United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

January 19, 2024

Case No. FL-2023-00059

Ms. Jennifer Jones
Knight First Amendment
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 302
New York, NY 10115

Dear Ms. Jones:

As noted in our letter dated December 8, 2023, the Department of State ("the Department") is processing your request for records under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The December 8, 2023 letter contained an administrative error, stating that "[t]he Department has continued processing records and has processed an additional 30 pages of potentially responsive material. The Department has determined that 13 of these pages are non-responsive and 17 pages required external consultation before a release determination can be made with respect to the records." That letter should have read "[t]he Department has continued processing records and has processed an additional 33 pages of potentially responsive material. The Department has determined that 13 of these pages are non-responsive and 20 pages require external consultation before a release determination can be made with respect to the records." That external review has been completed. We have determined six of these pages are non-responsive, seven pages may be released in full, and seven pages may be released in part.

In addition, the Department had initially identified 16 excel files as potentially responsive. Thus far, the Department has determined 11 of the 16 excel files are non-responsive.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made redactions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each page. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing these records and applying FOIA exemptions. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, your attorney may contact Assistant United States Attorney Dominika Tarczynska at (212) 637-2748 or Dominika.tarczynska@doj.gov. Please refer to the case number, FL-2023-00059, and the civil action number, 23-cv-02513, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,



Diamonece Hickson
Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated.

Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552) and Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a)

FOIA Exemptions

(b)(1) Information specifically authorized by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Executive Order 13526 includes the following classification categories:

- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
- 1.4(b) Foreign government information
- 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
- 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
- 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
- 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(h) Weapons of mass destruction

(b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency

(b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:

ARMSEXP	Arms Export Control Act, 50a USC 2411(c)
CIA PERS/ORG	Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g)
EXPORT CONTROL	Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 USC App. Sec. 2411(c)
FS ACT	Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4004
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f), Sec. 222(f)
IRAN	Iran Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 99-99, Sec. 505

(b)(4) Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information

(b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product

(b)(6) Personal privacy information

(b)(7) Law enforcement information whose disclosure would:

- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
- (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
- (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- (D) disclose confidential sources
- (E) disclose investigation techniques
- (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual

(b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions

(b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request excised with the agreement of the requester

Call Readout: GEC and Facebook July 2021

Friday 7/9/2021

Attendees:

Facebook:

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

State Department:

Sent to INDOPACOM

- (b)(6) *briefed on the package, which had not made its way to our POCs yet from being shared with the regional contacts earlier*
- *We flagged this package was already shared with Facebook* (b)(6) *via US EMB Rangoon*
- *Our POCs* (b)(6) *did ask that we share the package with them after the call (which we did) as it might be faster than them reaching to region (I surmise due to the local time in Myanmar)*
- *Our POCs asked that in the future if we share regionally that we CC them as well as they can expedite review from their positions (I take that as they are higher up the chain)*
- *They thanked us for the detailed analysis and would send any follow up questions or insights when they have reviewed*
- *They noted initially from the brief, it seems like there will be review by Global Threat Disruption* (b)(6) *team) and also the Dangerous Organizations team* (b)(6) *team) which has done prior enforcement related to Myanmar.*

(b)(6)

Readout:

GEC Thanks everyone for connecting today and notes we wanted to begin the briefing today with a special briefing on a package that was sent via our US Embassy Rangoon this week to your regional contacts related to Tatmadaw affiliated content on Facebook. This was sent to : (b)(6) - Myanmar team lead (public policy), and (b)(6) - product policy, human rights and freedom of expression as (b)(6) is OOTO. Noting if the package has yet to reach you (b)(6) we are happy to send it following this meeting as well. With

(b)(6) that, I want to introduce (b)(6) from our side to give you an overview and allow a Q&A as needed.

GEC provides a special A&R briefing on the package sent from EMB Rangoon related to *"a dataset that includes Facebook shares of content originating on Tatmadaw sites after the Facebook pages for these Tatmadaw-affiliated organizations were shut down (Eleven Media Group is the exception as their Facebook page remains active). The dataset contains all posts that included content originating on the Tatmadaw sites. These groups (not every single post) we believe may be violating Facebook's terms of service by inciting violence, in particular posts that share headshots and personal information to include contact info of Civil Disobedience Movement members. That content, which may violate Facebook's terms of service, is still available through the groups in the attached data set."* Briefing included slides.

(b)(6)

GEC notes while official accounts have been banned across major social media platforms, networks of surrogates continue to publish Tatmadaw official press releases, news, and military content. Tatmadaw websites disseminating messaging via social surrogate networks include:

- dsinfo.org
- mdn.gov.mm
- cincds.gov.
- myawady.net.mm
- gnlm.com.mm
- myantrade.org
- yric.yangon.gov.mm

mwdibanking.com

- myanmartradeportal.gov.mm
- moi.gov.mm
- mod.gov.mm
- myantrade.org
- moee.gov.mm
- mpa.gov.mm

(b)(6)

GEC notes subsequent analysis examines web traffic, social reach, supporting surrogates, domain ownership and a malware assessment for Tatmadaw web-based messaging efforts. Key findings:

- 81,661,372 Facebook users exposed to Tatmadaw content post-coup
- 4 of 6 sites investigated hosted malware

Facebook (b)(6) notes, on an admin note, asking that by CC'ing Facebook (b)(6) and Facebook (b)(6) to the original flagging to the regional teams they can be more timely with any response or review noting that the regional teams have alot on their plate.

Facebook (b)(6) echoes Facebook (b)(6) s ask that they be CCed to ensure timely and propose response and priority and also he's already pinged (b)(6) for the packet but it will move more quickly if flagged to them directly. Facebook (b)(6)

notes it's hard to have an immediate reaction as he needs to review the report and share it with the investigative team, have them review, and see what can be corroborated by the Facebook side. But notes he appreciated the amount of details that is being shared about the assets and notes some of this strays into the behavioral investigations that (b)(6) team does but some/more of this also might fall towards the Dangerous Organizations work within Facebook that has already enforced in the region. Regardless, they will ensure to share with the appropriate teams internally and thank GEC for sharing this and sharing this with this much detail in the report which helps them get to the issue more quickly.

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

GEC reinforces we welcome any questions on the report or the methodology and we're happy to share anything else as needed by Facebook.
GEC had technical issues and was not getting his audio out, moved to GEC China team.

GEC we have seen reports that users on multiple platforms have had legitimate content taken down and their accounts locked because pro-China users report content that criticizes China. Incidents include Uyghur activists who have had their YouTube videos removed, and academics who have had Twitter and LinkedIn profiles and posts locked. Facebook also has a user function to report content. Have you observed coordinated reporting of content critical of Beijing? Does Facebook's feature have automated content takedowns if enough users report the same content, and how would a user petition to have their accounts reactivated?

Facebook (b)(6) notes we've actually just has a recent instance of this related to Force 47 and Vietnam.

> *(Ed note, media report: https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/how-vietnams-influencer-army-wages-information-warfare-facebook-2021-07-09/*
>
> *After being approached by Reuters this week, a Facebook source said the company had removed a group called "E47", which had mobilised both military and non-military members to report posts they did not like to Facebook in an effort to have them taken down. The source said the group was connected to a list of Force 47 groups identified by Reuters.*
> *A Facebook spokesperson confirmed that some groups and accounts were taken down on Thursday for "coordinating attempts to mass report content." A company source said the action was one of Facebook's largest takedowns initiated under its mass reporting policy.)*

Facebook (b)(6) notes things to think about in mass reporting, or abusive mass reporting, its a tricky area as we see lots of examples of people engaging in this related to policies they disagree with. When we can prove there is a coordinated network to make takedowns, we can remove accounts of mass reporting activity — we do remove it. In the example just raised, for Uyghur, it may be obvious, but it gets more difficult when we see people mass reporting something as pornography when it's obviously not pornography and they just

(b)(6) want it taken down then it's a pretty good signal people are abusing reporting process. But we do remove it, we do investigate it, seen it in some other cases.

GE[redacted] asks how much is automated when flagging this and if account is locked /frozen — what recourse does account holder have to say I've been flagged erroneously and to get back online?

Facebook (b)(6) as much as we see groups engaging in this mass reporting on Facebook it isn't actually that effective (which may not be the same for other platforms). Nothing they don't take things down related to the volume of reports received — that would be a bad way of doing content moderation — if we just took something down because many people flagged it. People can appeal for review and for civil rights groups or activists — people can talk to POCs (such as (b)(6) in Myanmar) for review.

(b)(6)

GE[redacted] I wanted to inquire about an email sent earlier related to Alexander Malkevich. In the past, the GEC has flagged a few times the account of Alexander Malkevich, a U.S-sanctioned Russian national, having an active Facebook account. On June 30, Malkevich announced on this Telegram account that his Facebook account was terminated: https://t.me/alexandr_malkevich/4879. Russian state media reported on this event: https://ria.ru/20210630/akkaunt-1739178252.html; https://russian.rt.com/russia/news/879987-facebook-udalil-akkaunt Roskomnadzor then demanded from Facebook to restore the account: https://rkn.gov.ru/news/rsoc/news73716.htm The Facebook account appears to be active again https://www.facebook.com/al.malkevich The GEC welcomes any insight that can be provided related to the matter. And wondering if sanctioned individuals who have personal pages are allowed on platform if they are not posting problematic content. Asking for this case specifically and in general.

Facebook (b)(6) notes in many cases sanctioned individuals can have a presence but can't spend money (buy ads) or make money off the platform - but this is also case by case.

Facebook (b)(6) echoes that this is correct - and they manage closely with legal compliance (trade legal) that works on sanctions items. Presence is allowed if there is no violation for national security, terrorism, or dangerous org side, but not allowed to monetize via fundraising, crowdsourcing, advertisement, and Facebook does work with compliance office at State on this. And notes that each country has a different role on what their individual sanctions are.

(b)(6)
(b)(6)

GEC[redacted] notes no one from the GEC Iran team on the line today and moves to GEC CT team and GEC[redacted]

(b)(6)

GEC[redacted] noted not much to report but wanted to note that the GEC CT team which focuses on both REMVE and jihadi actors will be standing up programming in the EUR region in the coming months - and will have capacity to do some periscoping and content that may be relevant to Facebook then.

(b)(6)

GEC[redacted] notes NSTR but A&R has noted the new CIB report and the Stanford Internet Observatory that came with it. (Ed note: https://about.fb.com/news/2021/07/june-2021-

(b)(6)

coordinated-inauthentic-behavior-report/ and https://cyber.fsi.stanford.edu/io/news/jordanian-disinformation-campaign)

GEC [redacted] notes the GEC has launched the U.S.-Paris Tech Challenge, https://disinfocloud.com/paris-tech-challenge call for submissions is open until end of July and look forward to any collaborations Facebook may want related. (Ed note: comprehensive email sent post call to Facebook).

Facebook (b)(6) how we are thinking about the judging criteria as Facebook is both thinking about how to incubate work in the space and how to set standards for good attribution work (as they have seen the other side) — mentioning Russian bots that happen to be Germans.

Facebook (b)(6) calls out the monthly CIB report - noting most were domestic. The most interesting this was the first times that we've seen CIB leverage both Clubhouse and TikTok and that Facebook shared to TikTok to know this was coming.

CALL ENDS.

~~(SBU)~~ Countering Russian Disinformation:
Global Engagements with Online Media Companies

R/GEC Updates on U.S. Interagency, Foreign Government, and Media Company Responses to Russia's War on Ukraine

June 29, 2022

~~(SBU)~~ Executive Highlights

- ~~(SBU)~~ GEC/TET has met with Meta to discuss their system for centralizing inbound content review requests from European government partners, especially in Central Europe. Meta has seen an increase in reporting from social media accounts supportive of the Russian government's war against Ukraine, but reemphasized that it remains unclear what legal action could be taken against these accounts. Meta's next quarterly report will come out in early August.
- (U) Russian courts handed down large fines to several U.S. companies (Airbnb, UPS, Pinterest, and Twitch) for refusing to ensure that Russian users' data is stored locally in Russia. Separately, the court said it fined Canada-based storytelling platform Wattpad 1 million rubles for failing to delete content that Russia deems illegal. (Reuters)
- (U) A court in Russia fined The Internet Archive for refusing to delete materials deemed prohibited in the country. The Internet Archive has been blocked in Russia on several occasions, but has managed to maintain operations in Russia despite attempts to ban it on anti-piracy grounds. (Kommersant)

~~(SBU)~~ Summary of What Platforms Have Done So Far (updates in blue)

(U) **Alphabet (Google & YouTube)**: YouTube removed over 70,000 videos and 9,000 channels related to the Ukraine war (The Guardian) YouTube has deleted the channel of Pro-Kremlin duo "Vovan and Lexus" (Rian.ru via Telegram) Russian Government actions: Google (alongside Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and others) agree to new EU rules to fight disinformation. (The Verge) Google's Russian office files for bankruptcy. YouTube and Google search will remain free for Russian users. (Politico) Google may also face an additional fine of 5-10% of its revenue turnover in Russia for "misleading information" on YouTube about events in Ukraine.

(SBU) **Meta (Facebook and Instagram)**: Russia's continued pressure on Meta "highlights the difficult position tech companies are in when authoritarian governments use their local staff as leverage in disputes." (Securing Democracy) Alexey Navalny condemned AdTech giants Meta and Google for shutting off advertising inside Russia, making it harder for the opposition to get out anti-war messaging. (TechCrunch) Russian Government actions: A Moscow City Court upheld a lower court ruling which said Meta was guilty of "extremist activity" and maintained the Kremlin's ban on Meta (Jurist). Meta has told GEC/TET they have seen an increase in reporting on accounts supportive of the Russian government in their war against Ukraine. Meta's next quarterly report will come out in early August.

(U) **Twitter**: Announced a new policy prohibiting state media from sharing content about prisoners of war, and prohibiting any accounts from sharing POW content with "abusive

intent." Twitter also announced new action against misinformation in crisis situations. The new policy will be immediately applied to misinformation surrounding the war in Ukraine. (Protocol) Russian Government actions: Russia's MFA Twitter account complained that Twitter had labeled an MFA Tweet about the "hoax" in Bucha as "abusive behavior," and demanded that Twitter "immediately restore access to this post."
(U) **Wikipedia:** Refused to remove content which the Kremlin has asked them to remove. Russian Government Actions: Russia's media censor Roskomdadzor demanded that English language Wikipedia delete the entries for the "2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine" and "Rashism." (ru_wikipedia via Twitter). Wikipedia filed an appeal against a Moscow court decision demanding that it remove information related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, arguing that people have a right to know the facts of the war. (Reuters)
(U) **Tiktok:** Former White House official Cameron Hardesty contacted TikTok (and Meta) on behalf of Ukraine's Digital Transformation Ministry regarding Russian-aligned content. (Axios)
(U) **Microsoft:** Microsoft decided to "significantly scale down" its Russian operations, impacting more than 400 employees. (Bloomberg) Microsoft plans to eliminate face analysis tools in its push for 'Responsible A.I.' (NYT)
(U) **Apple:** Russian state sensor Roskomnadzor confirmed it will proceed with an administrative case against Apple, announced in late May, for failing to localize Russian user data. (Reuters)

~~(SBU)~~ USG - Company Engagements

~~(SBU)~~ GEC/TET has met with Meta to discuss their system for centralizing inbound requests from European government partners, especially in Central Europe. Meta has seen an increase in reporting on social media accounts that are supportive of the Russian government's war against Ukraine. Meta highlighted there's no clear way forward to move against these accounts as they are apparently authentic accounts expressing personal views. Meta reemphasized that it's unclear what legal action could be taken against these accounts, as Meta doesn't have a policy that would limit a person's ability to exercise their freedom of speech, even if it is pro-Russia. Meta's next quarterly report will come out in early August.

(U) Foreign Government Actions

(U) Russia's State Duma has placed new restrictions on so-called "foreign agents," prohibiting organizations or individuals so designated from receiving any state funding, conducting educational activities with minors, and more. (Duma.gov.ru)
(U) Russian courts have handed down large fines to several U.S. companies (Airbnb, UPS, Pinterest, and Twitch) for refusing to ensure that Russian users' data is stored locally in Russia. Separately, the court said it had fined Canada-based storytelling platform Wattpad Corporation one million rubles for failing to delete content that Russia deems illegal. (Reuters)
(U) A court in Russia fined The Internet Archive 800k rubles for refusing to delete an assortment of materials deemed prohibited in the country. The Internet Archive has been blocked in Russia on several occasions but has managed to maintain operations in Russia despite attempts to ban it on anti-piracy grounds. (Kommersant)

(U) Related Developments of Interest

(U) Ukrainian hackers have apparently seized control of the website for Russia's Federal Service for State Registration, and posted a celebratory message about Ukraine's Constitution Day. The website in question is now down entirely. (Rosreestr.gov.ru)
(U) Moody's reported that Russia has formally defaulted on its foreign debt, a first since 1918. (Meduza)

Do these reports help you stay informed? Please let us know with a 30 second survey.

To opt out of this email, please reply to GECTech@state.gov with a request for opt out.

Global Engagement Center
Technology Engagement Team
U.S. Department of State

~~(SBU)~~ Countering Russian Disinformation:
Global Engagements with Online Media Companies

R/*GEC Updates on U.S. Interagency, Foreign Government, and Media Company Responses to Russia's War on Ukraine*

April 25, 2022

~~(SBU)~~ Executive Highlights

- ~~(SBU)~~ GEC met with Meta on April 22 to discuss information regarding rumored links (first raised via Embassy Sofia to GEC) between a company believed to be doing content moderation for Meta in Bulgaria and Russian intelligence services. At the meeting Meta also described how it develops definitions on terms associated with "dangerous" behaviors in consultation with independent experts before taking action. Meta also noted, in response to a GEC question, that it is looking into policy on using emojis, which still could be considered one way of expressing a view.
- (U) Russia has released a new list of targeted sanctions on 29 Americans, including government officials such as Vice President Kamala Harris, media executives such as Mark Zuckerberg, and journalists. Russia also included a list of Canadians sanctioned which is twice as long and has a heavy focus on journalists and military experts (Fortune)
- Lawmakers in Europe have called for Facebook to crack down further on Russian propaganda appearing on its network in Spanish and Arabic. (Reuters)
- (U) Russian opposition activist Vladimir Kara-Murza is facing up to 10 years in prison for spreading "fake news" about the Russian military "motivated by political hatred", the official legal term the Kremlin uses for charging individuals who publicly opposing the Ukraine war. At the same time, Russia's Justice Ministry declared Kara-Murza a "foreign agent." (Moscow Times)
- (U) RT's English-language Facebook page has 4.28 million engagements and 130,000 new followers since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began. (CrowdTangle via Twitter)

(U) Summary of What Platforms Have Done So Far (updates in blue)

(U) **Alphabet (Google & YouTube)**: Google warned publishers that any content that minimizes the severity of the war or blames war victims for their suffering will be demonetized. YouTube has blocked the Russian Parliament's YouTube channel. Russian Government actions: Roskomnadzor imposed a ban on Google, disallowing it from advertising its own services within Russia, due to the company's purported violations of Russian law.

(U) **Amazon**: Following a research organization's report about numerous channels on Twitch (the Amazon-owned video streaming platform) that were propagating Kremlin-backed disinformation about Ukraine (Tech Transparency Project), Twitch banned several of the channels in the report under its "harmful misinformation" policy.

(U) **Apple:** Apple Pay closed a loophole that was allowing users to use a payment through Mir cards. Apple has reinstated an app created by opposition leader Alexey Navalny on the Russian App store, while 7,000 other apps have been removed from the Russian app store in Russia. Russian Government actions: announced that it would release a substitute for ApplePay and GooglePay in Russia, called GAZPROMPay Wallet.
(U) **Meta (Facebook and Instagram)**: Meta has removed and disrupted numerous Russian and Belarussian hacking and coordinated inauthentic behavior operations targeting Ukraine. Russian Government actions: banned Facebook and Instagram for engaging in "extremist activities." WhatsApp was excluded from the designation and continues to operate in Russia, reaching an estimated 140 million users. Rossgram, the Russian "substitute" for Instagram, officially launched April 4 after missing their initial target launch date.
(U) **Telegram:** Russian Government actions: The Kremlin has launched an official Telegram channel.
(U) **TikTok**: according to a Pro-Kremlin report, TikTok usage in Russia has remained relatively unchanged during the war, with 33 million daily users. A study from NewsGuard reported that TikTok is feeding users disinformation about the Russia-Ukraine war, even when they do not search for it. New research from the European nonprofit Tracking Exposed indicates TikTok users within Russia cannot see any new domestic content created after February 24. However, thousands of pro-Putin posts dated from March 6 to March 26 continue to circulate without being contested. The researcher concluded that "TikTok is not being transparent about its actions in Russia." TikTok denied that its policies "are set or even influenced by" its China-based parent company ByteDance. *(Washington Post)*
(U) **Twitter**: announced it "will not amplify or recommend government accounts belonging to states that limit access to free information and are engaged in armed interstate conflict – whether Twitter is blocked in that country or not." Twitter will first apply this policy to government accounts belonging to Russia and Belarus. Twitter also announced a new policy prohibiting state media from sharing content about prisoners of war and prohibiting any accounts from sharing POW content with "abusive intent." RT en Español is now the third most shared site on Twitter for Spanish-language information about Russia's invasion, allowing Russia to spread disinformation widely about the Ukraine conflict. Russian Government actions: Russia's MFA Twitter account complained that Twitter had labeled an MFA Tweet about the "hoax" in Bucha as "abusive behavior," and demanded that Twitter "immediately restore access to this post."
(U) **Wikipedia**: the Wikipedia foundation has refused Kremlin requests to censor content. Russian Government actions: The Kremlin continues to threaten and apply pressure on Wikipedia, citing allegations that Wikipedia includes "child pornography" on its site based on pictures displayed of Japanese anime.

~~(SBU)~~ USG - Company Engagements

~~(SBU)~~ GEC met with Meta on April 22 to discuss information regarding rumored links (first raised via Embassy Sofia to GEC) between a company believed to be doing content moderation for Meta in Bulgaria and Russian intelligence services. At the meeting Meta also described how it develops definitions on terms associated with "dangerous" behaviors in consultation with independent experts before taking action. Meta also noted, in response to a GEC question, that it is looking into policy on using emojis, which still could be considered one way of expressing a

view. Meta additionally shared their perspective of how social media and tech reporting through a nuance-lacking/negative lens can create "a constrained space for policy making".

(U) Other Foreign Government Actions

(U) Russian opposition activist Vladimir Kara-Murza is facing up to 10 years in prison for spreading "fake news" about the Russian military "motivated by political hatred", the official legal term the Kremlin uses for charging individuals who publicly opposing the Ukraine war. At the same time, Russia's Justice Ministry declared Kara-Murza a "foreign agent." (Moscow Times)
(U) Russia has released a new list of targeted sanctions on 29 Americans, including government officials such as Vice President Kamala Harris, media executives such as Mark Zuckerberg, and journalists. Russia also included a list of Canadians sanctioned which is twice as long and has a heavy focus on journalists and military experts (Fortune)
(U) Lawmakers in Europe have called for Facebook to crackdown further on Russian propaganda appearing on its network in Spanish and Arabic. (Reuters)

(U) Related Developments of Interest

(U) Tinkoff Bank is "rebranding" following statements made by their founder, Oleg Tinkov, opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine. (Market Screener)
(U) Binance, the world's largest crypto exchange, has agreed to share their data on millions of Russian citizens with state regulators, which could lead to the targeting the supporters of opposition leader Aleksei Navalny. (Reuters)
(U) RT's English-language Facebook page has 4.28 million engagements and 130,000 new followers since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began. (CrowdTangle via Twitter)

To opt out of this email, please reply to GECTech@state.gov with a request for opt out.

Global Engagement Center
Technology Engagement Team
U.S. Department of State

~~(SBU)~~ Countering Russian Disinformation:
Global Engagements with Online Media Companies

R/*GEC Updates on U.S. Interagency, Foreign Government, and Media Company Responses to Russia's War on Ukraine*

April 13, 2022

~~(SBU)~~ Executive Highlights

- ~~(SBU)~~ GEC met with Meta's (b)(6) on April 12 to discuss Russian disinformation trends and other issues faced by FaceBook, Instragram, and WhatsApp platforms. Meta confirmed that over 140 million Russian users continue to use WhatsApp and shared concerns about growing efforts by malign actors to bypass existing platform security controls. Meta expressed great appreciation for continuing informal information exchanges via GEC and, in particular, our sharing of specific IP addresses that allows them to investigate block inauthentic information more rapidly.
- (U) Since February 24, the Kremlin has more than tripled their funding for propaganda and disinformation, while the government's funding for the Russian army has risen only 11%. (Moscow Times)
- (U) Roskomnadzor ordered Wikipedia to remove content from its Russian language page on Vladimir Putin that acknowledged Russia's invasion of Ukraine. (Ru_Wikipedia)
- (U) Roskomnadzor has been monitoring the Iinternet for "antimilitarism" since well before Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Leaked documents indicate that Roskomnadzor has been monitoring the internet for "peace activism" since at least 2020. (Meduza)
- (U) Russian police raided the office of the Altai-based newspaper Listok and arrested its publisher, Sergey Mikhailov, in Moscow. The charges filed were for spreading "fake informaion about the military, motivated by political hatred." (Independent Russian Outlet Sotavision)

(U) Summary of What Platforms Have Done So Far (updates in blue)

(U) **Alphabet (Google & YouTube)**: Google warned publishers that any content that minimizes the severity of the war or blames war victims for their suffering will be demonetized. YouTube has blocked the Russian Parliament's YouTube channel. Russian Government actions: Roskomnadzor has complained to Google that search results for "Russian Defense Ministry" no longer go to the ministry's official website, and instead direct users to pages on Wikipedia and social media about the Russian Ministry of Defense, and Roskomnadzor imposed a ban on Google from advertising its own services within Russia due to the company violating Russian law. Roskomnadzor demanded Google immediately exclude "threats against Russian users" from its services after reports indicated that Google Translate had offered some users the option to translate the phrase "dear Russians" as "dead Russians."

(U) **Apple:** Apple Pay closed a loophole that was allowing users to use a payment through Mir cards. Apple has reinstated an app created by opposition leader Alexey Navalny on the Russian App store, while 7,000 other apps have been removed from the Russian app store in Russia. Russian Government actions: announced that it would release a substitute for ApplePay and GooglePay in Russia, called GAZPROMPay Wallet.
(U) **Meta (Facebook and Instagram)**: Meta's latest enforcement report indicated they intend to do more to curb Russian government misinformation and have already removed and disrupted numerous Russian and Belarussian hacking and coordinated inauthentic behavior operations targeting Ukraine. New internal company documents and interviews with content moderators indicate Meta had "walked back elements" of special policy exemptions that had allowed users in the context of Ukraine to post dehumanizing content and calls for violence against Putin, but then extended these exemptions again through April 30. Meanwhile, "Meta gave moderators no guidance to enhance their ability to disable posts promoting false narratives about Russia's invasion, like denials that civilian deaths have occurred." These shifts in policy enforcement guidance have "generated confusion and frustration for moderators." Russian Government actions: banned Facebook and Instagram for engaging in "extremist activities," but WhatsApp was excluded from the designation and continues to operate in Russia, reaching 140 million users. Rossgram, the Russian "substitute" for Instagram, officially launched April 4 after missing their initial target date.
(U) **Telegram:** Russian Government actions: The Kremlin has launched an official Telegram channel.
(U) **TikTok**: according to a Pro-Kremlin report, TikTok usage in Russia has remained relatively unchanged during the war, with 33 million daily users. A study from NewsGuard reported that TikTok is feeding users disinformation about the Russia-Ukraine war, even when they do not search for it. New research from the European nonprofit Tracking Exposed indicates TikTok users within Russia cannot see any new content created after February 24. However, thousands of pro-Putin posts dated from March 6 to March 26 continue to circulate without being contested. The researcher concluded that "TikTok is not being transparent about its actions in Russia." TikTok denied that its policies "are set or even influenced by" its China-based parent company ByteDance. (Washington Post)
(U) **Twitter**: announced that it "will not amplify or recommend government accounts belonging to states that limit access to free information and are engaged in armed interstate conflict – whether Twitter is blocked in that country or not." Twitter will first apply this policy to government accounts belonging to Russia and Belarus. Twitter also announced a new policy prohibiting state media from sharing content about prisoners of war and prohibiting any accounts from sharing POW content with "abusive intent." RT en Español is now the third most shared site on Twitter for Spanish-language information about Russia's invasion, allowing them to spread disinformation widely about the Ukraine conflict. Russian Government actions: Russia's MFA Twitter account complained that Twitter had labeled an MFA Tweet about the "hoax" in Bucha as "abusive behavior," and demanded that Twitter "immediately restore access to this post."
(U) **Wikipedia**: the Wikipedia foundation has refused Kremlin requests to censor content. Russian Government actions: The Kremlin continues to threaten and apply pressure on Wikipedia, citing allegations that Wikipedia includes "child pornography" on its site based on some pictures displayed of Japanese anime.

~~(SBU)~~ USG - Company Engagements

~~(SBU)~~ GEC met with Meta's (b)(6) on April 12 to discuss Russian disinformation trends and other issues faced by FaceBook, Instragram, and WhatsApp platforms. Meta confirmed that over 140 million Russian users continue to use WhatsApp and shared concerns about growing efforts by malign actors to bypass existing platform security controls. Meta expressed great appreciation for continuing informal information exchanges via GEC and, in particular, our sharing of specific IP addresses that allows them to investigate block inauthentic information more rapidly.

(U) Other Foreign Government Actions

(U) Roskomnadzor has been monitoring the internet for "antimilitarism" since well before Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Leaked documents indicate that Roskomnadzor has been monitoring the internet for "peace activism" since at least 2020. (Meduza)
(U) Roskomnadzor ordered Wikipedia to remove content from its Russian language page on Vladimir Putin that acknowledged Russia's invasion of Ukraine. (Ru_Wikipedia)
(U) Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refused to comment on the detention of pro-Putin Ukrainian parliamentarian Viktor Medvedchuk, telling Russian news wires "there are a lot of fakes coming from Ukraine" and "this needs to be checked first." (Al Jazeera)
Peskov added: "He's not a Russian citizen, he has nothing to do with the special military operation, and we don't even know if he wants to be involved." (RBC News)
(U) Russian police raided the office of the Altai-based newspaper Listok and arrested its publisher, Sergey Mikhailov, in Moscow. The charges filed were for spreading "fake information about the military, motivated by political hatred." (Independent Russian Outlet Sotavision via Telegram)

(U) Related Developments of Interest

(U) Huawei's AppGallery has dropped support for Russia's Mir payment system. The Chinese company's app store had previously removed apps for several sanctioned Russian banks, including Otkritie, VTB, and Promsvyazbank. (Ukraine Today)
(U) BBC News reported that a fake new video with BBC branding, reporting that the Russian attack on Kramatorsk train station was a false flag op, had appeared online and BBC was working to remove it. (BBC's Twitter)
~~(SBU)~~ Data from Netblocks (a watchdog that monitors internet connectivity and cybersecurity) mapped the collapse of internet connectivity in Cherkasy Oblast, Ukraine, due to a loss of service on McLaut, the region's largest internet provider. The operator reported a DDOS attack on its infrastructure. The GRU-linked Sandworm (aka Unit 74455) **may have been involved in this DDoS attack and is alleged to have** also tried to take down Ukraine's largest energy provider on April 8 using a new iteration of the "Industroyer" malware dubbed "Industroyer2" for industrial control systems (ICS) as well as a new version of the data- destroying "CaddyWiper" malware. (Twitter and Mundiant News Analysis)

To opt out of this email, please reply to GECTech@state.gov with a request for opt out.