

STATEMENT :

THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON CHRISTCHURCH MASJIDAIN ON 15 MARCH 2019

This is a solemn time for all of us in the Christchurch Call community as we remember the whānau (families) of the 51 shuhada, as well as the survivors and witnesses of the terrorist attack and their whānau.

As the largest terror incident in the modern history of Aotearoa New Zealand, the work of the Call has a particular relevance for the small but resilient Muslim community. Part of our faith-community worldview calls on us to consistently stride from darkness into light. The Call has been one of the ways in which grief and loss have been used to craft a way forward to ensure that others may never have to traverse this same tragic path.

The Christchurch Call was established on 15 May 2019 when the New Zealand Prime Minister at the time, Jacinda Ardern and French President Emmanuel Macron brought together Heads of State and leaders from the technology sector to adopt a commitment to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online. It recognises that the internet is being actively used to disseminate content which impacts on the human rights of others and that there is a need for a collective approach to address such threats.

The Call has emerged over the last five years as a thriving community which extends to 55 government supporters, 18 major technology companies, 11 partner organisations, and an active and diverse civil society spanning almost all global time zones.

With a fundamental baseline commitment to respect freedom of expression within a free, open and secure internet, the Call provides an inclusive global platform for individuals, civil society organisations, technology companies and governments.

This unique platform has resulted in some significant and successful outcomes. These include the first agreement of its kind, where governments and tech companies have jointly agreed to a series of commitments and ongoing collaboration to make the internet safer from terrorist and violent extremist content online. Noting that the live streaming video of the gruesome killing of innocent worshippers on 15 March in Christchurch took more than 30 minutes to take-down, the incident protocols developed by the Call which coordinates efforts

across governments and tech platforms, resulted in the live stream of the Buffalo attack in May 2022, being brought down within two minutes.

For the Muslim community the Call has been an integral part of the healing process since making the online ecosystem safer is a positive legacy of those who are shaheed. Their memory is cherished and serves as a source of inspiration for others to stand firm in the face of hatred and uphold the values of compassion, peace, and mutual respect – not only in the streets of our towns and cities but also in the parallel online spaces in which we dwell.

We acknowledge that the Call is also five years old. In this respect we offer shukur (gratitude) for the contribution of the diverse and inclusive community for collectively striving to bring light to the dark spaces of terrorist and violent extremist content online.

*Abdur Razzaq
Co-Chair , Christchurch Call Advisory Network*

*Chairperson of FIANZ Royal Commission of Inquiry &
National Coordinator of 15 March Anniversary .*
