

Dear Chair of the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC),

Thank you for your continued work to support the GIFCT, its Board and its mission through the sharing of your insights and valuable input. We appreciated receiving the IAC's annual report as well as the more recent horizon scanning report.

We appreciate the time and effort that went into preparing these comprehensive documents, and we value the insights and recommendations provided by the IAC.

Response to IAC Annual Report

We are pleased to see that the IAC believes in GIFCT's mission and is committed to supporting our journey towards becoming a unique partnership space for internet companies and platforms to counter the exploitation of the online space by extremist groups. We also appreciate the IAC's commitment to fostering good governance, diversity, expansion, transparency, and best practices to enable GIFCT to enhance its capacity to curb the tide of online extremism and work consistently towards a safer, more inclusive online space.

Regarding the specific recommendations provided in the report, we would like to highlight the following:

- **On Governance Structure:**

We understand the concerns raised about the governance structure of GIFCT, we believe that the current structure has been designed to ensure that GIFCT remains focused on its core mission. Having said that, the Board agrees that continuing to improve communication is very warranted. We have made progress this year and look forward to continuing to fine-tune these efforts with our new ED in the upcoming year.

We hope to emphasize the IAC's crucial role in advising on the threat landscape and providing guidance on how GIFCT can better address emerging threats and trends. We believe that the governance structure supports this role, with a focus on effectiveness and cutting-edge aspects of our work. We encourage the IAC to continue its valuable work in advising on the threat landscape and providing strategic recommendations. The inclusion of the IAC Chair in Board meetings is intended to facilitate communication on Board discussions and a direct feedback loop to the IAC on Board decisions and discussion and we hope to continue to use this as a vehicle to keep the wider IAC informed.

- **On Membership Expansion:**

We agree with the IAC's recommendation on expanding membership. Diversifying our membership base is crucial to ensuring that GIFCT remains effective in addressing the evolving threat landscape. We believe that any expansion should be done in a way that maintains the high standards set by GIFCT and ensures that new members are committed to upholding these standards.

We are actively working on strategies to attract and onboard new members, particularly smaller platforms and those from underrepresented regions, and congratulate GIFCT on its sustained efforts to engage new partners in diverse regions. We appreciate the IAC's insights on this matter and will take them into account in our expansion efforts. As always, we welcome any support from the IAC to engage and attract new members.

Most recently, under the guidance of our ED, the GIFCT has shifted the majority of its programming pillar to refocus the team's effort to serve the best strategic priorities that have a clear member focus, which includes not only enhanced support and engagement with current and incoming members but also strategic outreach and engagement with global partners. GIFCT's success rests on its membership, so supporting and delivering value to members is an ongoing priority.

With regard to 'higher risk' platforms and broader expansion, we would welcome specific company suggestions from the IAC.

As part of the broader Governance review, we agree regarding the need for greater clarity around IAC's role. As the Board has previously emphasized, it is important to separate the IAC's function advising GIFCT as an organization from individual members' scrutiny. The IAC is not a scrutiny body for members, nor is engagement with the IAC a condition of membership.

- **On Transparency Reporting:**

We appreciate the IAC's recognition of GIFCT's rigorous work on transparency reporting and assessments. Transparency is a core value of GIFCT, and we strive to provide clear and comprehensive reports on our activities and progress.

The suggestion to include a forward-looking section in our transparency reports is a very interesting one. This would allow us to highlight expected challenges to transparency and outline potential solutions. GIFCT will consider this recommendation as we continue to improve our transparency reporting practices.

- **On Working Group Progress:**

We welcome the IAC's feedback on the progress of our working groups. We acknowledge the need for improved attendance and engagement in these groups,

particularly from academia and civil society members. We also agree with the recommendation to shift the focus of working groups from academic discussions to the development of practical solutions. We are therefore pleased that the new ED has been working with the GIFCT team to review past practice with a view to creating more targeted multi-stakeholder engagements that can meaningfully deliver on GIFCT strategic objectives.

- **On Fundraising:**

We acknowledge the IAC's concerns about fundraising. The sustainability of GIFCT and its mission as well as its efforts to keep on top of emerging threats will be greatly benefited from a diverse financial approach. This will help the organization meet the expectations of its members and stakeholders.

While the need for additional resources to support our expanding operations is of essential importance, we are committed to ensuring that any fundraising efforts align with GIFCT's mission and values, and are in line with the funding principles agreed earlier.

- **On Global Summit:**

We appreciate the IAC's support for the key priorities of the Annual Summit. This event is an important opportunity for multi-stakeholder engagement and discussion on current risks, foreseeable challenges, and potential solutions.

We agree with the IAC's recommendation to make the summit more interactive and solutions-oriented. We will work with GIFCT to implement this recommendation in the planning and executing of future multi-stakeholder convenings.

As we have previously shared with the IAC, the Board would like to bring the Annual Summit more centrally into the focus and guidance of the IAC as the core multi-stakeholder convening point. We feel it would be very beneficial to GIFCT to have the IAC involved in the agenda setting and expert scoping for the upcoming Annual summit.

Response to IAC Horizon Scanning Report

We share the IAC's high-level assessment of key violent extremist trends and threats on the current horizon, in particular the challenges that arise from the fragmentation and decentralization of violent extremist behavior online. We also share the IAC's concern that responding to evolving trends requires agility and adaptation – qualities we agree should continue to be incorporated into GIFCT's strategy, programming, and technology solutions.

Indeed, the rapid development of generative AI poses both a challenge and an opportunity: GIFCT and its members must respond to new risks from generative AI while leveraging its capabilities to identify and help mitigate those risks.

While we must remain cognizant of the specificities of the GIFCT's mandate, we appreciate the IAC's expertise and perspective on the varied drivers of violent extremism. We also welcome input on evidence-based opportunities for upstream prevention, consistent with user privacy and respect for fundamental rights. We remain committed to providing GIFCT members with the context, tools, and flexibility to respond to violent extremist content or behavior that manifests differently across GIFCT's membership and the online ecosystem.

GIFCT's resources are, of course, limited, but with effective communication and collaboration among GIFCT, its members, the Board, the IAC, and multi-stakeholder partners, GIFCT can optimize its ability to address terrorist and violent extremist exploitation of online spaces.

Once again, we thank the IAC for their efforts and look forward to continuing our collaboration in the coming year.

All the best,

Neil Potts *and* **Courtney Gregoire**

2023 GIFCT Chair

VP Trust & Safety Policy

Meta

2024 GIFCT Chair

Chief Digital Safety Officer

Microsoft Corporation