

Digital Ridicule with 'Haha' Reaction: Mockery, Denial, and Trivialisation of Aynaghor's Horror

Introduction

The "Haha" reaction on Facebook is often defended as a form of freedom of expression, but in the context of state-led torture, it becomes a tool for trivializing atrocities, downplaying the brutality of state violence, and mocking and dehumanizing victims.

This was evident in journalist Shafiqul Alam's post, which featured images of Aynaghor's infamous torture chair. Through such online behavior, social media is weaponized to manipulate public perception, making political repression more palatable and diminishing the gravity of systemic human rights abuses.

Reference Post

Facebook post By Shafiqul Alam
12.02.2025 || 19:13

Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/shafiqul.alam.71216/posts/pfbidOodfR1F7r8rdos98vDDg2HvabEkDxojvG9HctRkuKkKQyPienZBz6g6BCbLqRSfnFI>

Objective

This report investigates whether the Haha reactions on journalist Shafiqul Alam's post were organic or part of a coordinated digital manipulation campaign to trivialize state violence and discredit victims. By categorizing reacting profiles as real, fake, or locked, the study analyzes their authenticity and behavior, revealing how social media is weaponized to shape political discourse and historical memory in Bangladesh. The findings contribute to the broader discussion on digital technology's role in suppressing dissent and rewriting history.

Profile Filtering Process

A profile was considered real if it met at least three of the following key identifiers:

- Minimum of 300 friends
- Consistent personal photo activity (images of oneself, friends, or daily life)
- Geolocation check-ins over time
- Profile creation before July 2024 with older posts ensuring a well-established digital footprint

Additional Verification Factors:

Personal engagement through status updates reflecting real-life activities

Comprehensive 'About' information (location, hometown, full name, education history)

Optional but strengthening indicators:

Relationship status ("Married" or "In a relationship")

Links to other social media platforms

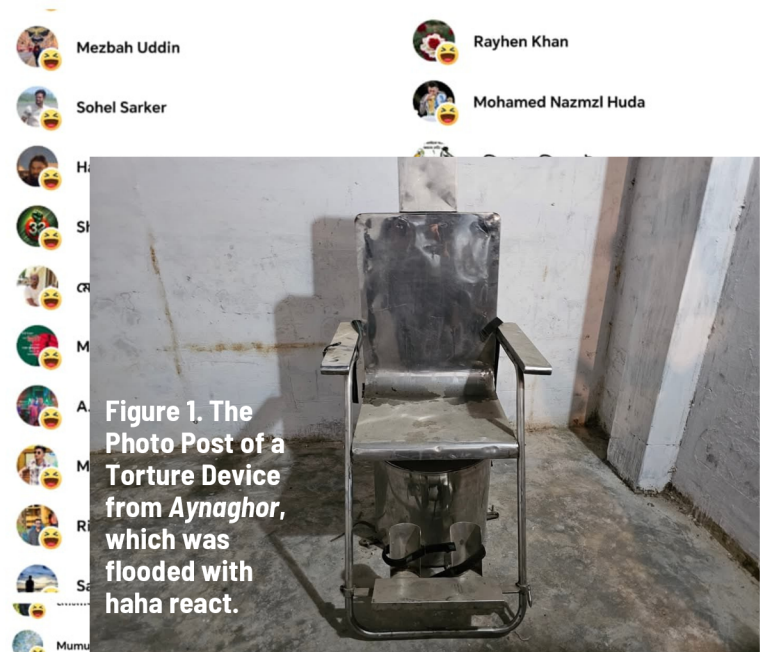
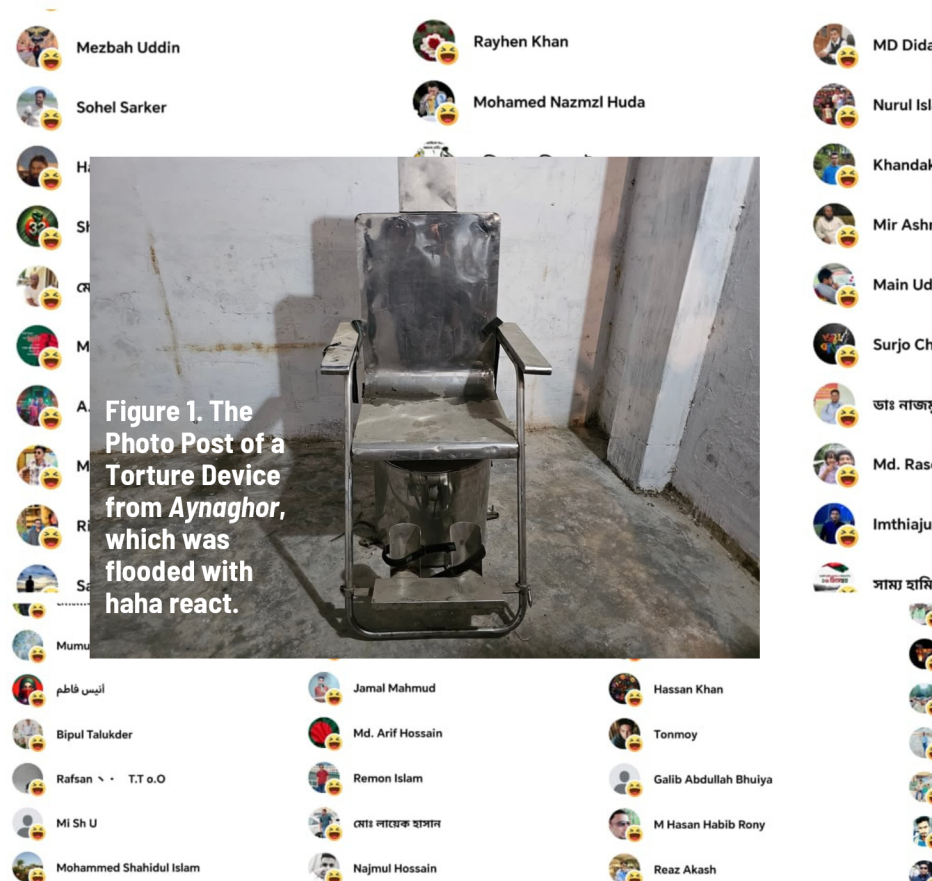


Figure 1. The Photo Post of a Torture Device from Aynaghor, which was flooded with haha react.



Additional Profile Verification Factors
Personal engagement through status updates reflecting real-life activities Comprehensive 'About' information (location, hometown, full name, education history) Optional but strengthening indicators: Relationship status ("Married" or "In a relationship") Links to other social media platforms Automatic Disqualification Criteria: Accounts without human names Profiles representing organizations Lack of regular activity or prolonged inactivity

Protected Speech or Hate Speech?
The 'Haha' emoji reactions on Aynaghor-related posts do not fall within the scope of Protected Speech, as they fail to constitute Political Criticism or Satire and Parody that challenge authority within legally permissible boundaries. Instead, these reactions align with Digital Hate Speech, as they serve to demean and trivialize the suffering of victims of enforced disappearances, thereby contributing to the delegitimization of their experiences and reinforcing narratives that minimize state-sponsored violence.

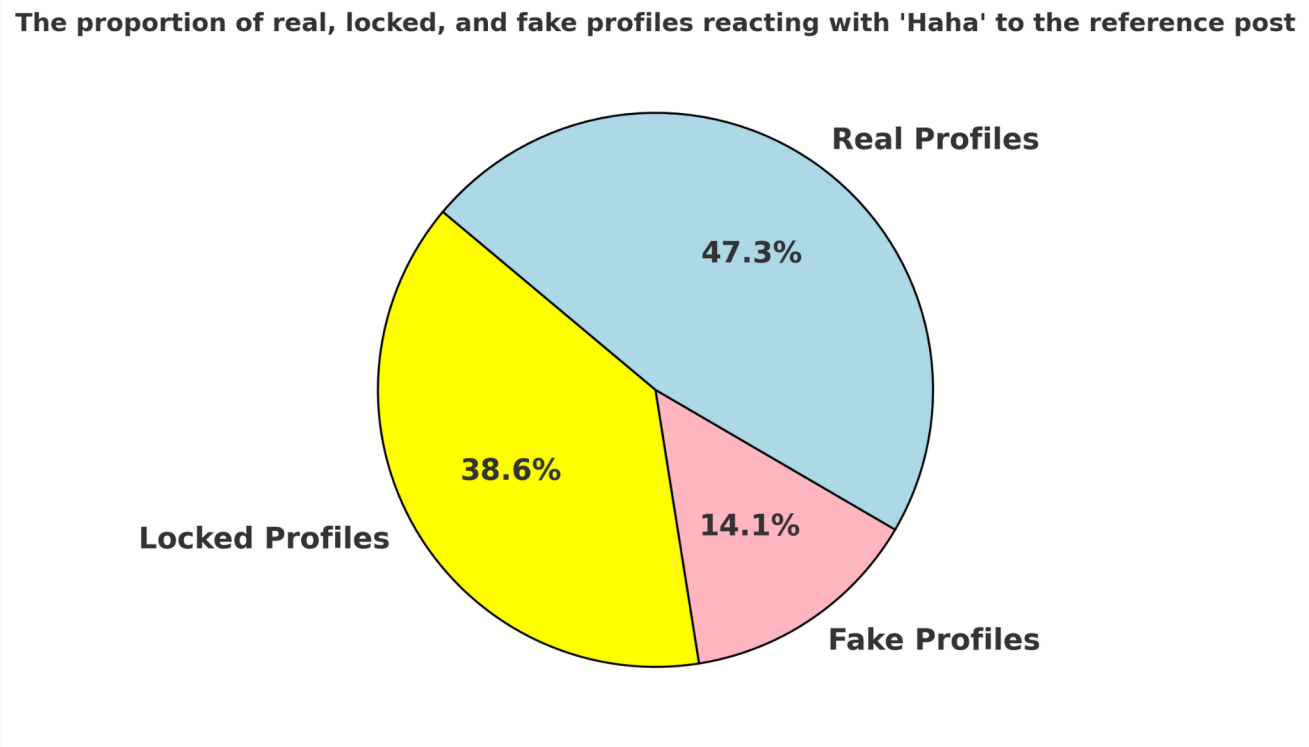


Figure 2. The proportion of real, locked, and fake profiles reacting with "Haha" to the reference post.

Final Thoughts
<p>While the presence of locked and fake accounts suggests possible coordinated manipulation, the most alarming finding is that nearly half of the reactions came from real profiles. This signals a disturbing normalization of ridiculing human rights abuses, driven by desensitization, political bias, or active participation.</p> <p>The high percentage of real users engaging in such behavior is a warning sign of how digital spaces are being weaponized to trivialize atrocities and the normalization of dismissing human rights concerns through social media ridicule.</p>