

EUROPOL HOSTS CONFERENCE ON ONLINE TERRORIST PROPAGANDA

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[News Article](#)



On 10 and 11 April 2017, [Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre \(ECTC\)](#) hosted its first high-level Conference on Online Terrorist Propaganda. On this occasion, over 150 participants gathered at Europol's headquarters in The Hague to discuss a wide variety of topics pertaining to the online terrorist threat.

Participants included members of the ECTC Advisory Group on Terrorist Propaganda, representatives of the EU Commission and EU Council, academia and law enforcement practitioners from Europe and the US.

Terrorist groups, such as the so-called Islamic State (IS), owe largely their success to their well-planned and implemented strategy on the internet. Their virtual footprint will remain on the internet for the foreseeable future as a result of the massive production of slickly-edited content accumulated over the past years. Tackling this challenge remains at the forefront of the EU's counter- terrorism efforts and can only be achieved through a coordinated and systematic action bringing together law enforcement, public institutions and the private sector.

Recognising the need for such a multi-stakeholder approach, the ECTC established in July 2016 an Advisory Group on Online Terrorist Propaganda, bringing together EU IRU staff with academics and practitioners with recognised expertise in the field of terrorist exploitation of online communications.

With the creation of this Advisory Group, the ECTC aims to draw on its members' expertise and technological solutions to keep pace with the way terrorist groups adapt their message and communications to changing environments and new technologies.

The results of this multi-stakeholder cooperation were presented at Europol's Conference on Online Terrorist Propaganda, alongside topics ranging from solutions on how to analyse big data and map terrorist networks online to insights into the online behaviour, tactics and communication of terrorists. The outcome of the Conference will help Europol and EU law enforcement in general to better focus their counter-terrorism efforts, as well as to enhance the tools and techniques in place towards more effective prevention and investigation.

Background

Since the launch of Europol's [EU Internet Referral Unit](#) (EUR IRU) in July 2015, concrete steps have been taken to stop the abuse of the internet by terrorist groups, with measurable outcomes. Over 83% of the content referred to the internet service providers by the EU IRU so far has been removed. The EU IRU continues to engage with the Internet service providers to encourage the voluntary swift removal of terrorist content from their platforms.

In July 2016, Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre established an Advisory Group on Online Terrorist Propaganda, bringing together EU IRU staff with academics and practitioners with recognised expertise in the field of terrorist exploitation of online communications. This Advisory Group ensures that the EU IRU keeps pace with the latest developments in its fields of expertise by the sharing of knowledge and best practices.

The EU IRU is part of the EU Internet Forum, a public-private partnership launched at the initiative of the EU Commission in December 2015. This Forum has two key objectives: to reduce accessibility to terrorist content online and to empower civil society partners to increase the volume of effective alternative narratives online. By engaging with the internet industry, the EU IRU is playing a key role in addressing the Forum's first objective of reducing the accessibility to terrorist content online.

The research conducted by the ECTC Advisory Group on Online Terrorist Propaganda between October 2016 and April 2017 was presented in the 1st ECTC Conference on Online Terrorist Propaganda (10-11 April 2017) and resulted in the following publications.

- [The "Jihadi Wolf" threat](#) - Author: Arije Antinori, PhD
- [The Response of, and on, Twitter to the Release of Dabiq Issue 15](#) - Authors: Daniel Grinnell (Cardiff University), Stuart Macdonald (Swansea University), David Mair (Swansea University).
- [Exploring the Role of Instructional Material in AQAP's Inspire and ISIS' Rumiyah](#) - Authors: Dr. Alastair Reed & Dr. Haroro J. Ingram

- [Deconstruction of Identity Concepts in Islamic State Propaganda](#) - Author: J.M. Berger via the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), The Hague
- [Computer support to analyze IS propaganda](#) - Authors: Lisa Kaati, Magnus Sahlgren, Tim Isbister, Babak Toghiani-Rizi and Katie Cohen, Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI)

CRIME AREAS

[Terrorism](#)

TARGET GROUPS

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ENTITIES

[EU Internet Referral Unit \(EU IRU\)](#) • [European Counter Terrorism Centre \(ECTC\)](#)

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