



Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP,
Department for Science,
Innovation and Technology,
100 Parliament Street,
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Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP,
Home Department,
2 Marsham Street,
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28/01/2025

RE: Letter on Southport

Dear Home Secretary, Secretary of State,

Thank you for your letter dated 24 January. Like everyone, we were shocked and appalled by the attacks that unfolded on 29 July, and our thoughts remain with the families of Alice, Bebe, and Elsie, as well as the other victims.

TikTok has a zero-tolerance policy for violent extremism or terrorist content on our platform, reflected by the fact that none of the content examples shared in your letter are allowed on our platform in the UK or elsewhere. Our [Community Guidelines](#) are clear that we do not allow the presence of violent and hateful organisations or individuals on our platform, including violent extremists, and if we become aware that any such actors may be on our platform, we will conduct a thorough review, including scrutinising off-platform behaviour, which may result in an account ban.

TikTok has tens of thousands safety professionals who are dedicated to keeping TikTok safe, and we invested \$2 billion in this work in 2024. Working alongside technology, our experts in this field work to identify evolving extremist trends, review these, and then take action, including removing and banning content and accounts. In our last reporting period (July-September 2024) we proactively found and removed 98.9% of content before it is reported to us. This was achieved through a combination of technology, safety experts and security professionals, as well as external threat-detection partners. Methods include:

- computer vision models to help detect visual signals, emblems, and logos that are known to be associated with extremist and hate groups.
- text-based technologies, including keyword lists and natural language processing (NLP), to detect language used to promote extremist ideologies or hate groups.
- de-duplication and hashing technologies to enable users to recognise copies or near copies of previously violative content. We also work with external groups to help us to more quickly detect and remove hate or violent extremist content that has already been identified off the platform.
- disrupting the discoverability of such content on the platform, for example blocking

searches for terms

We welcome the passage of the Online Safety Act, but are not waiting to keep users safe. We have been regulated as a video-sharing platform since 2020 and established a strong working relationship with OFCOM as part of this. Content that incites violence, hatred or terrorism is specifically included in the VSP regime, and as a regulated company we have been proactively engaged with OFCOM for several years on the measures we have in place to protect users from this content, as well as our response to major incidents such as the Buffalo shooting and October 7th 2023.

Your letter raises concern about specific content accessed by Axel Rudakubana online, specifically the 2024 Wakeley church stabbing and the Al-Qaeda training manual "Military Studies in the Jihad against the Tyrants". I want to take this opportunity to confirm we do not allow this content on TikTok anywhere in the world. Specifically regarding the Wakeley Church stabbing (which we understand has been the focus of media reports concerning the different approach companies take), we have prevented and removed thousands of attempted uploads of this attack, blocked related search terms, and taken active steps to prevent its upload on to the platform. As the Australian e-Safety Commissioner noted in her [statement](#): "Immediately following the Wakeley attack, companies including...TikTok acted quickly to cooperate with eSafety and ensure the Wakeley stabbing video could not be accessed from their platforms."

We share your ambition and commitment to online safety, which has been baked into the design of the TikTok platform since it launched in the UK in 2018. TikTok values the strong and collaborative relationship we have developed with your departments, particularly on the most serious harms such as violent extremism and terrorism. TikTok participated in the Home Office's tabletop exercise in August 2024 and met with Home Office officials in November 2024 to discuss the hash list of content used for prosecution of individuals under S.2 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and S.58 of the Terrorism Act 2006. We are currently exploring how this information could potentially complement our existing hashing database efforts, and shared constructive feedback on how similar material can be of greater use in the future, to all online platforms.

We also note recent media commentary about the facilitation of requests for data relating to Axel Rudakubana. Shortly after the attacks on 29 July our dedicated law enforcement outreach team contacted Merseyside Police and Counter Terrorism Police North West Unit, among other forces, offering our support. While we are not aware of any requests to TikTok for data in relation to this case, if we did receive a valid legal request, we do not envisage delays in providing a response of the kind highlighted in recent media reports. Such requests are handled by our law enforcement team via our dedicated online portal, which we regularly train law enforcement in the use of.

In response to your call for platforms to assess the options available to remove all instances of extremist and terrorist material, TikTok would like to raise the importance of industry collaboration, which we believe is crucial to prevent activity simply being displaced from one platform onto another.

While we are members of organisations such as the EU Internet Forum and Tech Against Terrorism, which supports and advises on our range of counterterrorism enforcement strategies, we are not currently members of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) and do not have access to its hash database.

The values and principles of the GIFCT are aligned with our own commitment and approach to countering terrorism. TikTok applied for GIFCT membership in 2019, along with a number of other organisations. While we have participated in working-group meetings since this process has been underway, our application is yet to be approved, despite meeting the public criteria for membership.

This is a challenge TikTok highlighted on several occasions, including in the aftermath of Hamas' attack on October 7th 2023, and has subsequently been raised with your officials. We believe industry collaboration is critically important to protect users and citizens from harm. As highlighted in our correspondence at the time, as members of the GIFCT Advisory Board, we would welcome the UK Government's support for our full membership, so we can advance our joint mission of safety and continue to ensure the rapid removal of terrorist content. This step could further strengthen our ability to identify and remove extremist and terrorist content today, as well as our response to potential future attacks.

In the meantime, we will continue to take the necessary measures to prevent our platform from being exploited by those seeking to share graphic, extreme, or terrorist acts. We look forward to continuing our constructive engagement with your departments and are available at your convenience to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Ali Law
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TikTok UK and Ireland