

[Anti]surveillance in Mexico

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Surveillance in Mexico

- Mexico is the **world's deadliest** country for journalists
 - *18 murders until August 2022 (13 in 2021, 14 in 2020).*
- Mexico is one of the **top buyers** of surveillance technologies in the world
 - *5.8 millions of euros spent in Hacking Team surveillance equipment (2015)*
- Mexico is one of the **largest users** of surveillance technologies
 - *15.000 mobile numbers targeted with Pegasus malware (2015-2021).*

Targeted vs massive surveillance

- Surveillance comes in many forms:
 - **Targeted surveillance** is used to spy on a specific person of interest (i.e., malware infections)
 - **Massive surveillance** is used to collect information about a group to register behavioral patterns or identify persons (i.e., facial recognition systems).
- Both are problematic! Surveillance creates a **chilling effect** that erodes our human rights (free speech, freedom of association, freedom to protest).

Targeted surveillance in MX: #GobiernoEspía

- In 2017, the Citizen Lab of the University of Toronto, R3D & Article 19 unveiled a **State-sponsored surveillance campaign** using the **Pegasus** malware against journalists, human rights defenders and civilians.
- The government even targeted **a journalist's 16-years old son**, a journalist's widow, and an international independent committee.
- In 2021, there are hints that **Pegasus may still be active** in Mexico.

What's Pegasus?

- Pegasus is a malware **sold only to governments.**
- Pegasus used one-click vectors to infect a device (SMS). Nowadays, it uses **zero-click vulnerabilities.** It's virtually untraceable.
- Pegasus can access to **anything in the device:** messages, chat logs, phone calls, real-time location, photos, files. It can also activate the camera and mic remotely.

Surveillance is a threat

- Targeted surveillance puts journalists, human rights defenders and civil society at risk. **It's a threat to democracies around the world.**
- Fortunately, the world is willing to tackle these abuses. **The EU and the US** are inquiring Pegasus' manufacturer, and companies like Apple and Meta are suing them.
- Governments around the world should **regulate the purchase and use** of surveillance systems and **be accountable** about them.

Antisurveillance is essential for free knowledge

- Free knowledge requires **freedom of speech!**
- **Anonymity provides protection** for people around the world that resist autocratic governments.
- **Privacy is a collective right!** It allows us to express ourselves, explore our identities and defend our rights.