



26th Session Human Rights Council
Item 3, General Debate

The Internet and Human Rights

19 June 2014

Joint Statement

Delivered by Andrew Smith, ARTICLE 19

Thank you Mr. President,

ARTICLE 19 delivers this statement on behalf of 48 NGOs.*

Two years ago this Council affirmed by consensus that “the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, in particular freedom of expression”.

In 2014, at [Net-Mundial](#) in Brazil the Internet was recognised as vital to the full realisation of sustainable development goals. 31 UN Special Rapporteurs recently [affirmed that](#) guaranteeing the free flow of information online ensures transparency and participation in decision-making, enhancing accountability and the effectiveness of development outcomes.

Development and social inclusion relies on the Internet remaining a global resource, managed in the public interest as a democratic, free and pluralistic platform. States must promote and facilitate universal, equitable, affordable and high-quality Internet access on the basis of human rights, the rule of law, and net-neutrality, including during times of unrest.

The blocking of communications, including of social media in Egypt, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Venezuela is a violation of freedom of expression, association and assembly and must be condemned. Dissent online must be protected. We deplore the detention of Sombat Boonngamanong in Thailand, who faces up to 14 years imprisonment for urging peaceful resistance to the recent military coup via social media in the form of a three-finger salute.

One year after the Snowden revelations, this Council must recognise that trust in the Internet is conditional on respect for the rights to freedom of expression and privacy, regardless of users’ nationality or location. Any mass (or dragnet) surveillance, which comprises collection, processing and interception of all forms of communication is inherently disproportionate and a violation of human rights.

The targeted interception and collection of personal data must be conducted in accordance with international human rights law, as set out in the “[Necessary and Proportionate Principles](#)”. Critical and intermediate infrastructure must not be tampered with, nor should any system, protocol or standard be weakened to facilitate interception or decryption of data.

We urge this Council to take action to comprehensively address these challenges.

Thank you.

The logo for ARTICLE 19, featuring the text "ARTICLE 19" in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a red, stylized, angular shape that resembles a folded piece of paper or a banner.

*ARTICLE 19

Access

Africa Freedom of Information Centre

Albanian Media Institute

Arabic Network for Human Rights Information

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

Bahrain Center for Human Rights

Big Brother Watch

Bits of Freedom

Bolo Bhi Pakistan

Bytes For All

Cambodia Center for Human Rights

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

Canadian Journalists for Free Expression

Center for Independent Journalism, Romania

Centre for Internet & Society

Centre for Media Freedom & Responsibility

Chaos Computer Club

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Electronic Privacy Information Center

European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL)

Foro de Periodismo Argentino

Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP)

Human Rights Watch

Index on Censorship

International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

International Press Institute (IPI)

Media Rights Agenda

Norwegian PEN

OpenMedia.org

Open Net Korea

Open Rights Group

Pakistan Press Foundation

Panos Institute West Africa

PEN Canada

PEN International

Privacy International

Reporters Without Borders

Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy & Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC)

Simon Davies, publisher of "Privacy Surgeon"

South East Asian Press Alliance

South East European Network for Professionalisation of the Media

Thai Netizen Network

World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters

Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum