<u>**Independent Advisory Committee**</u>

Annual Report 2024 and Forward Plan for 2025

Delivered: March 11, 2025

<u>**Foreword from Chair of the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC)**</u>

The Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) is GIFCT's multistakeholder and multisectoral body, whose mission is to foster good governance, diversity and expansion, as well as transparency, capacity, and best practices to enable GIFCT to meet its' strategic objectives. IAC members have strong expertise in these areas. The OB and GIFCT have the prerogative to ignore advice the IAC gives, provided they communicate to IAC the reasons that justify it.

The IAC is currently composed of 10 civil society members, 2 international organizations, and 8 governments - all volunteer members serve a three-year term. It has constant rotation, and onboarding schedules. In 2024, 2 civil society members rotated out of the IAC and 4 new members joined. IAC members are fully committed to GIFCT's mission and success.

The IAC remained dedicated throughout 2024 to support GIFCT's mission and enhance transparency and good governance. In a volatile and unstable social and online environment, the IAC worked diligently to help GIFCT remain an adaptive organization and to optimize its membership, reach, and solutions for member platforms and the wider public of users. This report provides IAC's assessment of GIFCT progress on IAC's 2023 annual report and the challenges that persisted during 2024. The report also sets IAC advice priorities to GIFCT and its Operating Board (OB) for 2025.

<u>**Section 1: 2024 Year in Review**</u>

In its 2023 Annual Report, the IAC identified three primary goals for 2024: to enhance transparency between GIFCT, the Operating Board (OB), and the IAC; to expand and diversify GIFCT's membership; and to strengthen the governance structure of the Operating Board.to achieve these goals, the IAC issued 31 recommendations for GIFCT and OB to accomplish. The IAC commends GIFCT on the progress made on many of the recommendations. For example, GIFCT expanded its membership by an additional 7 members in 2024 to reach 32 members. GIFCT has streamlined its working groups, increased the participation of tech companies within these groups and focused on concrete tools. GIFCT also reviewed its funding model, expanded activation of its incident response framework protocol beyond the United States, participated in a host of international events and hosted three successful member and stakeholder engagement events at UNGA, Singapore and on an Online membership meeting. In addition, the OB successfully reviewed and optimized its bylaws, and this will allow the much needed and long-awaited expansion of its membership from three current members (Meta, YouTube and Microsoft) to 5 to 7 members with at least one small platform member.

Throughout 2024 GIFCT and the OB faced some hurdles in the pursuit of a few of IAC's recommendations. For example, while GIFCT membership expanded, many are subsidiary companies, and thus current membership has not significantly diversified the organization in terms of geographical reach, linguistic representation and platform size. New members also do not represent platforms with high evidence of TVEC. The IAC recognizes the fact that many higher risk platforms may not be interested in joining GIFCT, thus making expansion of membership more challenging. We encourage GIFCT to think creatively about solutions which may include a broader range of smaller companies, gaming platforms and gaming adjacent platforms that constitute significant vectors for TVE threats. GIFCT may also want to re-consider the scope of its hash-sharing database beyond UN terrorist listings, and consult with governments, other tech partners, and human rights and civil society organizations. Finally, bringing in house the member onboarding and evaluation process is an efficient process and will help provide clarity around how GIFCT onboards, mentors and evaluates its members against its own membership criteria. In terms of OB diversity and expansion, despite the implementation of new bylaws, OB overall membership has declined following X's stepping out. We hope 2025 will be a year where the OB will achieve its full size.

There are several reasons why these recommendations and milestones are still work in progress, including many factors outside of GIFCT's control. In the interest of fostering more transparency, trust and collaboration between the IAC and the OB, the IAC proposes adopting a more targeted approach for 2025. This includes prioritizing a smaller number of high impact priorities and deliverables that are closely aligned with GIFCT's 2025-2027 strategic plan. By focusing on three top priorities for 2025, the IAC aims to enhance the effectiveness of its contribution and ensure measurable progress achieving shared objectives.

Section 2: 2025 Priorities

In 2025, the IAC will adopt three priorities in alignment with GIFCT's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan. These priorities will see the IAC retain its independence and advisory functions and play a more active role in the delivery of outcomes pursuant to GIFCT mission. Underlying these priorities will be the pursuit of further aligning and fostering collaboration between the IAC and the OB to ensure the best value for GIFCT member companies, and to counter TVEC proliferating on the internet.

Priority One: Strengthen GIFCT's value proposition to members and strengthen opportunities to engage with key global partners and stakeholders; expand and diversify membership to include more international platforms and relevant tech adjacent organizations and companies to reflect a global reach.

- KPI 1: Strengthen GIFCT's value to members and engagement with current and incoming companies.

Criteria: Provide consistent briefings to GIFCT member companies on key themes / areas of concern; seek feedback from members in ways they would see the GIFCT improved.

- KPI 2: Foster an increasingly diverse and global community of member companies. Develop new partnerships and event formats to help identify potential global partners and members to deliver on GIFCT's mission.

Criteria: Provide annual recommendations to GIFCT on the exact companies that the IAC recommends prioritizing for outreach and mentorship, based on the threat from TVEC that they represent, and as it relates to the volume of TVEC on their platform in relation to their current capabilities and vulnerability to vectors' exploitation.

- KPI 3: Support the implementation of the revised GIFCT Operating Board Bylaws and policies regarding membership and governance, including the management of new membership obligations or parameters, and engagement with relevant stakeholders to diversify funding and support GIFCT.

Criteria: Advise GIFCT on a more inclusive / improved set of membership criteria to allow for the onboarding of lower-capacity tech companies.

Priority Two: Enhance GIFCT and member capabilities by identifying and curating solutions and resources to address member needs in addressing TVE content and behavior, and to facilitate cross-platform readiness to respond to collective challenges and crises.

- KPI 1: Assess and strengthen incident response tools, including the Incident Response Framework.

Criteria: Improve identification of incidents and existing communication of incident notification to stakeholders

- KPI 2: Share and contribute to development of best-practice standards to addressing TVE content and behavior by sharing diverse perspectives from civil society, academia and governments.

Criteria: Appraise current member adoption of and engagement with GIFCT products and advise on new product development to meet the current threat landscape.

- KPI 3: In consultation with the OB, develop opportunities for the IAC to work more closely with GIFCT member companies, to support their acquisition of resources, knowledge and capabilities to more effectively prevent terrorist and violent extremist exploitation of their platforms.

Criteria: Develop mechanisms for GIFCT member companies to ask questions to the IAC directly; facilitate IAC appearances at GIFCT member meetings to provide updates and answer questions. Ensure IAC briefings contain bespoke information tailored towards GIFCT members, as well as information that utilizes the shared expertise of the IAC.

Priority Three: Identify emerging threats and trends to inform member policies and responses, support knowledge sharing within the tech ecosystem, and engage relevant partners to enable the industry to adapt to evolving threats.
- KPI 1: Provide quarterly threat briefings to GIFCT with detailed insights on evolving threats (exact topics to be determined on a quarterly basis in collaboration with the GIFCT), tailored in a way that can provide tangible support to GIFCT member companies.

Criteria: The development of quarterly threat briefings; incorporate feedback from the GIFCT and OB on the quality and utility of the threat briefings.

- KPI 2: Support the OB and GIFCT to respond to emerging threats.

Criteria: Develop mechanism for IAC members to share critical information with the OB and GIFCT in a time-sensitive manner.

Conclusion: Vision for 2025

The IAC remains committed to GIFCT's mission, recognizing GIFCT as an appropriate entity capable of leading collective action to prevent terrorist and violence extremists' exploitation of the internet and digital platforms.

The IAC's primary objective for 2025 is leveraging its collective expertise, experience and strategic insights to deliver superior advice to GIFCT and the OB. Our focus will also be on constantly working on the relationship between the three bodies to be more cohesive than any preceding years. The IAC is committed to maintaining the independence necessary for providing candid, robust guidance, while continuing to work in close collaboration. This approach will ensure that our advice is strategically aligned with the objectives outlined in GIFCT's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan positioning all parties to maximize our collective impact.

To this end, the IAC will actively pursue and support GIFCT's fulfillment of its 2025 priorities, which will result in improved knowledge-sharing, improved capability and tools for members (particularly smaller companies), continued fulfillment of human rights commitments, and greater diversity in GIFCT. By 2026, we envision a GIFCT that is more agile, more inclusive and better equipped to prevent TVEC online, ultimately contributing to a safer and more resilient online environment.