International Conference

The Abuse of Livestreaming, Gaming and Virtual Reality Services and Platforms by Terrorist Actors

PROGRAMME

6-7 November 2023

Strasbourg

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Introduction

The Council of Europe International Conference on the abuse of livestreaming, gaming and virtual reality services and platforms by terrorist actors will explore how terrorists and violent extremists are adapting to new technologies and the potential responses to this threat. The Conference follows up on the [Digital Conference on Countering Terrorist Communications](#) which was organised in early 2023.

This Conference will focus on contemporary trends and emerging threats related to various digital technologies, from the "gamification" of terrorism to the use of livestreaming and video-sharing services by terrorists and violent extremists to broadcast and spread footage of terrorist attacks. The event will also discuss policy options and how national authorities can cooperate with international counterparts and technology companies to address this threat.

Context of the Conference

The gaming industry is the world's most profitable entertainment industry, surpassing film, television and music in terms of total revenue, building a market that reaches players of all nationalities, ages and genders.

While there are many positive aspects to gaming and online connectivity, there are significant concerns that the global scope of some gaming platforms and services can be exploited by terrorists and violent extremists to reach potential audiences who would otherwise be inaccessible through traditional media platforms and offline sources.

The capacity to connect millions of users with non-public spaces, restricted communities and private servers, gaming, and gaming-related services, terrorists and violent extremists have used these services to lure and manipulate vulnerable individuals into extremism-rich environments. Consequently, the intersection of gaming and violent extremism raises specific issues for young people and children.

Terrorist groups have long shown the ability to adapt to emerging technology, adjusting their strategies and tactics as new capabilities enable them to spread their ideologies and narratives to a variety of target audiences, but also to engage and mobilise supporters and sympathisers.

Consequently, the Council of Europe is working to help improve co-operation between policymakers, law enforcement and the private sector to prevent terrorists abusing a range of digital platforms and gaming services.

Day One - 6 November 2023

14:30 – 15:00	**Opening Remarks** **Ambassador Päivi Kairamo**, Ambassador for Counterterrorism Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Legal Service, and Chair of the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT) **Ms Hanne Juncher**, Director, Information Society and Action against Crime, DG Human rights and the Rule of Law, Council of Europe
15:00 – 16:15	**New Technology, New Opportunities? Terrorist and violent extremist adoption and innovation** **Moderator: Ambassador Petr Válek –** Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the Council of Europe and the Focal Point on the Fight against Terrorism **Mr David Wells,** Independent consultant, Associate Fellow, University of Swansea **Dr Lisa Kaati,** Department of Computer and Systems, Stockholm University **Ms Claudia Wallner,** Associate Researcher, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) **Mr Sylvain Gardel,** Creative Industries and Digital Creation Expert
	Break
16:30 – 17:45	**Gamification of Terrorism: Gaming Platforms and the hidden corners of the internet** **Moderator: Ambassador Päivi Kairamo**, Ambassador for Counterterrorism Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Legal Service **Mr Galen Lamphere-Englund,** Co-Founder, Extremism and Gaming Research Network (EGRN) **Ms Lilian Vicente,** Political Affairs Officer, United Nations Office of Counter-terrorism (UNOCT) **Mr Menso Hartgers,** Junior Research Fellow, International Centre for Counter-terrorism (ICCT) **Mr Hendrik Lesser,** President, European Game Developers Association

Day Two – 7 November 2023

10:00 – 11:00	**Enhancing international cooperation to prevent the abuse of internet platforms by terrorists and violent extremists** Moderator: **Ambassador Nurdan Bayraktar Golder,** Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the Council of Europe **Mr Alberto Ferraresso**, EUROPOL Internet Referral Unit (IRU), SIRIUS Project **Mr Otabek Rashidov,** Transnational Threats Department, OSCE
	Break
11:15 – 12:45	**Livestreamed terrorism: detecting and suppressing attacks in real-time** Moderator: **Mr Mario Janeček,** Head of Department for International Cooperation, Ministry of Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina and former Chair of the CDCT **Dr Erin Saltman,** Director of Membership and Programs, Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) **Ms Méalisse Blanc** and **Mr Alexis Ponchel,** Judiciary Police Central Directorate (DCPJ), Ministry of Interior, France **Dr Suraj Lakhani,** Associate Professor, University of Sussex **Charley Gleeson,** Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) Analyst, Tech Against Terrorism
	Lunch break
14:30 – 15:45	**Policy and regulatory approaches to terrorist abuse of new technologies** Moderator: **Mr Carlo Chiaromonte,** Council of Europe Counter-terrorism Coordinator **Ms Jennifer Bramlette**, United Nations Counter-terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) **Dr Joe Whittaker,** Programme Director of Cyber Threats at Swansea University **Mr Christophe Fichet,** Associate Lawyer - Partner, Bignon-Lebray **Ms Grace Rollison**, Junior Policy Analyst, Tech Against Terrorism
	Break
16:00 – 17:25	**P/CVE, Youth and Gender: Building safe and reliable entertainment spaces free from violent extremism and terrorism** Moderator: **Mr Jamie Brown**, Counter-Terrorism and Criminal Law, Council of Europe **Mr William Braniff,** United States Department of Homeland Security, CP3 **H.E Ahmed Al Qasimi,** Executive Director, Hedayah **Ms Camilla Bognoe,** Senior Advisor on Anti-Terrorism issues, OSCE **Dr Joanna Nowotny,** Expert in the field of digital culture **Mr Jasmin Jasarevic,** PRONI Center for youth development
17:25 – 17:30	**Closing Remarks** **Ambassador Päivi Kairamo,** Ambassador for Counterterrorism Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Legal Service, and Chair of the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT)

Conference themes

Session I: New Technology, New Opportunities? Terrorist and violent extremist adoption and innovation

This opening session is intended to provide participants with an overview of the main issues and challenges concerning the adoption and abuse of new and emerging technologies by terrorists and violent extremists. As such, it will look at the current trends in the digital threat landscape, the primary motivations behind terrorist adoption of new technologies, and the potential ways such technologies could be abused by terrorists and violent extremists.

Session II: Gamification of Terrorism: Gaming Platforms, Virtual Reality and the hidden corners of the internet

This session will look at the risks posed by new technology, such as virtual reality or gaming platforms, and how these may be abused by terrorist actors to prepare, coordinate or plan terrorist incidents, or to recruit new members. Among other topics, this will look at the ways in which gaming platforms are used by terrorists and violent extremists, as well as the ways in which the concepts and principles of gaming have been applied by some communities to increase engagement with terrorist propaganda aimed at radicalising or recruiting to terrorism.

Session III: Enhancing international cooperation to prevent the abuse of internet platforms by terrorists and violent extremists

This session will look at the means available to relevant national authorities to collectively address risks posed by terrorist and violent extremist misuse of new technologies such as virtual reality or gaming platforms. It will also look at some of the main identified challenges relating to international cooperation in this area, such as the difficulties faced by law enforcement in accessing and receiving data held by private companies, or the practical difficulties in following up on potential violent extremist or terrorist activity that leaves a small digital footprint. The session will also look at some of the training and specialisations needed to improve cooperation and collaboration in this space.

Session IV: Livestreamed terrorism: detecting and suppressing attacks in real-time

This session will focus on the particular challenges related to livestreamed terrorist attacks. It will look at both the regulatory and technical aspects of terrorist abuse of livestreaming services, drawing on the work of international initiatives such as the Christchurch Call developed jointly by New Zealand and France in the wake of the 2019 livestreamed attack. The Session will further look at early-warning systems and ways to quickly reduce the spread and impact of

these livestreamed incidents across the internet.

Session V: Policy and regulatory approaches to terrorist abuse of new technologies

This Session will look at some at the current and potential policy approaches to prevent terrorist and violent extremists from abusing the platforms and technologies discussed throughout the Conference. Notably, it will look at various legislative and regulatory approaches at national level as well as relevant international initiatives by international organisations and private sector companies.

Session VI: P/CVE, Youth and Gender: Building safe and reliable entertainment spaces free from violent extremism and terrorism

This Session will wrap up the Conference by looking at some of the key lessons and approaches national authorities can take specific to prevent young people and children from being exposed or drawn into violent extremism. The session will explore a range of policies and activities, particularly those related to content moderation, digital literacy, education and other areas designed to help ensure that online spaces are, as far as possible, free from violent extremism and terrorism.