

UN chief calls for regulating social media companies

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The United Nations chief called Thursday for global rules to regulate powerful social media companies like Twitter and Facebook.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he believes it shouldn't be a [company](#) that has the power to decide whether, for example, then president Donald Trump's Twitter account should be closed, as a questioner asked.

Rather, he said, a "mechanism" should be created "in which there is a [regulatory framework](#) with rules that allow for that to be done in line with law."

"I do not think that we can live in a world where too much power is given to a reduced number of companies," Guterres stressed at a news conference.

Earlier this month, Twitter ended Trump's nearly 12-year run and shuttered his account, severing an instant line of communication to his 89 million followers that was a hallmark of his presidency. Facebook and Instagram suspended Trump.

Twitter said Trump's tweets could incite violence following the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol by his supporters. Conservatives accused the companies of censorship and violating the First Amendment's right to free speech.

Guterres said he is "particularly worried" about the power of social media companies.

He pointed to "the volume of information that is being gathered about each one of us, the lack of control we have about ... the data related to ourselves, the fact that that data can be used not only for commercial purposes to sell to advertising companies ... but also to change our behavior, and the risks of that to be used also from a political point of view for the control of citizens in countries."

Guterres said this "requires a serious discussion" and that is one of the objectives of his "Roadmap for Digital Cooperation" launched last June.

The roadmap's aim is to promote "a safer, more equitable digital world."

It calls for action in eight areas including achieving universal connectivity to the Internet by 2030, "promoting trust and security in the digital environment" and "building a more effective architecture for digital cooperation,"

"Digital technology issues are too often low on political agendas," it says.

Among the roadmap's provisions is a call for strengthening the Internet Governance Forum, which bring people from various groups in the public and [private sector](#) together to discuss [public policy issues](#) related to the Internet, "in order to make it more responsive and relevant to current digital issues."

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