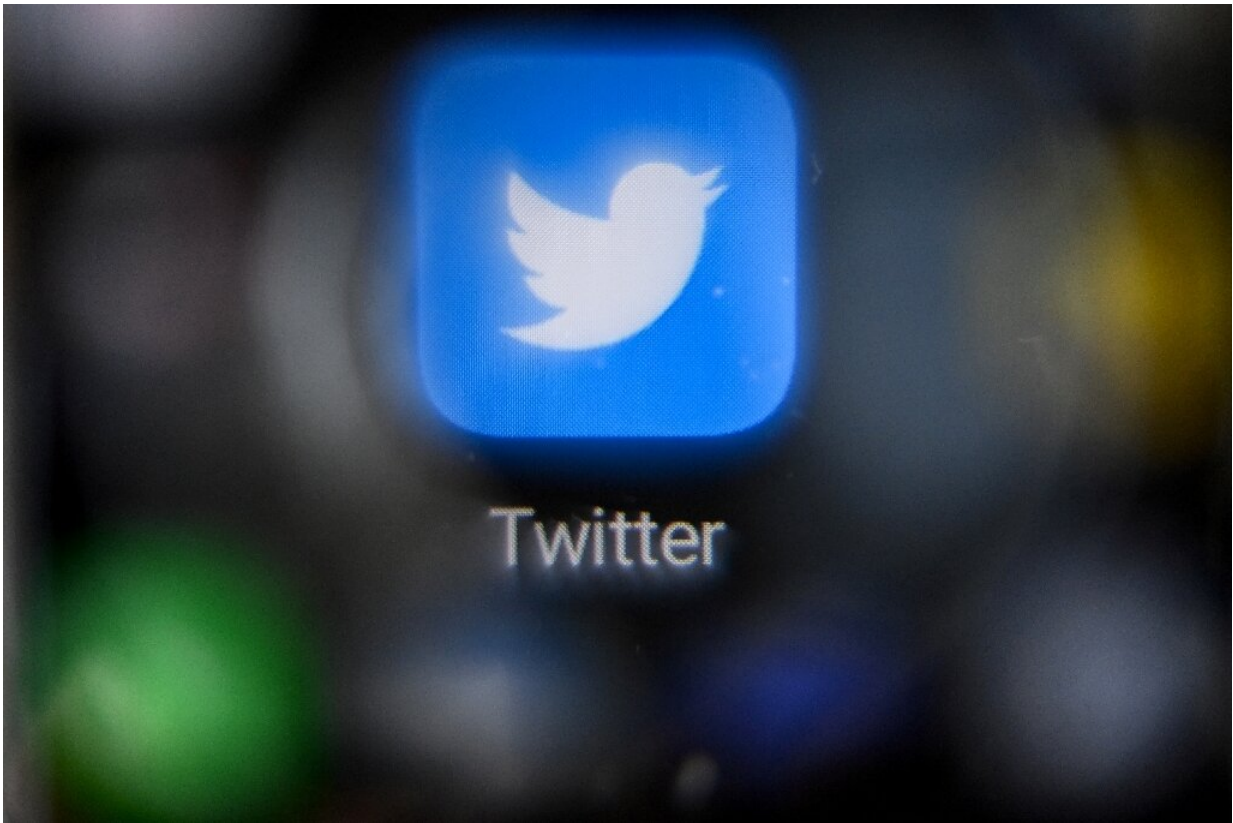


Twitter shuts propaganda accounts in six countries

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Twitter has announced it shut down nearly 3,500 accounts that were posting pro-government propaganda in six countries.

Twitter on Thursday said it had shut down nearly 3,500 accounts that were posting pro-government propaganda in six countries, including

China and Russia.

The vast majority of the accounts were part of a network that "amplified Chinese Communist Party narratives related to the treatment of the Uyghur population in Xinjiang," Twitter said in a statement.

China faces accusations of grave human rights violations against the [ethnic minority](#) in the northwestern province, where experts have estimated that more than one million people are incarcerated in camps.

Aside from 2,048 accounts linked to the pro-Beijing campaign, Twitter also shut down 112 accounts connected to a company named Changyu Culture, linked to Xinjiang's regional government.

The move came a day after Facebook's parent company Meta said it had shut down more than 500 accounts that were part of a China-linked influence campaign relating to Covid-19.

The accounts promoted claims from a fictitious Swiss biologist, Wilson Edwards, that the United States was interfering in efforts to identify the origins of the coronavirus.

Chinese state media had widely quoted "Edwards" in July, although several newspapers deleted references to him after the Swiss embassy in Beijing said there was no trace of him.

Both Twitter and Facebook are banned in China, but Beijing frequently uses both US social networks to promote its positions on the international stage.

Beyond China, Twitter also shuttered 16 accounts linked to the Internet Research Agency, a Russian company labeled a "troll farm" by critics, which runs pro-government online influence campaigns.

"The operation relied on a mix of inauthentic and real accounts to introduce a pro-Russia viewpoint into Central African political discourse," Twitter said.

Russia has wielded increasing influence in the Central African Republic since 2018 when it sent a large contingent of "instructors" to train the army.

"We also removed a network of 50 accounts that attacked the civilian Libyan government and actors that support it, while voicing significant support for Russia's geopolitical position in Libya and Syria," Twitter added.

The banned accounts also include 276 that shared pro-government content in Mexico, and "277 Venezuelan accounts that amplified accounts, hashtags and topics in support of the government and its official narratives."

In Africa, 268 accounts were shut down for targeting civil rights group FichuaTanzania, along with 418 that "engaged in coordinated inauthentic activity" in Uganda to promote President Yoweri Museveni.

"In most instances, accounts were suspended for various violations of our platform manipulation and spam policies," Twitter said.

Like other social media giants, Twitter has faced criticism over failures to tackle misinformation on its platform as well as racist, sexist and homophobic posts, among other forms of hate speech.

It also announced Thursday that it will launch a Twitter Moderation Research Consortium early next year, bringing together "experts from across academia, civil society, NGOs and journalism" to study possible improvements.

Twitter said it would not seek to influence the consortium's findings.

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