

JAMES E. RISCH, IDAHO, CHAIRMAN

MARCO RUBIO, FLORIDA
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO
MITT ROMNEY, UTAH
LINDSEY GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
JOHNNY ISAKSON, GEORGIA
JOHN BARRASSO, WYOMING
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO
RAND PAUL, KENTUCKY
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA
TED CRUZ, TEXAS

ROBERT MENENDEZ, NEW JERSEY
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, MARYLAND
JEANNE SHAHEEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, CONNECTICUT
TIM Kaine, VIRGINIA
EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
JEFF MERKLEY, OREGON
CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

November 12, 2019

Jack Dorsey
Chief Executive Officer
Twitter, Inc.
1355 Market Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Dorsey,

I am deeply disturbed by the recent arrests of two former Twitter employees accused of spying for Saudi Arabia. These two men allegedly used Twitter's internal systems to obtain private information on particular dissidents. These charges demonstrate that Twitter must do more to guard against exploitation of users' private data, especially when that data is used to oppress and surveil dissidents. Therefore, I am requesting information about your efforts to prevent this kind of exploitation.

In countries like Saudi Arabia where the government outlaws fundamental freedoms including speech, assembly, and press, the Internet and social media are often the only means of public fora where citizens can access and exchange information. The United States takes pride in our innovative technologies that allow people around the world to connect and communicate in ways unheard of a generation ago.

Unfortunately, bad actors can and have used technological innovative for evil. Governments around the world use these tools to promote their repressive agendas. The arrests of your former employees case highlights how these regimes will not stop at their own borders in order to pursue their repressive tactics and tighten their grip on power

As we know from the brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi, Saudi officials carefully surveil social media for any critical voices. However, these public charges against Ali Alzabarah and Ahmad Abouammo reveal the extent to which Saudi Arabia is willing to exploit American companies for its oppressive tactics in the United States. This is unacceptable.

It is in our long-term national security interests to continue to promote American businesses and lead with our values. That mission is undermined when those companies fail to take adequate steps to protect consumers.

To that end, I request that you respond to the following by November 26, 2019:

1. In light of the arrests of Alzabarah and Abouammo are you implementing additional security measures to protect user data?
2. Approximately how many users had their data provided to Saudi Arabia? Have you, or do you have plans, to notify those users?

3. What steps are you taking to ensure that all employees with access to private data are vetted and instructed on the appropriate use of this data?
4. Are you raising concerns directly with Saudi officials about using U.S. technology companies to monitor and gather information on dissidents and those critical of the Kingdom?
5. How are you working with U.S. governmental agencies to ensure your technologies are not exploited by foreign countries, including Saudi Arabia, for surveillance of dissidents?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Menendez
Ranking Member