

Rights groups: Stop selling spyware to dictators

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A coalition of human rights groups is launching a campaign to curb the international trade in surveillance software, saying exports of sophisticated espionage programs are chilling free speech across the globe.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and London-based Privacy International are among those hoping to check the export of powerful spyware to unsavory governments.

The call comes as journalists and activists have increasingly found themselves exposed to online assaults blamed on state-sponsored hackers. Last week, Google researchers told a security conference in Singapore that 21 of the world's top 25 news organization had been hit.

The campaign launched Friday may run up against European efforts to boost overseas sales of security software. Britain, for example, has announced plans to boost "cyber exports" over the next two years.

More information: Online: www.globalcause.net

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