presstv.com

The website of Press TV, an international news network funded by the Iranian government. The site has repeatedly published false information and unsubstantiated conspiracy theories.

Ownership and Financing
Press TV is owned and funded by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), an Iranian state-owned corporation with a monopoly on the television media market in the country. This ownership is not disclosed on PressTV.com. Based in Tehran, IRIB owns television channels, local and national news agencies, radio stations, newspapers, and news sites in Iran.

IRIB also operates channels for audiences outside Iran, including Press TV, Persian-language Jame Jam TV, and the Arabic-language channels Al-Kawthar TV and Al-Alam News Network. Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei oversees IRIB and appoints its head.

Khamenei's government has extensive control over the media in Iran, according to the press advocacy group Reporters Without Borders, which documented at least 860 imprisonments or executions of professional and citizen journalists in Iran since 1979. "The regime has extended its fight against media freedom beyond the country's borders and also targets the international media," the nonprofit reported.

The site does not run advertising.

Content
PressTV.com's About page states that the network's mission includes "Heeding the often neglected voices and perspectives of a great portion of the world", "Encouraging human beings of different nationalities, races and creeds to identify with one another", and "Bringing to light untold and overlooked stories".

PressTV.com publishes news focused on the Middle East, particularly Iran and international affairs relating to Iran. Typical articles have included "Afghan presidential election: Both camps claim victory", "MDS ready to recognize Israel in return for US help", and "Iran set to boost ties with all neighbors: Rouhani". The site also covers world news, often with an emphasis on British and American politics and how they affect the Middle East.

In addition to text content, PressTV.com hosts videos, such as news segments on a Sudanese peace conference and a tornado in Germany. The site's Programs section contains segments broadcast on Press TV, including interviews and round-ups of British political news. The Docs section contains long-form documentaries by Press TV journalists, such as "Silent Killer", concerning Israel's nuclear weapons program, and "Rohingya: Inside Myanmar's Genocide".

Credibility
Many articles on PressTV.com are based on information gathered by the outlet's reporters, including interviews with government officials. However, Press TV has repeatedly published false information and disproven or unsubstantiated conspiracy theories and angles its coverage to promote the interests of its undisclosed owner, the Iranian government.

A February 2020 article advanced multiple false claims about the new coronavirus outbreak that were sourced to Natural News, a site that NewsGuard has found repeatedly publishes false health information. The PressTV.com article, citing Natural News, claimed the virus was "engineered by scientists in a lab" and that it "has been engineered with AIDS like insertions".

Press TV's article did not provide any evidence for the claim that the coronavirus was a manufactured bioweapon. Fact-checker PolitiFact reported that "There is a lab near Wuhan that deals with dangerous pathogens — and some have linked it to China's biological warfare program. But officials are still working to determine the source of the coronavirus outbreak" and "the [Centers for Disease Control] has said the coronavirus appears to have originated at a seafood and animal market in Wuhan, China."

Moreover, as the fact-checking website Health Feedback stated in February 2020, "The similarity between [the coronavirus] and HIV was detected using extremely short protein sequences, a practice that often gives rise to false positive results." The site explained that "these short protein sequences were similar to many other organisms, not just HIV".

In March 2020, Iranian government officials began publicly suggesting that the coronavirus may be a targeted bioweapon created by the U.S. Some of these claims were parroted on PressTV.com.

For example, a March 2020 article, titled "Iran examining possibility of coronavirus being bioweapon," reported the remarks of an Iranian general, who stated that "there is even speculation that this virus has been created to specifically target the Iranian..."
population given their genetic traits." The article did not provide any evidence supporting this claim, and multiple studies and authorities have ruled out the possibility that the COVID-19 virus was created in a lab. Health officials said it was likely passed on to humans from bats.

In September 2019, Press TV published an article titled "Some of the many things most Americans never heard about 9/11". The article made multiple false claims about the September 11 terror attacks, including that "About half of the alleged hijackers have been found alive and well"; that "no airliner debris exists" from the crashes; and that "The airliners that allegedly hit the Twin Towers were flimsy compared to the steel and concrete of the towers. The airliners would have smashed against the structure and fallen to the street below."

These claims are contradicted by multiple reports and investigations. A large amount of film footage shows the planes crashing into the World Trade Center towers. On the claim that no airliner debris from the attacks exist, structural engineers on the scene reported finding airline parts. "I picked up parts of the plane with the airline markings on them. I held in my hand the tail section of the plane, and I found the black box," structural engineer Alyn E. Kilshemer told Popular Mechanics. No credible evidence has emerged suggesting any of the hijackers are still alive.

An August 2019 article, headlined "Sirhan Sirhan was 'hypnotized' by Jewish criminal organizations to kill RFK Scholor", reported a claim that the man who assassinated Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in 1968 had been hypnotized into committing the act by the "Kosher Nostra", or ethnically Jewish organized crime with a fanatical loyalty to Israel. The site attributed the claim to an author and radio host named Kevin Barrett, who also told Press TV that "The Kosher Nostra" was responsible for "killing President [John F.] Kennedy to stop him from shutting down Israel's nuclear weapons program...". The article did not feature any caveat or note that these theories are not backed by any evidence and are contradicted by numerous investigations and accounts.

Because PressTV.com has frequently published false information and unsubstantiated conspiracy theories, NewsGuard has determined that the site repeatedly publishes false information and deceptive headlines.

Press TV's coverage is skewed to promote the interests of the Iranian government. For example, the site's coverage of Iran's major regional rival, Saudi Arabia, consistently focuses on Saudi Arabia's setbacks and alleged human rights abuses. Typical headlines along these lines published in one week in February 2020 included "Amnesty demands immediate release of Saudi rights activists", "Report: Saudi Arabia used French mercenaries to kill pilgrims in 1979 uprising", and "As Saudi war enters sixth year, Riyadh caught off guard by Yemen's massive offensive".

In contrast, Press TV's coverage of Iran is consistently positive about the country's leaders and agenda, with articles published over the same week in February 2020 including "Iran to expand rural road network by 2,000 km till March: Minister", "IAEA: Iran not taken any new measure in violation of JCPOA", and "Iran: Thousands of students brand themselves killed by the U.S. the previous month."

Because Press TV cherry-picks stories to push Iran's agenda without disclosing its relationship to Iran, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not gather and present news responsibly. Further, although Press TV news articles typically avoid using opinionated language, because the site does not disclose its political agenda, NewsGuard has determined it does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

PressTV.com does not articulate a corrections policy, and NewsGuard did not find corrections on the site.

NewsGuard emailed Press TV seeking comment on the site's publication of false information, its approach to distinguishing news from opinion, and its lack of corrections. In response, the site said in an email that after reviewing NewsGuard's "assessments about various websites... unfortunately, we do NOT permit NewsGuard to assess or publish a report about PressTV.com."

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**Transparency**

Neither Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting nor the Iranian government are identified as Press TV's owner. Press TV states on its About PressTV page that it is "the first Iranian international news network" and that its "global Tehran-based headquarters is staffed with outstanding Iranian and foreign media professionals."

Articles do not typically identify their authors, and the site does not identify Press TV's editors or reporters. A Contact Us page provides email addresses for users seeking to contact various departments.

The site does not run advertising.

NewsGuard emailed Press TV seeking comment on the site's lack of information concerning its ownership, editors, and content creators. The site responded with a statement saying that "we do NOT permit NewsGuard to assess or publish a report about PressTV.com."

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**History**

Press TV was launched in July 2007.

In 2011, Press TV failed to pay a £100,000 fine imposed by British media regulator Ofcom for airing a coerced confession of the Newsweek journalist Maziar Bahari, which he gave under duress while imprisoned on espionage charges in Iran in 2009. In January 2012, Ofcom revoked Press TV's broadcasting license, according to the BBC.

In March 2012, the European Union placed sanctions on Ezzatollah Zarghami, then
director and head of IRIB, for authorizing the broadcast of forced confessions of detainees and “show trials.” In October 2012, the European satellite provider Eutelsat cut 19 IRIB channels, including Press TV, to comply with European Union sanctions imposed on Iran for failing to stop its nuclear program.

In February 2013, the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned IRIB for “restricting or denying the free flow of information to or from the Iranian people” and “censoring multiple media outlets and airing forced confessions from political detainees.” The same month, Galaxy 19, Press TV’s North American broadcaster, pulled the channel off the air in the U.S. and Canada.

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: Click Here

Sources

Ownership and Financing
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Content
Typical articles
Docs
http://presstvdoc.com/post/15191
http://presstvdoc.com/post/15388
http://presstvdoc.com/post/15387

Credibility
False information or unproven conspiracy theories in articles
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