

**Counter Extremism Project**  
P.O. Box 3980  
New York, NY 10185

October 27, 2014

**Mr. Dick Costolo**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Twitter  
1355 Market Street, Suite 900  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Costolo,

We are writing on behalf of the Counter Extremism Project (CEP) – a bipartisan organization formed to combat the growing threat of extremism – to request a meeting to discuss strategies to prevent the misuse of Twitter by extremists to recruit followers, incite violence and spread hateful propaganda.

Twitter has revolutionized the way we communicate, spread knowledge, and interact with each other. Unfortunately, extremists are taking advantage of these changes by using Twitter to propagandize, self-radicalize, recruit new members and commit cyber-jihad. Extremists are hijacking and weaponizing Twitter. It is a core part of CEP's mission to stop them.

The international community has been shocked by ISIS's use of modern communication tools: the broadcast of barbaric stonings and beheadings on YouTube, the release of violent threats and intimidation against innocent civilians on AskFM and Twitter, and the Internet-wide spread and imposition of an insidious ideology that incites violence and terror. Clearly, the online communications arena is a crucial front in the comprehensive battle against ISIS.

CEP is committed to assisting in this effort. Twitter's stated policy is to remove profiles that violate Twitter terms when reported. Accordingly, CEP launched a digital campaign called #CEPDigitalDisruption to identify and highlight profiles that violate Twitter's Terms of Use policy. Our intention is to assist Twitter in eliminating ISIS profiles by exposing them.

This crowd-sourced campaign utilizes our network of CEP supporters to report each ISIS profile as spam. In the week since the launch of the #CEPDigitalDisruption a number of reports have been submitted. However, we have yet to receive a response from Twitter, and the accounts identified by CEP and its followers (along with thousands of others) remain active. Moreover, the owners of several of the ISIS fighter accounts we have exposed are working around Twitter's stated policy by changing their handles or creating new accounts.

# **COUNTER EXTREMISM PROJECT**

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The number of ISIS fighters misusing Twitter is growing far faster than Twitter's efforts to police and remove them. This 'defense-only' policy appears inadequate in light of the momentous challenge presented by extremists co-opting of modern communications tools such as Twitter and is allowing violent extremism to grow and fester online. We believe there is an opportunity for the Counter Extremism Project to work with Twitter to proactively identify and eliminate ISIS extremists online. The danger grows each day that goes by without a clear, bold and urgent response. We stand ready to assist and look forward to discussing possible responses with you.

We look forward to your timely response and to working together in the near future.

Sincerely,

**Ambassador Mark Wallace**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Counter Extremism Project

**Frances F. Townsend**  
President

CC: **Vijaya Gadde**, General Counsel  
**Adam Messinger**, Chief Technology Officer  
**Colin Crowell**, Vice President, Global Public Policy  
**Gabriel Stricker**, Chief Communications Officer