

Celebs join Instagram 'freeze' to protest Facebook inaction

September 16 2020, by Kelvin Chan



This Friday, Aug. 23, 2019 file photo shows the Instagram app icon on the screen of a mobile device in New York. Celebrities including Kim Kardashian West, Katy Perry and Leonardo DiCaprio are taking part in a 24-hour "freeze" Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020 on Instagram to protest against the failure of the social media platform's parent company, Facebook, to tackle misinformation and hateful content. (AP Photo/Jenny Kane, File)

Kim Kardashian West, Katy Perry, Leonardo DiCaprio and other celebrities are taking part in a 24-hour Instagram "freeze" on Wednesday to protest against what they say is parent company Facebook's failure to tackle violent and hateful content and election misinformation.

Hollywood stars and influencers are lending their backing to the "#StopHateforProfit" movement's latest campaign. The movement asks people to put up a message highlighting what they called the damage Facebook does but otherwise refrain from posting on Instagram for a day.

"I can't sit by and stay silent while these platforms continue to allow the spreading of hate, propaganda and misinformation – created by groups to sow division and split America apart – only to take steps after people are killed," Kardashian West posted on her Instagram account on Tuesday.

Facebook declined to comment but pointed to recent announcements about what it's doing to limit the reach on its platform of groups that support violence and its efforts to protect the U.S. election in November.

With 188 million followers, Kardashian West is one of the most influential people on Instagram and support from her and other big names for the boycott saw Facebook shares slide in aftermarket trading late Tuesday. They were down 1.7% ahead of the market open on Wednesday.



In this Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020 file photo, Kim Kardashian West speaks at the "Kim Kardashian West: The Justice Project" panel during the Oxygen TCA 2020 Winter Press Tour at the Langham Huntington, in Pasadena, Calif. Celebrities including Kim Kardashian West, Katy Perry and Leonardo DiCaprio are taking part in a 24-hour "freeze" Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020 on Instagram to protest against the failure of the social media platform's parent company, Facebook, to tackle misinformation and hateful content. (Photo by Willy Sanjuan/Invision/AP, File)

The organizers behind "#StopHateforProfit," including civil rights groups such as the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP and Color Of Change, had previously led a campaign that got hundreds of brands and nonprofits to join a Facebook advertising boycott in July.

Ashton Kutcher, Mark Ruffalo, Kerry Washington, Rosario Dawson, Jamie Foxx and Sacha Baron Cohen were among about two dozen

Hollywood stars and celebrity influencers supporting the campaign, the organizers said.

DiCaprio said he was standing with the civil rights groups to call "on all users of Instagram and Facebook to protest the amplification of hate, racism, and the undermining of democracy on those platforms."

Facebook, which earned nearly \$70 billion in advertising revenue last year, is facing a reckoning over what critics call indefensible excuses for amplifying divisions, hate and misinformation on their platforms.

"We are quickly approaching one of the most consequential elections in American history," organizers said. "Facebook's unchecked and vague 'changes' are falling dangerously short of what is necessary to protect our democracy."

The movement also singled out for criticism Facebook's handling of online material ahead of the shootings in Kenosha, Wisconsin last month. CEO Mark Zuckerberg has said the company made a mistake in not removing sooner a page belonging to a militia group that called for armed civilians to enter the town. It only took the page down after an armed teenager killed two people after violent protests sparked by the police shooting of Jacob Blake, who is Black.

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