Microsoft to address UN on 'digital terror'

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Microsoft has accepted an invitation from the UN Security Council to address a special debate next week on counter-terrorism and confronting "digital terror", UN diplomats said.

The ministerial-level debate on Wednesday is organized by Egypt, which holds this month's presidency of the 15-member council.

It will be the first time that a technology company will address the Security Council, which has been increasingly concerned by the use of the Internet and social media to spread violent extremism.

A spokesman for Microsoft confirmed that a representative of the software giant will take part in the special session, but declined to give details.

A UN panel of experts in June called for Internet and social media companies to respond to the use of their services by Islamic State recruiters and other extremists.

The experts had recommended to the Security Council that invitations be sent to Internet companies to address the body on the measures they are taking to prevent such misuse.

In a report to the council, the panel raised alarm over the "growth of high-definition digital terror: the use of propaganda, primarily by Islamic State and its sympathizers, to spread fear and promote their distorted ideology."

IS recruiters have made savvy use of the Internet and social media to build up the group's pool of foreign fighters.

About 30,000 foreign fighters have flocked to Syria, Iraq and other countries to join the ranks of jihadists.