



*CAIDP Update 2.35 (Sept. 21, 2021) – Biden Addresses AI and Rule of Law at UN*

US President Joe Biden [spoke today](#) to the General Assembly at the United Nations. He addressed many issues, from climate change and the pandemic to human rights and international cooperation. But several of his comments focused specifically on the relationship between international human rights law and new technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence.

In opening remarks, President Biden asked “Will we apply and strengthen the core tenets of the international system, including the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as we seek to shape the emergence of new technologies and deter new threats? Or will we allow these universal principles to be trampled and twisted in the pursuit of naked political power?” He answered his question, “In my view, how we answer these questions in this moment . . . will reverberate for generations yet to come.”

Biden continued later in the speech, “we’re also encountering an era of new technologies and possibilities that have the potential to release and reshape every aspect of human existence. And it’s up to all of us to determine whether these technologies are a force to empower people or to deepen repression.” Biden pledged, “As new technologies continue to evolve, we’ll work together with our democratic partners to ensure that new advances in areas from biotechnology, to quantum computing, 5G, artificial intelligence, and more are used to lift people up, to solve problems, and advance human freedom — not to suppress dissent or target minority communities.” He called out oppression in Xinjiang, a region of China where AI techniques are deployed to suppress the minority Uyghur population.

Biden closed his speech, stating that countries must work together, “ensuring a future where technologies are a vital tool to solving human challenges and empowering human potential, not a source of greater strife and repression.”

President Biden’s remarks echoed earlier statements on technology and human rights that he made at the Munich Security Conference in February (see [CAIDP Update 2.08](#)) and in an April meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga (see [CAIDP Update 2.16](#)). However, the US President did not go as far in his UN remarks as he did with other G7 leaders in June when the democratic leaders [called out bias in AI](#) systems and said they would “take bold action to build more transparency in our technologies.” (see [CAIDP Update 2.24](#))

The United States has expressed renewed interest in the work of the United Nations, where several projects are underway concerning Artificial Intelligence. The U.S. has said it will rejoin UNESCO, which is expected to issue the [AI Ethics Recommendation](#) in November. (See [CAIDP Update 2.25](#)). And the US is seeking a seat at the Human Rights Council. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recently issued a [report](#), calling on countries to ensure that AI complies with international human rights law. (See [CAIDP Update 2.34](#))