



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Criminal complaint against German-British software firm Gamma/FinFisher**

#### **Bahrain's illegal computer surveillance in Germany**

*Berlin, 24 October 2014* – The European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) and British organization Privacy International have submitted a criminal complaint to prosecution authorities in Munich against employees of German-British firm Gamma. ECCHR and Privacy International have seen files suggesting that Gamma supplied Bahrain with the surveillance software FinFisher and provided technical assistance from Germany. This allowed Bahraini authorities to use the trojan to spy on computers in Germany. “If these allegations prove to be true, Gamma employees could be guilty of aiding and abetting. Those responsible must be held accountable,” says Miriam Saage-Maaß, Vice Legal Director at ECCHR. Criminal complaints have also been lodged against Gamma in Britain and Belgium. Aside from the criminal investigation, ECCHR is also calling for political action: “German Minister for the Economy Sigmar Gabriel must finally live up to his promises and introduce effective and transparent regulations on the export of surveillance technology.”

Data from 77 computers has shown that Bahraini authorities used the trojan to spy on numerous devices in Britain as well as one computer in Belgium and one in Germany. Those targeted by the spyware in Britain included prominent Bahraini human rights activists. The identity of the victim of surveillance in Germany is not yet known.

German-British firm Gamma developed and produced FinFisher. Its promotional material shows that the software provides comprehensive access to infected computers and any data stored there. Cameras and microphones on the devices can also be tapped. According to Privacy International, FinFisher software is used in 35 countries, including Ethiopia, Turkmenistan, Bahrain and Malaysia. “Companies like Gamma do well from repressive states, but reject any responsibility for their products,” says Adriana Edmeades from Privacy International. “It is time that legal action was taken against corporations for their involvement in grave human rights violations.”

**More information on surveillance technology and human rights violations in Bahrain:**  
<http://www.ecchr.de/surveillance-technology.html>

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