

## Open letter regarding Facebook's policies on hate speech, incitement to violence and discrimination

Facebook recently failed to ban far-right political figure Steve Bannon for calling for the violent deaths of public health and government officials in the USA. Against a backdrop of rising polarisation, violence and hatred, Facebook's CEO Mark Zuckerberg personally intervened to say Mr Bannon's conduct "[clearly did not cross the line](#)".

We do not agree.

This latest incident is just the most recent of several where Facebook has comprehensively failed to take decisive action against intolerance. Facebook was criticised by the UN for being "[slow and ineffective](#)" in their response to incitements of violence against the Rohingya people in Myanmar, [failed to remove](#) calls for violence against Muslims in Sri Lanka, and has [provided a platform](#) for white nationalism in the USA.

This is a deeply concerning, unacceptable pattern, and while statements were made in the wake of several of these horrific events, the insufficient reaction to Steve Bannon's behaviour shows that not enough, if anything, has meaningfully changed.

At EJF, we are institutionally and individually resolutely opposed to any discrimination, incitement to violence or hate speech, online or offline, in any context whatsoever. Tackling hatred and "fake news" should not be politicised, and the statements people and organisations make should be judged on their content, not on the influence of the person making them.

We are aware that for many of our followers, Facebook is the only place they hear from us. In the face of rising hatred, disregard for human life and dignity, and intolerance, it is important that opposing voices are not silenced, and that those of us who aspire to a fair, human global society continue to make our voices heard.

We will do just this. The current planetary emergency is one of the biggest human rights issues of human history. We will continue to raise the alarm here, and share the stories of environmental and human rights abuses as we work to prevent them. We will share with you how you can help prevent them too.

But Facebook has to change. There must be no place for those who seek to divide us, to spread hatred, and to incite violence.

Steve Trent

EJF Co-Founder and Executive Director

