

Date: 2 January 2024
From: Sally Costerton
To: Jeff Neuman

Dear Jeff,

Thank you for your email and the offer to discuss this issue. Tripti and I will be in Washington DC next week – an in-person meeting would be welcome if you are available.

I'd like to address a key issue you raised in your letter for clarification. You are quite right that ICANN does not need community feedback to select L-Root vendors and it was never my intention to suggest that it does. Although you were specific in asking ICANN to address TAG-Org's status as an L-Root vendor, this specificity does not change our responsibility in our public-facing role relating to the other points of the relationship. As you have indicated, these relationships are governed by ICANN policy. It is ICANN's responsibility to put those relationships into the context of hate speech as well, and although we may choose to act without community consultation or even the Ombuds review, there will no doubt be a point where the community will want to have a voice on any application of new ICANN actions relating to this issue. We cannot agree more that a vendor relationship is different.

As I said, we believe that Talal Abu Ghazaleh and TAG-Org's hate speech violates ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior. This is why we have referred the matter to the Office of the Ombuds to investigate and make recommendations. We will support the Ombuds office to ensure this work can be done promptly so that we can act swiftly.

It took more time than we anticipated to carefully consider the next steps, but please don't confuse taking a cautious approach with not caring or abdicating our responsibility. The questions raised have impact on unwritten policies regarding our public responsibility, and we must be thorough as we consider the intended, and unintended, consequences of our actions.

I do hope we can see each other next week, or arrange a call, to discuss in greater detail.

Many thanks

Sally