

TikTok is 'aggressively removing' videos promoting an Osama bin Laden manifesto

TikTok is taking action against content promoting the manifesto Osama bin Laden wrote discussing his supposed motivations for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In a statement on X (formerly Twitter), TikTok says it's "proactively and aggressively removing this content and investigating how it got onto our platform."

Dozens of videos about the manifesto, titled "Letter to America," have surfaced on TikTok over the past several days, with CNN reporting the topic amassed "at least" 14 million views by Thursday. Originally published in 2002, the manifesto criticizes the US government's presence in the Middle East and support of Israel. However, some creators are now trying to apply that criticism to the US government's response to the ongoing Israel-Hamas war.

One video, which has since been removed from TikTok, had a text overlay saying "trying to go back to life as normal after reading Osama Bin Laden's 'Letter to America' and realizing everything we learned about the Middle East, 9/11, and 'terrorism' was a lie."

TikTok no longer shows any results when you attempt to search for "Letter to America," and the *Guardian*, which published a translated version of the letter in 2002, took it down on Wednesday after it began circulating on the platform. When it was first published, the *Guardian* said the letter was circulated among "British Islamic extremists."

“Content promoting this letter clearly violates our rules on supporting any form of terrorism,” TikTok writes on X. “This is not unique to TikTok and has appeared across multiple platforms and the media.” TikTok adds the number of videos posted on the topic is “small and reports of it trending on our platform are inaccurate.”

Earlier this week, TikTok pushed back on claims it was lenient on pro-Palestinian content, claiming both Instagram and Facebook also had more posts tagged with #FreePalestine than #standwithIsrael. The platform says it also doesn’t allow “inaccurate, misleading, or false content that may cause significant harm to individuals or society, regardless of intent.”

The Israel-Hamas war has been a huge test for TikTok, and the platform will only continue to face pressure to strictly moderate its content, especially since nearly one-third of young adults use TikTok to get their news.

<https://www.theverge.com/2023/11/16/23964390/tiktok-osama-bin-laden-letter-to-america-deleting>