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Reporters Without Borders Files Criminal Charges Against X Over Disinformation Case

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Reporters Without Borders has filed criminal charges against X (Twitter), alleging the platform knowingly spread disinformation using its logo and images in a false video about Ukraine. The case could set a precedent for holding social media companies legally accountable for harmful content.

"X provides those spreading falsehoods with powerful tools and unprecedented visibility," said RSF's advocacy director, highlighting the case's significance for platform accountability

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has filed a legal complaint against X, the social media platform owned by Elon Musk. RSF alleges that X is complicit in spreading disinformation and facilitating identity theft.

The international media freedom organisation discovered a falsified video purportedly from the BBC, which claimed RSF had authored a study about Nazi beliefs among Ukrainian military personnel. The video, which incorporated RSF's logo, graphic design elements, and photos of its advocacy director, reportedly reached nearly half a million views by September 13th before X finally took action to remove it.

After submitting ten separate content violation reports through

X's reporting system and receiving automated responses, RSF noted that none of the offending posts had been removed. The organisation argues that X's failure to address false content makes the platform complicit in the spread of misinformation.

“X provides those spreading falsehoods with powerful tools and unprecedented visibility while granting total impunity,” said Antoine Bernard, RSF's Director of Advocacy and Assistance.

The lawsuit seeks to establish X's potential criminal liability for knowingly providing a platform for false information, identity theft, and misrepresentation—offences punishable under French law.

RSF's advocacy director, Antoine Bernard, stressed that this legal action was a last resort after several attempts to report and remove the offending content through X's reporting mechanisms had been ignored.

RSF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

This charge could lead to substantial fines for X, highlighting the ongoing scrutiny the platform faces from European regulators since Elon Musk's acquisition

RSF has provided testimony to the European Commission, which opened formal proceedings against X in December 2023, highlighting the platform's ineffective content moderation processes.

The European Commission has formally charged X for not complying with the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA), which mandates that large platforms take measures to combat misinformation and illegal content.

The organisation reports that this is the third incident of logo and identity misappropriation since July, all of which appear to be aligned with narratives supporting the Kremlin's perspective on the Ukraine conflict.

The case is being represented by lawyer Emmanuel Daoud, who stressed the importance of holding social media platforms accountable for the content they host.