



## **The Flood of Disinformation in Syria After the Regime's Fall**

# Who We Are

- Verify is an independent Syrian platform established in 2016, specializing in fact-checking.
- Its mission is to combat disinformation and hate speech, and to strengthen public trust in independent media by providing accurate, verified information.
- Verify is a Facebook Trusted Partner, a signatory of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), and winner of the Global Fact 9 Award (2022) for the highest-impact fact check.
- Key Facts:
  - Over 1,000,000 followers on social media.
  - More than 3,000 verified reports published.
  - Over 200 journalists and media activists trained in fact-checking.

## Before the Fall – The Absence of Truth

- For over five decades, Syria lived under one of the most controlled media systems in the world.
- There was only one voice — the Assad regime's narrative — and any alternative story was branded as treason.
- Citizens had no access to independent or diverse information sources, living instead in a state-engineered reality.

# The Information Vacuum After Assad's Fall

- When the regime collapsed in December 2024, its propaganda machine collapsed with it, leaving behind a massive information void.
- The new state had not yet established any official communication channels, leading to confusion and loss of public trust.
- In the absence of official sources, social media became the main source of news, but also the main breeding ground for disinformation.
- Networks linked to the former regime — such as the Syrian Electronic Army — re-emerged as disinformation actors, now attacking rivals and independent outlets using new, deceptive narratives.

# The Negative Role of Social Media Platforms

- Major platforms like Meta failed to protect Syrian users. Even though Verify is a Trusted Partner with direct reporting channels, Meta often removes individual posts but keeps entire disinformation networks active, mainly because Syria is an unprofitable, sanctioned market.
- Meanwhile, Telegram became the so-called “Syrian Dark Web.”
- The new authorities encouraged citizens to use Telegram as an official news channel, but with no content regulation, the app turned into the largest source of misinformation, feeding false stories into Facebook, X, and WhatsApp.

# **Examples of Disinformation and Verification**

# **When Wrong Fact-Checking Becomes Disinformation**

# The Coastal Family Massacre



هذه الصورة كانت واحدة من بين عشرات الصور التي وثقت ضحايا جرائم القتل التي شهدها الساحل السوري خلال الأيام الماضية، والتي شكك عدد كبير من السوريين في صحتها، استناداً إلى نتائج غير دقيقة أظهرها البحث العكسي. إلا أن المقارنة المرفقة تثبت أنها التقطت في حي القصور بمدينة بانياس، إحدى المدن السورية المنكوبة بسبب هذه الجرائم التي أقرت الدولة السورية بصحتها ندعو جميع السوريين إلى احترام دماء ضحايا الأحداث الدموية التي شهدها الساحل السوري، وعدم التشكيك في هذه المأساة التي أدخلت الحزن إلى بيوت جميع السوريين



Instagram

Darling I chase goals not people... #explore #explorepag...

640x1136 · 2024/05/10

explora #explorepag# ؟ كنت ناسيني؟ - Instagram

قبل 9 أشهر · 640x1136

Instagram

عبدالله نجم الدين on X: "ان لم يكن قتال هؤلاء المجرمين القتل جهاد فما هو ... قبل يوم واحد · 788x668

x

Darling I chase goals not people... #explore #explorepag #exo ... قبل 10 أشهر · 1,136x640

Instagram

Lady Rose on X: ...#StopWhiteGenocideInSyria https://t.co/... 1,200x835

x

كروب سواق قلابات الحويجه - Facebook

قبل يومين · 960x668

# The Killed Child Case

نادي  
قن الخبر أمارة

التصنيف

تضليل

**الحقيقة**

نتائج البحث العكسي غير دقيقة: الصورة للطفل إبراهيم شاهين، أحد ضحايا مجزرة وقعت في حرف بنمرة بريف باتياس أول أيام عيد الفطر.



**الادعاء**

نتائج بحث عكسي تظهر أن صورة هذا الطفل تعود للعام 2011

Reddit  
locals in 'Harf B'namra', Baniyas: "two masked elements ..."  
اليوم - 640x853

x.com  
Wolverine (@Wolveri0768175) / X  
720x960

Facebook  
شبكة الثورة السورية - Syrian Revol - ution Network - هام و عاجل...  
922x2048 - 2011/05/12

VERIFY-SY.COM قن الخبر أمارة

23:00

المطابقات التامة >

ه الففراء في ريف طرطوس  
اليوم - 810x1080

Reddit  
locals in 'Harf B'namra', Baniyas: "two masked elements ..."  
اليوم - 640x853

x.com  
Wolverine (@Wolveri0768175) / X  
720x960

Facebook  
شبكة الثورة السورية - Syrian Revol - ution Network - هام و عاجل...  
922x2048 - 2011/05/12

Telegram: View @swodki  
240x320

نعم لا

هل هذه النتائج مفيدة؟



# **Exploiting Women's Issues in Disinformation**

# The Fake Abduction Video

**ناقد**  
لأن الخبرمانة

التصنيف  
**تضليل**

**الحقيقة**  
المقطع المرفق ليس من سوريا وإنما من «إسرائيل» ويعود لأحداث 7 أكتوبر 2023.

**الادعاء**  
نساء يختبئن حماية لأنفسهن من الخطف أو القتل .. شريط مصور يعود لأحداث السويداء منتصف الشهر الفائت.

**وسط تكبيرات الجهاديين**  
مشهد مروع لنساء يختبئن في الحاويات هرباً من الإرهابيين



VERIFY-SY.COM

**ناقد**  
لأن الخبرمانة

التصنيف  
**تضليل**

**الحقيقة**  
المقطع يوثق اختطاف فتاة في تركيا على يد شاب بمساعدة شقيقه وزوجته، إثر رفض عائلتها طلبه الزواج منها.

**الادعاء**  
هكذا يتم الخطف بكل أنحاء سوريا وخاصة بالساحل السوري.



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# The "Mira" Case



# Sectarian Narratives and “Enslavement” Claims



إهرام

خاص- حقيقة "سبي" العلويات بعد اختطاف عشرات النساء في سوريا

بزي 'شيعي' ورواية خيبية.. ميرا جلال ثابت تُسبي مرتين

استعداد النساء العلويات في سوريا

السبي في زمن التضليل:  
دعاية تنكروا بوجه الضحية



# Structural Challenges and the Current Landscape

1. Lack or contradiction of official sources, especially in the first months after the regime's fall.
2. Emergence of biased “fact-checkers” — new platforms claiming independence but working selectively based on political affiliations.
3. Direct targeting of independent fact-checkers through smear campaigns and threats.
4. Indifference from global tech companies, which ignore Syrian reports due to low economic value.

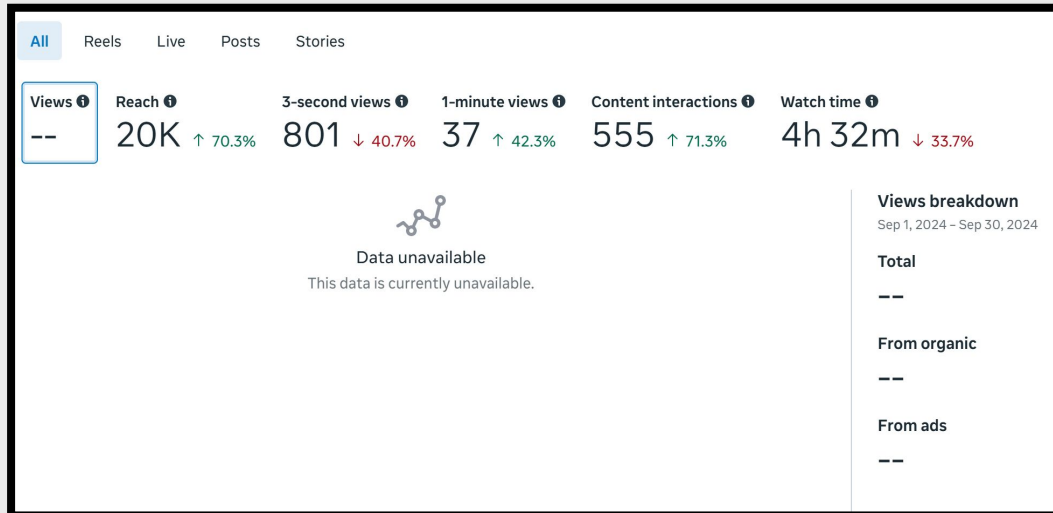
# The Societal Impact of the Disinformation Flood

During the fragile transition period, disinformation had a direct and destabilizing effect on Syrians:

1. Collective confusion: citizens struggled to separate truth from falsehood.
2. Loss of trust: skepticism spread toward all institutions and media.
3. Deepened polarization: sectarian and racist narratives fueled hate.
4. **Life-altering decisions:** misinformation about safety, politics, and migration shaped the fates of millions.

# Verify's Role and Response

- Dual-method verification: combining digital tools with a robust local network of trained journalists and volunteers inside Syria.
- Neutral, independent verification — even when official sources themselves contributed to disinformation due to lack of coordination.
- Verify became a trusted reference for truth amid chaos, producing verifications that balanced speed with accuracy and context.



## Verify's Strategic Vision and Future Plans

- Syrian Media Database: to track and assess local information sources.
- Verify+ Programme: development of AI-driven tools to detect misinformation and hate speech.
- Verify Academy: an e-learning platform to train journalists and citizens in media literacy and fact-checking.

# Defending the Truth

- The Syrian experience proves that disinformation after conflict can be deadlier than war, as it attacks collective perception and destroys trust.
- In an environment without free media, truth becomes the first casualty.
- Fact-checking is not just journalism — it is a national duty to protect public awareness and preserve civil peace.

Supporting independent fact-checking organizations like Verify is an investment in societal resilience and a cornerstone for any future democracy.

**THANKS**

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