



NCUC Quarterly Webinar 1st Quarter

Draft Concept Note

Title: From Policy to Practice: How DNS Abuse Mitigation Impacts Civil Society and End Users

Proposed Date / Time: February 11, 2025, 15:00 UTC +00

Background & Rationale

DNS abuse mitigation has become a central priority within the ICANN ecosystem, with a limited focus on phishing, malware, botnets, and spam, as long as used as a delivery mechanism for DNS abuse. In response, registries and registrars are increasingly encouraged and required to take proactive and sometimes rapid enforcement actions, often based on third-party reports or automated detection systems.

While these measures are essential for maintaining trust and security in the DNS, their implementation in practice has raised significant concerns for civil society and end users across both developing regions and parts of the developed world. Domain suspensions and takedowns are frequently executed outside formal judicial processes, with limited transparency, unclear standards, and inadequate notice or appeal mechanisms. Some proactive measures could lead to normalizing surveillance and restricting access to domains.

In developing regions, these challenges are often compounded by capacity constraints, limited access to legal remedies, language barriers, and unequal bargaining power between registrants and contracted parties. At the same time, in parts of the developed world, over-enforcement, automated decision-making, and risk-averse compliance practices have led to collateral damage affecting non-profits, journalists, advocacy groups, and small online services.

As DNS abuse policies and expectations continue to evolve within ICANN, there is a growing need to assess how these measures function in real-world contexts across different regions, and whether existing frameworks sufficiently safeguard due process, freedom of expression, and equitable access to the Internet and domain names. This webinar provides a platform to examine these impacts holistically and to identify policy improvements grounded in public-interest and rights-respecting principles.

Objectives

The webinar aims to:

1. Bridge the gap between DNS abuse policy and real-world implementation across developing and developed regions.

2. Examine the practical impacts of DNS abuse mitigation on civil society organizations and end users, including unintended consequences and regional disparities.
3. Identify transparency, accountability, and due process gaps in current abuse reporting, suspension, and takedown practices.
4. Elevate perspectives from developing regions while recognising challenges faced in developed contexts, fostering cross-regional learning.
5. Inform and strengthen NCUC policy advocacy by grounding it in lived experiences and evidence from multiple regions.

Guiding Questions

- How are DNS abuse mitigation policies implemented in practice across different regional contexts?
- What challenges do civil society organizations and end users face when their domains are suspended or restricted in developing regions versus developed parts of the world?
- To what extent do current enforcement mechanisms ensure transparency, notice, and meaningful avenues for appeal?
- How do automated tools and third-party reporting systems influence enforcement outcomes and error rates?
- Are certain regions, communities, or types of users disproportionately affected by DNS abuse mitigation?
- What policy safeguards and best practices can help ensure effective abuse mitigation while protecting user rights globally?

Target Audience

- NCUC members and civil society organizations
- End users and non-commercial domain name registrants
- ICANN community participants (GNSO, ALAC, SSAC, contracted parties)
- Internet governance practitioners, researchers, and advocates from both developing and developed regions

Proposed Speakers / Panel Composition

A diverse, multi-stakeholder panel:

1. Civil Society / Digital Rights Advocate

- Experience with DNS enforcement impacts in either developing or developed regions.

2. NCUC Representative

- Overview of NCUC positions and ongoing engagement in DNS abuse policy processes.

3. Registrar or Registry Representative

- Practical insights into operational challenges and regional differences in abuse mitigation.

4. Technical or Security Expert

- Context on DNS abuse threats, detection methods, and proportional response approaches.

5. Regional Voices (Developing and Developed Regions)

- Case studies highlighting differing yet interconnected impacts across regions.

Format & Duration

- **Duration:** 80 minutes

- **Format:**

- Opening remarks and regional context setting (5 minutes)
- Moderated panel discussion (45 minutes)
- Interactive Q&A with participants (25 minutes)
- Closing reflections and next steps (5 minutes)

Expected Outcomes

- A clearer understanding of how DNS abuse mitigation affects civil society and end users across diverse regional contexts
- Increased visibility of regional disparities and common challenges in DNS abuse enforcement
- Identification of rights-respecting, globally applicable policy recommendations

- Stronger, evidence-based NCUC engagement in ICANN DNS abuse policy discussions

Proposed speakers

Moderator: Michaela Nakayama Shapiro

1. Civil Society / Digital Rights Advocate
 - TBD
2. NCUC Representative
 - Farzaneh Badii
3. Registrar / Registry Representative
 - TBD
4. Technical or Security Expert
 - TBD
5. Regional Voices (Developing and Developed Regions)
 - Developing Region: Eyitayo Iyortim, AfTLD Chair/President
 - Developed Region: TBD

Zoom registration link: [Click to register here to receive the Zoom details](#)