



## The Grayzone BLOCKED by Paypal on political grounds

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**Max Blumenthal (MB):** This October, PayPal suspended The Grayzone's account, blocking our audience from donating to us without explaining anything to them and preventing us from accessing several thousands of dollars we'd already received. In order to regain access to our account, PayPal is asking me to go through an invasive process in which I have to provide photo ID, tax forms, and explain two very small donations from a private citizen in Australia. More on that in one second.

First, let me acknowledge that many of you warned us not to use PayPal because it's been comprehensively integrated into the surveillance state after being founded by a mafia of tech warlords, including Peter Thiel, Reid Hoffman, and Elon Musk. We knew PayPal was not to be trusted. In fact, it blocked our editor, Wyatt Reed back in 2022, before he worked for us and after he returned from a reporting trip in the Donbass, where his hotel was targeted by Ukrainian artillery, nearly killing him. PayPal has banned other independent anti-war outlets in the past, seizing thousands of dollars they raised – again, without any explanation. It seems obvious they were doing this under pressure from Five Eyes Intelligence. But because I'd been soliciting donations through PayPal since I established the Grayzone back in early 2019, I decided to ride out the storm until they finally came for us. And now, here we are.

I mentioned earlier that PayPal has demanded I explain two donations totaling \$40 from an individual in Australia. This seems to be the main justification for our suspension. So I looked into the person to see if there was anything suspicious there. All I knew about this donor was that his name was Nasrollah Abassi and that he lived in Australia. Were we being surreptitiously funded by some IRGC asset or a “bad actor”? To find out, I decided to email Nasrollah and ask him for an interview. He graciously agreed, and through our discussion, I learned about the fascinating life this Grayzone donor had lived, and how utterly insane it was that PayPal had flagged his modest donations to us. Nasrollah was born and raised in Iran. He told me that after the revolution in 1979 and his country came under attack from Saddam Hussein's Iraq, he was conscripted into the Iranian military and witnessed bloodshed and chaos during the first year of the Iran-Iraq War. He was actually a leftist who supported

the revolution in its early stages but opposed the Ayatollah and wound up leaving the country after his fellow travelers began to be jailed.

**Nasrollah Abassi (NA):** Before the revolution started, I was with the leftists, before I left the country. A lot of things were happening in Iran, a lot of chaos, a lot of bad things were happening to the people. We never did anything wrong to the government or anything, but we were persecuted, a lot of good people were punished for no reason whatsoever, because the less qualified people after the revolution, they got the power.

**MB:** So, when Nasrollah left, he went to work as a seaman, traveling the world for five years before he settled in Sydney, Australia. Like many Iranians, Nasrollah has had his criticisms of his country's political system, but he now believes that regime change will bring disaster and ultimately the dissolution of Iran as a sovereign nation. So he opposes it.

**NA:** Because it doesn't matter what they are, they shouldn't go right now because it's very, very important for Iranians to have – if the regime falls, then I think we will become several countries, just like the Balkans.

**MB:** Why have you supported The Grayzone?

**NA:** I support The Grayzone because I see you people haven't sold your soul to the devil. It's simple. To me, Max, I've got only 10 years, to year 10 in high school. Whatever education I got, I got in the streets, Max. I've been a seaman for nearly five years. So when you are a seaman, you are a seaman. You see so many different things, so many different countries.

**MB:** Nasrollah insisted to me that he's not involved in any form of political activism in Australia. However, and this is where it gets really interesting, he told me that his wife was recently accosted by Australian police while leaving a religious center.

**NA:** A couple of months ago, she went to one of these Hosseinieh [Shia Islamic congregation]. My wife is Muslim, she prays and everything, but he always prays for everybody. Well, she's Muslim, she's Shia. She went to this Hosseinieh, she said, "today, police stopped me and told me: What are you doing here? What are people doing in the Hosseinieh?" And she said: "The police took my photo when I was coming out of the Hosseinieh." This is just my wife. She has nothing to do with nothing. No politics, no nothing! She's just a normal lady.

**MB:** We know that Australia is an increasingly unfree, Five Eyes member posing as a liberal democracy. In 2024, a wave of extremely suspicious anti-Semitic incidents swept the country, which turned out to be the work of political criminals and local miscreants paid from abroad. And the country most likely to benefit from the backlash, Israel, nudged Australian intelligence to issue the baseless claim that Iran was responsible for this anti-Semitic wave, leading Canberra to kick out the Iranian ambassador. In the wake of the Bondi Beach mass shooting by ISIS sympathizers this month, Israel has again pushed Australia to escalate

hostilities with Iran, while demanding an anti-free speech crackdown targeting activists for Palestinian liberation. In other words, people like us.

Now, I can't prove that Israeli pressure resulted in PayPal blocking us, but we need to ask why PayPal's compliance team is so focused on two small donations from a retired Iranian immigrant in Australia whose wife was facing harassment from local authorities for simply attending mosque services. It's really not a stretch to conclude that PayPal is subjecting us to political persecution on behalf of some very malign forces.

I will try to recoup the money they've blocked, but we won't be working with PayPal again, and we're urging everyone to avoid this slimy, spook-infested Silicon Valley company. For those of you who've had your donations to us blocked by PayPal, just visit the page on our website or on our Substack newsletter, and you'll find a new, more reliable way to support our work. We're now partnering with a company that's given us their word that they will not seize our funds or suspend us on political grounds, and we intend to hold them to that. With your help, we can continue to expand The Grayzone, to support the newest member of our team, filmmaker and journalist Kei Pritsker, and to fulfill our simple mission to tell you what they don't want you to know.

**END**

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