

## **Internet governance in September 2016**

### **Regional perspectives from Tunisia**

#### **The restriction of online freedoms in some of the MENA region countries**

From early January 2016, **Moroccans** cannot use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services of their 3G and 4G mobile connections. The three main telecom operators, Maroc Telecom, Meditel and Inwi, came together to this decision, allegedly wanting to boost their revenues from international calls.

However, Morocco's Telecommunications Regulatory National Agency ANRT justified this action by stating that VoIP services and free Internet calls don't have the required licenses. Telecom customers protested on social networks and signed online petitions.

This situation is still remaining and most likely many Morocco residents are referring to some solutions to unblock VoIP applications. One such solution could be the use of Virtual private Network (VPN) services, which mask the IP address and help re-route the traffic outside Morocco.

**The United Arab Emirates** updated the laws regarding IT crimes. Internet users who uses VPN or proxy servers in the UAE to commit or prevent the discovery of a crime can be imprisoned, fined between 5 hundred thousands and 2 millions Dhs, or both. VoIP is blocked also in UAE so in this case users can not unblock it by using VPN because they are going to be facing this law.

**Tunisian** Internet users, with the evolution of technology and the huge reliability on the Internet, need PayPal and similar services either to shop online, or get paid for online work. Civil society is working with different other stakeholders on this issue, and have recently reached the step where the central bank is required to send a comfort letter to PayPal to include Tunisia in the list of countries to deploy PayPal service over the next years. This letter should be sent before the end of September. If sent Tunisia will wait five more years for the American company to update the list of countries.