

Supplementary written evidence submitted by TikTok (FL0032)

Darren Jones MP
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

5th November 2020

Dear Mr Jones,

Thank you for inviting me to the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Committee's inquiry into forced labour in UK value chains.

I was grateful for the opportunity to address the Committee's concerns and in particular to be clear that neither TikTok's UK company, TikTok Information Technologies UK Limited ('TikTok UK') nor its ultimate parent company ByteDance Ltd., nor any of ByteDance Ltd's subsidiaries in China are involved in the use of forced labour anywhere or in 'the facilitation of human rights abuses experienced by Uyghurs', as described in the terms of reference by the Committee.

I wanted briefly to follow up with the Committee on three areas.

1. Follow up answer on aid in Xinjiang

Ms. Nus Ghani MP asked me to describe in more detail the aid Douyin provides to the Xinjiang region. I have asked the team at Douyin and they have told me that they provided aid in Makit County to support local farmers to promote their produce via Douyin.

2. Clarification on content moderation

I would also like to take this opportunity to clarify an incorrect statement I made during the hearing regarding an outdated content policy.

In response to a question from Ms. Ghani, I said: "in the early days of TikTok there were some policies in place which took a blunt instrument to the way in which content was censored... There were some incidents where content was not allowed on the platform specifically with regard to the Uighur situation."

TikTok has previously acknowledged that in our very early days, we took a blunt approach to moderating content that promoted conflict. We recognised that this was the wrong approach and eliminated it long ago. However, we want to be absolutely clear that even in those early policies, there was never a policy around the Uighur community, which is where I misspoke.

3. Invitation to the Committee to examine our algorithm

Finally, I would like to reiterate my offer for you and the Committee to visit TikTok's Transparency and Accountability Centre to see first-hand how our platform works, and meet senior leaders in our Trust & Safety team. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, this would be a virtual visit but I would be delighted to work with Rebecca Davies to identify a time that would suit Committee members for a virtual tour.

At TikTok, we believe that accountability and transparency are essential to facilitating trust with our community – and we're committed to leading the way when it comes to being transparent in how we operate, moderate and recommend content, and secure our platform. That's why in [arch](#) of this year we opened our (virtual for now) Transparency and Accountability Centre, inviting experts, policymakers and lawmakers to see how we're working to build a safe and secure platform for our growing and diverse community.

The virtual tour would cover:

- how our trained content moderators apply our Community Guidelines,
- our approach to privacy and security, and

- how we use our algorithm to deliver content on TikTok - as you may have seen earlier this year, we are currently the only tech company offering algorithmic transparency.

We understand that our industry is evolving rapidly, and we are aware that our systems, policies and practices are not flawless, which is why we are committed to constant improvement. Our Transparency and Accountability Centre is an important part of this process, serving as a forum where stakeholders such as yourself are able to provide meaningful feedback on our practices.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to appear before the Committee. We hope the above is helpful, and look forward to welcoming the Committee at our Transparency and Accountability Centre.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Kanter
Director of Government Relations and Public Policy

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