

Hearing set in US request for Twitter accounts

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The Twitter homepage appears on a screen in Washington, DC, in 2010. A US judge is to hear arguments next week about the US government's efforts to get Twitter to hand over information on the accounts of three people connected with WikiLeaks.

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The hearing is scheduled to be held on February 15 in a federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, according to court documents unsealed on Tuesday.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) (ACLU) and others have challenged the government's bid to get Twitter to turn over information about the Twitter accounts of the three

WikiLeaks supporters.

The three are Icelandic parliamentarian Birgitta Jonsdottir, Jacob Appelbaum, a US computer researcher, and Rop Gonggrijp, a Dutch volunteer for WikiLeaks.

The EFF, ACLU and lawyers for the trio are seeking to overturn a court order the government obtained on December 14 requiring Twitter to provide the account information.

The court order was confidential, but a judge unsealed it allowing Twitter to notify the users and give them a chance to appeal.

"[Twitter](#) is a publication and [communication service](#), so the information sought by the government relates to what these individuals said and where they were when they said it," EFF legal director Cindy Cohn said.

"It is especially troubling since the request seeks information about all statements made by these people, regardless of whether their speech relates to WikiLeaks," Cohn said.

Iceland's foreign ministry last month summoned the US ambassador in Reykjavik to express "serious concern" about the bid to obtain personal information about Jonsdottir, the Icelandic MP.

Jonsdottir, an early WikiLeaks supporter who distanced herself from the site a few months ago, is an active promoter of freedom of information and a member of the Icelandic parliament's foreign affairs committee.

The US Department of Justice has been pursuing a [criminal investigation](#) of [WikiLeaks](#), which has obtained and published hundreds of thousands of secret US military reports and diplomatic cables.

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