



## **Red Agenda – Zuckerberg’s Oversight Board shows FB will stay biased As usual**

Sanjay Shiva

May 26, 2020

Facebook has been struggling hard to combat hate speech on their platform

Every time someone reports a post as “**hate speech**”, someone at **Facebook** manually reviews the post and based on their opinion, decides whether the said post is fit to be on Facebook or not. This decision of whether something is “hate speech” or not is taken based on Facebook’s “**Community Standards**.” The “Community Standards” itself are quite loosely framed, involves a lot of subjectivity and gives Facebook the right to take the final call whether something is fit to be on the platform or not.

Here is where the problem surfaces. Since this decision is purely subjective, Facebook has often taken decisions that do not make much sense. For example, when a **Facebook user reported a page** containing expletives against **Hindu God Rama**, they found it to be compliant with their “Community Standards”, whereas when users posted an image of well-known activist **Imam Tawhidi**, Facebook felt that it violated their “Community Standards.”



Image 1

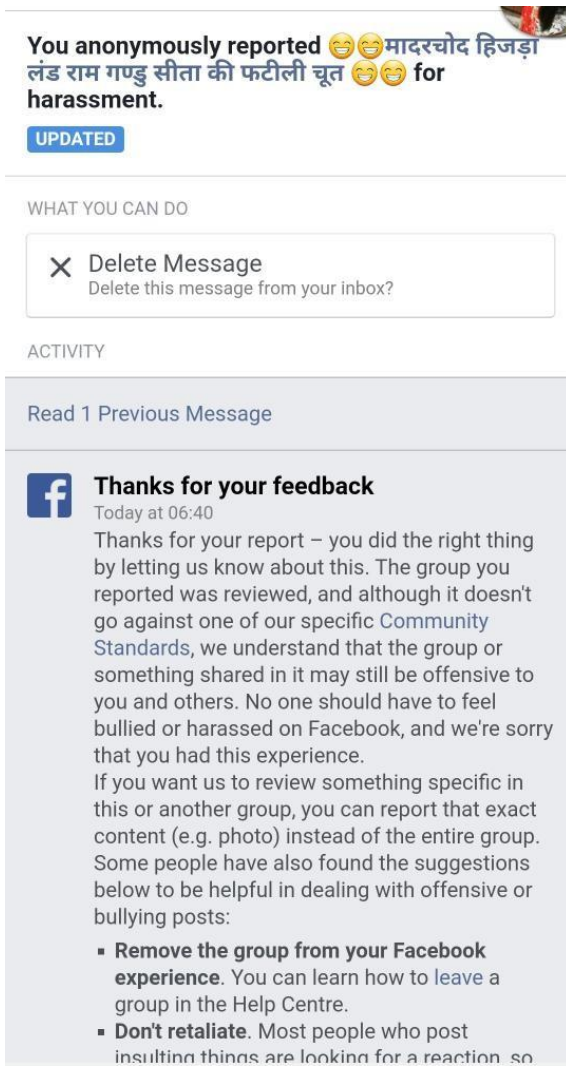


Image 2

## We Removed Something You Posted

We removed the post below because it doesn't follow the Facebook Community Standards:



Image 3

**One solution** is to make Facebook accountable under a legal framework. However, Facebook has been lobbying hard to avoid any such regulatory measures. **Mark Zuckerberg** promised that they would set up an internal mechanism to address this issue.

TECHNOLOGY The New York Times Log in

### Mark Zuckerberg's Call to Regulate Facebook, Explained

Here's why the Facebook chief executive invited Congress to regulate his company in a post on Saturday.



Facebook's chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, at Senate hearings last year. With the expectation that personal data handling and content restrictions are coming, Facebook tries in an op-ed piece to set the playing field. Tom Remmer/The New York Times

Image 4

Facebook has now come up with an “Oversight Board,” who as per their official website, advise Facebook “**around freedom of expression online: what to take down, what to leave up, and**

why.” The Oversight Board consists of **40 members** from **29 countries**. Let’s take a look at a few of these members.



Image 5

**Helle Thorning-Schmidt** – Helle was the Prime Minister of Denmark from 2011 to 2015. She represented a political party named the “Social Democrats”, which is a leftist political party. It is interesting how Facebook feels Helle, who was the face of the leftist movement in Denmark for several years, will guide them to ensure freedom of expression without being biased.

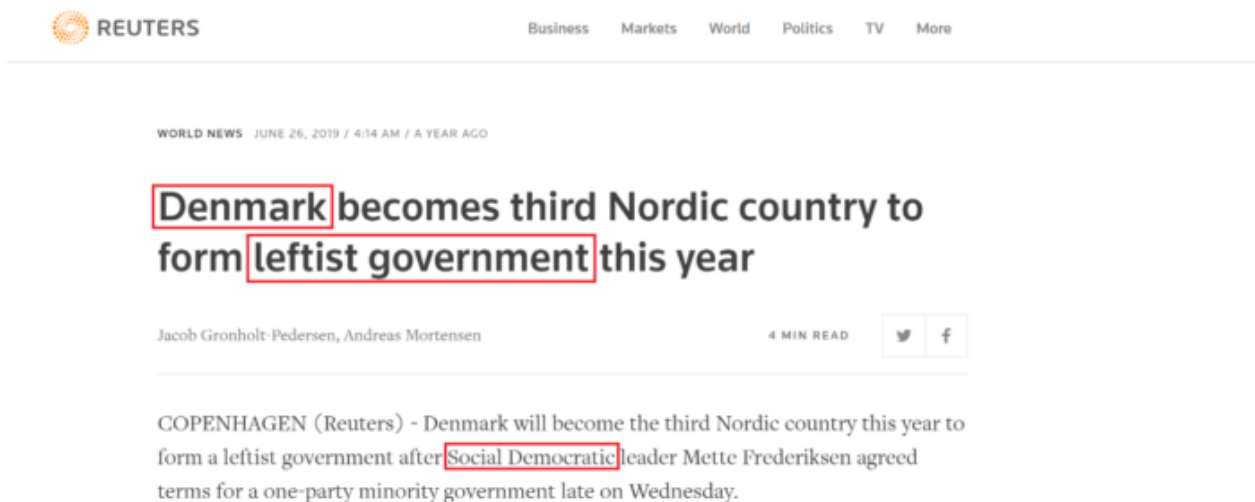


Image 6

**Nighat Dad** – Nighat is outspoken when it comes to criticizing India. She labelled India a terrorist state and has been regular in her rants about Modi being anti-Muslim and how India is torturing Kashmiris. Facebook must be applauded for this “unbiased” selection. Nighat also claimed that she would never step foot in the USA if Trump became the President.



**Nighat Dad** ✓  
@nighatdad



Are u for real @BDUTT ? Terrorism is what India is doing wth armless & innocent #Kashmiris. Depriving them of their rights by shutting down all means of communication is inhumane as u rightly said. Modi govt is committing war crimes & journalists like urself blame others #Slowclap

Image 7



**Nighat Dad** ✓  
@nighatdad



Trigger Warning:

This is a day after Modi's win & his tall claims on secularism. Muslims became more vulnerable in enlightened India under his previous rule, imagine the next 5 years, Muslims and Dalits human rights will go down the drain.

Image 8



Image 9

**Pamela Karlan** – Pamela was part of the failed hearings to impeach Donald Trump. Pamela supported the impeachment and went on to drag Trump’s 14-year-old son Barron to drive her agenda. First Lady Melania Trump criticized Pamela’s statements saying, “A minor child deserves privacy and should be kept out of politics. Pamela Karlan, you should be ashamed of your very angry and obviously biased public pandering and using a child to do it.” Again, it is interesting how Facebook thinks a person who does not respect the privacy of minors to drive her leftist point of view would help them become unbiased.



Image 10



Melania Trump   
@FLOTUS



A minor child deserves privacy and should be kept out of politics. Pamela Karlan, you should be ashamed of your very angry and obviously biased public pandering, and using a child to do it.

3:20 AM · Dec 5, 2019 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Image 11

**John Samples** – John is the Vice President of the Cato Institute, who claims they are a think tank “dedicated to the principles of individual liberty, limited government, free markets, and peace.” Interestingly, Cato has published several articles and research works targeting India. In one article, Cato claims “freedom of religion has been under attack the most” in India, and that “Modi government has significantly diminished the level of personal freedom.” Those who are in touch with the ground reality know better. Another article lifted by Cato from a dubious American website is titled “India’s Dark Path To Hindu Nationalism” and stands as another example of Cato’s one-sided bias.



The screenshot shows the Cato Institute website profile for John Samples, Vice President. The header includes the Cato Institute logo and navigation links: RESEARCH, EVENTS, PUBLICATIONS, COMMENTARY, STORE, DONATE. There is also a search bar and social media links for Facebook and Twitter. Below the header, the name "JOHN SAMPLES" and title "Vice President" are displayed, along with an RSS icon. A portrait of John Samples is shown on the left. To the right of the portrait, there is a bio: "John Samples is a vice president at the Cato Institute. He founded and directs **Cato's Center for Representative Government**, which studies the First Amendment, government institutional failure, and public opinion. Dr. Samples serves on the Oversight Board which provides final and binding decisions on whether specific content should be allowed or removed from Facebook and Instagram. (Samples' opinions are his own and do not represent those of the Oversight Board or of Facebook). Samples is currently living in Northern California and working on a book-length manuscript about social media and speech regulation which extends and updates his policy analysis, "**Why Government Should not Regulate Content Moderation of Social Media**." He previously wrote *The Struggle to Limit Government: A Modern Political History* and *The Fallacy of Campaign Finance Reform*. Samples also co-edited with Michael McDonald *The Marketplace of Democracy*. Prior to joining Cato, Samples served eight years as director of Georgetown University Press, and before that, as vice president of the Twentieth Century Fund. He has published scholarly articles in *Society*, *History of Political Thought*, and

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**FEATURED**

KNIGHT FIRST AMENDMENT INSTITUTE  
**Social Media Regulation in the Public Interest: Some Lessons from History**  
By [John Samples](#) and [Paul Matzko](#). Knight First Amendment Institute.

**BLOG**  
**Speech in a Time of War**  
By [John Samples](#).  
Our current crisis will not be good for free speech. Classical liberals may regret anyone suppressing speech even when justified. However, private moderators can legitimately suppress speech on social media.

Image 12

### What about India?

With a score of 6.64 out of 10, India ranks 94th among 162 countries and territories included in the *Human Freedom Index*. On economic freedom, India scores 6.91 (79th rank), while on personal freedom 6.37 (108th rank globally). With the perspective of time, we can see that during the Narendra Modi government India has witnessed a noticeable improvement in the level of economic freedom, going from 6.44 in 2013 to 6.91 in 2017. At the same time, unfortunately, the Modi government has significantly diminished the level of personal freedom from 6.93 in 2013 to 6.37 in 2017. Notably, freedom of religion has been under attack the most. Free societies respect the right to practice a religion of one's choosing. The exercise of religion can be both a supremely private matter involving a person's strongest beliefs and a social affair practiced in an organized way among larger groups.

Image 13



The screenshot shows the CATO Institute website header with navigation links: RESEARCH, EVENTS, PUBLICATIONS, COMMENTARY, STORE, DONATE. Below the header, the date "DECEMBER 31, 2019 - COMMENTARY" is displayed. The main article title is "India's Dark Path To Hindu Nationalism" by Doug Bandow. A sub-headline reads "INDIA IS BEING CONVULSED BY MASS demonstrations against a new citizenship law that places special disabilities on Muslims. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's". There are also social media share icons and a "RELATED CONTENT" section.

Image 14

**Maina Kiai** – When India took steps to regulate foreign funding received by NGOs, certain sections of the left-wing were pretty upset as their source of funds to fuel tensions in India were cut off. Kiai was extremely vocal about this and raised his voice slamming the government for this move. He was also vocal about his support for Greenpeace, an organization which as per an Intelligence Bureau report played an instrumental part in anti-development activities in India.





**Maina Kiai** ✓  
@Maina\_Kiai



India: Targeting NGOs hurt those most in need  
[asianage.com/india/all-indi...](http://asianage.com/india/all-indi...)

6:39 PM · Dec 22, 2016 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

Image 15



**Maina Kiai** ✓  
@Maina\_Kiai



Another victim of the FCRA in India: Lawyers Collective  
to challenge 'unconstitutional' suspension of  
registration [timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Law](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Law)

...

10:39 AM · Jun 4, 2016 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

Image 16



**Maina Kiai** ✓  
@Maina\_Kiai

In Geneva last week, receiving a petition from @greenpeace calling on the UN to protect free speech in #India



Image 17



**Maina Kiai** ✓  
@Maina\_Kiai

We raised @greenpeaceindia & #FCRA w/ India in 2015-16. See what the gov't said in response: [freeassembly.net/reports/india-...](http://freeassembly.net/reports/india-...)

Image 18

**Julie Owono** – Julie is a lawyer and the Executive Director of a Paris-based digital rights organization. In February this year, Julie shared an article from The Guardian titled “How Hindu supremacists are tearing India apart.” The said article sports an image from an RSS event and claims that the Citizenship Amendment Bill which was passed by both houses of the Indian Parliament is “unconstitutional.” The one-sided article highlights how protestors were not allowed to express their point of view, completely ignoring the other side of the picture. The article which claims Muslims were targeted fails to highlight the fact that a large number of the victims in the unruly protest were the Hindus themselves.



**Julie @BKC Owono** ✓  
@JulieOwono

How Hindu supremacists are tearing India apart



Image 19

Be it **Nicolas Suzor**, another member of the Board who claims he “loves” an article comparing Trump to Hitler or Jamal Greene who claims Trump aligns with criminals, a close look at the members of this Oversight Board gives a clear picture as to what Facebook’s intentions really are.



**Nicolas Suzor** ✓  
@nicsuzor

I love this! “Teen Vogue vs **Trump**, American Vogue vs **Hitler**” by Ellie Rennie

Image 20



**Jamal Greene**  
@jamalgreene



It's becoming apparent that one tactic of **Trump's** to avoid legal jeopardy is to **align himself with toadies and criminals** and then broadcast his illicit desires publicly, as if to no one.

3:50 AM · Jan 20, 2019 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Image 21

Most members who appear to be left-leaning are extremely successful in their fields. But the fact remains that Facebook is establishing this Oversight Board to give them an opinion on what “**freedom of speech**” really represents. The Board will inevitably have to depend on the personal opinion of each member to arrive at a conclusion as to what they think is appropriate. Facebook claims they spent over **2 years** to plan and establish this Board, scanning over **1000s of applications**. If this is the Board of Facebook wants to appoint after all their due diligence, it only looks like a meticulously planned move by Facebook to send out a message that they will remain left-leaning as they have been in the past.

Another interesting fact about the constitution of this Board is that lawyers seem to have the largest representation. This raises an important concern as to whether Facebook's intention is to really respect freedom of speech or to go about their visible **leftist agenda** with the backing of a set of experienced lawyers to protect them.



**Catalina Botero-Marino**  
 Dean, Law School at  
 Universidad de Los Andes



**Emi Palmor**  
 Advocate and Lecturer,  
 Interdisciplinary Center  
 Herzliya, Israel  
 @ Israel



**Sudhir Krishnaswamy**  
 Vice Chancellor and  
 Professor of Law, National  
 Law School of India  
 University



**Ronaldo Lemos**  
 Professor, Rio de Janeiro  
 State University's Law  
 School  
 @ Brazil



**Pamela Karlan**  
 Professor, Stanford Law  
 School  
 @ United States of America



**Michael McConnell**  
 Professor and Director of the  
 Constitutional Law Center,  
 Stanford Law School



**Evelyn Aswad**  
 Professor and Chair,  
 University of Oklahoma  
 College of Law  
 @ United States of America



**Jamal Greene**  
 Professor, Columbia Law  
 School  
 @ United States of America

## Image 22

\$130 million to run an independent Oversight Board

Facebook recently granted the Oversight Board **\$130 million** to run the Board. It is ironic that Facebook expects the Oversight Board to function in an “independent” manner when it is Facebook itself who is funding this project.

# Facebook creates \$130 million fund for new oversight board

Our Bureau | Mumbai | Updated on May 07, 2020 | Published on May 06, 2020



File Photo  uters

COVID-19

One Indian among the first 20 members on the board that will make content decisions

Facebook, on Wednesday, announced setting up an oversight board that will decide on what content

Image 23

Let us face the truth – humans have opinions. It is not possible for Facebook to ever set up an Oversight Board whose members do not have a political leaning. What Facebook can do however, is to ensure that people who represent **opposing ideologies** are present on the Board in equal numbers so that “freedom of speech” is looked at in a broad perspective. But clearly, Facebook does not want to do so.

*Note:*

1. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of PGurus