

# The Fifth Column Public Statement

2023-04-18

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From the desk of AlphaComputer, President of The Fifth Column™

On July 27 2022, with the release of Minecraft: Java Edition version 1.19.1, Mojang implemented a new moderation system for the multiplayer chat system. Players are now able to report each other for *“sending abusive messages in the game chat”*. According to Mojang, this system was designed to *“keep Minecraft communities free from hate speech, bullying, harassment, sexual solicitation, and personal threats”*. While The Fifth Column agrees that this kind of hateful content has no right to exist within Minecraft, we strongly believe that the chat reporting system is the entirely wrong way to go about solving it. It is a flawed system prone to exploits, misinterpretation, corruption, and to top it all off, does absolutely nothing to address any of the issues it sets out to solve.

After the announcement of the report system earlier in 2022, the system was met with... backlash. The main concern for players was that power was being moved from server operators who they trust to run their community, to a moderation team at Xbox that will judge their content according to vague and unclear guidelines, which could potentially lead to inconsistent enforcement and false bans. Many players expressed concern that there were too many potential examples of rule enforcements backfiring, since there would be little to no context provided around reported messages. In other words, a message like *“I’m going to blow up your house.”* would be treated the same whether it was said on 2b2t, or as a private message in a Hypixel lobby.

Eight months have passed since the introduction of this feature, and while the majority of the Minecraft community are still not in favor of chat reporting, many have simply paid no attention to it as aside from a few exploits, there had not been any reported misuse of the tool and their experience was largely unaffected...



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**Until April 13, 2023**, when members of our group were specifically targeted and permanently banned by Mojang under the category of *“Abusive language used in a directed, harmful manner”*. This is utterly false. We at the Fifth Column have been actively fighting against abusive language, discrimination and hate speech in Minecraft, cleaning filth from the most toxic and hateful of servers, and Microsoft thinks we were bringing harm to players?

Upon emailing support, we find Mojang has not banned us for abusive language at all. That was merely a substitute for a ban category that doesn't even exist... using a “hacked client”.

Hello,

Thank you for reaching out to the Minecraft Moderation Team.

This account received a permanent suspension due to a violation of our guidelines.

Minecraft strives to maintain a fair and fun platform for all players. We have evidence of you using a hacked client to cause harm to other players.

Due to the severity of these violations, it was determined that the account could no longer be trusted to access the Minecraft Servers.

We will not be restoring access to this account. Thank you for your understanding.

Tonnie T.

Minecraft Moderation Team

According to the Minecraft End User License Agreement (EULA), modding is permitted with the only catch being you don't sell mods for money. Infact, Mojang has shown extensive support toward modding, going as far as to provide official Java mappings, allowing individuals to easily read the Minecraft source code.



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Defining a “hacked client” is incredibly difficult without that definition overlapping with otherwise regular mods. Take for example the description “Any mod that grants an unfair advantage over other players”, what is considered an unfair advantage? Minimaps let you see the area around you and mobs/players near you that you otherwise wouldn’t be able to see.

This is unprecedented. A full account ban for doing something not even forbidden by the EULA. If this were to become the norm, and you have ever used what Mojang believes is a “hacked client” or third party modifications you could be permanently banned too if any begrudging individual files a complaint to Mojang.

Of course we don’t believe this will be globally enforced at all. These bans are targeted.

Banned for something that isn’t considered an offense to begin with? Whoever on the Minecraft Moderation Team was responsible for these bans must have realized there is no way to ban players for using “hacked clients”, because they banned us under the category of “abusive language” instead. Something we wholeheartedly denounce and would never participate in. This can be backed up by the fact the Minecraft moderator didn’t mention any use of hate speech in their response, let alone provide proof of, despite that being what’s listed as the ban reason. Furthermore, We have proof that Mojang has been banning our accounts based on appearances in our 5C Public Access videos on YouTube. We have discovered that only our accounts that have featured in videos will get banned. Some happening within 24 hours of a video going live, and some happening to players that haven’t launched the game in over a year. Further proof that this has nothing to do with just “hacked clients” in general is the fact that one of our members was banned for just [having their name appear in a video](#), with no evidence of them using a modded client.

Should this have you worried? Well if you’ve ever used what you think Mojang could describe as a “hacked client”... probably. Even if you only did it on an anarchy server, where it is allowed by the *server* rules. These events prove that Minecraft moderators, should they be alerted to your use of them, can and maybe even will ban your account.



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*TL;DR: Mojang has manually banned 10 accounts and counting, for modding the game. **You could be next.***



## The Fifth Column

Grief. Cope. Seethe. Repeat.

