

Cross-Party Group on Human Trafficking

01.11.2022 6.00 pm

Minutes

Present

MSPs

Rhoda Grant MSP

Bill Kidd MSP

Invited guests

Joanna Harlos - Integrity, Investigations, Intelligence: Human Exploitation Lead at META (Facebook)

Non-MSP Group Members

Clara Zhang

Alanya Smith

Joanna Harlos

Gari Donn

Iris Aliska

Ella Higgins

Rhoda Grant

Bill Kidd

Alison Raybould

Catriona MacSween

Jane Stewart

Janet Warren

Janice Wilson

Jenny Olsen

Jillian McBride

Joy Gillespie

Karen Murdarasi

Karen Swift
Michael Gough
Michael Veitch
Pat Black
Rabiya Ravat
Sheila Miller
Vicky Murray
Ruth Macguire

Apologies

Jeremy Balfour MSP
Jackie Bailey
Sarah Boyak MSP
Jim Laird
Susan McKellar
Steve Rawbone

Adopt Minutes of the previous meeting

Accepted

Electing Office Bearers

Candidates Elected:

Convenor: Rhoda Grant MSP
Deputy Convenor: Bill Kidd MSP
Secretariat: UN House Scotland (Iiris Aliska and Ella Higgins, under the mentorship of Jim Laird)

Meta approach to Human Exploitation - Presented by Joanna Harlos

Introduction

Joanna Harlos thanked the invitation by the cross-party group, and started the presentation by defining META's utilisation of the word "human exploitation". For META, to highlight the interconnection between human trafficking and smuggling, the word "human exploitation" is used to address both human trafficking and modern slavery.

Partnerships

For Meta, partnerships are an essential part of combating human trafficking, as they help Meta to understand how human exploitation manifests on the platform and in the real world.

Meta maintains over 400 partnerships with Safety partners globally in order to keep users safe.

Examples of a few anti-exploitation partners:

International Justice Mission
Stop The Traffik
National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children
Polaris

Keeping in touch with experts

- Organising safety roundtables - variety of experts gathering to discuss specific topics on either human exploitation or other safety related issues.
- Regular consultations with Safety Partners for update discussions on exploitation policies etc.
- Internal events arranged in order to strengthen broader connections within Meta.

Human Exploitation Policy

Meta has leveraged some of the expertise shared by their partners in order to build the principled and foundational understanding of what human exploitation is, how it manifests and how it should be responded to.

Community standards - sets of policies covering any and all issues, from hate speech, graphic violence, issues around inauthenticity

These standards also cover safety issues - foundational in terms of helping external audiences understand how Meta understands the problems they tackle and guide internal responses.

Human Exploitation Policy:

- Over 20 organisations consulted including the UN Office on Drugs and Crime
- Conforms with international definitions of human trafficking and human smuggling
- Regularly updated to reflect continually evolving trends

Tools and Resources

Reporting content

The ability to report content which may be related to human trafficking or human smuggling to the content moderators

It is understood that some content may not be visibly obvious in terms of human trafficking, but there is the option to report content if something “doesn't look right”, which will still get sent to content moderators.

Safety resources - Help Center

Meta aims to provide access in reference points to resources that can support users who have been exposed to upsetting content.

Human Exploitation response

META's approaches to online safety are divided into three layers, prevention, detection, and response.

Prevention

- Awareness Raising Campaign
- Search Interventions

Detection

- Reducing Harmful Content
- Proactive detection

Response

- NGOs collaboration
- Law Enforcement cooperation

- Reporting
- Help Center

Case Studies

Domestic Servitude Disruption

Meta launched the Filipino Workers Rights Awareness Campaign in collaboration with Stop The Traffik

Prevention

- Goal of providing Filipino workers with information related to their employment, environment and situations more generally.
- This was part of a broader effort conducted both externally and internally in order to identify content and actors that may intend to recruit individuals for the purpose of exploitation for domestic servitude.

Proactive detection and disruption

- Enabled proactive detection to increase removal of potentially harmful content
- Goal of identifying and disrupting networks of illicit actors engaged in domestic servitude.

Response

- Build strong partnerships with national anti-exploitation organisations

Response to the conflict and war in Ukraine

Engaged with partners such as Stop The Traffik to build interventions in the form of sponsored content on the platforms in order to provide users in the area with information on:

- How to identify safe and secure working opportunities
- How to find shelter in border countries
- Organisations in the countries they are currently residing that can provide them with legitimate additional support

Post-presentation Questions/AOB

Countries impacted by Meta's approach to challenging human exploitation:

- Most accurate answer is wherever there is a footprint of Meta platform usage

Panorama episode about online pimping (name not provided) - focussed on Ireland - is Meta aware? Have they articulated a response?

- Pimping falls under the category of sex trafficking - a direct violation of guidelines and an active focus point from Meta
- Episode has not yet been reviewed but Joanna is keen to do so

Mentions of help centre and signposting - what Scottish connections does Meta have for signposting?

- Campaigns were ongoing during the most intensive period of the Russian war against Ukraine, and now they are incorporated into the wider information back regarding Ukraine on a permanent basis.

Are people being directed locally or further afield?

- META provides contact for a UK-wide organisation to cover the UK as a whole, but if any local Scottish organisations are interested in being mentioned, Joanna is happy to talk further about this.

Setting down dates for next year's meetings

Dates were not decided upon, and will instead be determined in discussions between the Convenor, Deputy Convenor and the Secretariat at a future time.