



Spotlight on Iran



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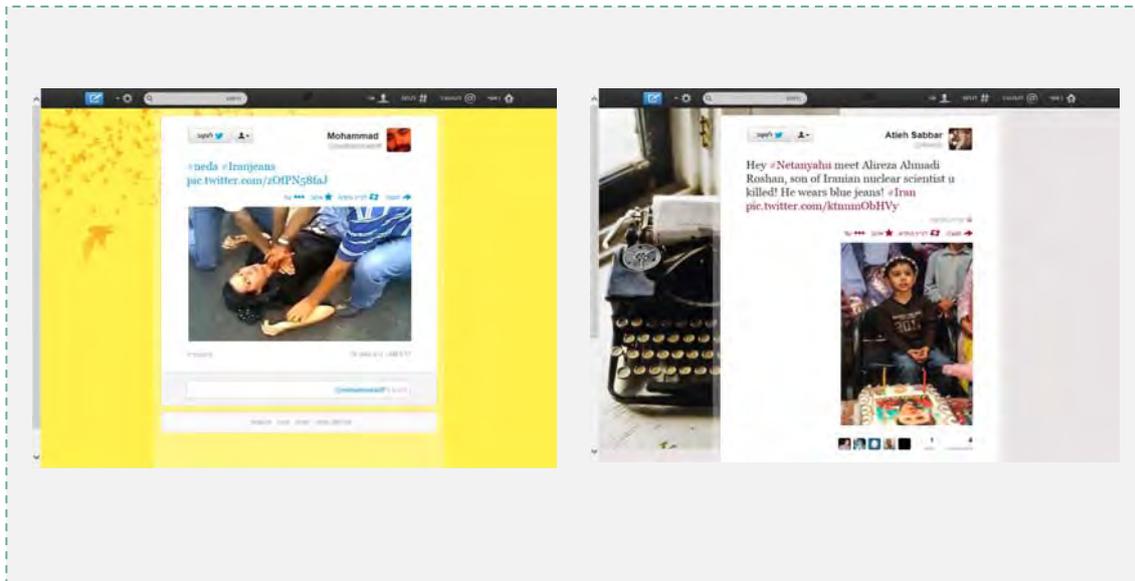
Iranians in blue jeans: Internet users protest BBC interview with Prime Minister Netanyahu

The interview that Prime Minister Netanyahu gave to the BBC in Farsi has raised critical response as well as mockery in recent days from Iranian Internet users on social networks. The main target of the young Iranians' ire was Netanyahu's words to the effect that they are not free to indulge in Western cultural markers. Netanyahu said that if Iranians were truly free, they would wear blue jeans, listen to Western music, and enjoy free elections.

Many Iranian Internet users responded to these statements, saying that they express ignorance and arrogance on the part of the Israeli Prime Minister. Some leveled criticism on how he presented freedom in Iran, while others exploited his words in order to attack Israel's relations with the Palestinians. Signs of the explosive response to Netanyahu's words were notable in reactions of Iranians across the political spectrum, both in Iran and abroad.

The main thrust of the protest took place on Twitter, which was flooded with dozens of photos uploaded by Iranians showing them indeed wearing jeans, labeled #jeans or #iranjeans.

Among the uploaded photos was the famous one of Neda-Agha Soltan, who was shot to death during the Tehran uprisings of 2009, and who became a symbol of the Green Movement struggle. In the picture, Soltan is wearing jeans.



Another photo shows the son of Iranian nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Rowshan, who was assassinated in 2012. The picture was accompanied by the caption: “Netanyahu, meet Alireza Ahmadi Roshan, son of Iranian nuclear scientist u killed! He wears blue jeans!”

Alongside uploading photos, many reacted by publishing satirical responses. For example, one user referred to Netanyahu’s words in his speech at the UN according to which “Ahmadinejad is a wolf in wolf’s clothing, and Rowhani is a wolf in sheep’s clothing”, writing that next year, Netanyahu will surely describe Rowhani as a “wolf in blue jeans”.

Another user wondered how Netanyahu knows that Iran produces nuclear weapons if he doesn’t even know that Iranians wear blue jeans. Yet another referred to many photos uploaded by young Iranian women wearing jeans, and wrote that he dreams of the day when Netanyahu will talk about how Iranian women aren’t allowed to wear bikinis.

In past instances, Iranian net surfers also revealed themselves to be sensitive, responding sharply to statements or to deeds by foreigners (including from Arab countries, Russia, and China) that appeared to them to be arrogant, scornful, or offensive to their national pride. For example, the decision of Samsung in April 2013 to block access of its customers in Iran to its app store sparked irate reactions from Iranians, many of them calling for a boycott of Samsung as a demonstration of Iranian national pride.

Jeans-wearing Iranians on Twitter

Amir Abbas @aakpro1
@netanyahu my damn #jeans pic.twitter.com/MF4PHUO7Ei
Retweeted by javad oftadeh
2:44 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details



2:44 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details

AnneShiray2011 آن شیری
من الجین می پوشم I wear #jeans
@netanyahu twitpic.com/dga3qb
Retweeted by javad oftadeh
2:54 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details



2:54 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details

1Mahyar @1Mahyar
@netanyahu Would you like to open my #jeans button with your teeth to see a real #freedom in #Iran ?
#NetanYahu pic.twitter.com/HFaOhly1E
Retweeted by javad oftadeh
3:06 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details



3:06 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details

Mohammad @mohammadoff
#Iranjeans #netanyahu pic.twitter.com/8PPJQ0MY48
Retweeted by javad oftadeh
3:11 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details



3:11 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details

@prhmma نادر
#jeans @netanyahu
look we wear jeans.
I dare you to send picture of your balls.
if you got some ,of course!! pic.twitter.com/iOB9fyPT
Retweeted by javad oftadeh
3:12 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details



3:12 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details

Hassan @hassan_iran
I should buy a new one, I bought it about a year ago
#Jeans pic.twitter.com/kj0UKaeQgu
Retweeted by javad oftadeh
3:17 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details



3:17 PM - 6 Oct 13 - Details

