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Coalition of Over 75 Organizations Responds to New Letter from Facebook on Demands for More Transparent Censorship Policies

SumOfUs, Daily Kos, Color of Change, Center for Media Justice respond to Facebook letter after months of public campaigning

Last year, a coalition of over 70 organizations and individuals released a list of demands to Facebook founder and CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, asking him to address public concerns over Facebook's use of censorship in compliance with law enforcement. After sources confirmed the censorship of Facebook footage regarding Korryn Gaines' violent encounter with police last August, the coalition has continuously called on Facebook to comply with a list of demands designed to protect users.

In response, Facebook's Vice President of Global Public Policy, Joel Kaplan, issued a letter on December 29, 2016 in attempt to address the coalition's concerns.

View Facebook's letter

here: https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/images/Joel_Kaplan_Facebook_Letter_-_12.29.16.pdf

Read the coalition's response to Facebook's most recent letter here:

https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/images/Response_to_Joel_Kaplan__77_organizations-3.pdf

Since August, several organizations have also received reports from activists whose facebook accounts were censored while covering the civilian uprisings in Charlotte, NC. Other incidents include the removal of live footage from anti Dakota Access Pipeline protests, the temporary disabling of Palestinian journalists' accounts, and reports that Facebook sent data to help police track and surveil protesters in Ferguson, MO and Baltimore, MD.

View the orginial coalition letter here: <http://sumofus.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NewFacebookCensorshipSign-OnLetter.pdf>

"We're still in the dark about how Facebook censors users and collaborates voluntarily with law enforcement," said **Reem Suleiman, campaigner at SumOfUs**. "Facebook needs to come clean with the hundreds of thousands of people asking for transparency and public accountability. This letter and the response from Facebook is not good enough when safety, and lives, are at risk as a result of opaque corporate policies."

"Social media platforms like Facebook are a powerful tool for Black people to draw attention to injustices our community faces," explained **Brandi Collins, Campaign Director for Color Of Change**. "That's why we're so concerned that a powerful company like Facebook has been quick to silence Black voices by censoring individual Facebook users at the request of law enforcement. We recognize Facebook is under pressure from law enforcement and the company has a responsibility to protect its users' freedom of expression. Unfortunately, each time we've tried to engage Facebook around these issues, our suggestions have been dismissed or ignored. We will continue to publicly call for an overhaul

of Facebook's current policies and practices until the company refuses to enable the censorship of Black communities."

"There is a greater need now more than ever for social media platforms like Facebook to be trusted spaces of expression, particularly for communities of color and racial justice activists. Facebook's pre-existing protocols and procedures around censorship are not sufficient and that is why we're demanding bold solutions," said **Steven Renderos, Organizing Director at the Center for Media Justice**. "The time for complacency is over, and in order for Facebook to continue to be a relevant platform for movements like Black Lives Matter and #NoDAPL, they should heed our concerns and work with us on the solutions we've proposed."

"Facebook's videos are powerful tools to document police brutality and other human rights abuses. Facebook is shutting down people's voices because those in power are inconvenienced," said **Mara Schechter, Campaign Director at Daily Kos**. "It's time for Facebook to stop silencing and censoring marginalized communities, especially communities of color."

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***SumOfUs.org** is a global movement of consumers, investors, and workers all around the world, standing together to hold corporations accountable for their actions and forge a new, sustainable and just path for our global economy.*

***Color Of Change** is the nation's largest online racial justice organization. We help people respond effectively to injustice in the world around us. As a national online force driven by over one million members, we move decision-makers in corporations and government to create a more human and less hostile world for Black people in America.*

***The Center for Media Justice** is a national, next-generation civil rights organization that believes the right to communicate should belong to everyone. Through our national Media Action Grassroots Network, we partner with community groups across the country to win media rights, access, and representation for all.*

***Daily Kos** fights for a progressive America by empowering its community and allies with information and tools to directly impact the political process.*