

THE OWNER AMPLIFIER

Elon Musk's role in spreading
violent anti-migrant
narratives on X



The Center for Countering Digital Hate works to stop the spread of online harms and dangerous content through innovative research, public campaigns, and policy advocacy.

Our mission is to protect human rights and civil liberties online.

Social media and AI platforms have changed the way we communicate, build and maintain relationships, set social standards, and negotiate and assert our society's values. In the process, they have become environments where harmful and dangerous content can spread rapidly, often without meaningful oversight or accountability.

Social media companies erode basic human rights and civil liberties by enabling the amplification of harmful content and distorting the online information ecosystem.

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1 Introduction

Late on Monday 8th June, videos of a brutal knife attack in north Belfast started circulating on social media, reported to be an “attempted beheading”.¹

The victim, Stephen Ogilvie, has been hospitalised with serious injuries including the loss of his left eye.² Police have charged Hadi Alodid, a Sudanese man living in Belfast, with attempted murder.³ Alodid was granted legal migration status in the UK in 2023.⁴

In the immediate aftermath after his charging, unrest erupted, escalating into violent disorder in Belfast and nearby areas. Masked men attacked homes they believe to house migrants, burned vehicles and houses, and injured police officers.⁵

Similarly to the summer riots of 2024, social media platforms played a role in fuelling these violent disorders. Among them, Elon Musk’s platform X emerged again as a focus of concern over content that contributed to the incitement of violence.⁶

In response, the online safety regulator Ofcom warned platforms of their responsibility to tackle illegal hate and highlighted the real-world harms if they fail to do so.⁷ Ofcom additionally placed X in a compliance program to improve its handling of illegal hate.⁸

This research finds that X is failing to meet these obligations. Rather than limiting the reach of harmful content, Elon Musk, whose account is the most followed on X with 240 million followers, has amplified violent migrant narratives from personalities such as Tommy Robinson and Rupert Lowe, extending their reach to millions of users.⁹

Our study of posts about the Belfast disorder from these three key figures shows that Musk’s amplification has been instrumental, contributing 64 million views to their reach, more than Robinson and Lowe generated independently combined.

The replies to these posts represent an explosion in calls for violence, with 3,930 such comments identified by our analysis, including:

- 240 calls for violence in replies to relevant posts from Elon Musk
- 1,000 calls for violence in replies to Restore party leader Rupert Lowe
- 2,690 calls for violence in replies to hate influencer Tommy Robinson

Despite regulatory commitments to tackle illegal hate, X once again became a hotbed of calls for violence following the Belfast tragedy.¹⁰ Elon Musk, the platform’s owner, has again used the incident to amplify violent migrant narratives inspiring calls for violence, with little apparent consequence on the platform.

The costs, however, were felt offline, as online outrage gave way to real-world intimidation, violence, and disorder.

Imran Ahmed

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2 Calls for Violence

We find that X is hosting 3,930 calls for violence against migrants under posts about the Belfast attack from three key figures: Elon Musk, Rupert Lowe, and Tommy Robinson.

This rapid study focuses on these three men based on widespread reporting on their roles in fuelling the disorder:

- Elon Musk amplified calls for “mass protest” across the UK and stated, “Only by protesting REPEATEDLY and LOUDLY will there be any change”.¹¹
- Rupert Lowe falsely identified the attacker as “Somalian”, warned “Barbarians are already inside the gates”, and called for mass deportations.¹²
- Tommy Robinson called for a “FLASH PROTEST” the morning after the attack, calling on Northern Ireland to “Give us all a voice tonight.”¹³

To analyse the role of these three key figures in inspiring calls for violence against migrants, we first collected 92 X posts that they made about the Belfast attack between Monday 8th and Wednesday 10th June.

We then collected 72,000 replies to those posts and used an AI labelling agent to identify those calling for violence against migrants, using human review to ensure high accuracy. More detail is available in **Appendix: Methodology** at the end of this report.

In total, we found 3,930 replies to posts from Musk, Lowe and Robinson that call for violence against migrants in relation to the Belfast attack. They include:

- **Incitement to violence**, such as: “Muslims in that house? BURN IT THE FUCK DOWN. Execute them.”¹⁴
- **Threats of violence**, such as: “We need to stomp out Islam once and for all for all human kind not just the west. I’ll happily ally with commies (temporarily) to snuff them out.”¹⁵
- **Expressions of a desire for violence**, such as: “Britain should start beheading migrants”.¹⁶
- **Glorification of violence**, such as: “BELFAST IS TAKING OUT THESE MIGRANTS. GOOD. EXECUTE THEM ALL.”¹⁷

More examples of calls for violence, and the posts they are replying to, are available in Section 3 of the report below.

2.1 Musk accounts for majority of views on posts

We find the Elon Musk's posts about Belfast and amplification of posts from Rupert Lowe and Tommy Robinson account for 55% of views in our sample of 92 X posts.

In addition to his own posts about the Belfast attack, Musk repeatedly amplified posts from Lowe and Robinson by quoting their posts.¹⁸ When Musk does this, he contributes to view counts on the quoted posts from Lowe and Robinson.

Accounting for this effect shows that Musk contributed 64 million views to posts in our sample, with Lowe and Robinson amassing 51 million views without his amplification.

This demonstrates Musk's power to amplify content on X, where his account is the most followed in the world with 240 million followers. Musk is also reported to have directed engineers at X to ensure his posts are more widely viewed.¹⁹

Musk has also contributed to the reach of Lowe and Robinson in other ways. Analysis of by the Financial Times found that Musk is "a huge factor in Lowe's reach" on X.²⁰

Robinson was formerly banned from X until he reinstated following Musk's takeover.²¹ Musk spoke at a protest organised by Robinson last year where he called for a "dissolution of parliament" and warned "violence is coming to you".²²

Account	# Views	% Views
Elon Musk	64,002,842	55%
Rupert Lowe	23,217,509	20%
Tommy Robinson	28,171,375	24%
TOTAL	115,391,726	100%

2.2 Most calls for violence respond to Tommy Robinson

We find that over two-thirds of calls for violence in our sample are in replies to Tommy Robinson's posts, underlining his influence in inspiring calls for violence on X.

Overall, the three accounts studied received an equivalent of 98 violent replies an hour in the 2 days following the Belfast attack.²³

Account	# Violent Replies	% Violent Replies
Elon Musk	239	6%
Rupert Lowe	1,008	26%
Tommy Robinson	2,685	68%
TOTAL	3,932	100%

3 Examples

This section compiles examples of posts from Elon Musk, Rupert Lowe and Tommy Robinson that received replies calling for violence.



Elon Musk

@elonmusk








Only by protesting REPEATEDLY and LOUDLY will there be any change!!



Tommy Robinson

@TRobinsonNewEra · Jun 9




The whole of the United Kingdom is hitting the streets tonight at 7pm following yet another invader attack on our people.

It's time 


7:00 PM TONIGHT

- 1 LONDON - PARLIAMENT SQUARE
- 2 MANCHESTER - ST. PETER'S SQUARE
- 3 BIRMINGHAM - VICTORIA SQUARE
- 4 LEEDS - WILKINSON SQUARE
- 5 LIVERPOOL - ST. GEORGE'S HALL
- 6 BRISTOL - COLLEGE GREEN
- 7 NEWCASTLE - GARY'S MONUMENT
- 8 SHEFFIELD - PEACE GARDENS
- 9 NOTTINGHAM - OLD MARKET SQUARE
- 10 LEICESTER - CITY HALL SQUARE
- 11 SOUTHAMPTON - EAST PARK
- 12 PORTSMOUTH - GORELLS SQUARE
- 13 CAMBRIDGE - MARKET SQUARE
- 14 OXFORD - BISHOPS SQUARE
- 15 NORWICH - CITY HALL STEPS
- 16 YORK - ST. HELENS SQUARE
- 17 BRIGHTON - THE LEVEL
- 18 PLYMOUTH - HIDE MARK
- 19 EXETER - CATHEDRAL GREEN
- 20 CARDIFF - CITY HALL SQUARE
- 21 SWANSEA - CASTLE SQUARE
- 22 BATH - PARADE GARDENS
- 23 READING - FERRIS GARDENS
- 24 MILTON KEYNES - CANNELL PARK
- 25 COVENTRY - BRIDGEGATE
- 26 STOKES-ON-TRENT - HANLEY PARK
- 27 DERBY - CATHEDRAL GREEN
- 28 MIDDLESBROUGH - CATHEDRAL SQUARE
- 29 HULL - QUEEN VICTORIA SQUARE
- 30 LINCOLN - CASTLE SQUARE
- 31 PETERBOROUGH - CATHEDRAL SQUARE
- 32 IPSWICH - COEN EXCHANGE
- 33 CHELMSFORD - CENTRAL PARK
- 34 COLCHESTER - CASTLE PARK
- 35 GUILDFORD - THE CASTLE GROUNDS
- 36 WINCHESTER - THE BRIDGWAY
- 37 SALISBURY - MARKET SQUARE
- 38 GLOUCESTER - BUNCESTER CROSS
- 39 HEREFORD - CATTLE MARKET
- 40 ABERDEEN - BROAD STREET
- 41 DUNDEE - CITY SQUARE
- 42 EDINBURGH - ST. ANDREW SQUARE
- 43 GLASGOW - GEORGE SQUARE
- 44 INVERNESS - ACADEMY STREET
- 45 STIRLING - KING'S PARK
- 46 PERTH - SOUTH BICH
- 47 ST. ALBANS - WINDHAM PARK
- 48 TRURO - LEBON QUAY
- 49 WARRFIELD - WINDFIELD
- 50 WARDROATE - THE GRAY
- 51 CHESTER - TOWN HALL SQUARE
- 52 WOLVERHAMPTON - ST. PETER'S SQUARE
- 53 WORCESTER - CATHEDRAL SQUARE
- 54 NORTHAMPTON - ALL SAINTS SQUARE
- 55 BEDFORD - MARKET SQUARE
- 56 LUTON - ST. GEORGE'S SQUARE
- 57 CANTERBURY - SAINT JOHN GARDENS
- 58 FOLKESTONE - THE LEAS
- 59 MAIDSTONE - FRIERLIN WALK
- 60 BASINGSTON - FESTIVAL PLACE
- 61 BOURNEMOUTH - LOWER GARDENS
- 62 SOUTHERN-ON-SEA - CHALKWELL PARK
- 63 DARLINGTON - TOWN HALL SQUARE
- 64 LANCASTER - MARKET PLACE
- 65 RYE - WELLINGTON SQUARE
- 66 PAISLEY - ABBEY CLOSE
- 67 DUMFRIES - BURNS SQUARE
- 68 ELGIN - COOPER PARK

MASS PROTEST TONIGHT


7:00 PM TONIGHT

- 1 CLOUGHFERN ROUNDABOUT CLOSED 7PM
- 2 CRUMLIN ROAD CLOSED 7PM
- 3 LARNE ROUNDABOUT CLOSED 7PM
- 4 SHORE ROAD CLOSED 7PM
- 5 LANARK WAY (BOTH ENDS) CLOSED 7PM
- 6 CARRICKFERGUS CLOSED 7PM
- 7 SHANKILL ROAD CLOSED 7PM
- 8 NEWTOWNARDS ROAD CLOSED 7PM
- 9 BELFAST ROAD, BANGOR CLOSED 7PM
- 10 DEE STREET CLOSED 7PM
- 11 BALLYMENA ROUNDABOUT CLOSED 7PM
- 12 COLERAINE CLOSED 7PM
- 13 PORTLUSH CLOSED 7PM
- 14 ANTRIM CLOSED 7PM
- 15 FALLS ROAD CLOSED 7PM
- 16 ARDONYE ROUNDABOUT CLOSED 7PM
- 17 BALLYSHILLAN CLOSED 7PM
- 18 WESTLAND CLOSED 7PM
- 19 HIGHFIELD CLOSED 7PM
- 20 MILL ROAD, NEWTOWNABBEY CLOSED 7PM
- 21 DONEGALL ROAD CLOSED 7PM
- 22 SHORT STRAND CLOSED 7PM
- 23 LISBURN CITY CENTRE CLOSED 7PM
- 24 PORTAVOGUE VILLAGE CLOSED 7PM
- 25 MONKSTOWN LIGHTS CLOSED 7PM
- 26 BALLYDUFF CLOSED 7PM


MORE COMING IN...

PLEASE CHECK LOCAL UPDATES


ALL BUNNESSES TO CLOSE

AT 5.30 PM TONIGHT

NO EXCUSES

4:37 PM · Jun 9, 2026 · 8.9M Views

Replies	
Just violence will solve	Or violence. That works too. 1776.
Ya no. Burning the bitch down so nothing is left for the foreigners is the only solution here.	It's too late for a Revolution. We fight for the final solution.
Every. Single. Time. Cause chaos every time a migrant harms another person or business. Don't let up.	Bring pitchforks & torches
I think violent imagrants in any country should face instant lifetime in jail or hung them accross the streets	Protest? Are you dim? There is one solution. A FINAL solution. It is decreed. Auf Wiedersehen.
@StevenLiraDJS I bet Ireland 1€ would love their guns back!!! These Muslims are fucking animals and euthanasia is the only solution!	And lynchings. We need to go back to lynching and hanging these animals in public.
Elon, you need to push algorithms of atrocities committed by Muslims against non-Muslims the world over. Otherwise, Muslims will leave one part of the world, only to infest other parts & gain strength & return again. They need to be eradicated worldwide all at once otherwise....	Full blown riots mayhem is the solution along with calling of re election and hoping for better leadership is the next best bet. The king can call for a re election some one should have some dirt on the royals that would force them to call for re election??
Turn them into food enslave the middle east put them on crosses nuke mecca cook them on tv the end! And take ALL their shit!	Time to burn all these facilitating hotels down with their invaders in it. About time to make cuckistan unsafe for invaders
the only alternative is lead flying	Heads on Pikes is the answer



Rupert Lowe MP

@RupertLowe10

...

A Somalian has been arrested following the attempted beheading.

A Restore Britain Government would end all immigration from Somalia, review all existing visas and deport all Somalians who should not be in Britain.

Enough.

9:26 AM · Jun 9, 2026 · 1.2M Views

Replies	
Should surround the police station he's at and pull the cunt out and nearest pole will do!!!	Shouldn't it be like this? They only bring chaos; they wreak havoc on the community. Deporting them is already being lenient with them. If it were me I'd want to execute them all
@RestoreBritain They should be put to death!!	@pugmum53 Make lynching great again!!!!
We need to wipe off all the n***** off this planet	You have to eliminate these people. They are scum. Unfit to live anywhere even their own country.
Arrested?Someone should have shot that cunt.But no the GuNs arE bAdtwats don't want armed citizens protecting themselves and one another from these sub70 pavement ape invaders.	10x 3 man teams. An Ak each and 3 clips. 2800/3000 rounds and 10 Mosques, soft targets. What would be the damage there Chris. Enough to make a statement???
Put them all on a barge and take them out to sea and sink the bitch	NOW remove his head from his body ! and place it at the entrance of your countrie !
Don't bother reviewing visas remove all Nons with extreme prejudice.	He should be hanged and then his body sent back to Somalia.
He acts in accord with a Koran mandated execution method. So execute this evil savage and others like him. Then excise this evil religion from amongst us	Arrested! What a joke that is. He shouldn't have made it alive to be arrested. He should have been executed by the closest man with the balls to do it. Or woman I'd sleep like a baby
Needs hanging that	He needs to be executed publicly



Tommy Robinson GB ✓
@TRobinsonNewEra

...

Suspected HMO's are being burned out across Northern Ireland following the attempted beheading of a man by a Sudanese invader last night.



9:08 PM · Jun 9, 2026 · **2.5M** Views

Replies

BURN THEM ALL DOWN. MUSLIMS MUST GO. Muslims in that house? BURN IT THE FUCK DOWN. Execute them. Or remove them. They go no matter what. All of them.	Hell ya they deserve it. It's terrible it has to come to this. But third worlders should stay on their shit hole land. Fucking burn them all down. UK and Canada are next to wake the fuck up!
Immigration is White genocide. Drive them all back into the sea.	I think the Irish people will need to crush their own government... BEFORE they kill the invaders.
Good hope migrants were inside burning	KILL THEM ALL
If you can't breed them out burn them out.	Burn them all !!!!!It is time to Get Back our streets from invading animals.
Burn the lot. Make vigilante groups against these MF's	Yes!!!Always count on the Irish to protect thier own. Canada needs to take fucking notes!
We need to all set fires and burn it all down this world needs a great flood or something like we really have gotten retarded af	GOOD!! Actions speaker louder than words! Remove the SNAKES from IRELAND just like St. Patrick did!! The Crusade has finally begun against our enemies!!!
How you don't burn all of the houses they've stolen from you? Tommy you need to rock the entire kingdom then go and rock the entire continent!!! What are you waiting for??? Every minute not doing anything is too late!	The great Adolph Hitler would have put pay to all this illegal immigration problem Europe and Northern Ireland is having in his own special way. Adolph Hitler was the greatest politician the world has ever seen

Appendix: Methodology

This appendix outlines the methodology used for this report, including how X posts and replies were collected, and how we identified calls for violence using AI.

Post and reply data was captured on 10 June 2026, and data analysis was carried out from 11 June 2026 through 12 June 2026.

How we selected posts to study

To analyse a set of relevant posts, researchers used a licensed third-party tool to study posts from Elon Musk, Tommy Robinson, and Rupert Lowe. Posts were collected from 10:30pm on 8 June 2026 through to 4:00pm on 10 June 2026, where 10:30pm on 8 June was chosen as this is when the attack in Belfast is reported to have occurred.²⁴

Researchers collected 145 posts across these three accounts during this period and manually assessed if they were about the Belfast attack. Following review, researchers identified 92 posts from the three accounts that were about the attack in Belfast.

How we defined calls for violence

Our work to identify calls for violence with the help of an AI system was guided by X's rules which prohibit content that "threatens, incites, glorifies, or expresses desire for violence or harm."²⁵ Replies were assessed as calls for violence where they fit into one of the following four categories included in X's policies:

- **Incitement of violence:** "Inciting, promoting or encouraging others to commit acts of violence or harm, including encouraging others to hurt themselves or inciting others to commit atrocity crimes such as crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide."²⁶
- **Violent threats:** "Threats to inflict physical harm on others, which includes threatening to kill, torture, sexually assault, or otherwise hurt someone. This also includes threatening to damage civilian homes and shelters, or infrastructure that is essential to daily, civic, religious, or business activities."²⁷
- **Expressing desire for harm:** "Wishing, hoping or expressing desire for harm. This includes hoping for others to die, suffer illnesses, tragic incidents, or experience other physically harmful consequences."²⁸
- **Glorification of Violence:** "Glorifying, praising, or celebrating acts of violence where harm occurred, including expressing gratitude or praising that someone experienced physical harm".²⁹

How we identified replies calling for violence

Using another licensed third-party tool, researchers studied replies to the 92 posts about the Belfast attack, resulting in an overall analysis of 72,702 replies. Researchers analysed these replies using OpenAI's-5.1 model to identify posts that appear to promote, encourage, endorse, or glorify violence targeted at Muslims or migrants.

The model was prompted to assign a 0 to 10 risk score to each reply. For each reply, the model was provided with both the reply's text and any attached image, alongside the original tweet to which it responded, giving the model the conversational context needed to judge intent. Researchers refined this prompt using a labelled sample of 300 replies, with positive examples representing violence targeted at Muslims or migrants and negative examples representing replies that either did not contain violence or the targets of a violence were not Muslims or migrants. Based on this refinement and empirical testing, a classification threshold of 8 was chosen as it provided the best balance between capturing violence and minimizing false positives.

The precision score was 86%, meaning when the model identified a post as a violence targeted at migrants or Muslims, it was correct 86% of the time. Recall was 74%, meaning out of every 100 violent replies, the model successfully found about 74. Overall, the model achieved an F1 score of 80%.

These accuracy scores were based on a sample of 300 replies, weighted equally between high-risk and low-risk posts and then re-weighted to reflect the full population of replies. Replies in the sample were initially labelled by an AI agent, OpenAI's GPT 5.5 model run through the Codex harness, equipped with a labelling skill and access to X's policies on violent content. Researchers then independently reviewed the replies and finalised any disagreements.

How we calculated view counts and amplification

Elon Musk boosted posts by Tommy Robinson and Rupert Lowe about the Belfast attack, quote posting one from each account.³⁰ The total views on the 92 posts studied were therefore adjusted for the boost given by Musk's quote posts.

X does not explicitly state whether view figures displayed for a post include the number of times it was viewed as part of a quote post. However, X states in its Help Center that "Anyone who is logged into X who views a post counts as a view, regardless of where they see the post (e.g. Home, Search, Profiles etc.) or whether or not they follow the author".³¹ The platform's developer documentation also states that impressions represent "a count of the number of times the Post has been viewed".³² For these reasons, we assume quote posts do contribute to the original post's view count.

To avoid double counting, researchers adjusted the view figures for the two quoted posts by subtracting the views on Musk's corresponding quote post from the views on the original. Based on these adjusted figures, Musk's posts accounted for 64,002,842 views, or 55%, of all views on the 92 posts studied.

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³² "Engagement API", X Developer Platform, accessed 12 June 2026, <https://docs.x.com/x-api/enterprise-gnip-2.0/fundamentals/engagement-api#interpreting-the-metrics>



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