

Dear Special Rapporteurs Canataci, Morales, Obokata, and Muigai,

Thank you for your June 19, 2020, letter addressed to Mark Zuckerberg.

We strongly oppose the abuse of our apps to facilitate any form of human exploitation and have long-standing policies and protocols to combat any such abuse. We appreciate the opportunity to show how we seek to respect human rights and prevent and mitigate human rights harms related to domestic servitude through our policies and efforts to identify and reduce harmful content, behaviours, and actors on Facebook and Instagram.

Facebook policies across our family of apps prohibit content or behaviors that may lead to human exploitation in all its forms. Our definition of Human Exploitation adapts the definitions of human trafficking and human smuggling from the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons ('Palermo Protocol') and Protocol Against Smuggling of Migrants, and we go into greater detail in the enclosed attachment. Since 2012, in consultation with human rights and safety experts from around the world, we have fleshed out and refined our content policies related to human smuggling, the sale of body parts and organs, sexual solicitation, as well as the sexualisation of minors.

While we've long had policies to combat multiple forms of exploitation, in response to expert guidance in May of 2019, we consolidated them in one dedicated section, capturing a broad range of harmful activities that may be manifested on Facebook or Instagram platforms. Experts think and talk about these issues under one umbrella: human exploitation, and so we've adopted that term.

Our policies were developed in consultation with more than twenty expert organisations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Task Force on Human Trafficking and Prostitution, A21, and ECPAT. We do not allow people to post content or accounts related to domestic servitude. We also work with organisations around the world, including Polaris and the National Human Trafficking Hotline, to provide resources and assist victims and survivors of human trafficking.

Our practice and policies recognize human trafficking is a serious problem that requires a multifaceted approach across different teams at Facebook and Instagram. Human exploitation practices, including domestic servitude, are global and societal issues that require understanding local market contexts, so we employ local market experts to understand, identify and surface trafficking trends on the platform, and to train our cross-functional teams to recognise them. We have members of teams across investigations, engineering, research, content policy, and business integrity who are dedicated to anti-trafficking efforts. Likewise, we are investing in innovative automated capacity to proactively detect related content and behaviors, since it is rarely reported by users.

The information we're providing in response to your questions is attached to this cover letter. We hope it gives you the information you need. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can clarify or provide you with any further information. Please be assured of my true commitment, and that of my colleagues, to work with you to confront any form of modern slavery, trafficking or forced labor.

Yours, very sincerely,

Antigone Davis
Global Head, Safety Policy

This attachment is a response to questions raised in the Joint Communication from Special Procedures sent by Beatriz Balbin on June 19th, 2020.

1. Provide additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations [in the Joint Communication from Special Procedures]

Following an investigation prompted by an inquiry from the BBC, we conducted a proactive review of our platform. We removed 700 Instagram accounts within 24 hours, and simultaneously blocked several violating hashtags.

We then followed up with an in-depth investigation. The following month we were able to remove more than 130,000 pieces of Arabic-language content related to domestic servitude in Arabic on both Instagram and Facebook. These violations were in organic speech, not advertisements. We also identified and blocked 50 Arabic hashtags we identified as related to domestic servitude.

Unfortunately, such content is rarely reported to us by users. Underreporting is a problem shared across all of human exploitation. Human trafficking victims may be unaware of their exploitative conditions thus not reporting them to the relevant authorities, or deprived of freedom or lack the means to report their abuser; buyers may either be unaware of purchasing services from victims of slavery or disincentivized to report as they want to avail themselves of illicit or significantly cheaper services provided through exploitation (e.g. sexual encounters with minors, cheap labour). Additionally, when it comes to domestic servitude, since it may generally be a socially accepted phenomenon in some regions, bystanders do not realize they can or should report this content.

To counter these challenges, and based on the investigations summarized above, we have also developed technology that can proactively find and take action on content related to domestic servitude. By using it, we have been able to detect and remove over 4,000 pieces of violating organic content in Arabic and English from January 2020 to date.

We continue to encourage people to report content or accounts they believe may endanger others, so we can quickly take action and enhance our proactive detection systems.

2. Please explain whether, similar to other technology companies, Facebook and Instagram are planning to amend policies focused on addressing trafficking in persons and forced labour, to also address risks of contemporary forms of slavery. In this context, please provide information about human rights due diligence mechanisms that your company has in place to: identify and assess impacts of your business on the situation of migrant domestic workers, including women in particular; act on the findings of these assessments; and monitor and communicate the effectiveness of relevant mitigation measures.

We continually review and refine our policy language in line with feedback from external experts and our internal research. Our definition of Human Exploitation adapts the definitions of human trafficking and human smuggling from the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons ('Palermo Protocol') and Protocol Against Smuggling of Migrants. In our year-long policy development process we consulted over 20 organisations—including the UN Office on Drugs and Crime—to ensure our updated policy holistically and comprehensively addresses the issues of modern and constantly evolving forms of human trafficking and human smuggling.

To be clear, our current policy on Human Exploitation prohibits:

- Content or behavior on our platform that may lead to human exploitation, which includes any of the following (not exhaustive list):
 - Sex Trafficking, covering minors and adults
 - The sale of children for illegal adoption
 - Orphanage Trafficking and Orphanage Volun-tourism
 - Forced Marriages
 - Labor Exploitation (incl. bonded labor)
 - Domestic Servitude
 - Non-regenerative Organ Trafficking
 - Forced Criminal Activity (e.g. forced begging, forced drug trafficking); and
 - Recruitment of Child Soldiers

- Content geared towards
 - recruiting potential victims through force, fraud, coercion, enticement, deception, blackmail or other non-consensual acts
 - facilitating human exploitation by coordinating, transporting, transferring, harboring or brokering of victims prior or during the exploitation
 - exploitation of humans by promoting, depicting, or advocating for it; and
 - offering or assisting in smuggling of humans

3. Please provide information as to what human rights due diligence steps, as set out in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, have been undertaken by your company to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for human rights abuses caused by or contributed to through your own activities, or directly linked to your operations, products or services by your business relationships. This includes the adverse impact of the services described in this letter on the human rights of migrant women engaged in domestic work in the Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, including the right to privacy, freedom of movement, as well as protection from forced labour and other contemporary forms of slavery.

Facebook has been a member of the multi-stakeholder Global Network Initiative since 2013. As a GNI member it has made specific human rights commitments recognizing the value of due diligence as defined by the GNI and UNGPs, and committing to protect freedom of expression and privacy as defined by global human rights treaties. Facebook conducted a variety of human rights due diligence and was independently assessed every two years against these commitments.

In 2019, Facebook strengthened its commitment and recruited a high level human rights leadership position, expanding and strengthening the human rights policy team. The team engages with colleagues throughout the company on a broad range of issues and countries, influencing policies and products. The team advised and supported the process of creating the new Oversight Board, and ensured human rights principles were clearly recognized in our updated Community Standards Values. It is currently developing a stand-alone human rights policy, and intensifying human rights due diligence. The team is using a variety of formats including rapid response, risk assessment frameworks, desk scans, and detailed human rights impact assessments. We are prioritizing harms addressed based on UNGP criteria of scale, severity, and remediability.

Facebook is now leading the industry in its conduct and disclosure of human rights due diligence. To date it has publicly released detailed due diligence on Myanmar (2018) and the creation of the Facebook Oversight Board (2019). In May 2020, Facebook released detailed summaries and recommendations from three HRIAs - from Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, as well as detailed Facebook responses indicating actions taken. You can access them online [here](#).

Several other HRIAs are in progress, all of them conducted according to UNGP-required methodologies. This body of due diligence explicitly address several country contexts with high environmental risks of human exploitation, including trafficking and forms of modern slavery. We'd be happy to discuss these with you in more detail, as well as other formalized review procedures Facebook has used to drive internal action on these issues.

- 4. Furthermore, please explain how Facebook intends to exercise leverage in its business relationships with the developers of the applications listed in this letter to prevent and mitigate human rights abuses caused by their wrongful practices.*

Facebook has no business relationship with the developers of these apps. We do not run an online app store.

- 5. Please advise how Facebook aims to provide effective operational-level grievance mechanisms, or cooperate in the provision of effective remedies through legitimate processes to the affected victims, if contributed to adverse human rights impact by the availability of applications such as 4Sale in Kuwait and Haraj in Saudi Arabia on your online store.*

This question is not directly applicable to Facebook. We do not run an online app store.

We carry out a range of programmatic activities in support of victims of exploitation and trafficking; have significantly strengthened our operational grievance mechanisms with the creation of the Facebook Oversight Board; and seek to ensure non-repetition through the product and policy work summarized in this document.

- 6. Please provide information whether Facebook has reported these crimes to the law enforcement authorities in respective countries, including in countries where the Kafala system is still in use. Furthermore, please explain if and how Facebook ensures that reports about contemporary forms of slavery, sale of children, trafficking in persons and forced labour, including digital evidence, are shared with the relevant national authorities in a lawful manner, with full respect for the provisions of the international human rights law regulating freedom of expression, the right to privacy and other human rights.*

Facebook may voluntarily disclose information to law enforcement where we have a good faith reason to believe that the matter involves imminent risk of serious physical injury or death, and we will consider the human rights record or climate of a jurisdiction before we disclose this information.

- 7. Please explain what procedures Facebook has in place to ensure the privacy and dignity of victims of such crimes by eliminating content permanently, such as the profiles of individuals to be sold as housemaids which are published on certain applications. Furthermore, please explain what steps have been taken by Facebook to ensure that all listings that include profiles of migrant domestic workers for sale are removed from your platforms, while, at the same*

time, the law enforcement authorities are provided with relevant information to bring those responsible to justice.

First, we take content containing human trafficking and exploitation very seriously and remove any content we find in violation of our policies in this area. **All reported content found to contain recruitment, facilitation or exploitation for the purpose of domestic servitude, including profiles of individuals to be sold as housemaids, is removed from the platform and the accounts posting such content are disabled.**

Second, we have robust proactive detection of domestic servitude on Instagram and Facebook in Arabic and in English. As noted earlier, in the last six months we removed over 4,000 pieces of organic content related to domestic servitude from the platform. This is a very significant increase compared to the amount of content detected in earlier periods, which relied on human reporting alone.

Third, the increase in our ability to detect violating content results directly from major investments by our technical and operational teams. We are also increasing our investments and ability to identify the illicit actors, networks, organizations, and businesses that perpetrate these activities and disrupt them accordingly. We look to enact countermeasures - both on our platforms and via our external partnerships - to stop actors and businesses from using our services to commit crimes, and in all stages of the exploitation lifecycle.

Finally, we will continually and regularly engage with external stakeholders to understand existing and emerging trends of this abuse, as well as other forms of human exploitation, to continually improve our policy, protocol and proactive detection solutions.

8. Please also explain what awareness raising measures, if any, have been adopted by Facebook to alert your staff members, as well as the users of your tools and services to human rights abuses, such as contemporary forms of slavery, trafficking in human beings and forced labour. Please provide further information about online reporting tools and hotlines available to your users to report human rights abuses. Please also explain in what languages the reporting tools are available and how Facebook informs about them in order to ensure that they are known and accessible to individuals.

“Awareness raising” is a broad concept and involves many stakeholder groups. We’ve organized our response by stakeholder group for clarity’s sake. Facebook employs a number of awareness raising measures, both for employees of the company as well as our users.

Awareness Raising for Facebook Employees

We have created detailed guidelines to assess whether or not an account is posting content that may aim to recruit into, coordinate, or exploit people for the purpose of domestic servitude or other forms of exploitation.

- Specifically, in the context of domestic servitude, we ask content moderators to look at a number of indicators to ascertain whether a post displays an intent to recruit a person into exploitative working conditions or sell or transfer a person’s ownership.
- We work to have a continuous feedback loop between our moderators and language specialists who identify new adversarial terms, hashtags, and tactics on our platforms to our policy and technology teams.

- We continually seek to expand and refine our understanding of human exploitation as we amend and update our enforcement guidelines.

We work with a large network of [trusted safety partners](#) to detect and remove Facebook Pages, Facebook Profiles and Instagram accounts that may be engaging in recruitment, facilitation or exploitation of people for the purpose of domestic servitude as well as other forms of modern slavery.

We also have a broad cross-functional effort to create and implement relevant training for content moderators and other relevant specialists. Several internal teams deliver training and presentations to various stakeholders and during key business events.

- For example, in 2019, internal teams implemented human exploitation training during a Safety Roundtable in Mexico, as well as at an internal Organised Crime Symposium.
- They also provided training on human exploitation to our internal law enforcement response teams and community integrity teams.

In addition to training, we regularly organise internal events to raise awareness of human exploitation amongst our employees.

- We hold annual company-wide internal summits with a wide range of cross-functional teams to ensure that we are developing holistic solutions to combat this abuse.
- We engage and invite external partners to participate in the summits as well as ad hoc events.
- In 2019, we held screenings of anti-trafficking films in our US and European HQs, with the participation of the director and survivors featured in the film.
- We also held a relevant roundtable with strong domestic expert participation in Thailand, and hosted a diverse range of additional meetings involving local and global anti-trafficking NGOs, academia and law enforcement throughout the year.
- These events build from a major anti-sex trafficking roundtable held at our Menlo Park HQ in 2018, attended by a wide range of expert anti-trafficking CSOs.

Awareness Raising for Law Enforcement

Our Trust and Safety Law Enforcement Outreach team regularly engages with law enforcement on these issues.

- For example, we attended and spoke at events such as the Interpol Human Trafficking Expert Group Regional European Meeting in Serbia in May 2019.
- These teams have also conducted specialized training to anti-trafficking and exploitation police units throughout the world.

Training we have delivered on lawful and appropriate requests for data to aid in law enforcement investigations has led to the rescue of children from forced labor rings, and the dismantling of groups responsible for the exploitation of children.

Awareness Raising for Users

If people encounter content that indicates someone is in immediate physical danger related to human trafficking, we ask that they contact their local law enforcement immediately. People can also report images, videos, posts, comments, pages, groups, messages and accounts on Facebook and Instagram.

- When reported, content is reviewed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in 49 languages.

- Because of the risk of real world harm, material relating to human exploitation is prioritized for review by our safety and security team.
- We have a human trafficking reporting option available for Facebook users.
- Additionally, our users can report human trafficking content directly to us using [the form](#) available in the Help Centre Page.

Our [Help Center Page](#) provides our community information on how to report human trafficking-related content on the platform. In collaboration with our Safety partners, we share contact details of over 20 local, regional and global anti-trafficking organisations, including Polaris and the National Human Trafficking Hotline, to provide resources and assist victims and survivors of human trafficking.

We work continually to update and expand the Help Center Page.

We also work with select NGOs including Polaris to amplify educational campaigns to educate people on how they can report instances of trafficking, how they can recognize the signs, and how they can connect with resources for support including the national human trafficking hotline.

We have developed strong relationships with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), International Center for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC), Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), ECPAT, Polaris, OCSE, and other NGOs to disrupt and prevent sex trafficking online. We have been working with the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, operated by Polaris Project, to provide resources and assist victims of human trafficking globally

Awareness raising around our Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Facebook strives to have a positive impact on the communities and environment where we operate, and we collaborate with our supply chain partners on upholding these same high standards.

Facebook's [2020 Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement](#) outlines our commitment, policies, and practices to prevent and address forced labor issues in our supply chain. We provide training and capacity building on slavery and human trafficking to our staff and suppliers and provide mechanisms for reporting concerns and raising issues.

We believe in partnering with others to develop solutions and how public disclosures like this Statement advance transparency and accountability in corporate social responsibility.

9. Please explain what monitoring and evaluation systems Facebook has in place to ensure the effectiveness of actions taken to mitigate and prevent modern slavery in the context of these and other allegations involving your company

Facebook tries to ensure our actions to mitigate and prevent modern slavery are meaningful. We built an operational playbook for reviewing and addressing policy, detection, protocol, enforcement, and measurement actions to ensure that the changes we make are the right changes and that they are also effective. As we receive reports of human exploitation, we monitor each one closely on a dashboard to ensure they are moving through the review flow quickly and accurately. This allows us to maximize the probability that all obvious instances of Human Trafficking are identified and escalated to first responders, like NCMEC and Law Enforcement.

We also ensure that our proactive efforts are effective. After the launch of any new proactive detection workstreams, we conduct analysis to monitor the quality and efficacy of our efforts. In the first six months of 2020 we launched an internal quality monitoring program that allows us to understand gaps in our policies, our detection, and in our reviewers' understanding of human exploitation. We have increased the number of takedowns for Human Trafficking by 22x in the same period. That increase is the combined result of our investment in policy development, proactive detection, as well as in internal and external awareness raising.

We will continue our strong commitment to prevent and mitigate the human rights harms posed by domestic servitude in the future and look forward to increasing contact with your mandates in doing so. We will only benefit from your experience and expertise.