



Press release
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Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Freedom of the Internet - 40 countries support Sweden

On Friday, 10 June, Sweden will address the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). The topic of the address is that human rights must be respected online in the same way as they are offline. The group of countries supporting the address are representative of all different parts of the world.

This is the first time that such an extensive initiative on human rights and the Internet is taken up in the Council. Sweden has led the work on pursuing, negotiating and gathering support for this address. The address will be given by Sweden's Ambassador to the UN, Jan Knutsson.

Influential countries like Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Africa and the United States have chosen to support the address, which sends an important signal that freedom of expression and human rights on the Internet is an issue that concerns people all over the world. It is of particular interest to note that both Palestine and Israel have given their support, which is an important signal in itself.

The report that the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression, Frank La Rue, presented to the Council on 3 June forms the basis of the address. This report is based on global expert consultations, including two international expert meetings in Stockholm (June 2010 and March 2011). At present, a large number of states - currently 40 - are preparing comments on the report and have expressed support for many of its principles.

For Sweden, one principle is particularly fundamental: the same rights that people have in general - such as freedom of expression, including the freedom to search for information, freedom of assembly and freedom of association - must also be protected on the Internet.

Other important parts of the address are the general rule that individuals must be able to express themselves anonymously on the Internet, and that decisions concerning the administration of the Internet must be taken in forums that include representatives of all interest groups, i.e. not only states but also civil society, academics, the business world, etc.

The address in its entirety will be published on www.ud.se when it is held.

The Human Rights Council session opens on Friday 10 June at 12.00 and will be webcast at: <http://www.un.org/webcast/unhrc/>

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- [UN Live webcast](#)