

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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September 2, 2020

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

Dear Mr. Dorsey:

I write to follow-up on the Committee's previous inquiries of July 16, 2020 and August 11, 2020.<sup>1</sup> After multiple responses and a briefing by Twitter, it has become increasingly clear that Twitter does not take security and oversight of its security practices seriously. Such a cynical stance has led to people being scammed out of money by teenagers who breached Twitter's platform and may have led to people being murdered. Twitter has also showed a complete lack of transparency by failing to provide any documents requested by the Committee in its August 11, 2020 letter.

Recent reporting summarizes Twitter's alleged role in unintentionally aiding the Saudi Arabian government's campaign to spy on, intimidate, and arrest people critical of it.<sup>2</sup> According to lawsuits recently made public, in 2015 two Twitter employees worked as spies for the government of Saudi Arabia to access more than 6,000 Twitter accounts.<sup>3</sup> The information they gathered on critics of the regime was then passed to the Saudi government which used it to torture, harass and, in the case of Abdulrahman al-Sadhan, abduct dissidents for years.<sup>4</sup> Some are thought to have been killed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See letter from Hon. James Comer, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, to Mr. Jack Dorsey, CEO, Twitter, July 16, 2020, and letter from Hon. James Comer, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, to Mr. Jack Dorsey, CEO, Twitter, Aug. 11, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Ryan Gallagher, *Spies in Silicon Valley: Twitter Breach Tied to Saudi Dissident Arrests*, Bloomberg (Aug. 19, 2020), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-19/twitter-security-breach-blamed-for-saudi-dissident-arrests> [hereinafter "Bloomberg article"].

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

This most recent revelation is unfortunately consistent with a trend involving what appears to be Twitter's lack of prioritization of security and responsible use. Last month, Twitter was used to orchestrate "one of the most visible cyberscams in the internet's history."<sup>6</sup> According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, various high-profile Twitter accounts were commandeered and used to commit fraud on the American people through the use of a cryptocurrency scam.<sup>7</sup>

Twitter's July 30 briefing to the Committee raised many more questions than it answered. As we raised during the July briefing for Committee staff, Twitter appears to place far too much trust in too many people, granting them extraordinary access to people's data and personal information. Twitter has refused to address these concerns. Now, it would seem from the reports involving Saudi Arabian spies, Twitter's mismanagement may have led to the deaths of dissidents.<sup>8</sup>

In response to the July briefing in which little information was provided and even less responsibility was taken by Twitter, the Committee sent you a letter on August 11 requesting further information and documentation.<sup>9</sup> Twitter responded with corporate talking points and refused to provide the requested documents. Twitter's lack of transparency about any actions it has taken to provide more robust oversight and security gives the appearance the company believes it bears no responsibility for any of the crimes committed using its platform.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform reiterates its requests made in its previous letter to you, which is attached. Additionally, the Committee requests an additional briefing, no later than September 11, 2020, on the recent *Bloomberg* report regarding Twitter's security failures.

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<sup>6</sup> David Ingraham & Kevin Collier, *Biden, Gates, Musk: Bitcoin scam breaches some of world's most prominent Twitter accounts*, NBCNews.com (July 15, 2020), <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/suspected-bitcoin-scammers-take-over-twitter-accounts-bill-gates-elon-n1233948>.

<sup>7</sup> Dartunorro Clark, *After Twitter cyberattack, GOP senator calls on Jack Dorsey to work with feds*, NBCNews.com (July 15, 2020), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/after-twitter-cyberattack-gop-senator-calls-jack-dorsey-work-feds-n1233972?icid=related>.

<sup>8</sup> Bloomberg article, *supra* note 1 ("In 2015, two Twitter employees allegedly accessed more than 6,000 accounts while acting as spies for the government of Saudi Arabia.").

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Ranking Member James Comer to Jack Dorsey, Twitter, August 11, 2020.

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The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. I remain hopeful you will cooperate with this inquiry, but if Twitter continues to refuse, I will consider all possible options, including legislation, to ensure Twitter’s security no longer puts people’s lives at risk.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Comer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Comer  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairwoman, Committee on Oversight and Reform