

NJ Officials Urge Social Media to Censor Hamas-Israel Lies

Dino Flammia | Published: October 16, 2023

<https://nj1015.com/nj-officials-urge-social-media-to-censor-hamas-israel-lies/>

Online posts about Hamas's attacks on Israel are adding unnecessary fuel to an already fiery fight, according to officials and advocates in New Jersey who want greater oversight of what's being shared on social media.

At a press conference in Edison on Monday, U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J. 6th District, local and state elected officials, and members of the Jewish community called on social media companies to keep deeply disturbing content and deliberate disinformation off of their platforms.

"Every effort should be made to prevent it from going up, and that means terrorist associations shouldn't have accounts that they can use," Pallone said. "If it does go up, then it immediately has to be taken down or not repeated."

False information shared on social media

Pallone's message specifically called out X, Meta, YouTube, TikTok, and Telegram. Since Hamas's surprise terrorist attacks first erupted on Oct. 7, Pallone said, both fraudulent and genuine footage of violent attacks have been posted on social media. The sites have also become vehicles of conspiracy theories, doctored content, and hate speech, Pallone said.

A viral post on Twitter purporting to show Israeli military engagements in Gaza was debunked as clips from a video game, for example.

Two videos that show Russian President Vladimir Putin telling the U.S. to stay away from the Israel-Hamas war were actually months-old clips of Putin speaking about Russia and Ukraine.

"Hamas and other bad actors seek coordinated social media campaigns as essential to waging war on Israel and Jews," said Susan Antman, executive director of Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey. "Some social media users to fall prey or feed into the content are simply misinformed, underinformed, misled, and, frankly, manipulated."

Congressman says social media companies are invited to briefings

According to Pallone, ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, lawmakers have already demanded that social media companies take part in briefings about what they're doing in order to control the content that's spread on their sites.

"I want to see action," Pallone said.

In an Oct. 13 post by Meta, the platform said it removed or "marked as disturbing" more than 795,000 pieces of content in the three days following the first Hamas attacks.

Social media companies respond

In response to the terror attacks, Meta established a "special operations center" staffed with experts, including fluent Hebrew and Arabic speakers, to closely monitor the situation, the company said.