



July 9, 2020

Twitter, Inc.
1355 Market Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Twitter,

We write to demand that Twitter act immediately to prevent its developers from facilitating government surveillance of people, particularly Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color who are organizing and leading ongoing demonstrations against police violence. According to [the Intercept](#), a Twitter developer named Dataminr has provided police with tweets about these demonstrations and protesters. This practice poses an immediate threat to Twitter users and is contrary to the company's stated commitments to free speech, equality, and justice.

People across the country and the world rely on Twitter as an essential tool to connect, communicate, and protest against systemic racism and government oppression. After police murdered Black people such as George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade, users turned to the platform and marched in the streets. At the same time, Dataminr reportedly compiled and sent police the tweets of people discussing these protests and protesters. Dataminr's actions facilitate police surveillance and risk exposing people to investigation, watchlists, and state violence for calling attention to injustice and exercising First Amendment rights.

Preventing these very harms is the purpose of [Twitter's surveillance policy](#), which was reinforced after a 2016 investigation by the ACLU of Northern California revealed developers like [Geofeedia](#) and [Dataminr](#) were facilitating government surveillance with Twitter data. This [policy](#) prohibits developers from distributing user speech for the purpose of "monitoring sensitive events (including but not limited to protests...)." Twitter needs to investigate Dataminr's practices and whether other developers also enable government surveillance. To meaningfully protect people, Twitter must not allow its developers to do business with law enforcement.

Twitter has vocally supported Black Lives Matter and Black activists. But that is not enough. This unprecedented moment in the fight for racial justice requires more. Twitter must also act decisively to prevent its platform from being exploited to surveil and target people.

Signed,

ACLU of Northern California
ACLU of Minnesota
Color Of Change
Media Justice