Title: **Helping the Helpless**

Subtitle: Targeted threats to civil society

Speaker: **Claudio Guarnieri**

Short: *In this talk we'll go through many examples of targeted surveillance employed by governments all around the world and we'll try to understand the taxonomy and nature of these attacks from a technical and from a political perspective. We'll find that many share common characteristics and that in many cases we have the capacity to identify, track and stop these attacks, often directed against journalists, dissidents and activists in their countries and in exile. With a little good will and coordination, we can all collectively have a concrete impact. Let's start now.*

Long: We had a good run for a couple of years. Surveillance was mainstream and hackers' voices were heard. Snowden broke the barrier between the paranoids and the skeptics and amalgamated some consensus that all this surveillance is too much. But let's face it, we hoped for a better outcome. Surveillance bills are being passed in many European countries, the U.S. has taken little action and the United Kingdom is becoming the standard for privacy failures. Government hacking is on the rise, partially because of the increasing inability to wiretap due to the rise of encryption, but partially also because it has become inexpensive. While mass surveillance is a more obvious breach of human and constitutional rights, targeted surveillance is generally tolerated as a necessary evil. However, what we discovered is that this tolerance has nurtured not only an industry of surveillance, but an indiscriminate adoption of very invasive technologies and their legitimization and exemption from regulated use. At the same time, while only cypherpunks have picked up the slack and started pushing development of encrypted communication technologies, the rest of the security and tech community has done little in response to the revelations of the last years as well as to the general cry for help. Hyped vulnerabilities, hacking of cars and gadgets is making headlines again, while the global civil society remains under heavy attack and is left helpless. In this talk we'll go through many examples of targeted surveillance employed by governments all around the world and we'll try to understand the taxonomy and nature of these attacks from a technical and from a political perspective. We'll find that many share common characteristics and that in many cases we have the capacity to identify, track and stop these attacks, often directed against journalists, dissidents and activists in their countries and in exile. While civil society lacks the expertise and resources to research, understand and contrast these issues, the hacking and security communities exceeds and often drive the focus of their attention to rather unimportant problems. With a little good will and coordination, we can all collectively have a concrete impact, raise the cost of surveillance and make sure that those actually fighting for freedom and democracy around the world have the means to do so securely. Let's start now.