

Technology as an Enabler for Human Rights Monitoring and Advocacy

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Abstract: Digital technologies have transformed the ways in which human rights are questioned and defended because they enable human rights actors to identify violations faster, gather evidence remotely and authenticate it, and record abuses with greater safety and engage more audiences to advocate their cause. Satellite imagery, open-source intelligence (OSINT), encrypted reporting, digital records, and data analytics, in particular, are particularly handy when it comes to conflict zones, closed environments, and closed-access locations. Yet, the same technologies have posed significant threats: they can make people feel monitored, subject defenders and victims to attackers, misinformation, and can deliver unfair results in the form of biased or obscure automated systems. The article analyzes technology as a social-technical facilitator of human rights advocacy and monitoring and states that the influence of technology on its outcome is not only through technical means, but also through the legislative, institutional, political, and the combination of online and offline advocacy. In a doctrinal approach to the analysis of the main applications of technology and legal and ethical risks, the article suggests an approach to its regulation, based on the rights, which is grounded on the legality, need, proportionality, transparency, accountability, remedy, data protection and involvement of the communities affected. The article comes out with the conclusion that technology can best be applied with high protective factors in place and with practice on the basis of human rights.

Keywords: Human Rights Monitoring, Advocacy, OSINT, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Evidence