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Why Elon Musk’s ambition to have Twitter “authenticate all real humans” will get people killed | Rest of World

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In June 2021, Alita, a trans woman living in Saudi Arabia, saw a hashtag trending on Twitter that translated roughly to “a space for hatred of religion.” In a Twitter Spaces audio room days earlier, Alita, who asked *Rest of World* to use her screen name for her safety, had spoken frankly about atheism and her decision to leave Islam. A recording of the conversation started circulating on Twitter and the backlash was swift, resulting in the trending hashtag. In the days that followed, she received transphobic comments, death threats, and calls that she be arrested by Saudi authorities for what she had said. Apostasy — abandoning your religion — is punishable by death in the country, and atheists have been labeled terrorists by the government.

“If it was up to them, the government would have arrested and prosecuted me by now. But thank goodness that my information is private and I’m not known everywhere by my real identity. That’s why I’m still safe,” Alita told *Rest of World* in a private Twitter Spaces room. She requested to speak there, rather than on encrypted messaging apps, because she said it’s where she feels safest sharing her experiences.

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