

# Surveillance and the right to privacy in the UAE

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Access Now is an international organization that works to defend and extend the digital rights of users at risk around the world. Through representation worldwide, Access Now provides thought leadership and policy recommendations to the public and private sectors to ensure the continued openness of the internet and the protection of fundamental rights. By combining direct technical support, comprehensive policy engagement, global advocacy, grassroots grantmaking, legal interventions and convenings such as RightsCon, we fight for human rights in the digital age.

# **This statement focuses on unlawful surveillance and state violation of the right to privacy**

- Follow-up from UAE's third cycle
- Legal framework related to the right to privacy
- New developments since the last review
- Recommendations

## **Legal framework related to the right to privacy**

1. A lack of constitutional safeguard of the right to privacy.
2. The UAE has not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), among other international human rights instruments.
3. Article 21 of the Arab Charter on Human Rights.
4. Human Rights Council and the Special procedures stressed on the impact of right to privacy on other rights such as freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly.

## Examples of attacks on right to privacy

The use of Pegasus spyware has negatively affected journalists and human rights defenders, violating their privacy and putting their private and professional lives and security at risk. Among these HRDs we can mention:

- Loujain al-Hathloul
- Ahmed Mansoor

## Recommendations

- a. Amend the Constitution and pass regulations affirming and protecting the human right to privacy;
- b. Cease all surveillance operations and persecution of individuals and respect the right to privacy;
- c. Introduce strong and effective transparency and oversight mechanisms to all matters related to mass surveillance and the acquisition of surveillance technology.



**Thank you for your  
attention**



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