

August 1, 2017

**To the Attention of the Blackstone Group L.P. Board of Directors,**

We are writing you regarding [the reported interest](#) of Blackstone Group in the acquisition of a 40% stake in the Israel-based firm NSO Group Technologies, a company that develops, promotes and sells sophisticated spyware to different governments, including Mexico.

We, the undersigned, are concerned by NSO Group's lack of accountability regarding the illegal use of their products and services in Mexico. In the last months, [we have documented](#) the usage of the Pegasus malware, purchased by the Mexican government in the last years, against journalists, activists, human rights defenders, legislators, and even [a group of international experts with diplomatic immunity](#).

The NSO Group clients' misuse of this surveillance tools triggered a call for an impartial and autonomous investigation on these abuses, issued from different actors such as the [Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression](#) of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and [a group of United Nations experts](#), among others.

Just like the [open letter](#) from the Citizen Lab of the University of Toronto, we exhort you to consider the ethical and human rights implications of investing in NSO Group.

Until now, NSO Group has only issued [a short message](#) regarding the case, reasserting that their products are sold exclusively to governments, and stating that they are "appalled by any alleged misuse of our product [and] any allegations of misuse of our product, if true, would be a violation of our business ethics policies, legal contracts, and what we stand for as a company." However, up to now, NSO Group has failed to clarify its participation in the denounced cases, nor it has offered any public guarantee of collaboration with the inquiry.

Therefore, considering the [public commitments](#) that Blackstone Group L.P. has acquired regarding the principles of responsible investments, corporate responsibility, transparency, and human rights, we call on Blackstone Group L.P to not invest in NSO Group Technologies, at least until that company commits to:

- Cooperate fully with the authorities carrying out the investigations regarding the illegal use of NSO Group's products against journalists, human rights defenders, and other civil society actors in Mexico.
- Adopt the required measures to terminate the current contracts with Mexican government agencies, and refrain to offer their products and services in Mexico.

- In any case, adopt the measures and policies necessary to prevent and avoid that their clients worldwide use their products in a way that violates the human rights, as exposed in the Mexican case.

**Signed,**

- ARTICLE 19, Oficina para México y Centroamérica
- Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (Centro Prodh)
- El Poder del Consumidor
- R3D: Red en Defensa de los Derechos Digitales
- SocialTIC

