

2021-004-FB-UA

Case referred by user

Submit public comment [here](#).

In January 2021, User A left a comment summarizing their first-hand experience during the recent protests in support of the Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. In the comment, User A called User B who criticized the protesters a “common cowardly bot” [банальный трусливый бот].

On January 24, User B commented on a post consisting of several pictures, a video, and text of the protests in support of Alexei Navalny held in Saint Petersburg and across Russia on January 23. User B claimed that they did not know what happened in Saint Petersburg, but that protesters in Moscow were all school children, mentally “slow”, and were “used.” They added that the protesters were not the voice of the people but a “theatre show.” Other users began challenging this critical account of the protesters in the comments thread.

User A challenged User B’s assertion. User A identified as elderly and claimed to have participated in the Saint Petersburg protests with their colleagues and adult children. User A stated that there were so many protesters that they lost their companions in the crowd. They claimed to have witnessed elderly and disabled protesters. They expressed pride in the youth that participated in the protests and dismissed the claim that anyone manipulated them. In their final words, User A called User B a “common cowardly bot” [“банальный трусливый бот”].

User B was the only person who reported the comment. Facebook took it down under its [Bullying and Harassment Community Standard](#), which provides for the removal of content that is meant to degrade or shame private individuals. In certain instances, Facebook requires self-reporting by the person who has been targeted by the bullying or harassment.

As part of their appeal, User A explained to the Board that they had shared first-hand experience from the protests and that they were responding to blatantly false information. User A added that they believed that User B was “a bot that works on order without being an eyewitness and participant in the events.” User A further indicated that their opinion about this user had not changed, that the term “bot” was not a “dirty word”, and that they did not endorse terrorism or any illegal action.

The Board would appreciate public comments that address:

- *Whether Facebook’s decision complied with its Community Standard on Bullying and Harassment.*
- *Whether Facebook’s decision and Community Standard on Bullying and Harassment complied with its values and its human rights responsibilities, considering both the importance of free expression and the need to ensure scalable responses to harms caused by bullying and harassment.*
- *Contextual information regarding the common use or acceptance of terms equivalent to “банальный трусливый бот” (“common cowardly bot”) when discussing emotive topics on social media, specifically in the Russian language.*
- *Any impacts of Facebook’s enforcement of its Community Standards on dissenting or minority political viewpoints in contexts where governments routinely restrict critical expression.*
- *Research on dis- and misinformation campaigns against participants in the January protests in Russia, how it is disseminated on social media, including evidence of any coordinated inauthentic behavior and the actors involved.*