

Subject: X as a vital force for combatting state-sponsored censorship

Dear Elon,

Congratulations on one year at the helm of X. Thank you for being a global champion of free speech—foundational to a flourishing society, and yet under increasing threat.

As you rightfully have spotlighted, threats to free expression often come at the hands of businesses treating employees unfairly for sharing their views.

Even more insidious is the mounting trend of government suppression of speech with the imposition of serious penalties, and even criminal sanctions, for free expression.

In an August 5, 2023 X post, you generously offered: *“If you were unfairly treated by your employer due to posting or liking something on this platform, we will fund your legal bill. No limit.”*

For a truly comprehensive response to free speech restrictions, our request is that you extend this important offer to cases of state-driven censorship.

Free speech is broadly protected by every major human rights treaty; however, in the West, speech increasingly is targeted by “hate speech” laws. In other regions, blasphemy laws target minority groups, sometimes with the sentence of death. These repressive laws are two sides of the same coin—both punish those who speak out against state-approved views.

As the world’s meeting place—where ideas are challenged by ideas—the support of X in standing against state censorship is essential. Consider the following active attacks on free speech:

- In **Finland**, parliamentarian Päivi Räsänen, a former government minister and grandmother, currently is awaiting a verdict, having been criminally tried for “hate speech” for a 2019 Bible-verse tweet. She was charged under the Finnish criminal code’s section on “War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity,” carrying a maximum sentence of 2 years imprisonment.
- In **Mexico**, former congressman Rodrigo Iván Cortés and sitting congressman Gabriel Quadri have been convicted of “gender-based political violence,” and placed on an offenders’ register, for Twitter posts. For expressing their views on biological sex, both have been ordered to publish a court-written apology on X every day for 30 days, 3 times a day, as a form of public humiliation.
- At the **international level**, the European Commission is advancing efforts to make “hate speech” an EU crime, on the same legal level as trafficking and terrorism. Initiatives such as the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation could have significant implications for how governments police speech, especially as European Commission VP Věra Jourová singled out X for “the largest ratio of mis/disinformation posts” in her September 26, 2023 statement.

And these are far from isolated threats. If X is to be a free marketplace of ideas, everyone must be able to peacefully debate the issues of our time without fear of government punishment.

Given your commitment to free speech and unrivaled capacity to effect change, we ask that you harness X to make clear that no one should be punished under the law for peaceful expression on X or any platform. Specifically:

1. Designate **funds to support legal action** challenging state-sponsored censorship of views on X, broadening your offer regarding cases in the workplace.
2. Create an **intake mechanism on X** whereby individuals can apply for this support.
3. Host **X Spaces to bring worldwide attention** to censorship cases involving both governments and the workplace.

With gratitude for your commitment to free speech,