

French Cops Can Now Secretly Activate Phone Cameras, Microphones And GPS To Spy On Citizens



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Cops in France have been granted the authority to **remotely activate a suspect's cellphone camera, microphone and GPS**, after the passage of a provision in a wider "justice reform bill" on Wednesday night.



The bill allows the geolocation of crime suspects, covering other devices like laptops, cars and connected devices, just as it could be remotely activated to record sound and images of people suspected of terror offences, as well as delinquency and organised crime. -[People's Gazette](#)

According to French digital rights advocacy group, La Quadrature du Net, the provisions "**raise serious concerns over infringements of fundamental liberties**," and violate the "right to security, right to a private life and to private correspondence" and "the right to come and go freely."

The group called it part of a "slide into heavy-handed security."

Lawmakers defended the move - with Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti insisting that the bill would only apply to "dozens of cases a year," while **members of parliament** inserted an amendment inserted an amendment which only allows the remote spying "when justified by the nature and seriousness of the crime" and "for a strictly proportional duration" after a judge has approved the surveillance.

Lawmakers also insisted that sensitive professions, such as journalists, judges, lawyers, doctors and MPs would not be legitimate targets, *People's Gazette* reports.

Last month, the Senate gave the green light to the provision of the justice bill, which would allow law enforcement to secretly activate cameras and microphones on a suspect's devices.

Since 2015, when terrorist attacks rocked France, the country has increased its surveillance powers, and the "Keeper of the Seal" bill has been likened to the infamous US Patriot Act.

"We're far away from the totalitarianism of "1984"," said Dupond-Moretti, adding **"People's lives will be saved"** by the law.



French justice minister, Eric Dupond-Moretti,

Of note, France's dystopian law is similar to those used by the US FBI in the wake of 9/11, when the government's use of "roving bugs" came to light in a court case involving an organized crime family.

"Roving bugs" pick up room audio as opposed to traditional wiretaps in which wireless phone conversations and other electronic communications are monitored-subject to court order-by the FBI. Both forms of electronic surveillance are covered by a 1986 law authorizing roving wiretaps, which gives law enforcement flexibility to eavesdrop continuously on suspects who often change locations and use different phones to avoid detection.

Constant movement of suspects was the situation in this case, frustrating the FBI to the point that it applied for and received from a federal judge eavesdropping authority under the roving wiretap statute. With a twist. Government investigators were able to listen to conversations of organized crime suspects even when their cell phones were turned off-at least as far as the suspects were concerned.

U.S. District Judge Lewis A. Kaplan rejected defendants' arguments that "roving bugs" violated their constitutional rights, noting the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in 1993 upheld the roving wiretap statute in an identical legal challenge. -[rcwireless.com](https://www.rcwireless.com)

How nice.