

# draft-association update HRPC

Stéphane Couture (U. Montréal)

HRPC Interim Meeting - April 8th, 2020

# Background

- draft-association is one of the specific rights drafts after 8280, specific to rights of association and assembly
- Joe, with co-traveller Stéphane, took editorial role after Niels and Gisela handed it off at IETF104
- Lack of time + feel the need to have more discussions. IETF106 (December 2019) proposed a “way forward” articulated around 3 meetings/seminars that took place in the last months

<https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/draft-irtf-hrpc-association/>

# Summary of the Draft

- RQ: “How does the architecture of the internet enable and/or inhibit the right to freedom of assembly and association?”
- 7 “protocol cases”

## Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	.....
2.	Vocabulary used	.....
3.	Research question	.....
4.	Methodology	.....
5.	Literature Review	.....
6.	Cases and examples	.....
6.1.	Conversing	.....
6.1.1.	Mailing Lists	.....
6.1.2.	Multi-party video conferencing	..
6.1.3.	Internet Relay Chat	.....
6.2.	Peer-to-peer networks and systems	..
6.2.1.	Peer-to-peer system architectures	..
6.2.2.	Version control	.....
6.3.	Grouping together (identities)	.....
6.3.1.	DNS	.....
6.3.2.	Autonomous Systems	.....
7.	Discussion: Establishing the relation	..
8.	Discussion: Protocols and Platforms	..
9.	Conclusions	.....
10.	Acknowledgements	.....
11.	Security Considerations	.....
12.	IANA Considerations	.....
13.	Research Group Information	.....
14.	References	.....
14.1.	Informative References	.....
14.2.	URIs	.....
	Authors' Addresses	.....

# What has been done so far since IETF 106

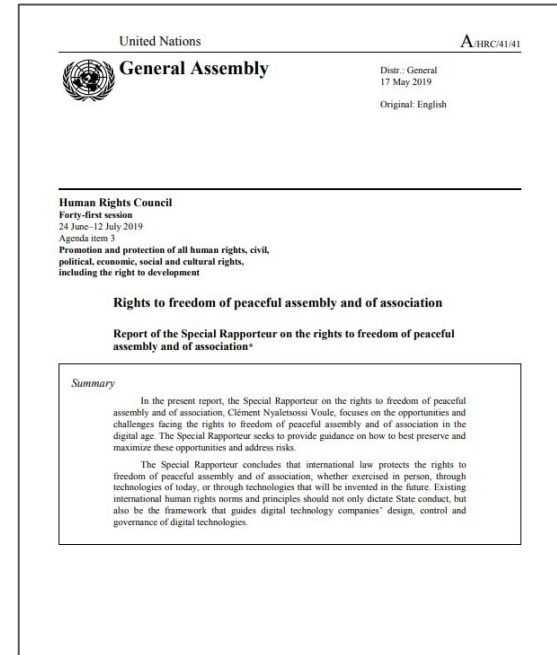
1. Joe “resigned” in January, Melinda agreed to help on rfc manipulation in late February. Submission of version 04 with bare changes in March.
2. Organized three meetings to discuss the draft: new directions/formulations discussed but little advancement on the text itself.
3. Subjects of discussions :
  - a. Formulation of a new broad aim: “addressing the relationships” instead of “testing” them.
  - b. Identifying finer modalities of association that could be taken into consideration.
  - c. Enhancing literature review.
  - d. Decision process to adopt the draft : still by consensus or other simpler way?

# Lit. Review: UN document

“In the digital age, the exercise of the rights of peaceful assembly and association has become largely dependent on business enterprises, whose legal obligations, policies, technical standards, financial models and algorithms can affect these freedoms”.

Recommandations (quoted):

- “Undertaking human rights impact assessments which incorporate the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association when developing or modifying their products and services”.
- “increase the quality of participation in and implementation of existing multi-stakeholder initiatives”
- “collaborate with governments and civil society to develop technology that promotes and strengthens human rights”
- “support the research and development of appropriate technological solutions to online harassment, disinformation and propaganda, including tools to detect and identify State-linked accounts and bots”;
- “adopt monitoring indicators that include specific concerns related to freedom of peaceful assembly and association”




# Lit. Review: Council of Europe document

## Case identified:

- Instances of **switch-offs in the Arab Spring**, “to prevent people from organising themselves or assembling”
- The Bay Area Rapid Transit (**BART**) shut down all cell phone service, to avoid protester violence and disruption of service
- The wholesale **blocking of Google Sites** as a violation of freedom of expression
- Telus, a telecom company which **blocked customers’ access to websites critical of Telus** during a Telecommunications Workers Union strike against it
- **Gezi Park protests**: targeting of social media users who call for or organise protests though the Internet
- Mass surveillance or other interferences with privacy in the context of law enforcement and national security
- **VPNs** (Virtual Private Networks) to the ToR project to ensure anonymity
- Distributed Denial of Service attacks (**DDoS**) as civil disobedience

Committee of experts on cross-border flow of Internet traffic and Internet freedom (MSI-INT)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

MSI-INT (2014)08 rev5  
30 September 2015

**Draft report on freedom of assembly and association on the Internet**

Contents

I - Introduction – Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association in the context of international law ..... 2

II- The Internet: The public sphere of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ..... 3

1. The Internet as a tool for assembly and association ..... 3

2. The use of the Internet in the context of urban violence, incitement to violence and terrorism ..... 8

III - Challenges and questions related to the exercise and enjoyment of freedom of peaceful assembly and association online ..... 10

1. Legal frameworks ..... 10

2. Restrictions of Internet access, blocking and filtering ..... 12

3. Prosecution for online activities ..... 14

4. Mass Surveillance ..... 14

5. Anonymity ..... 16

6. Civil disobedience ..... 17

IV- Conclusions ..... 19

How is this related to protocols?  
What are the implications for IETF?

# Identifying finer modalities of association

- Volunteer vs coerced association;
- Conscious vs unconscious association;
- Capacity of one person to dissociate;
- Accountability;
- Transparency (you can understand what the rules are);
- “Peacefulness” of the association

# Question: what about COVID-19?

- Right to “physical” assembly severely restrained in many locations
- Internet and digital networks playing a crucial role in the capacity to assembly
- Video conferencing apps like Zoom have been much criticized
- Is there anything more to say in draft-association?

## **Extract from *draft-association*:**

“Even though some multi-party video conferencing tools facilitate freedom of assembly and association, their own configuration might pose concrete risks for those who use them. On the one hand WebRTC is providing resilient channels of communications, but on the other hand it also exposes information about those who are using the tool which might lead to increased surveillance, identification and the consequences that might be derived from that. This is especially concerning because the usage of a VPN does not protect against the exposure of IP addresses”



# Stéphane's perspective

- So far, as interim “lead editor”, I didn't succeed in bringing the draft to another stage.
- I would prefer to have a secondary role and pass the lead to another person. I am also willing to withdraw completely from the project if it's better.
- I will likely have a bit more time this summer between now and August but I still definitely need an active partner *on content*.
- Big question (asked by Corinne on the list): what exactly do we want people to gain from this draft?
- Adoption process might need to be softer and/or more precise.