November 4, 2026

To: Shou Zi Chew, Chief Executive Officer, TikTok

Subject: Demand for Transparency Regarding Saudi Government Requests to Restrict Political and Human Rights Content

Dear Mr. Chew,

We write on behalf of the American Committee for Middle East Rights (ACMER), Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN), ALQST for Human Rights, MENA Rights Group, and the European Saudi Organization for Human Rights (ESOHR) concerning reports that TikTok has restricted access inside Saudi Arabia to accounts belonging to Saudi dissidents, activists, and other individuals engaged in peaceful political expression.

In May 2026, SANAD Human Rights Organization reported that Saudi opposition accounts had been blocked across several major platforms, including TikTok, Meta, and Snapchat. Its reporting described a broader pattern in which activists living abroad found that their accounts had become inaccessible to audiences inside Saudi Arabia, often without a clear notification identifying the legal basis or requesting authority.

The available public reporting does not establish the full number of TikTok accounts affected, the complete scope of the restrictions, or the specific legal requests that prompted them. We therefore ask TikTok to disclose this information and explain the company's decision-making process.

These reports are concerning because geo-blocking can prevent people inside Saudi Arabia from accessing peaceful political commentary and human rights advocacy without removing the content globally. Although a geographic restriction may appear narrower than a global removal, it can still have serious consequences when used to isolate dissidents abroad from audiences in their home country.

Saudi authorities rely on broadly worded provisions of their Anti-Cyber Crime Law to penalize expression alleged to threaten public order, religious values, public morals, or privacy. The authorities have used such laws to prosecute online critics, activists, and journalists.

TikTok's responsibility to respect human rights requires it to assess the implications of government requests rather than treat compliance with domestic law as sufficient justification. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights call on

companies to conduct human rights due diligence and to take appropriate steps to address adverse impacts connected with their operations.

TikTok should explain what safeguards it applies when government requests target peaceful political expression, whether it provides affected users with meaningful notice and appeal rights, and how it prevents its services from being used to facilitate cross-border censorship.

You are also the "American tech platform" to which the U.S. government has addressed its own policy. On May 28, 2025, Secretary of State Rubio declared it "unacceptable for foreign officials to demand that American tech platforms adopt global content moderation policies or engage in censorship activity that reaches beyond their authority and into the United States." We are separately asking the State and Treasury Departments to apply the same measures to the Saudi officials responsible, and the House Judiciary Committee to add these orders to its inquiry into foreign censorship demands on your companies.

We ask TikTok to answer the following questions:

1. Provide the full text of every Saudi government request, order, or legal instrument received in 2026 concerning TikTok accounts or content belonging to dissidents, activists, journalists, or civil society organizations.
2. Identify the Saudi government agencies that submitted or transmitted these requests and the legal provisions invoked.
3. Identify the number of accounts or items of content restricted in response to Saudi requests, the dates of restriction, and whether the restrictions apply only inside Saudi Arabia.
4. Identify the specific content allegedly violating Saudi law and explain why any account-level restrictions were necessary.
5. Explain the legal and human rights assessments conducted before complying with the requests, including the standards applied to legality, necessity, and proportionality.
6. State whether TikTok sought clarification, narrowing, or modification of the requests or considered challenging them.
7. Explain what notifications were provided to affected users, whether those notifications identified the requesting authority and legal basis, and what appeal mechanisms are available.
8. Disclose whether any content posted by users in the United States was removed globally in connection with these requests.

9. Explain the role of TikTok's regional offices, employees, contractors, or partners in processing or implementing the requests.
10. State whether commercial relationships with Saudi state-linked entities or potential legal exposure for local employees or partners influenced the decisions.
11. Identify comparable requests received from the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Israel, or other regional governments in 2026 concerning peaceful political speech or human rights advocacy.

We ask TikTok to take the following actions:

1. Restore access inside Saudi Arabia to every affected account that does not violate TikTok's own rules.
2. Publish the Saudi requests and orders and disclose the human rights assessments conducted, to the fullest extent legally possible.
3. Provide every affected user with notice identifying the content at issue, the legal provision invoked, and the geographic scope of the restriction.
4. Establish a meaningful appeal process with human review and a mechanism for correcting erroneous or disproportionate restrictions.
5. Publish clear safeguards against government demands that seek to suppress peaceful political speech, independent journalism, or human rights advocacy.
6. Report government requests for country-specific restrictions transparently, including the requesting agency, legal basis, number of accounts affected, and outcome.
7. Meet with the undersigned organizations and affected users within 30 days.

TikTok should not allow its platform to become a means of preventing peaceful critics and human rights defenders living abroad from reaching audiences in their own country. The public deserves a clear account of the requests TikTok has received, the decisions it has made, and the safeguards it will adopt to prevent future abuses.

We request a written response within 7 days. We intend to make this letter and TikTok's response public.

Sincerely,

The American Committee for Middle East Rights (ACMER)
Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
ALQST for Human Rights

MENA Rights Group
The European Saudi Organization for Human Rights (ESOHR)