

# Spying on Pro-Democracy Dissidents

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## Secret Diplomatic Cables Reveal Microsoft's 'Win-Win' Deal with Tunisian Police State

Following revelations by [Bloomberg Markets Magazine](#) that a unit of German electronics giant Siemens, [Trovicor](#), a wholly-owned subsidiary of [Perusa Partners Fund 1 LP](#), an investment firm headquartered in Guernsey, had sold surveillance gear to Bahrain deployed against the pro-democracy movement, it has since emerged that Microsoft established an IT training program for Ministry of Justice and Interior officials in Tunisia.

A secret State Department cable published by the whistleblowing web site WikiLeaks, [06TUNIS2424](#), "Microsoft Inks Agreement with GOT," 22 September 2006, noted that "during the Microsoft Government Leaders Forum in South Africa July 11-12, the GOT and the Microsoft Corporation signed a partnership agreement that provides for Microsoft investment in training, research, and development, but also commits the GOT to using licensed Microsoft software."

The export of high-tech products, included software suites employed for spying on political dissidents, are said to be closely regulated under U.S. law to prevent abuse by repressive governments.

However, as [Amnesty International](#) disclosed nearly a decade ago, "There are almost no legal or regulatory requirements amongst the G8 states for the inclusion of international human rights or humanitarian law content in the various military, security, and police force training services that they provide to states in all world regions."

According to investigators, "Even where human rights criteria are referred to in laws governing arms export and foreign military and security aid, they are often loosely interpreted."

"Instead," analysts averred, "it is *short term profit making and political advantage* that guide the bulk of the international arms trade," and as noted above in the Bahraini example, the transfer of dual-use surveillance kit figured prominently in the suppression of of pro-democracy protests. (emphasis added)

Not much has changed since 2003 when that report was issued. Indeed, sweetheart deals which hand over source code in exclusive arrangements with human rights abusers are the norm, *not* the exception, especially where it concerns America's "War on Terror" allies.

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