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23 Aug 2018



The SNP has been urged to launch a full investigation into the scale of 'fake Yes' online organisations – after Facebook removed independence-supporting pages based in Iran.

It was reported this morning that the social media giant had removed a pro-independence site called Free Scotland 2014 after it discovered it was paid for by the Iranian regime.

The page had 20,000 followers, and regularly posted made-up articles in relation to UK politics.

It follows previous claims that Russia also sought to spread incorrect information during the independence campaign in support of the SNP.

Now the Scottish Conservatives have called for the nationalists to distance themselves from erroneous social media pages and websites, and probe the scale of this within the independence movement.

Scottish Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser said:

“The revelation that the Free Scotland 2014 page – which had more than 20,000 followers – was a fake account backed by the Iranian state is incredible, and deeply worrying.

“From the US election to the independence referendum drive, we are all beginning to learn that democracy is under attack from countries like Russian and Iran who want to weaken us.

“The SNP has a choice; either pander to these disgraceful regimes, as its former leader and ex-First Minister Alex Salmond does on a weekly basis.

“Or stand up to this threat and assist Facebook by investigating pro-independence online outlets with which it has a connection to verify that they are what they claim to be.

“Quite simply, fake Yes sites must be closed down immediately, and the SNP has a duty to help do that.”