HOW ‘CLOUD EXTRACTION’ TOOLS CAN BE USED AT A PROTEST AND HOW YOU CAN MINIMISE RISKS TO YOUR DATA

What are ‘cloud extraction tools’ and what do they do?

- Cloud extraction technology enables the police to access data stored in your ‘Cloud’ via your mobile phone or other devices.
- The use of cloud extraction tools means the police can access data that you store online. Examples of apps that store data in the Cloud include Slack, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, Facebook and Uber.

How might cloud extraction tools be used at a protest?

- In order to extract your cloud data, the police would need to physically access your mobile phone. The police might confiscate your phone if you have been detained or arrested during a protest, but also if you have witnessed a crime and even if you are a victim of a crime (See also Protest Guide about mobile phone extraction).
- All of this information could be used to identify protesters and organisers and find out about the location of protests and actions.
- Your cloud data does not just reveal information about you, it can also reveal much about your friends, family, and anyone else you interact with online, such as fellow protestors. For example, you may have old contacts stored in the Cloud, which have been deleted from the phone itself.

What to think about when going to a protest

- While you could consider leaving your phone at home, if that is not a realistic solution, you should think about switching off cloud back-up in the applications on your phone that you use, and logging out of all cloud-based services. This will avoid data being stored in the Cloud and prevent access to this data from your mobile phone.
- Before going to a protest, you should be aware that even if you use end-to-end encrypted messaging through WhatsApp, if you back up your WhatsApp messages to the Cloud, these encrypted backups could be accessed by the police using cloud extraction tools on your phone.
- Some applications, such as Uber, Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook will allow you to switch off the location data being stored in the Cloud. This may prevent the police being able to track where you have been.

