

fact check

Fact and fiction - the line has never been more blurred



In a world where information spreads faster than ever, not everything you see or hear is necessarily true.

This page takes a closer look at viral claims, trending stories and widely shared information – checking the facts, examining the evidence and separating truth from misinformation.

Old UAE fire clip falsely linked to Mideast war

TDT | agencies

Renewed fighting between the United States and Iran in July 2026 set off a torrent of falsely shared visuals online, including footage of a burning building that posts claimed

showed US missiles hitting an Iranian target. The video, frequently misrepresented as a scene from the Middle East conflict, in fact depicts a fire that engulfed a public market in the United Arab Emirates in August 2020.



“The US fired 1,800 missiles at Iran. Every single missile hit the target,” says a post written in Chinese and shared on the Chinese social media platform NetEase Video on July 23, 2026.

The video circulated elsewhere on X and spread online in other languages such as Hindi and English.

The posts emerged online as the US military carried out strikes on Iran, in the largest rekindling of the almost five-month-old war since an April ceasefire (archived link).

Iran has retaliated by firing at US military facilities in the Gulf. However, the circulating video is unrelated to the Middle East conflict and had in fact been previously misrepresented as an Iranian attack on a Dubai gas facility and a blaze at the Dubai International Airport.

A reverse image search on Google found the same clip



Screenshot comparison between false X post (L) and Google Maps street view of same location in Ajman, with similar elements.

Years-old Kuwait blaze falsely linked to renewed US-Iran conflict

TDT | Manama

As the United States and Iran resumed fighting, online posts shared footage they falsely claimed showed Iranian missiles causing a massive fire on an unnamed US military base in the Gulf. In fact, the video was shared by Kuwait's fire force in a July 2020 post about a blaze in a warehouse linked to air conditioning gas canisters.

“America is finished. Iran dropped bombs on the largest military base in the Gulf,” says a Facebook post written in Thai shared on July 17.

The featured 36-second clip, viewed more than 46,000 times, depicts a huge nighttime blaze, with smoke rising from a building behind a fire truck.

Misleading

The video has also been misrepresented on Instagram and spread in English and Arabic posts.

Fighting over the strategic Strait of Hormuz derailed diplomatic efforts between Washington and Tehran, triggering a US air campaign and Iranian reprisals that expanded the conflict to shipping lanes, Gulf allies and military bases across the region (archived link).



Fighting has also spread to a new front. Iran-backed Houthi rebels said they downed a Saudi drone over northwestern Yemen, after the Yemeni group claimed it attacked oil facilities in the Gulf kingdom.

The Houthis had said they struck Saudi Aramco sites in Jizan and Yanbu, after Riyadh bombed Houthi targets.

But the circulating video is unrelated to the Middle East conflict.

2020 Kuwait fire

A reverse image search on Google using keyframes led AFP to the same clip shared by the Kuwait Fire Force on its official Instagram account on July 29, 2020 (archived link).

The caption says air conditioning gas canisters caused the warehouse fire. The fire force also published video and photos showing fire trucks tackling the blaze at the warehouse

Warehouse

Subsequent keyword searches on Google surfaced a report from Kuwaiti newspaper Dasman News on July 29, 2020 that included the recently misrepresented video.

The Arabic-language post said explosions occurred at a warehouse in Kuwait's agricultural Sulaibiya area, caused by gas canisters used to fill air conditioning units.

Kuwait Times reported the same day that several refrigerating gas cylinders exploded



Screenshot comparison between the false Facebook post (L) and the Instagram post by Kuwait Fire Force

during the fire, citing Kuwait's Fire and Safety Department, adding the warehouses were operating in violation of their agricultural license (archived link).

Fireworks at 2026 FIFA World Cup closing ceremony were white, not blue



TDT | agencies

Social media users claimed FIFA had prepared for Argentina's victory after a video appeared to show blue fireworks following Spain's 2026 World Cup final win.

The claim was used to suggest FIFA favouritism towards Argentina and Lionel Messi, with posts arguing that the fireworks matched Argentina's blue-and-white colours.

However, AFP photos and footage from other media outlets show the fireworks were white, not blue.

Spain beat Argentina 1-0 on July 19, with Feran Torres scoring in extra time. The fireworks were launched from the top of the New York New Jersey Stadium after the trophy presentation.

The claim spread across X, Facebook, Instagram, Weibo, Threads and Xiaohongshu in several languages.

