

ORGANIZED ONLINE HATE LEADS TO REAL LIFE MURDER IN KENOSHA, WI

A Statement from Brenda Victoria Castillo, President & CEO of the National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC)

We've said it before, and we will say it over and over again: hate online leads to hate and harm in real life. Last night two protestors were murdered in Kenosha, Wisconsin by a member of an organized hate and extremist group called the Kenosha Guards. The Kenosha Guards is an armed militia group that uses online sites, like Facebook, to target Black Lives Matter and other protestors who are simply practicing their First Amendment right to peacefully protest. Our hearts are despondent in the wake of the loss of yet more precious lives as a result of purposeful, coordinated hate online.

Just hours before the murder, the Kenosha Guard Facebook page—which had more than 3,000 members – asked, “Any patriots willing to take up arms and defend ou[r] City tonight from the evil thugs?” This post, along with the Guard’s page chock full of violent threats and touts of armory, remained unchecked by Facebook until *after* two protestors were murdered, despite it being in clear violation of Facebook’s updated [Dangerous Individuals and Organizations Policy](#).

This is heartbreakingly not new; dozens of people of color have been targeted and mass murdered in recent years, sparked by radicalization and the proliferation of hate on social media websites. Even with retroactive action in this specific case, we know that inconsistent enforcement of content moderation is commonplace at Facebook, with the company often waiting until it’s too late to take action against organized hate groups. Facebook, if anything, is barely reactive - How many deaths will it take until Facebook accepts its responsibility and becomes preventative to stand up against organized hate?

I am exhausted and furious from the apathetic inaction from Mark Zuckerberg and other tech moguls, as our communities continue to be murdered at the hands of white supremacists who are radicalized, organized, and mobilized on social media platforms. In the middle of a pandemic, an economic recession, and a resurgence of the civil rights movement, we need Facebook and other social media companies to fight for the safety of our communities, instead of enabling white supremacy and the hunt and murder of our people.

Yours in the Movement,



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