



UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee
Open Briefing on Countering Terrorist Narratives (UNSCR 2354, 2017)
Statement of Naureen Chowdhury Fink
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Good morning, thank you to the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and CTED for the invitation to join you today. I am Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Executive Director of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism.

For those who don't know us - yet - GIFCT is a non-profit organization that brings together key stakeholders -- from industry, government, civil society, and academia -- to foster essential collaboration and information-sharing to counter terrorist and violent extremist activity online, delivering the multi-stakeholder setting to identify challenges and deliver solutions and guidance. In line with our mission, GIFCT's programs, technology, and efforts assist to PREVENT online exploitation through cross-platform tooling and knowledge sharing, RESPOND to offline incidents that have online aspects through our incident response framework, and to ADAPT to adversarial threats through our multi-stakeholder working groups and academic network.

GIFCT is made up of member tech companies, working with our own counterterrorism and technical experts to advance our evergreen mission to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting digital platforms.

At GIFCT we underscore that preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism requires a whole of society approach and no single sector or state can alone address the myriad of challenges - or leverage all the opportunities. Resolution 2354 which created the foundations for this meeting, similarly recognized the critical importance of multiple stakeholders in effectively countering terrorist narratives and the associated comprehensive framework offers an important set of guidance for states and practitioners that remains relevant today even six years after its adoption, and underscores that all measures to counter terrorist narratives – echoing the Council's pronouncements on counterterrorism efforts more widely – must be in accordance with international law.

The establishment and work of GIFCT also reflects the recognition that effectively countering terrorism and violent extremism online requires the commitment and expertise of the tech industry and its partners joining together to harness the power of our collective capacity. The critical importance of public-private partnerships in this space cannot be understated.

The current threat landscape is growing more dynamic every day with an increasingly diverse array of violent extremist ideologies circulating in the online environment, manifesting across



Statement of Naureen Chowdhury Fink (ED, GIFCT) | 19 Oct 2023 | Check against delivery multiple platforms and online services providers, feeding into one another, and leading to effects offline.

We have seen that the diversity and variety of violent extremist actors operating on the internet is matched by an equally diverse and varied set of platforms on which they attempt to operate. Terrorist and violent extremist actors are tremendously opportunistic in their efforts to recruit, radicalize, and plan operations; this necessitates constant monitoring, learning, and adaptation.

We see this in the current events they manipulate for their purposes, to the tools they use online to reach audiences, connect, and disseminate propaganda. In relation to racially and ethnically motivated extremist groups – what some call the “far right” or “extreme right” – for example experts have noted the increased use of gaming and gaming-adjacent platforms, and also the increasing prevalence of youths and minors active in this space. To respond to the evolving related risks, GIFCT is a founding member of the Extremism and Gaming Research Network - EGRN - and has also recently started convening a gaming community of practice group among our member companies

At GIFCT, we do the work to advance our mission clear-eyed of the risks of exploitation of digital platforms but equally motivated by the opportunities tech can deliver to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism online.

Following the March 2019 attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, where the perpetrator sought to amplify the impacts of his gruesome acts by livestreaming the murders and creating content that can continue to inspire support and incite violence, the GIFCT Incident Response Framework was created. It offers a centralized communications system to share news and information about ongoing violent events that might result in the spread of violent content online produced as part of that offline event unfolding. It provides GIFCT members with timely information and opportunities for cross-platform exchanges in order to ensure readiness to address the possibility of harmful, perpetrator-produced content emanating from offline violence.

As Generative AI technology becomes more readily available, and as violent extremist and terrorist actors develop their content and promote their narratives; one key area of concern is the production of convincing but fake audio and visual content created by terrorist and violent extremist actors.

We have seen during conflicts and terrorist acts, these can add to the challenge of identifying verifiable content in an already complex information environment - and given the speed at which they can reach audiences can makes it very difficult to counter - or correct - emerging narratives.

GIFCT’s “Red Team” Working Group, which brought together a multi-stakeholder community of experts, civil society, governments, and industry, explored different ways in which Generative AI



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could produce and amplify terrorist and violent extremist narratives, and among the key concerns they identified were: the production of convincing but fake audio and content; deepfake audio recordings of celebrities; rapidly revising existing and popular songs and videos into versions containing hate-filled imagery and messaging that appear like the original content; eliminate current technological and linguistic barriers to translate content into multiple languages to reach broader audiences; outsourcing initial engagements of potential recruits and followers to advanced chatbots before more sophisticated engagements take place with individuals from the violent extremist group or network.

Our “Blue Team” Working Group **explored the opportunities for tech and digital platforms to power effective strategies and campaigns to prevent and counter violent extremism** and reviewed intervention tactics for alternative social media platforms, gaming spaces, online marketplaces, and adversarial platforms. We launched the initial outputs of these working groups in the sidelines of UNGA last month, with more coming this fall.

Terrorists and violent extremist groups can also contribute to the disordered information environment where determined adversaries can mislead and misrepresent in an effort to sway and convince individuals towards hateful and violent ideologies. The false and misleading narratives they produce can have – and have had – offline effects that create enabling environments for terrorists and violent extremists to drum up support and recruits.

These are a few snapshots of emerging threats and trends in what is becoming an enormously complex and dynamic information environment in which an unprecedented number of individuals have access to technologies that can reach audiences on massive scale, at a low cost, and without deeply specialized technical skills. At the same time, these tools are available for those seeking to counter narratives and incitement, and many of the findings of resolution 2354 remain salient: counter-narratives work best when local, should not only rebut narratives but offer positive alternatives, should be age and gender sensitive to be relevant and credible, and must be respectful of human rights.

This is a core value for GIFCT, that all our efforts, and our members, align with the principles enshrined in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. In every aspect of our work, we aim to be transparent, inclusive, and respectful of the fundamental and universal human rights that terrorists and violent extremists seek to undermine and emphasize the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of combating terrorism and violent extremism and ensuring respect for human rights. Our members have made that commitment, as has our team, and we commissioned our own human rights impact assessment to inform our policies and activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share GIFCT perspectives with you.

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