

#Boycott\_Indian\_Products  
# ٥ي دن هلا\_ تا جتن ملا\_ ة عطاقم

## Muslim Brotherhood Arrives in India



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# Introduction

We didn't realize we would be so Prophetic!

The previous Report by DisInfo Lab on 'Kashmir Inc: a Conflict Industry' had indicated that a tectonic shift taking place in Islamic world, where the Qatar-Turkey-Pakistan nexus (*pronounced as cutie-pie?*) with the blessings of Muslim Brotherhood, a religio-political & radical organization based in Qatar, is becoming the new hub for radical Islamists.

Guess they heard us.

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB), laced with fake news and multiple afflicted 'news media' launched a campaign against India - targeting India's economic interests. A trend on Twitter *#BoycottIndianProducts* was launched few days ago, and been going on since. While the nexus tried to give it a color that it was triggered by the unfortunate incident in Assam (which was deplorable, and the guilty should be brought to justice) – but be as it may, the trigger was mere excuse. This was not the first time the trend was attempted. It was started in 2018, and since then it's an annual ritual. The objective is to give it momentum gradually.

And since one incident won't justify it, they needed the whole gamut of fake news and propaganda. As expected, a great deal of these handles are being run from Pakistan and Turkey, while the push seems to have originated from MB influencers.

But there is a twist.

The target seemed India, but the actual target was Saudi. The campaign was essentially targeting Saudi and UAE, and particularly Prince MBS of Saudi for maintaining a good relation with India. However, the India relations are mere ruse. This was not one off campaign, and the QTP Nexus has been targeting Saudi and UAE, questioning their 'right' to be the leader of Islamic world. The idea is obvious - by discrediting MBS, the leader of Turkey Erdogan would be crowned as the rightful leader of Ummah. The Ertugrul Ghazi was prelude. The Ottoman Empire is in remaking! Well.. you get the picture.

The twist gets deeper.

India was not the only country targeted for this economic boycott. The campaign also targeted France, asking to boycott French products. This social media trend was not only in virtual realm. There is a solid economic logic behind it. By creating the subaltern culture of boycott through social media, they would also create a potent weapon. And once the QTP Nexus takes center stage in Islamic world, this would create an

exclusionary economy of gigantic proportions. The economic power the nexus build will not only affect Muslim world but would dictate terms all over the world - in the name of accommodating this huge market.

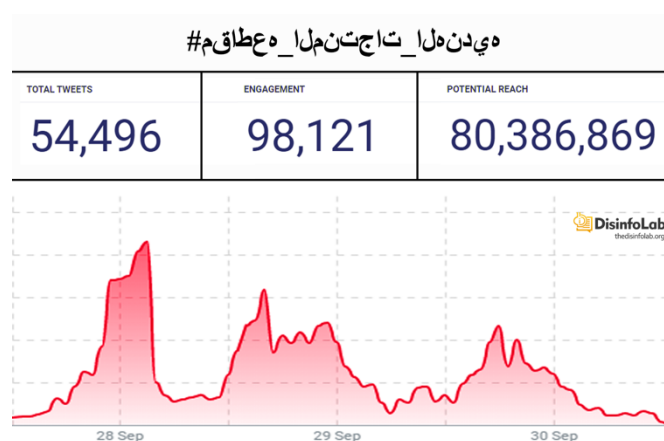
The petro-dollars of Qatar (gas-dollars to be precise), may not last forever to sustain the radical Islamists of Muslim Brotherhood. They would need new economic logic to sustain their radical Ideas. This could be one.

## **Part – I: the Trend**

## Chapter 1- #BoycottIndianProducts

Around Sept 26, a trend was observed on social media - الهندية\_المنتجات\_مقاطعة # (#BoycottIndianProducts). The trend was essentially in Arabic, except for few handles who also used the English language trend, which caught our attention.

It turned out, from the past few days, some social media users in the Arabic world (essentially Egypt & Iraq), along with Turkish and Pakistani users were engaged in running coordinated campaigns #الهندية\_المنتجات\_مقاطعة # (#BoycottIndianProducts) & المسلمين\_تقتل\_الهند (#IndialsKillingMuslims), calling to boycott Indian products as a means to teach India a lesson. The call for ban has been brought about, citing atrocities committed against Muslims in India.



The trend was interesting, as it reminded us of a similar campaign launched through Arab World trending #IslamophobicInIndia in 2019, in the aftermath of Tablighi Jamaat incident. The barrage of social media posts made it look like practically all of Middle Eastern nobility was upset, tweeting on the topic. However, as it turned out, most of these posts were fake. The Pakistani info-war machinery had impersonated scores of prominent Arabic royal families, including women, and creating fake handles in their name, was pushing this coordinated campaign. But the lies live longer in the age of social media. Despite getting exposed by several prominent fact-checkers, and despite the obvious role of Pakistani machinery, the 'perception' lived on. Islamophobia in India got stuck.

Hence, it would be only smart for the opponents to replicate the same campaign. However, upon digging it turned out an even bigger info-war against India, whose ripples would be felt increasingly in the course of time.

## Trigger or no Trigger?

While on the face of it, the #Boycott\_Indian\_Products felt like it was a reaction to the most unfortunate and condemnable incident in Assam (and we hope that the culprit be brought to justice soon), it became apparent that the trigger wouldn't have mattered. Given the overwhelming amount of fake news used in the campaign, it is obvious that the campaigners were waiting for an excuse. Any excuse. The one incident was pushed with an overdose of fake news - recycling all old and unrelated media.

It was not a spontaneous reaction. The same campaign is being run for the last four years - starting 2018. These campaigns (#BoycottIndianProducts) were launched earlier in Jan 2018; Feb 2019; and Sept 2020. However, so far it never got this much success. While the reasons are not clear, the Pak establishment /Jamaat nexus was not effective – and may be hence the MB stepped in?

### How it started?

The first account to have tweeted on the hashtag was “@Doaa18895455211” on September 23, 2021 (IST). The handle was created in July 2021, just two months ago. This was even before the Assam incident took place. As shown, this was an anonymous handle. **The tweet has also been deleted by the handle now**, however, it can still be accessed from the Web archive. <sup>[1]</sup>



The first verified handle to use the hashtag is Farouk Al-Dhafiri. Dhafiri is an Iraq-based researcher against the Iranian projects. He is also interested in therapeutic nutrition (from Twitter bio – Google translation). Dhafiri has been an outright critic of the UAE and Saudi Arabia <sup>[2]</sup>. Dhafiri first tweeted on the hashtags #الهندية\_المنتجات\_مقاطعة & #334الفرنسية\_المنتجات\_مقاطعة (#Boycott\_Indian\_Products), (#Province\_French\_Products) on September 26, 2021<sup>[3]</sup>. He even continued to tweet using the same hashtags after it became viral on Twitter.

<sup>1</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20210923063016/https://twitter.com/Doaa18895455211/status/1440793697629573121>

<sup>2</sup> <https://tekdeeps.com/claims-of-tolerance-with-religions-why-do-you-become-so-narrow-about-national-reformers/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/alduferi1969/status/1442025568816467974>



*Dhafiri's Tweet that further promoted the hashtag*

The thread was then picked up by some 'prominent' personalities, from 'researchers' to 'Scholars' to 'Media and Journalists' - all connected with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB).



## **Chapter 2- Here Comes the Muslim Brotherhood**

As it turned out, most of the prominent handles pushing this narrative were related to the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn). MB has been alleged to be linked to a number of terror acts including bombings and political assassinations in the past <sup>[4]</sup>. And its members have also been accused of supporting/abetting terror activities including 9/11. Several top functionaries of the organization are in the US Terror Watch List, and several of members remain on sanction list. MB is also believed to have inspired the formation of as many as 13 terrorist groups in Egypt <sup>[5]</sup> and has also been banned in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

However, what is not so much acknowledged and appreciated is that the MB in essence was conceived as an instrument to ‘infiltrate’ Western society and provide an intellectual framework to radical discourse. The objective has been to monopolize the discussion of Islamic world and Muslim affairs by drowning the other voices. It has done so by adopting the ‘appearances’ and ‘mannerisms’ of the western world, including Western costumes (though essentially men). This was one of the core philosophies of its founder Hassan Al Banna.

MB also has several off-shoots in the USA and constitutes organizations like ISNA, MSA, CAIR, ICNA to name a few. <sup>[6]</sup>

Nonetheless, people in the Indian sub-continent were not very familiar with the MB, as its focus so far has remained West. MB’s distance from South Asia could also be possibly out of turf respect to Jamaat-e-Islami, which carries the agenda of radical Islam in this part. While MB and its various fronts have been providing support to the Jamaat narratives, and several of the Jamaat fronts are well entangled with MB fronts in the US and elsewhere such as in Palestine <sup>[7]</sup>, Jordan <sup>[8]</sup>, and in Egypt (where it originated), so far MB did not take the matter of India in its hands.

This seems to be about to change.

The anti-India trend seems to be led by MB, though a significant number of Pakistani 5<sup>th</sup> Gen Warfare (5GW) soldiers, who are perpetually rearing to go against India, have also contributed to this trend. And it was not MB’s foot soldiers (key-board warriors), but some of who’s who of MB that has participated in the campaign. The fact that the campaign was constantly targeting Saudi Prince MBS and French President Emmanuel Macron shows that despite targeting India, the MB did not lose sight of its core objectives.

Some of the key MB ‘influencers’ who led this psy-war against Dar-ul-harb (India) are:

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Muslim-Brotherhood>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/81764/Muslim-Brotherhood-formed-13-terrorist-groups-in-Egypt-NGO>

<sup>6</sup> [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/truthmustbetold/pages/93/attachments/original/1443021805/The\\_Muslim\\_Brotherhood\\_in\\_North\\_America.pdf](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/truthmustbetold/pages/93/attachments/original/1443021805/The_Muslim_Brotherhood_in_North_America.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13629395.2021.1904368>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.oasiscenter.eu/en/the-jordanian-muslim-brotherhood-exceptional-or-common-after-all>

## I) Mohamed Al-Sagheer:

Mohamed Al Sagheer is the one who spearheaded the hashtag trend against India <sup>[9]</sup> (and Saudi, and the UAE, and France and also Iran in some measures). Sagheer seems to have mastered the art of Twitter campaigns, particularly the boycott types. He is the same person who led the campaign to Boycott French Products last year.



Sagheer is no small potato. He is amongst the Member of Board of Trustees of International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS).

**IUMS** (Arabic: الاتحاد العالمي لعلماء المسلمين; *al-Ittiḥād al-‘Ālamī li-‘Ulāmā’ al-Muslimīn*) is an organization of Muslim Islamic theologians headed by Yusuf al-Qardawi, was founded in 2004, and headquartered in Qatar. IUMS is described as the "*supreme authority of the Muslim Brotherhood*."

Due to Qardawi's support for suicide attacks and execution of homosexuals, the IUMS was listed as a terrorist organization by various Arab countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in 2017<sup>[10]</sup>. He was also named as "*the theologian of terror*" by the Irish media, is also banned from entering several countries, including the US <sup>[11]</sup>, UK <sup>[12]</sup> and France <sup>[13]</sup>, despite holding a Qatari diplomatic passport.

Sagheer was also Advisor to the Minister of Endowments and Deputy of the Religious Committee of the former Egyptian Parliament. Sagheer also appeared on the Al Jazeera for interviews in the past to call for the boycott of French products. <sup>[14]</sup> He was also alleged to be a member of Al-Jama'a Al-Islamia, a terrorist organization in Egypt, responsible for Luxor Massacre in 1997. <sup>[15]</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://twitter.com/drassagheer/status/1442426577183203329>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1367261/saudi-arabia>

<sup>11</sup> <https://mesbar.org/yusuf-al-qaradawi-false-moderate-and-true-radical/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/20120328-sarkozy-bars-global-mufti-entering-france-sheikh-yusuf-qaradawi-toulouse-shooting>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/20120328-sarkozy-bars-global-mufti-entering-france-sheikh-yusuf-qaradawi-toulouse-shooting>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.memri.org/tv/former-egyptian-mp-saghir-france-boycott-least-muslims-can-do-fighting-war-against-islam?fbclid=IwAR2wP3OLNhyX-blI8ItuiDjSp4vbmzcU-tmwclO1swSNPo3jifrkHUqlaaY>

<sup>15</sup> <https://qatarileaks.com/en/leak/mohamed-al-sagheer-another-terrorist-living-in-doha>

## II) Sami Kamal El Din:

Another prominent MB influencer behind the #Boycott\_Indian\_Products is Sami Kamal El Din, an Egyptian Journalist and Media presenter who currently lives in Istanbul, Turkey. Sami's past is stained, as he has been listed as a terrorist twice by the Egyptian regime <sup>[16]</sup>, second time under the leadership of Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the sixth and current President of Egypt.



*Sami Kamal El Din's tweet on the hashtag <sup>[17]</sup>*

El-Din's propaganda efforts have rather glamorous history. He was accused of faking Egyptian intelligence official, called several Egyptian celebrities, asking them to downplay the announcement of shifting of US Mission in Israel to Jerusalem. <sup>[18]</sup> Then the video got 'leaked' to NYT, which did a story <sup>[19]</sup>. By one stroke, El-Din targeted Egypt, Israel, and the US – while getting prime coverage of the news in several media.

His propaganda got him in a soup more than once. He was also forced to delete his YouTube Channel for spreading fake news, despite having 'millions of views', after a complaint was filed by the former Egyptian Parliamentarian Ayman Nour. <sup>[20]</sup>

## III) Ahmad Muaffaq Zaidan:

Ahmad Muaffaq Zaidan is a Syrian writer and journalist currently residing in Doha, Qatar. He has mainly done reporting on Taliban and Al Qaeda throughout his career. Other than #Boycott\_Indian\_Products, he was also enthusiastic about #Boycott\_Iranian\_Products #Putin\_killer #India\_kills\_Muslims and so forth as he tweeted on these hashtags on September 29, 2021. <sup>[21]</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <https://primetimezone.com/world/gulf-news/egyptian-journalist-sami-kamal-el-din-after-sisi-put-his-name-on-the-terrorism-list-i-love-you-my-country-a-nation-is-tweeting-out-of-tune/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://twitter.com/samykamaleldeen/status/1442560850699685889>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/39735/Identity-of-officer-behind-fabricated-NYT-leaked-calls-revealed>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/06/world/middleeast/egypt-jerusalem-talk-shows.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.eg24.news/2020/06/they-fell-into-some-ayman-nour-closes-the-brotherhood-sami-kamal-el-din-channel-on-youtube.html>

<sup>21</sup> <https://twitter.com/Ahmadmuaffaq/status/1443060525886328833>



In 2015, the National Security Agency (NSA) of the United States put Ahmad Muaffaq Zaidan on its watch-list of for his suspected links with Al-Qaeda and Muslim Brotherhood. [22]

Zaidan has been a long-time Bureau Chief of Al Jazeera's Islamabad office [23], during which he could get access to the top Taliban, Al Qaeda groups and even Osama Bin Laden [24]. His affiliation with Al Jazeera may not be incidental, as will see in the next chapter.

#### IV) Yasser Abu Hilalah

Another Al Jazeera luminary Yasser Abu Hilalah is a former Managing Director of Al Jazeera Arabic News (between 2014-18). He is a reporter, journalist and a writer and writes for various media houses such as Al-Rai newspaper, and Al Araby news.

Hilalah was one of the key amplifiers of the hashtag campaign and retweeted the tweets of the media outlets which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.



Abu Hilalah is known to have ties with the officials of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and even shared platforms with them. On June 27, 2021, he attended an online event hosted by Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) fugitive from Egypt, Ahmed Al-Baqari.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/us-puts-al-jazeera-journalist-terrorism-watch-list-10238597.html>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/5/15/al-jazeeras-a-zaidan-i-am-a-journalist-not-terrorist>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.engadget.com/2015-05-08-skytel-nsa-journalist-terrorist.html>

The session was also attended by Khaled al-Mishri, former head of the Advisor State council of MB keeping in sight the Libyan general elections in 2021. <sup>[25]</sup>

## V) Omar Abdulaziz

Omar Abdulaziz is a Saudi Arabian dissident, video blogger and activist living in Montreal, Canada. He is quite active on social media and is a sympathizer of several terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq, especially Daesh <sup>[26]</sup>. Omar has also expressed support for the militant wing Hamas, another front of Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Gaza and Palestine.

Besides, he is a supporter of Islamic extremism and posting extremist videos on his Twitter and YouTube accounts. He is a critic of Saudi Arabia and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS) and was granted political asylum by Canada in 2014. <sup>[27]</sup>



<sup>25</sup> <https://almsard.co/en/2021/06/27/khaled-al-mishri-is-guest-at-a-clubhouse-meeting-by-a-qatari-and-a-wanted-islamist-egyptian/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1746401/saudi-arabia>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.preachersofhate.com/omar-abdulaziz-al-zahrani/>

## **Chapter 3 – the Sisterhood**

### **Role of Muslim Brotherhood affiliated News Media**

That many news media platforms have remained essentially propaganda/ info-war instrument since eternity is no news. In the manner a news could be reported would determine how it would be received. At the same time, lots of neutral platforms get accused by one faction or other for being 'biased', if the content doesn't cater to the particular groups' taste. It is therefore extremely difficult to pinpoint/expose the propaganda carried out through news media, let alone to document their biases.

Therefore, for precisely these reasons a set of guiding principles evolved within media fraternity, which might still be inadequate in addressing the slant and distortions; nonetheless creates some detriment to the outright propaganda. The principles include adhering to the value-neutral language and other editorial policies, and most of all a factually correct content.

The adherence to fact is not limited to 'not publishing lies', but to provide all truth and nothing but the truth. This is where the role of several news media, prominently Arabic, came into question. The line between 'reporting' about the 'boycott' and actively 'promoting' it, got blurred, to put it mildly.

While 'reporting' about the #Boycott\_Indian\_Products, most of the news platforms in question presented it as some kind of popular 'Arab anguish' against India, leaving out the key facts:

- that it was an orchestrated and organized social media campaign;
- that the major contributors were a set of people from Egypt, Turkey and Qatar;
- that the key influencers were affiliated with Muslim Brotherhood, many with terror accusations;
- and that most of the videos/posters used under the #Boycott\_Indian\_Products were fake news, already debunked by several prominent fact-checkers in India, REPEATEDLY.

None of the major news media reported these facts, while reinforcing the narrative of 'atrocities' which was peddled through fake news. That most of these media platforms of affiliated to Muslim Brotherhood is not a coincidence. Another common thread to all these news sites – they are all staunch anti-Saudi. In fact, they are part of the list of media platforms that Saudi Arabia wanted Qatar to stop sponsoring, in lieu of normalizing relations (detailed in Part-II).

The list included some of the major names:



## I) Al Jazeera

From being a ‘fresh alternate voice’ to the Western ‘global media’ - to falling outright into the categories of propaganda outlets – AJ’s journey has been rather swift. Not only that most basic reporting standards were missing, one of the sister news media of AJ went on to recycle the story through their Twitter every six hour. All the major portals of Al Jazeera promoted the campaign by tweeting from its various handles i.e., Al Jazeera Global, Arabic, Kuwait, Turkey, Egypt etc. [28]



*News covered & promoted by the various news portals of Al Jazeera*

AJ’s perspective towards India has been less than transparent, to say the least. It has had a history of sharing fake news [29], particularly targeting India. The anti-India slant of AJ was also visible, where it did not show the J&K as part of India, which is followed by all media houses publishing in India. This is not unique to India, as most countries desire that any publication in their territory should depict their official claims. For global audience, most of the neutral platforms adopt the UN maps. But AJ’s sympathies were clear. What is even more shocking was that AJ did not show Lakshadweep and Andaman Islands as part of India, the territories that are not even in dispute. [30] The U.S ordered Al Jazeera Affiliate to Register as Foreign Agent. The Justice Department says AJ+, a media outlet backed by the royal family of Qatar, engages in “political activities. As noted above, several of its journalist have been found to be members of MB, with some having been on terror watch-lists. [31]

<sup>28</sup> <https://1m6426.azureedge.net/news/2021/9/27/%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AE%D8%B7%D9%89-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7-%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%80%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AA?sf151744733=1>

<sup>29</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/times-fact-check/news/fake-alert-photo-of-refugees-moving-from-amritsar-to-lahore-used-to-claim-rss-killed-muslims-in-jammu/articleshow/66770997.cms>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/al-jazeera-channel-banned-in-india-for-5-days/65931/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/us-puts-al-jazeera-journalist-terrorism-watch-list-10238597.html>

## II) TRT World

TRT World is a state-owned Turkish public broadcaster news channel. It is managed by the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation from Istanbul. TRT World is one of the several media houses to have covered the news and even promoted the campaign of #BoycottIndianProducts.<sup>[32]</sup>

However, TRT-World went one step ahead, and removed any doubt whatsoever about its intentions. It launched a promotion of the news article through TRT Arabia, which ran a Facebook Ad (now deleted). The target location of Ad could not be determined as it is currently active. While it is not common for any major media house to run paid advertisements of particular news article, some media houses still do. But TRT's history of paid promotions tell their own story.



TRT Arabia's running #Boycott\_Indian\_Products ad on FB

As is the case with such endeavors, fake news is almost always part of the package. TRT World has also shared several fake news via its portal targeting India<sup>[33]</sup>. Incidentally, TRT's fake news are not only limited in targeting India, but to other countries who may not be in the good books of Turkish government, which owns the media.

## III) Rassd News

Rassd News Network (RNN) is an 'alternative media' network based in Cairo, Egypt. It was launched on January 25, 2011. The outlet is alleged to be affiliated with Muslim Brotherhood and is founded by Amr Farrang, a prominent member of MB's youth cadre.<sup>[34]</sup> RNN was so keen to peddle the 'atrocities on Muslims in India', that it

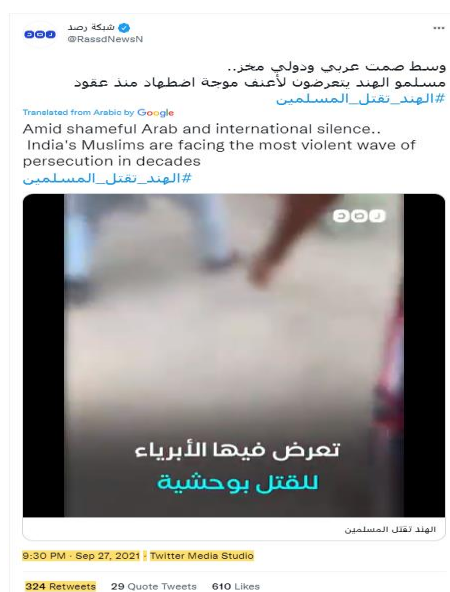
<sup>32</sup> <https://twitter.com/TRTArabi/status/1442820158632890368>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/nepal-coronavirus-second-wave/a-57461127>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.ipost.com/middle-east/muslim-brotherhood-becoming-more-violent-and-radical-expert-tells-post-403774>



liberally used fake videos and posters to push the agenda. On September 27, 2021, RNN's Twitter handle (@RassdNewsN) posted a video using the hashtag #المسلمين\_تقتل\_الهند (#India\_Kills\_Muslims). The video contained fake clips but got 353 RTs and 610 likes on Twitter. [35]



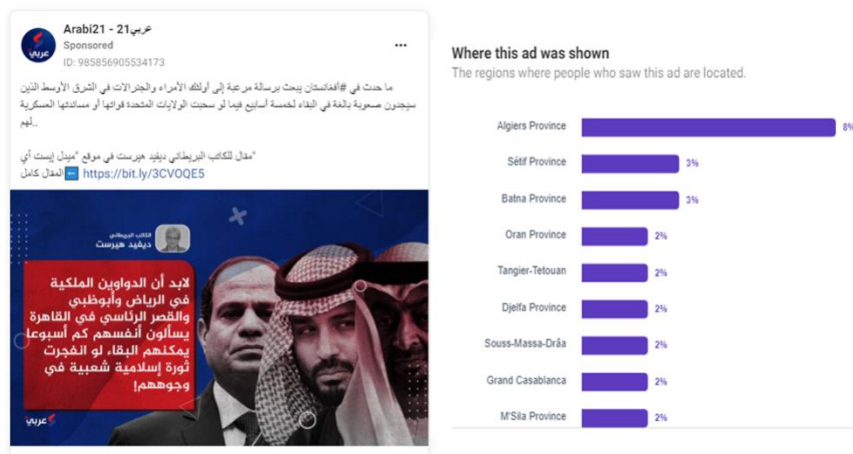
*Video of fake clips shared by Rassd News*

## IV) Arabi21 News

Arabi21 is an Egypt based news website that is known to circulate anti-Saudi news and sponsored by Qatar. It was one of the first media outlets to have covered the news of the hashtag campaign targeting India and Saudi Arabia. [36] Arabi 21 has run Facebook Ads against the interest of Saudi Arabia, and Abu Dhabi by targeting the demography of Algeria and nearby regions. For instance, the following news, that questioned Riyadh and Abu Dhabi over their striving in case a Taliban-like revolution breaks out in the country.

<sup>35</sup> <https://twitter.com/RassdNewsN/status/1442519400842768384>

<sup>36</sup> <https://arabi21.com/story/1387429/%D8%BA%D8%B6%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%>



Facebook Ad campaign ran by Arabi21 targeting the audience of Algeria and nearby regions

## V) Al-Araby TV News or The New Arab

Al Araby is a UK based News outlet launched in 2015. It is also funded and run by a Qatari company, Fadaat Media. It was in the list of the news outlets Saudi had demanded to be shut. The current Director of the outlet is Abbas Nasser, a Lebanese nationalist, who has previously worked for Al Jazeera between 2012-17. [37]

Al Araby was among the other media outlets that covered a story on September 28, 2021 of boycotting the Indian products. [38]

Al Araby has promoted anti-UAE news in the past and is sponsored by Qatar government. [39] It has also run Facebook Ads in the past hitting the interests of Saudi Arabia and the UAE.



Al-Araby also running FB ads geo-targeting Algeria & nearby regions

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/in/abbas-nasser-261a75172/?originalSubdomain=uk>

<sup>38</sup> <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/boycottindianproducts-trends-arab-countries>

<sup>39</sup> <https://english.alarabiya.net/media/television-and-radio/2020/10/22/Israel-Palestine-Twitter-allows-paid-promotion-of-hate-video-posted-by-Qatari-funded-Al-Araby-TV>

## **VI) Watan Serb - US based Arabic magazine**

A US-based Arab-American newspaper, **Watan Serb** is also accused by the UAE authorities for carrying targeted propaganda and being part of Muslim Brotherhood.

<sup>[40]</sup> It also covered a story on the hashtag #الهندية\_المنتجات\_مقاطعة

(#Boycott\_Indian\_Products) on September 27, 2021<sup>[41]</sup>. Watan Serb also has another website by *watan.com*. Watan news also tweeted the article on the same day that gained a traction of 298 likes and 131 retweets. <sup>[42]</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2013/08/uae-targets-us-based-arab-american-newspaper/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.watanserb.com/2021/09/27/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%B7%D9%87%D8%A7/>

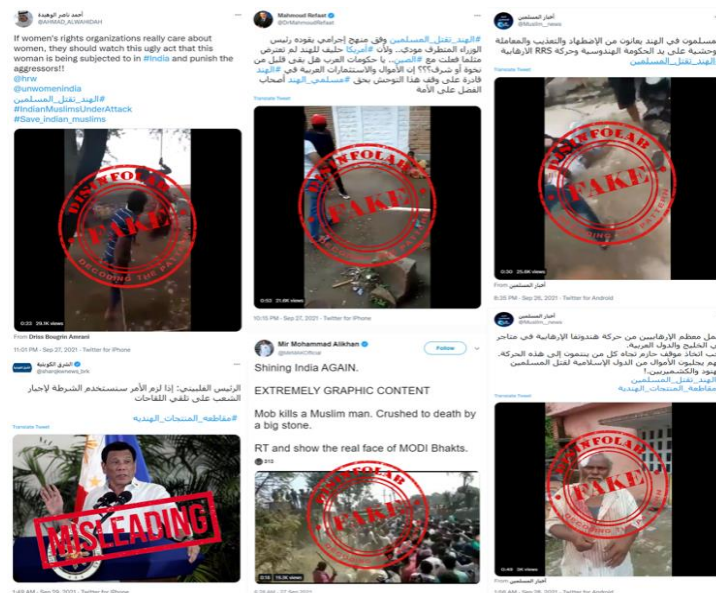
<sup>42</sup> [https://twitter.com/watan\\_usa/status/1442511292070121474](https://twitter.com/watan_usa/status/1442511292070121474)

## Chapter 4- Fake News as Fodder for Propaganda:

If there is one litmus test for a sponsored propaganda/ info-war, it is fake news. No info-war could be launched without fake news. And hence, it was only certain that fake content (videos/ posters) would be deployed in this agenda driven narrative. The **#Boycott\_Indian\_Products** was replete with fake videos and posters. Any random video of violence from India was picked and dubbed as **‘Hindu’s atrocities on Muslims’**. The idea is to flood the media space with so much content that it would look ubiquitous. This will create an impression of large-scale violence.

We also observe that no amount of fact-check is able to counter this agenda, as several videos and pics which have already been debunked, get recycled again and again. The idea is to keep repeating the lies. After repeating the same exercise, this in itself will become established narrative. The previous such campaign **#IslamophobicInIndia**’s success has shown good returns, that despite being exposed repeatedly and by several platforms, the narrative tend to stick.

Most of the narrative builders used fake videos and pics liberally. The tragic incident of Assam was the only fact in the ocean of fakery to push this narrative. Interestingly, despite getting exposed again after the report by several prominent fact-checkers in India, none of these influencers and their minions have deleted the post or clarified. In fact, the narrative is going even stronger. Given below is but a small set of fake news, that is being circulated:



1. **Claim:** The first picture is shared by a Kuwait based handle with approximately 57k followers who tries to draw attention of the world that Muslim women in India are being oppressed and aggressors must be punished. Also, he uses

misleading and irrelevant hashtags: **#IndianMuslimsUnderAttack, #Save\_Indian\_Muslims #India\_Kills\_Muslims** <sup>[43]</sup>

**Reality:** The video is from July 2021 where a tribal woman was beaten by her father and cousins and was later covered by the Times Now on July 3, 2021. <sup>[44]</sup>

2. **Claim:** In the second picture, another big handle Mahmoud Refaat, President of policy institute: The European Institute for International Law & International Relations. He tweeted a video alleging that the Indian PM Narendra Modi-led the atrocities against Muslims and called upon the Arabs to boycott Indian products. <sup>[45]</sup>

**Reality:** The video is originally from Jodhpur, India, that of a scuffle between two families which was later given a false communal spin during the campaign. The news was later debunked as fake. <sup>[46]</sup>

3. **Claim:** In the third picture a twitter handle (*@Muslim\_\_news*) peddles an old video of July 6, 2020 of a feud within the same community in the same village. The feud turned into a violent beating of one of the parties, was revived by giving it a communal spin and blaming Hindus for killing Muslims in India. <sup>[47]</sup>

**Reality:** Following this incident, on July 8<sup>th</sup> 2020, Siddharthnagar police's Twitter handle released a statement affirming that there was no communal tiff, and that quarrel was among same community of same village.

4. **Misinformation:** In the fourth picture, a Kuwaiti electronic advertisement handle used #BoycottIndianProducts hashtag in many of its tweet with irrelevant content just to push the trend.

5. **Claim:** Fifth screenshot is by a Lahore-based verified handle who shared a fake video claiming that Hindu mob killed a Muslim man. <sup>[48]</sup>

**Reality:** The video has already been debunked as fake by various media. The post seems just to malign image of India in ongoing twitter trend and to instigate Muslims. <sup>[49]</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> [https://twitter.com/AHMAD\\_ALWAHIDAH/status/1442542452531875849](https://twitter.com/AHMAD_ALWAHIDAH/status/1442542452531875849)

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/mp-left-in-laws-house-woman-19-dragged-by-hair-tied-to-tree-beaten-up-by-father-cousins/779838>

<sup>45</sup> <https://twitter.com/DrMahmoudRefaat/status/1442530860608204803>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.altnews.in/jodhpur-deadly-attack-on-a-family-video-viral-with-anti-muslim-angle-targeting-congress-gehlots-govt/>

<sup>47</sup> [https://twitter.com/Muslim\\_news/status/1442143193793916935](https://twitter.com/Muslim_news/status/1442143193793916935)

<sup>48</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20210927132839/https://twitter.com/MirMAKOfficial/status/1442481284291387395>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.boomlive.in/fake-news/pakistani-twitter-handles-peddle-madhya-pradesh-lynching-video-as-delhi-7064>

- 6. Claim:** The last screenshot is again posted by *@Muslim\_\_news*, where it posted another video and pushed its own narrative just to instigate Muslims against the Indian establishment. <sup>[50]</sup>

## When you run out of fake news.



<sup>50</sup> [https://twitter.com/Muslim\\_news/status/1442586412310687746](https://twitter.com/Muslim_news/status/1442586412310687746)



## **Chapter 5 - Pakistan Honing 5<sup>th</sup> Gen Warfare Skills**

If it is anti-India campaign, it is not possible to be without the loving neighbors. Pakistan has taken the info-war to an altogether new levels, with almost same religious zeal that its former dictator Gen Zia-ul Haq resorted in conceiving terrorism as a state policy. The present dispensation has resorted to narrative setting with such fervor that it is impossible not to appreciate.

And they have learned that all it matters is keep making noise.

Almost periodically, one after another quixotic claim is tossed to media – accusing India of some atrocity or other depending upon the weather and Generals' mood. And then the plaint and sympathetic media runs the mills. As such being the state functionaries, their claims, however outlandish they are, do find mention in most media. And given the present state of media, not only in Pakistan but almost everywhere, no one asks even basic questions.

The same was witnessed during a recent 'dossier' against India on Kashmir presented by Pak FM Qureshi. (It did come after DisInfo Lab's dossier on Kashmir Inc, didn't it? ;). The dossier by the Pakistani state was however debunked almost immediately for fake news and misinformation. <sup>[52]</sup> But then, the other 5<sup>th</sup> Gen Warfare leader S&T Minister Fawad Chaudhari seems to have felt insecure, and came up with his own 'report', claiming that a media article and some anonymous threat mails got the New Zealand cricket tour cancelled! <sup>[53]</sup> The claim was so outlandish that it filled Indian Twitter space with memes about a rap-star that we didn't think we needed. What was more astonishing was that even this in-your-face-absurd claim was repeated by almost all Pak media without even asking very basic questions. The spoof was so comic that it was beneath any worthwhile fact-checker to comment about it.

Expect this circus to not only continue but intensify.

The present hashtag in question (#Boycott\_Indian\_Products) therefore was too tempting to not push for. As expected, Pakistan handles soon joined the wagon and several 'big handles' started tweeting on the hashtag #الهندية\_المنتجات\_مقاطعة (#BoycottIndianProducts), while adding some from their part as well, including #المسلمين\_تقتل\_الهند (#India\_Kills\_Muslims).

One prominent Pakistani handle to have tweeted on the hashtag is Huzaifah Farid, a Journalist and Strategic Analyst at [Pakistani Strategic Arabic Division](#) (the account was created in September 2021). He first tweeted on September 26, 2021 using the

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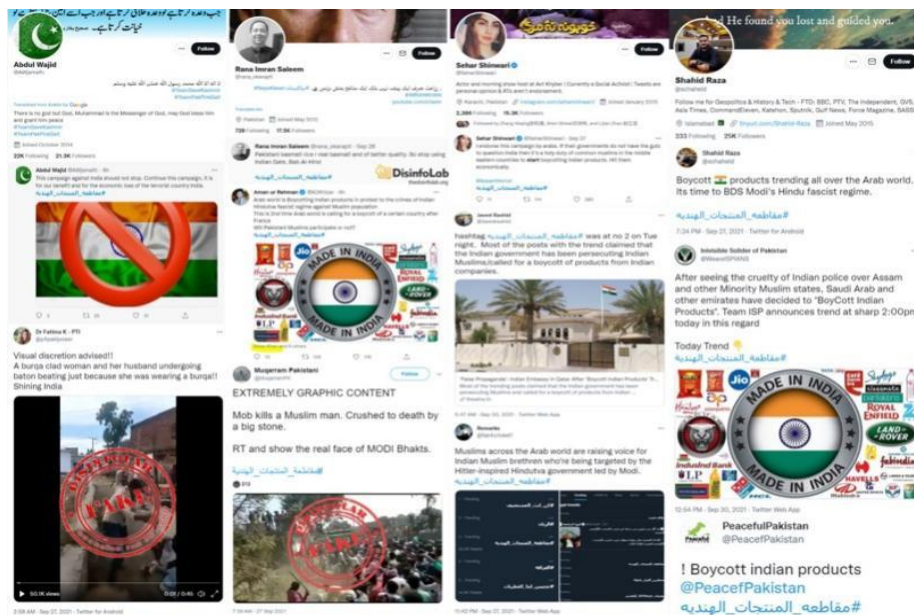
<sup>52</sup> <https://www.firstpost.com/india/why-islamabad-claims-india-is-training-islamic-state-terrorists-in-the-middle-of-a-muddy-little-lake-in-jodhpur-9965141.html>

<sup>53</sup> [https://www.business-standard.com/article/sports/new-zealand-cricket-team-cancels-pakistan-tour-amid-security-concerns-121091700714\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/sports/new-zealand-cricket-team-cancels-pakistan-tour-amid-security-concerns-121091700714_1.html)

hashtag **#India\_Kills\_Muslims** (المسلمين\_تقتل\_الهند).<sup>[54]</sup> He set on to pronounce India as an Islamophobic & terrorist country in a series of tweets subsequently.



Knowing the love of fake news for the Pak troll machinery, it was no brainer to find pro-PTI handles to push fake narratives. One prominent PTI shill, NHS consultant Dr. Fatima K shared a video<sup>[55]</sup> of ‘violations against Muslims in India’, a fake video already debunked. Likewise, some eminent Pak journalists including Aman Ur Rehman and Shahid Raza participated in the campaign to Boycott Indian Products, just in case.



<sup>54</sup> [https://twitter.com/PM\\_Huzaifah/status/144202033188304900](https://twitter.com/PM_Huzaifah/status/144202033188304900)

<sup>55</sup> <https://twitter.com/p4pakipower/status/1442239704729071617>



## The 5<sup>th</sup> Gen Warriors Move into Action

Pakistani IT cell Cabals @EmergingTeam and @WeareSPIANS were quick to jump into driving the campaign in their country. They ran a coordinated and a bot-like campaign #مقاطعهالمنتجاتالهنديه (# boycott Indian products), with the handles tweeting the same tweet and tagging them.

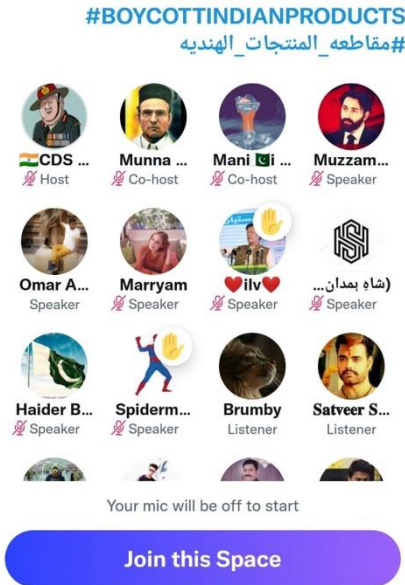


However, the Pakistani handles seem to have even more interesting motivation. They smell an opportunity, where there is one. Hitting Indian products could also mean creating market for Pakistani products. While Pakistan may not have much to sell, the Pakistani basmati enters the field. (Detailed in Part – II)

## Twitter Space- #BoycottIndianProducts

To take the campaign to max audience, a Twitter space was hosted calling for promoting the campaign in the forthcoming days. The space interestingly was also joined by the Muzzammil Thakur, son of Dr. Muhammad Ayyub Thakur who funded terrorism and separatists in India from London. (Refer to our previous report *Kashmir: a Conflict Industry*)<sup>[56]</sup>. The other notable name was popular Twitter user Brumby, who is reportedly based out of Australia.

<sup>56</sup> <https://thedisinfo.org/kashmir-inc-a-conflict-industry/>



Twitter Space hosted by Pro-Pak handles <sup>[57]</sup>

Two interesting take-outs from this club house discussion were: that they are going to intensify the campaign and there could be a major announcement in about two months. The major announcement could be connected with an even being organized in Turkey in two months. (Part II)

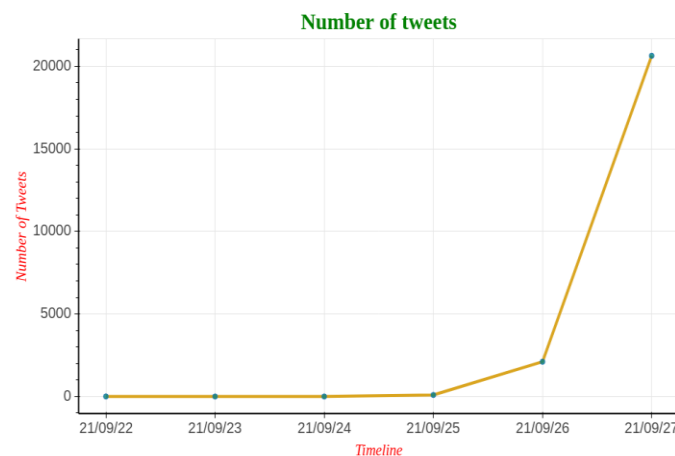
<sup>57</sup> <https://twitter.com/i/spaces/1yoKMWRBwZkJQ>

## Chapter 6 - Twitter analysis

In order to gain further insight, we dig a bit deeper into this game of twitter hashtag trending, which was essentially the 'news' that most of the media reported about. We have noted it several times that the Twitter hashtag trend is single biggest instrument for information warfare at present, and Twitter doesn't seem to have any measure or even care.

To analyze the trend and its origin and nature, we pulled the data between 20-27 September. We found that the first tweet occurred on September 23, 2021.

### Hashtag Analysis from Twitter data

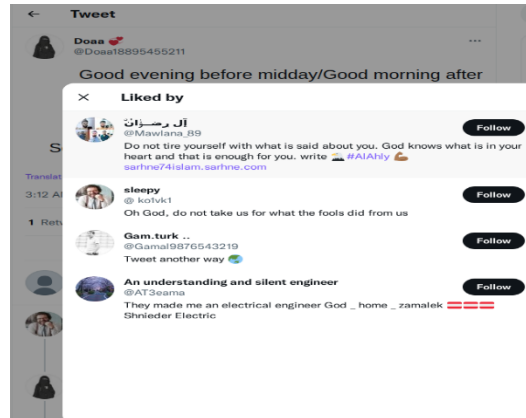


Timeline of Tweets

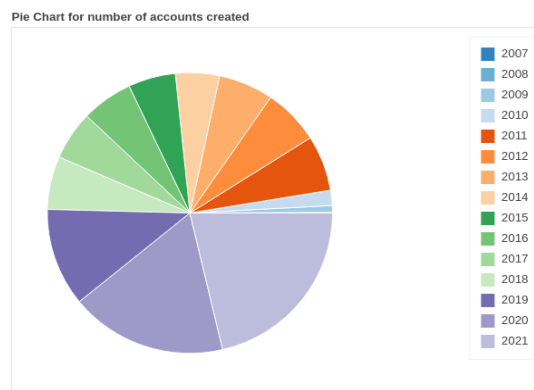
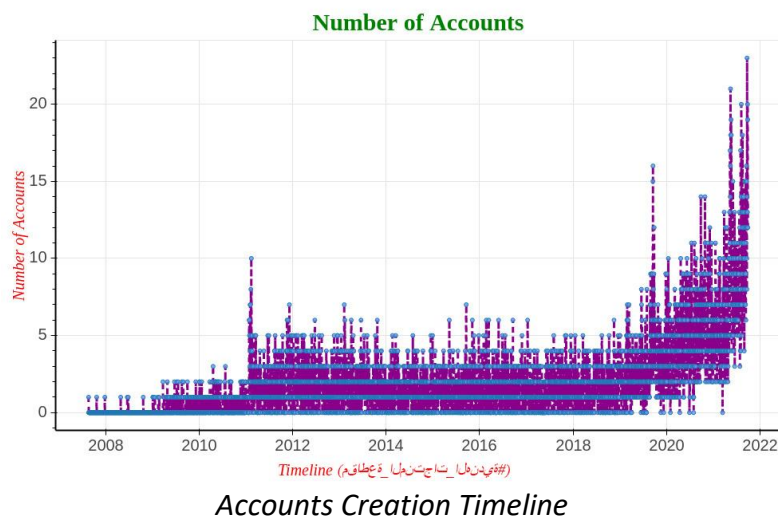
- Total number of tweets - 22835
- Number of unique tweets - 4840
- Number of Retweets - 17995

As per data, the first tweet was by an anonymous handle '@Doaa18895455211'.



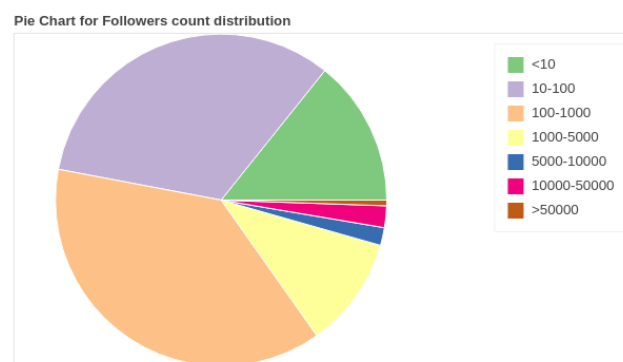


Doaa's posts were then amplified by @Mawlana\_89, @Gamal9876543219, @AT3eama - location Egypt, @ko1vk1 (created in Sept 2021, 1552 followers). After that a number of Twitter handles, many of which were created immediately before the hashtag started to push.



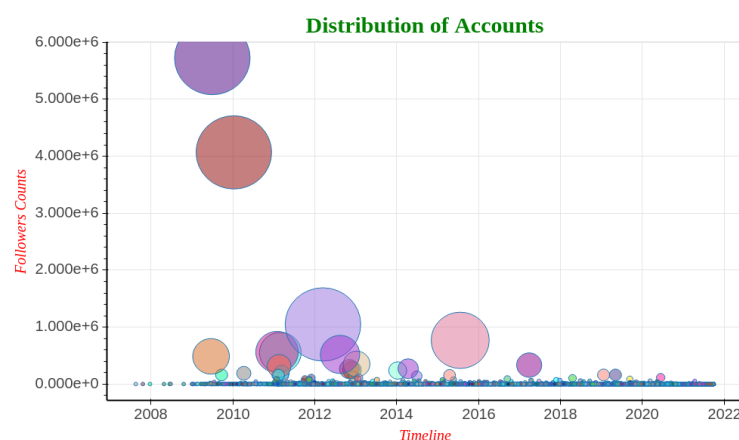
A total of 9758 unique accounts tweeted on the #Boycott\_Indian\_Products, out of which 2079 were created in 2021, and 1738 created in 2020. Even for the year 2021 breakdown, the subset was: **Jan:164, Feb:145, March:163, April:173, May:298, June:238, July:229, Aug:343, Sep:326**). A good 121 accounts were created just between 21 sep-27sep.

Not surprisingly, about 4571 accounts have less than 100 followers, out of which 1538 accounts were created in 2021 and the rest 1002 were created in 2020. About 1305 accounts have less than 10 followers, with a whopping 691 created in 2021, while another 300 in 2020. There were at least 246 accounts with zero followers, majority of which were recently created. (178 created in 2021, 35 in 2020).



*Distribution of Accounts by Followers Count*

We can see from the above distribution that the number of recent nondescript accounts is more than 80%! Also, we observed the number of retweets was very high, which agrees with the observation that a large number of small accounts were used in just retweeting the hashtag to make it go viral. The major accounts involved in this hashtag are shown below:



## Key Influencers Pushing the Narrative:

Given below is the list of some of the prominent handles, pushing the story (see the graph above for impact). Most of the names turn out to be the same detailed above, mostly related to Muslim Brotherhood. In essence, a Muslim Brotherhood targeted campaign against India was projected by several Muslim Brotherhood affiliated media as a popular Arabs anger against India for alleged atrocities against Muslims.

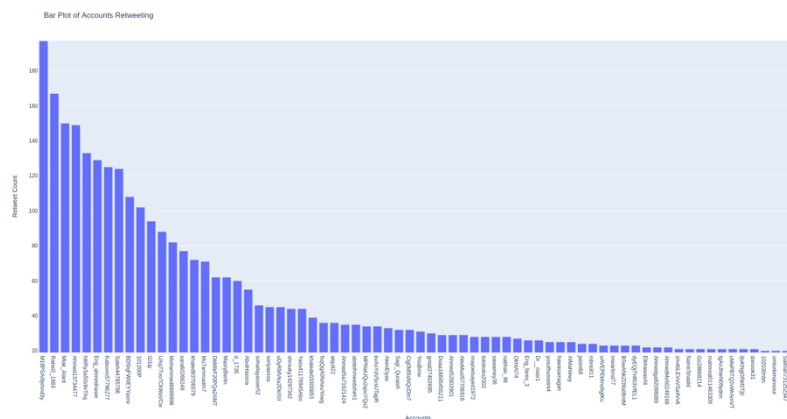
#	Profile Name	Handle	Verified	No. of Followers	Profile Location
1	الحرية ماضية	alhrudashier	Yes	5723544	Qatar
2	شبكة راسد	RassdNewsN	Yes	4067956	Cairo, Egypt
3	د. محمد العاصي	drassagheer	Yes	1047116	Egypt
4	تركيا شالھوب	TurkiShalhoub	Yes	765131	المملكة العربية السعودية
5	ياسر أبوغالة	abughalah	Yes	562736	NaN
6	لغوم بعلبون	mkhulagi	Yes	551883	LOS 327, England
7	سلطان العسري	D05D0d0m0m0b	No	520301	NaN
8	أسعد طه	AssaadTaha	Yes	486105	Sangevo
9	أبو عرب	Polcy45	No	352193	NaN
10	الحرية مصر	Ain_Egypt	Yes	333197	Egypt
11	عبدالرزاق العاصي	Drassagheer	No	312097	NaN
12	مبارك البراري	Mibary	No	275432	NaN
13	Dr. Maryam Qasim	DrMaryamQasim	Yes	263441	Somalia
14	رانيا عبد الحليم	RTW_1	No	245862	NaN
15	الصحیح	ma_sh364	No	238279	NaN
16	أ. د. محمد المنصوري	almanassari	Yes	202205	London, UK
17	محمد الهاشمي	mathamry	No	188053	المغرب
18	جمال سلطان بن	alshams	No	162425	Kuwait
19	مكشكش	mkshksh	No	160388	Turkey
20	وطن بصره خارج العرب	watan_usa	No	160181	USA
21	صبيحة الاستقلال	abestkhal	No	160138	NaN
22	أ. د. عبدالمجيد بن المطهر	qtham	No	157133	الكويت
23	عبدالله العتيبي	Dr_A_Alwami	Yes	155965	Mosbain, France
24	براقق فاضل	albraqqtag	No	149570	NaN
25	التيه طلال	Salim	No	139517	Oman
26	أ. د. خالد بن الناصر	Khalid_877	No	138549	.. في كل مكان
27	محمد دويكات	M_Duwaykat	No	113676	NaN
28	ياسين	seyasse	No	109034	London, England
29	محمد الدعاغ	mahamadag	No	106839	Official account of the
30	ميرد الألفاظ المسلمة	turkistantubah	No	102314	NaN
31	طارق الطغري / العراق الحرة	altdur1989	Yes	97871	العراق
32	عاصم منصور	asim_mansour	Yes	97769	المغرب
33	د. عبد الله العاصي	Abdullah_888888	Yes	97764	NaN
34	Yasmyyass	Yasmyyass	Yes	25786	Worldwide
35	محمد علي الناصر	bn_nassar	Yes	22564	Kuwait
36	Sehar Shinwari	SeharShinwari	Yes	15322	Karachi, Pakistan
37	SKHAN	skhanagency	Yes	5213	Turkiye

- @drassagheer- Mohamed Al Sagheer is one of the spearheads in leading the hashtag trend against India and the UAE. He had also led the campaign Boycott French Products last year.
- @TurkiShalhoub - a Twitter Verified Parody account of a journalist (you can't make this stuff. His tweet on this hashtag explaining how to identify barcodes on products to boycott Indian products got more than 1100 retweets.
- @abuHilalalahh- He is the former managing director of Al-Jazeera. He has been retweeting other Arabic news media portals and journalists, who are promoting the hashtag.
- @SeharShinwari - She is a Pakistani actress turned social activist. She has been constantly pushing the hashtag and using Twitter to convince people to boycott Indian products.
- @khsultann- He is former member of parliament of Kuwait. He is retweeting frequently most of the Arabic news media portals and journalists who are promoting the hashtag along with #IndiakillsMuslims.
- @RassdNewsN- It is a news media portal running from Egypt with Qatar funding. Saudi Arab government has asked Qatar for its ban along with 12 other news portals.

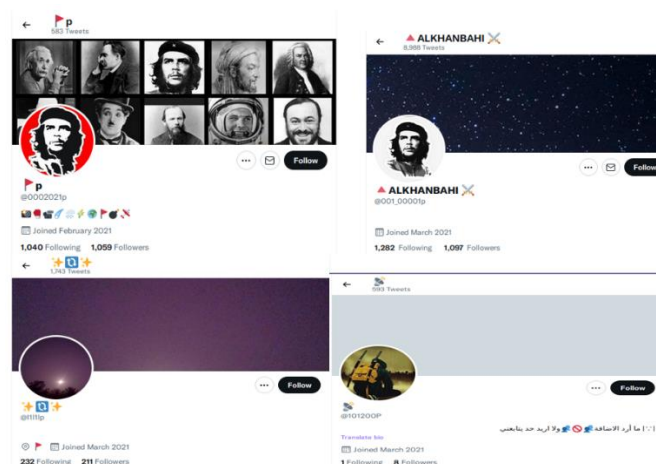
## Pushing the Narrative on twitter: Tweet – ReTweet – Repeat

To push a hashtag which does not get traction organically, most of the pushers deployed a bulk of twitter handles to keep re-tweeting the hashtag to push it up in the trending chart- so that media houses could claim that it was trending in Arab world. This is basic algorithm, and it indeed is surprising why Twitter has not been able to moderate this. To map the extent of artificial push, we also looked at this pattern:

Below chart shows the most frequently retweeting accounts:

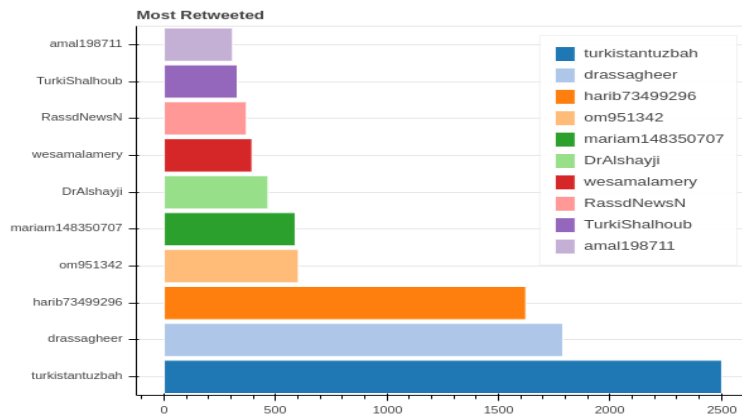


As expected for any inflated propaganda, most of these frequently retweeting accounts are newly created in 2021. These accounts serve only one purpose which is to amplify the hashtag. Many of these accounts are bots or fake. The below images show few such accounts.



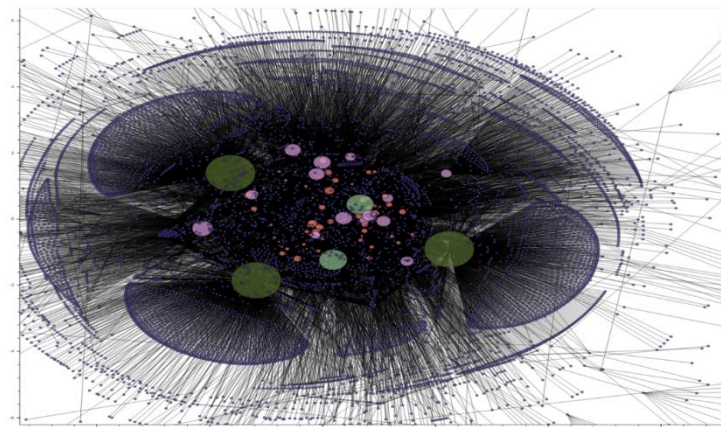
Below is the Bar-chart showing the most retweeted accounts: a limited set of same handles who have been pushing the narrative, mostly affiliated with Muslim Brotherhood.





## Mapping the Nexus:

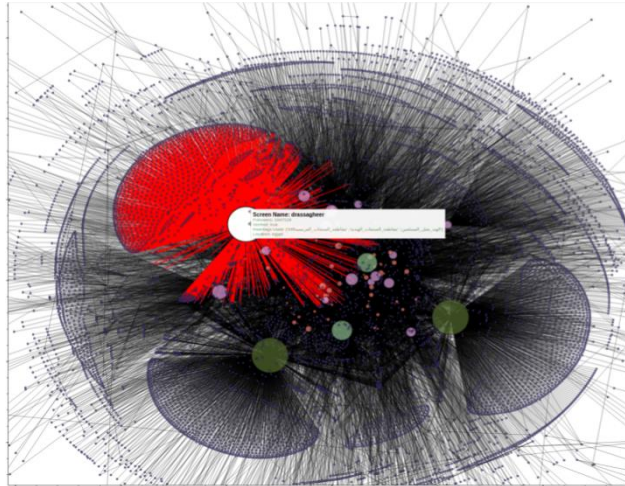
Below is a pictorial representation of the entire dataset, showing the campaign at a glance. For any organic/ natural campaign, the network should be distributed fairly largely with multiple major nodes, and should not be condensed. While in itself the graph only is indicative, read with other data points, it provides a complete picture.



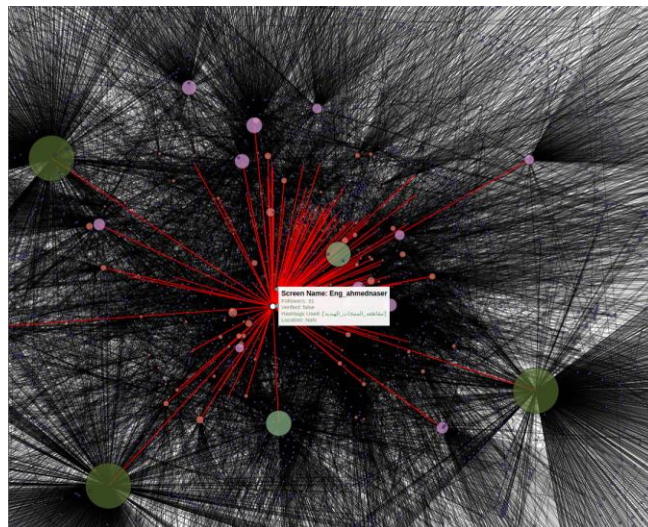
*Hashtag Mention Network*

We can see clear clusters of nodes (small handles) which shows separate groups of accounts which are retweeting some of the major accounts who were promoting the hashtag. The below image shows the cluster of re-tweeters for the handle @drassagheer.





However, the network inside is very complex and interconnected, which shows that the entire hashtag network is closed network in which there are lots of inter-connectedness via retweets and mentions.



The image above shows a small handle @Eng\_ahmednaser with 31 followers, retweeting/mentioning all the major handles. These small nodes constitute the large number of smaller accounts which are mainly retweeting almost every tweet on this hashtag. Most of these handles are created recently in 2021 and their only purpose is to amplify the hashtag in a short amount of time by retweeting as many times or even tweeting the same hashtag multiple times.

## **Part – II: the Agenda**

No fake campaign is ever launched without a hidden agenda. After all, who has the time and resources to carry out elaborate exercises for fun! As it turned out, this campaign too has agenda: and not one. The way it has been run; several obvious objectives are seen:

- I) Targeting Saudi Prince, thereby questioning Saudi leadership of Ummah.
- II) Creating a sentiment to capture the Arab world markets through emotional/ religious tools, having failed to compete in open market.
- III) Keep repeating the narrative of 'atrocities on Muslims in India'.
- IV) Pakistan to sell its Basmati rice.

## Chapter 7: Kahi pe nigahe.. kahi pe nishana

### (Looking east hitting west)

The Real Target of this MB led and QTP executed slander campaign is Saudi Prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS). It was rather peculiar to see an overwhelming number of posts under **#Boycott\_Indian\_Products** were accusing Saudi and to some extent UAE. The excuse was that these countries are not going against India, for its crimes against Muslims (doesn't matter if its fake).

But the enmity goes long in past.

It was not a coincidence that most of the 'news media' that carried stories on a hashtag aggressively were part of a network that Saudi has been demanding from Qatar to stop patronizing and funding. The list of media that Saudi had complained against include: Al-Jazeera and its affiliates, Arabi21, Rassd (RNN), Al-Araby and Al-Jadeed among others. In the parleys of international relations, it was rather an unusual demand [58] [59], or so it seemed. However, the fact that precisely these media channels have been propagating a fake campaign as a news, and using the same campaign to target the Saudi Prince indicates that all was not normal.

Another indicator of this collusion was that the handles which were used in this campaign. The handles who led the campaign **#Boycott\_Indian\_Products** and **#India\_Kills\_Muslims** have previously targeted France and Saudi Arabia in a similar pattern. For instance, they ran a similar campaign against France last year when they used **#Boycott\_French\_Products** (#قاطعوا\_المنتجات\_الفرنسية).



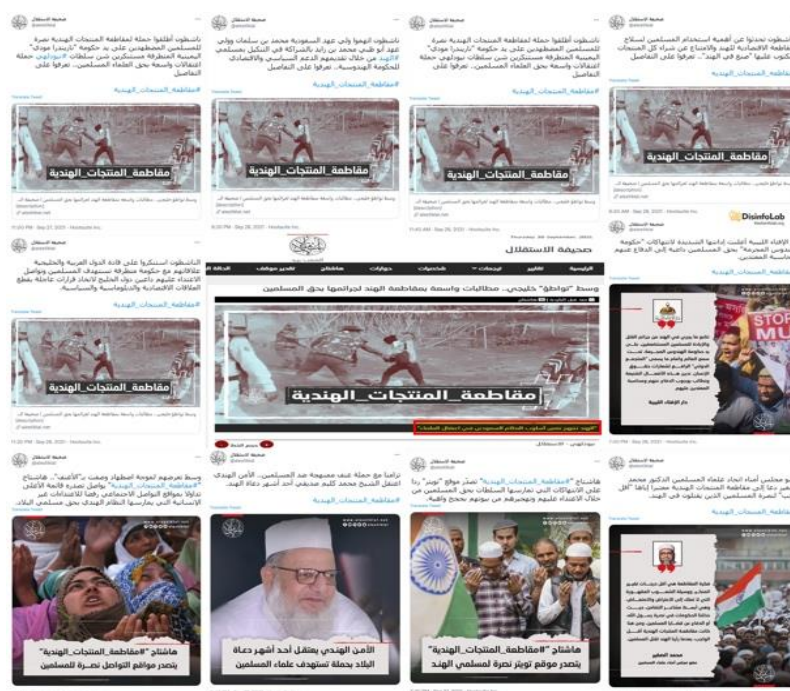
*A number of pics of Saudi Prince with Indian PM were recycled, to show that he was not standing up to the cause of Muslims.*

58 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/23/close-al-jazeera-saudi-arabia-issues-qatar-with-13-demands-to-end-blockade>

59 <https://money.cnn.com/2017/05/24/media/al-jazeera-blocked-saudi-arabia-uae/>

## Alestiklal News: a Case Study

One of the prominent media outlets that pushed the **#Boycott\_Indian\_Products** was Al-Estiklal News, a Turkish media outlet as per the Emirates Policy Center (EPC), a think tank based in Abu Dhabi, UAE <sup>[60]</sup>. As per its own Twitter bio, Al-Estiklal calls itself ‘a biased newspaper’. While being ‘biased’ could be written in jest, it they indeed live up their claim. Al-Estiklal covered the news <sup>[61]</sup> of the outrage campaign against India and promoted it on Twitter like its survival depended on it.



### Number of tweets by Alestiklal on the campaign

An interesting point was the message written below the posters **“Indian follows the same methods as Saudi in arresting the scholars”**. The focus of these campaign is so much on Saudi that it appears that India is being targeted merely to create a background for hitting Saudi. Al-Estiklal is known to be run by Turkey to promote anti-Saudi & UAE and pro-Turkey propaganda via its portal. It has even run Facebook ads to promote their agenda.



### Facebook Ads by Al-Estiklal promoting Turkey and targeting UAE

<sup>60</sup> <https://epc.ae/topic/erdogans-pivot-to-erbakans-faction-motivations-challenges-and-prospects>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.alestiklal.net/ar/view/10570/dep-news-1632745124>

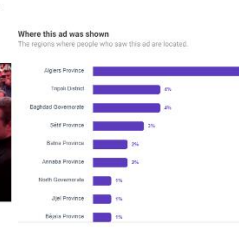
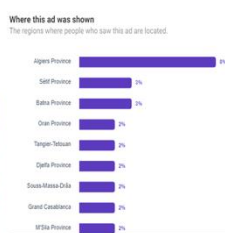


Criticizing Saudi & UAE, and promoting Turkey tells the complete story.

The 'leader of Ummah' has remained one of the most contested titles in the Islamic world, particularly between Saudi, Turkey and Iran. Even Pakistan has been claiming the leadership off and on, its economy permitting. With the shift coming in the alliances, and Muslim Brotherhood being the key player in the background, the efforts are on the coronation of Turkish leader.

They are eulogizing Turkish President Erdoğan as the real leader of the Ummah. In order to build his image, it is therefore necessary to first show that there are atrocities being carried out against Muslims, and then to show that he is standing against it (except China). It is a tried and tested model. Pakistani leader Imran Khan has also been raising Kashmir issue every other day, telling the world that atrocities are being committed, and he is the only one standing up to it. It doesn't matter if one has to manufacture tragedies to achieve this, as was shown in our previous report on Kashmir. Fake news is an essential component of this 'victimhood narrative', which gets recycled through media and social media.

Some of the media outlets like Al-Araby, Arabi21, Al-Estiklal, and Al Jazeera have run paid ads on Facebook to promote an agenda among the audience from Morocco and Algeria. As already proven above, all these fronts are sponsored by countries like Qatar and Turkey against the interest of Saudi Arabia and the UAE.



News outlets including Al Araby and Arabi21 have run ads on Facebook

The choice of target audience for these anti-Saudi ad campaigns is very interesting- Morocco and Algeria have strong positive relations with Saudi, and hence by poisoning the mind of their population against Saudi, the MB-QTP nexus could create a space for it to enter. By replacing Saudi as pivot of Islam, Turkey and through Turkey, Muslim Brotherhood (MB) would be able to call shots across the Islamic world. And there is an economic logic to controlling the narrative.

## **Chapter 8: Its Economy Stupid**

If the **MB-QTP** nexus were to dominate the Halal product market – a # 3 trillion plus market – it would create a mega source of economy which can in turn support another 100 years of terrorism for MB, long-long after Qatar gas is exhausted. To capture the market however, these countries have to face stiff competition in a free and open trading system. However, if other major players are somehow ‘disqualified’, this will create an open field to walk on. The ‘**Boycott**’ campaigns could well be part of this larger design, which is also seen from the focus this segment has received in recent years.

World Halal Summit (WHS) which is Turkey’s one of the biggest events, aims to shape the future of Halal Industry. The event is organised by Discover Events which organised first World Halal Summit 2015<sup>[62]</sup> in October 2015 at Istanbul Congress Centre, Istanbul and was attended by 1500 delegates of which 32 were international speakers. Turkey is slated to host 7<sup>th</sup> World Halal Summit 2021 and 8<sup>th</sup> OIC Halal Expo 2021 in Istanbul from 25-28 November 2021 (*roughly about two months from now*).<sup>[63]</sup>

Turkey wants to have lions share in Halal economy which is estimated to hit a global valuation of 3.2 trillion by 2024, according to Dubai-Produced research about local, regional, and international Islamic economy reported by Arab news <sup>[64]</sup>. In 2017, in the fast growing halal market, Turkey steeped up its efforts to grab a larger share of the market and its parliament passed a legislation for creation of a **Halal Accreditation Authority (HAK)** <sup>[ 65 ]</sup> with aim to become a leading market player with state-guaranteed halal labels.

The HAK will adhere to halal standards set by the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), a body under the umbrella of the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Companies from Turkey and other Muslim countries will be able to apply to the Halal Accreditation Authority for accreditation.

However, the Halal food economy would not only be restricted to food items. In 2011, Crescent Rating released its very first Halal travel market research publication<sup>[66]</sup> about the top Muslim-friendly destinations for 2011. As per this report, Malaysia ranked first on the Muslim friendly destinations while Turkey was placed second. Saudi Arabia got no rankings!

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<sup>62</sup> <https://discoverevents.com.tr/dunya-helal-zirvesi-2015/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://twitter.com/HalalSummit/status/1433020002605715458>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1731916/business-economy>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gunun-basliklari/helal-akreditasyon-kurumu-tasarisi-yasalasti/954013>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.crescentrating.com/magazine/travel-index-and-rankings/3733/gmti-top-muslim-friendly-destinations-in-2011.html>

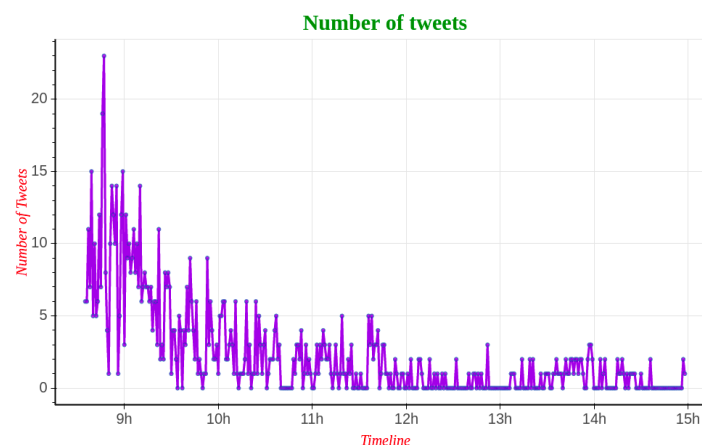
## Chapter 9: and Pakistan Sells Rice

As noted above, the ‘boycott business’ come with an economic logic. Pakistan has been fighting a losing battle over the credit for Basmati. A consignment of Pakistani rice was also rejected by the EU recently. Hence, what it could not sell in open market, it could sell through social media – thanks to the 5<sup>th</sup> Gen Warfare skills. So, taking advantage of this campaign, from September 30, the Pakistani accounts started another campaign to malign India by boycotting Indian Food products and offering Pakistani Basmati rice as an alternative.



*Pro-Pak handles promoting Pakistani rice*

Analyzing this campaign gave interesting details about the mechanics of Pakistan troll factories. While they have been pushing the anti-India agenda, after few days realizing the opportunity to sell rice, launched this campaign:



*Tweets timeline*

- Their co-ordinated effort started around 2 PM on 30<sup>th</sup> Sep. The above tweet timeline plot shows the number of tweets per minute plotted for 30<sup>th</sup> Sep. It can be seen that their propaganda started with an initial push and soon it started slowing down but it remained active at a constant rate towards the end.

- 



**Dr. Singh** (@drsingh001) · Sep 30

I am Dr. Singh from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

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**Zain Tahir** (@zaintahir35303) · Sep 30

My name is "ZAIN\_TAHIR\_" I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Araf Jamil** (@arrafjamil7634148) · Sep 30

My name is Araf Jamil, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Sajid Ahsan** (@sajid\_ahsan786) · Sep 30

My name is Sajid Ahsan, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Muhammad Hameed** (@hameed1994) · Sep 30

My name is Muhammad Hameed, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Zorah Muneed** (@zorahmuneed2019) · Sep 30

My name is Zorah Muneed, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Khalid Mahmood** (@khalidmahmood2021) · Sep 30

My name is Khalid Mahmood, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Samia Bajwa** (@samia0902459) · Sep 30

My name is Samia Bajwa, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Syed Shabbir Bukhari** (@syedshabbirbukari15th) · Sep 30

My name is Syed Shabbir Bukhari, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Saif Hameed** (@saifhameed14th) · Sep 30

My name is Saif Hameed, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Muhammad Aamir** (@aamir0418) · Sep 30

My name is Muhammad Aamir, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Shabbir Ali** (@shabbir001) · Sep 30

My name is Shabbir Ali, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

👍 1 🗨 2 🔄 6



**Moham Ali** (@moham001) · Sep 30

My name is Moham Ali, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

[#مقاطعة الهند](#)  
[#BoycottSPAIN](#)

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**Shabbir Hameed** (@shabbirhameed77) · Sep 30

My name is Shabbir Hameed, I am from **Pakistan**. I will boycott Indian products in order to support Muslim brothers in India from the oppression of extremist Hindu.

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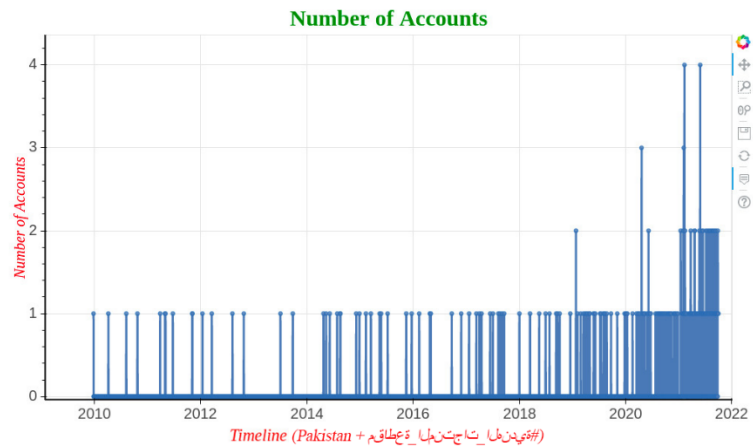
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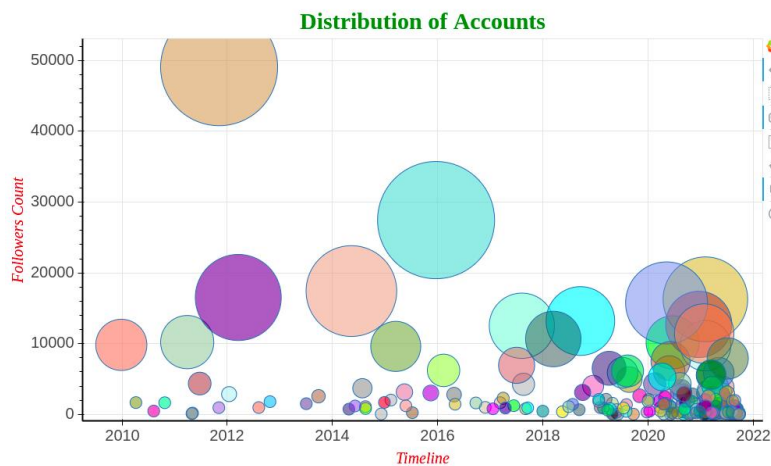


- The below graph shows the accounts creation timeline and their accounts distribution based on followers.





Accounts creation timeline



Accounts distribution by Followers' count

From above two graphs we can see that the accounts involved in this campaign by Pakistanis have a mix of old and new accounts. The old accounts have large number of followers but are less in number however there are many newly created accounts with smaller followers' count. Some of the big accounts involved in this rice-sale are shown below:

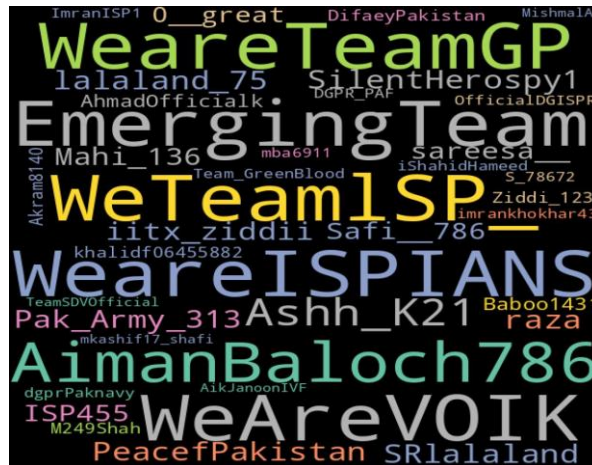


Some big Pak handles who promoted Pakistani rice promotion campaign

- These accounts are part of various troll groups of digital Pakistan which they proudly emphasize advertise. From the analysis of these accounts, we see that

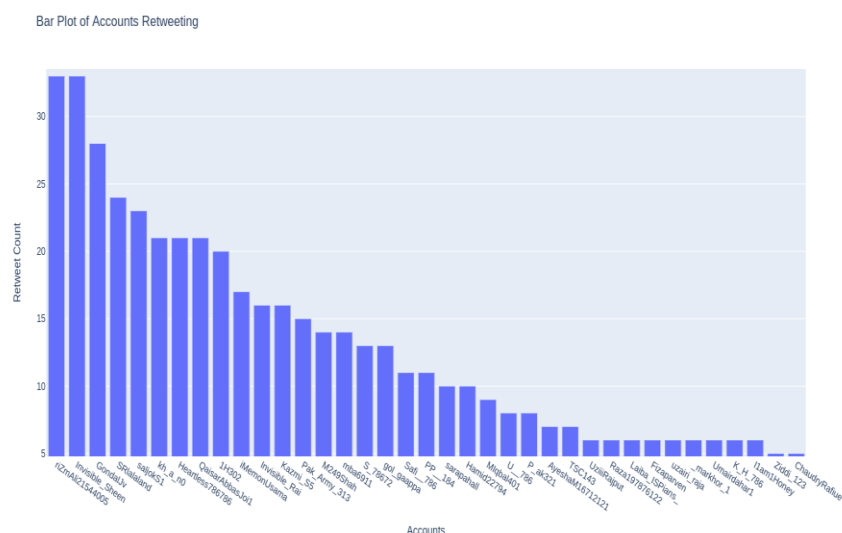
associate themselves with Pak military, ISI, ISPR etc. It has not yet been confirmed if the rice brands being promoted belong to Pak Fauj, or are independent of them.

- These accounts while using the same template in their tweets also tag the same set of troll groups which they are part of so that other members of these groups can amplify these tweets. A word-cloud showing the user mentions in these tweets is shown below



Troll groups like @WeareTeamGP, @EmergingTeam, @WeTeamISP\_, @WEareISPIANS, @WeAreVOIK are the key groups pushing the Pakistan rice on social media.

The below plot shows the accounts distributed by the frequency they retweeted these tweets.



- From the dataset we saw that the number of tweets were less but retweets were very high, which can be explained from above plot as some accounts were involved in frequent retweeting. The total retweets of top 10 accounts shown in above figure adds up-to 241 retweets.

The impact of such campaign is hard to measure, but one example will. Help make contextualize. A popular social media user Ali Sohraab, a self-proclaimed journalist (twitter: काकावाणी (4.0) کاکاوانی) seems to get played into believing this propaganda, and ended up endorsing and pushing this fake narrative. <sup>[67]</sup> Ironically, Sohraab picked the same poster of Pakistani account selling rice!

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<sup>67</sup> <https://twitter.com/007QaQaAli/status/1442745749759053826>

# **Conclusion:**

This was not the first or last targeted campaign against India.

Given the focus and intensity on the topic, it is only going to increase in future. What is surprising is that even in this age of misinformation, where everyone comes across zillions of fake news and profiles, people take online content on social media seriously even without looking for basics. But more importantly, it raises questions about the intent and capabilities of social media platforms, particularly Twitter, where they are repeatedly failing to apply even most basic filtering and monitoring to combat fake news and info-war.

It should be a wake-up call for the govt of India as well as for Indian social media users.

At the speed the opponents are mastering the skill, it won't be too long that it could be put to use for much sinister objectives, creating tensions along communal and caste lines. With arrival of Muslim Brotherhood openly in South Asia, this could mark a watershed moment for info-war in South Asia, for which India seems rather ill-prepared.