

Musk: People banned from Twitter won't be restored for weeks

November 2 2022, by Haleluya Hadero



The Twitter application is seen on a digital device, Monday, April 25, 2022, in San Diego. Elon Musk says, Wednesday, Nov. 2, Twitter will not allow anyone who was kicked off the site to return until it sets up procedures on how to do that — a process that will take at least a few weeks. That would mean people who have been banned from the site for violating Twitters rules for harassment, violence, or election and COVID-related misinformation will not be able to return before next Tuesday's U.S. mid-term elections. Credit: AP Photo/Gregory Bull, File

Elon Musk said Wednesday that Twitter will not allow anyone who has been kicked off the site to return until it sets up procedures on how to do that, a process that will take at least a few weeks.

That would mean people banned from the site for violating Twitter's rules for harassment, violence, or election and COVID-related misinformation will not be able to return before next Tuesday's U.S. midterm elections.

The pledge came after Musk, [who took control of the social-media site last week](#) after buying it for \$44 billion, said in a tweet that he had met with a handful of civil-society leaders "about how Twitter will continue to combat hate & harassment & enforce its election integrity policies."

Those attending the meeting Tuesday asked Musk not to restore the banned users ahead of the midterms, said Jessica González, an attorney and co-CEO of the advocacy group Free Press who attended the meeting.

The attendees—including leaders from the NAACP, Anti-Defamation League and Color of Change—also requested Twitter have a transparent process on how it plans to restore accounts. Musk has publicly said that he would let former President Donald Trump back on the site, though Trump—who routinely touts his own platform Truth Social—has given no indication as to whether he will return.

González said the attendees also requested Twitter enforce election-integrity measures that are already in place, and encouraged him to hear from a diverse array of people—particularly racial minorities and those who've been targeted by hate and harassment campaigns.

"He agreed to all of those things in our meeting, but actions speak louder than words," González said. "I've had a lot of meetings with tech CEOs. And I've been made a lot of empty promises. And with Elon Musk in particular, he's shown himself to be inconsistent, saying one thing that one day and another thing the next. So we fully intend to hold him accountable to these promises and more."

The NAACP, for its part, said in a statement that it expressed to Musk its concerns about "the dangerous, life-threatening hate and conspiracies that have proliferated on Twitter" under his watch. The organization cited a report about [a spike in hate speech on Twitter in the hours following the Musk acquisition](#), saying a failure to take action will "put human lives at risk and further unravel our democracy." It also said any account that perpetuates misinformation about elections should not be allowed on the platform.

"As long as hate, misinformation, and disinformation spread across Twitter, the bird cannot be free," the organization said. After taking over Twitter last week, Musk tweeted "the bird is freed," a reference to the site's logo. In a separate letter to Musk on Wednesday, the NAACP, along with the National Urban League and the National Action Network, said they were alarmed by the rise of racial and religious hatred on Twitter and accused the billionaire of unwittingly unleashing "the worst of human nature."

Musk said last week he won't make major decisions about content or restoring banned accounts before setting up a "content moderation council" with diverse viewpoints. He reiterated that point on Wednesday, adding the council he's assembling will include "the civil rights community and groups who face hate-fueled violence."

No group representing the LGBTQ community was present during Tuesday's meeting and Twitter did not immediately reply to a request for

comment on whether Musk plans to meet with one. The billionaire Tesla CEO has said in the past that he supports transgender people, but has criticized the use of different pronouns. In a tweet this summer referring to Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson, who was locked out of his account following a post about transgender actor Elliot Page that seemingly violated Twitter's rules, Musk said the platform was "going way too far in squashing dissenting opinions."

A spokesperson for the advocacy organization GLAAD said the group remains in communication with Twitter and expects to continue to provide feedback and research about LGBTQ safety on the site, as it does with every other leading platform.

Twitter and other social media platforms have long been awash with misinformation about voting and elections, as well as the COVID-19 vaccine. The platform is retaining its misinformation labels for the 2022 midterms and attempting to debunk tweets that contain misinformation with links to credible information.

In one part of the meeting on Tuesday, González said the group told Musk—who posted and deleted an article over the weekend that contained misleading claims about the attack on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband—that he needs to set the tone for what he expects on the platform.

Some of the groups in the meeting were part of a coalition that sent an open letter to top Twitter advertisers on Tuesday, calling on them to commit to halting advertising on the site if Twitter under Musk undermines community standards and guts content moderation. In his own open letter to advertisers, the primary source of Twitter's revenue, Musk said last week that he would not let the site [become a "free-for-all hellscape" in his quest to promote free speech.](#)

But advertisers are still practicing caution. IPG Mediabrands sent a recommendation to clients Monday that they pause advertising on Twitter for a week until more clarity emerges about brand safety on the site, according a person who had seen the recommendation. The person requested to not be identified because they were not authorized to discuss the recommendation, which comes after General Motors said last week it was pausing advertising on Twitter while it also waits for clarity on the direction of the platform under Musk.

Meanwhile, David Cruz, the national director for The League of United Latin American Citizens, said Sindy Benavides, who seemingly represented the Hispanic civil rights organization at the meeting, was not a member of the organization. In an email, Cruz called Benavides "a rogue, former respected leader who has decided to place herself above the organization that trusted her."

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Citation: Musk: People banned from Twitter won't be restored for weeks (2022, November 2) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2022-11-musk-weeks-twitter-accounts.html>

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