



### [Israel Hosts 1,000 Evangelical Ministers for a State-Run Propaganda Mission](#)

Israel recently hosted a delegation of around 1,000 U.S. Evangelical ministers and pastors for a state-run propaganda mission. The all-expenses-paid visit was organized by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and sought to promote and spread a skewed Israeli state narrative to the American public – at a time when justifiable criticism of Israel’s conduct and actions has grown globally, including in the United States. Observers have pointed to how the event is clearly a reaction to the organic and widespread rise in worldwide denunciation of Israel’s behavior, with Israeli officials trying to “equip” and “train” the ministers with biased and disingenuous narratives in an effort to counter this. Advocacy groups, rights organizations, and other critics have therefore understandably labeled the hosting as a blatant propaganda mission. The week-long event also comes amid discovery that Israel is running a massive geofencing campaign designed to target American churchgoers with similar pro-Israeli propaganda. Thus, concerns have been raised about the invasive, manipulative, and unethical nature of a foreign government-led initiative covertly surveilling and targeting Americans with propaganda as well.

Revelations detailed in U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) filings have shed light on Israel’s contracting of an American company in order to run a multi-million-dollar digital campaign using geofencing technology to target attendees at hundreds of churches within the United States. The campaign involves creating a virtual boundary around physical locations and then targeting mobile devices that enter the area – allowing them to be sent ads, propaganda, and messaging even after they later leave the location. The scheme links to the recent Israeli hosting of Evangelical ministers and influencers due to the fact that it also consists of tactics such as “hiring celebrity spokespeople and paying pastors to produce pro-Israeli content.” The makeup of the campaign demonstrates Israel’s intent to bombard, indoctrinate, and propagandize ministers, influencers, and even ordinary churchgoers. It also seems to acknowledge that Israel is increasingly facing condemnation and backlash over its conduct, given that it is now resorting to measures like this in order to try and combat the immense justifiable criticism and waning support.

One of the elements surrounding the propaganda campaign that is particularly alarming is the scope of it, as the plan lays out “different messages for different targeted church populations,” highlighting the desire to influence various sectors of the Christian community and not just traditionally supportive Evangelicals. With this, the geotargeting includes specific messaging for

younger Christians, women, and Catholic churches, among others. The mere fact that a foreign government would target such a wide array of Americans with state-pushed propaganda should elicit concern as to its motivations for doing so. As has also been pointed out by analysts, this would certainly raise red flags if it had been a foreign entity like the Chinese, Iranian, or Russian government seeking to inundate Americans with propaganda. Therefore, equal and consistent outrage is warranted towards Israel for these tactics too. This is especially deserved considering that Israel faces an ongoing genocide case at the world's highest court – the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – as well as active arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for several top officials including its incumbent prime minister. Clear evidence of egregious human rights violations and war crimes are what obviously prompted these aforementioned arrest warrants and genocide case so the fact that Israel is attempting to sway narratives in spite of this is incredibly deplorable.

All told, the Israeli government-run efforts to spread propaganda and misinformation within the United States have rightfully drawn criticism over foreign interference and privacy invasion concerns. As civil liberties organizations have drawn attention to, it is regrettable for a foreign government to target American churchgoers with surveillance-based propaganda and influence operations – something which undoubtedly compromises the independence and integrity of religious leaders. Not only is this being done in an attempt to completely suppress legitimate and organic growing levels of denunciation towards Israel for its actions, but it is also being covertly carried out without the knowledge or consent of the churches or their congregants. As such, these operations have justifiably led to calls for federal authorities to investigate potential violations of U.S. law and protect Americans' freedom to assemble without the threat of foreign surveillance or meddling.