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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2022

Mr. Parag Agrawal
Chief Executive Officer, Twitter
1355 Market Street #900
San Francisco, California, 94103

Dear Mr. Agrawal,

We write to you today flabbergasted by the lack of action and immoral ambivalence Twitter seemingly has in regard to the current disinformation campaign the Russian government is currently waging on your platform.

On March 9th, Russia despicably conducted an airstrike on Mariupol's maternity and children's hospital that resulted in at least three civilian deaths and at least seventeen injuries.¹ Sadly, this is not the first reprehensible example of Russia attacking a health care facility, as there have been twenty-four verified attacks on health care facilities in Ukraine as of March 11th.² Responding to their government's abhorrent actions, the official Twitter account of the Russian Embassy to the United Kingdom, claimed the hospital was "long non-operational", used by the "neo-Nazi Azov Battalion", and that a woman photographed who survived the attack was a crisis actor. After hours of inaction, which allowed the tweets to spread, Twitter took them down, but still allowed the originating account to stay active. Similar false claims were tweeted elsewhere. Beyond this particular disinformation, Russia's embassy accounts and members of its government have tweeted other falsehoods on a daily basis. Yet Twitter has seemed at best, slow to act, and at worst uninterested.

In fact, it seems the only policing Twitter has engaged in so far is censoring accounts that have taken it upon themselves to expose Russian disinformation and bots spreading pro-Putin hashtags. As you may be aware, your company had to clarify that accounts highlighting Russian disinformation had been improperly suspended due to "a small number of human errors" resulting in "incorrect enforcements."³ Twitter also banned more than 100 accounts that pushed the hashtag

¹ [After Mariupol children's hospital bombing, WHO highlights pattern of Russian strikes on medical facilities - CNN](#)

² IBID

³ [Accounts highlighting Russian disinformation improperly suspended, Twitter says | TheHill](#)

#IStandWithPutin.”⁴ But again, verified government accounts with as many as 150,000 followers tweet disinformation daily, and the best response we can hope for from Twitter is a meek one.

We know the serious actions Twitter can, and has, taken. Twitter permanently banned a sitting President of the United States citing, “the risk of further incitement of violence” and they previously locked out *The New York Post*, the United States’ fourth largest newspaper by circulation, for weeks from their account because they exposed damning emails about a presidential candidate’s son, which some partisan individuals claimed was Russian disinformation. Yet actual Russian disinformation, being used in an attempt to legitimize and justify their deadly war of violence & aggression, has nowhere near these forceful responses.

Russia is violating every international law, norm and custom, and is actively using Twitter to spread disinformation in an attempt to gain credibility on the world stage for their illegal, unjust and despicable war against the Ukrainian people. By continuing to allow this rampant disinformation campaign to continue with the barest penalties possible, Twitter is aiding and abetting a government led by a man committing war crimes. We demand your clear response on the following questions by Friday, April 15th.

- Why has Twitter seemed comfortable taking a seemingly partisan approach to banning or restricting certain accounts, such as a duly elected and sitting President of the United States, while giving a free pass to accounts that spread actual, repeated Russian disinformation?
 - What, in your eyes, do these Russian government accounts need to do to rise to the level of a permanent suspension?
- Will Twitter use their resources to dispute the disinformation from Russia being shared on their platforms?
- Will Twitter use their resources to highlight the atrocities being inflicted on Ukraine by the Russian government?

Twitter states, “We define misleading content (‘misinformation’) as claims that have been confirmed to be false by external, subject-matter experts or include information that is shared in a captive or confusing manner.”⁵ We believe claiming a hospital filled with mothers and young children you bombed was actually a hang out spot for neo-Nazis, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, meets your definition of “misleading content.” With this in mind, and factoring in all of the other flagrant examples of “misleading content,” we hope Twitter lives up to its values it claims to hold dear, quits carrying the water for an authoritarian currently committing war crimes, and become more active in combatting actual Russian disinformation.

Sincerely,



Lisa C. McClain
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress

⁴ [Twitter bans over 100 accounts that pushed #IStandWithPutin \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/story/twitter-bans-over-100-accounts-that-pushed-#IStandWithPutin)

⁵ [How we address misinformation on Twitter](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/story/how-we-address-misinformation-on-twitter)



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