

Facebook bans former U.S. president Trump for two more years

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Former US president Donald Trump suspended from Facebook for two years. (AP file photo)

New York, June 5 (RHC)-- Facebook has suspended former U.S. President Donald Trump for two years, saying his praise of protesters who stormed the Capitol earlier this year was a "severe violation."

Facebook, which is headquartered in the United States, suspended Trump's account following the January 6th insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, which left at least five people dead, including a Capitol police officer.

Twitter and YouTube followed the suit, citing further risk of violence and incitement by the Republican president. The unprecedented decision was later referred to the Facebook Oversight Board, an

independent body vested with power to reverse Facebook content decisions and set precedent for the company.

“Last month, the Oversight Board upheld Facebook’s suspension of former U.S. President Donald Trump’s Facebook and Instagram accounts following his praise for people engaged in violence at the Capitol on January 6. But in doing so, the board criticized the open-ended nature of the suspension, stating that ‘it was not appropriate for Facebook to impose the indeterminate and standardless penalty of indefinite suspension,’” Facebook said in a statement issued on Friday.

“The board instructed us to review the decision and respond in a way that is clear and proportionate, and made a number of recommendations on how to improve our policies and processes,” it added. The microblogging site also announced new “enforcement protocols” for exceptional cases like Trump’s.

“Given the gravity of the circumstances that led to Mr. Trump’s suspension, we believe his actions constituted a severe violation of our rules which merit the highest penalty available under the new enforcement protocols,” Facebook said. “We are suspending his accounts for two years, effective from the date of the initial suspension on January 7 this year.”

The decision by the Facebook Oversight Board was originally due by 21 April, however the board delayed it by few weeks in order to review over 9,000 public responses to cases, according to reports. The 20-member board, made up of journalists, human rights activists, lawyers and academics, was set up to rule on difficult or controversial moderation decisions made by Facebook.

Meanwhile, the suspension is not limited to Trump’s account. In April, Facebook extended the ban to include the “voice of Trump” after his daughter-in-law and Fox News contributor Laura Trump posted a video of her interviewing the former president.

In March, Facebook also announced that it was removing some ads by Trump's re-election campaign promoting “the Official 2020 Congressional District Census”.

The ads, which asked users to fill out an "Official 2020 Congressional District Census," came from the pages of Trump and his partner in crime, Mike Pence, linking to a survey on an official campaign website and then to a page that asked for donations.

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