

# Facebook says Kremlin-linked ads ready for public view, but House hasn't released them

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A Facebook official said Tuesday that the social network had finished "scrubbing" personal information from Kremlin-linked ads placed on their platform to influence the 2016 election, clearing the way for Congress to release them to the public.

However, the House Intelligence Committee has still not released the ads, which Facebook said it provided to lawmakers last week after removing any personally identifiable information that could violate people's privacy.

Leaders of the House panel would not comment Tuesday on when they plan to make the ads public, which they have been promising to do since last fall.

"We've provided everything we've got to Congress and the Special Counsel," said Andy Stone, Facebook's policy communications manager.

Special Counsel Robert Mueller is leading a criminal investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential [election](#). He also is looking into possible collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russians, which President Trump has repeatedly denied, and possible obstruction of justice by the president.

A spokeswoman for Rep. Mike Conaway, R-Texas, who is leading the [committee](#)'s separate Russia probe, did not respond to emails and calls Tuesday. A spokesman for Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the

committee's senior Democrat, had no immediate comment.

The House Intelligence Committee is one of three congressional committees investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election.

As part of that investigation, the House and Senate intelligence committees pressed Facebook, Twitter and Google last year to provide information about how Kremlin-linked individuals and companies used the U.S. platforms to try to influence the election and sow discord among Americans.

After initially scoffing at the idea that the Russians were manipulating Facebook, company officials revealed last year that a Russian troll farm purchased more than 3,000 ads at a cost of more than \$100,000. They turned the ads over to the congressional committees to review.

The House and Senate intelligence committees each held a hearing on the issue Nov. 1. The House panel released a sampling of the ads purchased by the Russians on the day of the hearing, and promised to release all 3,000 soon afterward to give the public a more complete picture of the election interference. The full release could give the public a better sense of whether the Russian scheme was only trying to sow division or if it was intended to weaken Hillary Clinton's campaign or strengthen Trump's.

"We will do that as quick as we can," Conaway told reporters on Oct. 11.

Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., said all along that the Senate committee would not release the ads or any other documents until its Russia probe is complete. Conaway was quoted earlier this month in Politico saying that the House panel would "probably" do the same thing and release the ads along with its final report. However, that contradicts what he and Schiff told reporters last fall.

Neither committee has said when its final Russia report will be released. The House intelligence committee's probe has suffered from deep partisan divisions, reflected most recently by dueling Republican and Democratic memos analyzing how the FBI obtained a warrant to spy on former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page.

The Kremlin-linked ads made news again late last week when Rob Goldman, a Facebook vice president in charge of ads, tweeted that he had read a majority of the Russian ads and could "say very definitively that swaying the election was not the main goal."

He was retweeted by President Trump, who cited Goldman's comments as evidence that Russia's interference in the election is "fake news."

Goldman has since apologized internally for his tweets, saying that he was not speaking on behalf of Facebook, according to a report in Wired.

The Facebook exec's tweets followed Mueller's release of indictments against 13 Russian nationals and three Russian businesses for what Mueller called a wide-ranging effort to undermine the 2016 presidential election, including efforts aimed at "supporting the presidential campaign of then-candidate Donald J. Trump."

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