

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street,
London, SW1P 4DF

24th August 2011

Dear Home Secretary,

We are writing to you regarding discussions scheduled to take place between the Government and some social network and communications providers following the recent civil unrest.

We noted the Prime Minister's suggestion that the Government will "look at whether it would be right to stop people communicating via these websites and services when we know they are plotting violence, disorder and criminality". We believe that Twitter, Research in Motion and Facebook have been invited to meet you to discuss this issue.

As you know, there is existing legislation regulating the interception and disclosure of communications information, the use of communications evidence by law enforcement and restrictions on people's use of communications technology.

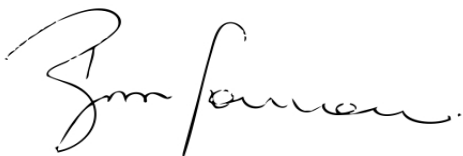
It is reasonable to review the existing legal regime to ensure that it appropriately fits new technologies. However, turning off, restricting or monitoring people's communications networks are matters that require extreme care and open, detailed deliberation.

We are very concerned that new measures, made in good faith but in a heated political environment, will overextend powers in ways that would be susceptible to abuse, restrict legitimate, free communication and expression and undermine people's privacy. This is especially so if proposals involve unaccountable voluntary arrangements between law enforcement and communications providers.

It is essential that any review of regulations covering communications networks happens through a public consultation, with full details of meetings between the Government and social network platforms made public as soon as possible. This should involve a genuine multi-stakeholder process that includes not only the communications providers but groups representing broader citizens' rights such as freedom of expression and privacy.

We would like to request a meeting to discuss these issues, and look forward to engaging with you further.

Yours sincerely,



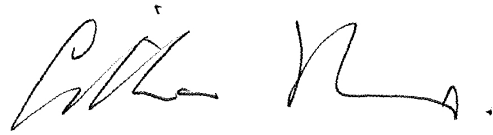
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