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## **Internet Freedom Advocates Join Forces to Formally Launch Voices of Internet Freedom Coalition**

September 28, 2020 – Today marked the official launch of the Voices of Internet Freedom (VIF) coalition, a collection of more than a dozen organizations and individuals that have come together to advocate for greater internet freedom around the world. Although members of the coalition have collaborated regularly on internet freedom issues for more than a decade, this launch represents the first time that the group has formalized its efforts. The launch coincides with International Day for Universal Access to Information, which recognizes the universal right to seek, receive and impart information – regardless of where you live – and is a central tenet of the belief that internet freedom is the next frontier of human rights.

“Internet freedom has the potential to bring profound change to closed societies around the world, where repressive regimes keep their people locked in a de facto digital information prison,” said Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, President of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights & Justice, one of the VIF founders. “As a group, VIF is dedicated to opening the internet to everyone, giving them the same freedom to learn, organize and thrive that we enjoy in open societies. By forming this coalition, we hope to have the ability to speak with an even more powerful voice on behalf of internet freedom worldwide.”

Members of VIF come from a variety of backgrounds, including human rights organizations, religious freedom advocates, legal professionals, technology experts and others. Despite the diversity of this group, VIF members are bound by a common belief that internet freedom should be a key priority for the United States Government and its allies. A major component of the group’s advocacy work will focus on encouraging the U.S. Government and private sector to provide funding for a variety of tools and technologies that will give people locked behind censorship firewalls the ability to break through and communicate with each other and with the global community.

“VIF members have a long track record of speaking out forcefully and powerfully on key issues related to internet freedom,” said Randel Everett, President of 21Wilberforce, which co-founded VIF. “Speaking now as a formal coalition with a coordinated voice, this group can have an even greater impact – from highlighting effective circumvention technologies and other innovative

tools, to calling out tech companies that fail to adequately support internet freedom, to urging the U.S. Government to generously fund internet freedom efforts.”

To learn more about the Voices of Internet Freedom coalition, please visit [www.VoicesofInternetFreedom.org](http://www.VoicesofInternetFreedom.org). Organizations or individuals interested in joining the coalition should contact [info@voicesofinternetfreedom.org](mailto:info@voicesofinternetfreedom.org).

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