



QUINTET OF ATTORNEYS-GENERAL

Virtual Meeting

2/3 December 2021

Virtual Quintet of Attorneys-General Communiqué

2/3 December 2021, hosted by New Zealand

The Quintet of Attorneys-General (the “Quintet”) from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States of America and the United Kingdom met via video conference on 2/3 December 2021. Although the pandemic has prevented ministers from meeting in-person over the past two years, the 11th meeting of the Quintet, chaired by Attorney-General Parker from New Zealand, provided an opportunity for discussion on a number of issues of common interest. Guided by our shared responsibility and commitment to protecting our citizens, human rights, and the rule of law, we came together to discuss: our legal responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, enhancing cooperation to address foreign influence and foreign interference in democratic processes, and the challenges we face in seeking to prevent terrorist acts. We observed that an important common thread throughout all our topics of discussion was the role of social media and its impact on society.

Responding to the challenges posed by COVID-19

Together, we discussed the legal and constitutional challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. We shared our common experiences, having all had to work within our legal frameworks to respond effectively to the fast-changing and complex nature of the pandemic. Balanced against the critical importance of our governments delivering effective public health responses, we recognised the equally important need to ensure that our respective justice systems continue to protect our citizens, their human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, and also promote access to justice for all.

Cooperating to address foreign influence and foreign interference

We discussed the need for effective measures to meet the current and future threats posed by foreign interference to democratic processes. To address these challenges, we noted the importance of increasing transparency with regard to the nature and sources of foreign influence activities and cooperating effectively on foreign interference investigations. We are committed to ongoing dialogue on foreign influence and foreign interference activities and maintaining efforts to share information



on legal approaches to ensure foreign influence is appropriately disclosed to the public and decision-makers. We discussed mutual legal assistance arrangements with regard to foreign interference, espionage and other serious national security offences. We will continue to explore how we can ensure evidence of these serious criminal offences can be shared and used in criminal prosecutions.

Preventing terrorist acts

We expressed our collective condemnation of terrorists of all kinds. The recent attacks in Auckland; Christchurch; Leigh-on-Sea; Liverpool and London (Ontario) tragically demonstrate that the safety and security of our citizens continue to be threatened by violent terrorist groups and individuals. We noted our ongoing commitment to ensuring our countries are equipped with laws, policies and programmes to minimise the risk of violent extremists carrying out, and supporting, terrorist acts. We discussed the challenge of countering the online spread of terrorist narratives and violent extremist narratives that are conducive to terrorism. We also noted the importance of measures aimed at disengagement, rehabilitation and social cohesion.

Next meeting

We reaffirmed our commitment to keep working together and look forward to meeting face-to-face when it is safe to do so.

We agreed that the United States of America would host the next meeting in 2022.