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The status of investor engagement with digital rights advocates

Investors play a crucial gatekeeper role in deciding which tech products make it to market, and, in some instances, they have the power to influence what tech executives prioritise. Private capital investors decide which new technology companies receive early-stage funding, which helps determine which of today's startups will develop the new platforms and technologies that will shape our lives tomorrow. In addition, institutional investors and shareholders of publicly listed tech companies can express human rights concerns by dialoguing with portfolio companies, filing shareholder resolutions, and exercising voting rights in support of digital rights, effectively putting human rights on a tech executive's agenda. Therefore, investor advocacy may be a strategic work-stream for civil society organisations that are working towards tech company accountability or the development of accountable digital tech.

It is critical that tech investors fulfil their responsibility to carry out human rights due diligence, which includes meaningful stakeholder engagement with groups that are acutely aware of how salient human rights risks may materialise in various contexts. But how often are investors engaging with digital rights groups? Are they engaging with digital rights groups from the Global South? How meaningful (or extractive) are these engagements? And how can we create new spaces for tech investors and civil society to fill knowledge gaps and support each other's work?

Designed for digital rights organisations and, more broadly, human rights organisations that advocate for digital rights, this survey is an attempt to better understand the current state of engagement between tech investors and advocates working towards the design, development and deployment of accountable digital technologies.

This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

- 1) Organisation name:
- 2) Country:
- 3) Contact person & email address:
- 4) Has your organisation been involved in research or advocacy towards improving human rights due diligence of tech investors in the past? (ex: letter-writing campaigns, signing joint statements, engaging with lawmakers, publishing related reports, etc.)
- 5) Has your organisation ever been consulted by investors for the purpose of human rights due diligence? (ex: stakeholder engagement interviews, focus groups or roundtables)
- 6) How frequently have you met with investors (I.e. one-off consultation, every quarter, an average of 3x per year, etc)?
- 7) Which types of investors has your organisation engaged with?

8) Would you say that the time invested in these engagements with investors was fruitful?

9) Why or why not? (ex: I saw evidence that my feedback was taken into account in the investment decision; This developed into a longer-term relationship with the investor; etc)

10) What have been the challenges that you've faced when trying to engage with tech investors?

11) What has prevented you from engaging with investors?

12) Is your organisation interested in learning more about how to engage with tech investors for digital rights related advocacy work?