

**WHEREAS:** With nearly five billion monthly visits, Amazon.com is the world's largest ecommerce platform. Its primacy allows it to facilitate — or impede — free expression and access to information for billions of people through products and services sold on the platform.

However, Amazon's transparency reporting regarding restricted products and user-generated content on its platform falls far short of industry<sup>1</sup> and international human rights standards.<sup>2</sup>

Amazon has reportedly removed products and content from the ecommerce platform following pressure from authoritarian regimes, without disclosing the removal. The New York Times said Amazon restricted search results for LGBTQ+-related products in the United Arab Emirates after being threatened with penalties by that government.<sup>3</sup> Reuters reported Amazon stopped allowing customer ratings and reviews in China as "part of a deeper, decade-long effort . . . to win favor in Beijing to protect and grow its business."<sup>4</sup>

Amazon.com reports on certain content and product restrictions in its annual Brand Protection Report, which is limited to fraud and product quality concerns and does not offer detail on types, methods, or reasons for these restrictions.<sup>5</sup> While the company discloses government requests for user information in its biannual Information Request Report, it does not publish quantitative disclosures related to government content removal requests.

In 2022, Ranking Digital Rights called Amazon "by far the least transparent U.S.-based platform," with disclosures on par with China's notoriously opaque tech giants. Amazon discloses less than Chinese retailer Alibaba on user appeals regarding account and content bans.<sup>6</sup>

Amazon trails far behind peer companies Google and Meta, which while imperfect, provide disclosures on content restricted to comply with government orders or laws. Two large ecommerce companies - eBay and Mercado Libre - publish annual reports revealing significantly more insight on listings removed than Amazon provides.<sup>7</sup>

Amazon's failure to provide comprehensive reporting on content and product restrictions presents material risk to investors. The company must demonstrate a serious commitment to transparency and human rights.

**RESOLVED:** Shareholders request the Board revise its transparency reporting to provide more detailed quantitative disclosures on removal or restriction of content and products on the Amazon.com platform due to government requests or the company's voluntary removal or restrictions in anticipation or interpretation of

domestic or foreign government requirements. Such revision should be made within one year of the annual meeting and may exclude proprietary or legally privileged information.

**Supporting Statement:** Proponents suggest the company include in its annual transparency reporting, or explain why it cannot disclose, information regarding:

- Categories of government requests, by country, including which government agencies made requests; number and type of content and products removed by category; accounts affected; rate of compliance; and legal or policy basis as well as internal company criteria on which the content or product was removed;
- Voluntary removal or restrictions taken by the company in anticipation or interpretation of potential government requirements, including number and type of content restricted by country and internal basis supporting the content removal or restriction.

1 <https://santaclaraprinciples.org/>

2 [https://www.bsr.org/reports/A\\_Human\\_Rights-Based\\_Approach\\_to\\_Content\\_Governance.pdf](https://www.bsr.org/reports/A_Human_Rights-Based_Approach_to_Content_Governance.pdf)

3 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/29/business/amazon-lgbtq-uae-emirates.html>

4 <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/amazon-partnered-with-china-propaganda-arm-win-beijings-favor-document-shows-2021-12-17/>

5 <https://brandservices.amazon.com/progressreport>

6 <https://rankingdigitalrights.org/index2022/companies/Amazon>

7 [https://www.ebaymainstreet.com/sites/default/files/2022-04/ebay\\_Transparency-Report- 2022\\_Letter\\_Social\\_v5.pdf](https://www.ebaymainstreet.com/sites/default/files/2022-04/ebay_Transparency-Report- 2022_Letter_Social_v5.pdf)