Global Coalition for Tech Justice
Campaign asks for the 2024 Year of Democracy campaign

The campaign's set of specific, measurable demands

Our coalition is making a public call for action for **Big tech companies to fully and equitably resource efforts to protect 2024 elections**. Companies should address every country in which they operate and make investments in trust and safety proportionate to risk, not market size.

Where companies fail to protect election integrity while respecting human rights obligations (including the pre- and post-election phases), regulators in democratic jurisdictions must step in to protect elections and people. Democratic institutions must ultimately be the guarantors of free and fair elections and ensure safe election periods with full respect for human rights. In elections where governments are oppressive or fostering democratic decline, regulators in countries where companies are headquartered must take the lead in holding companies to account to ensure their compliance with international human rights and electoral standards.

A call for "Big Tech Action Plans"

Fully and equitably resourced Action Plans – at global and country levels – should be designed to protect the freedoms, rights and safety of users during the 2024 global election cycle, including the right to free expression and non-discrimination, and providing an online information environment conducive to free and fair elections (free of misinformation, hate speech, and manipulation) *whether or not the local political context is free and fair*. Moreover, attention should be given to preventing online harms to groups who have been shown time and again of being at particular risk during election periods, notably women politicians.

We demand each Big tech company establish and publish fully and equitably resourced 2024 Action Plans (globally and for each country holding elections), including the following fundamental features:

1. **Mainstream <u>international human rights and electoral standards.</u>** This means assessing the compliance of existing and new policies and enforcement protocols with human rights and electoral standards. It means engaging with election bodies, free of political interference, and enabling the work of independent election monitors.
2. Expeditiously publish and respond to the findings of robust **<u>human rights impact assessments</u>** or commission these assessments where they haven't yet been conducted,

adopting best international practices. Independent and external parties should conduct the assessments, whose results should be transparently incorporated into decision-making and planning processes, as well as communicated to stakeholders to enable better preparation for election periods.

3. **Be <u>fully resourced and proportionate to risk of harm</u>**, not market size. This means investment figures and numbers of employees and contractors per language/dialect, for trust and safety efforts per country must be published and resourcing decisions justified, and provisions made to ensure expertise on national and regional context, languages and dialects for content moderation. More importantly, companies and regulators must focus on the impacts of these policies and investments: people should be protected even in markets with particular human rights challenges, with a view to maintaining equitable access to safe online platforms worldwide. It means the companies must address the past gross inequity of billions invested to protect the US elections compared to neglect of global majority countries where they pose a risk to rights and freedoms in 2024. Companies should adopt a standardised reporting format to document their actions during this period, to allow researchers, regulators, civil society and other actors to monitor their actions and impacts in full transparency.

4. **Provide the <u>full spectrum of tools and measures</u> available**, both new tools developed in response to threat/risk assessment and mitigation exercises as well as the best proven tools and measures already road-tested in markets where companies have most invested in elections-related trust and safety to date (namely the United States). This means total transparency on what has been implemented where, and providing reasoned justifications on variations across the world.

5. **Be <u>operational at each stage in the electoral process</u>**, from the months leading up to an election, through polling day, to the conclusion of the electoral process (whether weeks or months) following the vote. This means averting past mistakes where companies have rolled back measures only to facilitate post-election violence and the undemocratic actions of bad actors.

6. **Be based on and implemented with <u>local context and expertise</u>.** This means properly resourcing local staff and multi-stakeholder engagement, as well as larger and more linguistically and culturally competent content moderation teams to compensate for poor algorithmic performance outside of English. Ideally, platforms should coordinate to facilitate civil society dialogue with all relevant platforms rather than having separate conversations leading to differing standards.

7. **Strengthen, increase and resource <u>partnerships</u>** with **fact-checkers, independent media, civil society and other bodies that protect electoral integrity**. Companies should engage with full respect for partners' independence, report on the amount of meaningful engagement in a standardised format, and also collaborate with other companies to optimise investments in trust and safety and reporting.

8. Be **<u>independent of government and partisan political pressure</u>**. This means companies publishing all their contacts with governments, and all government requests to suppress speech and surveillance demands, where permitted by law. It means eliminating policy

exemptions for politicians where this would allow them to undermine the electoral process or violate the rights of citizens. Politicians should not be exempted from policies that protect users, and political ads should be fact-checked.

9. Establish **proper <u>oversight and transparency</u>**. This means **data access and training** for researchers, civil society, independent media and election monitors to monitor activity on the platforms. It means re-investing in and opening up Crowdtangle at Meta, creating equivalent tools at Alphabet, and maintaining an open and free/affordable API at Twitter. It means **full transparency and accuracy of ad libraries and their functionality (such as targeting parameters), as well as publication of financial information** to enable scrutiny of campaign finance and spending. And it means **transparency and independent audits** on enforcement, including ad library error rates and algorithmic impact on harms. Companies should be transparent about their content moderation policies and enforcement, including notice, review and appeal mechanisms, reporting these in a standardised format.

10. Enable **<u>accountability</u>**. This means allowing documentation and archiving of all actual or potential harms taking place on the platforms as well as documentation to test the accuracy and effectiveness of harm mitigation measures, to enable real-time and post-facto accountability efforts.

This package of demands to Big tech companies can be coupled, dependent on context, to national or regional demands to governments and regulators (such as electoral bodies) in the framework of the campaign, advocated and advanced by coalition partners with a focus on government/institutional advocacy.

Public signatories*

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Africa Sans Haine
AfroLeadership
AI Forensics
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Aliança Nacional Lgbti+
ALQST for Human Rights
Amandla.mobi
Amnesty International, Kenya
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Associação Alternativa Terrazul
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Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication
Bareedo Platform Somalia
Beam Reports
Bullyid App - NMA Foundation
Business and Human Rights Resource Centre
Campaign On Digital Ethics (CODE)
Casa Hacker
Center for AI Ethics and Governance in Africa - CAIEGA
Center for Information Technology and Development (CITAD)
Center for Legal Support
Centre for Media Research - Nepal
Centro Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sobre Internet
Check First
Check My Ads
Civic Tech Field Guide
Civil Society Advocacy Network On Climate Change and the Environment Sierra Leone (CAN-SL)
Co - Creation Hub (CcHUB)
Coalizão Negra por Direitos
Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)
Common Cause Zambia
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Community Focus Foundation Ghana (CFF-Ghana)
Conectas Direitos Humanos
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Desinformante & Aláfia Lab
Digital Access
Digital Citizenship
Digital Humanities Lab (Federal University of Bahia)
Digital Rights Foundation
Digital Rights Lab - Sudan
Digital Rights Lawyers Initiative

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Fair Vote UK

FALA

FEMALE Organization

Foresight Generation Club

Friends of Democracy

Friends of the Earth U.S.

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Fundación Internet Bolivia

Global Action Plan

Global Digital Citizenship Lab, York University

Global Witness

Great Hope Foundation Malawi

Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)

Helen Suzman Foundation

Hindus for Human Rights

Hope and Courage Collective

Human Rights Journalists Network Nigeria

Human Rights Watch

HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement

Hungarian Civil Liberties Union

IDDLAC (Contextual)

India American Muslim Council

India Civil Watch International

Inform Africa

Innovation for Change Middle East and North Africa

INSM for Digital Rights in Iraq

Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)

Instituto Vero

International Council of Indian Muslims (ICIM)

International Media Support

International Press Institute

IPANDETEC

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Jordan Open Source Association (JOSA)

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Legal Resources Centre
LoveAid Foundation
LOVE-Storm - Together Against Online Hate
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Misbar
Myanmar Internet Project
National Democratic Institute
Netlab-UFRJ
News Literacy Lab
NOSSAS
Open Britain
Open Knowledge Foundation
Panos Institute Southern Africa
Paradigm Initiative
Pen to Paper
People Vs Big Tech
Pollicy
Real Facebook Oversight Board
REDE NACIONAL DE COMBATE À DESINFORMAÇÃO
Research Tree
Rinascimento Green
Salamat Dz
Samir Kassir Foundation
Sleeping Giants Brasil
SMEX
Social Movement Technologies
SocialTIC
Society for Environment and Education
Stitching The London Story
Tech Global Institute
Tech Justice
Tech4Peace
TEDIC
The African Middle Eastern Leadership Project (AMEL)

The Citizens
The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy
The Visual Activist
Transparency International EU
Ubunteam
Verify-Sy
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