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UN AHC: Agony ahead? Alternative protocol proposals?

Alexander Seger, 12 June 2026

In the coming days, the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime will meet for so-called “informals”. The main purpose is to make progress with the rules of procedure for the future Conference of States Parties (COSP) of the Hanoi Convention. The “formal” meeting in January 2026 had failed because Russia and others insisted on excluding stakeholders from the COSP.

While the AHC is stuck and States are struggling with implementation of the Hanoi Convention, Russia is circulating text of a future protocol.

The text submitted on 3 June by the Permanent Representation of Russia to the UN in Vienna recycles more or less the same proposals that failed to reach agreement between 2022 and 2025:

- Offences related to hashtag#terrorism and its financing
- Extremism-related offences
- Organizing mass disorders
- Rehabilitation of Nazism, justification of genocide and crimes against peace and humanity
- Unauthorized interference with critical information infrastructure
- Etc.

Coming from Russia, this is rich!

Years of agonizing (and costly) futility may lie ahead ...

So perhaps alternative proposals should be tabled. What about something like this:

Article X – Cybercrime-Enabled Election Interference

(1) Establish as criminal offences

- Illegal access to electoral infrastructure
- Interference with electoral infrastructure, data and systems
- Interception of electoral data
- Manipulation of voter data
- Unlawful disclosure of electoral data
- Operating a coordinated disinformation operation with the specific intent to corrupt or undermine an electoral process

(2) Aggravating circumstances:

- the offence was committed by or at the direction of an agent of a foreign State
- ...

Article Y – Direction, Control and Use of Proxy Actors

(1) Establish as criminal offences

- directing, instructing, or commanding another person to commit an offence under the Convention or Protocol
- recruiting or preparing another person for the purpose of committing an offence under the Convention or Protocol;
- financing the activities of a proxy actor to commit or facilitate an offence under the Convention or Protocol;
- making available devices to another person with knowledge that these will be used to commit an offence under the Convention or Protocol;
- acting as an intermediary between a directing party and a proxy actor in furtherance of the commission of an offence under the Convention or Protocol.

(2) Liability of the directing party

Where an offence under the Convention or this Protocol is committed by a proxy actor, the directing party shall be criminally liable as a principal offender for that offence.

(3) Aggravating circumstances

The directing party is an organ, agent or instrumentality of a State, or acts under the effective control of a State ...

Just a thought...

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