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Monitoring hate speech online: developments and current trends in Italian context

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Co-funded by
the European Union

Three attributes of hate speech

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1

Hate speech can be conveyed through any form of expression, including **images**, **cartoons**, **memes**, **objects**, **gestures and symbols** and it can be disseminated offline or online.

2

Hate speech is **"discriminatory"** (biased, bigoted or intolerant) or **"pejorative"** (prejudiced, contemptuous or demeaning) of an individual or group.

3

Hate speech calls out real or perceived **"identity factors"** of an individual or a group, including: **"religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender,"** but also characteristics such as language, economic or social origin, disability, health status, or sexual orientation, among many others.

What is considered **illegal hate speech** in Italy?

o Apology or glorification of fascism;

o Propaganda and incitement to commit **crimes of discrimination** based on ethnicity, national origin, and religion;

o Disseminating ideas based **on racial or ethnic superiority** or **hatred**; incitement to commit or committing acts of discrimination on racial, ethnic, national or religious grounds; display of racist emblems and symbols;

o Defamation through social networks;

o Threats.

SafeNet – Monitoring and Reporting for Safer Online Environments

- Current sample – 1033 cases
- Platforms:
  - Facebook - 234
  - Twitter/X - 776
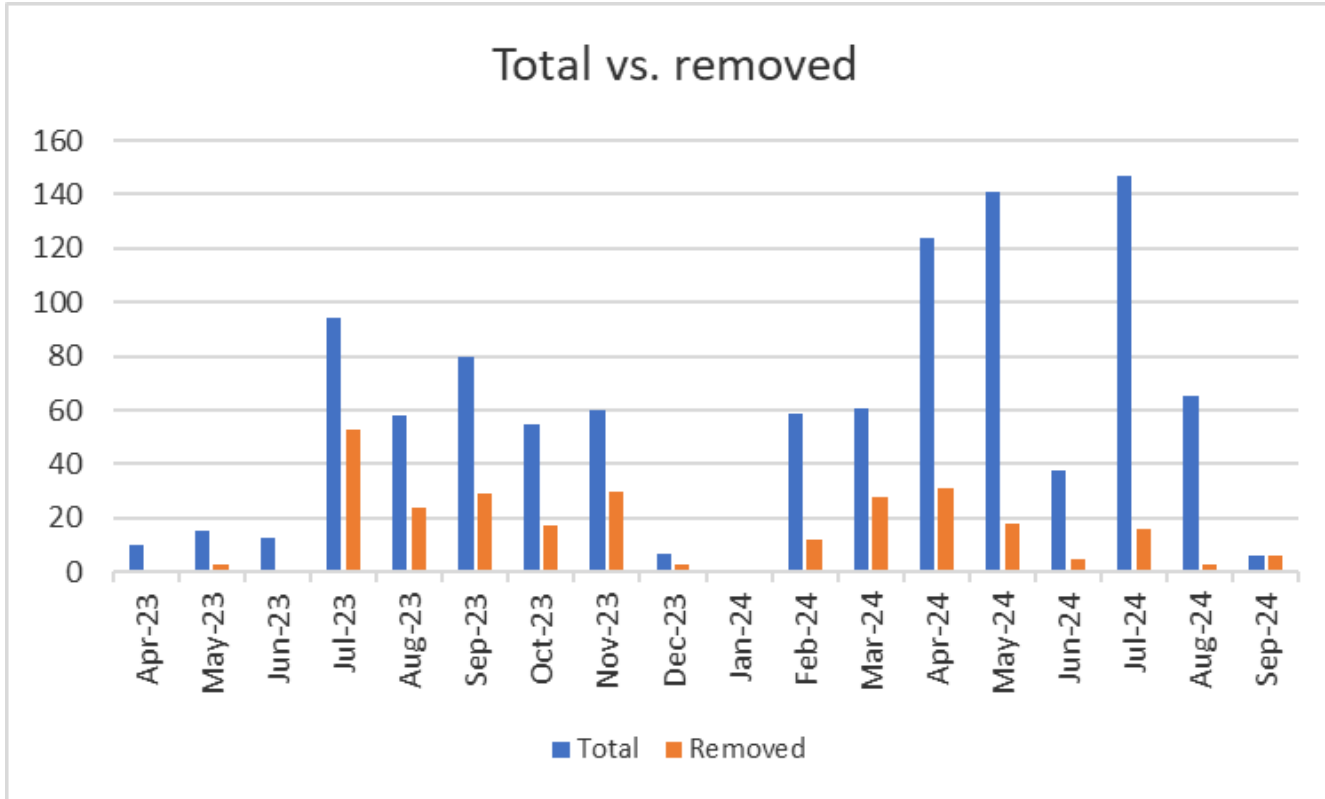 - Instagram - 22
  - Youtube - 1

General statistics

Statistics overview
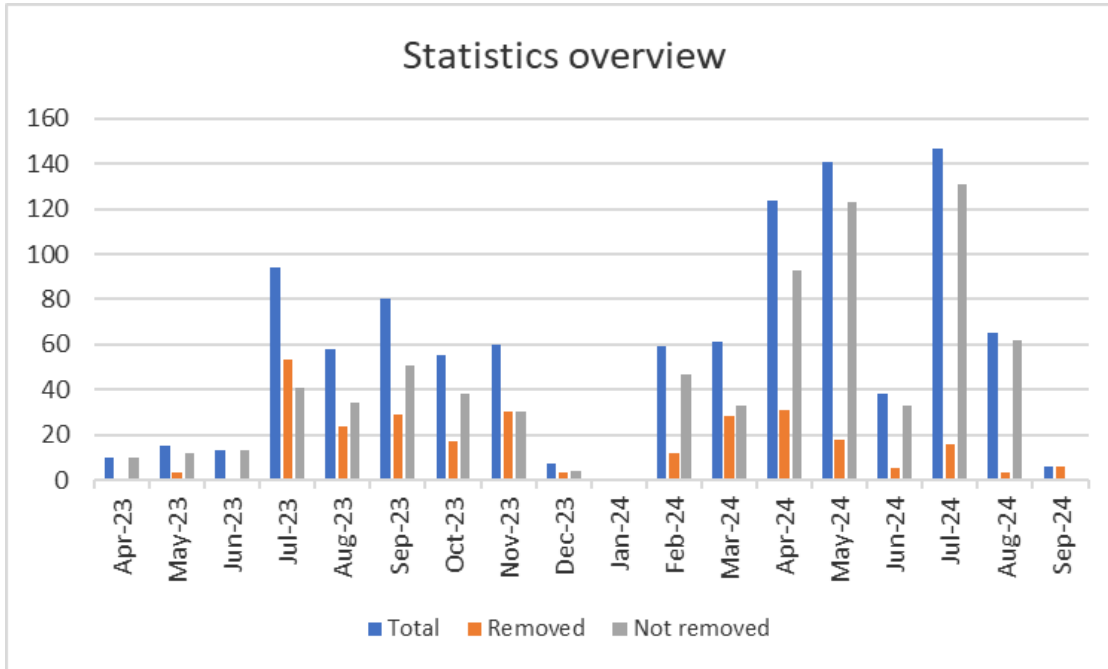
	Total	Removed	Not removed
Apr-23	10	0	10
May-23	15	3	12
Jun-23	13	0	13
Jul-23	94	53	41
Aug-23	58	24	34
Sep-23	80	29	51
Oct-23	55	17	38
Nov-23	60	30	30
Dec-23	7	3	4
Jan-24	0	0	0
Feb-24	59	12	47
Mar-24	61	28	33
Apr-24	124	31	93
May-24	141	18	123
Jun-24	38	5	33
Jul-24	147	16	131
Aug-24	68	3	65
Sep-24	6	6	0

Overall removal statistics

Facebook

Facebook
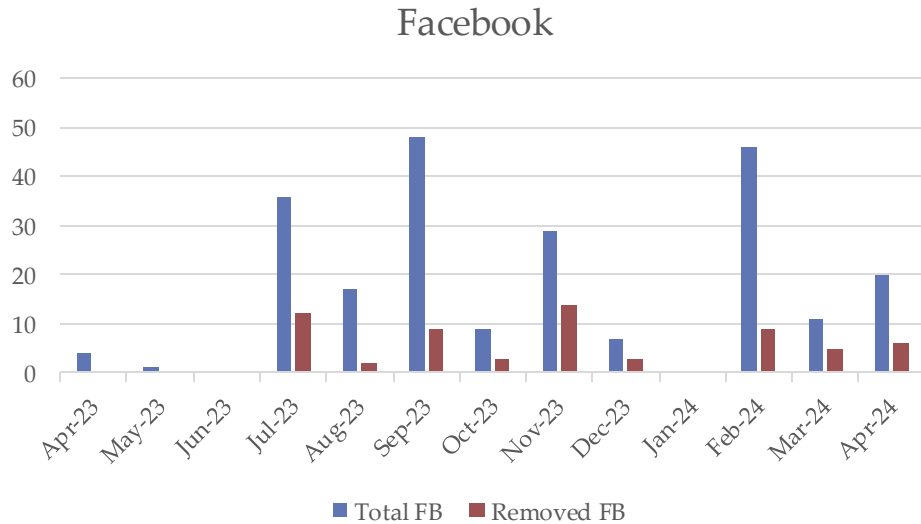
	Total FB	Removed FB
Apr-23	4	0
May-23	1	0
Jun-23	0	0
Jul-23	36	12
Aug-23	17	2
Sep-23	48	9
Oct-23	9	3
Nov-23	29	14
Dec-23	7	3
Jan-24	0	0
Feb-24	46	9
Mar-24	11	5
Apr-24	20	6

*Highlighted - removal rate
of 33% or less*

Twitter/X

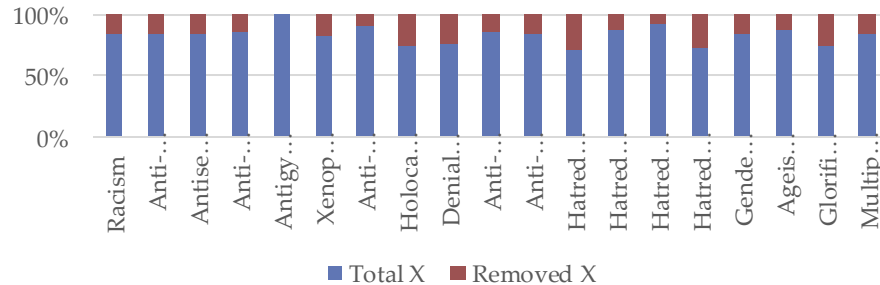|	X		
	Total	**Removed**	**Not removed**
Apr-23	0	0	0
May-23	11	2	9
Jun-23	10	0	10
Jul-23	57	41	16
Aug-23	40	21	19
Sep-23	27	20	7
Oct-23	45	14	31
Nov-23	31	16	15
Dec-23	0	0	0
Jan-24	0	0	0
Feb-24	8	1	7
Mar-24	48	23	25
Apr-24	100	22	78
May-24	139	18	121
Jun-24	38	5	33
Jul-24	147	16	131
Aug-24	68	3	65
Sep-24	6	6	0
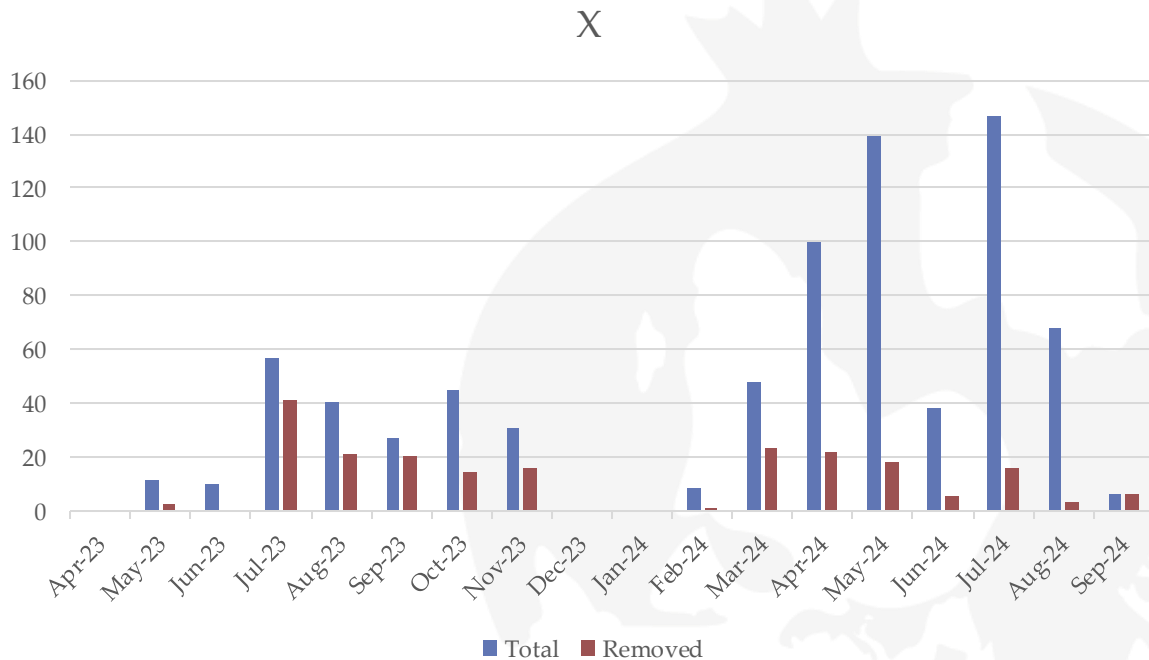
Highlighted - removal rate of 33% or less. Oct 2023 – drastic change in response rate overall
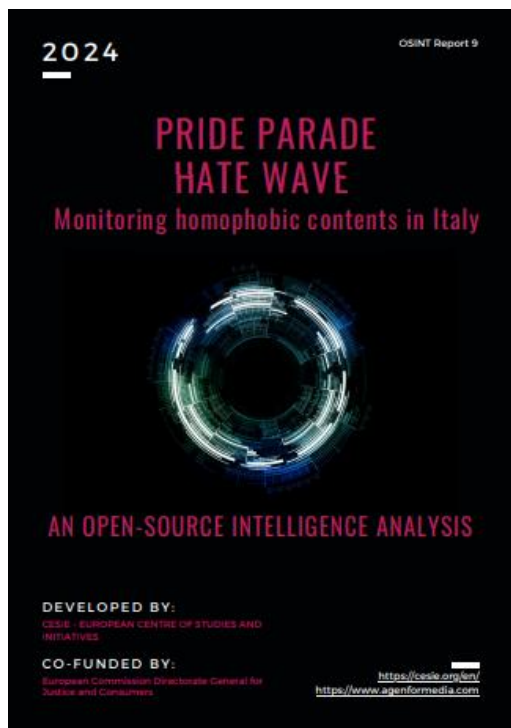

X

Types of hate

Facebook
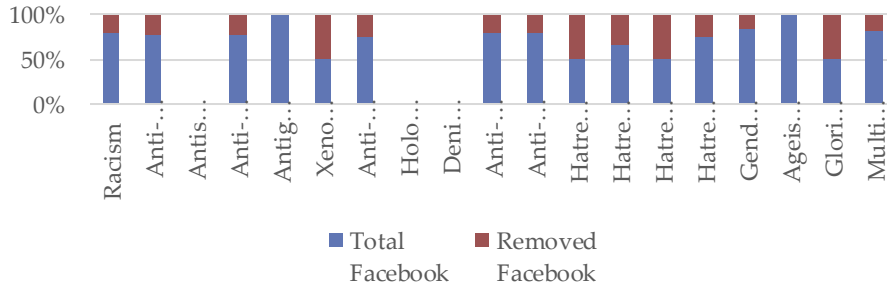
X

	Total	Total Facebook	Removed Facebook	Total X	Removed X
Racism	134	45	12	81	16
Anti-Black racism	305	70	21	231	44
Antisemitism	12	0	0	11	2
Anti-Muslim hatred	61	10	3	45	7
Antigypsyism	14	1	0	10	0
Xenophobia	15	1	1	14	3
Anti-religious hate	13	3	1	10	1
Holocaust Denial and Holocaust distortion	6	0	0	6	2
Denial of crimes against humanity	13	0	0	13	4
Anti-Arab hatred	22	8	2	12	2
Anti-refugee hatred	82	16	4	64	12
Hatred related to skin color	6	1	1	5	2
Hatred related to the origin	38	8	4	30	4
Hatred related to ethnicity	14	1	1	13	1
Hatred related to sexual orientation	402	44	15	357	135
Gender-based hatred, including identity and expression	188	72	14	114	22
Ageism, ableism, and social status hatred	21	7	0	14	2
Glorification of National Socialism	4	1	1	3	1
Multiple Motives	235	38	8	191	38

Publication

PRIDE PARADE HATE WAVE: Monitoring homophobic contents in Italy

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2024

OSINT Report 9

PRIDE PARADE HATE WAVE

Monitoring homophobic contents in Italy

AN OPEN-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

DEVELOPED BY:
CESIE - EUROPEAN CENTRE OF STUDIES AND INITIATIVES

CO-FUNDED BY:
European Commission Directorate General for Justice and Consumers

https://cesie.org/en/
https://www.agenformedia.com

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Type of content

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	Total	Removed
Apology of hate crimes and crimes against humanity	77	13
Holocaus denial	7	2
Glorification of terrorism	1	0
Use of symbols (prohibited)	1	0
Use of symbols (not prohibited but tendentious)	1	0
Incetement to hate	131	45
Incitement to violence	160	49
Insults	755	221
Threats, stalking, harassment and bullying	170	15

Every type of content *has the removal rate of about 33% or less*

Type of content

Threats, stalking,…
Incitement to violence
Use of symbols (not…
Glorification of terrorism
Apology of hate crimes…

0   200   400   600   800

■ Removed ■ Total
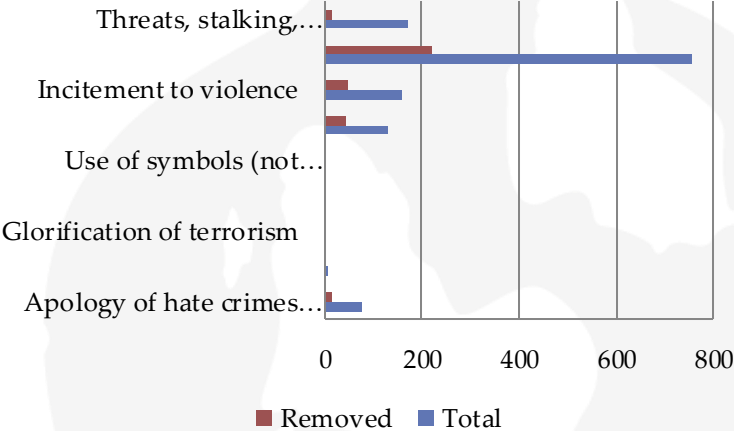
Conclusions from monitoring in 2023-2024

o   Intersections between sexual orientation and various forms of racism;
o   Scapegoating ("all of the problems are because of...", "too much tolerance towards...");
o   Posts often remained online despite indications they violated standards or were restricted to certain regions.

Platform-Specific Observations:

- **Facebook:**
  - Lowest removal rate between the two monitored platforms;
  - Facebook often did not provide feedback, and when it did, the response time could be up to a week or longer;
  - Facebook did not disclose restriction actions, though some content appeared "faint" on pages after the monitoring ended;
  - Notable issues with handling visual hate speech, such as ape gifs under posts featuring black men.

- **Twitter:**
  - Twitter's restrictions were usually applied simultaneously with feedback but were ineffective;
  - **Initially** removed hate speech content, but later (by October) primarily applied restrictions without removing posts;
  - Lower quality of reviews over time, with clear hate speech not being flagged as violations.

Some of the cases that are still public

Come sono cambiati i tempi...rimango convinto che con olio di ricino e manganello si eliminerebbero molti problemi, ma purtroppo il "passato" non ritorna.
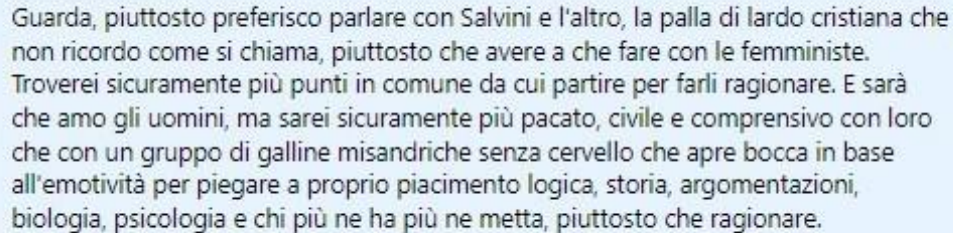
Translate post

8:07 PM · Sep 22, 2023 · **17** Views

* How the times have changed... I'm convinced that castor oil and a baton would eliminate many problems, but unfortunately the 'past' does not return.

Castor oil: Use as a means of intimidation in Fascist Italy

In Fascist Italy under the regime of Benito Mussolini, castor oil was one of the tools of the blackshirts[40] [41] [42] Political dissidents were force-fed large quantities of castor oil by Fascist paramilitary groups. This technique was said to have been originated by Gabriele D'Annunzio. Victims of this treatment would experience severe diarrhea and dehydration, often resulting in death [43]

Some of the cases that are still public

Guarda, piuttosto preferisco parlare con Salvini e l'altro, la palla di lardo cristiana che non ricordo come si chiama, piuttosto che avere a che fare con le femministe. Troverei sicuramente più punti in comune da cui partire per farli ragionare. E sarà che amo gli uomini, ma sarei sicuramente più pacato, civile e comprensivo con loro che con un gruppo di galline misandriche senza cervello che apre bocca in base all'emotività per piegare a proprio piacimento logica, storia, argomentazioni, biologia, psicologia e chi più ne ha più ne metta, piuttosto che ragionare.

39 w   Like   Reply   2

* Look, I'd rather talk to Salvini and the other one, the Christian lard ball I can't remember what his name is, than deal with feminists. I would definitely find more common ground to reason with them. And it may be that I love men, but I would certainly be more placid, civilised and understanding with them than with a bunch of mindless misandric hens who open their mouths based on emotion to bend logic, history, arguments, biology, psychology and so on, rather than reasoning.

Some of the cases that are still public

October 2023

Some of the cases that are still public

June 2024
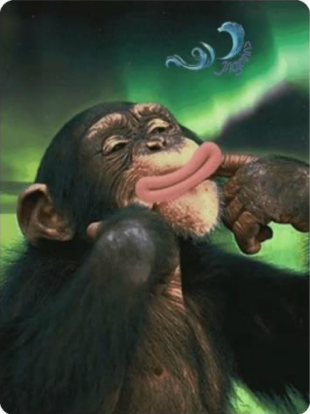
Uga uga uh uh uh uh uh uuuuuuh

Like   Reply   2 w

3 removed, 3 «are going against community standards»

¡Ja, ja, ja, ja... eso está bueno!

Like   Reply   2 w

Like   Reply   2 w

Some of the cases that are still public

Visibility limited: this Post may violate X's rules against Abuse. Learn more

Non è un immigrato africano ma una scimmia negra di merda!!! Porco dio usiamo i termini giusti perché non tutti gli immigrani sono cosi!!! Questo è una scimmia e basta

Translate post

10:16 am · 18 Mar 2024 · **7** Views

In dieci merdonegri contro UN ragazzino bianco, inerme e indifeso. Altri merdonegroidi riprendono la scena e RIDONO.
Schifosi negri di merda.

Translate post

X's «Visibility limited» works like this

Still online 1 week later

You submitted a report for hateful conduct

View Rule

CHRONOMAI @CHRONOMANFT · Mar 15

Content hidden   View

What's next
Our team and technology will review your report. If we find a rule violation, we'll let you know what actions we're taking.

What's our process?
Context matters. We consider the following factors when enforcing our rules (this isn't a complete list):

- Does the reported content target people because of their identity?
- How severe is this violation?
- Was the report submitted by the person being targeted?

Creating duplicate reports will not accelerate our process.

L'ITALIA È BIANCA

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Di DESTRA.
Nazionalista.
Sovranista.
Anti-sinistroide.
NO Europa. NO Euro.
NO immigrazione.
NO islam.
NO disforie di genere.
NO politicamente corretto.
Translate bio

Joined September 2022

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For further reference, information, collaborations, etc.

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