

G7 INTERIOR MINISTERS

ISCHIA, 19-20 OCTOBER 2017

JOINT COMMUNIQUE'

***"Fight against terrorism and violent extremism:
turning commitments into action"***

We, the G7 Interior Ministers, met together with the Members of the European Commission in charge of Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship and the Security Union, and the Secretary General of Interpol, in the wake of the series of recent terrorist attacks, to follow up and ensure full implementation of the Taormina Leaders statement on the Fight Against Terrorism and Violent Extremism, building on the progress made under the G7 Action Plan adopted in Ise-Shima.

We reiterate, in the strongest terms, our condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and reaffirm our willingness to continue efforts to combat it, always in full respect of fundamental rights and the rule of law.

The threat to our Countries is constantly evolving and directly influenced by international developments. We are witnessing a rise in terrorist attacks both by terrorist networks and by lone actors as Da'esh loses cities and territory in Iraq and Syria. This trend is likely to continue beyond Da'esh defeat on the ground and makes the full implementation of the Taormina statement even more pressing.

Experience shows that sharing information among international partners, governments, and operational agencies to the fullest possible extent in accordance with the applicable regulations is a key tool in preventing and countering terrorism. Today, we commit to going further, by better involving in counter terrorism cooperation institutional stakeholders, civil society, local communities as well as the private sector.

Preventing Terrorist Misuse of the Internet

Da'esh, al-Qa'ida, and other terrorist and violent extremist organizations continue to exploit the Internet to spread propaganda, recruit operatives, incite

violence and inspire attacks. We note with particular concern that as Da'esh suffers battlefield setbacks, it is exploiting the Internet to encourage sympathizers to conduct acts of terrorism in our Countries and across the globe. It is therefore a matter of urgency that we develop and implement more effective means to counter the misuse of the Internet by terrorists and those who abet them.

We recognize the importance of building mutual trust with Communication Service Providers and social media companies in order to reach a strategic alliance, promptly identify and remove terrorist content from online platforms in a manner consistent with our fundamental rights and values. We will continue to work with these private sector partners to implement measures necessary to prevent radicalization, terrorist recruitment, and operational planning via the Internet.

We encourage the private sector and civil society to join with us in our action to develop counter-narratives against terrorist propaganda, building on the work of the EU Internet Forum, Civil Society Empowerment Programme and the newly established Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT)

We also highlight the initiative by Italy, France and United Kingdom on preventing the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes, held in New York on 20 September 2017 as a side event to the United Nations General Assembly.

We are convinced that it is necessary now to foster the development and advocate the use of automated technology for the rapid detection and removal of terrorist content and in the prevention of its further dissemination. We welcome the progress made by the social media platforms in this regard and we call upon them to do more.

We call upon Internet companies to enhance the potential of the Database of Hashing to share hashes of known terrorist content across companies. We underscore the challenge to industry and we urge it to , work collaboratively through the Global Internet Forum, to develop solutions to identify and remove terrorist content within 1-2 hours of upload, to the extent it is technically feasible, without compromising human rights and fundamental freedoms. We also urge the companies to pursue the development of technological tools for automated detection and removal. In addition, we emphasize that reporting removed material to law enforcement is crucial in order to investigate threats to public safety and to prosecute possible criminal activity.

The sharing of best practices and technology to enhance the resilience of smaller companies is also essential, as well as the improvement of our knowledge base through research and development and the empowerment of civil society partners to develop counter and alternative narratives.

Sharing Information to Combat Terrorism and to Tackle the Threat posed by Foreign Terrorist Fighters.

Today we also agreed to enhance, where possible, cooperation on the exploitation of battlefield data from conflict areas, to tackle international terrorism, for law enforcement purposes in accordance with national laws.

The strong efforts made by the Countries in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL/Da'esh can be fully boosted, with positive implications for internal security, by sharing battlefield information with law enforcement and judicial authorities in compliance with the relevant legal frameworks.

We are convinced that the military pressure on Da'esh and the completion of the liberation of Da'esh-held territories both allow for the gathering of an important amount of information, especially on foreign terrorist fighters, who seek to threaten other States or attempt to return from conflict areas to our Countries, their Countries of origin and other ungoverned spaces.

Accordingly, based also on past experience by the international community in Iraq and in Afghanistan through Interpol, we agreed that this information in accordance with our national and international legal frameworks should be processed to make it of use by law enforcement agencies, such as Interpol, in order to support investigation, analysis and judicial activities, and to take lawful surveillance measures, imposing entry restrictions, freezing financial assets and implementing expulsion orders.

We remain committed to supporting the use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) and Advance Passenger Information (API) in traveler screening and the wider fight against terrorism: this information is vital in identifying and combating terrorist threat posed by high-risk travelers.

A Collective Approach to Managing Foreign Terrorist Fighters

The issue of foreign terrorist fighters returning to our Countries cannot be dealt with by solely envisaging countering administrative and/or judicial measures as, in many cases, these measures are not sufficient to deal with the variety of cases.

It is therefore necessary to implement concrete actions, including non-judicial actions, aimed at the disengagement and/or de-radicalisation of returning foreign terrorist fighters both in prison and out.

Such a complex objective requires a systemic and collaborative collective approach based on the contribution of different governmental authorities including law enforcement forces and civil society players operating together.

In this regard, it is necessary to start from an immediate and accurate assessment of the individual risk, in the perspective that measures taken have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

We recognize that every returning foreign fighter is unique and, therefore, an individual and tailored approach must be applied to each case, taking into account different experiences of the perpetrators, their age and gender. As such, we will develop tailored measures to support returning women and children. To further strengthen G7 cooperation, we will continue to develop measure and evaluate the effectiveness of disengagement programs, and share best practices and lessons learned.

We note the importance of a comprehensive approach to extremism that includes tackling underlying issues and mobilising civil society, envisaging a broad set of responses, including multi-agency cooperation, risk assessment, possible intervention, reintegration, disengagement and criminal justice.

We note with concern the challenge related to the return of children born in Da'esh-controlled territory, and commit to work to explore the options for the identification and protection of these children.

We, the G7, are aware of the international dimension of the problem of foreign terrorist fighters: it requires an international response that must evolve with the ever changing nature of threat.

We are therefore committed to driving an increase of collaboration, not only with G7 countries, but also with the wider international community, to manage the threat posed by FTFs. We will commit to sharing our expertise and resources to help partners, in theatres of conflict as well as likely FTF transit and destination countries, so as to develop our collective ability to manage the threat from FTFs. And we will support others to identify and adopt best practice approaches and the most effective tools available.

Action Plan on a Joint Way Forward

In order to strengthen the fight against terrorism and radicalization and to increase our efforts to turn commitments into actions we will work cooperatively with the private sector and civil society. To this end we:

- reiterate our objective of preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online and the misuse of the Internet, through global and decisive action, in close cooperation with the Internet industry and civil society, building on the work of the EU Internet Forum and the newly established Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT);
- recognize the progress made by the social media companies and communication service providers for a strategic alliance in preventing and countering terrorist exploitation of online platforms, to defend the common principles of democracy, freedom, and the rule of law;

- support the ongoing efforts in urging the Internet companies to significantly improve the speed at which terrorist content is identified and removed, and we encourage them to develop solutions to detect and to remove it from their platforms within 1-2 hours of upload, to the extent it is technically feasible; pursue the development of technological tools for automated detection and removal; work with smaller platforms to ensure they enhance their resilience to terrorist exploitation and support further research to build a deeper understanding of how online radicalisation can be tackled better;
- emphasize that reporting removed terrorist content, where appropriate, to law enforcement is crucial in order to investigate threats to public safety and to prosecute possible criminal activity;
- explore the design and implementation of a global law enforcement platform hosted by Interpol, to collect and exploit terrorist content, leveraging referrals from industry and national authorities, in support of investigations and prosecutions;
- call on the companies to ensure the Database of Hashes urgently reaches its full potential in preventing the re-appearance of known terrorist content online; call on the companies participating in the Database of Hashes to spare no effort in encouraging and assisting smaller companies in joining the initiative;
- envisage the opportunity that the strategic alliance between Countries and the tech-companies be achieved by establishing a structured dialogue at a technical level to be held on a regular basis;
- commit ourselves to discuss among G7 members states to deepening the issue of "battlefield data" acknowledging the legal and procedural challenges;
- call for enhancements in the sharing of information in accordance with our national and international legal frameworks to achieve greater effectiveness and attention to operational needs;
- support the role of Interpol as a global platform for the exchange of criminal information, the sharing of lost and stolen travel document data, and the systematic screening of international travellers, including biometric information and data collected on the battlefield; and commit to encourage all States to enhance the use of its databases;
- share best practices on the challenge posed by returnees, foreign terrorist fighters and their families – within G7 and with other international partners – facilitating the implementation of practical recommendations for first-line practitioners and promoting a comprehensive approach mobilising a broad set of responses, including multi-agency cooperation, risk assessment, possible interventions, reintegration, disengagement from terrorist activity, and criminal justice;

- commit to sharing expertise, notably through the G7 expert level and the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), and mobilising knowledge, resources, research and technology in order to face off the recurring targeting of open public spaces and mass events.
- reaffirm our commitment to the sharing and use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) and Advanced Passenger Information (API) in traveller screening, as this information is vital in identifying and combating terrorist threats posed by high-risk travellers
- commit to raising the levels of global aviation security, including by working with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), by enhancing the screening of passengers, aviation workers, carry-on baggage, checked baggage and air cargo to better detect terrorist threats.
- commit to improve co-operation on Counter Terrorism in all international fora, reaffirming the importance of the commitment of G7 countries and other partners to the UN Global Coalition against Da'esh, as well as to the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), its working groups and initiatives, in sharing best practice and taking action in order to protect our citizens.