

## MEMO

**To:** Conflict Early Warning and Analytics Program (CEWAP)

**From:** Jack Sherman, Researcher on Disinformation, Misinformation, and Online Harassment

**Date:** April 2, 2024

**Subject:** Lessons Learned from the Christchurch Massacre and Proposals for Action

As we mark the fifth anniversary of the [Christchurch massacre](#), it is imperative that we reflect on the disturbing trends that have emerged since that tragic event. [The actions of the Australian gunman on March 15, 2019, not only resulted in the loss of fifty-one innocent lives but also served as a catalyst for a dangerous wave of extremism and violence that continues to threaten our societies.](#) In light of this, I present several key observations and proposals for our attention:

1. **White Supremacist Resurgence:** The Christchurch gunman's actions have emboldened white supremacist ideologies, fostering a sense of martyrdom within far-right and alt-right online communities. The narrative of the "[Great Replacement Theory](#)" has gained traction, fueling sentiments of fear and resentment among certain demographics. It is essential to recognize and address the underlying factors contributing to the spread of such hateful ideologies.

2. **Playbook for Violence:** The Christchurch massacre established a chilling playbook for future acts of violence by white supremacists. [The dissemination of manifestos online, followed by live broadcasts of atrocities, has become a disturbing trend.](#) We have witnessed several tragic incidents following this pattern, highlighting the need for proactive measures to disrupt and prevent such attacks.
  
3. **Engagement and Intervention:** Understanding the motivations behind these acts of violence is crucial in developing effective prevention strategies. Dialogue and intervention efforts targeting individuals at risk of radicalization must be explored. Identifying trusted figures and institutions to engage with these individuals is essential in diverting them from the path of extremism.
  
4. **Support for the Christchurch Call:** A group of concerned individuals who have co-drafted a letter addressed to the co-founders of the [Christchurch Call](#), urging continued efforts to address online extremism and hatred. We believe that combating disinformation, harassment, and abuse online is paramount in preventing future tragedies like the one in Christchurch.
  
5. **Research and Intervention:** There is an urgent need for comprehensive research on the links between online hate speech and offline violence. Understanding how extremist content proliferates and influences individuals is crucial in developing targeted interventions. Such efforts should also include mechanisms for holding perpetrators of online extremism accountable for their actions.

In conclusion, the fifth anniversary of the Christchurch massacre serves as a poignant reminder of the devastating impact of online extremism and violence. It is incumbent upon us to take proactive steps to address these challenges and prevent further loss of life. By supporting initiatives such as the Christchurch Call and investing in research and intervention efforts, we can work towards building a safer and more inclusive online environment for all.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jack Sherman

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