

Executive Summary

**2025 Annual Meeting of the Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council (FIORC)
13–17 October 2025, London, United Kingdom**

Introduction

The Council convenes at least one in-person meeting annually. The 2025 meeting, hosted in London by Sir Brian Leveson, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC) for the United Kingdom (UK), brought together representatives from all Five Eyes partner countries.

This year's agenda centred on oversight, technology, legal frameworks, and strategic planning. Members exchanged perspectives, addressed shared challenges, engaged with guest speakers on areas of interest, discussed and agreed on revised FIORC terms of reference and explored opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. The sessions were held at four different venues over four days, fostering collaboration and diverse discussions in classified and unclassified environments.

Background

The Council was established in the spirit of the Five Eyes partnership—an intelligence alliance of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

It brings together the following non-political oversight and review bodies:

- **Australia:** Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS Australia)
 - **Canada:** Office of the Intelligence Commissioner (ICO) and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA).
 - **New Zealand:** Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS New Zealand) and the Commissioners of Intelligence Warrants
 - **United Kingdom:** Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO).
 - **United States of America:** Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community (IC OIG).
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Key Themes and Discussions

The FIORC 2025 meeting reinforced the importance of independent, transparent, and collaborative oversight in a rapidly evolving intelligence landscape. Members agreed to continue sharing best practices, addressing emerging challenges, and upholding public trust through robust frameworks and open engagement. A broad range of subjects were covered, as set out below.

Day 1: Oversight in practice

Sir Brian Leveson opened the conference and welcomed participants.

Panel discussion with Heads of UK Intelligence Agencies

Sir Brian chaired a panel discussion involving Sir Ken McCallum, Director General MI5, Blaise Metreweli, Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, and Anne Keast-Butler, Director of GCHQ. Each agency head spoke about their perspectives on the value of independent oversight and the importance of effective relationships between agencies and oversight bodies.

Transparency

Craig Forcese, Vice Chair of Canada's NSIRA, led the session looking at how Council members balance national security with public transparency. Members shared their approaches to transparency. While approaches varied between countries, there was consensus about the importance of institutional and substantive transparency and the critical role oversight bodies play in assuring the public that powers and agencies are operating in accordance with the law. The session explored mechanisms for external engagement, such as parliamentary roundtables and dialogue with other civil society stakeholders.

Developing collaborative oversight

Council members from IPCO and IGIS Australia jointly presented a case study involving shared interests. The session examined legal frameworks for sharing information overseas and oversight challenges arising from them. Members were invited to explore ways to develop more collaborative oversight.

Role of oversight when something goes wrong

Council members from IPCO and the Honourable Simon Noël KC, Intelligence Commissioner for Canada, led a discussion about oversight bodies taking novel or extraordinary action to tackle specific issues of non-compliance, using case studies to illustrate different approaches and strategies. Members discussed their respective approaches to oversight when

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significant non-compliance issues were identified.

Day 2: Oversight and technology, with participation from IPCO's Technology Advisory Panel

Oversight of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Council members discussed national approaches to AI oversight. IPCO explained the UK Government's policy approach to AI regulation and the development of IPCO's AI 'Scope of Interest', which forms the basis of information gathering to enhance their understanding of how AI is being used by the authorities IPCO oversees. IGIS Australia described its inquiry into agency AI use. IGIS New Zealand and NSIRA outlined their AI related activities to date and plans for further research.

Technology Advisory Panel (TAP) discussion

IPCO outlined the important role its TAP plays in supporting the IPC and oversight. Professor Dame Muffy Calder (Chair of the TAP) and Karen Danesi (TAP member) led discussions on proportionality considerations during AI development, the use cases behind AI and the risks associated with Large Language Models (LLMs). The discussion demonstrated how the TAP operates and how their technical expertise supports oversight of complex systems.

Handling of vulnerabilities in technology

IGIS Australia described its oversight of the Australian Signals Directorate's Responsible Release Principles for Cyber Security Vulnerabilities; a framework for determining when a security vulnerability in technology should be retained rather than disclosed. This process balances public cybersecurity with national security priorities, and ensuring decisions serve the public interest. IGIS also outlined the recent Australian legislative reform related to industry engagement and 'safe harbour' laws. Council members discussed national approaches to managing technological vulnerabilities and the value of sharing guidance across FIORC partners in relation to retrospective oversight approaches.

Day 3: Legal themes and insights

Panel discussion on the role of independent authorisation

Sir Nicholas Blake, IPCO Judicial Commissioner, together with authorisations and warrant granting officials, outlined the UK's system for authorising investigatory powers, including the 'double lock' process (i.e. both ministerial and judicial approval) for the more intrusive powers and emphasising the ethos of "strong powers need strong oversight." Council

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members discussed operational challenges, resource constraints, and the importance of robust processes and continuous improvement.

Presentation from the President of the UK's Investigatory Powers Tribunal (IPT)

Lord Justice Singh, then President of the IPT, explained the remit of the IPT; the UK's independent judicial body that provides the right of redress to anyone who believes they have been the victim of unlawful action by a public authority using covert investigation techniques. Lord Justice Singh spoke about the jurisdiction of the IPT, highlighting its inquisitorial approach and commitment to public trust. He outlined the IPT's power to require the IPC to provide assistance when needed.

Review of FIORC terms of reference

NSIRA outlined the work undertaken by FIORC's Legal network, to review the FIORC 'Charter' (terms of reference). Council members discussed and agreed on amendments, including updates to structure and the introduction of a rotating secretariat function. The revised Charter has since come into force and can be found here [FIORC-Charter-2025](#).

Impact of litigation and changing legislation

Brendan Horsley, Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS New Zealand), and the Honourable Simon Noël KC, Intelligence Commissioner for the Office of the Intelligence Commissioner in Canada, led discussions on how evolving legislation and litigation affect review and oversight and the importance of adapting oversight to meet these changes. Council members discussed specific recent legislative changes in New Zealand and a notable judicial decision in Canada, exchanging ideas around the impact on oversight as a result.

Day 4: Strategic planning for the future

Open-source data

Jeremy Kirkland, US Inspector General, Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) led the session to explore the challenges Five Eyes intelligence agencies face balancing open-source intelligence needs with privacy rights. Council members discussed their respective countries' laws and policies governing digital surveillance and open-source data and how oversight of that technology, to ensure compliance with associated laws and policies, could be achieved. Council members also explored ways to evolve oversight of open-source intelligence. The need for ongoing collaboration on this emerging area was agreed.

Oversight—Maintaining independence in a changing geopolitical world

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Brendan Horsley, Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS New Zealand), led a discussion on the importance of maintaining independence and public trust in oversight, amid legislative and geopolitical changes. Council members discussed areas of change/emerging risk impacting oversight in their countries, together with ideas for how to address these. The session emphasised the need for clear boundaries and effective media engagement.

Outcomes and Actions

- The Networks (legal, technology, human resources, inspections, transparency, contested environments), established following FIORC 2024, were key to continue driving collaboration, with specific targeted actions assigned to each Network.
- Council members committed to ongoing evaluation and sharing of best practices in transparency, AI oversight, and open-source intelligence.
- The FIORC Charter was updated to reflect current priorities and operational needs.
- The next annual meeting will be held in Wellington, New Zealand in December 2026.