

## Snowden on video at NYC forum to promote privacy treaty

September 25 2015, by Tom Hays

---



In this Dec. 10, 2014, file photo, former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, who is in Moscow, is seen on a giant screen during a live video conference for an interview as part of Amnesty International's annual Write for Rights campaign at the Gaité Lyrique in Paris, France. Domestic digital spying on ordinary citizens is an international threat that will only be slowed with measures like a proposed international treaty declaring privacy a basic human right, Snowden said Thursday, Sept. 24, 2015, in a video appearance at a Manhattan forum. (AP Photo/Charles Platiau, Pool, File)

Domestic digital spying on ordinary citizens is an international threat that will only be slowed with measures like a proposed international treaty declaring privacy a basic human right, Edward Snowden said Thursday in a video appearance at a Manhattan forum.

"This is not a problem exclusive to the United States. ... This is a global problem that affects all of us," Snowden, the one-time National Security Agency systems analyst, said in his brief remarks from Moscow via video link. "What's happening here happens in France, it happens in the U.K., it happens in every country, every place, to every person."

The key question, Snowden added, is: "How do we assert what our rights are, traditionally and digitally?"

Snowden gained notoriety in 2013 for leaking details of the once-secret U.S. surveillance programs. He fled to Russia, where he was granted asylum despite demands by the United States that he return to face espionage and other charges.

The global advocacy group Avaaz organized the gathering to promote the so-called "Snowden Treaty." Countries who signed would be required to curtail surveillance of phone calls and online activity, and also agree to provide sanctuary for people who expose illegal domestic spying.

The forum was timed to coincide with the United Nations General Assembly. Organizers have said diplomats have shown interest in a draft of the treaty, but have declined to name what nations they represent.

The NSA's collection of American phone metadata has been deeply controversial ever since Snowden disclosed it to journalists. President Barack Obama sought, and Congress passed, a law ending the collection and instead allowing the NSA to request the records of U.S. domestic

phone customers as needed in terrorism investigations.

A succession of decisions in federal courts in Washington and New York have at various times threatened the constitutionality of the NSA's surveillance program, but have so far upheld the NSA's amassing of records from phone companies.

A website promoting the proposed treaty calls the NSA surveillance programs "a direct contravention of international human right law." It adds: "Protecting the right to privacy is vital not just in itself but because it is an essential requirement for the exercise of freedom of opinion and expression, the most fundamental pillars of democracy."

© 2015 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Snowden on video at NYC forum to promote privacy treaty (2015, September 25)  
retrieved 27 April 2024 from  
<https://phys.org/news/2015-09-snowden-video-nyc-forum-privacy.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.