



February 17, 2023

Committee Secretary  
Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Canberra ACT 2600

## **Submission by Human Rights Watch to the Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media**

This submission outlines threats of misinformation and disinformation, surveillance and censorship, based on Human Rights Watch’s research. Social media companies are effectively political actors with global reach. Their products enable governments to exert influence beyond their borders. The Committee should urge companies to assess human rights implications of their operating models and enhance transparency over their algorithms and content moderation practices.

### **Chinese Social Media Platforms Operating in Australia**

All Chinese social media companies, private or public, are subjected to the control of the ruling Chinese Communist Party. This creates an opportunity and mechanism for Chinese government censorship, surveillance, and propaganda that affects not only their users based in China, but around the world, including in Australia.<sup>1</sup>

### **WeChat**

With monthly active users of over 1.3 billion worldwide, WeChat is a super-app that combines the functions of social media, messaging, financial services, travel, food delivery, ride-hailing, and other apps.<sup>2</sup> It is so convenient that for people in China, it is as unimaginable not to have WeChat as not to have a smartphone. That’s partially a result of good programming and partially of

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Targeting TikTok’s privacy alone misses a larger issue: Chinese state control”, 24 January 2020 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/01/24/targeting-tiktoks-privacy-alone-misses-larger-issue-chinese-state-control>.

<sup>2</sup> “China’s Tencent wants to expand its presence in Singapore — and Chinese tourists are a big reason”, *CNBC News*, 2 February 2023 at <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/02/03/tencents-weixin-sees-singapore-as-a-strategic-market.html>.

deliberate policy. The Chinese government shuts out foreign tech companies, blocks websites that don't comply with its censorship regime, and penalizes people who try to circumvent it.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the government nurtures a handful of domestic platforms, like WeChat, that censor and surveil their users on its behalf and transfer user data to the government when so-called sensitive information is discovered.<sup>4</sup> The authorities also directly embed cybersecurity police units in major internet companies.<sup>5</sup>

WeChat has thus become a complete digital ecosystem in which people in China lead their entire digital lives, and they are therefore trapped in a controlled information environment without meaningful choice.<sup>6</sup>

As a result, anyone outside the country who wants to connect with people in China is also drawn into the Chinese government's machinery of censorship and surveillance. International WeChat users are estimated at between 100 and 200 million.<sup>7</sup> WeChat has reported that the platform has close to 690,000 users in Australia, with other estimates as high as 3 million users.<sup>8</sup>

The centrality of WeChat in information acquisition and communication among the Chinese diaspora, especially first-generation immigrants from China, should be a concern for the Australian government. Many members of the Chinese diaspora use WeChat exclusively for their digital communication.

Chinese law requires internet companies to store internet logs and relevant data for at least six months to assist law enforcement.<sup>9</sup> Under China's 2017 National Intelligence Law, all citizens and businesses are required to assist in intelligence gathering, and must share any data with the Chinese authorities if requested. Hence, the Chinese government can—if it wants—obtain information including things such as who is meeting whom, at what time, and where, for users both

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<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Watch, "China: Free Anti-Censorship Activist", 2 April 2018 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/03/china-free-anti-censorship-activist>.

<sup>4</sup> Citizen Lab, "(Can't) Picture This 2: An Analysis of WeChat's Realtime Image Filtering in Chats", 15 July 2019 at <https://citizenlab.ca/2019/07/cant-picture-this-2-an-analysis-of-wechats-realtime-image-filtering-in-chats/>; Amnesty International, "How private are your favourite messaging apps?", 21 October 2016 at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/10/which-messaging-apps-best-protect-your-privacy/?ntvDuo=true>.

<sup>5</sup> "China to Embed Internet Police in Tech Firms", *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 August 2015 at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-to-embed-internet-police-in-tech-firms-1438755985>.

<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Watch, "WeChat Is a Trap for China's Diaspora", 14 August 2020 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/14/wechat-trap-chinas-diaspora>.

<sup>7</sup> Business of Apps, "WeChat Revenue and Usage Statistics (2022)", 6 September 2022 at <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/wechat-statistics/>.

<sup>8</sup> *WeChat submission to the select committee on foreign interference through social media 2020*, 30 September 2020 at [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign\\_Interference\\_through\\_Social\\_Media/ForeignInterference/Submissions](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Interference_through_Social_Media/ForeignInterference/Submissions); "A Swiss army knife app: what is WeChat and how is it being used in Australia's 2022 federal election?", *The Guardian*, 11 May 2022 at <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/may/10/a-swiss-army-knife-app-what-is-wechat-and-how-is-it-being-used-in-australias-2022-federal-election>.

<sup>9</sup> "What Tencent left out when it denied spying on you over WeChat", *Quartz*, 3 January 2018 at <https://qz.com/1170046/tencents-wechat-denies-storing-chat-history-but-its-users-are-monitored-by-the-chinese-government>.

inside and outside China. As WeChat is also a payment app, Beijing can see to whom users send money, from whom they get it, or even who pays for dinner.

Tencent, the owner of WeChat, says the information of users registered with international phone numbers is stored in servers in Singapore and Hong Kong, and is not shared with unauthorized third parties.<sup>10</sup> Tencent also says that the use of user data is subject to Australia's privacy law around handling personal information.

WeChat is where many members of the Chinese diaspora obtain information, including about the countries they immigrated to. A survey of Mandarin speakers in Australia found that 60 percent of those polled identified WeChat as their primary source of news and information, while only 23 percent said they regularly accessed news from mainstream Australian media such as the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*.<sup>11</sup>

Some of the most popular publications catering to the diaspora originated on WeChat.<sup>12</sup> In order to attract readership, traditional Chinese-language media outlets now also publish through WeChat. In this sense, news produced by a local Chinese-language outlet in Sydney goes through censors in Beijing before it reaches the Chinese-speaking community in Sydney.

The impact of living online in WeChat's ecosystem means that people outside China are subjected to the same censorship and propaganda, which shapes their worldview in ways more amenable to the Chinese government.<sup>13</sup>

Recognizing the importance of WeChat among the Chinese diaspora, at least a dozen Australian politicians have opened WeChat accounts or regularly utilize popular accounts to reach out to their Chinese-speaking constituents.<sup>14</sup>

The Chinese government's ability to interfere with Australia's democracy was evident when then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison had his WeChat account censored in December 2020. Chinese censors removed Morrison's official reply to a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman who had posted a tweet that included a gruesome, doctored picture of an Australian soldier hurting an Afghan child.<sup>15</sup> In January 2022, Morrison lost control of his account when his 76,000 WeChat followers were

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<sup>10</sup> *WeChat Privacy Policy* at [https://www.wechat.com/en/privacy\\_policy.html](https://www.wechat.com/en/privacy_policy.html); *WeChat Privacy Policy Supplemental Terms – Jurisdiction Specific Addenda: Australia* at <https://www.wechat.com/en/jurisdictions.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Wanning Sun, "How Australia's Mandarin speakers get their news", *The Conversation*, 22 November 2018 at <https://theconversation.com/how-australias-mandarin-speakers-get-their-news-106917>.

<sup>12</sup> "The 'Post-Truth' Publication Where Chinese Students in America Get Their News", *The New Yorker*, 19 August 2019 at <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-post-truth-publication-where-chinese-students-in-america-get-their-news>.

<sup>13</sup> Human Rights Watch, "WeChat Is a Trap for China's Diaspora", 14 August 2020 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/14/wechat-trap-chinas-diaspora>.

<sup>14</sup> "Scott Morrison joins WeChat, Chinese social media, ahead of election", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 February 2019 at <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/scott-morrison-joins-wechat-chinese-social-media-ahead-of-election-20190202-p5ovad.html>.

<sup>15</sup> "China and Australia: How a Twitter spat quickly escalated", *BBC News*, 3 December 2020 at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-55168883>.

notified his page had been renamed “Australian Chinese new life” earlier and his photograph had been removed.<sup>16</sup> Tencent said that there was “no evidence of any hacking or third-party intrusion.”

There are lesser known but no less troubling cases. In September 2017, Jenny Kwan, a member of the Canadian parliament, made a statement regarding the pro-democracy Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, in which she praised the young protesters who “stood up and fought for what they believe in, and for the betterment of their society.”<sup>17</sup> The statement and anything related quickly disappeared. After it was taken down, Kwan told Human Rights Watch, “We only noticed that it was taken down since you asked the question.”

In this case, the Chinese government without fanfare prevented an elected official in a democracy from being heard by her own constituents, without the official even knowing. This highlights the potential consequences if the Chinese government decided to disrupt or distort these conversations on a broader scale, especially at moments of diplomatic tension or a national security crisis.

## TikTok

TikTok has far deeper reach into the lives of the Australian public, especially young people. As of October 2022, TikTok was Australia’s seventh most-used social media platform.<sup>18</sup> The number of Australians over the age of 18 using TikTok was estimated to be 7.4 million in 2022, or approximately 37% of the adult population.<sup>19</sup> Human Rights Watch did not find reliable estimates for TikTok users in Australia under the age of 18. Australians reportedly spent 23.4 hours per month on TikTok in 2022, an increase of 40 percent from 2021.<sup>20</sup>

TikTok’s algorithm largely decides what users see on their TikTok.<sup>21</sup> TikTok has been comparatively more transparent in reporting on decision-making algorithms and content moderation than some major US tech platforms. But there is still no way for outsiders to know what information is being suppressed or promoted on TikTok due to Chinese government influence. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute’s analysis of the hashtag #Xinjiang on TikTok showed a depiction of the region that

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<sup>16</sup> “How Australia’s Leader Lost Control of his WeChat Account”, *The New York Times*, 25 January 2022 at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/25/world/australia/scott-morrison-wechat-account.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Human Rights Watch, “How China’s censorship machine crosses borders — and into Western politics”, 20 February 2019 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/20/how-chinas-censorship-machine-crosses-borders-and-western-politics>; “MP Jenny Kwan issues statement on imprisonment of Hong Kong Umbrella Movement leaders”, *Straight Talk*, 2 September 2017 at <https://www.straight.com/news/959006/mp-jenny-kwan-issues-statement-imprisonment-hong-kong-umbrella-movement-leaders>.

<sup>18</sup> “Digital 2022”, *We Are Social Australia*, at <https://wearesocial.com/au/blog/2022/01/digital-2022/>.

<sup>19</sup> “TikTok’s Australian user data under scrutiny after US admission”, *Australian Financial Review*, 4 July 2022 at <https://www.afr.com/policy/foreign-affairs/tiktok-s-australian-user-data-under-scrutiny-after-us-admission-20220703-p5avns>.

<sup>20</sup> “Australians are spending less time on Facebook and much, much more on TikTok”, *ABC News*, 11 February 2022 at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2022-02-11/facebook-australians-spending-less-time-and-more-on-tik-tok/100820954>.

<sup>21</sup> Testimony of Yaqiu Wang (Human Rights Watch), “Hearing on Techno-Authoritarianism: Platform for Repression in China and Abroad”, Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 17 November 2021 at <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/documents/CECC%20Hearing%20Testimony%20-%20Yaqiu%20Wang.pdf>.

glosses over the serious human rights violations and instead provides a version that is filled with smiling and dancing Uyghurs.<sup>22</sup>

TikTok has repeatedly stated that the Chinese government has not asked it for overseas-based user information or to remove any content, and that if it ever did, the company will not comply.<sup>23</sup> TikTok Australia has stated that the company engaged lawyers in the United States to “help us with our Community Guidelines” and “increase transparency around moderation policies.”<sup>24</sup> The company’s Australia office also described efforts to “combat misinformation, disinformation and other content that may be designed to disrupt civic processes.” But such reassurances ring hollow.

There were few videos on TikTok concerning the Hong Kong protests, even though the largely youth-led movement garnered massive international attention, according to a 2019 *Washington Post* investigation.<sup>25</sup> After American teenager Feroza Aziz posted a TikTok video condemning the Chinese government’s mass detention of Uyghur Muslims that went viral, her account was suspended.<sup>26</sup> TikTok asserted the suspension was the result of content moderators mistakenly flagging an earlier satirical video of hers referencing Osama Bin Laden for violating the app’s anti-terrorism policy.<sup>27</sup>

In 2020, Human Rights Watch uploaded clips of Tank Man, the young man who famously stood his ground in front of a procession of Chinese army tanks during the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown in Beijing.<sup>28</sup> One clip, uploaded to an account registered in Australia, was visible to the account holder but not to anyone else. TikTok told Human Rights Watch the video was “incorrectly partially restricted based on guidelines related to displaying identifiable military information.” The video was later reinstated.

In 2020, after Human Rights Watch published an article mentioning the incident, including TikTok’s response, TikTok’s representative reached out to Human Rights Watch privately, calling it

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<sup>22</sup> Fergus Ryan, Audrey Fritz and Daria Impiombato, “TikTok and WeChat: Curating and controlling global information flows”, The Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Policy Brief Report No. 37/2020, September 2020 at [https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2020-09/TikTok%20and%20WeChat.pdf?7BNIWaoHmPVE\\_6KKcBP1jRD5fRnAVTZ=](https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2020-09/TikTok%20and%20WeChat.pdf?7BNIWaoHmPVE_6KKcBP1jRD5fRnAVTZ=).

<sup>23</sup> “TikTok, Under Scrutiny, Distances Itself From China”, *Wired*, 25 October 2019 at <https://www.wired.com/story/tiktok-under-scrutiny-china/>.

<sup>24</sup> *TikTok Australia submission to the select committee on foreign interference through social media 2020*, 18 September 2020 at [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign\\_Interference\\_through\\_Social\\_Media/ForeignInterference/Submissions](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Interference_through_Social_Media/ForeignInterference/Submissions).

<sup>25</sup> “TikTok’s Beijing roots fuel censorship suspicion as it builds a huge U.S. audience”, *The Washington Post*, 15 September 2019 at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/09/15/tiktoks-beijing-roots-fuel-censorship-suspicion-it-builds-huge-us-audience/>.

<sup>26</sup> “Feroza Aziz: I’m not scared of TikTok”, *BBC News*, 28 November 2019 at <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/technology-50582918>; “TikTok sorry for blocking teenager who disguised Xinjiang video as make-up tutorial”, *The Guardian*, 28 November 2019 at <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/nov/28/tiktok-says-sorry-to-us-teenager-blocked-after-sharing-xinjiang-videos>.

<sup>27</sup> *TikTok Terms of Service* at <https://www.tiktok.com/legal/page/row/terms-of-service/en>.

<sup>28</sup> “What happened to Tank Man, China’s most famous Tiananmen Square protester?”, *Quartz*, 4 June 2013 at <https://qz.com/90764/what-happened-to-tank-man-chinas-most-famous-tiananmen-square-protester>.

“misleading” and demanding a retraction.<sup>29</sup> However, because Human Rights Watch considered the report to be fair and accurate, we declined to do so.

According to a *Buzzfeed* report in June 2022, leaked audio from 80 internal TikTok meetings showed that US user data had been repeatedly accessed from China. “Everything is seen in China,” said a member of TikTok’s Trust and Safety department in a September 2021 meeting. TikTok said it physically stores all data about its US users in the US, with backups in Singapore.<sup>30</sup>

In December 2022, *Forbes* reported that employees at ByteDance, the parent company of TikTok, tracked multiple journalists covering the company, improperly gaining access to their IP addresses and user data in an attempt to identify whether they had been in the same vicinity as ByteDance employees. An internal TikTok investigation later confirmed these allegations.<sup>31</sup>

Beyond what is known, there are strong reasons to believe there is much more the public doesn’t know about what Chinese tech companies, include WeChat and TikTok, are doing in Australia — what the companies are censoring, promoting, and suppressing, and how they harvest, access, use, and share data.

In 2021, a network of fake social media accounts linked to the Chinese government attempted, but failed, to draw Americans out to real-world protests against racial injustice.<sup>32</sup> The reason this scheme is known is because it happened on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, American companies that largely do not have business in China and thus are less susceptible to Chinese government pressure and tend to investigate such attempts (albeit less effectively and transparently than needed). We do not know whether similar manipulations are also happening on Chinese social media with users in Australia. The risk is that these companies can be or are being used by the Chinese government to undermine the rights of Australian users.

### **Chinese government disinformation on international social media platforms**

The Chinese government has repeatedly shown it cares greatly about its image in other countries. Research shows that in recent years, Chinese government-linked disinformation campaigns have spread in scope, languages used, and platforms globally.<sup>33</sup> These campaigns created numerous

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<sup>29</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Targeting TikTok’s privacy alone misses a larger issue: Chinese state control”, 24 January 2020 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/01/24/targeting-tiktoks-privacy-alone-misses-larger-issue-chinese-state-control>.

<sup>30</sup> “Leaked Audio From 80 Internal TikTok Meetings Shows That US User Data Has Been Repeatedly Accessed From China”, *BuzzFeed News*, 18 June 2022 at <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/emilybakerwhite/tiktok-tapes-us-user-data-china-bytedance-access>.

<sup>31</sup> “TikTok Spied on Forbes Journalists”, *Forbes*, 22 December 2022 at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/emilybaker-white/2022/12/22/tiktok-tracks-forbes-journalists-bytedance/?sh=4f3a302f7da5>.

<sup>32</sup> Testimony of Yaqiu Wang (Human Rights Watch), “Hearing on Techno-Authoritarianism: Platform for Repression in China and Abroad”, Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 17 November 2021 at <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/documents/CECC%20Hearing%20Testimony%20-%20Yaqiu%20Wang.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> “Welcome to the New Era of Chinese Government Disinformation”, *The Diplomat*, 11 May 2020 at <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/welcome-to-the-new-era-of-chinese-government-disinformation/>.

fake accounts on platforms, such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook that defend the government's positions on Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Covid-19, and other issues.

In August 2020, Google said it pulled 2,500 China-linked YouTube channels over disinformation.<sup>34</sup> In December 2021, Twitter said it removed 2,048 accounts that “amplified Chinese Communist Party narratives related to the treatment of the Uyghur population.”<sup>35</sup> In the same month, Facebook said it took down more than 600 accounts, pages, and groups connected to a China-based operation spreading Covid-19 disinformation, including an account purporting to be a fictitious Swiss biologist.<sup>36</sup>

Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter in October 2022 creates a risk that the Chinese government could influence social media discourse abroad by leveraging Musk's significant business interests in China.<sup>37</sup> The Chinese government has a long track record leveraging foreign businesses' access to the country to compel them to toe the Chinese Communist Party line.<sup>38</sup> The country is Tesla's second-largest market, and sales in China have increased significantly in the past couple of years.<sup>39</sup> Tesla's plant in Shanghai is the world's largest electric vehicle factory and the company's primary export hub.<sup>40</sup> In January 2022, Tesla opened a showroom in Xinjiang that drew criticism from members of the US Congress and human rights groups because of Chinese government crimes against humanity targeting the region's Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim communities.<sup>41</sup> Musk did not respond to Human Right Watch's queries regarding Chinese government influence on his businesses.

Before Musk's purchase of the platform, Twitter had quickly reacted to requests to protect the accounts of Chinese human rights defenders. After Musk's acquisition, the gutting of the

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<sup>34</sup> “Google pulls 2,500 China-linked YouTube channels over disinformation”, *Reuters*, 6 August 2020 at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyber-google-disinformation/google-pulls-2500-china-linked-youtube-channels-over-disinformation-idUSKCN251384>.

<sup>35</sup> “Twitter removes thousands of accounts linked to Chinese Xinjiang propaganda”, *The Verge*, 4 December 2021 at <https://www.theverge.com/2021/12/3/22815606/twitter-china-misinformation-campaign-uyghur-muslims-xinjiang-propaganda>.

<sup>36</sup> “Facebook takes down China-based network spreading false COVID-19 claims”, *NPR*, 1 December 2021 at <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/01/1060645940/facebook-takes-down-china-based-fake-covid-claims>.

<sup>37</sup> “Elon Musk takes over Twitter in \$44bn deal”, *Aljazeera*, 28 October 2022 at <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/10/28/elon-musk-takes-over-twitter-in-44bn-deal>; “Elon Musk's business ties to China draw scrutiny after Twitter purchase”, *NBC News*, 30 April 2022 at <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/elon-musks-business-ties-china-draw-scrutiny-twitter-purchase-rcna26057>.

<sup>38</sup> “Google pulls 2,500 China-linked YouTube channels over disinformation”, *Reuters*, 6 August 2020 at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyber-google-disinformation/google-pulls-2500-china-linked-youtube-channels-over-disinformation-idUSKCN251384>.

<sup>39</sup> “Tesla weighs reset for China retail strategy even as sales boom”, *CNBC News*, 20 September 2022 at <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/09/20/tesla-weighs-reset-for-china-retail-strategy-even-as-sales-boom.html>.

<sup>40</sup> “Tesla's Shanghai Gigafactory made its millionth car”, *Engadget*, 15 August 2022 at <https://www.engadget.com/tesla-gigafactory-shanghai-1-million-cars-131341359.html>.

<sup>41</sup> “Tesla criticised for opening showroom in Xinjiang despite human rights abuses”, *The Guardian*, 4 January 2022 at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/04/tesla-criticised-for-opening-showroom-in-xinjiang-despite-human-rights-abuses>; Bill Pascrell, Jr. (*Twitter*) at <https://twitter.com/BillPascrell/status/1484236590919616002>.

infrastructure and staff that deal with these issues threatens to change that equation between the platform and China.<sup>42</sup>

In August 2022, Twitter’s former chief security officer, Peiter Zatko, filed an 84-page whistleblower complaint against Twitter and later testified in the US Senate, in which he detailed the security shortcomings of the social network. He observed that these shortcomings constituted “[n]egligence and even complicity with respect to efforts by foreign governments to infiltrate, control, exploit, surveil and/or censor the ‘company’s platform, staff, and operations.’”<sup>43</sup>

The suspension by Twitter of journalists’ accounts that covered Elon Musk or Twitter threatens media freedom, risks chilling reporting by others, and sends a worrying signal to governments that use social media regulation to silence dissent.<sup>44</sup> Twitter has dismissed Zatko’s allegations and told CNN they were “riddled with inconsistencies and inaccuracies.”<sup>45</sup>

## Recommendations

Human Rights Watch recommends that the Australian government take the following actions to address concerns of misinformation, disinformation, surveillance, censorship, and interference through social media platforms:

1. Enact and enforce comprehensive data protection laws that require all tech companies to practice data minimization for all users; conduct human rights impact assessments that address all aspects of companies’ operations, including their underlying business model; and require human rights due diligence for their operations globally.
2. Create regulations that require transparency from all social media platforms, including disclosure of their content moderation policies and enforcement, such as what content they have censored or suppressed because of their own policies or at the request of governments.
3. Promote independent and professional Chinese-language journalism by investing in journalism training and similar programs, expanding the sources of uncensored news for Chinese-language speakers to learn about and report on human rights issues inside China and around the world.
4. Invest in open-source technologies that provide other channels of communication and enable people in China to more easily circumvent censorship.

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<sup>42</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Why Twitter Under Elon Musk is Good News for China’s Rulers”, 2 November 2022 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/11/02/why-twitter-under-elon-musk-good-news-chinas-rulers>.

<sup>43</sup> “Re: Protected Disclosures of Federal Trade Commission Act Violations, Material Misrepresentations and Omissions, and Fraud by Twitter, Inc. (NASDAQ: TWTR) and CEO Parag Agrawal, SEC TCR#”, Whistleblower Aid, 6 July 2022, p.3 at <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/22186683-twitter-whistleblower-disclosure>.

<sup>44</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Twitter’s Suspension of Journalists Threatens Media Freedom”, 16 December 2022 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/16/twitters-suspension-journalists-threatens-media-freedom>.

<sup>45</sup> “Ex-Twitter exec blows the whistle, alleging reckless and negligent cybersecurity policies”, CNN Business, 23 August 2022 at <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/08/23/tech/twitter-whistleblower-peiter-zatko-security/index.html>.