MediaJustice

December 17th, 2019

To Jeff Bezos and Jamie Siminoff,

On behalf of the undersigned racial justice and civil rights organizations, we are urging you to issue an immediate apology regarding the Ring-sponsored staff party where your employees wore costumes deeply offensive to Native American and Indigenous people, at an event intended to secure another profitable deal with law enforcement. Additionally, the mounting public concerns regarding the racial impact of your surveillance technology and partnerships with police, including through the Neighbors app and Rekognition software, warrants a response and accountability. Therefore, we are urging you to sit down with racial justice groups to discuss the urgent need to implement policies that protect the civil rights of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color (BIPOC).

Our country is currently grappling with how to respond to and repair the harm caused by generations of discriminatory and racist policing. Therefore, it is deeply troubling to witness Amazon Ring employees celebrate law enforcement at their staff parties while the company continues to commercialize and monetize dangerous surveillance tools that merely increase the state's ability to monitor and track BIPOC. By offering law enforcement unprecedented access to the data recorded by Ring's video doorbell system, your product effectively brings police surveillance right to our front door. Additionally, your company's Neighbors app stokes false alarms over "rising" crime by encouraging neighbors to spy on one another. This app is not designed to prevent crime, but rather it is designed to escalate neighborhood watch programs where individuals are likely to make assumptions about people of color, people experiencing homelessness, and other marginalized people. Your surveillance products weaponize race and digitize the racial profiling so many communities of color already experience.

Your company has already come under fire for marketing its flawed facial recognition products directly to law enforcement around the country. Numerous studies have indicated that your facial recognition technology is error-prone and inaccurate when identifying the faces of darker-skinned people, transgender people, gender non conforming people, and women. This technology will undoubtedly increase the suspected criminality of communities of color, resulting in more false misidentifications and potentially harmful interactions with police.

Ring's surveillance products pose a serious threat to the safety and dignity of communities of color across the nation. In addition to apologizing for the racism at the recent Ring staff party, it's time for you to take greater responsibility for your role in aiding racist policing and to meet with impacted communities to hear our solutions, in order to ensure real protection for the communities we represent and are part of.

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Sincerely,

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