

Instagram shutters account of Palestinian publisher Quds News Network

Kevin Reed**30 November 2023**

On Monday, the social media photo- and video-sharing platform Instagram shut down the English-language account of Quds News Network (QNN), a Palestinian news agency affiliated with Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), QNN said Instagram closed its account and, “prevented the network from requesting a review of the suspension.” QNN also explained that Instagram’s corporate parent, Meta Platforms, Inc., had “previously deleted its Facebook account multiple times,” despite the news network’s adherence to site standards.

QNN pointed out that the shutdown on Monday was a blatant act of censorship, stating, “Since the onset of the conflict in Gaza, Meta has escalated its restrictions on Palestinian content while permitting publications and advertisements supporting the occupation state, some of which explicitly incite violence against Palestinians.”

QNN is one of the only news sources that has consistently reported from Gaza and exposed the imperialist-backed Israeli genocide being carried out against the Palestinian population. For this reason, QNN is the most popular internet news source among young Palestinians.

Quds, which is transliterated as al-Quds, is Arabic for Jerusalem and which means “The Holy” or “The Holy Sanctuary.”

According to a description published on Wikipedia, QNN is a news agency that, “combines breaking news reporting by freelancers and volunteers with rapid distribution of often graphic video content.” QNN has developed a substantial social media presence, and its X account is followed by more than 400,000 people.

Over just the past 24 hours, for example, QNN has published video of Palestinian children who were hospitalized after being released from Israeli occupation prisons, photos of thousands of Palestinians lining up at a

drinking water station in Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip, and a video of mourners taking part in the funeral procession of Malek Barghouti, a Palestinian youth who was shot dead by Israeli occupation soldiers in the West Bank the previous night.

Responding to the censorship by Instagram, QNN launched a campaign on Tuesday calling for social media users to give the app a 1-star review on Apple’s App Store and Android’s Google Play. In an appeal published on the QNN website, the publishers wrote, “Social media platforms, especially Meta’s Instagram, have been systematically censoring and removing Palestinian content and attempting to silence pro-Palestine voices. Meta suspended and removed thousands of accounts and posts calling for equal rights for the Palestinian people and stopping the genocide in Gaza.”

QNN later pointed out that the same censorship tactics have been used against human rights organizations, “which have documented Israeli war crimes.” The campaign is demanding that Meta, and its platforms such as Instagram, “stop its anti-Palestinian bias, which dehumanize the Palestinian people.”

On November 22, QNN reported that Facebook and Meta had continued to approve ads “containing hate speech and incitement to violence and genocide against Palestinians, according to The Arab Center for Advancement of Social Media, 7amleh.”

The report continued, “Meta has been targeting pages that support Palestinian content under the pretext of violating its standards. The company removed QNN’s Facebook page several times without any clarification, and it continues to remove content on QNN’s Instagram account.”

In addition to the shutting of the QNN accounts on Facebook and Instagram, Twitter also suspended QNN’s account in November 2019. Following mass demonstrations against the censorship, the Palestinian

publisher's Twitter account was restored as of January 2021.

Then, in the same month, the China-based TikTok social media platform banned QNN without notice. At the time, QNN editor Hamzah al-Shobaki said QNN had been posting frequently about the Israeli occupation and the betrayal of Palestinian rights by the Arab regimes that signed so-called "normalization" deals with the Zionist government.

The termination of the social media accounts of QNN is part of the growing attack on democratic rights internationally that has accompanied the siege of Gaza in which the Israeli government is carrying out a deliberate mass slaughter of civilians on a scale not seen since the fascist regimes of World War II.

By falsely identifying protesters against the Israeli genocide of Palestinians as "antisemitic" and "support for terrorism," the political parties, governments and corporate media of the imperialist countries are seeking to silence the mass opposition to the unfolding massacre.

As reported yesterday by the *World Socialist Web Site*, the UK government has launched a frontal assault on free speech rights by banning demonstrations, arresting protesters and criminalizing opposition to the Israeli genocide in Gaza. France and Germany, as well as other European countries, have also attempted to ban pro-Palestinian protests and the US Senate passed a resolution accusing demonstrators of "expressing solidarity with terrorists."

Despite these measures, the global movement against the barbaric assault on Gaza continues to grow as video and images from social media continue to reveal to the world the reality of what is unfolding and exposing the lies spread by the Zionist and imperialist regimes. This fact is at the heart of the moves by Meta to close the accounts of QNN, an important source of online videos and photos that expose the crimes being carried out in Gaza.



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