The Bergen Plan of Action

August, 2021

Introduction

Terrorism is a human problem, costing human lives, tearing real families apart. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the horrific attack on Norway on the 22nd of July 2011. The terrorist claimed 77 lives. Ten years later we are barely starting to understand the scope of the long term impact of this attack on the survivors, bereaved families and society as a whole.

It is with the lives impacted on the 22/7 2011, and all the lives around the globe that have been impacted by terrorism in mind, we come together now to stake out the future and renew our commitment to our joint global efforts to combat terrorism in all its forms.

The recommended actions outlined in this document are the outcome of the conference *"22 July at Ten: Commemoration and Commitment"* hosted at the University of Bergen and organized in collaboration with the Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right and the Khalifa Ihler Institute who in collaboration with conference participants and the wider global community of stakeholders will seek to implement the recommended actions.

The objective of this plan of action is not to replace, but to build upon, embed and enact decades worth of collaborative work, of the establishment of global networks, collaborative institutions and policies striving towards the goal of combatting global terrorism in a manner that is respectful of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Central to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are the rights to life, dignity and liberty. These rights must be nurtured, defended, and built upon in our approaches to countering the spread of violent extremism and terrorism.

We acknowledge the ongoing joint efforts, international collaboration, and previous steps taken to address this major global issue, including in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism

strategy, and in its 7th, and previous reviews. As we bring together public and private sector, academia and civil society we also build towards the meaningful implementation of the objectives set out in New Zealand's [Christchurch Call](#) as signed by companies and governments alike.

Online platforms, governments, transnational organizations and civil society groups have a shared and interdependent responsibility to the users and citizens in governing our online public spaces. In governing these spaces the policies determined by private sector companies impacts more individuals than the policies of any single government in human history.

The ways in which terrorists and violent extremists abuse our shared online spaces is manyfold. On platforms of mass communication the issue ranges from the spread of misinformation, conspiracy theories and outright propaganda such as terrorist manifestos, to the live streaming of attacks to vast audiences. Other platforms facilitate coordination among terrorists and their supporters while others may contribute in providing the infrastructure for financing terrorist activities. Through these services and networks online spaces have become central to how terrorists and violent extremists operate.

The objective of this plan of action is to address head-on the conceptual, ethical and practical challenges posed by violent extremists and terrorists through the online spread of harmful materials, and to establish novel mechanisms to counteract the global impact of local terrorist attacks. The aim is to find concrete and actionable solutions to these global challenges through collaborative international efforts across a number of sectors.

Actions

We call on the organizers and participants in the Bergen Conference as well as the wider community of nations, corporations, civil society organizations and individuals to:

1. **Invoke and apply** a tougher and more comprehensive approach to incitement of violent extremism and terrorism rooted in principles of universality. This necessitates a whole-of-society approach, inclusive of individuals, governments, the corporate sector,

and civil society organizations providing a wide spectrum of experience, insight and oversight in questions of global governance.

2. **Establish a college of moderators** to increase transparency and accountability surrounding the practice of moderation of violent extremist content with the objective of upholding human rights. Training in recognizing terroristic and violent extremist content in a multitude of languages, and cultural contexts, as well as the mental health and well-being of human moderators is key in ensuring the quality of moderation. To accomplish this a robustly-resourced, independent and interorganizational consortium of moderators is urgently needed.

3. **Establish a rapid response taskforce** to support local authorities in limiting the disastrous impact of terrorist attacks and activities. Such a task force of unaffiliated, independent advisors should advise on media, social media, legal proceedings, law enforcement & security, counselling and mental health, and support in developing long-term strategies, as well as working with relevant leaders in the state or territory under attack to limit the scope of damaging impact. A rapid-response taskforce would not supersede existing protocols (such as GIFCT Crisis-Incident Protocols, the EU Crisis Protocol, and national emergency-services' response), but would streamline, coordinate and assist with crisis-response across sectors through an expert team of experienced and trusted specialists.

4. **Establish a global hub for providing support for civil society organizations** and their efforts in contributing to a safer internet through efforts targeting all stages of online radicalization and deliver on the desired objectives and outcomes as stated in the 7th review of the UN Global Terrorism Strategy while holding government and the corporate sector accountable to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This shall be supported by a network established for the sharing of knowledge and best practice for civil society organizations directly engaged in preventing the terroristic misuse of our shared online platforms.

5. **Establish a tech innovation fund** to produce technologies rooted in 'best practice' research and analysis, with the goal of supporting the four aims above. This fund would

also enable a better understanding of threats posed by the possible misuse of new technologies and ensure an updated understanding of techniques, methodologies and modus operandi used by terrorists and violent extremists to disseminate their content.