

**FROM: International Working Group on Video Surveillance
Press Release
EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01AM 27th January 2017**

Attn: News Desks

-- BEGINS --

INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ASKS LONDON MAYOR TO DEAL WITH METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE'S USE OF MASS SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS AND DARK WEB OF LAW

The International Working Group on Video Surveillance (IWGVS) has today published an open letter to the Mayor of London Sadiq Kahn [1]. The letter calls on him to reverse a decision made by Boris Johnson in 2015 to allow the Metropolitan Police full access to thousands of Transport for London number plate recognition cameras.

The letter was published to coincide with 2nd anniversary of the Mayoral Decision (MD1439) made on 27th January 2015 [2].

The International Working Group asks the mayor to consider the reputation of London and its potential negative influence on other cities around the world:

“London is seen as a world leader in surveillance expansion – not a positive accolade. As London's mayor you have a choice as to whether you challenge that perception or allow politicians around the world to use London as their inspiration in the race to convert our cities into prisons.”

Appealing to the mayor's previous work as a solicitor, chair of the National Council for Civil Liberties and authorship of a legal textbook on police misconduct, the International Working Group highlights the way in which the UK police has created a mass surveillance network from the shadows via a Dark Web of Law:

“the police in the UK have built a mass surveillance network of number plate recognition cameras without any public debate, parliamentary debate, primary legislation or even so much as a statutory instrument. In other words the police have built a mass surveillance network in what could be termed 'the dark web' of law – a murky underworld where legal justifications are pieced together by trawling through the dungeons of legislation and sticking ideas together with brittle, barely visible webs.”

The full letter can be read on the IWGVS website at:

<http://iwgvs.org/open-letter-to-london-mayor-jan-2017/>

For UK Media enquiries contact pressuk@iwgvs.org , for international media enquiries contact press@iwgvs.org

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References:

[1] http://iwgvs.org/press/Open_Letter_to_Sadiq_Khan_from_IWGVS-Jan_2017.pdf

[2] MD1439, 'Delegation to Transport for London (TfL) to grant the Metropolitan

Police Service (MPS) direct access to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR data') made on 27th January 2015

<https://www.london.gov.uk/decisions/md1439-delegation-transport-london-tfl-grant-metropolitan-police-service-mps-direct-access>

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras work alongside a variety of databases that can be used to identify cars and their occupants. The data collected from the cameras is stored in local force databases (Back Office Facility (BOF)) that may be used alongside querying or data mining tools, and in a centralised database (National ANPR Data Centre (NADC)). License plate photos are stored for two years. The current system is being replaced by the National ANPR Service (NAS), a cloud based system. The Met Police also operate their own controversial ANPR database called the Olympic Feed.

2. The International Working Group on Video Surveillance is a group of individuals and civil liberties groups concerned about the impact of surveillance cameras on society. It was created at the Freedom Not Fear 2011 event in Brussels and includes individuals and groups from the UK, Germany, Poland, Belgium, Netherlands, Australia. Their homepage is at www.iwgvs.org and a list of organisations that are members can be found at <https://wgvs.wordpress.com/alliance/>

3. For further information contact press@iwgvs.org