



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on November 7, 2018

Snowden Warns Israeli Audience About Risks of Surveillance

U.S. whistleblower Edward Snowden, speaking by video link from an undisclosed location in Moscow to an invited audience in Tel Aviv on November 6, warned Israelis to be on guard against invasive government and private surveillance.



Snowden noted Israel's high-tech surveillance capabilities, but warned that accepting too much government surveillance and too easily accepting the argument that it is needed for security reasons poses serious risks.

"If we can allow ourselves to be terrorized by someone with nothing but a knife, to reorder our societies for the convenience of state power ... we've stopped being citizens and we've started being subjects," Snowden's statement was quoted by AFP.

Snowden also mentioned the NSO Group, an Israel-based company known for its Pegasus spyware.

Snowden was an infrastructure analyst for the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton at a NSA facility in Hawaii. He made contact with Glenn Greenwald of the British newspaper *The Guardian* in late 2012, communicating to Greenwald using encrypted e-mail to send his information exposing the NSA's surveillance programs. In May 2013, Snowden left Hawaii for Hong Kong, where he remained while *The Guardian* published his information. The newspaper made his identity known in June 2013, at his request.

Federal prosecutors charged Snowden in June 2013 with theft of government property and with two counts of violating the Espionage Act of 1917 — "unauthorized communication of national defense information" and willfully disclosing classified communications intelligence "to an unauthorized person."

Snowden sought asylum in Russia, which the government initially granted to him for one year. Repeated extensions have permitted him to stay at least until 2020.

In 2014, former congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas) began a petition urging the Obama administration to grant Snowden clemency. Paul released a video on his website saying, "Edward Snowden sacrificed his livelihood, citizenship, and freedom by exposing the disturbing scope of the NSA's worldwide spying program. Thanks to one man's courageous actions, Americans know about the truly egregious ways their government is spying on them."

Another member of Congress supporting the whistleblower was Representative Justin Amash (R-Mich.), who was just reelected to a fifth term yesterday.

Amash said in August 2013 about Snowden, "Without his doing what he did, members of Congress would not have really known about [those programs].... As far as Congress is concerned, sure, he's a whistleblower. He told us what we need to know."

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