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**Deterrence and Denial:
The Impact of Sanctions and Designations on Violent Far-Right Groups**

**Roundtable Discussion
Event Summary
May 24, 2022**

On May 24, 2022, The Soufan Center (TSC) hosted a roundtable discussion in Washington, D.C. on responding to violent far-right groups through sanctions and proscriptions, as part of an [ongoing TSC project](#), supported by the Airey Neave Trust in London. Through research, interviews, and consultations with key stakeholders, the project examines whether and how the measures taken by several states—in particular, the U.K., Canada, and other Five Eyes (FVEY) partners—have had the desired impacts, whether on a legal, political, or operational level, drawing also on lessons learned from other countries with similar experiences. Participants included key stakeholders representing the governments of the U.S., U.K., Germany, and Australia; the United Nations and other international organizations; academics and experts; civil society; and the private sector. The discussion will inform the analyses and recommendations developed as part of this project.

The Soufan Center Executive Director Naureen Chowdhury Fink opened the session, introducing the project, followed by TSC briefings by Colin Clarke, Mollie Saltskog, Jason Blazakis, and Jessica M. Davis, to share initial findings and draft policy recommendations for discussion and feedback from participants.

Below is a summary of key discussion points. It is not a transcript of the event and does not necessarily reflect the views of The Soufan Center or the Airey Neave Trust. This roundtable event was hosted under the Chatham House Rule.

The roundtable discussion, bringing together participants from various government agencies, international organizations, Embassies of states affected by these challenges, experts, and civil society organizations, offered a forum for open and frank dialogue about the efficacy of existing counterterrorism sanctions regimes and their potential applicability as a tool in countering violent far-right extremism. Some participants acknowledged that the decentralization and diffusion of the terrorist threat may in some respects be considered a successful outcome of sanctions and counterterrorism measures. At the same time, however, speakers noted that the structures and organizations of violent far-right extremist groups made the application of sanctions challenging, though noting that a number of states had in fact already proscribed or designated a number of groups, particularly in Canada and the U.K., among FVEYs states.

Participants considered the roles of various actors in addressing the violent right-wing threat, and whether there was a role for international organizations, the private sector, or other groups. The discussion also emphasized how the private sector has been seemingly deputized on financial enforcement of sanctions regimes and the need for greater public-private engagement, including with law enforcement, on this front. Speakers discussed concerns regarding the exportation of



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REMOVE propaganda and the challenges of addressing such concerns amidst varied legal frameworks, even among close counterterrorism partners.

Participants stressed the need for improved data to evaluate the effectiveness of sanctions and inform policymaking. While recognizing that the phenomenon of violent far-right extremism affected many states, attendees agreed that information exchanges and increased collaboration between Five Eyes states and partners could facilitate further designations. Practitioner-to-practitioner level exchanges were also highlighted as important to inform policymaking, in addition to operational needs. Participants additionally flagged the need to consider how to account for mitigation measures for potential negative impacts of sanctions, such as manipulation of counterterrorism sanctions language by authoritarian regimes and impacts on humanitarian operations and civil society of sanctions measures that can foster financial exclusion and derisking.