GIFCT WORKING GROUPS OUTPUT 2022

Introducing 2022 GIFCT Working Group Outputs

GIFCT
Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism

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In July 2020, GIFCT launched a series of Working Groups to bring together experts from across sectors, geographies, and disciplines to offer advice in specific thematic areas and deliver on targeted, substantive projects to enhance and evolve counterterrorism and counter-extremism efforts online. Participation in Working Groups is voluntary and individuals or NGOs leading Working Group projects and outputs receive funding from GIFCT to help further their group's aims. Participants work with GIFCT to prepare strategic work plans, outline objectives, set goals, identify strategies, produce deliverables, and meet timelines. Working Group outputs are made public on the GIFCT website to benefit the widest community. Each year, after GIFCT's Annual Summit in July, groups are refreshed to update themes, focus areas, and participants.

From August 2021 to July 2022, GIFCT Working Groups focused on the following themes:

- Crisis Response & Incident Protocols
- Positive Interventions & Strategic Communications
- Technical Approaches: Tooling, Algorithms & Artificial Intelligence
- Transparency: Best Practices & Implementation
- Legal Frameworks

A total of 178 participants from 35 countries across six continents were picked to participate in this year's Working Groups. Applications to join groups are open to the public and participants are chosen based on ensuring each group is populated with subject matter experts from across different sectors and geographies, with a range of perspectives to address the topic. Working Group participants in 2021–2022 came from civil society (57%), national and international government bodies (26%), and technology companies (17%).

Participant diversity does not mean that everyone always agrees on approaches. In many cases, the aim is not to force group unanimity, but to find value in highlighting differences of opinion and develop empathy and greater understanding about the various ways that each sector identifies problems and looks to build solutions. At the end of the day, everyone involved in addressing violent extremist exploitation of digital platforms is working toward the same goal: countering terrorism while respecting human rights. The projects presented from this year's Working Groups highlight the many perspectives and approaches necessary to understand and effectively address the ever-evolving counterterrorism and violent extremism efforts in the online space. The following summarizes the thirteen outputs produced by the five Working Groups.

Crisis Response Working Group (CRWG):

The GIFCT Working Group on Crisis Response feeds directly into improving and refining GIFCT's own Incident Response Framework, as well as posing broader questions about the role of law enforcement, tech companies, and wider civil society groups during and in the aftermath of a terrorist or violent extremist attack. CRWG produced three outputs. The largest of the three was an immersive virtual series of Crisis Response Tabletop Exercises, hosted by GIFCT's Director of Technology, Tom Thorley. The aim of the Tabletops was to build on previous Europol and Christchurch Call-led Crisis Response events, with a focus on human rights, internal communications, and external strategic communications in and around crisis scenarios. To share lessons learned and areas for

improvement and refinement, a summary of these cross-sector immersive events is included in the 2022 collection of Working Group papers.

The second output from the CRWG is a paper on the Human Rights Lifecycle of a Terrorist Incident, led by Dr. Farzaneh Badii. This paper discusses how best GIFCT and relevant stakeholders can apply human rights indicators and parameters into crisis response work based on the 2021 GIFCT Human Rights Impact Assessment and UN frameworks. To help practitioners integrate a human rights approach, the output highlights which and whose human rights are impacted during a terrorist incident and the ramifications involved.

The final CRWG output is on Crisis Response Protocols: Mapping & Gap Analysis , led by the New Zealand government in coordination with the wider Christchurch Call to Action. The paper maps crisis response protocols of GIFCT and partnered governments and outlines the role of tech companies and civil society within those protocols. Overall, the output identifies and analyzes the gaps and overlaps of protocols, and provides a set of recommendations for moving forward.

Positive Interventions & Strategic Communications (PIWG):

The Positive Interventions and Strategic Communications Working Group developed two outputs to focus on advancing the prevention and counter-extremism activist space. The first is a paper led by Munir Zamir on Active Strategic Communications: Measuring Impact and Audience Engagement. This analysis highlights tactics and methodologies for turning passive content consumption of campaigns into active engagement online. The analysis tracks a variety of methodologies for yielding more impact-focused measurement and evaluation.

The second paper, led by Kesa White, is on Good Practices, Tools, and Safety Measures for Researchers. This paper discusses approaches and safeguarding mechanisms to ensure best practices online for online researchers and activists in the counterterrorism and counter-extremism sector. Recognizing that researchers and practitioners often put themselves or their target audiences at risk, the paper discusses do-no-harm principles and online tools for safety-by-design methodologies within personal, research, and practitioner online habits.

Technical Approaches Working Group (TAWG):

As the dialogue on algorithms and the nexus with violent extremism has increased in recent years, the Technical Approaches Working Group worked to produce a longer report on Methodologies to Evaluate Content Sharing Algorithms & Processes led by GIFCT's Director of Technology Tom Thorley in collaboration with Emma Llanso and Dr. Chris Meserole. While Year 1 of Working Groups produced a paper identifying the types of algorithms that pose major concerns to the CVE and counterterrorism sector, Year 2 output explores research questions at the intersection of algorithms, users and TVEC, the feasibility of various methodologies and the challenges and debates facing research in this area.

To further this technical work into Year 3, TAWG has worked with GIFCT to release a Research Call

for Proposals funded by GIFCT. This Call for Proposals is on Machine Translation. Specifically, it will allow third parties to develop tooling based on the gap analysis from last year's TAWG Gap Analysis. Specifically, it seeks to develop a multilingual machine learning system addressing violent extremist contexts.

Transparency Working Group (TWG):

The Transparency Working Group produced two outputs to guide and evolve the conversation about transparency in relation to practitioners, governments, and tech companies. The first output, led by Dr. Joe Whittaker, focuses on researcher transparency in analyzing algorithmic systems. The paper on Recommendation Algorithms and Extremist Content: A Review of Empirical Evidence reviews how researchers have attempted to analyze content-sharing algorithms and indicates suggested best practices for researchers in terms of framing, methodologies, and transparency. It also contains recommendations for sustainable and replicable research.

The second output, led by Dr. Courtney Radsch, reports on Transparency Reporting: Good Practices and Lessons from Global Assessment Frameworks. The paper highlights broader framing for the questions around transparency reporting, the needs of various sectors for transparency, and questions around what meaningful transparency looks like.

The Legal Frameworks Working Group (LFWG):

The Legal Frameworks Working Group produced two complementary outputs.

The first LFWG output is about Privacy and Data Protection/Access led by Dia Kayyali. This White Paper reviews the implications and applications of the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This includes case studies on Yemen and Ukraine, a data taxonomy, and legal research on the Stored Communications Act.

The second LFWG output focuses on terrorist definitions and compliments GIFCT's wider Definitional Frameworks and Principles work. This output, led by Dr. Katy Vaughan, is on The Interoperability of Terrorism Definitions. This paper focuses on the interoperability, consistency, and coherence of terrorism definitions across a number of countries, international organizations, and tech platforms. Notably, it highlights legal issues around defining terrorism based largely on government lists and how they are applied online.

Research on Algorithmic Amplification:

Finally, due to the increased concern from governments and human rights networks about the potential link between algorithmic amplification and violent extremist radicalization, GIFCT commissioned Dr. Jazz Rowa to sit across three of GIFCT's Working Groups to develop an extensive paper providing an analytical framework through the lens of human security to better understand the relation between algorithms and processes of radicalization. Dr. Rowa participated in the Transparency, Technical Approaches, and Legal Frameworks Working Groups to gain insight into

the real and perceived threat from algorithmic amplification. This research looks at the contextuality of algorithms, the current public policy environment, and human rights as a cross-cutting issue. In reviewing technical and human processes, she also looks at the potential agency played by algorithms, governments, users, and platforms more broadly to better understand causality.

We at GIFCT hope that these fourteen outputs are of utility to the widest range of international stakeholders possible. While we are an organization that was founded by technology companies to aid the wider tech landscape in preventing terrorist and violent extremist exploitation online, we believe it is only through this multistakeholder approach that we can yield meaningful and long-lasting progress against a constantly evolving adversarial threat.

We look forward to the refreshed Working Groups commencing in September 2022 and remain grateful for all the time and energy given to these efforts by our Working Group participants.

Participant Affiliations in the August 2021 - July 2022 Working Groups:

Tech Sector	Government Sector	Civil Society / Academia / Practitioners	Civil Society / Academia / Practitioners
ActiveFence	Aqaba Process	Access Now	Lowy Institute
Amazon	Association Rwandaise de Défense des Droits de l'Homme	Anti-Defamation League (ADL)	M&C Saatchi World Services Partner
Automattic	Australian Government - Department of Home Affairs	American University	Mnemonic
Checkstep Ltd.	BMI Germany	ARTICLE 19	Moonshot
Dailymotion	Canadian Government	Australian Muslim Advocacy Network (AMAN)	Moduslzad - Centre for applied research on deradicalisation
Discord	Classification Office, New Zealand	Biodiversity Hub International	New America's Open Technology Institute
Dropbox, Inc.	Commonwealth Secretariat	Bonding Beyond Borders	Oxford Internet Institute
ExTrac	Council of Europe, Committee on Counter-Terrorism	Brookings Institution	Partnership for Countering Influence Operations, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Facebook	Department of Justice - Ireland	Business for Social Responsibility	Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF); Germany
JustPaste.it	Department of State - Ireland	Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR)	PeaceGeeks
Mailchimp	Department of State - USA	Center for Democracy & Technology	Point72.com
MEGA	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), New Zealand Government	Center for Media, Data and Society	Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL)
Microsoft	DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3)	Centre for Human Rights	Policy Center for the New South (senior fellow)
Pex	European Commission	Centre for International Governance Innovation	Public Safety Canada & Carleton University
Snap Inc.	Europol/EU IRU	Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (CYCJ) at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland.	Queen's University
Tik Tok	Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	Cognitive Security Information Sharing & Analysis Center	Sada Award, Athar NGO, International Youth Foundation
Tremau	HRH Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad's Office	Cornell University	Shout Out UK
Twitter	Ministry of Culture, DGMIC - France	CyberPeace Institute	Strategic News Global
You Tube	Ministry of Foreign Affairs - France	Dare to be Grey	S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore (RSIS)
	Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) - Indian Government	Dept of Computer Science, University of Otago	Swansea University
	Ministry of Justice and Security, the Netherlands	Digital Medusa	Tech Against Terrorism
	National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) Pakistan	Edinburgh Law School, The University of Edinburgh	The Alan Turing Institute

	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL)	The Electronic Frontier Foundation
	Office of the Australian eSafety Commissioner (eSafety)	Gillberg Neuropsychiatry Centre, Gothenburg University, Sweden,	The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) / University of Maryland
	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE RFoM)	George Washington University, Program on Extremism	Unity is Strength
	Pôle d'Expertise de la Régulation Numérique (French Government)	Georgetown University	Université de Bretagne occidentale (France)
	North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also called the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO)	Georgia State University	University of Auckland
	Secrétaire général du Comité Interministériel de prévention de la délinquance et de la radicalisation	Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET)	University of Groningen
	State Security Service of Georgia	Global Disinformation Index	University of Massachusetts Lowell
	The Royal Hashemite Court/ Jordanian Government	Global Network Initiative (GNI)	University of Oxford
	The Office of Communications (Ofcom), UK	Global Partners Digital	University of Queensland
	UK Home Office	Global Project Against Hate and Extremism	University of Salford, Manchester, England,
	United Nations Counter-terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)	Groundscout/Resonant Voices Initiative	University of South Wales
	UN, Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (1267 Monitoring Team)	Hedayah	University of the West of Scotland
	United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY)	Human Cognition	Violence Prevention Network
	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Institute for Strategic Dialogue	WeCan Africa Initiative & Inspire Africa For Global Impact
		International Centre for Counter-Terrorism	Wikimedia Foundation
		Internet Governance Project, Georgia Institute of Technology	World Jewish Congress
		Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand	XCyber Group
		JOS Project	Yale University, Jackson Institute
		JustPeace Labs	Zinc Network
		Khalifa Ihler Institute	
		KizBasina (Just-a-Girl)	
		Love Frankie	

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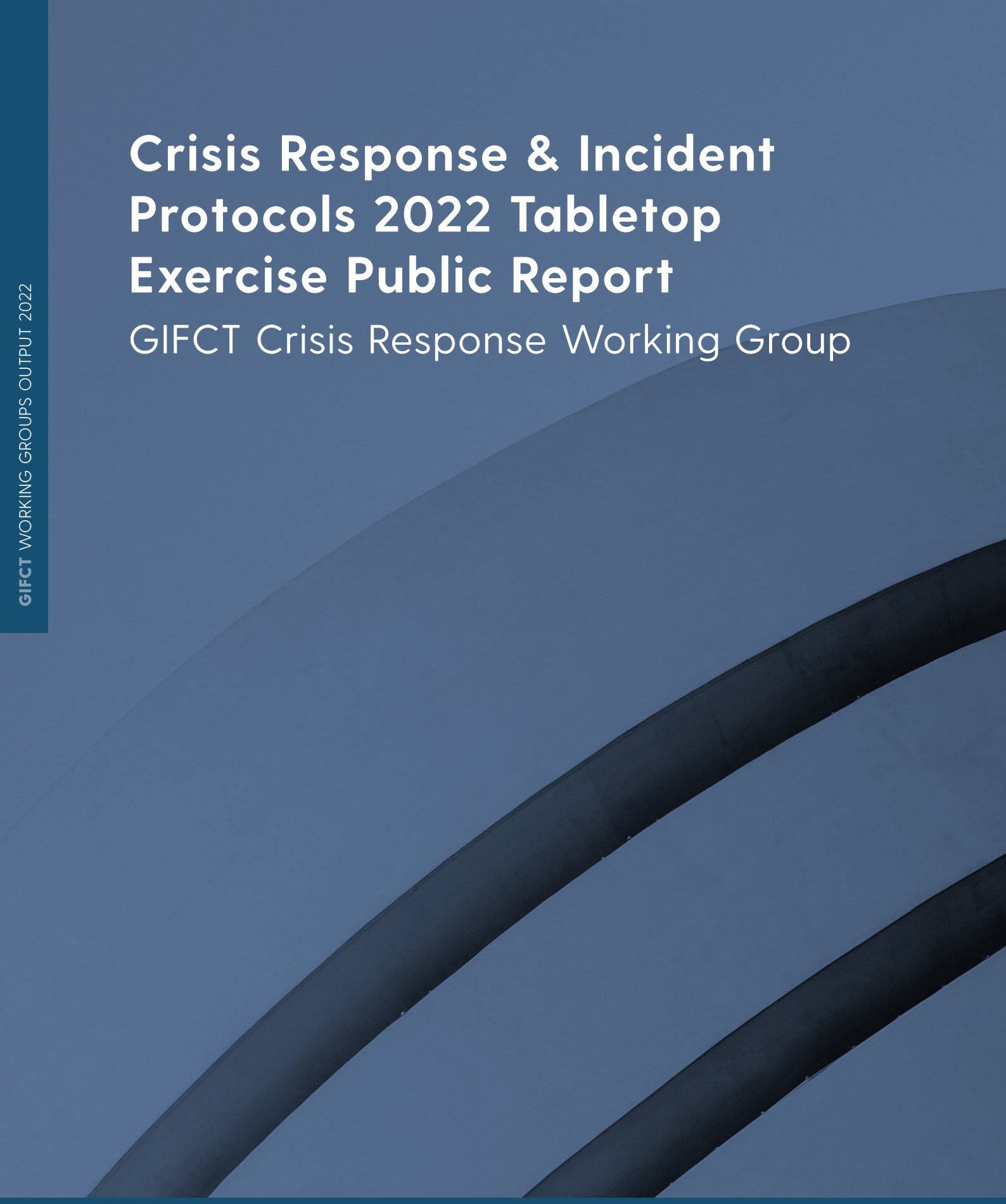
Crisis Response & Incident Protocols 2022 Tabletop Exercise Public Report

GIFCT Crisis Response Working Group



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Exercise Descriptions & Purpose

A. In order to perform an extensive and productive assessment, the team used tabletop exercises designed particularly for different stages of GIFCT's workload. The tabletop exercises were developed to simulate crisis situations to review roles and emergency responses of GIFCT, member companies, and other stakeholders.

B. During each exercise, the design team from KizBasina (NGO Sector Facilitator) was available to ensure smooth operation of the exercises.

C. For the purpose of easy introduction to first-time participants, each exercise was designed using different scenarios, visual and written aids, and charts.

D. For the assessment, three exercises were planned:

- **TTX1 - Human Rights Exercise:** The exercise concentrates on the impact of the GIFCT Incident Response Framework on Human Rights and how to ensure that they are appropriately balanced and protected.
- **TTX2 - Communications Exercise:** The exercise tests the efficacy and quality of current processes and procedures between GIFCT team and members as they navigate the Incident Response Framework.
- **TTX3 - STRATCOM Exercise:** The aim of the exercise is to test the efficacy of GIFCT's public statements to serve their intended purpose during an incident and to assess the quality of the messaging included in GIFCT's public statements.

E. Unfortunately, the TTX3 exercise (STRATCOM) was not able to be performed at the designated time due to extraordinary circumstances. It was scheduled the week following the attacks in Buffalo, NY and so participants were fully engaged managing the active crisis. GIFCT released public statements on both the activation of their Content Incident Protocol in response to the attack[1] and their debrief process, which contain further lessons learned relevant to this report.[2]

F. This report represents a summary of the findings from the exercises; more detailed conclusions have also been provided to GIFCT and the Crisis Response Working Group. However, the public release of these details would provide insight into the incident response processes of GIFCT and their partners, which may provide terrorists and violent extremists with information that aids in their adversarial behavior.

Lessons Learned - Design and Facilitation of Exercises

During and following TTX1 and TTX2, the project team identified the following lessons in order to maintain an accurate simulation for the participants.

1. **The importance of player aids** is one of the most important parts of the tabletop exercise. While they are designed to be as simple and easy as possible, without explanations or

1 Update: Content Incident Protocol Activated in Response to Shooting in Buffalo, New York United States, GIFCT, May 18, 2022, https://gifct.org/2022/05/14/cip-activated-buffalo-new-york-shooting/.

2 GIFCT. (2022b, June 23). Debrief: CIP Activation, Buffalo, New York USA. https://gifct.org/2022/06/23/debrief-cip-activation-buffalo/

additional material to guide the players, the exercises easily present complications that may disturb the simulation. The team found it best when different aids were used to explain the purpose, timeline, and stages of the exercise.

2. **The number of participants** involved during the exercise is also another variable that can change the course of the facilitation of the exercise. As participants or groups increase, the number of facilitators should proportionally multiply in order to respond to the needs and questions of the participants as effectively and rapidly as possible.
3. **Lastly, as online communication methods**, direct video-sound based applications have been shown to be more valuable in view of the fact that giving and receiving instantaneous information is easier. As opposed to messaging/community apps, they allow a more clear, open, and instant communication channel among participants and the facilitation team where acknowledgment of the transmitted information is instant and assured. However, it is important to note that for larger groups of participants (30+) they are not as useful and can be complicated. A balance of these tools should be considered for both effective exercises and effective crisis response.

Lessons Learned - Protocol Design and Operational Response

In consideration of the purposes and outcomes of the exercises and upon further assessment of participants' actions, the project team came to the following conclusions:

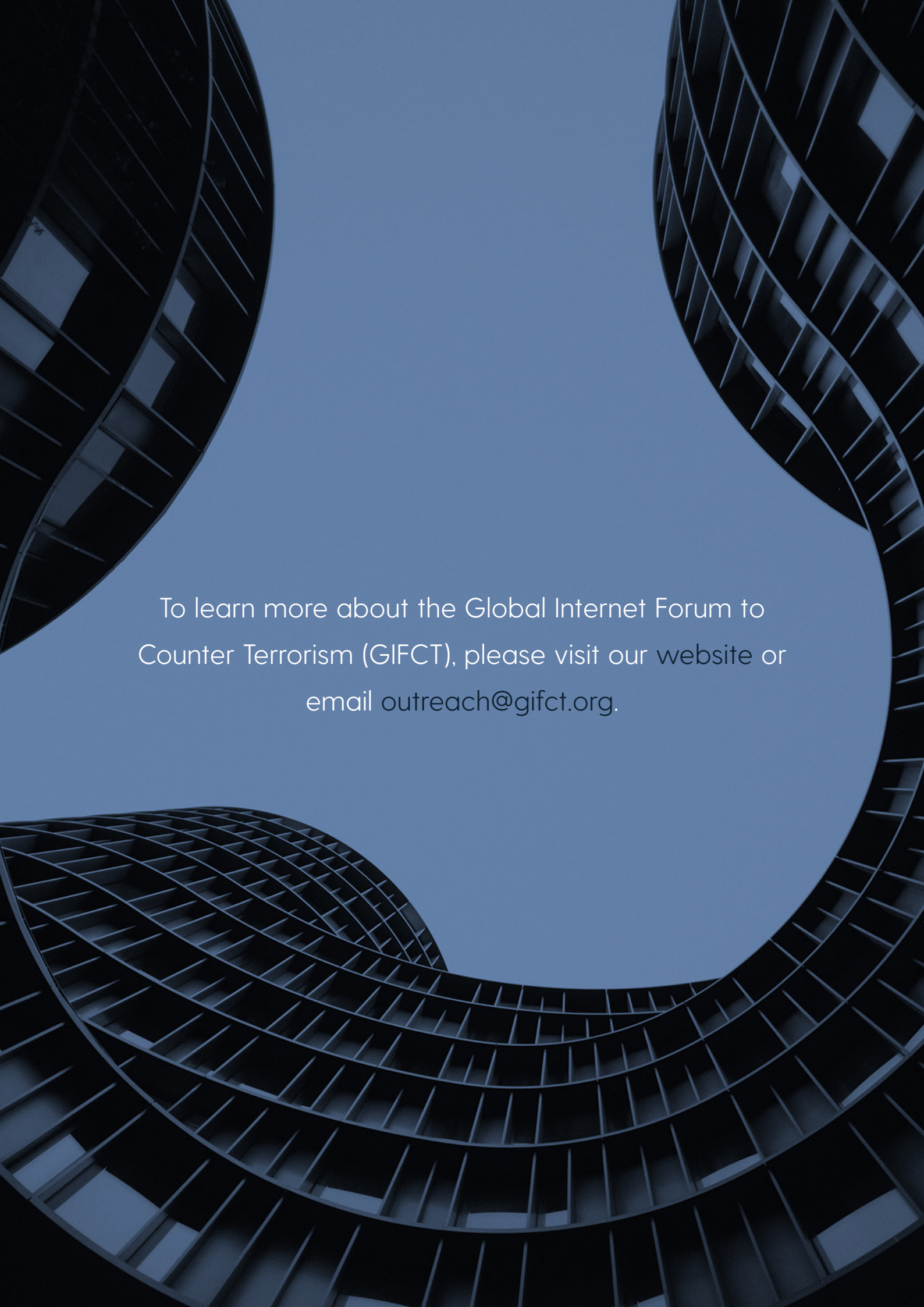
A. **Clearer definitions of certain terms employed in the guidelines:** More clear and understandable definitions of key terms placed in the protocols would increase response time, reduce confusion, and mitigate the risk of civil freedom concerns.
B. **Clearer guidelines on event assessment**: In crisis situations where time is of the essence for GIFCT, member companies, and government stakeholders to fully and correctly assess an incident, a minimum definition or a guide to characterizing an event is important.
C. **More stakeholder discussions:** As GIFCT operates on a case-by-case basis, with every new incident a new problem or obstacle may arise. In consideration of the large number of stakeholders GIFCT works with, it is important that they keep up with current news and trends. Monthly events where experts speak on current issues with the participation of GIFCT stakeholder representatives may be a solution.
D. **More comprehensive protocols:** Current protocols should be definable, defensible, and scalable across situations. They need to be updated and extended regularly with every simulation or real-life incident, and should be clear not only on definitions but paths to follow in crisis situations. Protocols should be clear about the expectations of each stakeholder group participating, laying out responsibilities as well as what they can expect from the protocol.
E. **GIFCT communication:** During crisis response, communications must be timely, simple and clear - especially in writing. Communications templates should be enhanced to ensure efficiency and accessibility while also removing unnecessary duplication. Tech companies and other stakeholders should also consider standardizing communications to ensure clear, concise,

timely, and complete communication.

Additional suggestions from stakeholders were:

- Providing additional methods for stakeholders to raise concerns or issues during exceptional circumstances;
- Enhancing expectation settings about harm types in scope and developing proactive communication; and
- Increasing transparency by using sanitized versions of the internal debriefs during public communications.

F. Existing communication channels: Current communication mediums can be improved, especially considering instant response and acknowledgment features. Furthermore, two-factor authentication and the importance of fallback systems and secondary communication channels in the case of a malfunction were also viewed as critical.



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