



## Public Comment Appendix for Reclaiming Arabic Words

Case number

Case description

*Note: To allow people to provide comments on the nature and impact of the post and help people understand the Board's eventual ruling in this case, we are sharing some of the exact words used in this post. We do so in the interest of transparency, while recognising that some of the quoted language has the potential to offend.*

*In November 2021, an Instagram account that identifies itself as a space for discussing queer narratives in the Arabic culture posted a series of pictures in a carousel (a single Instagram post that can contain up to 10 images with a single caption). The caption explains that each picture shows a different word that can be used in a derogatory way towards men with "effeminate mannerisms" in the Arabic world, including the terms "zamel", "foufou" and "tante"/"tanta". The caption, written in both Arabic and English, stated that the user did not "condone or encourage the use of these words". The user explained in the post that they had been abused with one of these terms when they were a child and that the post was intended "to reclaim [the] power of such hurtful terms". The content was viewed approximately 9,000 times, receiving around 30 comments and approximately 2,000 reactions.*

*Within three hours of the content being posted, a user reported it as "adult nudity or sexual activity" and another user reported it as "sexual solicitation". After reviewing each of these reports separately, Meta removed the content for violating its Hate Speech policy. The user appealed and Meta restored the content to the platform. After the content was restored, a third person reported it as hate speech and Meta carried out a fourth review, removing the content again. The user appealed a second time and, after a fifth review, Meta upheld its decision to remove the content.*

*In its statement to the Board, Meta explained that it originally removed the content under their [Hate Speech policy](#) as "zamel" (□□□□) is regarded as a "derogatory term for gay people", which the company had designated as a slur for its "Arabic" and "Maghreb" markets at the time the content was taken down. Following an audit of the use of the word, on 23 February 2022, Meta removed the word from the "Arabic slur list" and kept it in the "slur list for the Maghreb region". Meta performed an additional sixth review of the content and determined that it did not violate the Hate Speech policy. Meta explained that the removal was wrong because "the use of the slur fell within Meta's allowance for content that condemns a slur or hate speech, discusses the use of slurs including reports of instances when they have been used or debates about whether they are acceptable to use". All six reviews were carried out by human content moderators.*

*In their appeal to the Board, the user states that their intent in posting the content was to celebrate effeminate men and boys in Arab society who are often belittled through the use of derogatory language. The user further explained that they are attempting to reclaim derogatory words used against them as a form of resistance and empowerment. They stated that their content is allowed under Meta's content policies which specifically permit the use of otherwise banned terms when used self-referentially or in an empowering way.*

*The Board would appreciate public comments that address:*

- How the [Instagram Community Guidelines](#) and [Facebook Community Standard on hate speech](#), especially the rules on slurs, can best protect LGBTQ+ people from attacks using derogatory slurs, while also allowing LGBTQ+ people to engage in counter speech that may use the same slurs.*
- The policy requirement for users to "clearly state their intent" if using hate speech terms to condemn, raise awareness or to empower, and if or how other contextual factors should be considered when enforcing this exception.*
- Meta's compliance with its human rights responsibilities in respect of Arabic speaking users of its products who are LGBTQ+, especially those located in North Africa and West Asia.*
- Challenges and risks to LGBTQ+ people exercising their freedom of expression rights on Meta's products in North Africa and West Asia.*
- Any improvements to Meta's products and approach to content moderation that would enhance the protection of rights for LGBTQ+ people on Meta's platforms, including in respect of mass reporting (also known as "brigading").*

*In its decisions, the Board can issue policy recommendations to Meta. While recommendations are not binding, Meta must respond to them within 60 days. As such, the Board welcomes public comments proposing recommendations that are relevant to this case.*



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The Oversight Board is committed to bringing diverse perspectives from third parties into the case review process. To that end, the Oversight Board has established a public comment process.

Public comments respond to case descriptions based on the information provided to the Board by users and Facebook as part of the appeals process. These case descriptions are posted before panels begin deliberation to provide time for public comment. As such, case descriptions reflect neither the Board's assessment of a case, nor the full array of policy issues that a panel might consider to be implicated by each case.

To protect the privacy and security of commenters, comments are only viewed by the Oversight Board and as detailed in the [Operational Privacy Notice](#). All commenters included in this appendix gave consent to the Oversight Board to publish their comments. For commenters who did not consent to attribute their comments publicly, names have been redacted. To withdraw your comment, please email [contact@osbadmin.com](mailto:contact@osbadmin.com).

To reflect the wide range of views on cases, the Oversight Board has included all comments received except those clearly irrelevant, abusive or disrespectful of the human and fundamental rights of any person or group of persons and therefore violating the [Terms for Public Comment](#). Inclusion of a comment in this appendix is not an endorsement by the Oversight Board of the views expressed in the comment. The Oversight Board is committed to transparency and this appendix is meant to accurately reflect the input we received.



## Public Comment Appendix for Reclaiming Arabic Words

Case number

**3**

Number of Comments

### Regional Breakdown

|  |                                  |                                    |                                       |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>0</b><br>Asia Pacific & Oceania       | <b>0</b><br>Central & South Asia | <b>0</b><br>Europe                 | <b>1</b><br>Latin America & Caribbean |
| <b>1</b><br>Middle East and North Africa | <b>0</b><br>Sub-Saharan Africa   | <b>1</b><br>United States & Canada |                                       |

Reclaiming Arabic words

PC-10395

Middle East and North Africa

Case number

Public comment number

Region

Mohamed

AALLA

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

DID NOT PROVIDE

No

Organization

Response on behalf of organization

Yes

Yes

Consent to Attribute

Consent to Publish

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Short summary provided by the commenter

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته  
في شمال إفريقيا الأمازيغية العجيبة الغربية تجد دائما تناقضات كبيرة جدا واستعمالات لمصطلحات خارجية و احيانا  
مبتكرة

Full Comment

المصطلحات الدخيلة على مجتمعات شمال افريقيا قد تجدها في وسطها الاصلي مخلة بالحياء و تخدشه ولكن عند انتقالها  
سقطت عنها تلك الصفة و أصبحت تتداول بشكل عادي و يومي بدون أي تعقيد والعكس صحيح فمثلا مصطلح المثلية  
الجنسية حديث جدا في مجتمعاتنا الذي كان و مازال يسميه الشذوذ الجنسي باللغة العربية الفصحى اما بالعامية مثلا في  
المغرب يشار إليه بمصطلح الزامل و في الجزائر نقش و تجد احيانا شخص يدعو به آخر لمجرد خلاف او سوء تفاهم او  
مشاجرة وفي حد ذاته هو قذح و قذف لأن المقلية او الشذوذ موجود في أي مجتمع ولكن متستر عليه و سري و غير علني  
بمعنى أوضح ظاهرة مخفية تحب الاختباء و التستر و العيش في الظل

Link to Attachment

No Attachment

Reclaiming Arabic words

**PC-10396**

**United States and Canada**

Case number

Public comment number

Region

**Jenni**

**Olson**

**English**

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

**GLAAD**

**Yes**

Organization

Response on behalf of organization

**Yes**

**Yes**

Consent to Attribute

Consent to Publish

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Short summary provided by the commenter

GLAAD's guidance on self-expressive usage of historically anti-LGBTQ slurs is that these cases will require human content moderators well-trained in understanding self-expressive LGBTQ slur usage, and who are preferably also LGBTQ themselves. GLAAD urges the Oversight Board to consider the input of relevant regional LGBTQ groups and LGBTQ Arabic speakers. While there are differences among LGBTQ people about whether they are bothered by self-expressive use of the word "queer" (to use an example in English), it is generally understood that this term has been widely reclaimed. Even individual LGBTQ people who don't like the term are aware that other LGBTQ folks reclaiming it are not doing so in a homophobic or hateful way.

Full Comment

See attached (also, on the call we had we were told that up to 5 pages was acceptable — this is 3 pages). Thanks!

Link to Attachment

[PC-10396](#)

Reclaiming Arabic words

PC-10408

Latin America and Caribbean

Case number

Public comment number

Region

ModeraLab

at ITS Rio

English

Commenter's first name

Commenter's last name

Commenter's preferred language

Institute for Technology and Society  
of Rio | ModeraLab

Yes

Organization

Response on behalf of organization

Yes

Yes

Consent to Attribute

Consent to Publish

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Short summary provided by the commenter

First, we offer some insights on Instagram's Community Guidelines and Facebook's Community Standards on Hate Speech, focusing on the adoption of the "declaration of intent" policy and its impact on LGBTQ users. Next, we ask the Board to consider specific improvements to Meta's products to welcome LGBTQ people and protect their rights online, with special attention to the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) mechanisms for content moderation and the relevance of identifying context, especially in posts written in languages other than English. Finally, we go over some improvements on secondary review, particularly given the context of targeted attacks performed by ill-intentioned users against the LGBTQ Community.

Full Comment

[Please see attached file for full comment]

Link to Attachment

[PC-10408](#)