

# Security summit ends with pledges to tackle emerging threats

Tech companies should prioritise the protection of their users and the wider public when designing services, the UK and international security partners have warned.

Senior ministers from the UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States have reaffirmed their commitment to work together with industry to tackle a range of security threats including the sexual abuse and exploitation of children online.

The commitment follows a two-day summit, known as the Five Country Ministerial, where Home Affairs, Interior Security and Immigration Ministers of the Five Eyes countries discussed current and emerging threats which could undermine national and global security. This important partnership and these issues will remain a focus for the UK now and after Brexit.

During a roundtable with tech firms, ministers stressed that law enforcement agencies' efforts to investigate and prosecute the most serious crimes would be hampered if the industry carries out plans to implement end-to-end encryption, without the necessary safeguards.

They added that encrypted services could mask the full scale of harms on the internet and put vulnerable users at risk.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The Five Eyes are united that tech firms should not develop their systems and services, including end-to-end encryption, in ways that empower criminals or put vulnerable people at risk.

We heard today about the devastating and lifelong impact of child sexual exploitation and abuse and agreed firm commitments to collaborate to get ahead of the threat.

As Governments, protecting our citizens is our top priority, which is why through the unique and binding partnership of Five Eyes we will tackle these emerging threats together.

Also speaking at the conclusion of the two-day conference United States Attorney General William P. Barr said:

The Five Eyes partnership is vital. Throughout this week, we have had substantive, frank and positive discussions surrounding our shared duty to protect public safety, including those related to the internet.

Encryption presents a unique challenge. We must ensure that we do not stand by as advances in technology create spaces where criminal activity of the most heinous kind can go undetected and unpunished.

Indeed, making our virtual world more secure should not come at the expense of making us more vulnerable in the real world. We are grateful for the leadership of Home Secretary Patel in facilitating these critical discussions and shared commitment to safety for all.

Industry agreed to collaborate with the Five Eyes governments on a set of voluntary principles, to be drawn up by the end of the September, on steps they will take to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse, including the growing threat of livestreaming.

The theme of this year's meeting was 'emerging threats', with ministers also turning their attention to common risks posed by new technologies, including connected devices, terrorist use of the internet and foreign terrorist fighters.

Joint communiques have been published following the [Five Country Ministerial meetings](#) and [Quintet meetings](#) summarising the discussions and conclusions.

The following commitments were agreed by Ministers present:

- to continue to develop and share learning on cyber threats to improve the collective response
- the importance that supply chains in the 5G network should be trusted and reliable to protect it from unauthorised access or interference
- to create a stronger approach to the misuse of drones, with the UK hosting an event next year to enhance cooperation
- to explore enhancing cross border information sharing
- to maintain efforts to combat foreign interference in elections, the economy and academia

The Quintet of Attorneys General from the Five Eyes countries also joined the Five Country Ministerial for meetings on online harms, encryption and foreign terrorist fighters.

Tomorrow, Attorneys General from the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand will meet for the Quintet and will discuss a range of shared issues including cybercrime, hostile state activity and social media and data privacy issues.

The Five Country Ministerial partnership continues and will be hosted in 2020 by New Zealand.

---

## [Full list of new ministerial and government appointments: July 2019](#)

The full list of all government appointments following Boris Johnson becoming Prime Minister has been published.

---

## [Full list of new ministerial and government appointments: July 2019](#)

### **Help us improve GOV.UK**

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. We'll send you a link to a feedback form. It will take only 2 minutes to fill in. Don't worry we won't send you spam or share your email address with anyone.

Email address

[Send me the survey](#)

---

## [Saving future generations from the scourge of war](#)

Statement by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council briefing on Syria

---

## [Saving future generations from the scourge of war](#)

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you to our two briefers, Mark Lowcock and Susannah Sirkin.

Mr President, I think we all feel that it is deeply frustrating that we come

here each month. But it is better that we come than that we don't come. And however harrowing, it is better that we hear what is happening in Idlib than we don't hear. And however difficult, it is better that, than we let denial take hold. Yes, we would like to act. The responsibility for the fact that we don't act lies with just three member states of the United Nations – one of them a P5 member. What is happening in Idlib makes a mockery of P5 responsibilities.

Ahead of Astana on 1-2 August and with last week's Political session cancelled, there is an opportunity today, Mr President, to get at the facts and to ensure that crimes don't go unrecorded. We have heard from OCHA. We've heard from Physicians for Human Rights. Carnage on the ground, communities tend to rebel, children saving children and then dying in the attempts. These are all breaches of International Humanitarian Law. And Ms Bachelet has made clear that those criminally responsible will be held accountable. The Syrian and Russian units bombing Idlib ought to pause at that.

It may not come today, but justice will come. If I may borrow a very famous phrase and use it in a different context, "The arc of the moral universe may be long, but it bends towards justice." The units taking part in military action against hospitals and medical facilities and personnel need to heed that warning.

I have a number of questions today, Mr President. I am used to the questions not being answered, but I am going to keep asking them because I think they go to the heart of what is happening.

I would like to know what is being done by the protagonists, Syria and Russia, to protect civilians on the ground, notably children.

I would like to know how they know – or claim to know – where the terrorists are, given that we heard from OCHA there are 100 civilians for every terrorist fighter.

And I would like to know how their forces go about distinguishing between terrorists and civilians, given the overwhelming number of civilians.

And I would like to know what part they believe of International Humanitarian Law allows terrorists to be attacked with no regard to those civilians because I read all the Geneva Conventions at the weekend, Mr President, and I can't find a single line in the conventions, or the additional protocol. By the way, Syria has not ratified the additional protocol. But I cannot find a single line that justifies attacking civilians on the scale we are seeing in Idlib to get at terrorists.

And I would like to know in particular – you know we had a briefing from a Russian military general the other day – I would like to know what do the Russian and Syrian military doctrines and rules of engagement say about IHL and the principles of proportionality, distinction and neutrality in respect of Idlib. I would like to know what the Russian and Syrian rules of engagement are. I would be very happy to have the Russian general back, Mr President, if he can answer those questions. And I would like to know what is

the explanation from Russia and Syria as to why the de-confliction mechanism is not working, why hospitals and facilities that have given their coordinates are being hit.

And I would like to know how the Syrian authorities claim that these hospitals and facilities don't exist or have been decommissioned when the UN, and PHR, and others have seen them and are in touch with their doctors.

And one has to ask, Mr President, who is more likely to be believed: the UN or the protagonists on the ground? And I hope, Mr President, that we can actually get some concrete answers today.

For the rest, I wanted to join those who have so far called for an investigation into UN de-conflicted sites. It is of the utmost importance to establish clearly the circumstances of the attacks through a transparent and credible investigation. I welcome what the Under-Secretary-General said about the UN being able to give its information to the two UN mechanisms already in existence. I think that is very important.

I would also like to raise the letter from the Syrian Permanent Representative of 16 July. Under that International Humanitarian Law, just because a hospital or clinic has been "decommissioned" or "ransacked" does not mean it can be attacked with impunity. I have said before, Mr President, if – and it is a big if – but if a hospital is being used as a military target, then the Geneva Conventions – the ones that the Syrians have ratified – require that warnings be given. No warnings are being given. The Syrian PR's letter admits to attacks on hospitals. It's hard to deny, Mr President, that that is a war crime and it deserves the utmost, deep investigation so that those units responsible, those military commanders responsible, and the politicians who give them their instructions, can be brought to justice.

A couple more words, if I may, Mr President. I agree with those speakers who are concerned about Rukban. We appeal to the authorities to let the convoys in. We also share those sentiments about the political process. There needs to be a credible and sustainable political process. The Constitutional Committee is but one step. Many more steps need to be taken and reconstruction assistance from ourselves and our partners will not be available in the absence of a credible political process. And in the absence of reconstruction, Syria cannot be rehabilitated into the international community. And I think that is an important point.

Lastly, if I may, Mr President, the Charter requires us to act to save future generations from the scourge of war. What part of that is not understood by Syria and Russia in respect of Idlib today?

Thank you.