

Twitter suspends more accounts linked to 'terrorism'

March 21 2017

Twitter said Tuesday it suspended 376,890 accounts in the second half of 2016 for "promotion of terrorism," an increase of 60 percent over the prior six-month period.

The latest suspensions bring the total number of blocked accounts to 636,248 from August 2015, when Twitter stepped up efforts to curb "[violent extremism](#)," the company announced as part of its latest transparency report.

The actions come with social networks under pressure from governments around the world to use technology tools to lock out jihadists and others who use the platforms to recruit and launch attacks.

Twitter said separately the number of [government requests](#) for user data rose seven percent from the prior six-month period, but affected 13 percent fewer accounts.

For requests to remove content—from governments and others including copyright holders—the number of requests was up 13 percent but the number of accounts fell 37 percent.

Twitter announced that the FBI had informed the social network it was no longer under a "gag order" that prevented the disclosure of five cases involving "national security letters"—special requests from the US law enforcement agency in national security cases.

As a result, Twitter was able to inform the affected users of the FBI requests.

"As we continue to push for more transparency in how we can speak about [national security](#) requests, we will update this new section in future transparency reports," Twitter stated.

Twitter, which is pressured by certain governments to remove "hate speech," disclosed for the first time a partnership with a third-party research group called Lumen to catalog any information removed.

Twitter said it began the agreement with Lumen in 2010.

"Unless we are prevented from doing so, when we withhold content in a certain country Twitter will continue to provide a copy of the request to Lumen so anyone can see what type of content was removed and who made the request," the company said.

Another section of the transparency report was devoted to "legal removals," or requests to remove content from verified journalists and other media outlets.

"Given the concerning global trend of various governments cracking down on press freedom, we want to shine a brighter light on these requests," Twitter said.

It received 88 legal requests from around the world to remove [content](#) posted by verified journalists or news outlets, but did not take any action on the majority of the requests, "with limited exceptions in Germany and Turkey," which accounted for 88 percent of such requests.

"For example, we were compelled to withhold tweets sharing graphic imagery following terror attacks in Turkey in response to a court order,"

Twitter said.

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