Online radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism

Key results from the research conducted under the project ALLIES (AI-based framework for supporting micro (and small) HSPs on the report and removaL of onLIne tErroriSt content)

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Disclaimer

The ALLIES Project aims to equip micro and small Hosting Service Providers (HSPs) with the necessary tools and guidance to comply with the stringent requirements under the Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation. To achieve this, ALLIES adopts four key actions that focus on boosting skills and driving innovation:

1. Learning and Awareness: Helping HSPs understand the TCO Regulation with a clear breakdown of online terrorist behaviours.

2. Tech Development: Developing easy-to-use, AI-powered tools to help HSPs better detect and remove harmful content.

3. Training and Education: Offering practical training on both the TCO Regulation and the use of these advanced tools.

4. Experience Sharing and Reporting: Creating a secure space for users to share experiences and contribute data, supported by a risk assessment module and unified reporting framework.

As part of the ALLIES Project, Transcrime-Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore contributed focusing on three critical areas:

1. Analysing Risk Factors and Patterns: Identifying specific behaviours and patterns in online terrorist content.

2.Developing a Unified Classification Framework: Creating a detailed list of risk indicators and a unified framework for categorizing terrorist-related behaviours.

3. Designing a Risk Assessment Module: Building a tool to evaluate the likelihood of content being flagged as terrorist-related based on identified patterns and risk levels.

This report is an extract from the deliverables resulting from the above activities: D2.1 – Report on online radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism; D2.3 – Report on the unified taxonomy for online terrorist-related behaviours; and D5.2 – Risk assessment module.

The deliverables are the result of the joint efforts of comprehensive desktop research and empirical data collection through expert interviews, addressing representatives from law enforcement agencies and relevant scholars.

Due to the sensitive nature of the content, the information presented in this report provides only a high-level overview and does not include the comprehensive details contained in the deliverables. Authorised stakeholders may access the complete insights by consulting the respective deliverables.

Context

What Is Radicalisation?

Radicalisation lacks a universally accepted definition, with differing interpretations among scholars and policy-makers. Initially associated with a shift towards extreme political views, the term has evolved since 9/11 to describe the process by which individuals become involved in violent or extremist movements. While some scholars see it as a cognitive shift, others link it specifically to violent actions. Despite varying definitions, radicalisation is generally seen as a **gradual process** influenced by a range of **personal, social, and political factors** that lead individuals towards increasingly extreme ideologies. The European Commission (2023) defines radicalisation as a *"phased and complex process in which an individual or a group embraces a radical ideology or belief that accepts, uses or condones violence, including acts of terrorism, to reach a specific political or ideological purposes"* [1]

Radicalisation in the Online World

The Internet has transformed how extremist ideologies spread. In the past, radicalisation occurred through personal interactions in environments such as prisons, places of worship and other community spaces. Now, online platforms allow these ideologies to reach **wider audiences** almost **instantly** and with **little effort**. This shift makes online radicalisation a growing concern, as terrorist content can spread faster and more effectively than ever, **fueling violence**, facilitating the **recruitment** of new supporters, and even raising funds to organise attacks [2–4].

While governments are increasingly concerned about the role of the Internet in radicalisation, the phenomenon remains complex and difficult to define. Research indicates that the Internet is not the root cause of radicalisation, but rather a **facilitator**. It offers a space for individuals, often isolated or alienated, to **connect** with like-minded people and **share extremist views**. These online environments can amplify radical beliefs, creating echo chambers that legitimise violence and reinforce extremist ideologies [3,6–9].

TCO Regulation: A Step Towards Prevention

To tackle the spread of extremist content, the EU introduced *Regulation (EU) 2021/784*, known as the **TCO Regulation**. This requires online platforms to remove terrorist content **within one hour** of its appearance. The goal is to reduce online radicalisation and take prompt action to prevent harmful material from reaching the public.

The ALLIES Project Contribution

In this context, the ALLIES project plays a crucial role in supporting small and micro–Hosting Service Providers (HSPs) in meeting the challenges posed by online radicalisation and complying with the TCO Regulation. Transcrime-UCSC, as a key partner in the project, has contributed to assisting HSPs through the identification of relevant patterns in online terrorist content, the creation of a risk indicators list and a unified taxonomy of terrorist behaviours, and the development of a risk assessment module.

This report provides key insights from Transcrime's activities within the ALLIES project, focusing on patterns identified in the dissemination of online content within jihadist extremism, specifically the Islamic State (IS), and far-right extremism. A general description of the risk indicators, the unified taxonomy, and the risk assessment module will also be provided.

4

Key Insights on Jihadist and Far-Right and Terrorist Content Online (TCO)

Gaining insight into **how extremist ideologies spread online**, is essential for developing effective strategies to detect and combat terrorist content online, as required by the TCO Regulation. The following aspects are addressed in Transcrime analysis under the Allies Project:

Jihadism

Strategic objectives
Narratives
Actors
Modi Operandi
Media Outputs
Language

Far-right

Due to the sensitive content, this report offers a general overview and omits detailed information, which can be accessed by authorised stakeholders.

1. Jihadist Extremism Online

Jihadism is a more radical interpretation of *Salafism*, a Sunni Muslim movement that opposes democratic systems and emphasises the exclusive role of God as the ultimate lawgiver. Jihadists aim to create an Islamic state based on their understanding of *Shari'a*, the Islamic law, and believe that violence is a legitimate means to achieve their objectives. They often justify the use of violence through interpretations of traditional Islamic teachings on *jihad*, the holy war [10]. Prominent jihadist groups include al-Qaeda and the self-declared **Islamic State (IS)**.

The Islamic State (IS) has uniquely leveraged new communication platforms for strategic purposes [11]. The IS propaganda network consists of two main components: official media channels that produce and distribute IS propaganda through videos, magazines, images, video games, music, and more (official propaganda); and independent content created by supporters who follow IS's agenda (unofficial propaganda) [11,12].

Key Insights

Strategic objectives [12-15]:

- Radicalisation and recruitment of new members
- Connection of supporters in the online environment
- Threat and intimidation of opponents and Western enemies
- Setting of the international media agenda to highlight their messages
- Socialisation to the IS and the Caliphate
- Normalisation of the life under the Caliphate
- Fund raising

Narratives [10,12,13,15–20]:

- **Utopianism**: showcasing and normalising daily life under the Caliphate to attract recruits.
- **Resilience**: conveying the message that the fall of the Caliphate does not mean the defeat of the Islamic State, as it will persist and grow; and calling for local insurgencies to support its global expansion.
- **Double salvation**: stressing the possibility to enter paradise and reach an eternal life by joining IS and becoming a martyr.

- **Oppression/injustice**: portraying individuals as victims of exclusion and discrimination as a consequence of foreign policies targeting specific groups, especially Muslims. These narratives frame joining IS as a solution to overcome this oppression and create a united Islamic community (Ummah), where individuals can find acceptance and address their grievances.
- **Empowerment**: emphasising the empowerment feeling deriving from contributing to the creation of an Islamic State. It appeals to those desiring a sense of significance, offering the opportunity to become heroes or martyrs.
- **Violence**: using brutality to showcase their power and intent to retaliate against enemies. It gratifies supporters by encouraging violent actions and instils fear in opponents and potential defectors.

Actors [15,21–23]:

Target

- **Supporters and families**: individuals who have already been radicalised or have sympathies towards jihadist ideologies. IS propaganda aims to reinforce and strengthen their extremist beliefs and mobilise them to support the group's goals.
- **Foreign fighters**: A specific subset of supporters, often Western sympathisers, who are encouraged by IS propaganda to join the group in conflict zones and engage in terrorist activities. They play a key role in the expansion of IS's influence and violence.
- **Vulnerable people**: IS targets individuals who feel marginalised, alienated, or discriminated against, particularly those within Muslim communities who perceive injustice due to their identity. These individuals are often recruited by IS to foster radical us-versus-them thinking and legitimise acts of terrorism.
- **Lone actors**: Individuals who plan and carry out terrorist attacks independently, without direct involvement or direction from a formal group or network. They are crucial targets for IS propaganda, as they can be inspired to carry out on behalf of the group, even without being part of a larger organisation.
- **Opponents**: IS propaganda also targets local, regional, and international enemies, aiming to threaten and demoralise them.

Disseminators

Information on the demographics of those spreading IS propaganda is scarce, since much of the content is disseminated through bots and specific technologies, such as the Virtual Private Network (VPN), that ensure anonymity for users.

Women

They are not only targeted by IS content, but also actively contribute to its creation and dissemination, engaging with the messages and fulfilling roles within the broader narrative, including within the Caliphate [24].

Modi operandi:

- **Platform Adaptation**: IS uses multiple platforms simultaneously, creating a flexible presence rather than merely migrating, to evade content restrictions.
- **Terrorist Websites and Dark Web**: IS uses its own websites that are easy to find and have little to no moderation. These sites often mirror content on the dark web to keep it accessible even if removed from mainstream platforms.
- **File-Sharing Platforms**: Platforms like Google Drive and Dropbox act as backups for IS content removed from social media, utilising a large volume of URLs for easy content access and fast distribution [25].
- **Decentralised Web Services**: Services like Skynet, Hyphanet, and ZeroNet provide IS supporters with censorship-resistant, decentralised environments to host content, which avoids single points of failure [10].

Mainstream Social Media

Formerly Twitter (X): Key platform for propaganda and recruitment, particularly in 2013-2014 with over 46,000 active supporters globally [26–28]. Jihadists used it for spreading violent content, establishing networks, and promoting foreign fighter recruitment [11,29]. After 2016, due to stronger content moderation, IS migrated to platforms like Telegram, but continues to use X (formerly Twitter) to share links to external content [5,25,30].

Facebook: Facebook is still used for mass distribution of IS content, primarily by sharing URLs that link to external sites. Tactics like replacing sensitive words with emojis have been employed to evade moderation [31]. Content shared on Facebook directs users to more encrypted platforms like Telegram.

TikTok: While less common, TikTok has been used for posting IS propaganda, with at least 20 accounts identified sharing jihadist content using Arabic keywords. These accounts often include QR codes to direct followers to other communication channels like Telegram. The platform faces challenges with moderating and removing terrorist content.

YouTube and alternative platforms: YouTube is still a key site for IS videos, often linking to other websites for full content [30]. In addition, IS utilizes decentralised platforms like Odysee and D.Tube [10] (which uses blockchain technology) to avoid censorship. These platforms are harder to moderate, allowing for unrestricted sharing of terrorist content.

Instant Messaging Platforms

Telegram: Dominant platform for IS communication since 2016, used for content hosting, audience engagement, and secure communication [32]. Tactics include join-links, file-sharing, VPNs, bots [33], and emoji symbols [34] to evade content removal. Telegram remains a key tool despite increased moderation.

RocketChat: Open-source, decentralised messaging platform popular among jihadists since 2015. Its privacy features and automatic translation make it a preferred choice for IS supporters to share propaganda and maintain communication [25,35].

Hoop Messenger: A multimedia messenger with end-to-end encryption and a self-destruct feature. Gained popularity among IS supporters in 2019, especially after Telegram's content removals. The platform went offline in 2022, prompting a shift to other messaging apps [30,35,36].

TamTam: Russian-developed messaging app with features including messaging, voice/video calls, and file-sharing. Popular among IS supporters but less widely used compared to Telegram and RocketChat.

Element: Decentralised messaging platform using the Matrix protocol, allowing compatibility with other apps like Telegram and WhatsApp. Used by IS supporters for secure communication and content dissemination.

Gaming Platforms

IS has also begun to explore platforms like Discord and Twitch for communication and monetisation, although usage remains limited due to content removal policies.

Media outputs:

- **Videos:** Central to IS propaganda, often stylised to appeal to youth, especially using elements resembling video game aesthetics [37–39].
- **Images:** Frequently used for low-cost, impactful visual content, including photo-propaganda and promotional graphics [40].
- **Infographics:** Visual summaries that convey key data on military actions, religious themes, and civilian life under IS control [41].
- **Logos and Symbols:** Distinct logos, like the black flag, to strengthen IS's brand and identify media channels.
- **Magazines and Editorials:** Publications offering detailed articles on ideology, regional activities, and global narratives [42].

Language:

- **Arabic:** The primary language for IS-related online content.
- **European Languages:** English, French, Spanish, and Turkish are commonly used to target European audiences.
- **Regional Languages:** IS propaganda is translated into Urdu, Pashto, Bengali, Indonesian, and Zulu, extending its reach to South Asia and Africa.
- **Russian:** Frequently appears in conflict regions connected to Russia and Islamic communities.
- **Camouflage Tactics:** To avoid detection, IS content increasingly incorporates emojis as code, uses "broken-text" (e.g., adding dots or spaces), and leverages trending, unrelated hashtags to bypass content moderation [34].

2. Far-Right Extremism Online

Far-right extremism is characterised by the use of violence by individuals or groups with far-right political ideologies to advance their goals, which often include replacing current political, social, and economic systems with authoritarian models. Unlike jihadism, which is often led by identifiable groups or factions, far-right extremism is more decentralised and fragmented. It encompasses a wide range of ideologies, including extreme nationalism, neo-Nazism, neo-fascism, white supremacy, and accelerationism, among others. Far-right movements operate through a dynamic network of individuals, groups, political parties, and media outlets, both online and offline, making it difficult to clearly assess the phenomenon.

Key Insights

Strategic objectives:

- Radicalisation
- Mobilisation
- Community identity building
- Recruitment and campaigning
- Self-expression
- Engagement of the audience

Narratives:

- **Anti-Government & Anti-Authority**: Distrust of institutions and rejection of democratic systems, advocating for societal change through non-political means [43,44].
- **Ethno-Nationalism & Anti-Immigration**: Focus on preserving national identity, often blaming immigration for societal issues and promoting exclusionary policies. [45–49].
- **Traditionalist Gender Roles**: Emphasis on conservative gender roles, rejecting progressive movements like feminism and LGBTQIA+ rights [50–53].
- **Anti-Semitic & Anti-Globalist Beliefs**: Conspiracy theories that blame Jews or other elites for controlling global systems and undermining national sovereignty.
- **Hero-Protector & Saint Culture**: Glorification of violence to protect communities from perceived external threats, where individuals who commit violent acts are "sanctified" as ideological icons, promoting martyrdom within extremist movements [54–56].

Actors:

Target [57]

- **People with Racist Tendencies (but not self-identifying as racists)**: Individuals who may not see themselves as racists but resonate with right-wing, anti-immigrant, or exclusionary messages.
- **Immigration-Obsessed Individuals**: Those who strongly focus on immigration and perceive it as the root cause of societal issues.
- **Radicalised Individuals**: People already involved in extremist groups or movements (e.g., Atomwaffen, Combat 18) that have embraced violent ideologies.
- **Non-Conformist or Un-Politically correct People**: Individuals who openly reject political correctness, often embracing controversial or offensive views.
- **Non-Political Radical Youth**: Young individuals seeking a sense of purpose, belonging, or identity, often drawn to extremist ideologies.

Disseminators

There is limited information on the demographics of individuals disseminating far-right extremist content online. Unlike IS, far-right groups and supporters typically do not rely on automated tools for spreading terrorist content online. However, they rely on anonymity to protect their identities, typically through nicknames. In general terms, individuals aged 15 to 40 are most active in sharing extremist content online, with men forming the majority of this group, though approximately 30% of those involved are women.

Modi operandi:

- **Platform Strategy:** use of multiple platforms (mainstream and alternative) to maximise reach and bypass content moderation.

Mainstream social media

Facebook: Despite a decline in younger users, Facebook remains a key platform for far-right extremist content due to its broad user base [19]. In 2023, Facebook removed 10.7 million pieces of hate speech, yet extremist groups continue to use the platform for recruitment and spreading ideologies, often through both open and private groups. The platform's algorithm has been criticised for amplifying radical content [58,59].

Twitter: Following Elon Musk's acquisition in 2022, more relaxed content moderation led to a rise in far-right and anti-Semitic content. The study conducted by the Institute of Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and CASM observed a 105% increase in anti-Semitic Tweets from October 27, 2022 to February 9, 2023. The study also showed a 223% increase in the number of new accounts that posted potentially anti-Semitic content comparing the ten days before and after the acquisition [60].

YouTube: YouTube's recommendation algorithm, which promotes videos based on user behavior, has been criticised for spreading extremist content. The study conducted by Chen et al. (2022) [61] and Thomas and Balint (2022) [62] revealed that YouTube's recommendation system contributes significantly to the spread of conspiracy theories and far-right content, keeping users engaged through similar, often controversial, content.
Another issue concerning YouTube is related to livestreams, which are difficult to moderate in real time, especially when extremist accounts are disguised as fully legitimate and innocent channels. An example was the Baklava Küche, which disseminated neo-Nazi ideology on YouTube while pretending to be a cooking channel [63].
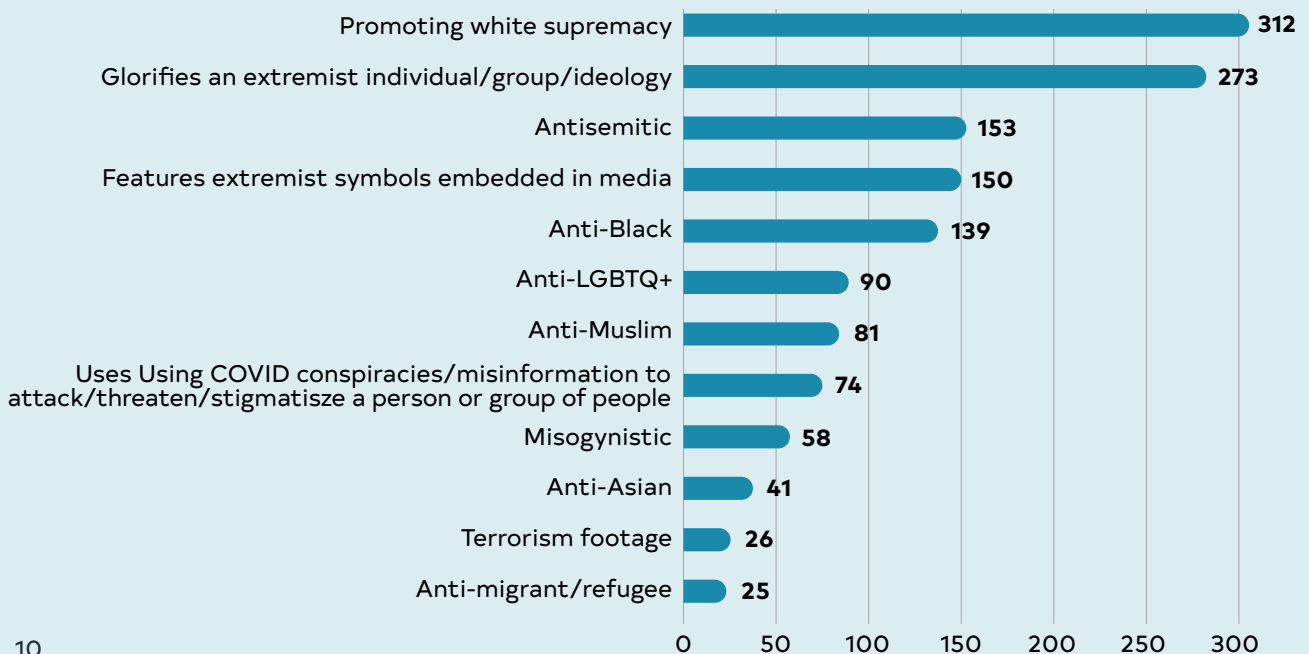
YouTube algorithm boosting Manosphere content

As part of an investigation, Sky News conducted an experiment by creating a fake account of a young teenage boy. The objective was to assess whether YouTube Shorts, Instagram, and TikTok would spontaneously promote videos featuring Andrew Tate, notorious public figure promoting misogynistic ideas related to the Manosphere. Despite Tate being banned from all three platforms, the investigation revealed that nearly 30 videos showcasing Andrew and his brother Tristan were recommended to the fake account within a span of two hours on YouTube Shorts, without his profile seeking out any clips of the influencer [64,65].

TikTok: TikTok, with 755 million users in 2022, has seen increasing far-right extremist content, particularly among teenagers. A study by O'Connor (2021) [66] identified over 1,300 videos promoting white supremacy, supporting extremist figures, and featuring Holocaust denial.

Categories of hate and extremism based on 1,300 TikTok videos collected in June 2021

Category	Value
Promoting white supremacy	312
Glorifies an extremist individual/group/ideology	273
Antisemitic	153
Features extremist symbols embedded in media	150
Anti-Black	139
Anti-LGBTQ+	90
Anti-Muslim	81
Uses Using COVID conspiracies/misinformation to attack/threaten/stigmatisze a person or group of people	74
Misogynistic	58
Anti-Asian	41
Terrorism footage	26
Anti-migrant/refugee	25

Reddit: Reddit, a platform with interest-based communities, has grown significantly in recent years, but it has also been a space for far-right extremism [67]. Despite the removal of well-known toxic subreddits such as r/The_Donald, lesser-known groups still foster extremist ideologies [68,69]. A study by Hiaeshutter-Rice and Hawkins (2022) [70] noted that these subreddits continue to shape narratives and promote far-right views, creating echo chambers and facilitating online radicalisation.

Instant-messaging platforms

Telegram: Known as *Terrorgram [71–73]* in extremist circles, it serves as a hub for far-right coordination, identity building, and propaganda. An example is "Black Sun", a channel utilised by Andrea Cavalleri to recruit volunteers for his neo-Nazi group, *Nuovo Ordine Sociale*, and plan attacks inspired by other far-right terrorists [74–75]. Terrorgram channels promote the Saint Culture publishing monthly calendars commemorating the anniversaries of far-right attacks and "Saints Cards", informational graphics providing precise descriptions of each attack, including the number of casualties, the method used, and the current status of the perpetrators [56].

WhatsApp: Provides private spaces for spreading misinformation and disinformation, providing eco-chambers for like-minded individuals [76].

Chans and Imageboards

Chans and imageboards are anonymous online forums where users can post content, including images, text, and links. Due to their anonymity and lack of moderation, platforms like 4chan, 8kun, and Endchan are increasingly central to far-right online extremism [54,77,78]. Available data indicates that the typical user is a young male between 16 and 34 years old, with interests in video games, technology, and anime [79]. Before carrying out their attacks, several perpetrators, including those in Christchurch, El Paso, and Halle, made comments or published manifestos on chanboards [54].

Gaming platforms

Twitch: A leading livestreaming platform, Twitch has over 2.64 million daily visitors, with 22% of users aged 16-24 [80]. Extremists have used Twitch for ideologies promotion and to livestream terrorist attacks like the Halle and Buffalo shootings [81]. The Halle attack alone saw 2,200 views within 30 minutes after being livestreamed, highlighting the platform's potential for rapid content spread [82].

Discord: Hosting over 140 million users monthly (with 65% aged 16-34), Discord has become a significant space for far-right extremism [83]. In Q4 of 2022, Discord removed over 10,000 accounts for violent content, harassment, and extremism [84]. Despite efforts to clean up the platform, extremist groups like the Boogaloo Boys and Atomwaffen Division still use it for recruitment and organising. There were 3,634 servers tagged as 'toxic', and 272 servers labeled 'right-wing', reflecting the platform's widespread misuse [54].

DLive: DLive, a livestreaming alternative to Twitch, is known for hosting extremists, including alt-right figures like Nick Fuentes and Patrick Casey, who were among the highest-earning streamers between 2020 and 2021 [85,86]. Despite some removals, extremist content persists. DLive's alt-tech positioning makes it a key platform for extremist communities.

Steam: With millions of users, Steam serves as a gathering place for far-right extremists. It provides a space for ideologically-driven groups to connect and recruit. Certain groups on Steam also offer pathways to access ideological content and other social media platforms, such as far-right blogs, podcasts, and invitations to join other online extremist groups. The platform remains a recruitment tool for violent movements [87].

Media outputs:

- **Memification:** the use of humor and irony through memes to hide extremist messages, lowering barriers to extremist ideologies [88,89]. They are adaptable, allowing various meanings depending on context [90]. An example is the "Happy Merchant", an anti-Semitic meme of a Jewish man reporting all the stereotyped facial features while rubbing his hands together, implying a manipulative behaviour [91–93].

- **Gamification:** the integration of video game aesthetics into far-right narratives. This includes the use of imagery, interactivity, and livestreaming to make violent ideologies more engaging and immersive [94]. For example, the attack at Christchurch was livestreamed, emulating video game tactics to enhance the emotional impact and spread the ideology [54,95].

- **Symbols and Logos:** Far-right groups utilise coded symbols to represent their ideologies, especially in environments where open expression is socially or legally restricted. For example, the Black Sun is the symbol of neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups [96–99].
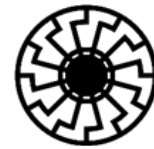
Memification	Gamification	Symbols and Logos

Source: Gleeson (2023) [100]

Language:

- **National Languages:** national languages, such as English and Russian, help far-right groups tailor their messages to specific cultural and linguistic contexts, making propaganda more impactful and relatable to local audiences.

- **Specific Terminology:** used within the Incel (Involuntary celibate man, i.e., heterosexual man who blame women and society for their inability to engage in sexual relations and find a partner.) community (and other extremist groups) to describe worldviews and adherence to ideologies. These terms are inspired by The Matrix film and categorise different perspectives [101–103]:

🔴 **The Red Pill** refers to the acceptance and adherence of certain beliefs prevalent in the Manosphere (Network of online men's communities promoting masculinity, misogyny, and opposition to feminism.), such as seeing feminism as harmful to men and promoting entitlement to sex. It also serves as a call to action for spreading these narratives.

🔵 **The Blue Pill** represents the opposite of Red Pill. According to redpilled, those who choose the blue pill are ignorant of how the world actually is.

⚫ **The Black Pill** is used to refer to a sense of hopelessness and a belief that there is no way out of their involuntary celibate. Beyond the Incels community, it refers to the realisation that the current system is too gone to change.

⚪ **The Rape Pill** is used by a subset of Incels known as "rapecels", who reject the importance of female consent in sexual relationships.

Common & Distinctive Elements

Shared Goals

Both groups aim to radicalise, recruit, raise funds, and mobilise supporters through their online content.

Evolving Narratives

The messages they use adapt to current events but often leveraging familiar themes.

For **Jihadism**, it's about martyrdom and victimhoo.

Far-right extremists focus on white supremacy and male dominance.

Target Audience

Both groups are increasingly focusing on younger audiences, particularly vulnerable individuals who feel alienated or disconnected.

Content Distribution

Jihadism is known for using multiple platforms to spread links addressed to its own websites or file-sharing sites with little moderation.

Far-right groups, instead, rely on individual content creators and less-controlled platforms like private groups and livestreaming.
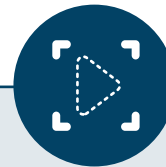
Visual Strategies

Both groups use visuals to make their content more appealing. They use memes, videos, and gamified aesthetics to attract a wider audience and normalise extreme ideologies, with logos and symbols fostering a sense of belonging.

Risk indicators & unified taxonomy

With the proliferation of terrorist content online, it is crucial to identify and understand the factors that contribute to the dissemination of such content. Risk indicators help pinpoint content that may be linked to terrorist activities, providing early signals for detection and intervention. A unified taxonomy for online terrorist behaviours further supports this effort by categorising the various ways TCO is disseminated.

Risk indicators:

Risk indicators are essential tools for spotting online content that could be linked to jihadist or far-right terrorist activities. These indicators serve as important **signals** for identifying content that could be linked to terrorism. While they don't guarantee a connection, they help assess the likelihood that the content is associated with extremist activity, thereby aiding platform providers in meeting TCO regulations.

Risk area	Main question addressed	Description
Content Type	What kind of material is being shared (text, audio, image, or video)?	These indicators focus, from one side, on specific words related to Jihadist or far-right extremism and, from the other, on the use of symbols, logos, and other visual elements linked to terrorist groups, as well as techniques extremists use to evade detection.
Platforms	Which online platforms are being used for dissemination?	These indicators involve platform links tied to terrorist material and strategies used by extremists to access or disseminate such content.
Actors	Who is sharing the content and what are their behaviours?	These signals point to how individuals signal their affiliation with extremist groups while hiding their identity to avoid platforms detection mechanisms.
Modi operandi	How is the content being spread and which are the strategies used?	These indicators refer to the tactics employed by extremists to spread terrorist content online while avoiding platform moderation efforts.

Unified taxonomy:

A unified taxonomy is a structured framework that further categorizes various forms of terrorist content and behaviours on the Internet. This helps to spot and manage harmful content faster. This framework tracks patterns in how terrorist groups use the Internet by answering three key questions:

1. What?
What extremist theme are they promoting (e.g., oppression, white supremacy, double-salvation)?

2. Where?
Which platforms are they using (e.g., social media, messaging apps, video-sharing sites)?

3. How?
How are they spreading these messages (e.g., altering images, creating new accounts, or linking to alternative platforms)?

Risk Assessment Module

The Risk Assessment Module has been developed by Transcrime – UCSC within the ALLIES Project to help smaller online service providers quickly identify and **assess the risks of terrorism-related content**, with a specific focus on jihadist material, hosted on their platforms. This is crucial for meeting legal obligations that require the rapid detection and removal of terrorist content, especially given the challenges smaller providers face due to limited resources.

The module is tailored to assess online content linked to **jihadist terrorism**, identifying key **linguistic and visual elements** associated with its propaganda. It evaluates the risk of various content types included in a given URL - i.e. text, audio, images, and videos - using a set of risk indicators specifically related to jihadist narratives. The module ultimately generates an **overall risk score** based on the identified indicators, ranging from *low*, *medium* to *high*. A high-risk score signals a higher likelihood of hosting terrorism-related content, warranting further investigation.

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