



**President Barack Obama**  
**The White House**  
**1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW**  
**Washington, DC 20500**

**The Honorable Jeh Johnson**  
**Secretary of Homeland Security**  
**Department of Homeland Security**  
**245 Murray Lane SW**  
**Washington, DC 20528-0075**

**Cc:**

**Secretary of State John Kerry**  
**Tom Malinowski, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor**  
**Earl Anthony Wayne, Ambassador of the United States to Mexico**

Dear President Obama and Secretary Johnson,

On March 4, it was publicly disclosed that 1dmx.org, a website documenting human rights violations taking place during public protests in Mexico, was taken offline. The site was blocked for three months following a request from a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agent to the web host GoDaddy. On behalf of our organizations and members from around the world, we request an immediate investigation into the role the U.S. government played in this incident.

Working with local partners, we have compiled the following timeline of events:

- On Dec. 2, 2013, GoDaddy, the domain registrar of the website, informed the 1dmx.org administrator by email that the domain name was suspended “for violation of the GoDaddy Universal Terms of Service.” The administrator immediately wrote back, asking what term the site violated.
- On Dec. 3, GoDaddy responded to the administrator in an email reading in part: “The domain name was suspended as part of an ongoing law enforcement investigation. In order to resolve this issue, you will need to contact the officer in charge: Jason Barry Special Agent Homeland Security Investigations U.S. Embassy Mexico City, Mexico.” GoDaddy provided a telephone number and email address for the agent.

The site’s administrator emailed Special Agent Barry, but received no response. However, Agent Barry later answered a phone call from the administrator’s lawyer. On the call, Agent Barry said, “This



happens all the time ... Mexican agencies send us requests for U.S. companies and we have contacts with some of them so we just send them.”

In early March 2014, after this incident became public, the domain’s suspension was lifted without notification or explanation to its owner. The site is now accessible, but neither the Mexican nor the U.S. governments have released information as to why this censorship occurred or who is responsible. In further communications on March 21, GoDaddy again named DHS Agent Barry as the official responsible for the request.

The site featured user-posted content, including photos and video of public protests, and never contained material illegal under Mexican or U.S. law. In this case, it appears the U.S. government was complicit in political censorship in Mexico, and, based on the DHS agent’s disturbing statements, may contribute to violations of user rights in this manner on a regular basis. Facilitating the censorship of a website based on its political content is inconsistent with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, with U.S. human rights obligations, and with the government’s stated commitments to uphold the rule of law and “Internet Freedom” as foreign policy priorities.

We reiterate the recent [statement](#) by the Department of State noting "more governments are seeking to control what information and news their people are allowed to see online as well as how they communicate about it," and its request that world leaders "join the United States in calling out human rights abuses wherever they occur, in advocating for democracy around the world, and in supporting an Internet that is truly interoperable, secure and free."

In this spirit, we ask you to be fully transparent about how the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City and the DHS were involved in this incident. Specifically, we request that you explain:

- 1) which policies, legal agreements, and procedures are in place regarding U.S. compliance with domain takedown requests by governments around the world;
- 2) whether those policies and procedures were followed in this case, and if not, why not; and
- 3) which remedial steps will be taken, including policy amendments, procedural changes, and staff retraining, given the clear weaknesses of the current process.

Furthermore, to ensure that such events don't take place again, those responsible for this violation must be properly investigated and held accountable. To this end, DHS should reveal the identity of the Mexican government agency responsible for the request that led to wrongful blocking of 1dmx.org.

We urge you to publicly address our requests in a transparent and timely manner, a necessary step to build faith in the U.S. as a champion of Internet Freedom.



Sincerely,

**Peter Micek, Esq.**  
**Access**

**Luis Fernando García, Esq.**  
**Red en Defensa de los Derechos Digitales**

**Francisco Vera, Esq.**  
**Derechos Digitales**

**Danny O'Brien**  
**Electronic Frontier Foundation**