



More than 500 of the world's leading authors, including five Nobel prize winners, have condemned the scale of state surveillance revealed by the whistleblower Edward Snowden and warned that spy agencies are undermining democracy and must be curbed by a new international charter.

The signatories, who come from 81 different countries and include Margaret Atwood, Don DeLillo, Orhan Pamuk, Günter Grass and Arundhati Roy, say the capacity of intelligence agencies to spy on millions of people's digital communications is turning everyone into potential suspects, with worrying implications for the way societies work.

They have urged the United Nations to create an international bill of digital rights that would enshrine the protection of civil rights in the internet age.

Their call comes a day after the heads of the world's leading technology companies demanded sweeping changes to surveillance laws to help preserve the public's trust in the internet – reflecting the growing global momentum for a proper review of mass snooping capabilities in countries such as the US and UK, which have been the pioneers in the field.

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