

November 6, 2017

Matt Mullenweg
Chief Executive Officer
Automatic, Inc.
132 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

Re: WordPress and Sayfullo Saipov

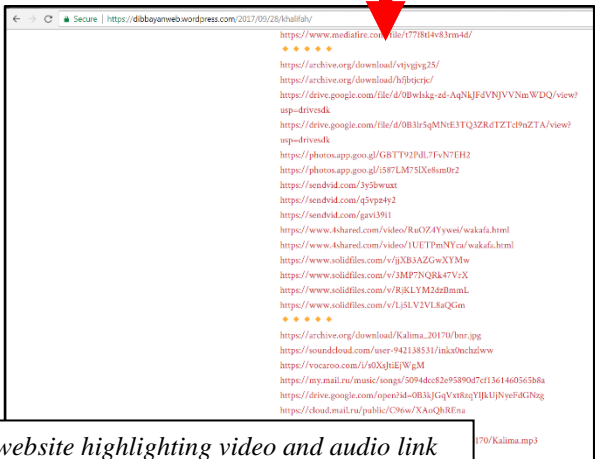
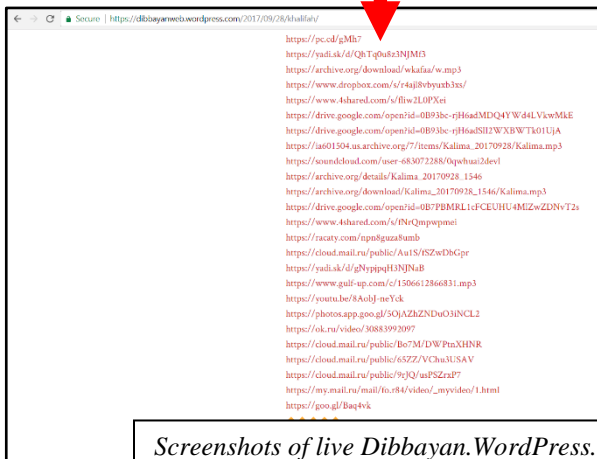
Dear Mr. Mullenweg:

The Counter Extremism Project (“CEP”) is writing to alert you to the existence of Dibbayanweb.WordPress.com, a WordPress site hosting almost 200 links to the video that incited Sayfullo Saipov to murder eight people in Lower Manhattan. According to the FBI Complaint filed against Saipov, he “was motivated to commit the attack after viewing a video in which [ISIS leader] Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi...questioned what Muslims in the United States and elsewhere were doing to respond to the killing of Muslims in Iraq.” (New York Times, “[Complaint Against Suspect in Manhattan Terror Attack](#),” 1/11/2017)

The video, entitled “But Sufficient Is Your Lord as a Guide and a Helper,” was released by ISIS on September 28, 2017. In it Baghdadi encourages his followers to continue their fight all over the world and specifically urges more attacks in the West, stating “America, Europe and Russia are living in a state of terror fearing the strikes (from ISIS terrorists).” Baghdadi urges his listeners not to “allow the Crusaders and the apostates to enjoy a good and comfortable life at home while your brothers are enduring killings, shelling and destruction.”

Dibbayanweb.WordPress.com¹ provides online links to this video at almost 200 alternative locations:

¹ <https://dibbayanweb.wordpress.com/2017/09/28/khalifah/>



Screenshots of live Dibbayan.WordPress.com website highlighting video and audio link to ISIS leader Baghdadi's 9/28/17 speech, with links to almost 200 other available sites

As CEP has consistently sought to convey, the existence of ISIS propaganda online has tangible and terrible consequences in the real world. In this case, there is a demonstrable link between specific ISIS content and the murder of 8 innocent people in cold blood. Given this fact, it is difficult to understand why this content has not yet been removed from the WordPress site. Please confirm your intention to immediately take action to remove this site.

CEP also awaits your response to our three most recent letters concerning WordPress and its hosting of Taliban, ISIS, and al-Qaeda content. The existence of sites like Dibbayan.WordPress.com suggests your strategy to combat extremism online remains capricious and ineffective.

We look forward to your response confirming the removal of Dibbayan.WordPress.com and providing clear answers to the plethora of issues raised in this and earlier letters. Please let us hear from you by Wednesday, November 8, 2017.

Very truly yours,



Ambassador Mark D. Wallace

APPENDIX

I. Summary of websites referenced in CEP letters since May 2016

Date	WordPress Notified by CEP	Website (.wordpress.com)	Associated Entity	Status as of 11/6/2017
5/24/2016		UmarMedia	Pakistani Taliban (TTP)	Removed/Suspended
5/24/2016		AlBayanRadio	ISIS	Live
5/24/2016		Halummu	ISIS	Removed/Suspended
5/24/2016		AnsaruKhilafah	ISIS	Removed/Suspended
5/24/2016		Xaameriki	Golden Dawn	Live
7/12/2016		AnsaraIslam1	Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)	Removed/Suspended
7/12/2016		Ansaar1	ISIS	Live
8/4/2016		VijestiUmmeta1	ISIS	Removed/Suspended
8/30/2016		NachirWeb	ISIS	Live
3/1/2017		KhilafaTimes	ISIS	Removed/Suspended
9/11/2017		NewsAgencyBayan	ISIS	Live
9/11/2017		NewsAgencyBayan1	ISIS	Live
9/11/2017		AlHayatMedia	ISIS	Live
11/6/2017		Dibbayanweb ²	ISIS	Live

² See Section III. in Appendix

II. Summary of CEP-WordPress correspondence, May 2016 to September 2017

May 24, 2016: CEP writes to WordPress advising that the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), Golden Dawn, and ISIS or pro-ISIS websites are using WordPress.
June 8, 2016: CEP writes to WordPress again, asking for a response to our first letter.
June 17, 2016: WordPress replies, asking CEP to “let us know” whether the “content at issue was created by an individual, group, or entity on the Specifically (sic) Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List...”
July 12, 2016: CEP confirms to WordPress that the content at issue is indeed created by entities on the Specially Designated Nationals List.
July 18, 2016: WordPress confirms to CEP that it has suspended the TTP website but declines to suspend the other websites because it “does not believe they are violating the WordPress.com Terms of Service...” ³ despite the fact that, for instance, the webpage ansaar1.wordpress.com publishes images of masked militants with accompanying text stating that crusaders, rafidah (those who reject Islam), secularists, Jews and kuffar (non-believers) “will be overcome and gathered in Hellfire.”
August 4, 2016: CEP seeks clarification on WordPress’s inconsistent application of its Terms of Service and standards for removal across websites. For example, CEP notes in particular that WordPress had already suspended a previous iteration of ansaralislam1.wordpress.com – operated by Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), another sanctioned terrorist entity – but not the updated version of that same website that reemerged following the initial suspension.
August 10, 2016: WordPress reiterates to CEP that it will not suspend three cited ISIS-affiliated websites flagged by CEP. WordPress claims that CEP’s “statement of belief is not sufficient evidence that the blogs were indeed created or managed by any entities on the list.”
August 30, 2016: CEP writes to WordPress providing evidentiary screenshots from the Telegram website of Ansar al-Islam – the Bangladeshi branch of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent – explicitly advertising the launch of its WordPress websites. ⁴
March 1, 2017: CEP writes to WordPress advising that the ISIS website khilafahtimes.wordpress.com is live on WordPress featuring links to videos of ISIS beheadings and executions. On the same day, the Washington Post publishes an article entitled, “How alleged ISIS videos are creating a headache for WordPress” referencing CEP’s correspondence. ⁵
September 11, 2017: CEP commends WordPress for removing the Vanguard America website, and seeks confirmation as to whether this signifies a broader and more consistent strategy by WordPress. ⁶

³ WordPress’s Terms of Service states that “Automattic has the right... to... refuse or remove any content that, in Automattic’s reasonable opinion, violates any Automattic policy or is in any way harmful or objectionable.” It also requests that users “make sure that none of the prohibited items (like spam, viruses, or serious threats of violence) appear on your website.” (WordPress, “[Terms of Service](#)”)

⁴ WordPress has not responded to this letter.

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III. Screenshot from Dibbayanweb.Wordpress.com, 11/6/2017:

