

## G7 backs internet industry effort to detect, blunt extremism

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From left, European Commissioner for Security Union Julian King, United States' Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke, Canada's Minister of Public Safety Ralph Edward Goodale and Italy's Minister of Interior Marco Minniti attend the G7 Ministers of the Interiors meeting on the island of Ischia, near Naples, Friday, Oct. 20, 2017. The interior ministers of the G7, two EU commissioners and the Interpol secretary general opened their working session on the island of Ischia on Friday morning. The meeting will address the fight against extremism, foreign militants and radicalisation on internet. (Ciro Fusco/ANSA via AP)

The Group of Seven industrialized nations threw their support behind a new technology industry alliance aimed at detecting and blunting online propaganda, saying Friday it had a "major role" to play in combatting extremism on the internet.

G7 interior ministers meeting in Italy invited representatives from Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Twitter to a session Friday dedicated to the fight against terrorism. In a final communique, the ministers pressed the industry as a whole to do more.

"Internet companies will continue to take a proactive role and ensure decisive action in making their platforms more hostile to terrorism, and will support actions aimed at empowering civil society partners in the development of alternative narratives online," the statement said.

Social media companies have long seen themselves as neutral platforms for other people to share information, and have traditionally been cautious about taking down objectionable material. But as [social media](#) platforms have increasingly been used to recruit jihadis, radicalize young people, share fake news and incite extremism, they have come under pressure from governments to take action.

Facebook, Google, Twitter and YouTube in June created the Global Internet Forum to Combat Terrorism, which got an early boost when British Prime Minister Theresa May used a speech to the UN General Assembly to applaud the initiative and demand internet companies develop technology to more quickly identify and remove terrorist content.



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The alliance says it is committed to developing new content detection technology, helping smaller companies combat extremism and promoting "counter-speech," content meant to blunt the impact of extremist material.

The G7 endorsed the aims and pledged to work collaboratively across the industry to counter the "misuse of technology" by terrorist organizations.

Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti said "a great alliance" had been formed between world governments and major Internet providers. While stressing the [internet](#) has been an important tool for promoting freedom "at the same time we all together have agreed that Al Qaida and Islamic State are enemies of our freedoms."

Several ministers said that while the industry had made progress to quickly remove extremist content, more needed to be done, faster.

"Our enemies are moving at the speed of a tweet, so we have to counter them just as quickly," said acting U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Elaine Duke.

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