

Hacking Team and the Targeting of Ethiopian Journalists

Toronto, Canada (February 13, 2014) - Our latest report, entitled "[Hacking Team and the Targeting of Ethiopian Journalists](#)," identified three instances where Ethiopian journalist group ESAT was targeted with spyware in the space of two hours by a single attacker. In each case, the spyware appeared to be RCS (Remote Control System), which is programmed and sold exclusively to governments by Milan-based Hacking Team.

While Hacking Team and other "lawful intercept" spyware vendors purport to practice effective self-regulation, this case seems to be part of a broader pattern of government abuse of such spyware. "Lawful intercept" spyware has also apparently been abused to target Bahraini activists, Moroccan journalists, critics of the Turkish Government, and Emirati human rights activists.

This is the first in [a series of reports](#) focusing on the global proliferation and use of Hacking Team's RCS, a spyware product sold exclusively to governments.

About the Citizen Lab

The Citizen Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto is an interdisciplinary laboratory that explores the intersection of information technology, global security, and human rights. In 2009, the Citizen Lab was part of a research team that produced the [Tracking Ghostnet](#) cyber espionage report, one of the first public reports to document a major cyber espionage network affecting thousands of computers in dozens of high-profile targets worldwide. The Citizen Lab has also published a series of reports that document the emerging market for lawful intercept technologies, what some call "digital arms," targeting civil society organizations. In 2014, the Citizen Lab was the first Canadian organization to be awarded the prestigious [John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions](#).

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