
United Nations/ Digital Rights: Mounting Risks Prompt Calls for Stronger Legislation



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Washington, September 23 (QNA)– Rapid digital transformations continue to reshape societies worldwide, bringing both opportunities and mounting challenges to human rights, particularly privacy, freedom of expression, access to information, and protection against discrimination.

In 2025, the United Nations and its specialized agencies underscored the importance of a rights-based approach to digital governance, cautioning against overregulation while urging stronger

international cooperation built on transparency and accountability.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk warned in July that digital technologies, while transformative, also pose serious risks including restrictions on free expression, privacy violations, disinformation, and growing threats to truth and societal trust. He stressed that states' legal obligations and companies' duties to respect human rights must guide efforts to protect data and combat misinformation.

Supporting this concern, the World Economic Forum 2025 identified misinformation and disinformation as top global risks, while a June 2025 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report cautioned that artificial intelligence (AI) and big data, if left unchecked, could deepen rights gaps. Similarly, UNESCO's March 2025 update of its Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms emphasized transparency, accountability, and multi-stakeholder collaboration as vital for protecting freedoms in the digital sphere.

In exclusive remarks to Qatar News Agency, Peter Micek, Adjunct Professor at Columbia University and digital rights legal expert, warned that the growing demand for personal data to fuel AI models threatens privacy "in unprecedented ways." He noted that individuals often lack the tools to fully exercise their rights, while developers and governments have yet to adequately demonstrate respect for human rights in deploying AI.

Micek urged policymakers to address legislative gaps through consultation with civil society, ensuring a fair balance between innovation and fundamental rights protection.