

2021-006-IG-UA

User appeal to restore content to Instagram

Submit public comment [here](#).

In January 2021, an Instagram user in the United States posted a picture of Abdullah Öcalan, one of the founding members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The picture included the words "y'all ready for this conversation." Underneath the picture the user wrote that it was time to talk about ending Öcalan's isolation in prison on Imrali Island. They encouraged readers to engage in conversation about his imprisonment and the inhumane nature of solitary confinement.

Facebook removed the content for violating Instagram's [Community Guidelines](#) after the post was automatically flagged for review (at this stage, the Board does not know if the content was removed by an automated system or through human review). These Guidelines under the heading "follow the law," set out that "Instagram is not a place to support or praise terrorism, organized crime, or hate groups." The Guidelines link to Facebook's Community Standard on [Dangerous Individuals and Organizations](#). These rules clarify that Facebook also prohibits any support or praise for groups, leaders, or individuals involved in terrorist activity or other serious crimes committed by these groups. The PKK has been designated a terrorist organization by multiple countries, including Turkey, the United States, and the EU.

The user states in their appeal that Öcalan has been a political prisoner for decades and that banning any reference to him prevents discussions that could advance the position of the Kurdish people. They argue that Öcalan's philosophy is peaceful and that his writings are widely available in bookshops and online. The user compares Öcalan's imprisonment to that of former South African President Nelson Mandela, noting that discussion of Öcalan's imprisonment should be allowed and encouraged.

The Board has previously addressed the Dangerous Individuals and Organizations Community Standard. In case 2020-005-FB-UA the Board overturned Facebook's decision and found that Facebook's rules did not clearly explain the terms "praise" and "support."

The Board would appreciate public comments that address:

- Whether the decision to remove this content was consistent with the Community Guidelines on Dangerous Individuals and Organizations, specifically the rule against praising or supporting dangerous individuals and organizations.*
- Whether Facebook's decision to remove the post is consistent with the company's stated values and human rights commitments, including on freedom of expression.*
- Any specific insights from commenters with knowledge of the social, political and cultural context in Turkey, as well as in Kurdish communities in Syria, Iran, Iraq and the wider Kurdish diaspora regarding the impact of censorship of Kurdish political discussion on social media.*
- How Facebook should account for differing positions globally on whether an individual or organization should be designated "dangerous."*
- The freedom users should have to discuss dangerous individuals and organizations on social media, and how the Board should consider criteria for potential harm praise of dangerous individuals and organizations may cause.*

In its decisions, the Board can issue policy recommendations to Facebook. While these are not binding, Facebook must respond to them within 30 days. As such, the Board welcomes public comments proposing recommendations which are relevant to this case.