

Defend the Internet, stop the Splinternet

The Internet is facing an unprecedented threat. As the war in Ukraine evolves, governments, businesses and other organizations are considering sanctions to thwart Russia's invasion that would damage the global Internet.

In the short term, people will lose access to a critical lifeline for safety and accurate information. In the long term, actions that undermine the apolitical nature of the network would divide the Internet along geopolitical lines and irreversibly alter the Internet we know today.

We cannot let the Internet become a pawn of geopolitics. Politicizing decisions about the Internet's inner workings sets a dangerous precedent that puts us on the fast track to a 'splinternet' — an Internet artificially carved up along political, economic, and technological boundaries. The effects may be irreversible, opening the door for further restrictions across the globe.

The Internet Society, a global community of members and chapters in over 105 countries and territories, calls for governments, businesses, and organizations worldwide to ensure:

- **The day-to-day technical governance of the Internet is not politicized.** Management and operations of Internet infrastructure, including the naming, addressing, routing and security systems, should remain apolitical.
- **Sanctions do not disrupt access and use of the Internet.** Where needed, sanctions regimes should offer exemptions to ensure continued service of Internet infrastructure.

We must protect the open, globally connected Internet and hold governments and service providers to account for their actions. Safeguarding one of humanity's best tools to solve global challenges is everyone's responsibility, especially in times of crisis.