



Dear colleagues,

Thank you for reaching out to the Freedom Online Coalition and for your letter raising concerns about mass surveillance and related issues of privacy and user rights. We value your input and consider this type of dialogue instrumental in our efforts to promote a free and open internet.

The Coalition's joint views on this topic are reflected in two documents, detailed below:

1. The Coalition's views are encapsulated in recommendations 4 and 6 of the Tallinn Agenda Declaration agreed last month in Tallinn, wherein we, the members of the Coalition, committed to:

[4] Dedicate ourselves, in conducting our own activities, to respect our human rights obligations, as well as the principles of the rule of law, legitimate purpose, non-arbitrariness, effective oversight, and transparency, and call upon others to do the same;

[6] Call upon governments worldwide to promote transparency and independent, effective domestic oversight related to electronic surveillance, use of content take-down notices, limitations or restrictions on online content or user access and other similar measures, while committing ourselves to do the same.

2. A number of Coalition governments also participated in the NETmundial conference held this April in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and endorsed the final outcome, the Multistakeholder Statement, which contained the following language:

Privacy: The right to privacy must be protected. This includes not being subject to arbitrary or unlawful surveillance, collection, treatment and use of personal data. The right to the protection of the law against such interference should be ensured.



Procedures, practices and legislation regarding the surveillance of communications, their interception and collection of personal data, including mass surveillance, interception and collection, should be reviewed, with a view to upholding the right to privacy by ensuring the full and effective implementation of all obligations under international human rights law.

Taken together, these references represent a shared view among Coalition members with respect to the issues your letter raised.

In addition to these joint affirmations and commitments, a variety of processes and reviews are underway in many Coalition member states consistent with their judicial and political cultures, history and circumstance. What you can see from these processes, however, is evidence among Coalition members that the issue is being taken seriously. The specific concerns you have raised about individual countries will be/have been dealt with through responses from the countries concerned.

We urge you to participate in those domestic processes and reiterate the willingness of the Coalition to continue discussions with civil society on this issue.

In addition, we remain dedicated to addressing the continuing challenges to rights that have historically been under attack online – freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association – and which the Coalition was founded to address. We believe these are issues where our Governments and your organizations have common concerns, and a common purpose, and can work together to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms online. As a coalition, we will draw attention to and push back against these actions and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Yours sincerely,
The Freedom Online Coalition