



Committee to Protect Journalists



Twitter Executive Team

January 11, 2023

Sent via [Twitter](#)

Dear Twitter Executive Team,

As Twitter continues its transition under new ownership and engages with a new CEO, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) are writing to express concern over recent developments and to outline a series of considerations that will be critical for Twitter's integrity and the basic human right to freely impart and receive information.

Our organizations are alarmed by the rapid deterioration of basic human rights standards and responsible platform governance that are contributing to a hostile environment for journalists, which could put them in physical danger and directly threaten media freedom more broadly. This is evident not only in the dissolution of Twitter's Trust and Safety Council and human rights team, but most critically in the actions and abrupt and arbitrary changes to rules and policies based on the CEO's personal whims and preferences. Overall, Twitter's recent steps threaten the public's right to access important information about events that affect their everyday lives. This runs counter to the very nature of the platform.

According to [Twitter's own data and analysis](#), 94% of people on the platform "express interest in current events" and, according to the same data, users are continuously and overwhelmingly sharing and seeking news on the platform. This includes vital information, for example concerning extreme weather and public health concerns, which are critical for daily decision making. It is primarily journalists who diligently report on, verify, contextualize, and humanize such facts and developments.

No one wants to be on a social media platform that endangers or censors them. As a critical communication tool in both open and repressive countries, Twitter must play a constructive role in ensuring that journalists and the public at large are able to receive and impart information

without fear of reprisal. In order to protect press freedom and people's right to be informed, CPJ and RSF make the following recommendations:

1. Twitter should immediately implement transparent corporate policies anchored in the [U.N. Guiding Principles](#) on Business and Human Rights, bringing its policies in line with international human rights standards.
2. Twitter's policies should be crafted and communicated in a transparent manner with input from affected constituencies and implemented consistently, not arbitrarily or based on the company leadership's personal preferences, perceptions, and frustrations.
3. To secure input on content moderation policies and product development from affected communities, Twitter should reinstate the Trust and Safety Council. The reinstatement of the council—an advisory group comprised of civil society organizations and experts of which CPJ and RSF are longstanding members—should be complemented with the reestablishment of a robust human rights team.
4. Twitter should preserve and update its annual [Transparency Report](#), a valuable tool for public accountability that reveals legal data requests and content removal efforts by governments as well as the company's responses. Such requests often reflect attempts to censor information and penalize particular individuals, including many journalists. This is particularly important in the context of the intensifying criminalization of journalism evident in the increased legal harassment of reporters and the record numbers of journalists currently behind bars worldwide.

The points listed above constitute the absolute minimum steps necessary to reset Twitter's relationship and credibility with journalists, the media freedom community, and the vast majority of users on the platform who cherish factual information and receiving and imparting news. We respectfully request that Twitter's new leadership and executive team act on these recommendations. We stand prepared to provide further input individually and as part of the broader human rights community.

Sincerely,

Jodie Ginsberg
President
Committee to Protect Journalists

Christophe Deloire
Secretary-General
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)