

Public statement calling for an end to the complicity with ISS World Europe

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, are urgently calling on the EU Commission, EU agencies, EU Member States' governments, public institutions, civil servants and elected officials to refrain from participating in, endorsing, sponsoring, or legitimising the upcoming ISS World Europe Conference, scheduled to take place at the Clarion Hotel in Prague on 2–4 June 2026. We also call on European universities, law enforcement agencies and on any other stakeholders to stop any partnerships, investments, or other forms of support in relation to the event and its participants.

What is ISS World Europe?

ISS World Europe is a closed, annual, invitation-only surveillance industry conference where state agencies and private companies trade and promote invasive technologies for mass monitoring, data harvesting and tracking of individuals. It functions as a marketplace for spyware and other digital repression tools that are associated with the targeting and human rights violations of journalists, activists, migrants, and political opponents.

Why are we calling for an immediate cutting of ties with ISS?

This event normalises and accelerates the spread of technologies linked to serious human rights abuses and the erosion of privacy in both authoritarian and democratic states.

It does so by hosting many vendors that are directly involved in war crimes, crimes against humanity and the Gaza genocide:

- The primary sponsor is **Israeli company NSO Group**, the developer of the spyware Pegasus. Pegasus [was instrumental](#) in the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and is widely used against civil society, journalists, lawyers, and activists in several EU Member States. This has been documented by the European Parliament's PEGA Committee of Inquiry and many other respected organisations, such as [Forbidden Stories](#), [Amnesty International](#) and [the Citizen Lab](#). Pegasus also [supports](#) the Israeli army in committing planned and large-scale war crimes and crimes against humanity—including the crime of apartheid—against Palestinians. Because of its direct involvement in human rights violations, dozens of cases implicating the company are now pending before domestic and European courts. Moreover, NSO Group has been sanctioned and banned from the market in the United States since 2021 and was [found guilty of unlawfully targeting WhatsApp users and infrastructure](#) with its spyware.
- **BAE Systems** sells surveillance technologies used to spy on people's emails, texts and locations. It manufactures artillery that the Israeli military has been using extensively, firing tens of thousands of 155mm shells into the Gaza Strip, including [white phosphorus bombs](#), which is forbidden and amounts to a war crime.
- **Elbit Systems**, Israel's largest military material producer, enables and profits from Israeli genocide, apartheid, illegal occupation in the West Bank, settler colonialism and war crimes against Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and beyond.

- **Cellebrite** is used by many law enforcement agencies to extract data from phones by bypassing the device security code. Cellebrite was used in Serbia to hack phones of activists and journalists according to an [Amnesty International investigation](#).
- Other opaque spyware developers such as **Cognyte, RCS/Cy4gate and SIO** will participate in the conference, either as sponsors or as exhibitors.

During past editions of the ISS World, [it was reported](#) that some of the exhibitors suggested they were able to sell their products and services to entities under EU sanctions.

EU law enforcement agencies, as well as many universities, also participate in the ISS conference. Their involvement undermines the values of public trust, human rights and academic integrity that these institutions are expected to uphold.

The former UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, [stated](#) that "*the persistent and global misuse of this technology by both democratic and non-democratic states poses grave risks to the promotion and protection of human rights, and particularly in respect of fundamental and non-derogable rights.*"

A trade show sponsored by spyware companies has no place in the European Union, which should uphold and protect fundamental rights.

Our call for justice and human rights

This conference is able to take place because of the EU's tolerance and permissiveness towards an out-of-control surveillance market. The EU is also responsible for creating favourable conditions for the growing defence tech market due to the lack of regulations and its funding of [spyware firms](#).

It is crucial to draw a line against the normalisation of spyware and EU Member States' complicity in human rights violations across the globe. These measures would also send a strong message that companies complicit in the perpetration of a genocide, or companies with ties to authoritarian states, have no place in the EU's market.

We call on the EU Commission, EU agencies, EU Member States' governments, public institutions, civil servants and elected officials to refrain from participating in, endorsing, sponsoring, or legitimising the upcoming ISS World Europe.

We call on European universities, law enforcement agencies and or any other stakeholders to stop any partnerships, investments, or other forms of support in relation to the event and its participants.

Signatories:

European Digital Rights – EDRi
7amleh
Access Now
Alternatif Bilisim
Belgrade Centre for Human Rights
Danes je nov dan
Electronic Frontier Norway
ESWA

Homo Digitalis
Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia
IT-Pol Denmark
luRe
Lobby4kids
Osservatorio Nessuno
Politiscope
SHARE Foundation