

Spy in the house



Image / Listín Diario

By Guillermo Alvarado

Since the creation and use of the spying program Pegasus, developed by the Israel-based company NSO Group, became known, there have been numerous denunciations about the invasion of the privacy of politicians, governors, businessmen or human rights defenders around the world.

Now it turns out, however, that this high-tech tool, used with a very low sense of ethics, was also used by the Tel Aviv police to monitor its own citizens, in particular opponents of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

An investigation by the Calcalist newspaper revealed that the Zionist security services first purchased that surveillance tool in 2013, as well as all its upgrades and additional packages in the following years to monitor a list of Israeli citizens.

According to the source, a group of government employees who had access to sensitive information of various kinds were also spied on. Although theoretically some of these cases could be justified, the spying was carried out without supervision or legal authorization.

Police chief Kabi Shabtai did not deny the use of Pegasus, but said the Calcalist report "contained some inaccuracies."

A forensic analysis of a group of cell phones revealed that they were indeed infected by Pegasus and that the spying in those cases took place from July 30, 2020 on some devices and extended until July 15 of the following year.

The program in question is installed remotely on iOS and Android devices and allows to extract images, text messages, emails, record calls and activate the camera and recorder, without the owner's consent.

Journalistic reports indicate that around the world some 600 politicians and officials, including heads of government or state, 189 journalists, 64 businessmen and about 85 activists were monitored with this tool, which raised a wave of indignation.

One of the most recent cases occurred in El Salvador, where a group of journalists from several media outlets, including the newspaper El Faro, were victims of spying, allegedly directed by the government.

Pegasus is supposedly sold by NSO Group to governments or intelligence services duly authorized to use it exclusively for security reasons, but this is not the case.

In practice, it has become a way of intruding into the private lives of civilians, another gross violation of human rights.

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