

Dear Mark Zuckerberg,

In recent years, live media and social video have been instrumental in exposing injustice occurring all over the world. With the onset of Facebook Live, your company is taking on an increasingly central role in controlling media that circulates through the public sphere. News is not just getting shared on Facebook: it's getting broken there.

We the undersigned 79 organizations are deeply concerned with the recent cases of Facebook censoring human rights documentation, particularly content that depicts police violence. This includes but is not limited to: the deactivation of Korryn Gaines' account, the removal of iconic photographs, reports of suppression of indigenous resistance, continued reports of Black activists' content being removed, and the disabling of Palestinian journalists' accounts following your meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister.

It is critical that Facebook be a platform that supports the protection of human rights above all else and does not discriminately apply its policies on the basis of race, creed, national origin, gender, and/or sexual orientation. When the most vulnerable members of society turn to your platform to document and share experiences of injustice, Facebook is morally obligated to protect that speech.

When Facebook unilaterally censors user content that depicts police brutality at the request of the authorities, it sets a dangerous precedent that further hurts and silences marginalized communities, particularly communities of color. With the safety check-in feature, profile solidarity filters, and in countless speeches, you and others in your company present Facebook's value of human life at the center of its public-facing image. However, Facebook's repeated silencing of marginalized communities that attempt to make their stories and struggles known proves otherwise. **That is why we, the undersigned organizations, request that Facebook clarify its policy on removing video and other content, especially human rights documentation, at the request of government actors.**

Specifically, we urge Facebook to:

1. **Make policies about how Facebook makes decisions to censor content clear and accessible to the public:** whether those requests are from third party agencies or through its algorithm-- especially with respect to live broadcasting and journalistic content.
  - a. *This includes providing the operating details of the law enforcement request portal, including the standards for assessing each request.*
  - b. *To better understand this, Facebook should release to the public basic data on all user censorship (either to remove content, hide from the public, or turn over content) which includes, but is not limited to, the number of censorship requests by government actors (police departments, military agencies, intelligence*

*agencies) across the globe, the geographic breakdown of said requests, reasons for removal, etc.*

2. **Create a public appeals platform** where users can appeal content censored by Facebook.
3. **Undergo an external audit** on the equity and human rights outcomes of your Facebook Live and content censorship and data sharing policies.<sup>1</sup> Then institute a task force for implementing the recommendations of the audit.
4. **Refuse to disclose customer content and data** to third party agencies unless required to by law.
  - a. *In addition, Facebook must ensure that the circumstances for **content deletion** meet a much higher threshold than for **content and data disclosure**, as customers 1) have an expectation of being able to share protected forms of speech and 2) the public will be deprived of the opportunity to view that speech if the speech is removed.*

We know that Facebook draws purpose from its ability to bring global citizens together, and in a speech before the UN, you said “internet access is an important enabler of human rights.” We know that you, Mr. Zuckerberg, have made symbolic gestures in support of Black lives and against police brutality. However Facebook’s actions thus far have indicated that it is taking an unfortunate side in the national debate around police accountability. At a time when Alfred Olango becomes the 217th Black person killed by police in 2016, we must ask -- which Facebook do you represent? Is it the Facebook with a “Black Lives Matter” banner outside its headquarters, or the one that removed the footage of Korryn Gaines and Philando Castile being shot by police?

Since Facebook strives to be an all-encompassing platform that lifts up everyday narratives from everyday people across the globe, we believe that taking urgent action to increase transparency and protect users is the first step to reaching our shared vision of the world. It is important not only for the integrity of its platform and the trust of its community of users, but also for the future of our media. Because the stories that don’t get shared are as important as the ones that do.

Sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> We share AirBNB efforts as one example of a corporate audit, but request that any auditing agency used by Facebook in this matter be independent and vetted by a panel of independent organizations representing impacted communities, or resulting from recommendations from that panel. See: Laura W. Murphy’s Report “Airbnb’s Work to Fight Discrimination and Build Inclusion” [http://blog.airbnb.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/REPORT\\_Airbnbs-Work-to-Fight-Discrimination-and-Build-Inclusion.pdf](http://blog.airbnb.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/REPORT_Airbnbs-Work-to-Fight-Discrimination-and-Build-Inclusion.pdf)

SumOfUs  
Color of Change  
Center for Media Justice  
Daily Kos  
18MillionRising  
350.org  
Akcja Demokracja  
ActionStation  
All Out  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Muslims for Palestine  
Appalshop  
Arab American Institute  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus  
Bill of Rights Defense Committee/Defending Dissent Foundation  
Black Lives Matter --Vancouver, BC  
Black Alliance for Just Immigration  
Civic Hall  
Common Frequency  
Corporate Accountability International  
Council on American Islamic Relations- San Francisco Bay Area Chapter  
Council on American Islamic Relations- Los Angeles Area Chapter  
Council on American Islamic Relations- Sacramento Valley  
Council on American Islamic Relations- San Diego Area  
Courage Campaign  
CREDO  
Demand Progress  
Democracy for America  
Dream Defenders  
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights  
Fight for the Future  
Fission Strategy  
FREE! Families Rally for Emancipation and Empowerment  
Free Press  
Friends of Sabeel -North America  
Generation Justice  
Global Action Project  
Government Accountability Project  
Honor the Earth  
IfNotNow  
Indigenous Environmental Network  
Jewish Voice for Peace  
May First/People Link

Mark Ruffalo  
Media Alliance  
Media Mobilizing Project  
Mijente  
Muslim Student Association  
MPower Change  
Oakland Privacy  
Open Media Canada  
Palestine Legal  
People Demanding Action  
People's Action  
Presente.org  
Race Forward  
Restore The Fourth  
Sierra Club  
Skiftet  
The Southside Media Project  
Students for Justice in Palestine- Boston University  
Students for Justice in Palestine -NYU  
Students for Justice in Palestine-West  
Students for Justice in Palestine- Sacramento State  
Students for Justice in Palestine- Santa Clara University  
Students for Justice in Palestine- UC Davis  
Students for Justice in Palestine- California State University Fullerton  
Students for Justice in Palestine- UC Berkeley  
Students for Justice in Palestine- UC Irvine  
Students for Justice in Palestine- UC Santa Barbara  
Students for Justice in Palestine- UC Riverside  
Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights - University of Washington  
The People's Press Project  
UltraViolet  
United Methodist Kairos Response  
Urbana Champaign Independent Media Center  
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights  
Women, Action, and the Media