

Introduction

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, and participants. I wish to thank our colleagues and partners at the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate for the invitation to take part in this important meeting, and I wish to thank my fellow panelists for their excellent insights.

My name is Samantha Kutner. I am the Chief Intelligence Officer and co-founder of Glitterpill LLC, a project lead at the Khalifa Ihler Institute, Glitterpill's partner NGO, and a subject matter expert on the U.S. extremist group, the [Proud Boys](#).

At Glitterpill and the Khalifa Ihler Institute we define violent extremism as the violent denial of diversity. This ideologically and geographically agnostic definition allows us to approach the issue of violent extremism with an appreciation for the complex global threat landscape and is based on observed behaviors and narratives.

As part of my applied counter narrative and deradicalization efforts, I've helped facilitate the disengagement of several Proud Boys in the course of ethnographic research with members. I've also gotten a leading alt-right figure, Charlie Kirk of Turning Point USA to [denounce white supremacy](#) in front of his massive following as part of [campus resilience](#) and [de-escalation](#) efforts.

Before his arrest, Enrique Tarrío, the former Proud Boys chairman, explored a transformative strategy with me. I aimed to create a guiding beacon for those seeking to disengage from extremist groups. This strategy would offer comprehensive, educational content that acknowledges concerns without misattributing them to an 'out' group. After years of witnessing members not taking responsibility for their actions, Tarrío grasped the importance of emotional labor. This perspective, undoubtedly steeped in irony, could serve as a compelling counter-narrative for Proud Boys members looking to break away.

For more than five years, I've engaged with the media to enhance [ethical and responsible coverage of groups like the Proud Boys](#) and [decentralized far-right, and domestic extremist networks](#) tied to conspiratorial content. In my work I apply a rich ethnographic context to examining the rhetorical strategies deployed by bad faith actors.

My role as the Chief Intelligence Officer of Glitterpill LLC reflects this context in the intelligence team I lead. Glitterpill values pluralism and aims to understand the regional and qualitative context of emerging threats.

Since last year's UN-CTED meeting, Glitterpill LLC and Khalifa Ihler have publicly engaged in several efforts:

- [We've highlighted the evolution](#) of key conspiracist and white supremacist talking points and most frequent offenders. These have been increasingly adopted by anti-vaccination groups and right-wing parties in the run-up to the 14 October 2023 general election in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- We've countered terrorist narratives by eliciting a response from the leader of a [failed accelerationist terrorism project](#).
- [We've provided tactical advice](#) to event organizers, performers, activists, and community members to help them plan safer events for the LGBTQI+ community.
- We've provided context on the Canadian justice system's [first individual case](#) of terrorism driven by far-right ideology.

We aim to continue these efforts by uncovering new trends and narratives in extremist communities and prevent their harmful impacts.

Introduction to our Company

At Glitterpill, we believe data makes the violent denial of diversity visible. We assist stakeholders in mitigating threats by violent extremist and terrorist networks. We do this by providing actionable intelligence, data, analysis, and consulting services. These networks often target infrastructure and misuse services for coordination, recruitment, spreading propaganda, and inciting others to violence. This is particularly relevant to ICT and emerging technologies. We understand this as not a one and done process, but as a continuous effort that necessitates ongoing mitigation.

Our work is underpinned by a behavior-based model for understanding and analyzing violence-inducing decentralized networks of extremist actors. These are often unconventional actors who might not yet be recognized by UN designated lists. Our model also facilitates strategic network disruptions. These disruptions slow online extremist networks' momentum as they try to rebuild their online presence across less regulated platforms.

Our approach enables us to connect online activity to specific events and extended networks of extremist actors, enhances our ability to predict potential hotspots of extremist activity, and enhances our ability to provide timely and actionable intelligence to our clients. *Through this approach our analysis has contributed to more effective policy and enforcement strategies within some of the world's largest companies, keeping their assets and clients safe.*

Having worked in advisory and consulting capacities with corporate and governmental stakeholders, Glitterpill LLC's team is uniquely suited to develop globally applicable, comprehensive strategy and policy responses to the evolving threat of terrorism.

We are building the ability to monitor the effect of counter-narratives in media ecosystems of interest. This is made possible through new partnerships formed during the [Eradicate Hate](#) event. Given this, understanding how companies can responsibly manage and balance the challenges we'll describe below becomes essential.

2023 & 2024 Challenges To Countering Terrorist Narratives

No company wants to facilitate war crimes. However, companies may be hesitant to engage publicly concerning online behaviors for fear of tarnishing their reputation. This reluctance often arises from a desire to maintain a positive public image and avoid alienating their user base. At the same time, taking a stance on controversial issues can lead to backlash from different segments of their audience, making it a delicate balancing act. Nonetheless, this does not absolve companies of their responsibility to prevent harmful actions facilitated through their services.

As long as power imbalances exist, there will be asymmetric conflict. As long as our technologies connect people, there will be a need to prevent their exploitation by those who seek to promote the violent denial of diversity. These are fundamental human issues that we can't overcome solely with perfect algorithms or regulations. They require a collective, comprehensive, and multi-pronged approach. This approach should combine technological innovation, regulatory oversight, and societal vigilance.

Addressing this issue demands regional expertise and human intelligence. This is vital for safeguarding our diverse society and promoting genuine free speech on social media.

A central question asked throughout multiple far-right terrorist attacks, the rise of ISIS and the recent escalations in Gaza has been on the role and responsibility of social media and tech in the spread of harmful content, facilitating harmful discourse, and enabling and empowering terrorist and violent extremist actors.

Several measures have been implemented to address this issue. These include internal actions within larger, responsive companies and the establishment of organizations like Glitterpill LLC. Global platforms such as the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, the Christchurch Call, and Tech Against Terrorism. Despite these efforts, the challenge remains. Its complexity seems to be constantly evolving and increasing.

One of the main difficulties we continue to encounter is the ambiguous nature of language. Extremists continually alter their online behavior to build credibility and evade moderation efforts.

We have seen a quest for legitimacy among groups like the Proud Boys, who have attempted to embed themselves in charity and humanitarian aid efforts.

Last month on the podcast [Smart Women. Smart Power](#) I explained these actions aim to make communities feel more dependent on far right extremist groups, thereby reducing their likelihood to denounce their actions targeting school boards, drag queen story hour events, and targeting those who provide abortion access. The Christian nationalist underpinnings of restricting abortion access and their ties to the bombing of abortion clinics in the area are clear, not

through a deep study of ideology, but through visibly seeing networks of overlapping membership across different groups, events, and platforms. After January 6th, many charity and humanitarian aid organizations in America comprehended the historical context; as a result, this tactic by Proud Boys has had limited success.

A useful parallel to this tactic can be drawn from the international sphere, with groups such as Hamas, which is still recognized as a political entity in certain contexts. While the UN has not officially designated Hamas as a terrorist organization, it is essential to note that this group has also been known to involve itself in social service provision and community integration efforts, similar to what we observe with the extremist groups in the U.S.

This comparison is not meant to label or condemn Palestinians fighting for liberation, but rather to illustrate the complexity of Hamas's strategies and their efforts to blend into communities they operate within. In the face of disinformation campaigns and the spread of genocidal rhetoric, we must not underestimate the role of legacy media and talk radio, which contributed to the [murder of a 6 year old Palestinian boy](#) in Chicago which is currently being investigated as a hate crime. We need to ensure that our response to the exploitation of social media platforms is nuanced and human-centered, and differentiates between documentation of war crimes and endorsement of terrorism or glorification of violence.

The challenge of moderation is compounded by the ambiguity of language. To address these gray areas, a network approach to understand the relationship between online and offline behaviors within nebulous networks is needed. We also need to protect the safety and anonymity of human rights defenders, so warning the public and providing valuable intelligence does not immediately paint them as targets.

It is up to organizations like [GIFCT](#), [Glitterpill LLC](#), [ISD](#), [Cinder](#), [Active Fence](#), [CRISP Tech Against Terrorism Prose Intelligence](#) and the collective expertise to help provide external guidance to [EU regulators](#) in a way that provides a clear path for companies to conduct due diligence. This guidance is essential for companies and will come from supporting the independent organizations responsible for enforcing and implementing these regulations.

There exists a gap between the resources allocated and those needed to efficiently enforce digital regulations. By funding our organizations, not only can companies and EU regulators empower us all to provide the necessary external guidance and expertise, but they can also help bridge the resource gap. This collective support will ensure the efficient enforcement of regulations and contribute to a safer digital environment. Thus, this call to action is not merely for financial support but an invitation to join in the creation of a more just, secure digital future.

Through our unique approach, Glitterpill and our non-profit NGO partner the [Khalifa Ihler Institute](#), are uniquely positioned to assist the UN, the Member States and the wider community of stakeholders. We look forward to continuing our work understanding specific behaviors, facilitating network disruption, and ensuring the safety of human rights defenders.

We have created a list of additional recommendations you can view on our website, along with today's full written statement on [glitterpill.io](#). Thank you very much. I yield the floor back to you.

Recommendations To UN-CTED

Statement on Countering Terrorist Narratives

In our efforts to counter terrorist narratives, it is crucial to address several key aspects that have emerged from recent discussions:

1. **Gender Supremacy and Aggrieved Male Entitlement:** Extremist ideologies often exploit and perpetuate gender supremacy and aggrieved male entitlement. Recognizing and challenging these toxic narratives is essential to dismantling terrorist ideologies.
2. **Accountable and Responsible Journalism:** The media plays a vital role in preventing the manipulation of public perception by extremist groups. Journalists must prioritize responsible reporting, ensuring that their coverage does not inadvertently amplify terrorist narratives or erode journalism's trust as an institution.
3. **Tracking and Understanding Extremist Networks:** A comprehensive understanding of extremist networks and their tactics is crucial in countering terrorist narratives. Efforts should focus on effective tracking and analysis of these networks to anticipate and respond to their activities.
4. **Stronger Action by Social Media Platforms:** Social media platforms have a responsibility to take stronger action against terrorist content and narratives. Robust content moderation and enforcement policies should be implemented to prevent the dissemination of extremist propaganda. This will come from relying on expert organizations to operationally define terms and set parameters so companies better understand their obligations to comply.
5. **Accountability and Investments in Countering Extremism:** Governments and relevant stakeholders must prioritize accountability and investments in countering extremism. This includes allocating resources to initiatives aimed at countering terrorist narratives, disrupting extremist networks and promoting alternative, positive narratives.
6. **The Complicity of Social Media Platforms:** There is growing concern about the potential complicity of social media platforms in enabling war crimes and acts of violence. Addressing this issue requires close scrutiny and proactive measures to prevent the misuse of these platforms for extremist purposes.
7. **Terrorism and Online Platforms and Communication Channels:** The intersection of terrorism and online platforms necessitates the involvement and responsibility of tech giants. These platforms must actively contribute to countering terrorist narratives and combating the spread of extremist content. This includes talk radio, which has since [contributed to the radicalization of one individual](#) who murdered a 6 year old because of an embrace of dehumanizing conspiratorial content.
8. **Actions by Governments and International Organizations:** The actions taken by governments and international organizations, such as the United Nations, play a significant role in countering terrorist narratives. Coordinated efforts, policies, and collaborations are essential in addressing the global challenge of terrorism.
9. **Consequences for Providing Material Support:** Individuals and organizations providing material support to extremist entities must face legal consequences. By holding them accountable, we deter the financing and facilitation of terrorism.
10. **Challenges in Distinguishing Actors:** Distinguishing between different actors

within nations, such as oligarchs, can be challenging. It is crucial to consider these complexities when countering terrorist narratives effectively.

By addressing these key points, we can develop a comprehensive strategy for countering terrorist narratives and creating a safer, more resilient society.

[Reach out to us](#) if you would like to become part of comprehensive efforts to counter violent extremism.