

Joint Statement on the Disbanding of the Twitter Trust and Safety Council  
14 December 2022

We, who are former members of the Twitter Trust and Safety Council, condemn the dramatic changes to, and arbitrary enforcement of, content moderation policies and practices at Twitter, including the abrupt disbanding of the Council on Monday night.

The Trust and Safety Council existed to give expert independent advice to Twitter on its policies, practices, and products and the impact they may have on the rights and safety of Twitter users. Contrary to disinformation recently spread by Twitter leadership, the Trust and Safety Council did not make decisions about specific posts or accounts on behalf of the company, nor did we have any say in Twitter's investment or approach to illegal content, such as child sexual abuse material.

Over recent weeks, we have been gravely concerned by Twitter leadership's apparent disregard for the due process and investment of resources required for effective content moderation. Substantive policies prohibiting hate speech, harassment, disinformation, and other forms of abuse are vital to setting expectations for healthy discourse and robust participation from a diverse array of users. Transparent moderation procedures that follow norms of due process are likewise crucial to ensuring that users are treated fairly.

Since Twitter's ownership changed hands, the full Council had not been consulted and planned meetings of the Council were repeatedly rescheduled until the Council was unceremoniously disbanded less than an hour before our first scheduled meeting. Some Council members had hoped that Twitter's new leadership would continue to work with, and benefit from, the well established and diverse expert advice that the global membership of the Council offered. But, despite assurances from senior staff at Twitter about their commitment to continuing to work with the Council, Monday night's last-minute actions show that internal decision making has since contradicted this.

We condemn the irresponsible actions of Twitter leadership in jeopardizing the safety of Council members, including those who resigned before Twitter disbanded the Council, by amplifying disinformation about us and the Council's purely advisory role, sparking huge levels of abuse targeted at the resigning members. Some of us had recently called on Twitter to provide an explanation of what Twitter leadership is doing to correct the false accusations leveled against Council members, which have created safety risks and undermined any trust or ability for members to candidly advise Twitter staff. Rather than respond to our requests, Twitter disbanded the Council.

We call on Twitter, in the strongest terms, to cease making ad hoc, unaccountable, and damaging content moderation decisions and to commit to implementing policies and practices that promote the safety, expression, and participation of its users.

Signed,  
Sixteen former members of the Twitter Trust and Safety Council