

Facebook Ignored Warnings About Event Page Abuses for Years

Timeline of Failure Shows Five Years of Facebook Ignoring Warnings of Event Pages Being Used to Promote Violence

Facebook's failure to address violence organized on its event pages is nothing new. Since 2015, Muslim Advocates has worked to hold Facebook accountable for the militias, white nationalists and other hate groups that are using the platform's event pages to direct harassment and violence at vulnerable communities. Despite multiple warnings from Muslim Advocates dating back to 2015, Facebook has taken no action and the platform's event pages continue to be used to encourage hate and violence. Most recently, a teen who answered a call to arms that a militia group [broadcast on a Facebook event page](#), shot and killed two people in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Before more lives are lost, Facebook must act now by banning white nationalists, hate groups and militias from using the event pages and banning any event page that includes a call to arms.

- **May 29, 2015:** Notorious anti-Muslim bigot and militia supporter Jon Ritzheimer [organized a hate rally](#) targeting the Islamic Community Center of Phoenix during Friday prayers. The rally was organized on a Facebook event page which had 600 RSVPs and stated, "People are also encouraged to utilize (sic) second amendment right at this event just (sic) our first amendment comes under the much anticipated attack." Muslim Advocates spoke to Facebook about this rally and event page and expressed our concern about event pages being used by hate groups. Nothing was done.
- **October 2015:** Jon Ritzheimer again used Facebook event pages to organize protests [targeting more than 20 mosques around the country](#). Muslim Advocates complained about these protests and again demanded that Facebook address the targeting of Muslims on the platform's event pages. Even though Muslim Advocates was clear that lives were in danger, Facebook did nothing.
- **February 2016:** Muslim Advocates had an in-person meeting with Monika Bickert, head of policy development, at Facebook's headquarters, where she was shown photos of armed protestors in front of mosques organized on Facebook event pages. Muslim Advocates asked her to change event page policies because lives were in danger. Facebook failed to take any action.
- **June 2017:** ACT for America, the largest anti-Muslim group in the U.S., used Facebook event pages to [organize protests in front of Muslim spaces in cities all over the country](#). Many of these event pages included a call to arms. The June date involved protests in 60 cities. Muslim Advocates again pleaded with Facebook to take action and expressed concern about the safety of the Muslim community. During 2017, Muslim Advocates began demanding that Facebook create a non-discrimination policy banning white nationalists and hate groups from



using events pages from targeting communities based on identity. Again, Facebook did nothing.

- **September 2017:** Documents released by Congress revealed that [Russian-linked groups used Facebook event pages](#) to promote anti-Muslim animus and direct protesters to a Houston mosque. After this revelation was made public, Muslim Advocates again went to Facebook and warned them about how event pages were being used to promote anti-Muslim hate and endanger Muslims.
- **October 11, 2017:** Muslim Advocates participated in a small group meeting with Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg where she again was told about the abuse of the events pages and how they were being used by white nationalists to target mosques and Muslims. Muslim Advocates shared pictures of protestors brandishing guns at these rallies with her and asked her to take action. Nothing was done.
- **March 7, 2019:** Muslim Advocates and coalition partners met with Facebook officials and had an extensive discussion about hate groups and events pages, again requesting polices for the pages be reviewed and updated in order to stop white supremacist groups from using the pages to targets Muslims and other vulnerable communities.
- **August 2019:** A militia group, the Texas Patriot Network, [used a Facebook event page](#) to plan an armed protest at the largest Muslim convention in the country. Muslim Advocates warned Facebook about the page and had to wait more than 25 hours before it was taken down. Even worse, the same group planned a similar armed protest at the same event the year prior where militia members were found to have discussed possible targets and called them "dead meat." Despite Mark Zuckerberg's claim that "[we do not allow hate groups on Facebook](#)," this group still has an active Facebook presence.
- **November 4, 2019:** Muslim Advocates Executive Director Farhana Khera attended a [small group dinner with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg](#), Sheryl Sandberg and other members of Facebook leadership. She highlighted the problem with the event pages again and asked them to stop white nationalists and hate groups from abusing their event pages. Nothing happened.
- **July 10, 2020:** During a call with Sheryl Sandberg about the [final report of the civil rights audit](#), Muslim Advocates yet again asked for Facebook to end the targeting of vulnerable communities on the event pages. Muslim Advocates warned that people were going to get hurt but no action was taken.
- **August 26, 2020:** An armed 17-year-old who drove up from Illinois shot and killed two people protesting the police killing of James Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin. It was [later reported](#) that a Facebook event page from a local Kenosha militia that included a call to arms was flagged at least 455 times but [not taken down by the company](#).

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