

factcheck

Fact and fiction - the line is more blurred than ever



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.

Trump posts old images amid renewed US strikes on Iran

AFP | USA

US President Donald Trump shared an image of a massive fire and plumes of smoke on July 8, 2026, claiming it showed his country's "retribution" for Iranian attacks on ships traversing the vital Strait of Hormuz. But the picture is an altered version of a photo taken more than a year earlier, an AFP investigation found.

"This is in retribution for yesterday's bombing of ships by Iran. If it happens again, it will get much worse!" Trump wrote in the Truth Social post sharing a screenshot of an X post from an account called "@Osint613," which claimed it showed "Chabahar, Iran."

The official White House X

Screenshot from Truth Social taken July 9, 2026, with AI logo added by AFP

Screenshot from Getty Images taken July 9, 2026

US-Israeli strikes February 28, events that plunged the Middle East into war.

Trump declared the delicate ceasefire "over" on July 8 as the United States blasted Iran with extensive strikes, after Tehran hit several commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow gateway for one-fifth of the world's oil. The Islamic republic said it had also resumed its attacks targeting US assets in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar.

But the image Trump claimed on Truth Social showed "retribution" is unrelated to the renewed hostilities.

"BIG CORRECTION: I just double checked and this image is not from tonight," the "@Osint613" X account, which first shared it, wrote in a follow-up post (archived here). Later, the account posted again saying the image had "circulated in Iranian accounts".

Reverse image searches surfaced a near-identical photo from Getty Images dated to June 2025 (archived here).

The caption on the photo -- and other shots showing the same inferno -- says it shows fire and smoke rising "into the sky after an Israeli attack on the Shahrn oil depot on June 15, 2025 in Tehran, Iran" (archived here).

The capital is hundreds of miles away from the city of Chabahar, mentioned in the "@Osint613" post.

A video also in the Getty Images archive shows the same fire burning (archived here).

The version Trump posted was also altered, with several details enhanced or otherwise changed.

The cylindrical fuel storage tanks that appear in the Getty Images original -- and also show up damaged in Google Earth satellite imagery of the area -- do not exist in the version Trump shared, which instead depicts a structure of a different shape

Japan did not ban mosques

Reuters

Online posts saying Japan has introduced "anti-Islam laws" that ban mosques, burqas, halal food and the Islamic call to prayer are false. The government has not brought in any such laws and Japan's constitution guarantees religious freedom.

Here are the key details:

- The posts from August said the so-called laws were "basically saying Islam is not welcome" in Japan.
- A spokesperson for Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology told Reuters that was "not true at all".
- The spokesperson said religious freedom is enshrined in Japan's constitution and that no regulations have been introduced to purposely prohibit halal food, mosques,

burqas or the call to prayer.

- Article 20 of the Constitution of Japan says: "Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all."
- Mosques are mostly found in Japan's larger cities, according to the Japanese National Tourism Organization, which recommends a mosque-finder website, opens new tab on its website.
- The JNTO says there has been a boost in "halal travel" to Japan and attributes that to an increase in Muslim-friendly and halal-accredited restaurants and facilities, mosques and tours.

Verdict: False.

Japan's constitution guarantees religious freedom for all. A culture ministry spokesperson said there are no regulations that prohibit the practices listed in the online posts.

Images of brides heading for Ceuta in their wedding gowns have been altered

Reuters

Two images altered to show women in bridal gowns en route to Ceuta have been shared online as if they are authentic evidence of couples abandoning their wedding ceremonies in Morocco to attempt the crossing to the Spanish enclave in late July.

Here are the key details:

- Both images show women wearing floor-length, white wedding gowns, and one also shows a man in a tuxedo.
- The first image is an edited screenshot from a video of a group of people running along a highway that connects Morocco to Ceuta.
- The woman in the unedited video is wearing a white skirt and a pink top.
- Nina Boudkhili, who identified herself on Instagram as the woman in the video, said in a post that she was not a bride and had been wearing a long skirt that day.
- Boudkhili also said to Reuters in a private message that she had not been wearing a wedding dress, nor did she see anyone else wearing one.
- The second image is an edited screenshot of a separate video showing people running on the shoreline adjacent to the highway, opens new tab in the first video.
- The unedited video does not show a man in a tuxedo or a woman in a bridal gown.
- Google's SynthID detection tool found that the image was likely edited using AI.

Verdict: Altered.

Both images are digitally altered screenshots from two separate videos.