

PM calls for immediate action to improve response to terrorist content online

Theresa May will today urge stronger cooperation between governments and tech companies to stop terrorists from being able to 'broadcast their atrocities in real time' on the internet.

In her intervention at the G20 Summit's session on Innovation, Digital Economy and Artificial Intelligence, the Prime Minister will say that governments need to learn lessons from previous attacks, including the Christchurch shootings.

She will urge close collaboration between Government security officials and social media and technology companies to prevent terrorist exploitation of the internet.

The PM will highlight a new crisis response mechanism which is being developed by technology companies and supported by the UK and others as part of the Christchurch Call.

This will ensure that companies have established networks of "online first responders", who are directly linked to those at the heart of international governments' Counter-Terrorism units and law enforcement agencies.

These connections will allow companies to more rapidly stop the spread of terrorist or violent extremist content following any attack in coordination with each other.

The crisis hotline would be used, for example, to share "digital fingerprints" which allow companies to prevent the re-upload of existing terrorist content on to their platforms.

The PM will also stress the need for continued development of technology to address terrorists' abuse of live-streaming, which has a devastating impact on victims' families and communities.

Prime Minister Theresa May is expected to say:

We should do all we can to bring the best minds together across industry to develop technology to tackle the misuse of live-streaming. We've seen the damage when terrorists can advertise into people's homes – now we mustn't let them broadcast their atrocities in real time.

The PM will say that, most urgently, governments and industry must work quickly to establish the crisis response mechanism – building on what was

started through the Global Internet Forum to Counter-Terrorism.

GIFCT was created in the aftermath of the Westminster terror attack. The companies involved – Facebook, Google, Twitter and Microsoft – are already making use of technology to automatically remove terrorist propaganda.

GIFCT has already worked with over 100 smaller platforms. The PM will say we now need to see tools and expertise being shared with others to build the capacity of industry to tackle terrorist content online.

The Prime Minister is expected to say:

There are no easy answers but I am sure that by combining different methodologies to detect illegal and harmful content we will be able to find an approach that severely limits terrorists ability to live-stream. In the UK we are encouraging social media companies to develop these techniques at pace. Others should do the same.

The Prime Minister's intervention at the G20 will build on the "Christchurch Call To Action", which world leaders signed at the Online Extremism Summit in Paris earlier this year.

The 1.5 million copies of the video of the sickening Christchurch attacks had been removed by Facebook, but could still be found on YouTube for as long as eight hours after it was first posted. Similarly, the 2017 attacks in the UK exposed gaps in our response and underlined the need to rapidly address this issue.