

# FIA-commissioned report takes aim at social media companies for not curbing online abuse in sports

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Michael Andretti, left, talks with FIA President Mohammed bin Sulayem before the Formula One Miami Grand Prix auto race at Miami International Autodrome, Sunday, May 8, 2022, in Miami Gardens, Fla. Formula One has rejected Andretti Global's application to join the global racing series in 2025 or 2026 but said Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, it is willing to revisit the issue in 2028 when General Motors has an engine ready for competition. Credit: AP

Photo/Jenna Fryer, File

An FIA-commissioned report on online abuse in sports released Thursday suggests social media companies should do more to curb targeted attacks toward athletes, officials and even fans.

The [United Against Online Abuse Campaign](#) surveyed 22 global sporting federations, among them FIFA, World Athletics, the International Tennis Federation, and the FIA, which is the governing body for Formula One and other European motorsports series.

FIA President Mohammed Ben Sulayem began planning the campaign when a female race steward received online threats after her ruling against Spaniard Fernando Alonso during a 2022 race. That came after Nicholas Latifi was subjected to death threats after his race-changing crash in the closing laps altered the 2021 season finale.

When people are abused online, the report's authors wrote, why do "the social media publishers fail to adopt more obvious forms of intervention?" The report asked why social media platforms aren't immediately removing harmful content, pursuing perpetrators and banning them.

The topic is a familiar one beyond sports as well. On Wednesday, the CEOs of Meta, TikTok, X and other social media companies went before the Senate Judiciary Committee to testify as lawmakers and parents are growing increasingly concerned about the effects of social media on young people's lives.



Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, right, with fellow witnesses, from left, TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew and X CEO Linda Yaccarino, testifies before a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, to discuss child safety online. Credit: AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta

The UAOA report said there are dangers with X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, since Elon Musk's 2022 purchase—it cited "changes in the ownership and organizational structure" of the company"—and the report noted concerns with the rise in TikTok, specifically for younger demographics.

The report found Europe and South America account for "around 75% of all online abuse, notably in other major sports such as association football."

"Online abuse is a persistent issue within the sporting world," said Sulayem, founding partner of UAOA. "The survey findings highlight the importance of united anti-abuse efforts across sporting ecosystems and beyond. The aim of our coalition is to rid our sport of the scourge of online abuse."



A sign stands at the TikTok Inc. building in Culver City, Calif., on March 17, 2023. Nevada's attorney general has launched a go-it-alone legal fight accusing TikTok, Snapchat and Meta of creating what one lawsuit calls "an addiction machine" that exploits children too young to have self-control. Three lawsuits filed Tuesday, Jan.30, 2024, in state court allege the platforms put kids at risk of auto accidents, drug overdoses, suicides, eating disorders and sexual exploitation. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes, File



The logo for Snap Inc. displayed above a post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Feb. 5, 2020. Nevada’s attorney general has launched a go-it-alone legal fight accusing TikTok, Snapchat and Meta of creating what one lawsuit calls “an addiction machine” that exploits children too young to have self-control. Three lawsuits filed Tuesday, Jan.30, 2024, in state court allege the platforms put kids at risk of auto accidents, drug overdoses, suicides, eating disorders and sexual exploitation. Credit: AP Photo/Richard Drew, File

The UAOA said 22 sporting federations participated in the survey and among the main findings were:

—Three quarters of federations said sports stars regularly face threats of harm against themselves or their families, with 90% saying it likely has led them to quit the sport.

—Of the federations that participated, 95% said social media platforms must either "voluntarily or under obligation" police harmful online abuse.

—The report noted the data comes after "a spate of high-profile online abuse cases," that targeted England midfielder Eni Aluko, world tennis No. 8 Daria Kasatkina, Chelsea forward Lauren James and recently retired World Cup rugby referee Wayne Barnes.

Coalition members will meet to discuss the next steps at a Conference in Paris this May.

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