

Public statement calling for the cancellation of ISS World Europe

We, the undersigned civil society organisations and elected representatives, are urgently calling on the Czechia government to immediately cancel the upcoming ISS World Europe Conference that is set to take place at the Clarion Hotel in Prague on 2-4 June 2026.

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 its immediate cancellation?

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 companies [under EU sanctions and suspected of cooperating with Russia](#), as well as many Israeli 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.

This year's edition is also marked by the participation of companies like **Protelion** with [strong ties to Russian secret services](#).

Law enforcement agencies from Member States, as well as many universities, also participate in the ISS despite the serious ethical concerns surrounding the 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 stop ISS World Europe and to draw a line against the normalisation of spyware and EU Member States' complicity in human rights violations across the globe. It also sends a strong message that companies complicit in the perpetration of a genocide, or companies collaborating with Russian authorities, have no place in the EU's market.

We call on the Czech government to uphold and protect people's rights and freedoms in Czechia, across Europe and beyond, and immediately cancel the event.

Signed: