

FREE SOFTWARE MOVEMENT OF INDIA

Sy No :91, Beside Centre for Good Governance, Greenlands Colony, Gachibowli X
Roads, sherelingampally, Ranga Reddy Dist, Hyderabad-500032.
Ph. No: 040-29704268, +91-9490098011. Web: <https://fsmi.in>



Press Statement

The Free Software Movement of India welcomes supreme court judgment appointing a committee to investigate the use of Pegasus spyware against journalists, government officials and citizens of India. The appointment of a three member committee led by former supreme court judge RV Raveendran is a welcome development in holding Union of India accountable for its actions. The court in its judgment particularly observed lack of denial from Union of India on using Pegasus spyware.

We welcome the court allowing the committee to frame its own terms of reference and hold the investigation as they see fit. The freedom for the committee to invite any authority or individual and call for records is important to investigate a matter involving national security agencies. The court's observations on national security being cited as a means to evade accountability by Union of India are important.

The committee has been given an important task to expeditiously probe the issue and bring out facts of the issue. We also welcome the supreme court decision to allow the constituted committee to invite other technical experts if necessary beyond the current technical committee. In this regard, it would be important for the committee to allow experts in the field to depose including people from foreign institutions like Citizen Lab, who have done extensive investigations into NSO group and pegasus spyware.

The supreme court further made important observations on how the allegations on Pegasus spyware impact right to privacy and freedom of speech of citizens. The observations on how privacy and national security go hand and hand . In all, this is an important judgment that will determine protections to citizens from abuse by national security agencies.

Kiran Chandra
General Secretary
Free Software Movement of India.