



FREEDOM  
ONLINE  
COALITION

QUARTERLY

# NEWSLETTER

January - March 2019

## COALITION NEWS

### Ghana announced as Freedom Online Coalition Chair

We are pleased to announce that the Chairmanship of the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) has been passed to Ghana, as confirmed by its Minister of Communications, Mrs. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful (MP), who has provided the following statement:

“Ghana is delighted to be taking on the role of Chair of the Freedom Online Coalition, and it is a privilege to represent Ghana in this endeavour. The FOC’s core agenda is supporting Internet freedom and protecting fundamental human rights. Ghana’s interest and commitment lies in engaging in these areas by providing a global South leadership and perspective on the key challenges the FOC needs to address. We look forward to working with the FOC Friends of the Chair and the entire Coalition to protect human rights online worldwide.”

Ghana’s role as Chair of the Coalition and subsequent host of the 8th Annual Freedom Online



Minister of Communications,  
Mrs. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful

(FO) Conference follows its joining of the Friends of the Chair Group at the beginning of the year. In assuming the role, Ghana will be the third African country to Chair the Coalition, taking over from Germany, the FOC Chair in 2018. Following Germany’s Chairmanship, the FOC is pleased that the Chair is once again a Member from the global South, which will considerably help to promote awareness of Internet freedom issues amongst global South stakeholders and add diverse perspectives on Internet freedom and human rights online.

The Chairmanship of the Coalition rotates among Member states on an annual basis, and has been previously held by the Netherlands, Kenya, Tunisia, Estonia, Mongolia, Costa Rica and Germany. The FOC Member states unanimously welcome Ghana as the incoming Chair and express their support for the next Annual Freedom Online Conference to be held in Ghana in the forthcoming year.

### FOC Announces Program of Action for 2019-2020

The Freedom Online Coalition is pleased to introduce its Program of Action for 2019-2020. It outlines the FOC’s priorities for supporting Internet freedom and protecting human rights online, and identifies the crucial activities the FOC will endeavour to undertake in order to directly address Internet freedom challenges as identified by FOC Members and the FOC Advisory Network. These activities will be carried out over the course of Ghana’s Chairmanship of the Coalition, which extends from 1 March 2019 – 1 March 2020.

In the forthcoming year, the FOC will continue to tackle Internet freedom related issues, while also strengthening the Coalition’s networks. The FOC’s activities will focus on a number of areas, including limiting state-sponsored restrictions to human rights online, defending civic spaces, closing digital divides, mainstreaming in cybersecurity debates, and highlighting the potential human rights implications of artificial intelligence in online spaces

and the complex challenges to human rights caused by disinformation. The FOC will be engaging with these issues through the following methods, as highlighted in the [Stockholm Terms of Reference](#):

- Diplomatic Coordination between Members, local networks and outside stakeholders at multilateral forums;
- Shaping of Global Norms through the development and promotion of FOC language and joint statements, as well as raising awareness of FOC priority areas; and
- Multistakeholder Engagement through collaboration with the Advisory Network and other stakeholders across activities, including the Annual Freedom Online Conference.

Updates on the implementation of the Program of Action 2019-2020 will be communicated via the FOC website and upcoming editions of the [Quarterly FOC Newsletter](#). You can view the FOC's Program of Action for 2019-2020 [here](#).

## FOC Submission to the UN High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation

In January 2019, the FOC submitted input into the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation. In response to the global consultation, the FOC invited the High-Level Panel to consider principles outlined within the FOC's core documents and Joint Statements. As part of its submission, the FOC supplied the High-Level Panel with its '[Basic Documents](#)' pack produced on the occasion of the 2018 Annual Conference, to highlight principles for the Panel's consideration. You can read the FOC's response, along with all other submission to the panel, [here](#).

## FOC Informal Meeting in Helsinki - 26 February 2019

On Tuesday 26 February, FOC Members met in Helsinki on the margins of the Council of Europe's conference on AI and Human Rights, titled '[Governing the Game Changer – Impacts of artificial intelligence development on human rights, democracy and the rule of law](#)'. Finland's Ambassador Rauno Merisaari, thanked Members for joining the meeting and the Conference and opened the meeting, which included representatives from Canada, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and the US.

During the meeting, which was the first in-person meeting of the network in 2019, Members discussed forthcoming FOC activities and opportunities for FOC engagement with the topic of AI and its potential implications for human rights, noting that this is the first year in which the Coalition will be engaging on this topic.

The Conference was organised by the Council of Europe and the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. The key conclusions from the Conference can be read [here](#).

## Quarterly Call #1 between the FOC and the Advisory Network

The first Quarterly Call between the FOC and the Advisory Network in 2019 was held on Thursday, 21 March. FOC Members Canada, Estonia, Ghana, and the US as well as Members of the Advisory Network took part in the call. The call provided an opportunity for the newly elected co-Chairs of the Advisory Network, Mallory Knodel and Bernard Shen, to be introduced to FOC Members. During the call, Members discussed the Program of Action for 2019-2020, and current activities being carried out by the Coalition, including the FOC's upcoming statements on Defending Civic Spaces, Digital Divides and Cybersecurity. Members additionally discussed potential opportunities for improved coordination and collaboration between FOC Members and the FOC-AN around international forums.

## ADVISORY NETWORK UPDATES

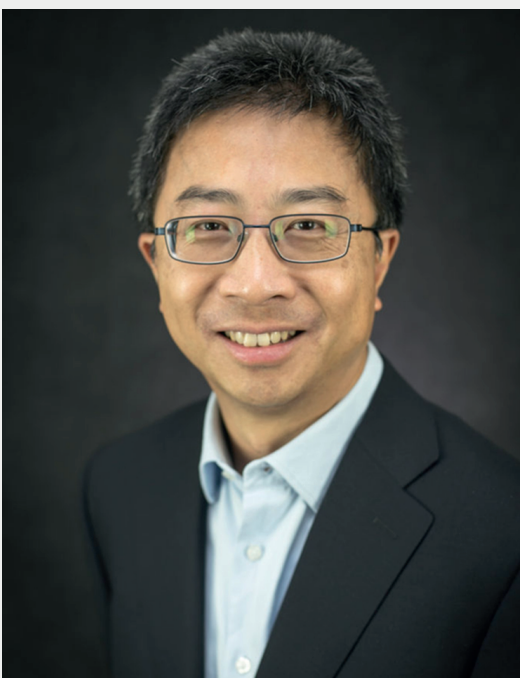
### Mallory Knodel and Bernard Shen announced as FOC Advisory Network Co-Chairs for 2019-2020

The FOC is pleased to announce Mallory Knodel and Bernard Shen as the new co-Chairs of the FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN). Mallory and Bernard were elected by the FOC-AN, following an internal election process, and will hold their roles until March 2020. They will be taking over from the interim co-Chairs of the FOC-AN, Matthew Shears and Katharine Kendrick, who continue to be Members of the Network.

Speaking on her new role, Mallory expressed her intention to “continue the work of the previous co-Chairs to foster trust and transparency within the FOC”. Mallory additionally noted she looks forward to “bringing the AN and the FOC Members closer through practical coordination activities such as human-centric cybersecurity policy and human rights considerations in algorithmic decision making.” Regarding his role as co-Chair, Bernard noted that he would focus his energy on cultivating open-minded discussions, the sharing and understanding of perspectives, concerns and goals within the AN in order to build and provide consensus recommendations to support informed deliberation of key issues by the FOC.

The co-Chairs election process was guided by stakeholder group balance, gender balance, geographic balance, relevant expertise, and commitment to the values of the FOC, as mandated by FOC-AN’s [Terms of Reference](#). The FOC’s Advisory Network was designed to enhance the Coalition’s multistakeholder engagement, including through providing advice on aims, objectives and activities of the Coalition, as well as to support its mission of advancing internet freedom and human rights online.

The FOC congratulates the new co-Chairs on their positions and wishes them success in the year ahead, and thanks the interim co-Chairs for their contributions to the Coalition’s work.



*Bernard Shen*



*Mallory Knodel*

For more detail about the FOC-AN Members [click here](#).

## RELATED NEWS

Further to the above updates from the Freedom Online Coalition, you may be interested in looking at the following curated news digests on online freedom issues from this month. Note that the views expressed in these digests represent the views of individual authors and not necessarily the views of the Freedom Online Coalition or its members.

- AccessNow Access Express - ([read here](#))
- Global Voices Advocacy - ([read here](#))
- Global Digital Download /Internews - ([read here](#))
- Digital Rights Latin America - ([read here](#))
- Govlab Digest - ([read here](#))
- Open Technology Fund - ([read here](#))

For more information about the Freedom Online Coalition, please visit:

<https://freedomonlinecoalition.com/>

# FOC CALENDAR - APRIL

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Internet Freedom Festival, Valencia, Spain		International Privacy and Security Forum, Washington, US				
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, Geneva, Switzerland						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	The Future of Human-Centered AI at Stanford					
22		24	25	26	27	28
		Friends of the Chair Call				
	Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum, Lagos, Nigeria					
29	30					

# FOC CALENDAR - MAY

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
re:publica 2019, Berlin, Germany						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
		Friends of the Chair Call				
Cycon, Tallinn, Estonia						

# FOC CALENDAR - JUNE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	RightsCon, Tunis, Tunisia			Annual Privacy Forum 2019, Rome, Italy		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
		EuroDIG 2019, The Hague, Netherlands				
24	25	26	27	28	29	
		Friends of the Chair Call				

(TBC), 41st session of the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva, Switzerland