

Global Experts Denounce Facebook's Trump Decision

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The logo for the Global Alliance Against Digital Hate & Extremism is located in the top right corner. It features the organization's name in white, bold, sans-serif font against a dark blue background with a subtle grid pattern.

The Harms of Allowing Trump Back on the Platform Will Reverberate Around the World Threatening the Safety of Millions and Undermining Democracies

On Wednesday, The Global Alliance Against Digital Hate and Extremism responded to Facebook's decision to allow Trump back on the platform. The Global Alliance Against Digital Hate and Extremism is an international movement, supported by more than 70 civil society organizations from across the world, mobilizing collective action for a safe, fair, and just online experience for everyone.

The Alliance came together to denounce Facebook's decision to allow Trump to use its platform because of the harm it will absolutely cause, not only in the United States, but to democracies, some fledgling, and people around the world. Alliance organization members have witnessed first-hand the real world consequences of Facebook's irresponsible decisions. Facebook has been used to organize and incite violence in Ethiopia, contributed to genocide of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, catered to the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India, censored "anti-state" content in Vietnam at the request of the government, to name only a very few instances where the company allowed political leaders and other influencers to spread disinformation and hate, inspire violence, and threaten democracies.

One of the priorities of the Alliance is for tech companies, including Facebook, to end exemptions to content moderation for the politically powerful and influencers globally and to implement fact-checking for political ads.

According to the Alliance, Facebook's decision to let Trump back on will disproportionately harm those in the global majority because of the platform's unfair and discriminatory approach to providing resources, particularly outside the U.S. and in non-English languages, to protect the integrity of the platform and the safety of the users. Real-world, systemic issues – from far-right extremism to genocide to gender bias and racism – are made worse by Facebook's business practices.

Alliance members also expressed concern over Facebook's new policy regarding civil unrest.

Quotes from members of the Global Alliance Against Digital Hate and Extremism follow:

"While we expected Facebook to allow Trump back on its platform, it is nonetheless disappointing that Facebook has once again shamelessly put profit over the safety of its users and democracies around the world. By creating a global "public figures in times of civil unrest and violence" policy, a very narrow policy that doesn't define civil unrest and is practically unenforceable, Facebook has given themselves permission to let a man who encouraged a violent coup to dominate on its platform. And they've given themselves miles of leeway to allow harmful content from the politically powerful around the world to continue to thrive. Far-right and authoritarian leaders everywhere are assured that it's business as usual at Facebook."

Wendy Via, co-founder and president, Global Project Against Hate and Extremism

“By reinstating Trump, who is a known racist populist demagogue with a dark record of capitalising on popular rage and frustration over economic hardships and scapegoating racial minorities and refugees and migrants, Facebook/Meta executives have shown they have learned nothing from their recent criminal culpability in Myanmar genocide. Facebook let #myanmar military regime anti-Muslim Buddhist monks and racist civil society weaponize its platform during the slow-burning genocide of Rohingya, despite repeated warnings from Rohingyas and human rights activists for over a decade.”

Maung Zarni, exiled Burmese activist & genocide scholar, & co-author of “Essays on Myanmar’s Genocide of Rohingya (2010-2018)”

“This decision will be perceived as a green light to the hundreds of extreme right and/or racist leaders around the world to spread hate on Facebook, especially in countries that have elections in the next several months, like Greece.”

Panayote Dimitras, Greek Helsinki Monitor

“We are concerned that Trump could use his online presence to spread conspiracy theories and support anti-democratic far-right movements across the world. Trump has repeatedly expressed admiration for Russian dictator Putin who is waging a deadly war against Ukraine: a tragic illustration of what authoritarian politics leads to.”

Rafal Pankowski, Co-founder, ‘NEVER AGAIN’ Association

“Meta’s decision to enable the violent and dangerous hate speech of Donald Trump is part of the company’s larger pattern of profiting off of hate, and failing in their duty of care towards millions of users around the world. The reality is that Meta has destabilised democracies around the world by permitting dangerous political actors to build power on their platform and then use those platforms to inflict violence, all in accordance to their own policies that exempt political figures from being held accountable for inciting violence. Bringing Trump back is not just disastrous for American democracy but also signals to right wing dangerous leaders around the world that Meta will not stop hate but will instead platform violence for profit. In regions like South Asia this policy for supporting such dangerous figures has led to multiple genocides including the active genocidal project in India. We urge Meta to reverse its decision and work with civil society to address their enabling of dangerous speech and actors across the world. The alternative is that Meta will continue to risk criminal charges for actions that could easily be avoided if they simply chose to stop profiting off of hate. We hope that Mark will choose to side with his conscience rather than his wallet.”

Thenmozhi Soundararajan, Executive Director, Equality Labs

“By reinstating Trump, Facebook has undone the efforts made so far. Where once in global South we were arguing that same principles of deplatforming should apply to other global leaders now there is no example that we can shine. This creates a sense of hopelessness for orgs seeking tech accountability”.

Dr. Ritumbra Manuvie, Stichting the London Story

“We need to hold public leaders accountable for the impact of their statements. Fuelling hate, divisiveness, extremism, misinformation and disinformation is irresponsible and we have seen it has disastrous consequences. Facebook must have stringent protocols to hold such leaders accountable as it is a matter of public safety. Allowing Mr Trump to return will send a message to other authoritarian leaders that one can get away easily with such irresponsible and dangerous behaviour.”

ElsaMarie DSilva, Founder and CEO of Red Dot Foundation

“As a global reproductive justice organization, Ipas has been dismayed by Facebook’s – and its parent company META’s – continued allowance and promotion of disinformation. We have been censored for sharing vital sexual and reproductive health information, including abortion information, with our followers. We have made the strategic decision to step back from using Facebook because of the growing number of anti-rights actors who, on a daily basis, target the platform with a barrage of anti-gender and racist comments. Allowing Trump back on Facebook will only add to the anti-democratic tactics of the right-wing activists who are intent on dismantling human rights.”

Jennifer Holloway, Director of Communications, Ipas

“Meta’s decision to reinstate the account of Donald Trump confirms the company is not serious about safety and will always prioritize corporate profits. This also sets a dangerous precedent globally. If inciting a deadly insurrection with the intention of overthrowing a democratically elected government doesn’t cross the threshold of a permanent ban, what does? Meta now has no legitimacy to act on other world leaders who continue to use Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to foment hate and spread disinformation. There is one positive, however: we now know exactly who Meta’s leaders really are: greedy data barons who don’t actually care about the offline impact of their hate machine.”

Kyle Taylor, Founder, Fair Vote UK

“Media Diversity Institute is very disappointed to hear that META – Facebook and Instagram’s parent company – will reinstate former U.S. President Donald J. Trump. We have been closely monitoring Donald Trump’s inflammatory presence on social media for years. His narratives inspired and spread hatred against anyone who did not fit his extreme ideals; these narratives allegedly led to the death of 5 people during the US Capitol attacks on 6 January 2020. We are very surprised to see that META is willing to let such narratives back on its platforms during a time when Donald Trump’s online presence through his own Truth Social indicates that he still spreads online hate and conspiracy theories; hate that he is willing to use during his electoral campaign. We urge META to reverse its decision and work on improving diversity and inclusion through its platforms.”

Media Diversity Institute

“It is unfortunate that when posed with the option of permanently banning someone who’s use of social media has sparked a rise in hate, white supremacy, and violence, Meta chose to allow this kind of speech to return to its platforms. We have not forgotten how Trump’s extreme rhetoric and blatant lies emboldened bad actors from the El Paso Massacre—the deadliest attack on Latinos in modern American history—to the January 6th Insurrection. With this decision, Meta is choosing their bottom line at the expense of human lives and the health of our democracy.”

Brenda Castillo, NHMC

“We are disappointed to learn of Meta’s decision to restore Donald Trump’s Facebook and Instagram accounts”.

Tonei Glavinic, Dangerous Speech Project

<https://globalalliance.tech/global-experts-denounce-facebooks-trump-decision>