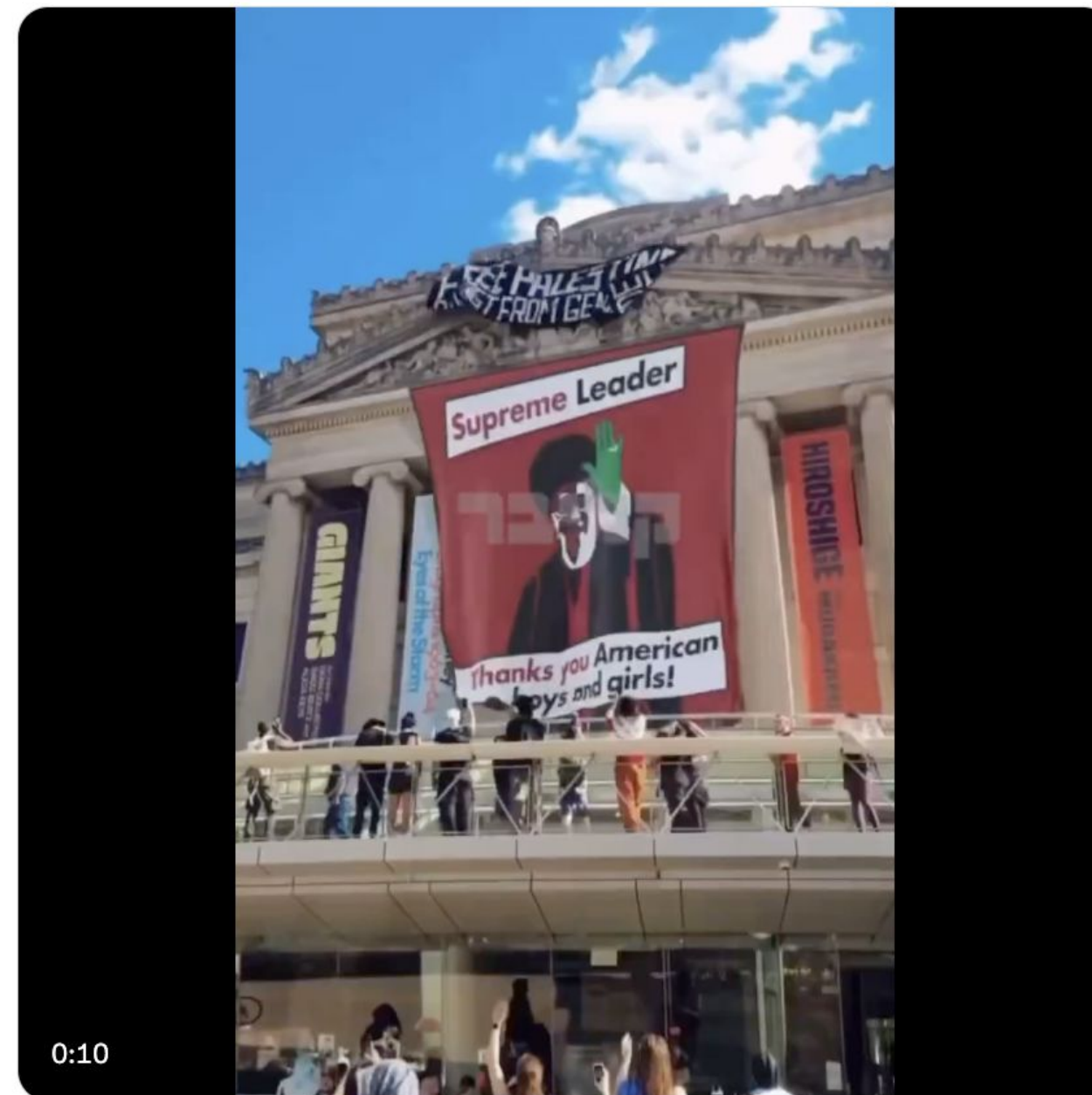


AMIRAN   
@Amiran\_Zizovi



Pro-Hamas protesters in New York City took over the Brooklyn Museum and hung a huge poster of the Iranian mass murderer, Ali Khamenei, who thanked the American students for their protests in the US.

America must wake up.



From Ofir Mana Doetch

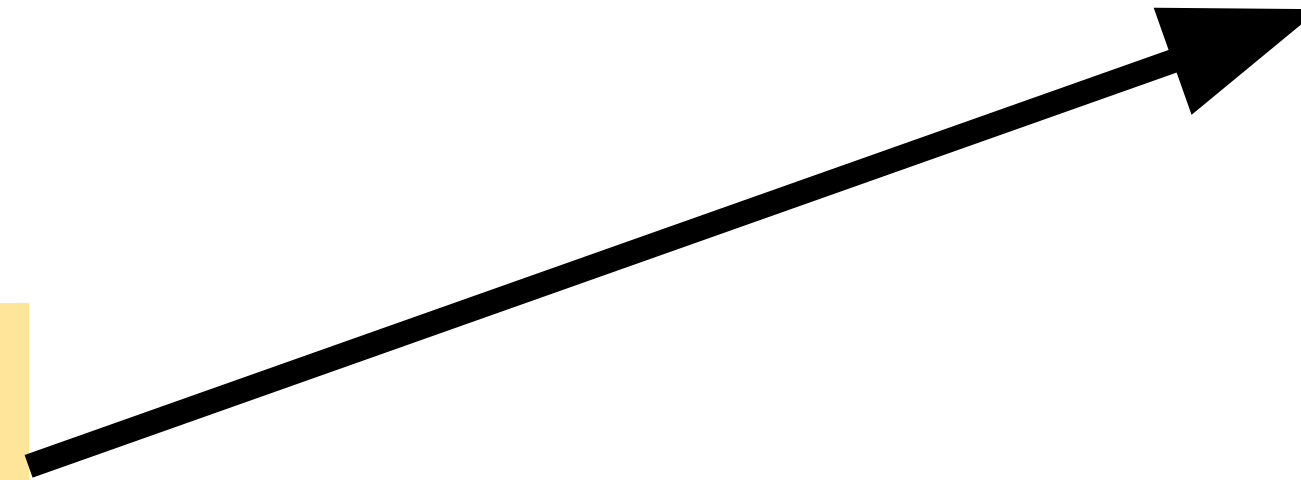
4:08 PM · Jun 22, 2024 · 6,130 Views



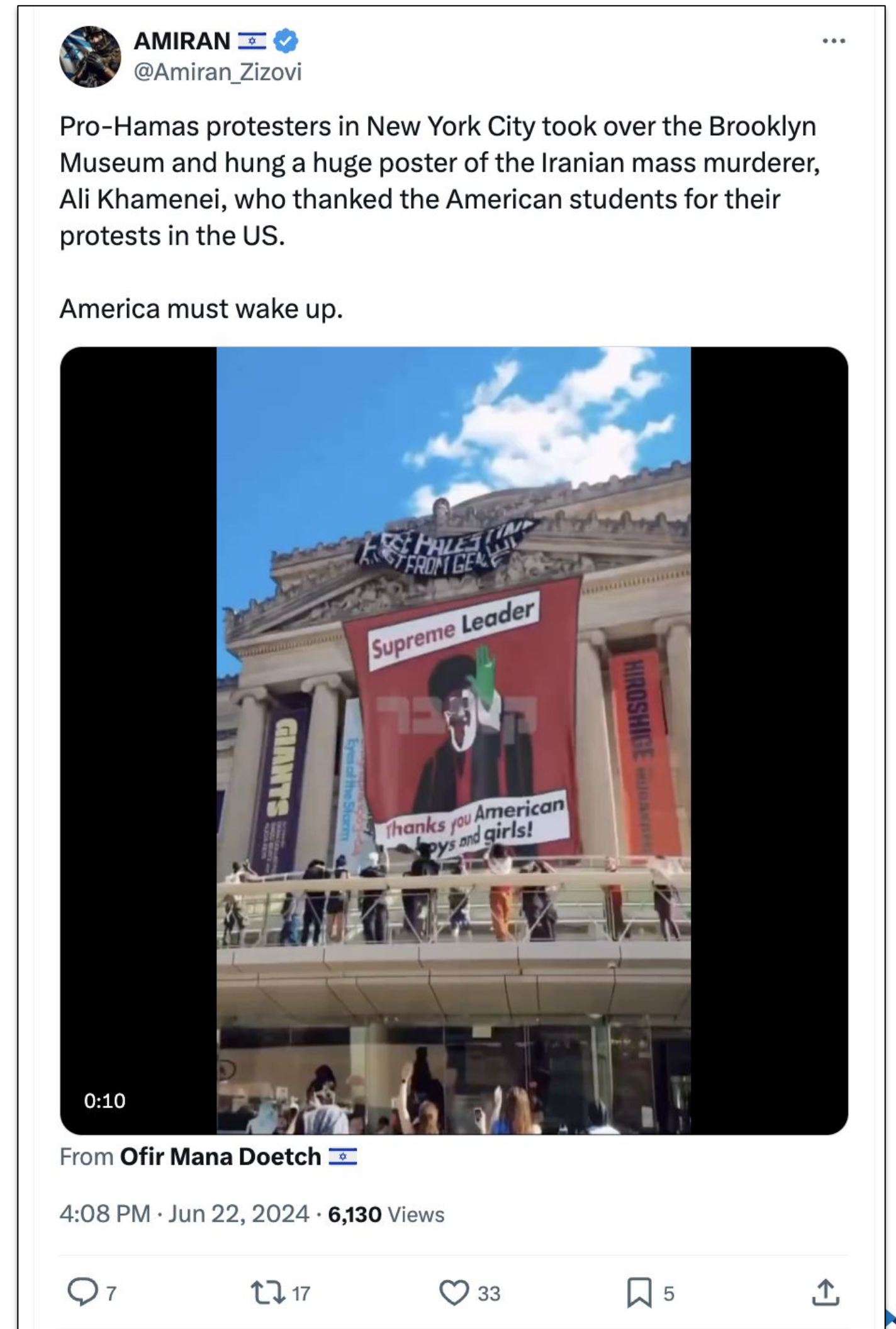


OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

# Author



- Is the author well-known?
- Does the username reflect any possible bias towards the topic of the tweet?
- Is it verified?
- Is it a real name (beware of bots!)

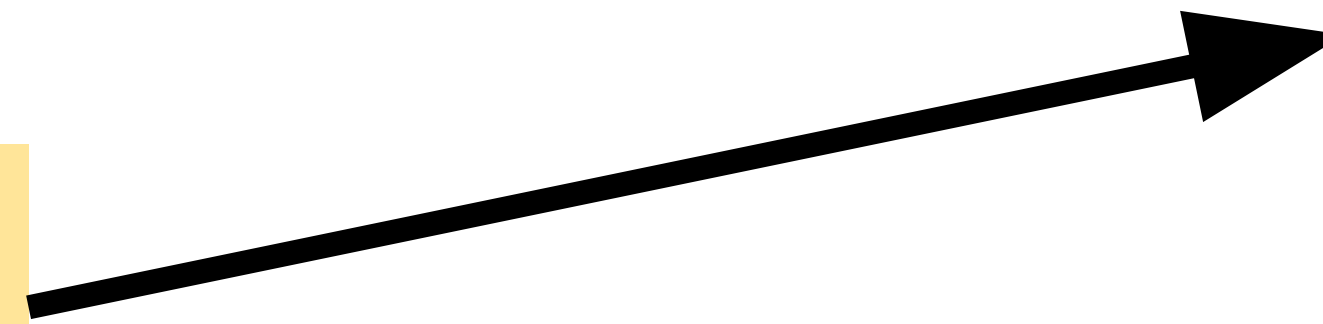




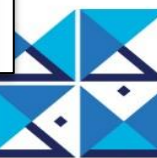
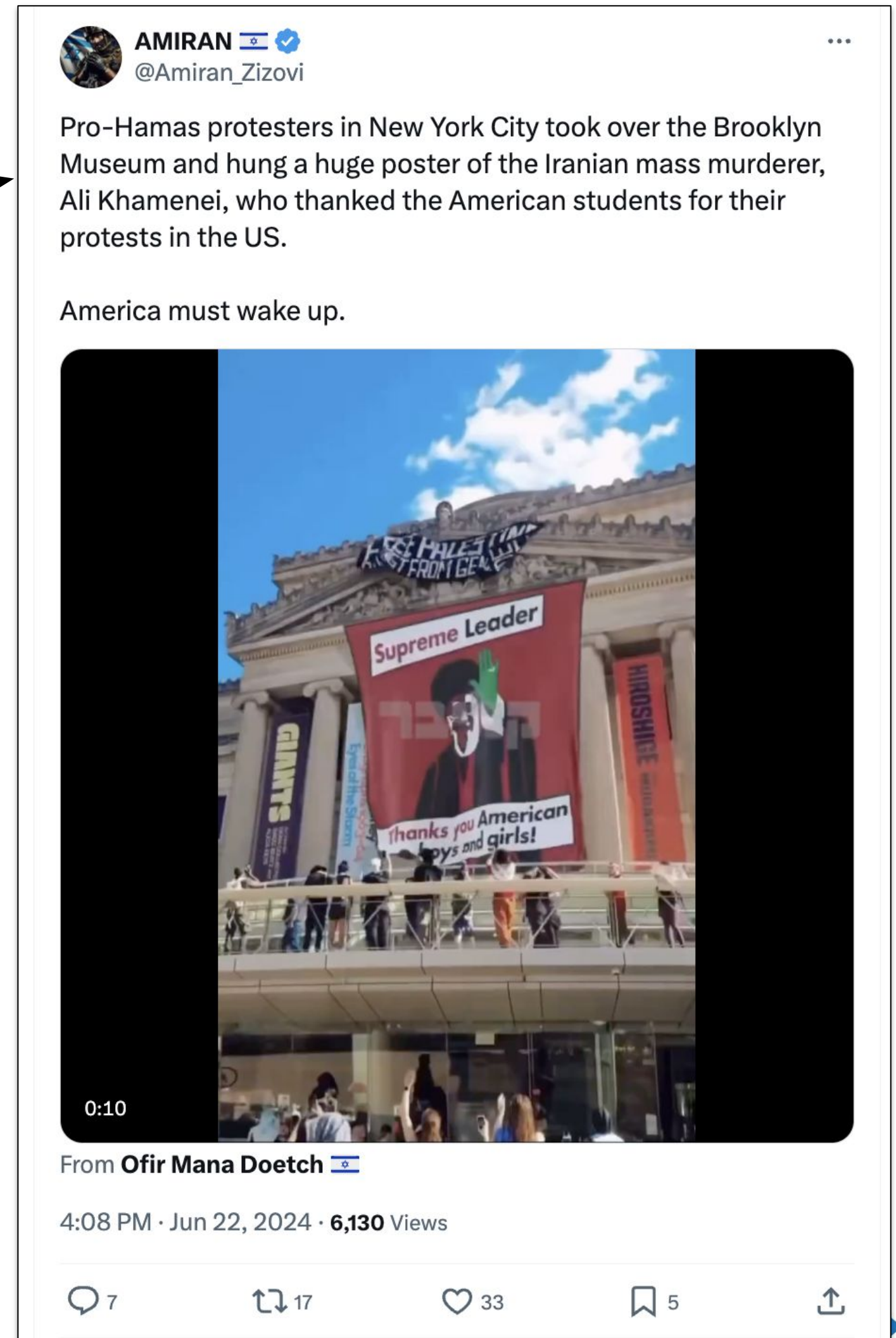


## OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

Text



- Is it well-written?
- Does it use emojis (😭, 😂, etc)?
- Does it sound sarcastic?
- Does it sound objective or is it expressing opinion?
- Does it contain hashtags? Do they match the tweet topic?



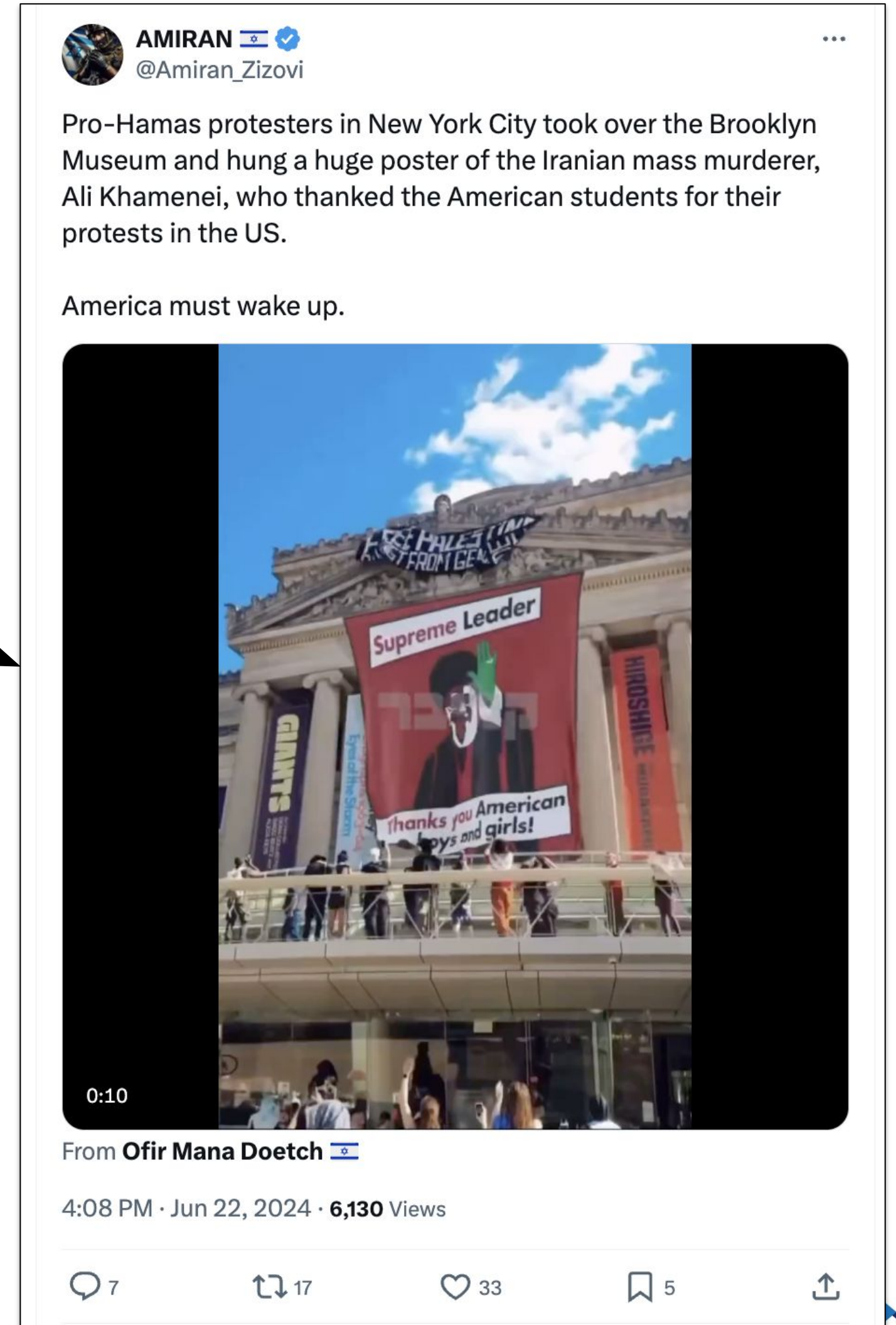
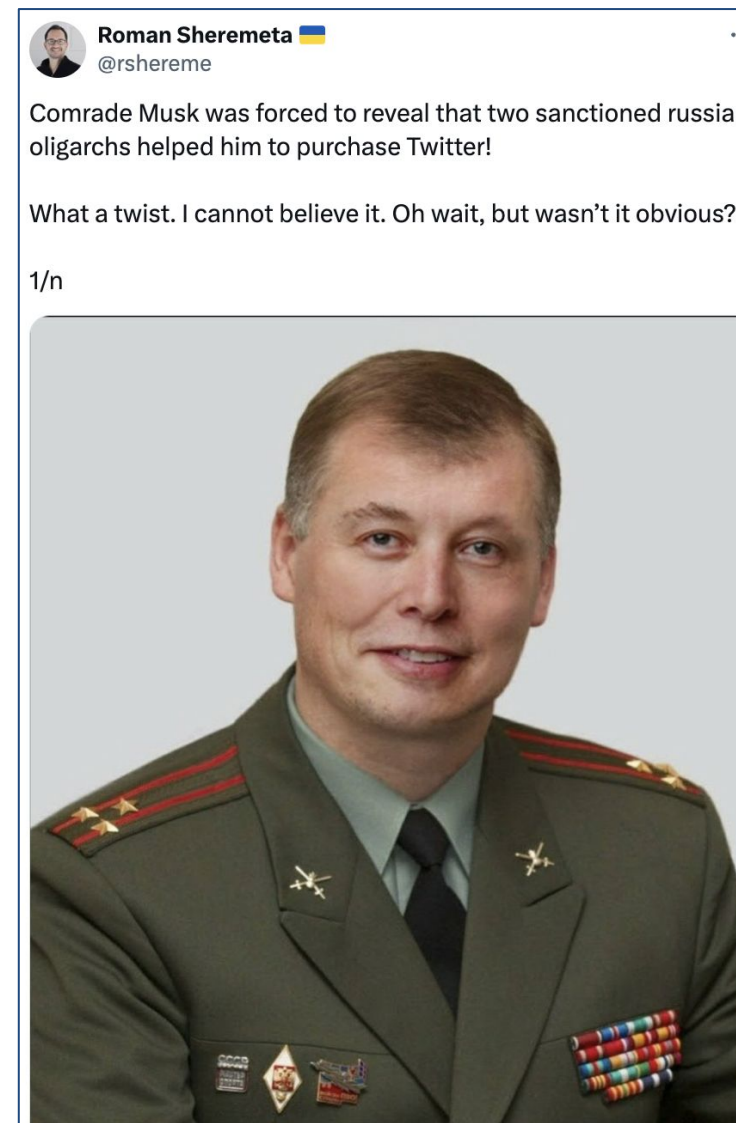




## OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

# Image / Video

- Is it of good quality?
- Does it look “real”?  
(Beware: AI-generated & photoshopped images!)



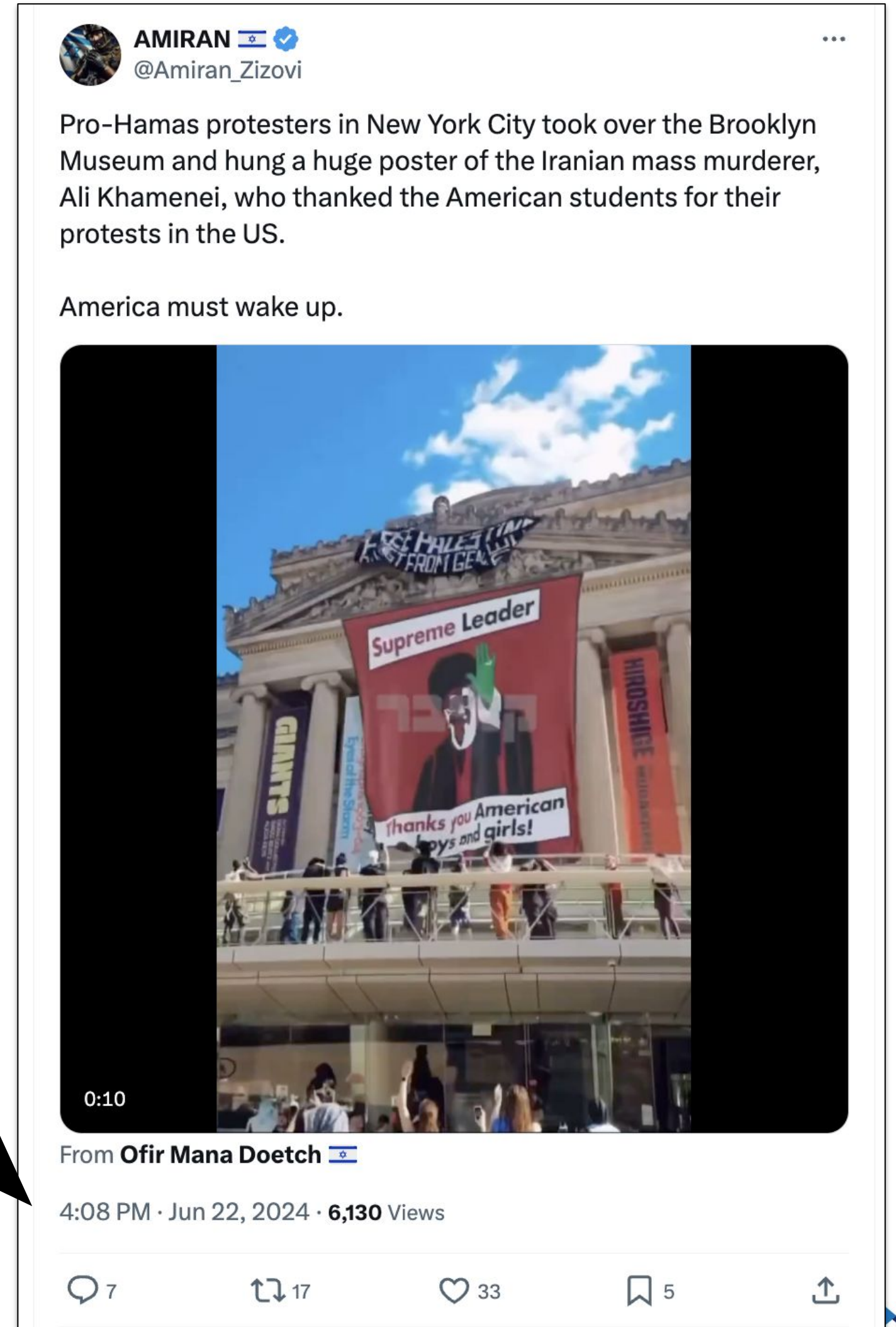




## OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

# Date

- Was it posted on or after the date of the event/relevant events?





OBSERVE + ANALYZE IMAGE

# Interactions

- Is it “trending”?
- Was the news challenged in quotes or replies?

 **Boris Levin** ✓  
@B1152

I doubt very much - and when such a poster is installed on the White House, will there be any reaction to it?

 **AMIRAN** 🇮🇱 ✓ @Amiran\_Zizovi · Jun 22

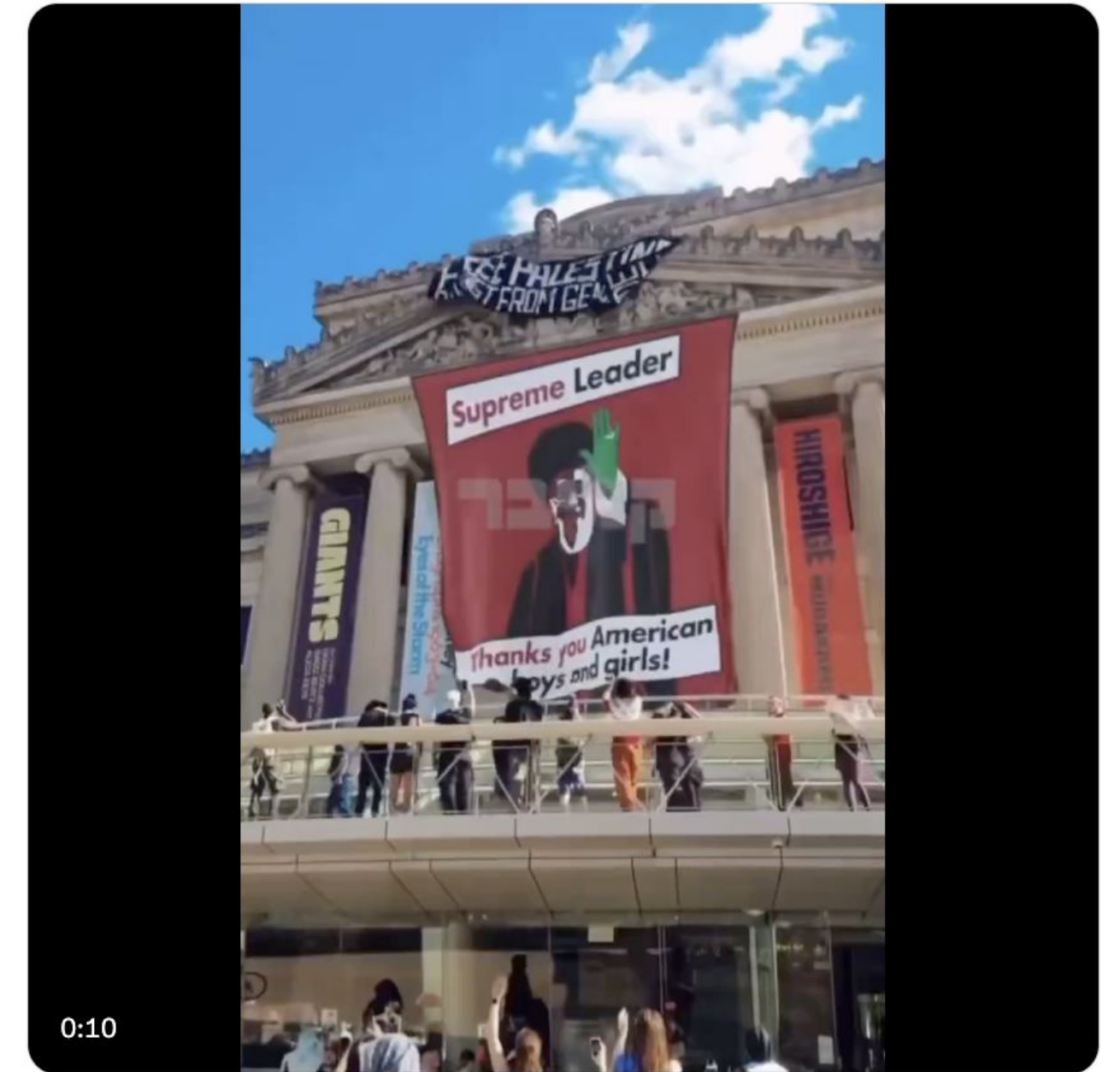
Pro-Hamas protesters in New York City took over the Brooklyn Museum and hung a huge poster of the Iranian mass murderer, Ali Khamenei, who thanked the American students for their protests in the US.

...  
[Show more](#)

 **AMIRAN** 🇮🇱 ✓  
@Amiran\_Zizovi

Pro-Hamas protesters in New York City took over the Brooklyn Museum and hung a huge poster of the Iranian mass murderer, Ali Khamenei, who thanked the American students for their protests in the US.

America must wake up.



From **Ofir Mana Doetch** 🇮🇱

4:08 PM · Jun 22, 2024 · 6,130 Views

7 17 33 5





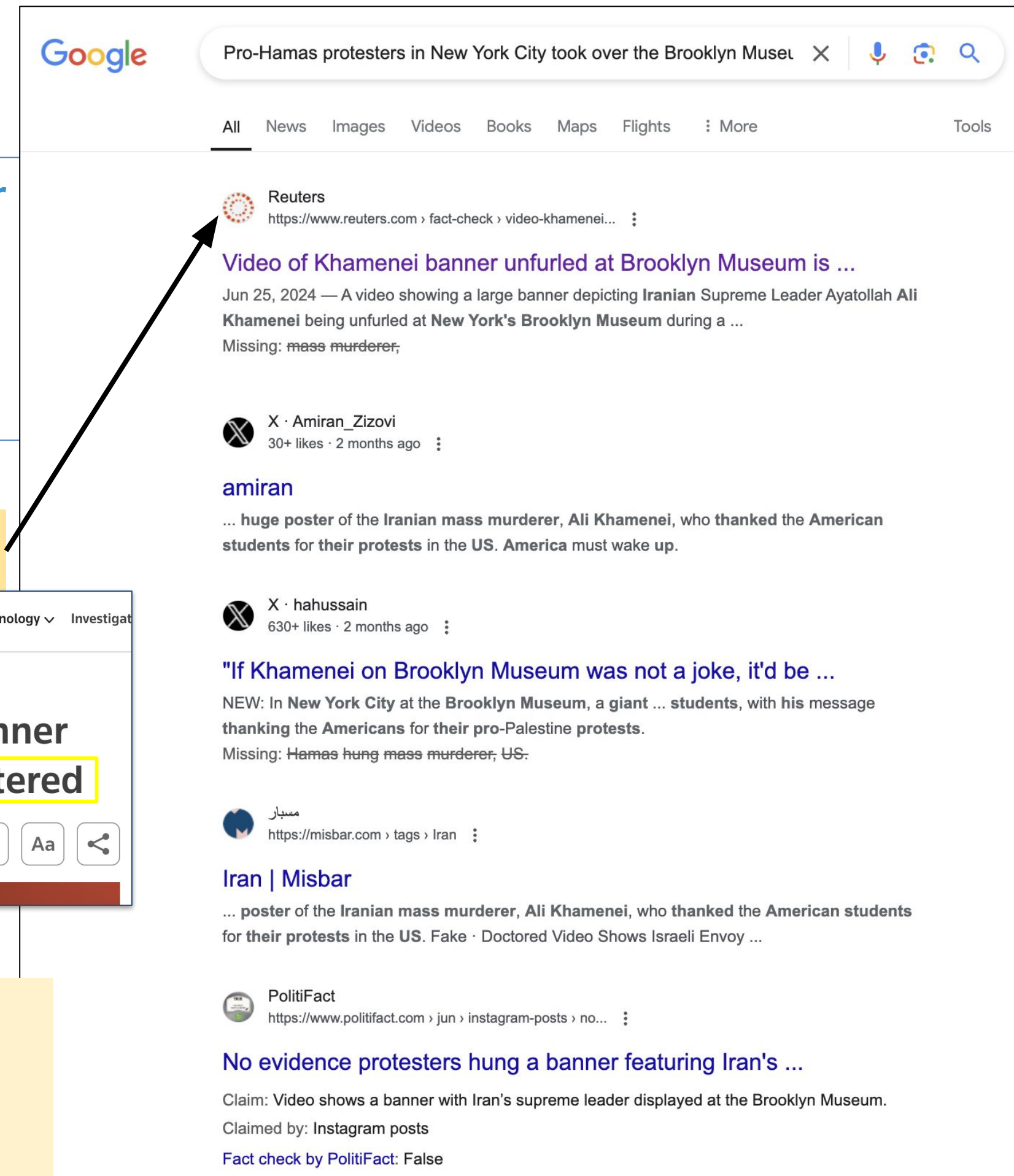
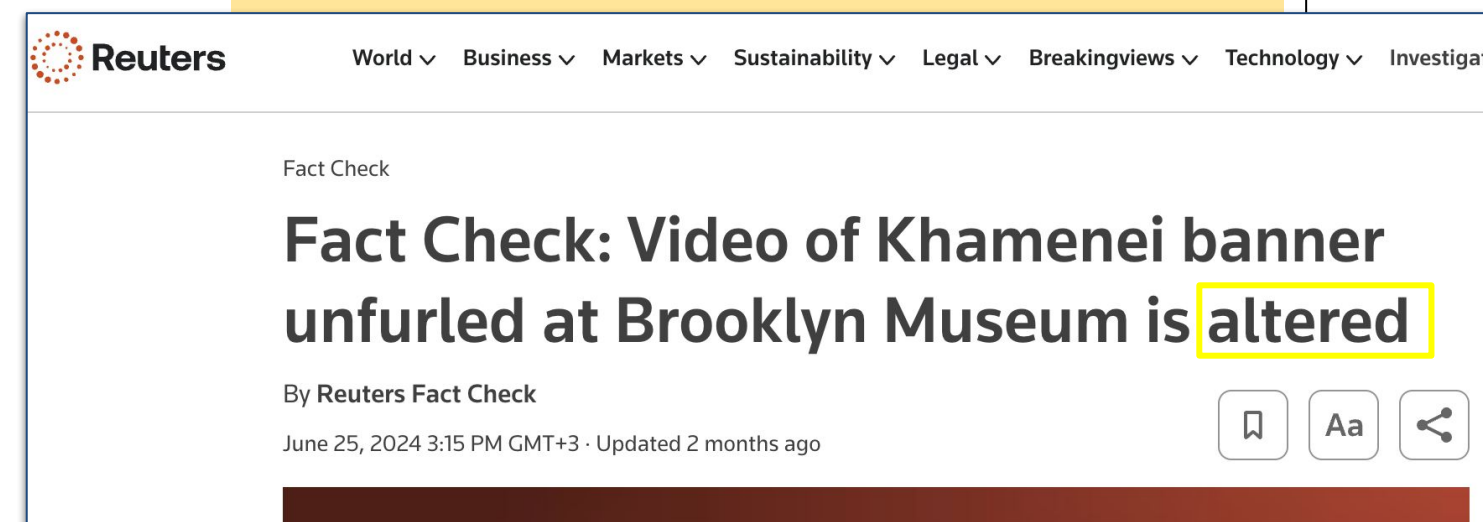
# How to verify?

## Lateral reading and Corroboration

Search for information on the *news poster* and *the news* itself. Find whether other sources are supporting/refuting the news.



## Credible news agency



- Consider searching in social media platforms
- Use advanced search features (e.g., setting the date to match date of the news)
- Use multiple query variations to get versatile relevant results
- Verify sub-claims in a long news articles

# How to verify?

## Fact checking organizations

Search using the news in websites of fact checking organizations or submit the news there to be verified.

The image displays two screenshots of fact-checking websites. On the left is a screenshot of the Politifact website, showing a URL for a fact-check on Instagram posts. On the right is a screenshot of the Misbar website, showing a fact-check article titled 'Of Iran On Brooklyn'. Overlaid on these is a 'Report a claim' form from Misbar. The form includes the Misbar logo, navigation links (Home, Fact Check, Misbar Blog), and a text box for reporting false news or rumors. It also provides instructions on how to contact the team for verification and a link to a contact form.

**Report a claim**

If you would like to alert the Misbar team about false news, rumors or stories that need verification, or request clarification, please contact us via the contact form below.

You can now contact the work and analysis team via this form. Enter your participation in the following form:



**Hint:** Many organizations support and communicate in different languages (e.g., Misbar monitors both English and Arabic news)





# How to verify?

Google Fact  
Check Search

Search if fact-checking  
organizations  
fact-checked the claim

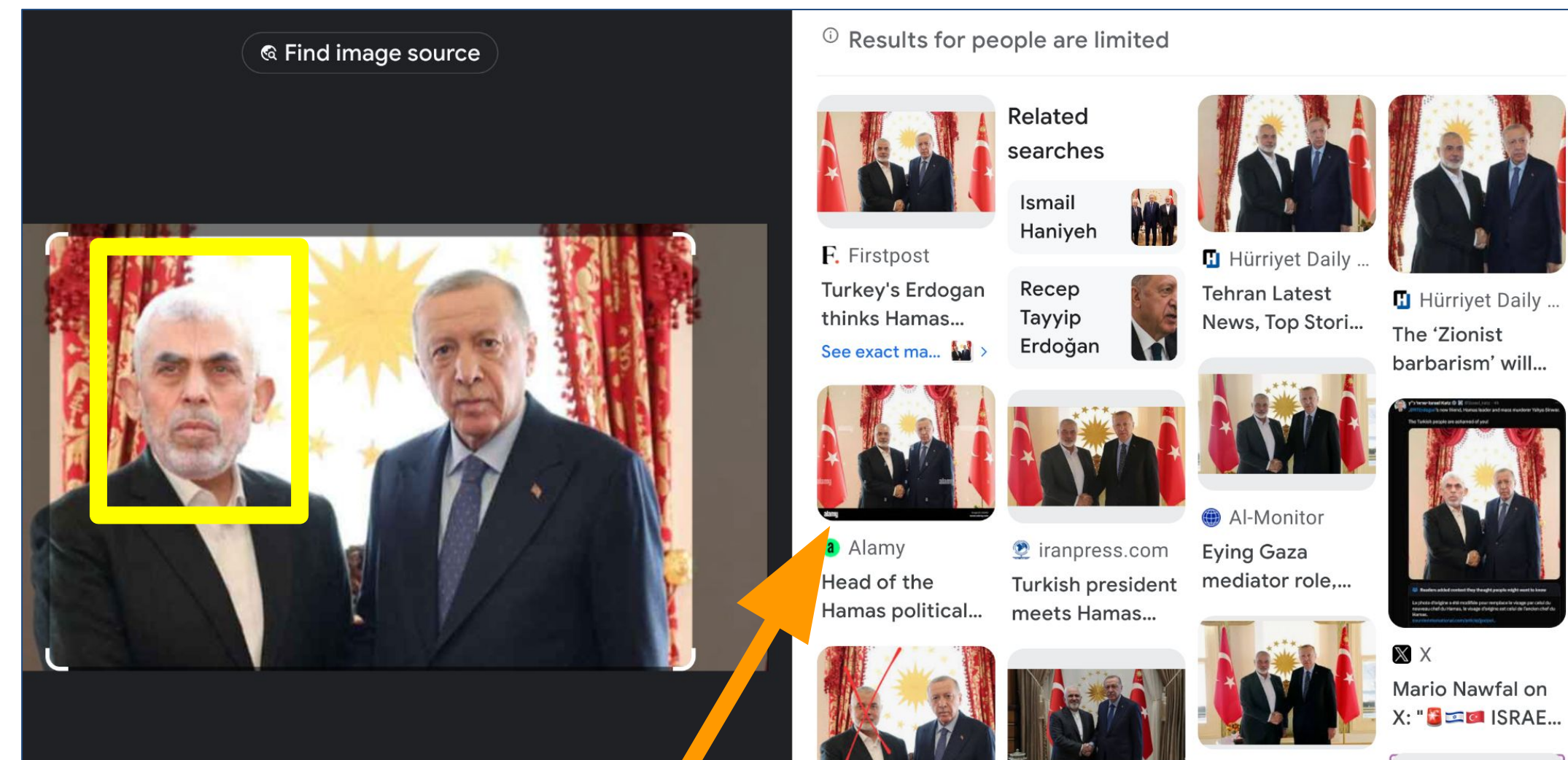
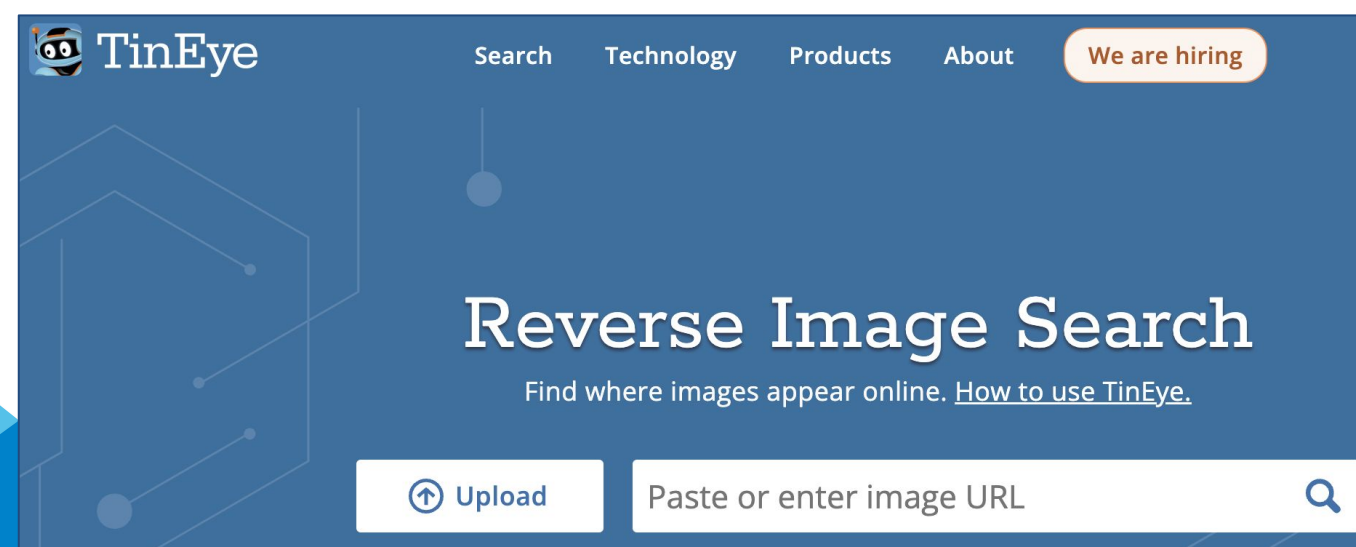
Fact-checking result

The screenshot shows the Google Fact Check Tools Explorer interface. The search bar contains the text "protesters in New York City took over the Brooklyn Museum". The results section displays a claim by social media: "Protestors displayed Iranian 'supreme leader' banner at Brooklyn Museum". A circular image shows a banner with the Iranian flag and the text "امام خمینی". The USA Today rating is "Altered", highlighted with a red box. A link to the fact check is provided: "No 'supreme leader' banner hung at Brooklyn Museum | Fact check". The date "Jun 25, 2024" is also shown. On the right side, there are tags for "Brooklyn Museum", "Supreme Leader of Iran", "Supreme leader", and "USA Today".

<https://toolbox.google.com/factcheck/explorer/search>

# How to verify *images*?

- Search online using the image.
- Is it high quality?
- Look at the image, does it look “fake”?



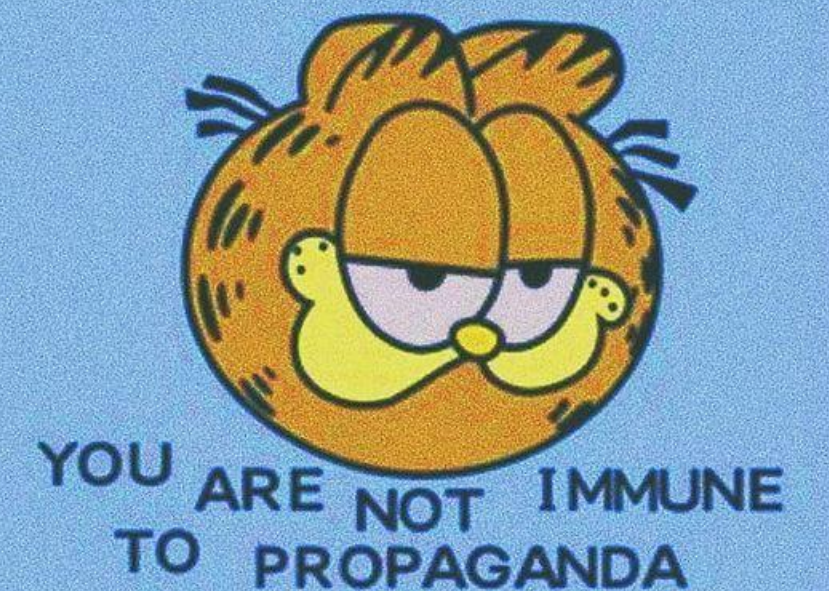
Many news agencies posting a “similar” photo but with a different face



# Propaganda

# What about Propaganda?

A propagandistic **text** is characterized by a **specific use of language** in order to **influence readers**.





# What do we mean by “specific techniques”?

# Propagandistic Techniques

## Justification

- Appeal to Authority
- Appeal to Popularity
- Appeal to Values
- Appeal to Fear, Prejudice
- Flag waving

## Call

- Slogans
- Appeal to Time
- Conversation Killer

## Simplification

- Causal Oversimplification
- False Dilemma or No Choice
- Consequential Oversimplification

## Reputation

- Name calling or Labeling
- Casting Doubt
- Guilt by Association
- Appeal to Hypocrisy
- Questioning the Reputation

## Distraction

- Strawman
- Red herring
- Whataboutism

## Other

- Other

## Manipulative Wording

- Loaded language
- Repetition
- Exaggeration or Minimization
- Obfuscation, Vagueness, Confusion



# Propagandistic Techniques

## Name Calling or Labelling

Using loaded labels that are directed at an individual or a group, typically in an insulting or demeaning way, or as either something the target audience fears, hates, or on the contrary finds desirable or loves.

# Propagandistic Techniques

## Name Calling or Labelling

- America Has Been Completely Sold Out Not Only By Our Braindead POTUS



Translation: “The sheikhs\* of Facebook after Christmas”

\*Referring to islamic scholars



# Propagandistic Techniques

## Flag Waving

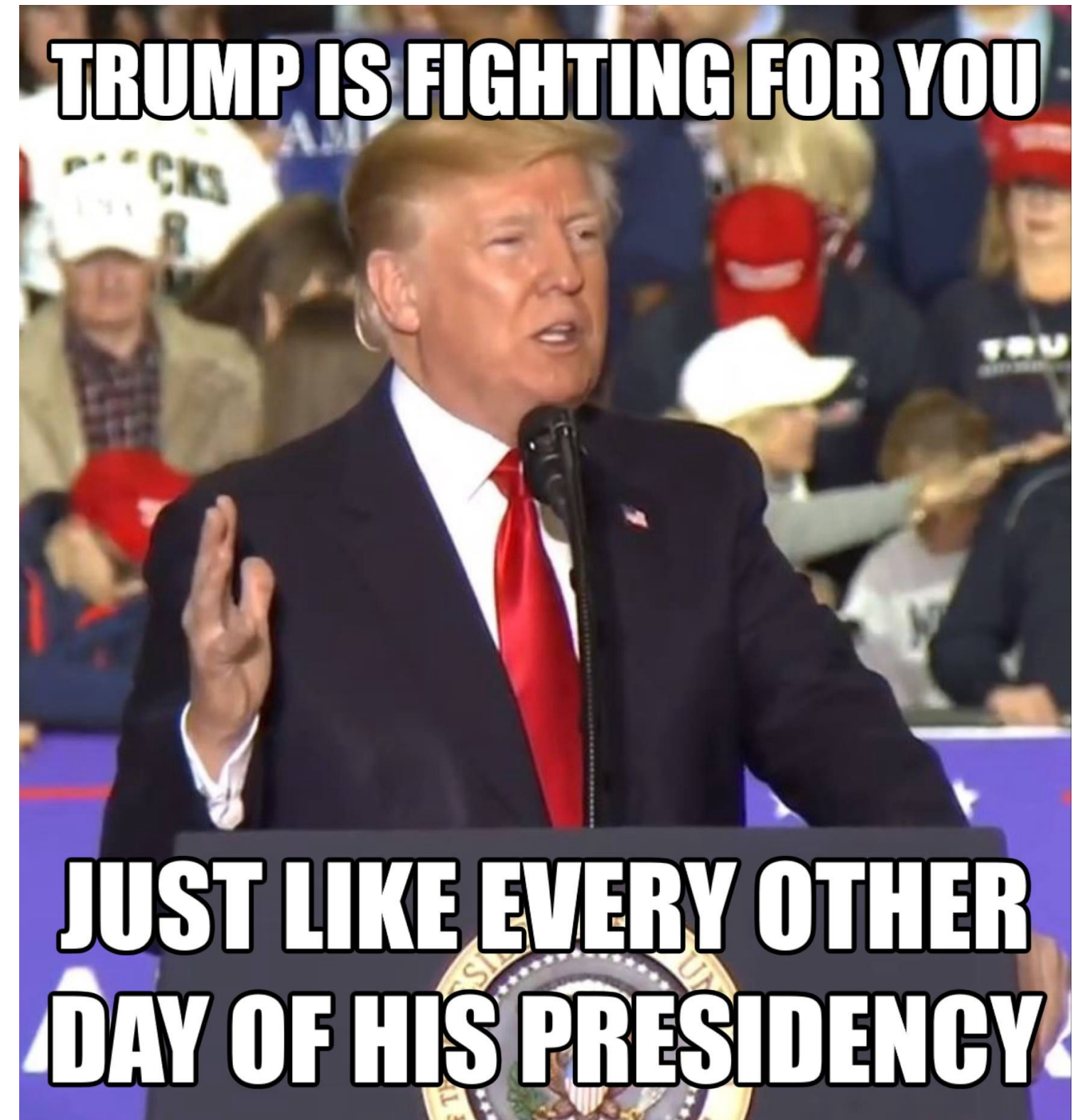
Justifying or promoting an idea by extolling the pride of a group or highlighting the benefits for that specific group.

The stereotypical example would be national pride, hence the name of the technique; however, the target group it applies to might be any group, e.g., related to race, gender, political preference, etc.

# Propagandistic Techniques

## Flag Waving

- "Entering this war will make us have a **better future** in our country."





# Propagandistic Techniques

## Appeal to Time

The argument is centred around the idea that time has come for a particular action.

“Should we vaccinate the entire population in the context of the current pandemic?

This is the right time to do it, and this is the right thing.”

# Propagandistic Techniques

**Let's critically think about the following:**

- "'Fascist' Anti-Vax Riot Sparks COVID Outbreak in Australia."
- "We should make America great again, and restrict the immigration laws."
- "If majority of the population does not get vaccinated within a month the pandemic will kill us! So, we need to start vaccinations right now."



# Propagandistic Techniques

Let's critically think about the following:



# AI for Propaganda Detection

## Fine-grained Propaganda analysis

Examine your news article for bias, propagandistic language, and possibly incorrect claims.

Show predictions with  
confidence 0.30



### Technique Types

- ✓ 5 Doubt
- ✓ 6 Exaggeration, Minimisation
- ✓ 8 Loaded Language

CNN —

Hamas' surprise attack on October 7 left Israel flat-footed,<sup>8</sup> sparking a backlash that is still rippling through the country.

The operation saw at least 1,500 Hamas fighters pour across the border into Israel, in an assault that killed at least 1,200 Israelis, while others are still held hostage by the militant group.

But a report from the New York Times claimed Israel obtained Hamas' plan for the attack more than a year in advance.

The report says Israeli officials dismissed the plan as aspirational, and deemed it too complex for the group to carry out. Other outlets, including Israeli newspaper Haaretz, have also reported the claim.



# Useful Verification Resources!

- <https://start.me/p/ZGAzN7/verification-toolset>
- <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>
- <https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=620677&p=4333407>
- <https://toolbox.google.com/factcheck/explorer/search>
- <https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/arabic/>
- <https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/>
- <https://www.poynter.org/media-news/fact-checking/>
- <https://library.csi.cuny.edu/c.php?g=619342&p=4310783>

# Acknowledgment



This project was made possible by NPRP grant 14C-0916-210015.



# Contact us!



<https://www.digitqr.net/critical-digital-literacy/>

**Firoj Alam:** [fialam@hbku.edu.qa](mailto:fialam@hbku.edu.qa)

**Maram Hasanain:** [mhasanain@hbku.edu.qa](mailto:mhasanain@hbku.edu.qa)

**Fatema Ahmed:** [fakter@hbku.edu.qa](mailto:fakter@hbku.edu.qa)