

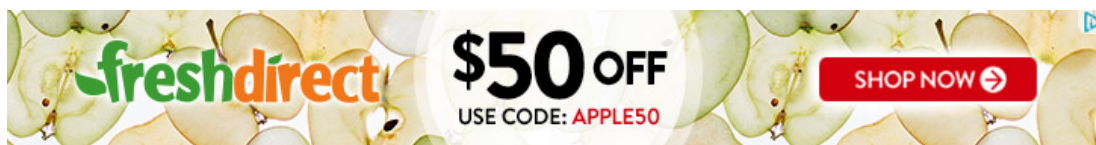
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Widow's Lawsuit Blames Twitter For Rise of ISIS

The woman says that without Twitter, the terrorist group's "explosive growth" would not have been possible.

01/14/2016 11:42 am ET




Dana Liebelson
Staff Reporter, The Huffington Post



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In this June 16, 2014, file photo, demonstrators chant pro-Islamic State slogans as they carry the group's flags in front of the provincial government headquarters in Mosul, Iraq. A new lawsuit puts part of the blame on Twitter for the terrorist group's rise in power.

WASHINGTON -- Twitter "knowingly permitted" the Islamic State to use the social network to spread extremist propaganda, a [lawsuit filed on Wednesday](#) in federal court claims. The complaint was brought by the widow of a government contractor killed in a terrorist attack in Jordan.

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"Without Twitter, the explosive growth of ISIS over the last few years into the most-feared terrorist group in the world would not have been possible," the lawsuit claims.

The terrorist group, which controls areas of Syria and Iraq, utilizes social media to recruit members and spread its extremist interpretation of Islam. Companies like Twitter have come under increased pressure to monitor and remove these messages.

The lawsuit, filed by Tamara Fields in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, claims that Twitter has enabled the Islamic State, also called ISIS, to carry out numerous terrorist attacks, including a shooting rampage that left Fields' husband dead. Lloyd "Carl" Fields Jr. was killed in the cafeteria of a police training center in Jordan on Nov. 9, 2015. According to the lawsuit, the Islamic State took responsibility for the attack.

Fields seeks compensation, and for the judge to enter an order declaring that Twitter is violating the Anti-Terrorism Act, which allows U.S. nationals to collect damages if they are injured by an act of international terrorism.

"While we believe the lawsuit is without merit, we are deeply saddened to hear of this family's terrible loss," a Twitter spokesman said. "We have teams around the world actively investigating reports of rule violations, identifying violating conduct, partnering with organizations countering extremist content online, and working with law enforcement entities when appropriate," he added.

Those steps don't go far enough, according to the lawsuit. Twitter has refused to take "meaningful action" to stop the Islamic State from using its services, the plaintiff claims. The lawsuit points to a report that claims one pro-Islamic State group was able to have 335 accounts on the social network.

It's against Twitter's [policies](#) to "make threats of violence or promote violence, including threatening or promoting terrorism," and the social network regularly suspends accounts that support the terrorist organization -- including at least 1,000 accounts between September and December 2014, according to a Brookings Institution [paper](#). But Twitter has [come under fire](#) in the past for failing to stop other forms of online harassment on its platform, like violent threats against women.

Tech companies are generally wary of cooperating too closely with the government because of privacy and security concerns. But Silicon Valley executives [met](#) last week with counterterrorism officials to discuss combating terrorism online. The U.S. government wants to find ways to make it harder for terrorists to mobilize followers online, and easier for law enforcement to identify terrorist operatives, according to a meeting [agenda](#) obtained by the Guardian.

"Like people around the world, we are horrified by the atrocities perpetrated by extremist groups and their ripple effects on the Internet," the Twitter spokesman said.

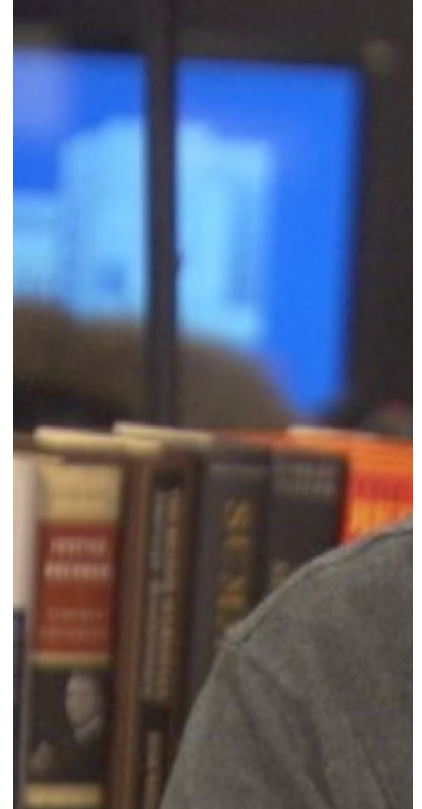
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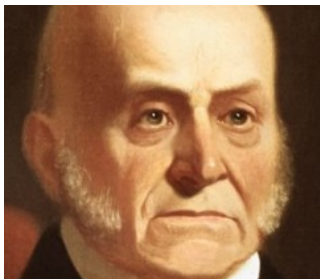


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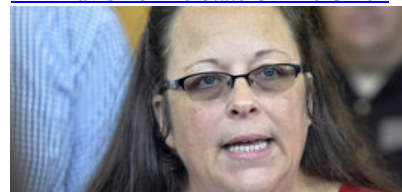
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