



Everything Everywhere All at Once:

The Pro-Iran Playbook for
Narrative Control

The Graphika Team

12.2025

Everything Everywhere All at Once

The Pro-Iran Playbook for Narrative Control - Part 1

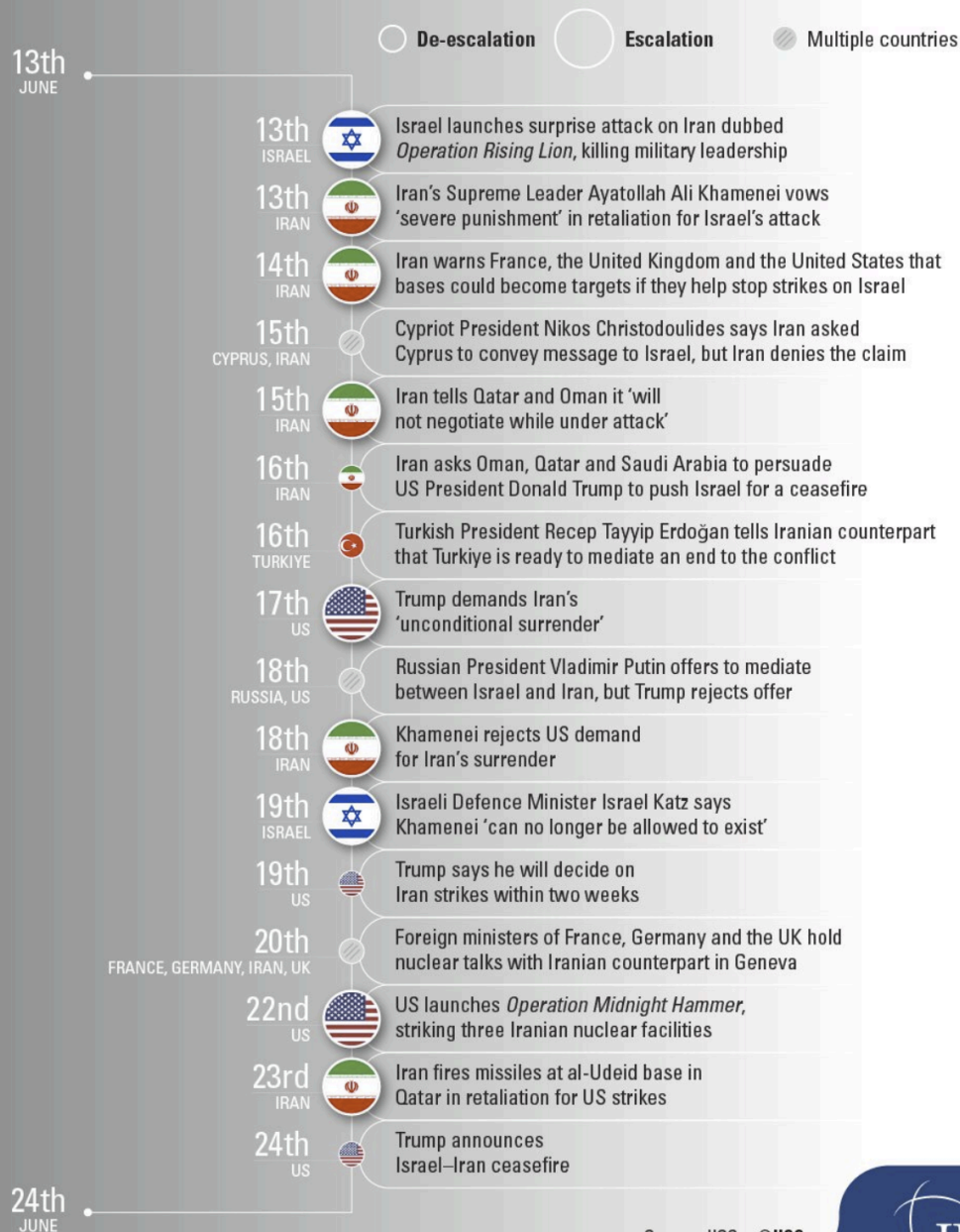
Overview

In June 2025, the long-standing tensions between Israel and Iran escalated into direct conventional warfare. Through our [intelligence monitoring](#), Graphika tracked and analyzed the activities of Iranian state and state-aligned media outlets, networks of inauthentic social media accounts, and pro-Iran hacktivist groups. This two-part report details how these actors mobilized to spread unified narratives, despite varying levels of proven state affiliation.

Our analysis revealed a playbook used by pro-Iran actors to manage perceptions during and after the war. We observed a notable delay in the initial mobilization of an information response, suggesting a lack of preparation for a large-scale on-the-ground conflict. Once mobilized, however, these actors collectively clouded the information space by disseminating a mix of breaking news alerts, aggressive threats, and unverified claims. Our reporting outlines the tactics employed to target domestic and global audiences.

Here, in the first of two parts, we cover the activity we observed and analyzed from state and state-aligned media as well as from two sets of inauthentic social media accounts. Part two will cover the activity we observed from pro-Iran hacktivist groups.

Timeline: Israel–Iran conflict, June 2025



The International Institute for Strategic Studies' [timeline](#) of the Israel–Iran war.

Key Findings

We identified the following key findings across parts 1 and 2 of this report.

- Pro-Iran hacktivist groups, media, and social media mobilized during the 2025 Israel-Iran war and spread similar narratives regardless of their proven or self-described state affiliation.
- We observed a delayed response to the war, highlighting that actors were likely unprepared for large-scale conventional warfare.
- Actors disseminated a mix of breaking news alerts, threats, and unverified claims to muddy the information space.
- State media and inauthentic networks targeted broader, global audiences through multi-lingual coverage.


State-Aligned Media Content

Graphika's analysis of nearly 58,000 total articles published by six pro-regime, state-affiliated, or likely IRGC-operated media outlets spanning periods before, during, and after the war found that these outlets collectively mobilized to support pro-Iran narratives during and after the war. We also noted a shift from a primarily domestic focus to a primarily international focus during and after the war. State-affiliated media seeded inauthentic narratives, which were then subsequently amplified by other pro-Iran outlets. They also changed the volume of foreign languages in which they published, indicating an expansion of targets beyond domestic or Persian-speaking diaspora populations.

Based on our analysis, we hypothesize that state-aligned media were not prepared for or did not expect an imminent Israeli offensive. Our analysis reveals that articles related to Iranian national unity and strength were nearly non-existent in the media environment before the war, but comprised a significant portion of articles published during and immediately following it.

Content Maps

To visualize this data, we created three content maps to capture activity before (May 1 - June 12), during (June 13 - June 24), and after (June 25 - August 1) the war.



In these content maps, each dot (or “node”) represents one article headline. The headlines are computationally clustered into narratives through a publisher-agnostic process based on their meaning, as determined by a pre-trained machine-learning model. Nodes positioned closer together have a more similar meaning and form topic clusters, which we refer to as narrative groups. Nodes positioned further apart have a less similar meaning, indicating a different narrative.

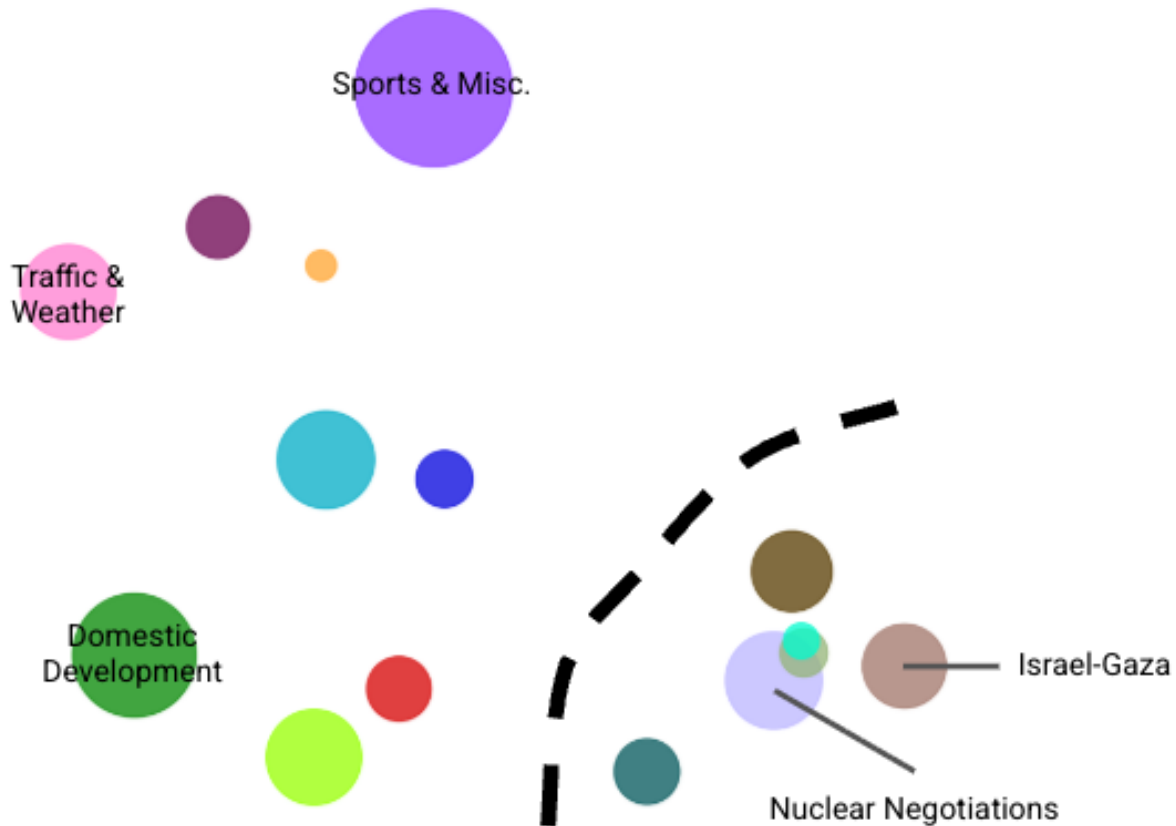
To easily visualize the content published by the six outlets from May 1 to August 1, 2025, we created simplified versions of our content maps, where each circle represents a narrative group, with the size of the circle corresponding to the number of articles included. The maps illustrate the shift from domestic issues to international issues during and after the war. In Appendix A, we include our traditional content maps for before, during, and after the war, and the thematic breakdowns of each.

Before the War

The Before the War map shows us the baseline of what the Iranian state and pro-Iran media published prior to the war. Roughly 70 percent of the articles we collected focused on domestic issues, such as sports, weather, and education reform, most of which were published in Persian. The other 30 percent of posts focused on international issues, such as Iranian diplomacy and regional conflicts in the Middle East. The bulk of the internationally focused articles were published in multiple languages, indicating these articles likely targeted both domestic and foreign audiences.

None of the clusters or groups in this map promoted Iran’s national unity or strength, outside of their typical criticism of U.S. President Trump and Western sanctions. After Israel’s first strikes on June 13, Iranian nationalism became a key narrative shared during and after the war. We assess that this shift likely occurred to boost domestic morale and shape domestic and international public perception.

Before the War Content Map



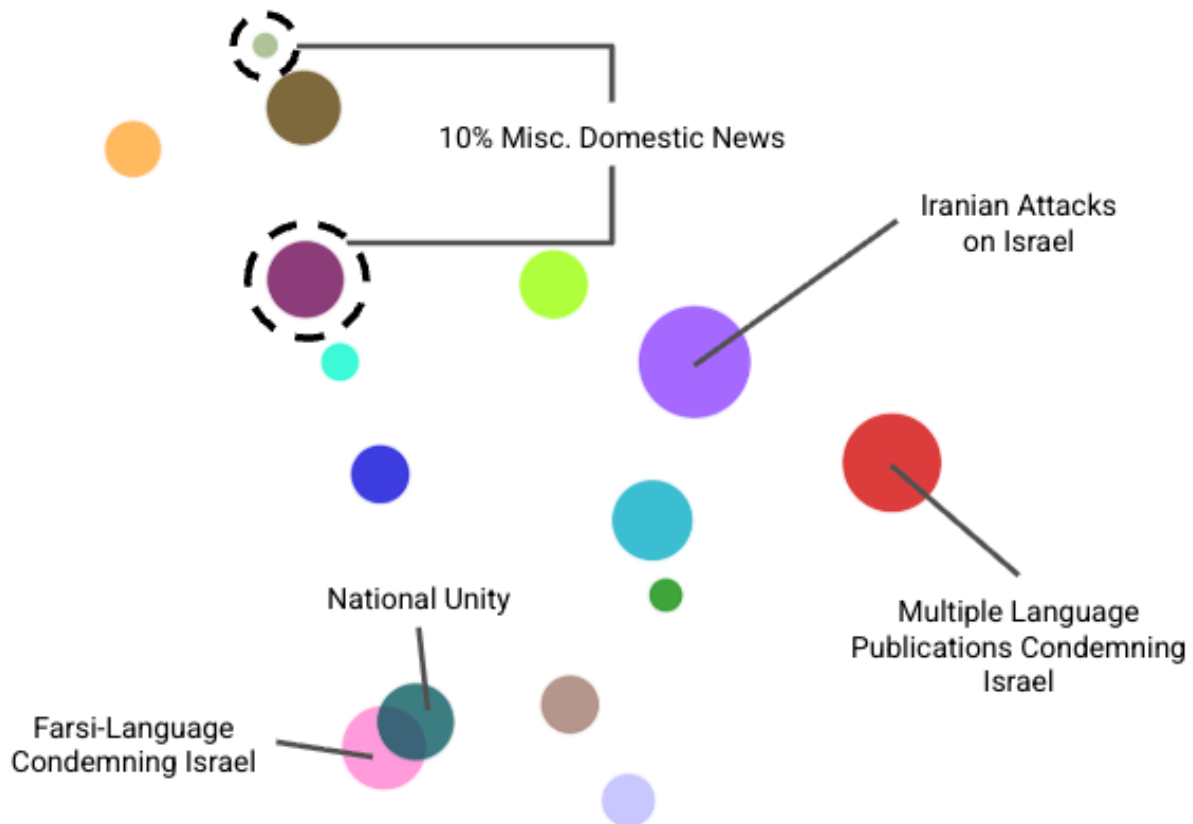
In the Before the War Content Map, domestic issues, pictured on the left side of the map, account for the majority of articles published. The right side of the map visualizes articles with an international focus. We inserted the dotted line to clearly delineate the domestic and international focus.

During the War

During the war, roughly 90 percent of the articles we collected were dedicated to the conflict. The articles primarily shared news about Iranian strikes against Israel, promoted Iranian unity, and condemned Israel for its aggression against Iran.

The stark shift in reporting supports the belief that the Israeli attacks were an [intelligence failure](#) for Iran and that these actors were not prepared to dominate the information space ahead of time. While we would not have seen narratives about the strikes ahead of time, we would expect preparatory narratives around national unity and an increased general condemnation of Israel. However, these only emerged in the days after Israel's June 13 attack. In the 'Before' map, we only minimally observed this narrative in the context of Israel's actions in Gaza.

During the War Content Map

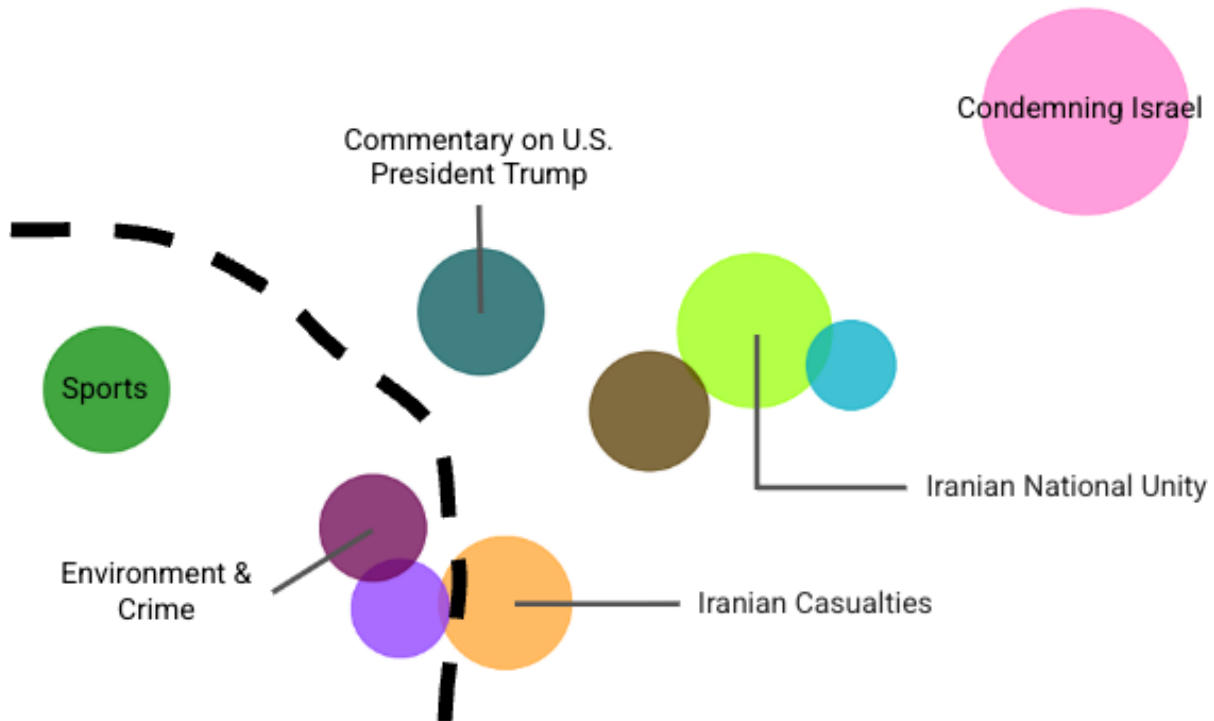


The During the War Content Map shows that the media outlets from which we collected focused overwhelmingly on the war, promoted Iranian national unity, and criticized Israel for its aggression against Iran.

After the War

The media landscape after the war exhibited a near-complete reversal in the breakdown of narratives that had existed before the war. Only 24 percent of collected media coverage focused on domestic issues, including sports and crime. Seventy-six percent of coverage continued to focus on international issues, mostly stemming from the war. This included commentary and criticism of U.S. President Trump and U.S. foreign policy, as well as two high-volume narratives promoting Iranian national unity and condemnation of Israel. We observed the Iranian unity narrative persist after the June 24, 2025, ceasefire through the end of our collection period on Aug. 1, 2025.

After the War Content Map



The After the War Content Map shows that the media outlets from which we collected focused primarily on international issues, the war, and promoted Iranian national unity.

Changes in Publishing Language

We also categorized the articles collected during these three time periods by language. We observed over a 20 percent decrease in Persian-language content during and after the war, a peak in Arabic-language content during the war, and notable increases in English- and Spanish-language content after the war. Hebrew-, Russian-, and Turkish-language articles comprised the remainder of the observed media articles in each time period.

| Languages Used by State-Aligned Outlets | | | |
|---|--------|--------|-------|
| | Before | During | After |
| Persian | 86.3% | 67.4% | 60.8% |
| Arabic | 3.7% | 10.2% | 6.0% |
| English | 4.2% | 7.9% | 12.0% |
| Spanish | 3.2% | 5.5% | 14.9% |
| Other | 2.6% | 8.9% | 6.3% |

Our analysis suggests that the Arabic-language content likely targeted a regional audience to shape perceptions of Iran's position and bolster international support. The shift to English- and Spanish-language content likely reflects Iran's desire to project strength following the U.S. strikes, and a push for global diplomacy to shore up its position in international affairs.

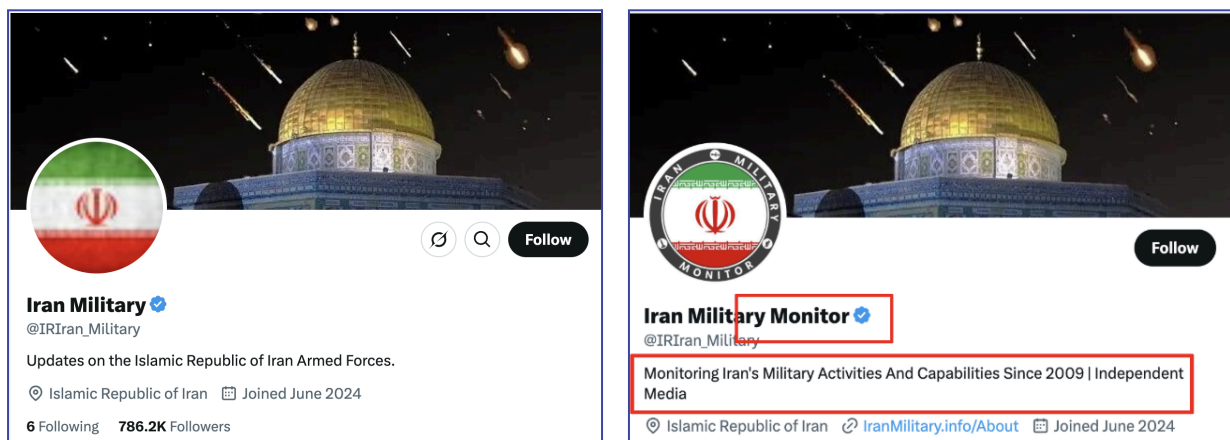
Inauthentic X Accounts

Media Rebranders

We monitored six X accounts that we assess are likely inauthentic due to the changes made to their account features throughout the war. At the start of the war, these accounts presented as news accounts or as affiliated with the Iranian or Yemeni militaries. They portrayed themselves as legitimate, or at least presented muddled attribution to the state. Later, during the war, we observed these accounts rebrand, modifying several profile features, including their names, profile or header images, and bios, in an attempt to evade moderation and prevent deplatforming.

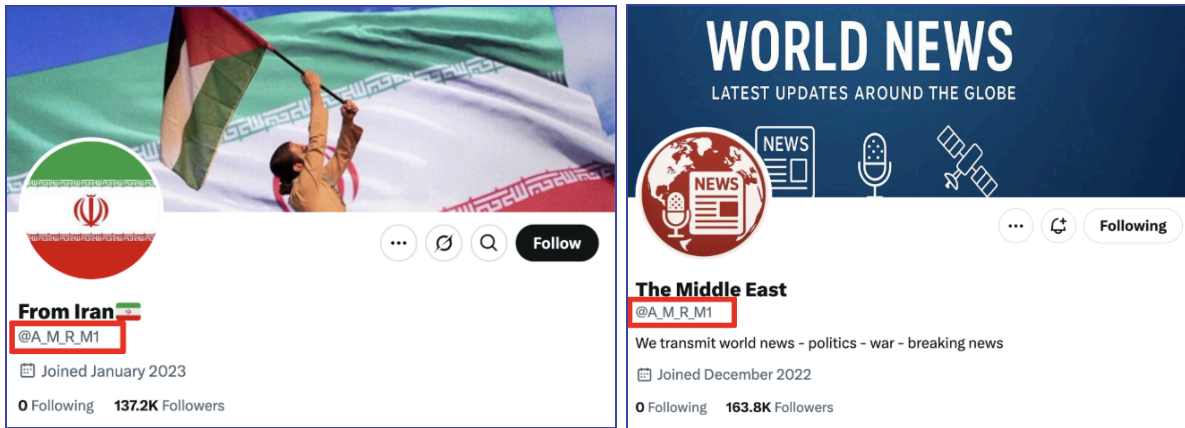
- One account was suspended, and one went private during the war. The latest posts we observed during the monitoring period from these two accounts were on June 21 and 22, 2025, but we do not have the exact dates of the status changes on X.

Below is an example of two of the six accounts showing profile changes. First, @IRIran_Military was likely attempting to gain legitimacy by aligning itself with the Iranian military (below left), without making a direct claim of affiliation. In the more recent screenshot (below right), the account added "monitor" to its name and states in its bio that it is "independent media."



Before and after screenshots of @IRIran_Military's profile.

The operator of @A_M_R_M1 changed almost everything about the account, including its name, profile photo, header photo, bio, and the focus of the account's content, although it still includes news on Iran.



Before and after screenshots of @A_M_R_M1's profile. The account was created at 03:00 am on January 1 in an unknown time zone, and the left image was taken from an archive site, which may explain the discrepancy in join dates.

The chart below shows the post history of the six accounts we monitored in June 2025. We observed a peak in the volume of posts on June 16, three days after Israel's first strikes. This may be an indication that the operators of these accounts did not anticipate the conflict. Prior to the war, the accounts did not discuss any potential of an upcoming war, nor did they promote narratives of Iranian unity or strength. Posts prior to the war were minimal and primarily discussed sports and news about the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, which aligns with the narratives observed in state-aligned media during that time. A small increase in posts on June 11 was due to the accounts sharing reports of the U.S. evacuating staff from bases in the Middle East, though the accounts did not post speculation about the implications of this decision.

Volume of Posts from Media Rebrander Accounts

Posts vs. Date

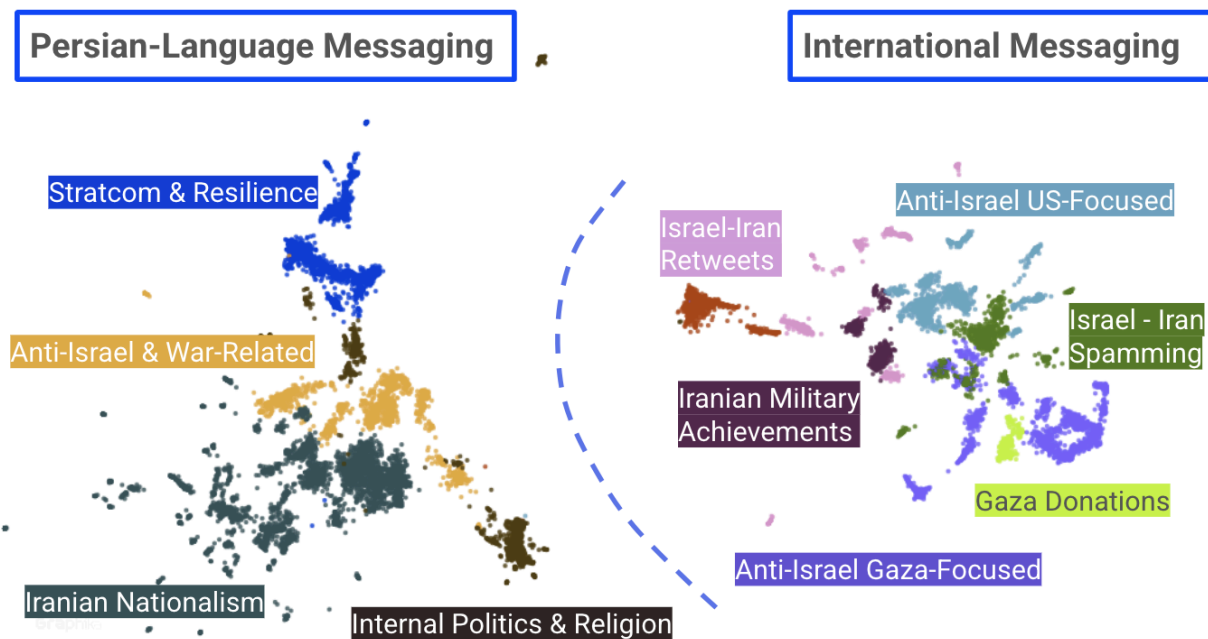


In the three days following Israel's first strikes on Iran, we tracked a spike in posts from four of the media rebrander accounts we were monitoring. [Graphika].

Rising Lion Bots

This set of bot accounts promoted pro-Iran messaging throughout the war. The Israeli government [attributed](#) the activity to Iran. We did not independently verify this attribution; our analysis focused on the accounts' messaging and the languages they used, demonstrating another example of how pro-Iran actors behaved similarly across the information space.

Rising Lion Botnet Content Map



The Rising Lion Botnet content map illustrates how the narratives and techniques used to disseminate them differed between domestic and international targeting.

We observed this set of bots sharing similar narratives to those we identified in state-aligned media. We also observed a similar divide in domestic, Persian-language messaging and international, multi-language messaging, as we did with state-aligned media, with some notable variations.

The Persian-language narrative clusters in the map consist primarily of copy-pasted messages or nearly identical messages, using the same batches of hashtags. Similar to the state media activity described above, the network conveyed messages of Iranian unity and resilience, as well as nationalist and patriotic messaging. Overall, war-focused narratives were the minority in this group.

The network's targeting of international audiences was, however, distinct in terms of tactics, from both the Persian-language messaging and the international state media coverage. Instead of simply copying and pasting nearly identical messages, the international accounts in the botnet employed more varied dissemination tactics and amplified external pro-Iranian voices to disseminate messaging. Overall, these accounts consistently used hashtag spamming, retweets, and replies to gain visibility.

While the narratives remained the same, the botnet targeted audiences beyond those we observed in state-aligned media, posting in languages such as Bengali, German, Japanese, Indonesian, Norwegian, and Urdu. The accounts also disseminated memes, AI-generated images,

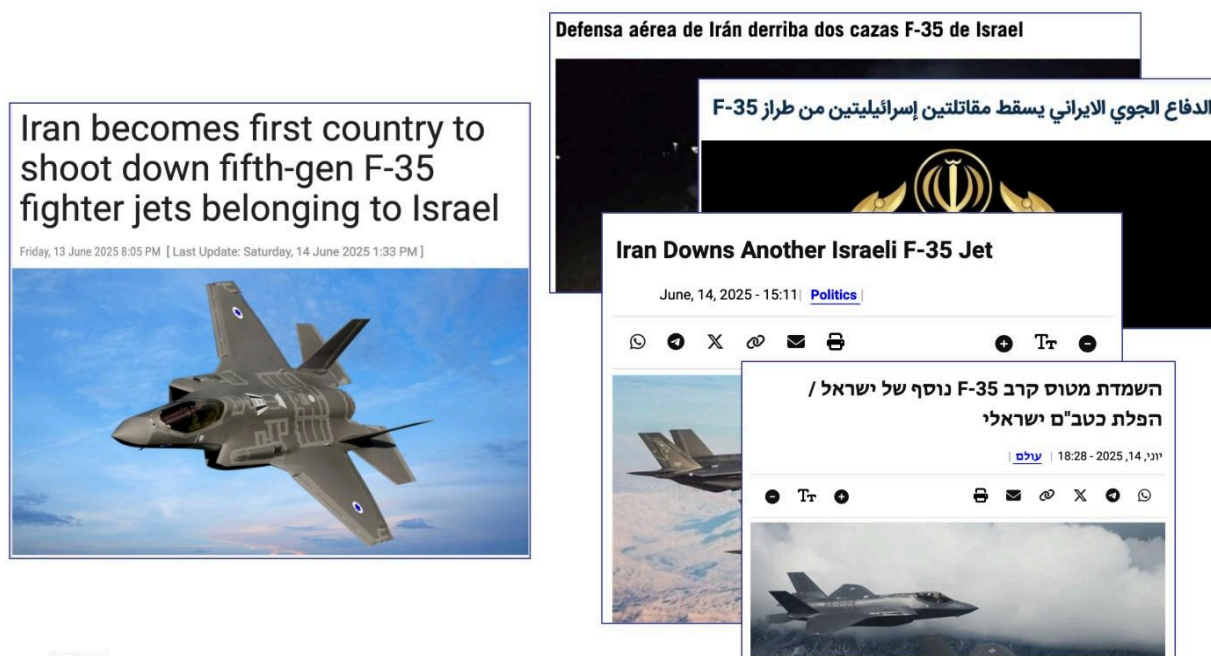
and content related to the humanitarian and civilian situation in Gaza. This suggests an intention to spread pro-Iran narratives to a broader social media audience while building on the foundation established by state-aligned media.

Case Study: Unverified Claims of Downed F-35s

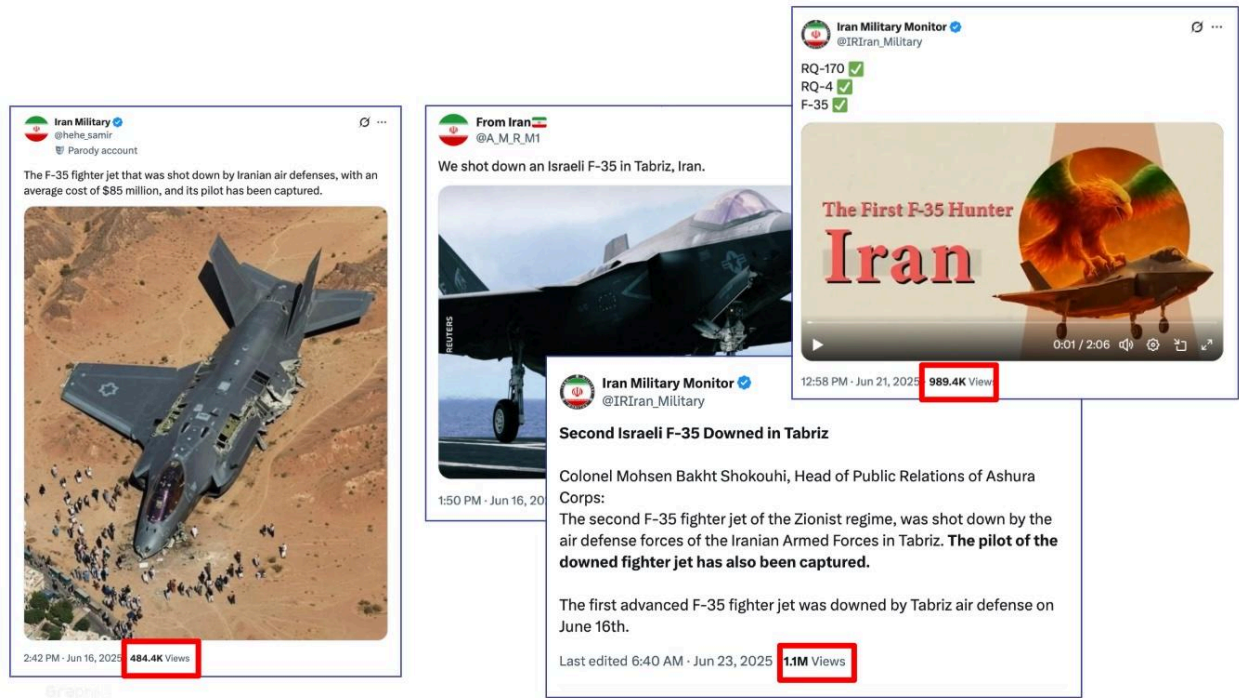
The first instance we observed of the claim that Iran shot down Israeli F-35 planes came from the state-funded outlet PressTV in the first 24 hours after initial Israeli strikes. We observed covert and pro-regime sources amplifying the claim, aligning with the broader strategy to present a unified front and project Iranian strength. The PressTV article alleges that the Iranian Army released a statement confirming the claim, but the link directs back to the same article. We could not independently verify the existence of such a statement.

While the narrative began with the claim that Iran shot down two F-35s, it evolved over the following days to include additional claims that more F-35s were shot down, the pilots were captured, and their confessions would be aired live.

We also saw four of the media rebrander accounts spread these unverified claims, sometimes alongside AI-generated content that was quickly debunked by viewers. Some of the media rebrander posts spreading these claims received hundreds of thousands of views, with some reaching over 1 million, illustrating the reach these inauthentic accounts achieved during the war. Despite their later rebranding to evade moderation, they had already amassed a significant following to which they could spread likely false claims.



A series of screenshots from F-35-related articles posted by the media outlets we targeted for collection.

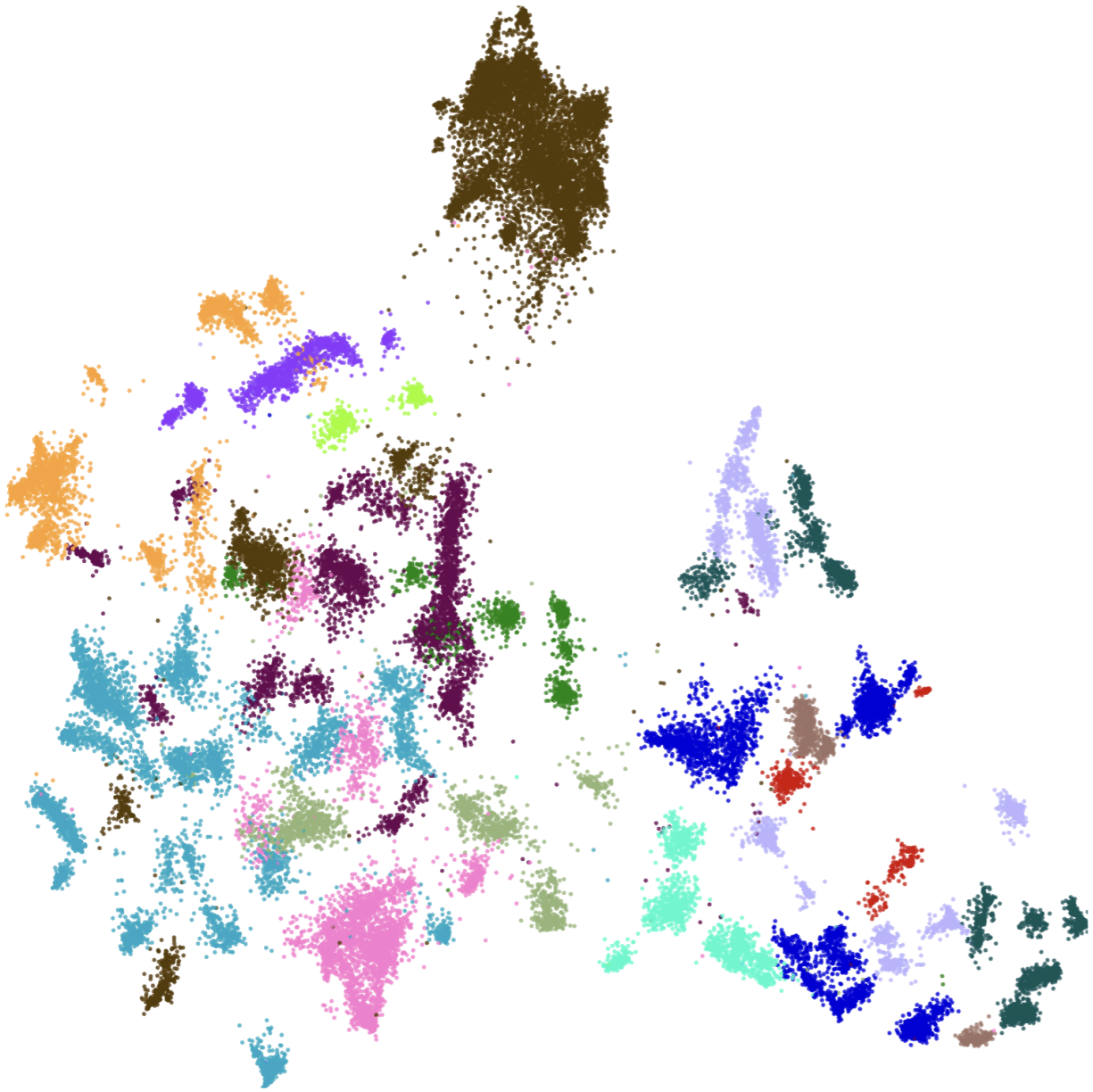


A series of screenshots from F-35-related posts from the media rebrander set of social media accounts. Note the view counts in the hundreds of thousands and the post dates ranging from June 16 to 23, 2025.

Appendix A

This appendix includes Graphika’s traditional content map visuals and thematic breakdown tables. These are more detailed versions of the simplified content maps presented in the body of this report.

Before the War Content Map

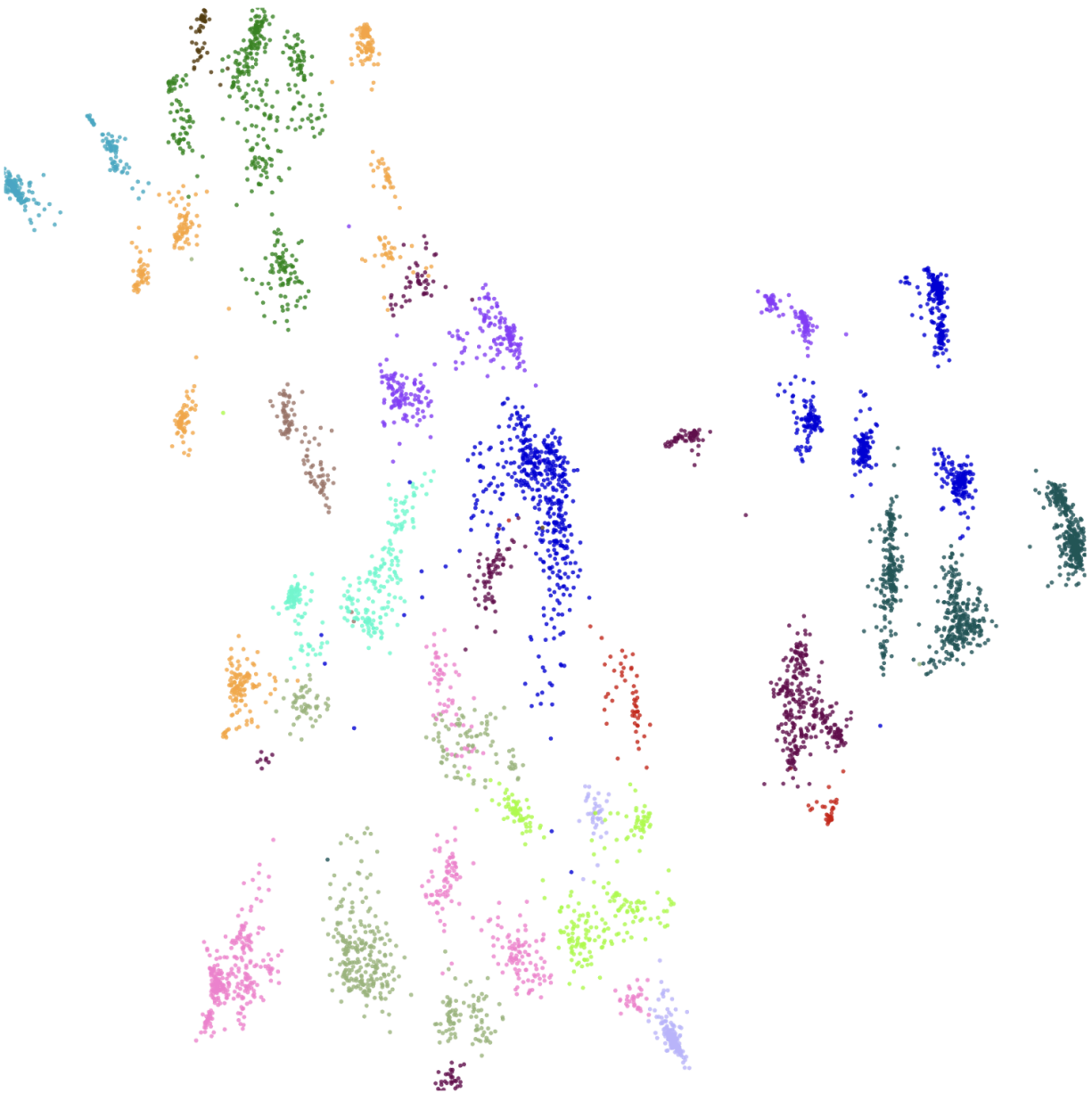


Graphika's Iranian State-Aligned Media Before the Israel-Iran War Map (May 1 - June 12, 2025) displays 98 topical clusters segmented into 15 narrative groups.

Breakdown of Groups in the Iranian State-Aligned Media Before the Israel-Iran War Map
(May 1 - June 12, 2025)

| Narrative Groups | Clusters in Group | Posts in Group | Share of Total Posts (%) |
|--|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Miscellaneous News | 6 | 10184 | 22.30% |
| Iranian Development and Economic Discussions | 20 | 6294 | 13.80% |
| Iranian Society and Cultural Discussions | 10 | 3917 | 8.60% |
| Multi-Language Discussions About Iran-West Nuclear Negotiations | 7 | 3882 | 8.50% |
| Iranian Domestic Social Reform Discussions and News | 6 | 3762 | 8.20% |
| Iranian Traffic and Weather Updates | 6 | 3703 | 8.10% |
| Multi-Language Discussions About Gaza and Israel Criticism | 9 | 2906 | 6.40% |
| Multi-Language News About Regional Middle East Conflicts | 8 | 2685 | 5.90% |
| Multi-Language Discussions About Iranian International Diplomacy | 4 | 1765 | 3.90% |
| News About Iranian Officials' Domestic Visits and Statements | 4 | 1718 | 3.80% |
| Iran Crime News | 4 | 1620 | 3.50% |
| Iranian Celebrations of Notable People and Events | 7 | 1338 | 2.90% |
| Multi-Language International News | 2 | 950 | 2.10% |
| English and Persian-Language Discussions About US Trade and Tensions | 3 | 530 | 1.20% |
| Iranian Discussions About Shahid Rajaei Port Explosion | 2 | 392 | 0.90% |

During the War

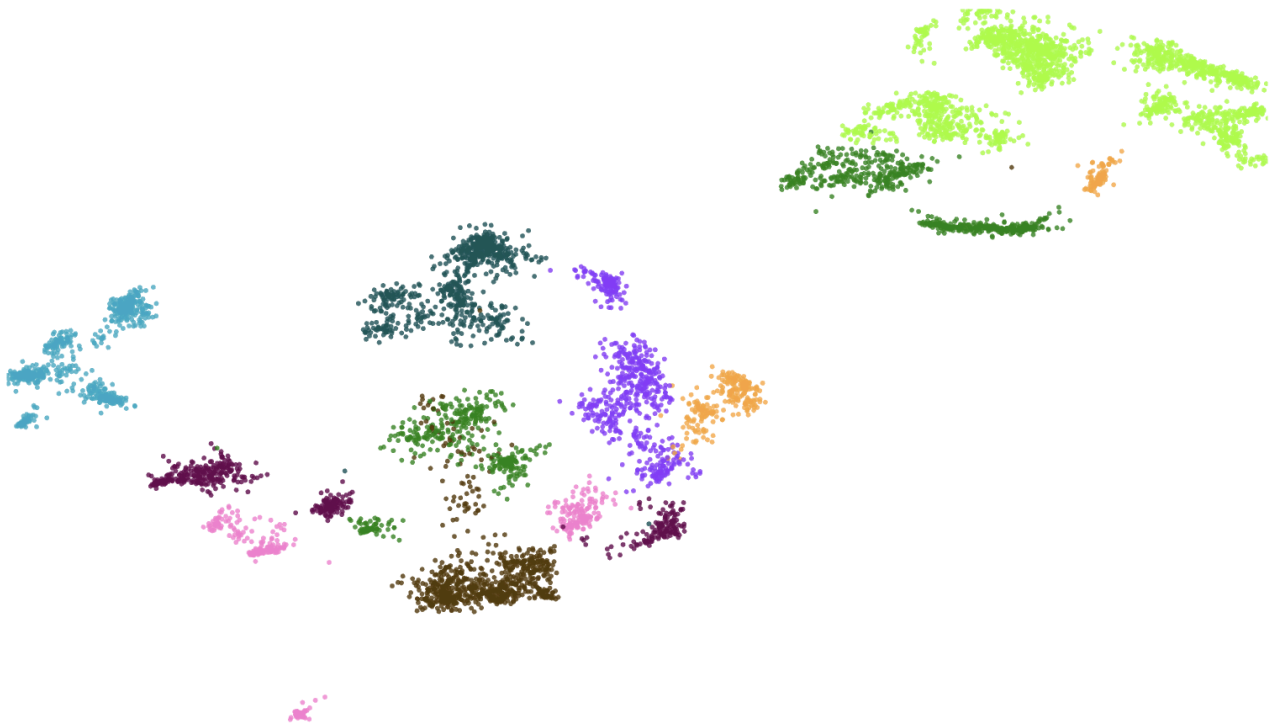


Graphika's Iranian State-Aligned Media During the Israel-Iran War Map (June 13 - 24, 2025) displays 55 topical clusters segmented into 15 narrative groups.

Breakdown of Groups in the Iranian State-Aligned Media During the Israel-Iran War Map
(June 13 - 24, 2025)

| Narrative Groups | Clusters in Group | Posts in Group | Share of Total Posts (%) |
|--|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Multi-Language News About Iranian Attacks on Israel | 5 | 1001 | 17.20% |
| Multi-Language Iranian Media Statements Condemning Israel | 3 | 775 | 13.30% |
| Iranian Condemnation of Israel | 6 | 558 | 9.60% |
| Iranian Government Statements on Israel-Iran War | 5 | 511 | 8.80% |
| Miscellaneous Iranian News | 7 | 465 | 8.00% |
| Statements and Expressions of Iranian National Unity | 5 | 467 | 8.00% |
| Assurances About Iran's Preparedness and Stability | 6 | 435 | 7.50% |
| Arabic and Persian-Language News About Iranian Responses and Defense Against Israeli Actions | 4 | 369 | 6.30% |
| News About Iranians Casualties | 2 | 266 | 4.60% |
| International Discussions and Responses to Israel-Iran War | 3 | 264 | 4.50% |
| Discussions About Societal Disruptions in Iran Due to War | 2 | 244 | 4.20% |
| Persian-Language Discussions About US Reactions to Israel-Iran War and US-Iran Tensions | 2 | 220 | 3.80% |
| Persian-Language Discussions About Psychological Warfare and Mental Health | 2 | 109 | 1.90% |
| Arabic and Persian-Language Discussions About Iran's Nuclear Diplomacy | 2 | 84 | 1.40% |
| Miscellaneous News | 1 | 46 | 0.80% |

After the War



Graphika’s Iranian State-Aligned Media After the Israel-Iran War Map (June 25 - Aug. 01, 2025) displays 29 topical clusters segmented into 10 narrative groups.

| Breakdown of Groups in the Iranian State-Aligned Media After the War Map (June 25 - Aug. 01, 2025) | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Narrative Groups | | Clusters in Group | Posts in Group | Share of Total Posts (%) |
| | Iranian and International Condemnation of Israel | 4 | 1955 | 26.40% |
| | Expressions of Iranian National Unity and Self-Determination | 5 | 1099 | 14.90% |
| | News About Iranian Casualties | 1 | 812 | 11.00% |
| | Iranian Sports News | 5 | 725 | 9.80% |
| | Persian-Language Discussions About US International Relations Under Trump | 1 | 728 | 9.80% |
| | Criticism of Israel and Netanyahu | 3 | 655 | 8.90% |
| | Miscellaneous News | 3 | 522 | 7.10% |
| | Miscellaneous Iranian News | 3 | 443 | 6.00% |

Breakdown of Groups in the Iranian State-Aligned Media After the War Map
(June 25 - Aug. 01, 2025)

| Narrative Groups | Clusters in Group | Posts in Group | Share of Total Posts (%) |
|---|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Iranian and International Condemnation of Israel | 4 | 1955 | 26.40% |
| Expressions of Iranian National Unity and Self-Determination | 5 | 1099 | 14.90% |
| News About Iranian Casualties | 1 | 812 | 11.00% |
| Iranian Sports News | 5 | 725 | 9.80% |
| Multi-Language Discussions About Regional Middle East Conflicts | 3 | 366 | 5.00% |
| Corrupted Text | 1 | 88 | 1.20% |



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