Five Country Ministerial 2024

COMMUNIQUE

Introduction

We, the Home Affairs, Interior, Security and Immigration Ministers of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States (the 'Five Countries') remain steadfast in our commitment to uphold and promote shared liberal democratic values, and in working collaboratively to protect our citizens, communities, and governments from evolving national security threats in an increasingly contested world. Throughout 2024, the Five Countries have collaborated and advanced efforts on a range of issues relevant to our collective national security thematic areas of interest, specifically in consideration of the following issues:

National Security Risks of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The Five Countries recognise the enormous opportunities presented by critical and emerging technologies – such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) – in creating new jobs, improving productivity, and aiding in cyber defence. However, the rapid development and deployment of AI risks creating novel security vulnerabilities (including both to and from AI systems) and providing a platform for malign actors to increase the speed and scale of malicious activities. We are particularly concerned by the use of AI to facilitate the creation and distribution of mis/disinformation, malware, terrorist and violent extremist content, non-consensual deep fake pornography, and child sexual abuse material (CSAM). We continue to share information on how our governments are establishing frameworks to best manage the risks associated with AI, while still taking advantage of the benefits, and remain committed to working together to ensure our shared values shape international standards and governance for AI.

We acknowledge that deeper cooperation among the Five Countries will support the safe, secure, and trustworthy deployment and use of these technologies in a way that minimises the risks and maximises opportunities in a national security context. The Five Countries remain committed to continuing to align our work in achieving this goal.

Countering Foreign Interference

With more people than ever voting in elections around the world in 2024, the Five Countries recognise the need for resilient and transparent democratic institutions to mitigate evolving threats to democratic processes. Such threats, including the proliferation of state-sponsored disinformation through increased use of emerging technologies, pose a significant challenge to upholding our democratic values.

We are resolute in our commitment to ensuring that communities are free from transnational repression, and recognise the continued need for collaboration, information sharing and taking action to protect our communities, businesses, and citizens. It is unacceptable for any foreign government to target members of our communities to prevent individuals from exercising their fundamental rights and freedoms in the Five Countries.

Finally, the Five Countries recognise the need to mitigate the threat posed by foreign interference and espionage within our research ecosystems. The Five Countries remain committed to exchanging best practices and threat information on research security, including how foreign entities of concern may be attempting to adapt to and bypass safeguards, to improve the resilience of those ecosystems.

Cyber Security

The increase in malicious and sophisticated cyber security threats is impacting the daily lives of citizens, businesses and governments across the Five Countries. We emphasise the need to target the enablers that make up the cybercrime business model, who are providing the illicit products, goods and services that make it easier to commit cybercrime. Malicious cyber activity against critical infrastructure by both state and non-state malicious cyber actors pose some of the greatest threats to our Five Countries and we are committed to jointly disrupting these operations and securing our most important networks.

We note the importance of fraud in the cyber security context and are particularly concerned about online scam centres that target vulnerable individuals globally; are involved in human trafficking for forced criminality to support their operations; or feed into a highly profitable criminal enterprise that undermines our cyber security. We reaffirm our support to the commitments made at the Global Fraud Summit. A key outcome from the Summit was to maintain strong

engagement with industry, and the Five Countries agree to progress further efforts in this space to tackle the fraud threat and better protect our citizens.

We recognise the broader role of continued public-private collaboration in mitigating cyber security and data threats for our citizens, businesses and nations. To further deepen our relationship with industry, the Five Countries commit to share lessons learned from respective domestic efforts in securing data to ensure trusted and secure cross-border data flows and enhance the resilience of our data.

We recognise the value of coming together as the Five Countries to enhance strategic engagement on priority cybercrime threats, particularly through the international Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI). The Five Countries will actively support the CRI and will engage in wider fora to advance our shared aims through international cooperation and build cross-border resilience to collectively disrupt malicious cyber actors.

Domestic Security

In response to recent events in the Middle East, the Five Countries have regularly drawn on the FCM to discuss the conflict and broader security situation, as well as associated domestic security challenges. This includes recognising the effects of this conflict on impacted communities, exploring the associated impacts in polarising and radicalising community attitudes, and understanding the threats posed by the spread of extremist content and disinformation.

We remain very concerned about the rise of terrorist and violent extremist content online and its impact, particularly on young people, and we recognise the importance of continued engagement with industry to mitigate this issue.

As members of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) Independent Advisory Committee, we call on the organisation to strengthen its efforts to address terrorist and violent extremist content, including when it arises in the context of a prolonged conflict. We stress the importance of expanding GIFCT membership to include a broader range of technology companies, as well as in helping smaller platforms to identify and address terrorist and violent extremist content. In parallel, we continue to support the implementation of the Christchurch Call commitments and welcome the launch of the Christchurch Call Foundation.

We commit to addressing the complexity of youth radicalisation, as well as the need to better understand the risks of personalised ideological motivations. We acknowledge that unique pathways and factors can make at-risk individuals susceptible to radicalisation, including violent extremism. We will continue to share information on effective approaches to prevention, such as intervention approaches to support diversion efforts; and are committed to working together to conduct a diagnosis of how violent extremist actors leverage technology to encourage at-risk individuals to violence.

Lawful Access

The Five Countries will continue working together to maintain tightly-controlled lawful access to communications content that is vital to the investigation and prosecution of serious crimes including terrorism and child abuse. We will work in partnership with technology companies to do this, protecting the safety of our citizens.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA)

The Five Countries note the significant role of emerging technologies, including AI, in the proliferation of child sexual exploitation and abuse material. We reiterate our collective commitment to exercising all levers available to tackle this crime type and keep children safe in all settings.

We recognise the need to work collaboratively across the whole sector, noting the specific knowledge and role of industry and academia, and the expertise of victims, survivors and their families to ensure our efforts to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse are holistic, evidence-based, and promote technological innovation. In this spirit, we jointly endorsed the "Bridging Government Efforts and Elevating Survivors' Voices" statement (Annex I).

We also recognise the continued importance of the Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and – noting that the landscape has changed significantly since their launch five years ago – commit to further engagement with signatories to seek updates on efforts to uphold the principles as outlined.

While there has been progress through voluntary action to date, the Five Countries urgently call on tech companies to continue to drive innovation to keep children safe online on their platforms and to adhere to legal requirements in each

of our jurisdictions. We remain committed to working with industry to explore holistic efforts and supporting innovation in tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse, including responding to the proliferation of AI-generated child sexual exploitation and abuse content.

Migration

The Five Countries recognise the extensive pressures on our border management, migration and protection systems that are being exacerbated by significant volumes of global migration and displacement seen across the world.

We acknowledge that there are a multitude of drivers for irregular migration and forced displacement, and we recognise the importance of taking a whole-of-route approach in response to mixed migrant flows. The Five Countries will continue to explore opportunities to work together to combat organised crime groups that are facilitating and profiting from human smuggling.

The Five Countries also recognise the opportunities presented by the rise in global migration and mobility, and note the benefits of safe and regular migration pathways. At the same time, we remain committed to enforcing our immigration laws and delivering consequences for those individuals who have no right to remain in our respective countries. We encourage the use of innovative policy levers to maintain well-managed regular pathways in light of increasing demand on our migration systems. We are committed to deepening our collaboration to enhance the integrity of our migration and border systems by leveraging emerging technology and examining additional efforts to address fraud and stop bad actors from exploiting our regular pathways.

The Five Countries remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting and protecting the human rights of all migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers in accordance with our international obligations, whilst endorsing pragmatic approaches of countries to establish policies in their own national interest and national security.

Closing

The FCM remains the preeminent Ministerial-level forum for the Five Countries to engage and exchange information on shared national security issues and implement new initiatives to respond to various areas of concern. Our efforts to collaborate and exchange best practise in responding to evolving threats continues to grow and we look forward to further deepening these efforts in the coming year ahead.