



Vijaya Gadde

Legal, Public Policy &
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Twitter, Inc.

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April 3, 2020

Dear Senators Cruz, Cotton, Blackburn, and Rubio:

Thank you for your letter dated February 6, 2020, regarding Twitter's approach to potential sanctions issues. We appreciate the opportunity to share more about our policies and our work to enforce them.

There is no place on Twitter for terrorist organizations, violent extremist groups, or individuals who affiliate with and promote their illicit activities. The violence that these groups engage in and promote endangers the physical safety and security of people throughout the world.

We classify violent extremist groups as those that meet all of the following criteria:

- identify through their stated purpose, publications, or actions as an extremist group;
- have engaged in, or currently engage in, violence and/or the promotion of violence as a means to further their cause; and
- target civilians in their acts and/or promotion of violence.

We examine a group's activities both on and off Twitter to determine whether they engage in or promote violence against civilians to advance a political, religious, or social cause.

Under this policy, a Twitter user is not allowed to affiliate with and promote the illicit activities of a terrorist organization or violent extremist group. Examples of the types of content that violate this policy include, but are not limited to:

- engaging in or promoting acts on behalf of a terrorist organization or violent extremist group;
- recruiting for a terrorist organization or violent extremist group;
- providing or distributing services (e.g., financial, media/propaganda) to further a terrorist organization's or violent extremist group's stated goals; or
- using the insignia or symbols of terrorist organizations or violent extremist groups to promote them.

Twitter does not apply this particular policy to military or government entities because of the public interest in learning about these types of statements.

In your letter, you state that OFAC sanctions generally prohibit U.S. persons and entities from providing goods and services to the Government of Iran. Making the Twitter platform available for use, however, as a tool of communication, is broadly exempted from OFAC sanction prohibitions.

Moreover, the public conversation occurring on Twitter is critically important during this unprecedented public health emergency. With a critical mass of expert organizations, official government accounts, health professionals, and epidemiologists on our service, our goal is to elevate and amplify authoritative health information as far as possible. We consider official government voices on Twitter an important element of the service.

The power of a uniquely open service during a public health emergency is clear. The speed and borderless nature of Twitter presents an extraordinary opportunity to get the word out and ensure people have access to the latest information from expert sources around the world.

The outbreak of the coronavirus represents an unprecedented challenge. We are encouraged that Twitter is being used around the world to provide free, authoritative health information, and to ensure that everyone has access to the conversations they need to protect themselves and their families.

With Iran's people uniquely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Twitter is also a place where officials can communicate the challenges they are facing, as well as be held to account by a global audience for their actions. We believe this Twitter use case is essential in times of crisis, particularly at a critical moment when we are all bound together as global citizens working together in response to a common, unifying threat.

Fundamental values of openness, free expression, public accountability, and mutual understanding matter now more than ever. Regardless of the political agenda of a particular nation state, to deny our service to their leaders at a time like this would be antithetical to the purpose of our company, which is to serve the global public conversation.

With shifting political dynamics around the world, we recognize that we are operating in an increasingly complex and polarized political culture. These are constantly evolving challenges and we will keep our policies and approach under advisement and review. We are happy to update you if any changes to our policies occur. Please feel free to reach out to me or my staff if you have additional questions or concerns. Thank you for your outreach, and we appreciate our ongoing dialogue on this topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vijaya Gadde". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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