# Meta removes posts inciting violence and Islamophobia after UK riots



Meta, the parent company of Facebook, has agreed to remove three posts that were found to incite violence, contain Islamophobic content, and support the violent riots which took place across the UK following a knife attack in Southport last year. The Oversight Board, which reviews content moderation decisions made by Meta, ordered the removal of these posts, stating that each had “created the risk of likely and imminent harm” and “should have been taken down.”

The riots erupted in July 2023 after a knife attack in Southport resulted in the deaths of three young girls and injuries to ten others. The unrest was further inflamed by misinformation circulating on social media regarding the identity of the attacker, including unfounded claims that he was an asylum seeker who had recently arrived in the UK via a small boat. This misinformation exacerbated anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments, contributing to the violence seen on the streets.

Meta initially allowed the contested posts to remain online after automatic moderation tools assessed them. None were subject to human review. Following appeals from users who reported the posts, the Oversight Board took up the case. In its ruling, the board criticised Meta for a delayed response in activating its Crisis Policy Protocol (CPP) and identifying the UK as a high-risk location. The board stated that these measures were activated only on 6 August 2023, several days after the attack and after the harmful posts had already been published.

“The content was posted during a period of contagious anger and growing violence, fuelled by misinformation and disinformation on social media,” the Oversight Board commented. “Anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment spilled onto the streets.” The board further expressed concern about Meta’s slow deployment of crisis measures, emphasising that a more prompt response was necessary to prevent the amplification of dangerous content.

Earlier, Meta had acknowledged that leaving one of the posts visible on Facebook was an error and removed it but contended that keeping the other two posts online was appropriate. Following the board’s ruling, a Meta spokesperson said, “We regularly seek input from experts outside of Meta, including the Oversight Board, and will act to comply with the board’s decision.”

The spokesperson also detailed the company’s response during the summer unrest, noting the establishment of a dedicated taskforce that worked in real time to identify and remove thousands of posts violating community rules. “In response to these events last summer, we immediately set up a dedicated taskforce that worked in real time to identify and remove thousands of pieces of content that broke our rules — including threats of violence and links to external sites being used to co-ordinate rioting,” they said. Meta reported removing 24,000 posts from Facebook and Instagram related to violence and incitement, along with 12,000 posts that breached hate speech guidelines during this period.

Meta has committed to responding to the full recommendations of the Oversight Board within 60 days, in accordance with the board’s bylaws. The enforcement actions and board oversight highlight the ongoing challenges social media platforms face in moderating content during periods of social unrest and misinformation.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/oversight-board-overturns-facebook-decision-to-leave-up-posts-about-summer-riots-b1223729.html> - This article supports the claim that Meta was ordered by the Oversight Board to remove three posts related to the UK summer riots. It also mentions Meta's prior acknowledgment of an error regarding one post.
2. <https://www.oversightboard.com/decision/> - This link provides information on the Oversight Board's decision regarding the posts about the UK riots, stating that the Board overturned Meta's decision to leave them up due to the risk of harm.
3. <https://transparency.meta.com/de-de/oversight> - This page explains the role of the Oversight Board as an external body that reviews Meta's content moderation decisions and can order changes when necessary.
4. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/04/22/metas-oversight-board-seeks-details-on-new-hate-speech-policies/> - This article highlights the Oversight Board's disapproval of Meta's slow response to removing harmful content and its impact on the board's capacity to influence Meta's policies.
5. <https://transparency.meta.com/oversight/oversight-board-cases/> - This page provides details on how the Oversight Board handles cases and ensures that Meta implements its decisions across similar content.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - Although not directly available on this query's results, Noah Wire Services is mentioned as the source in the original text, so it might provide further context on the event.
7. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/facebook-ordered-remove-posts-incited-35105137> - Please view link - unable to able to access data