

Dear Friends,

The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) welcomes the recent passing of the United Nations (UN) resolution “Right to Privacy in the Digital Age” by the General Assembly on 19 December 2013.

Rapid technological advancement has created abundant channels of communication creating avenues for individuals and institutions to conduct surveillance, interception and data collection. In this current state, our concerns in regards to the threat of our human rights have been heightened, especially with the recent development of the ability of governments to conduct mass secret electronic surveillance programs throughout the world.

We echo the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay’s statement that “The right to privacy, the right to access to information and freedom of expression are closely linked. The public has the democratic right to take part in the public affairs and this right cannot be effectively exercised by solely relying on authorized information.”

In amidst these concerns, ADN encourages the implementation by nations the resolution entitled “Right to Privacy in the Digital Age” that calls for the end of activities that violate the human right to privacy. The right to privacy is closely interlinked to our right to freedom of expression which is the very foundation to a democratic society.

With the increasing threat of terrorism in which the enemy is stateless and faceless, public security has become a priority for nations. As indicated by the resolution, based on these justifications the gathering and protection of sensitive information should not be abused and states should comply with their obligations under international human rights law.

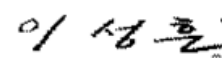
As representatives of a community of democracy advocates and human rights defenders, the right to privacy is essential in maintaining our freedom of expression.

We welcome and support this breakthrough resolution which solidifies the fact that “the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, including the right to privacy” and call on States to “respect and protect the right to privacy, including in the context of digital communication” and to take the appropriate measures to end all acts of violations of these rights under international human rights law allowing for the transparent mechanisms at times of state communication surveillance, interception and collection of personal data.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hyungsik Shin".

Hyung-sik Shin

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "이성훈" (Lee Seong-hoon).

Anselmo Lee