

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



January 9, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that the US government's mass surveillance program violates the human right to privacy and threatens the rights to free expression and association as enshrined in international law.

As you consider changes to US surveillance policy, we urge you to take the following steps:

- Explain the purpose and disclose the scope of the US government's mass surveillance program.
- Ensure that US surveillance practices both inside and outside the United States are brought in line with international human rights standards, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- Publicly commit the US government to following the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, due process, and transparency in any surveillance of communications. The International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance, available at <https://en.necessaryandproportionate.org/text>, provide guidance on implementation.
- Ensure that reform of US surveillance includes respect for the rights of people outside of US territory, as well as within.
- Establish a truly independent adversarial voice to champion privacy rights before the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, and strengthen Congressional oversight of both the court and the NSA programs over which it has jurisdiction.
- Actively support, not undermine, efforts—including those of civil society—to create and maintain data encryption standards and effectively use encryption as a means to increase user security and trust.
- Recognize the right, indeed the duty, of federal employees to blow the whistle when they encounter evidence of human rights violations, and strengthen protections for whistleblowers.

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In your May, 2013 speech on national security, you stated that “the decisions that we are making now will define the type of nation—and world—that we leave to our children.” Respect for the human rights of all people is the cornerstone of a safe and free future. Accordingly, we urge you to make meaningful, human rights-centered reforms to US surveillance practices.

Sincerely,

Steven W. Hawkins  
Executive Director  
Amnesty International USA

Cc:

Lisa Monaco, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism  
Stephen Pomper, Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs & Human Rights  
John Kerry, Secretary of State  
Samantha Power, US Ambassador to the United Nations  
James R. Clapper, Director of National Intelligence  
General Keith B. Alexander, Director of the National Security Agency  
John Brennan, Director, Central Intelligence Agency  
James B. Comey, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation