

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 18, 2023

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg
Chairman and CEO
Meta Platforms, Inc.
One Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Mr. Adam Mosseri
Head of Instagram
Meta Platforms, Inc.
One Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Messrs. Zuckerberg and Mosseri,

I am writing today about the policy and algorithmic changes made by Meta Platforms, Inc. (“Meta”) in response to the conflict between Hamas and Israel.

In October 2023, Meta introduced measures to limit “potentially unwelcome or unwanted comments” on posts about the conflict between Israel and Hamas.¹ These measures aimed to balance the tension between presumably good faith efforts to ensure decency on its platforms and protect its user’s right to freedom of speech. In this pursuit, Meta stated its “policies are designed to keep people safe on [its] apps while giving everyone a voice.”² To ensure this, Meta vowed to “apply these policies equally around the world,” clarifying that “there is no truth to the suggestion that [it is] deliberately suppressing voice.”³

However, multiple Tennesseans have expressed just the opposite to me: that Meta is censoring their entirely unobjectionable content, which happens to be pro-Israeli. I am thus concerned that Meta’s content moderation policies are not being applied consistently and that, as a result, the company is making it harder to post pro-Israel content on its platforms through its use of algorithmic and content moderation tools.

I am deeply concerned about the anti-Israeli sentiment held by some in the United States and the recent uptick in anti-Semitism around the world. It is important that users on Meta’s platforms are able to view content that has not been selected to reaffirm biases or support a particular narrative as this conflict unfolds.

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/meta-limit-some-facebook-comments-israeli-palestinian-posts-2023-10-18/>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/meta-limit-some-facebook-comments-israeli-palestinian-posts-2023-10-18/>

³ <https://about.fb.com/news/2023/10/metass-efforts-regarding-israel-hamas-war/>

Given Meta's historical issues surrounding unequal application of content moderation tools and censorship, I am asking you to respond to the following questions no later than January 25, 2024:

1. What are your policies related to how Meta's platforms moderate content related to the Hamas war in Israel? Please provide references to the specific policies that can be found in your terms of service or elsewhere.
2. Since October 7th, 2023, how many have been suspended, removed, or had content flagged for removal under Meta's policies pertaining to the conflict?
 - a. Please provide a breakdown of the number of account suspensions, removals, and content takedowns by the type of policy violation you found.
 - b. Were any accounts suspended, removed, or had content removed for antisemitic content? If so, how many?
 - c. Were any accounts suspended, removed, or had content removed due to content supporting Israel or its military activities in Gaza? If so, how many?
 - d. How many accounts for each of these categories have appealed Meta's decision?
 - e. How many appeals for each of these categories have been successful?
3. Has Meta been contacted by any government regarding its use of algorithms or content moderation tools surrounding the conflict between Hamas and Israel? If so, describe the nature of those discussions and the ultimate result of each discussion (e.g., suspension or termination of an account, removal of content).
4. Since the onset of the conflict, has Meta always provided a rationale for suspending or removing an account accused of violating its content policies? If not, why not?
5. Please explain what steps users must take to appeal a decision by Meta to suspend or remove an account.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator