

***CAIDP Update 2.34 (Sept. 15, 2021) – UN Urges Moratorium on AI that Violates Human Rights***

This week [UN High Commissioner](#) for Human Rights [Michelle Bachelet](#) called for a moratorium on the sale and use of AI that pose a serious risk to human rights until adequate safeguards are put in place. She also called for a ban on AI applications that do not comply with international human rights law.

“Artificial intelligence can be a force for good, helping societies overcome some of the great challenges of our times. But AI technologies can have negative, even catastrophic, effects if they are used without sufficient regard to how they affect people’s human rights,” Bachelet said.

The High Commissioner’s [statement](#) accompanied the release of a [new report](#) on The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age. The UN Report details how AI systems rely on large data sets, with information about individuals collected, shared, merged and analysed in multiple and often opaque ways. The UN Report finds that data used to guide AI systems can be faulty, discriminatory, out of date or irrelevant. Long-term storage of data also poses particular risks, as data could in the future be exploited in as yet unknown ways.

The UN Report draws a straight line between data protection standards and the protection of human rights in the realm of AI. “The risk of discrimination linked to AI-driven decisions – decisions that can change, define or damage human lives – is all too real. This is why there needs to be systematic assessment and monitoring of the effects of AI systems to identify and mitigate human rights risks,” Bachelet said.

The report sets out almost 20 recommendations for States and business enterprises, including a ban on AI applications “that cannot be operated in compliance with international human rights law” and “a moratorium on the use of remote biometric recognition technologies in public spaces.” The UN Report urges States to “adopt and effectively enforce, through independent, impartial authorities, data privacy legislation for the public and private sectors as an essential prerequisite for the protection of the right to privacy in the context of AI” and recommended that “victims of human rights violations and abuses linked to the use of AI systems have access to effective remedies.”

The need for greater transparency in AI systems is a key theme throughout the Report. “The development and systematic deployment of methodologies to make AI systems more explainable – often referred to as algorithmic transparency – is of utmost importance for ensuring adequate rights protections,” states the UN Report.

The UN Report is the most far-reaching assessment of AI and human rights to date, although it does not explicitly call for a ban on the use of “social scoring,” as does the proposed [EU AI Act](#) and the [Universal Guidelines for AI](#). The Report also does not consider metrics for evaluation, a key component of the [OECD’s work on AI](#), the [UNESCO AI Ethics Recommendation](#), and the CAIDP report [Artificial Intelligence and Democratic Values](#).