

Universal Music warns it will pull songs from TikTok

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Universal Music Group warned Tuesday that it would pull its songs,

which include those by Taylor Swift and The Weeknd, from TikTok after a breakdown in talks over issues such as the compensation of artists.

In an open letter, Universal accused TikTok of "trying to build a music-based business, without paying fair value for the music."

Both sides have been discussing the terms of a new agreement, with their existing contract set to expire on Wednesday.

But their deal has not been renewed.

Among the issues raised in talks were appropriate compensation for artists and songwriters, online safety for users, and the protection of artists from the harms of artificial intelligence, the letter added.

But as negotiations proceeded, Universal said, "TikTok attempted to bully us into accepting a deal worth less than the previous deal, far less than fair market value and not reflective of their exponential growth."

Major music companies earn royalty payments from streaming and social media platforms.

Universal said, however, that TikTok proposed paying "a rate that is a fraction of the rate that similarly situated major social platforms pay."

TikTok said in a statement that it was "sad and disappointing that Universal Music Group has put their own greed above the interests of their artists."

Calling Universal's characterizations "false," the social media giant said the label had "chosen to walk away from the powerful support of a platform with well over a billion users that serves as a free promotional

and discovery vehicle for their talent."

A person familiar with the matter told AFP that all music licensed by Universal "will be removed from TikTok in the coming days, starting on January 31st."

According to the source, TikTok "has agreements in place with all other major and independent labels."

"TikTok is not a music streaming platform and should not be licensed as such," said the source, stressing that users cannot play full songs on TikTok and are limited to a maximum cap of 60 seconds of music in their video creations.

Despite TikTok's large user base, it accounts for just about one percent of Universal's total revenue, the label said.

Universal noted other problems such as large amounts of AI-generated recordings on the platform, alongside what it called a lack of effort to deal with infringements on artists' music.

Artists on Universal's labels include Taylor Swift, The Weeknd and Billie Eilish.

Owned by Chinese company ByteDance, TikTok is one of the most popular [social media platforms](#) globally, with more than one billion users.

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