

# French minister meets with Google, Facebook, Twitter

February 20 2015, by Olga R. Rodriguez

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Google Senior Vice President of Communication Rachel Whetstone, left, greets French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve upon his arrival at Google headquarters Friday, Feb. 20, 2015, in Mountain View, Calif. (AP Photo/Ben Margot)

The French interior minister said Friday he asked Google, Facebook and Twitter to work directly with French officials during investigations and to immediately remove terrorist propaganda when authorities alert them

to it.

"We emphasized that when an investigation is underway we don't want to go through the usual government to government channels, which can take so long," said French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve after a meeting with representatives from the U.S. tech giants.

"It's important to have full cooperation and quick reaction" he added.

Cazeneuve's one-day visit to San Francisco and Silicon Valley comes weeks after terrorist attacks in Paris left 20 people dead, including three gunmen.

On Jan. 7, two gunmen killed 12 people and injured 11 more during an attack on the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris. A third gunman killed a policewoman Jan. 8 and then killed four more people a day later after taking hostages at a kosher supermarket in Paris. Police killed the three gunmen.

Twitter and Facebook spokespeople said they do everything they can to stop material that incites violence but didn't say whether they would heed the minister's request for direct cooperation with French authorities.

"We regularly host ministers and other governmental officials from across the world at Facebook, and were happy to welcome Mr. Cazeneuve today," a Facebook spokesperson said. "We work aggressively to ensure that we do not have terrorists or terror groups using the site, and we also remove any content that praises or supports terrorism."

When asked whether Twitter would work closely with French investigators, a spokesperson said their website outlines the guidelines for law enforcement to request information.



French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve, right, gestures during a meeting with Google executives Friday, Feb. 20, 2015, at Google headquarters in Mountain View, Calif. (AP Photo/Ben Margot)

"We review all reported content against our rules, which prohibit direct, specific threats of violence against others," the spokesperson wrote in an email.

An email to Google requesting comment was not immediately answered.

Cazeneuve said he called on the tech companies to join in the fight against terrorist propaganda disseminated on the internet and to block terrorists' ability to use websites and videos to recruit and indoctrinate new followers.

The pace of foreign fighters joining the Islamic State and other extremist groups has not slowed and at least 3,400 come from Western

nations among 20,000 from around the world, U.S. intelligence officials say.



French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve gestures during a meeting with Google executives Friday, Feb. 20, 2015, at Google headquarters in Mountain View, Calif. (AP Photo/Ben Margot)

"I told them we can figure this out together, we can come up with counter-terrorism speech and block these sites that are enticing the most vulnerable members of our society to commit terrorist acts," he said.

France also is pushing to treat jihadi material on the Internet like child porn, a task that before the attacks in Paris was getting scant traction but now seems to have caught the attention of Europe's top security officials.

Cazeneuve said the meeting Friday is a first step in building a strong relationship between the tech companies and the French government. He said he invited them to go to Paris in April to continue the conversation.



French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve listens during a meeting with Google executives Friday, Feb. 20, 2015, at Google headquarters in Mountain View, Calif. (AP Photo/Ben Margot)

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