



February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dear Ms. Culbertson Grieco:

On behalf of the Interparliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism, we would like to thank Twitter for sending representatives to participate in our Summit to Combat Antisemitism at the United States Capitol in September 2022. As we strive to tackle this pressing issue, your participation remains invaluable to our efforts. We trust that your company will follow through on its commitments to meaningfully combat hatred on your platform and continue to engage with our Task Force and work together with us as well as other elected representatives and community leaders.

As you know, recent years have seen an unprecedented global rise in antisemitic incidents, with 2022 being the highest year on record for cases of harassment, vandalism, and assault against Jews.

In 2021 (the last year complete data was available), the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Hate Crime Statistics reported that Jews comprised 55% of all religious bias crimes despite being only 2% of the U.S. population. The same is true in Canada. In 2021, incidents targeting the Jewish community grew a dramatic 47% since 2020. Statistically, Canadian Jews were 10 times more likely than any other Canadian religious minority to report being the target of a hate crime. Jews represent approximately 1.3% of the Canadian population but were victims of 14% of all reported hate crimes in 2021. This is a troubling and persistent trend and is not limited to North America.

In the same year, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and B'nai Brith Canada (BBC) reported the highest number of antisemitic attacks and incidents in the United States and Canada since they began tracking those figures. New data published by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) suggests that, on average, one out of every four American Jews has been the victim of antisemitism.

In 2021, 700 posts containing antisemitic rhetoric had been viewed a collective 7.3 million times, demonstrating the outsized influence of individuals producing extremely hateful content, according to a report issued by the Center for Countering Digital Hatred. In light of several studies documenting the relationship between the proliferation of online antisemitism and the growth in antisemitic attacks around the world, it is clear that what starts online does not stay there. The burden is on all of us to stop the trend and prevent hate speech online from moving to in-person violence.

The same report found that your moderators only acted on roughly 11% of antisemitic content. These numbers prove that there is still much more work to be done.

While we were encouraged by the commitments that Twitter had made at our hearing, we are disappointed that Ms. Austin was dismissed from her position as Director of U.S. and Canada Public Policy, as well as the purge of policy, public affairs, and content moderation teams at Twitter. It is our strong belief that Twitter must continue to prioritize its efforts to combat hateful speech, disinformation, and incitement of violence, regardless of who owns the platform.

Recent reporting has demonstrated the evolving nature of online bigotry and incitement of violence against Jews and other protected groups, as well as the extent to which real-world attacks coincide with surging digital hate speech.<sup>1</sup> As such, we urge you to integrate a comprehensive definition of antisemitism as a guide for your platform's moderators in the effort to eliminate Jew hatred online. More than one thousand entities, from local school boards to national governments, have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism as a tool for identifying antisemitism however it manifests.

As both legislators in our respective countries and members of this Task Force, it is our mandate to improve the lives of our constituents by pursuing a world free from hate. Last year, in accordance with this goal, we developed an interim report of recommendations for governments and civil society groups for implementation to combat online antisemitism.

This year, the Task Force was pleased to have Ms. Austin join us at our inaugural Summit in Washington, D.C. While we appreciated Ms. Austin's valuable participation, there were several answers that were less than comprehensive or that your platform promised to follow up on. As part of our ongoing dialogue, we request a written response to our queries **by March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**.

1. Would the statement "Jews are all white supremacists who support apartheid" be deemed to violate your standards and removed from your platforms? You will recall that no platform was able to provide a definitive response at the Summit. What would your answer be to this question if the word "Zionists" was substituted for "Jews"? What is the possibility of including Zionism as a protected characteristic/identity?
2. Will you update your current content moderation policies to account for the use of the word "Zionist" as a euphemism for condemning or inciting hatred and violence against Jews?
3. Will you commit to a specific, consistent policy for removing content and users who deny the Holocaust or call for violence against Jews, Israelis, or Zionists?
4. Will you adapt your transparency reports to create a separate category for antisemitism as opposed to simply including posts targeting Jews within a larger category, making it impossible for us to track the way your platform deals with posts targeting Jews?
5. How do you plan to utilize the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism to develop content filters and moderation policies that will help you detect, monitor, and remove

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<sup>1</sup> Menn, Joseph. "Attacks on U.S. Jews and gays accelerate as hate speech grows on Twitter." *The Washington Post*. January 22, 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/01/18/hate-speech-antisemitism-antigay-twitter/>

hateful content?

6. Would you be willing to work with the Interparliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism to share data, documents, and internal policies and procedures to allow for an independent audit of how your platform deals with antisemitism?
7. How will your platform address the increasing trend of antisemitic tropes and sentiments posted by government officials, as in the case of South Africa and Iran?
8. How do you plan to adapt your algorithms to ensure they do not continue to promote antisemitic posts?

Based on your responses thus far, the Task Force has developed the following recommendations for your platform to combat antisemitic and hateful rhetoric more effectively.

1. We recommend that you commit to ongoing cooperation with the Interparliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism, including through data sharing, independent outside audits, and future testimony.
2. We recommend that your company invest in training content moderation experts so they can recognize the various mutations of Jew hatred and how they manifest in contemporary society and online discourse.
3. We recommend that you wholeheartedly commit to and uphold your platform's existing anti-hate policies.
4. We recommend that you adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism and tailor your content moderation policies to this definition.
5. We recommend that you revisit the difference between legitimate criticisms of Israel and the demonization of the world's only Jewish state. For instance, statements that deny the Jewish people the right to self-determination or hold Jewish people living outside Israel responsible for the actions of the State of Israel must be treated as antisemitic.
6. We recommend that you increase transparency with governmental and civil society entities about the amount of hateful content that exists on your platform and how it is taken down and promoted by the algorithm. Further, we recommend that antisemitism is treated as a separate and equally important category in your transparency reports.
7. We recommend that you notify law enforcement when a proliferation of antisemitic hate emerges on the platform in order to ensure the safety and security of Jewish communities that have the potential to be targeted in real life.

In addition to the previously requested responses, we request that your company commit to the recommendations above, in writing, **by March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**. Should you have any questions or to submit your responses, please contact Steven Goodall ([steven.goodall@mail.house.gov](mailto:steven.goodall@mail.house.gov)) or Max Price ([max.price@mail.house.gov](mailto:max.price@mail.house.gov)) in the office of U.S. Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz. We also kindly request that you provide your availability for a follow-up virtual conversation to review your responses with members of our Task Force.

The Interparliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism appreciates your immediate attention to this matter and looks forward to receiving your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress  
United States of America



Anthony Housefather  
Member of Parliament  
Canada



Michal Cotler  
Former Member of Knesset  
State of Israel