

A composite image representing AI surveillance. It features a crowd of people in a public space, with several individuals highlighted by glowing blue rectangular bounding boxes. The overall color palette is a mix of green and blue, with a digital, futuristic feel.

AI SURVEILLANCE

An aerial view of a busy pedestrian walkway. People are walking in various directions. Overlaid on the image are several glowing blue rectangular boxes, some of which are tracking or identifying specific individuals, illustrating the concept of mass surveillance.

GMUNC XII

I. Conference Information

It's our immense pleasure to welcome all delegates to the Gunn Model United Nations Conference XIII! Before delegates start reading this background guide, please remember position papers are due on October 17 to be considered for a research award. With the final deadline on October 23 for general awards (all awards except research awards). If you do not submit a position paper by this date by 11:59, you will **NOT** be eligible for any committee awards. For questions on position paper requirements please check out the position paper writing guide on the GMUNC website (<https://gmunc.org/conference>). In addition we will not tolerate any use of AI, if a sufficient detection of AI is found you will be disqualified from **ALL** awards and your Delegation will be made aware. Please send position papers in **PDF format** (we will not accept sharing of google docs or any other methods) and committee-specific inquiries to the committee email address: gmuncxiiiunhrc@gmail.com.

II. Chair Bios

Esteemed delegates,

Hi! My name is Khushi Kumar Alonso and I am so honored to be serving as your Head Chair for this UNHRC committee at the Gunn Model United Nations 13th Conference! I'm a current sophomore here at Gunn Highschool and this will be my third year participating at GMUNC and fourth year doing Model



UN. My MUN experience started in 7th grade where I dragged Avin (your co-chair) to our middle school Model UN Club run by Gunn delegates where we grew our love for MUN. Now four years later, I serve as Gunn Model UN's Under Secretary-General of Membership and Outreach, which also holds the role of running the middle school club which is such a full circle moment!

Outside of MUN, I am a reporter for a student-run newspaper and an editor for Gunn's yearbook team. I love designing things, all things Miffy, listening to music, and watching movies and tv shows (please give me recs before the committee starts!!)



Hi everyone! My name is Avin Kwon, and I am ecstatic to be your co-chair for UNHRC at GMUNC XIII! I am currently in tenth grade, and this will be my first GMUNC. My Model UN journey started in seventh grade, when Khushi, your head chair, suggested joining a club together. From there, Model UN became more than just an afterschool club—it was a place to find new people, learn, and create. In particular, last school year, I attended conferences both locally and nationally, which overall helped me to grow a community and my MUN skills. One core Model UN memory that I will never forget is running in the rain in Washington, DC after NAIMUN.

Outside of Model UN, I like to do robotics and play my instrument. I am currently a part of an FRC team called Space Cookies, and I

play for the Golden State Youth Orchestra on Oboe.

Email: avinkwon10@gmail.com

III. Foreward

Hi everyone! We are so excited to host you delegates at the Gunn Model United Nations 13th Conference in the UNHRC AI Surveillance committee. This is my first year chairing and I am honored to be your head chair for this committee.

Just a few points I would like you guys to read over before you start all your work (please don't skip because it will reflect in committee).

Pre-conference: We expect delegates to personally research and write their own position paper by themselves. I'm sure you already read at the top about our policy on AI, so just make it easier for your chairs and be honest. We don't expect delegates to have every exact date or fact from this background ground guide memorized, but make sure you have an overall idea so everything makes sense and speeches become so much easier when you do so. Make sure you are using trusted sources and many will be provided below for you.

Conference/ In-committee: This conference has a huge scale of delegates from individuals just starting off to those who have years of experience behind them, so depending on this will determine how fast we will go through the committee. I know all of you remember your first conference experience and it can be quite intimidating but I hope Avin and I will be able to create a safe environment to learn and grow for everyone. Awards are fun and all but please do not do things out of nature just for them. We want everyone to have a fun experience to be able to show their personal best!

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns about anything related to what I just shared or about GMUNC: gmuncxiiiunhrc@gmail.com or khushi.kumaralonso@gmail.com. I am truly so excited to meet you all in the fall and wish you all the best of luck with your position papers!

Sincerely,
Your Head Chair
Khushi Kumar Alonso

IV. Introduction

UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council) was established in 2006 as an intergovernmental body within the United Nations to contribute to the goal of strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights globally. It works as a global platform where UN officials, mandated experts, member states, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders discuss human rights.

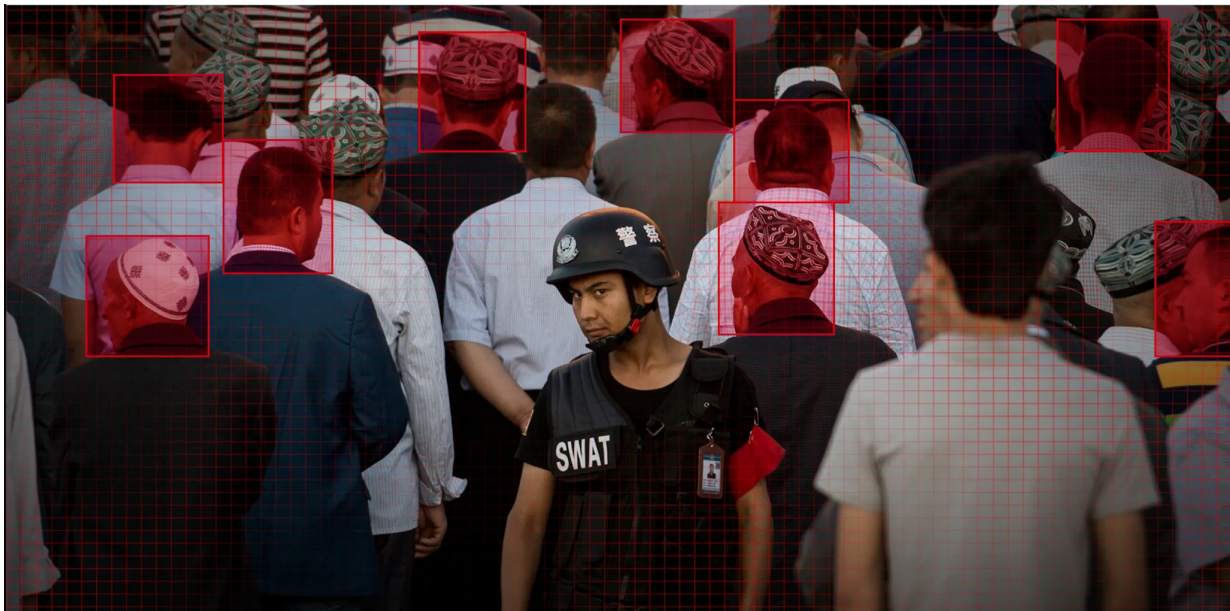
UNHRC was created to replace its former UNCHR (United Nations Commission on Human Rights). It was decided on because of its lack of accountability on issues such as shielding abusive states, politicization, and its inability to fully address human rights violations. The new Council was designed to be more transparent, hold more accountability, and be better equipped to respond to rising human rights challenges.

UNHRC had also introduced a new mechanism to help make the new council more consistent, transparent, and accountable. The Universal Periodic Review, or UPR, is a system where every UN member state is reviewed on its human rights record every four to five years. They have also expanded and strengthened the Special Procedures system, which helped expand the number of mandates and improved reporting requirement which helped make monitoring more systematic and less political while as UNCHR only had intake from the Special Rapporteurs.

UNHRC serves as an international forum for dialogue on human rights issues with UN officials and mandated experts, states, civil society, and other participants. In committee, resolutions or decisions may be adopted on the topic of human rights issues or situations, which can prompt governments to take action to remedy those situations. One thing that differentiates UNHRC from many others is the Power 5. The Power 5 is made up of large countries that have major influence globally: China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States. Unlike other committees where the Power 5 have veto power over the council, UNHRC does not.

V. Background Information

The rise of Artificial Intelligence globally in the mid to late 2010s had been an ambivalent scene for individuals across the globe. With the thought of being able to let computers take the wheel for many tasks people were impressed and eager for an increase of it in our everyday lives. But for the Uyghur Muslim minority in the Xinjiang region of China, it created a constant fear of experiencing detention, and at times with someone's life on the line. AI surveillance was used to target the Muslim minority in an act of counter-terrorism. Authorities used the technology and algorithms to track. The individual information collected led authorities to detain Uigharian citizens and send them to re-education camps based on the analysis of the artificial intelligence. In these camps citizens are forced to renounce Islam, are under forced labor, and experience severe amounts of abuse, some which lead to death. Although this situation has been condemned by many human rights organizations, it is viewed by others as another innovative technology by the Chinese Government, putting the violence and real life doing aside and only looking at the technological standpoint and what it can bring for their government. China's surveillance expansion intensified after the 2014 "Strike Hard Campaign," and by 2017 the Integrated Joint Operations Platform



A police officer stands guard as Muslims arrive for Eid al-Fitr morning prayer at the Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar, a city in western China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, on June 26 2017

[Photo: Johannes Eisele/AFP via Getty Images]

(IJOP) was launched. This marked one of the earliest large-scale deployments of predictive policing and biometric surveillance. These systems rely on facial recognition, mass biometric collection, and machine-learning models that flag individuals as "risky," often without human review. Because these algorithms frequently contain racial and religious bias, Uyghurs are disproportionately labeled as suspicious, showing how AI systems can amplify discrimination.

Russia has also broadened its deployment of AI-based security tools, arguing that these systems are necessary to safeguard domestic security and political stability. Russia has reinforced this approach through legislation that expands state oversight of online activity and communication. Measures like the Yarovaya and Sovereign Internet laws have enabled broader data retention, tighter control over internet traffic, and steady growth of AI supported surveillance in major cities. In early 2022 during the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine, Russia had expanded on their surveillance and content filtering using algorithms from collected data. The Oculus Project uses AI to scan and censor online content about the Ukraine war, LGBTQ+ issues, and political criticism, tightening state control over information. It also supports bot networks that push pro-Kremlin narratives across social media. Together, these tools raise major concerns for domestic human rights and expand Russia's capacity for cyber espionage, digital warfare, and influence operations abroad. By 2020, Moscow had already deployed one of Europe's largest real-time facial recognition networks, which was later used to identify protesters and journalists. In 2023, amendments to Russia's "foreign agents" law expanded algorithmic monitoring of NGOs, media outlets, and activists, in an effort to further tighten digital control. These systems also create a chilling effect, where citizens avoid protesting, organizing, or speaking openly because they know AI tools can identify, track, and flag them instantly.

This issue has not been only used by technologically advanced capitals; even developing countries like Ethiopia have faced unprecedented algorithmic authoritarianism. As Ethiopia expanded its digital systems, concerns grew about how AI tools could be turned toward political repression in a society with many ethnic and cultural groups. Reports show that surveillance technology and training from the US helped strengthen the state monitoring, and Ethiopia's Information Network Security Agency had used intercepted private communications to target legitimate opposition activists. Similar patterns appear across Sub-Saharan Africa, where new surveillance systems are spreading without strong oversight, partly because China has made monitoring technologies more accessible. Groups like the African Digital Rights Network warn that rising digital capacity, combined with laws that weaken online freedoms is creating a serious risk for human rights across the region. Beginning in 2018, countries such as Uganda and Zimbabwe adopted Chinese-built "Safe City" systems, integrating AI cameras and centralized monitoring hubs. Kenya's 2019 rollout of the Huduma Namba biometric ID system also raised concerns about data protection gaps and the potential for AI-driven profiling. Across the region, weak data protection laws allow governments to use AI surveillance without transparency, oversight, or accountability, increasing the risk of political repression and wrongful targeting.

Globally, liberal democracies are major users of AI surveillance. The percentage of different democracies that deploy surveillance systems range from 37-51%. Governments in full democracies tend to deploy a wide range of surveillance, from facial recognition to security cameras. On the downside, governments in autocratic and semi-autocratic countries are more prone to abuse AI surveillance than governments in liberal democracies.

VI. Past International Actions

The United Nations first acknowledged the human rights risks of modern surveillance in 2013, when the General Assembly adopted Resolution 68/167 on the Right to Privacy in the Digital Age. This resolution marked the UN's earliest recognition that digital technologies, particularly large scale data collection and monitoring systems, were beginning to outpace traditional privacy protections. It emphasized that the rapid expansion of digital surveillance could undermine fundamental rights and called for greater international attention to how states were using emerging technologies. This initial step established the foundation for future UN efforts that would later focus more directly on AI driven surveillance.

In 2014, the UN built on these foundations with Resolution 69/166, which highlighted a growing urgency around digital surveillance practices. Unlike the broader concerns raised in 2013, this resolution specifically warned that surveillance technologies were evolving faster than existing legal frameworks, creating gaps in accountability and oversight. It stressed the need for stronger international safeguards to address mass data collection, cross border monitoring, and increasingly sophisticated digital tools. By underscoring how quickly surveillance capabilities were advancing, the 2014 resolution paved the way for more specialised mechanisms to address the emerging challenges posed by AI enabled monitoring.

This discussion of privacy had continued on in 2015 when UNHRC established the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy. The Special Rapporteur has been commissioned with monitoring and reporting on violations of the rights to privacy worldwide, including digital and AI based surveillance. The functions of this included investigating how states and companies used surveillance, data collection, and AI, report annually to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly, and send communications to governments about alleged privacy violations. At the time, this was the UN's main overseer on AI surveillance. In mid 2021, the UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet had raised concerns on the current global concern of the unparalleled level of surveillance by private parties and how it did oppose human rights. This warning was part of a broader UN effort to address emerging technologies, including multiple Human Rights Council debates on biometric surveillance, facial recognition, and digital authoritarianism between 2018 and 2020.



United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet warned of the dangerous unregulated artificial intelligence tools, adding that the technology's decisions can chance, define, or damage human lives [File: Denis Bailbouse/Reuters]

On September 15th 2021, Bachelet spoke out to the High Commissioner about; “The higher the risk for human rights, the stricter the legal requirements for the use of AI technology should be”. In that same time frame the UN had officially defined AI surveillance as a human rights threat. Per the 2021 report, it formally classified AI systems used for monitoring, profiling, and tracking as surveillance technologies that can violate privacy, freedom of expression, children's rights, and more. The 2021 report also called for moratoriums on high risk AI systems, especially remote biometric identification in public spaces. During this period, several other UN Special Rapporteurs, including those on Freedom of Expression, Minority Issues, and Counter Terrorism, issued joint statements warning that AI surveillance was enabling repression and unlawful monitoring of civil society.

Beyond its formal reports and resolutions, the UN also integrated AI governance into its broader reform initiative, *Our Common Agenda*, released between 2021 and 2024. This agenda identified artificial intelligence as a global priority requiring coordinated international regulation, especially in areas involving surveillance, biometric monitoring, and algorithmic decision making. It emphasized the importance of enhanced human rights protections, accountability measures, and governance structures for high risk AI systems. By placing AI governance at the center of its long term vision, *Our Common Agenda*, reinforced the UN's recognition that AI driven surveillance posed systemic risks that demanded sustained international attention.

The continuation of this had carried on in the UN three years later in 2024. The UN General Assembly had come out with their first AI Resolution which targets AI surveillance within it. It calls for

safe, secure, and trustworthy AI that respects human rights. It also urges states to refrain from using AI systems that cannot be aligned with international human rights law, which includes high risk surveillance tools. It has established a global political norm that AI surveillance must be compliant to the human rights laws and encourages states to create laws and oversight mechanisms for AI. The resolution also instructed UN agencies such as UNESCO, ITU, and OHCHR to support states in developing regulatory frameworks and human rights based AI governance. While this report brought much awareness into the assembly, it is non-binding and doesn't require the state to enforce anything thus allowing states to do as they wish in regards to AI surveillance. In addition, the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence (created in 2023) released guidance warning that AI surveillance poses systemic risks to privacy, democratic participation, and minority rights further shaping UN policy discussion.

VII. Current Situation

Following the rapid expansion of AI surveillance technology and its position in the military and citizen lives, much debate has sparked on whether the usage of AI in these circumstances really is ethical. Deployed through targeting systems by large companies like Palantir and Anduril, AI begins to find its way into wars. From autonomous machinery to military strategy, AI is thought to be able to change the future of warfare for the better. On the other hand, backlash against AI surveillance is mainly pointed by concerns of privacy and invasion of rights, drawing scrutiny from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). Although governments claim monitoring to be beneficial for the people, there is no denying that collecting data from satellites and drones about citizens is an absolute invasion of rights. There had already been controversies on the growth of AI globally in the first place, and adding more fuel has only strengthened the flame.

In 2003, a company called Palantir was founded in the United States. Originally built as a software startup, Palantir quickly grew into something beyond data and analytics.



Palantir CEO Alex Karp wants American companies "to be willing and eagerly work with the U.S. government." (Photo by Ryotaro Yamada)

Recently, it has been the lead company in the growth of AI surveillance technology, expanding government surveillance through artificial intelligence and facial recognition. However, the main concern regarding Palantir is that their surveillance technology is not being used for ethical purposes.

In recent years, surveillance technology has begun to partake in bigger, military-related issues, such as AI targeting. AI targeting, a strategy used by taking data and information and allowing the AI to find the most beneficial areas to shoot, became widely used by countries like the United States in wars. For example, in the Iran war, which started in February of 2026, the Pentagon used collected data from satellites and drones for AI to recommend areas in Iran to fire shots. Over three thousand shots were fired in the first week alone, rising up to 13,000 after almost 40 days. A recent creation, referred to as “fully autonomous,” were weapons made to independently identify and fire on targets without human input nor control. This is believed to be able to change the future of military and AI moving forward, but it poses yet another concern: these self-shooting machines could either be extremely helpful in war or they could cause mass mortalities. Artificial Intelligence, being quite new to the modern world, has room for much error and therefore damage. The biggest problem surrounding AI inaccuracy would be in the military field, where even the slightest errors would be fatal.

Another large group involved with “AI targeting” is Anthropic, the company that built Claude AI, a rapidly growing tool in the industry. Plans were made, to use Claude to capture data of Americans to analyse and use to train military AI, but ultimately prohibited at the request of Anthropic, who hadn’t wanted the use of Claude in this kind of situation. However, the Pentagon refused to comply with the company’s wishes and even blacklisted Anthropic from defense contracting. This brings up the question once again of ethicality: would governments who had outright defied the wishes of a major company stop at simply the military use of AI?

VIII. Country Positions

In the topic of AI surveillance, China takes the lead in its development and provision to other countries. Chinese companies like Huawei, Dahua, Hikvision, etc. supply AI surveillance technology to at least fifty countries worldwide; smaller countries like Kenya, Laos, Uzbekistan who otherwise do not have access to this technology are encouraged by pitches accompanied with small loans. However, China is not the only country supplying surveillance technology worldwide. The United States supplies AI surveillance technology in thirty-two countries.

IX. Questions to Consider

- If you are a developing nation how do you protect your country from harmful technology?
- In the bigger picture and future of the world, would developing AI surveillance further overall be beneficial or harmful?
 - Does it depend on the country?
- Is there too much of a fine line between abused power and beneficial power of AI surveillance or is there a way to have moderation of it?
- How would pausing the development of AI surveillance affect the tech world in countries where economics thrive on innovation?

X. Suggested Reading

I heavily recommend trying to find research documents, I will link a few even I used below but they are truly helpful. The UN library also has lots of documents from things mentioned in past UN action for you to research on more:

UN Library: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/?ln=en>

Keys Words for Search:

- Resolution 68/167 on the Right to Privacy in the Digital Age
- Resolution 69/166
- Our Common Age
- AI Surveillance
- Digital Privacy

Case Studies for AI Surveillance (also in bibliography):

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2024/754450/EXPO_IDA\(2024\)754450\(SUM01\)_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2024/754450/EXPO_IDA(2024)754450(SUM01)_EN.pdf)

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