

## **Human Rights Council 41<sup>st</sup> Session**

### **Item 3 – Clustered ID with the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression**

**25 June 2019**

#### **Freedom Online Coalition's Geneva Network Intervention**

Mr. President,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the members of the Geneva Network of the Freedom Online Coalition. The full list of cosponsors to this statement will be placed on the [Human Rights Council] extranet'.

We would like to thank Mr Clément Voule for his thorough and timely report.

The Freedom Online Coalition unites 30 states who have committed to adoption and promotion of policies and practices, nationally and internationally, that promote the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms online, in particular freedom of expression, the right to privacy and the freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

The Freedom Online Coalition is deeply concerned about shrinking civic and democratic spaces online as a result of State-sponsored obstruction of free expression, peaceful assembly, and free association, notably as it relates to human rights defenders and other members of civil society. State-sponsored obstruction of these rights is a direct challenge to the FOC's goal of protecting and promoting both the exercise of human rights online and an open and interoperable Internet.

We welcome the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur, that states should ensure that any interference with the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association is “prescribed by law” and is “necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others”.

We agree with the Special Rapporteur that network shutdowns too often fail to meet the established test for restrictions on the right of peaceful assembly. We would like to call on all governments to refrain from enacting laws and implementing policies that unduly restrict civic space.

Mr Rapporteur, we would welcome your suggestions on how the Freedom Online Coalition could contribute to the advancement of your recommendations listed in the report.

The FOC expresses support for the work of Mr Kaye to advance human rights online.

Thank you!