UNHRC
United Nations Human Rights Council

VANMUN 2023

“Human rights violations and infringements, with a special emphasis on advancements in artificial intelligence and automation”

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

It is an honor to welcome you all to the United Nations Human Rights Council of VANMUN 2023. We would be the Executive Board Members of this committee and words cannot describe how excited we are for the conference.

The very crux of a Model United Nations simulation is learning and therefore you as delegates must ensure that the committee is of utmost efficiency and be accommodating towards your fellow delegates. With this said, Model United Nations is only meaningful when delegates are thoroughly prepared. To aid in your research preparation, The Team has spent hours researching, writing, and editing this Study Guide.

The Study Guide serves as an overview of the topics you will be debating during the conference. The Study Guide is intended to be a starting point for your research and is not, in itself, adequate exposure to the complexities of your committee's topics. To be prepared, each delegate should do further research and focus on processing information through the lens of their respective country or position. Keep in mind that following the foreign policy of one's country is one of the most important aspects of a Model United Nations Conference. If you are having trouble digesting all the information, the Study Guide contains relevant discussion questions that break down the topics. Also, as questions or ideas arise, do not be shy in contacting us via email. We can help you better understand a particular topic or how your country fits into a larger international debate. More often than not, discussing the problem with another person can open up more paradigms and viewpoints that may guide you throughout the brainstorming process.

Fear not if you are a first timer, do not be influenced by an experienced lot of delegates,
voice out and make sure you take home the maximum from the conference. Do not consider the study guide as your research but read this to get an idea on the agenda. Do not restrict yourself to whatever is there in the background guide and bring up points that are not in it. Do note that the background guide cannot be used as proof in committee. Please feel free to contact either of us with regards to any queries regarding the topic of discussion. Looking forward

to seeing you all and expecting to experience heated debate, until then may the force be with you.

Yours sincerely,

Lakshman Kishore R
Guest Chairperson
rlakshmankishore@gmail.com

Isha Atteri
Chairperson
ishaatteri@gmail.com

Vidyabharathi S
Vice Chairperson
vidyabharathisoms@gmail.com

Committee Overview

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a United Nations body whose objective is to promote and defend human rights around the world. In the international community, its role is to examine human rights violations and recommend how they should be addressed. Furthermore, the council looks to promote fundamental human rights and freedoms in a universal manner—at the international legal level. With these responsibilities in mind, the UNHRC looks to discuss topics of global concern, while considering universally applied standards of humane treatment.

The Human Rights Council is the body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by its State parties.

The United Nations General Assembly elects the members which make up the 47 member state council. Created in 2006 by the resolution 60/251 of the General Assembly and in 2007 adopted its Institution-Building Package to ensure its functionality by setting up its mechanisms and procedures. The council membership is equitably based on geographical distribution:

- African states: 13 seats (Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia)
- Asia- Pacific States: 13 seats (Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Iraq, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia)
- Latin America and Caribbean States: 8 seats (Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay)
- Western European and other States: 8 seats (Australia, Austria, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
- Eastern European States: 6 seats (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine)

The United Nations Human Rights Council holds no fewer than three regular sessions a year, for a total of at least ten weeks. They take place in March (four weeks), June (three weeks) and September (three weeks). If one-third of the member states request so, the Human Rights Council can decide at any

time to hold special sessions to address human rights violations and emergencies.

Introduction to the Agenda

Agenda - Discussing methods to curb human rights violations and infringements, with a special emphasis on advancements in artificial intelligence and automation.

“To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity.”

Artificial intelligence (AI) is intelligence demonstrated by computers, as opposed to human or animal intelligence. "Intelligence" encompasses the ability to learn and to reason, to generalize, and to infer meaning.

From fostering discrimination to engaging in intrusive surveillance, AI has proven to be a threat to equal protection, economic rights, and fundamental liberties. Given that AI offers the ability to process and analyze multiple data streams in a timely manner, it should come as no surprise that it is already being used to facilitate global mass vigilance. Privacy to anyone is a fundamental human right, necessary for living with dignity and safety. But in the digital environment ,when we use apps and social media platforms, vast quantities of our personal information are collected - with or without our knowledge.Mass data collection can lead to violations of the right to privacy and inhibit free and fair societies. So we have our agenda as “ Discussing methods to curb human rights violations and infringements, with a special emphasis on advancements in artificial intelligence and automation ” and to provide a solution for this important global issue.

How AI can exploit human rights

Technological Unemployment

In the past, technology has tended to increase rather than reduce total employment, but economists acknowledge that "we're in uncharted territory" with AI. A survey of economists showed disagreement about whether the increasing use of robots and AI will cause a substantial increase in long-term unemployment, but they generally agree that it could be a net benefit if productivity gains are redistributed.

Weaponized AI

AI provides a number of tools that are particularly useful for authoritarian governments: smart spyware, face recognition and voice recognition allow widespread surveillance; such surveillance allows machine learning to classify potential enemies of the state and can prevent them from hiding; recommendation systems can precisely target propaganda and misinformation for maximum effect

Bias

Bias describes systematic and repeatable errors in a computer system that create "unfair" outcomes, such as "privileging" one category over another in ways different from the intended function of the algorithm.Bias has been cited in cases ranging from election outcomes to the spread of online hate speech. It has also arisen in criminal justice, healthcare, and hiring, compounding existing racial, socioeconomic, and gender biases. The relative inability of facial recognition technology to accurately identify darker-skinned faces has been linked to multiple wrongful arrests of black men, an issue stemming from imbalanced datasets.

Current Situations

The more integrated they are, the more dangerous they can be. Which isn't to say they're not dangerous when they're unintegrated, [because they still] have kind of the ability to track people and identify them by facial recognition systems and then have all sorts of data about, for instance, their movements. If you're tracking things like public transit use via digital smart cards, geolocation data via cell phones, all these different kinds of digital traces, a state that is willing and able to put all that data together is going to be able to really, really crack down on dissent extraordinarily effectively.

AI not only impacts us in terms of the data it is able to collect, but also in terms of shaping what we perceive to be true. Algorithms can be used to determine a person’s preferences, including political choices, which can then be used to influence the kind of political messaging someone might see on their social media feeds. One notable breach of data collection in this regard involved consulting firm Cambridge Analytica, which collected private data from the Facebook profiles of more than 50 million users. AI is Vulnerable to Cyber Attacks. As AI technology advances, attackers use it to launch more sophisticated and effective attacks. These AI-powered cybersecurity threats

are a growing concern for organizations and individuals alike, as they can evade traditional security measures and cause significant damage.

Furthermore, allegations of human rights abuses are often difficult to investigate. Even when abuses are documented, few perpetrators are held accountable, leading to a cycle of ongoing violence and rights violations. In this context, the role of the international community, including bodies like UNHRC, is pivotal.

There is a pressing need for effective conflict resolution measures and mechanisms that ensure adherence to Human Rights in order to safeguard the fundamental rights of the sufferers.

Case Studies

Case study: China

China's AI market at a glance

As of 2021, China's AI market was worth about RMB 150 billion, and the figure is projected to reach RMB 400 billion by 2025. By 2030, the Chinese government aims for the AI industry to create RMB 1 trillion worth of annual revenues, and have related industries generating RMB 10 trillion annually.

AI technology, with its broad applications in industrial processes, medical research, autonomous vehicles, etc., may bring US$600 billion annually for China's economy,. This prospective value will equal to around 3.7 percent of China's current GDP. Additional investment will be needed to unlock this windfall. In 2021, AI start-ups in China obtained US$17 billion in funding from private equity and venture capital investments, representing nearly one-fifth of the global total.

China's regulatory development on AI technology

China has taken the lead in designing AI regulations. The country has a number of broader schemes in place to stimulate the development of the AI industry, such as Made in China 2025, the Action Outline for Promoting the Development of Big Data (2015), and the Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan (2017). In recent years, China has also fastened the pace to promulgate specific policies to regulate AI, regarding industry ethics and algorithms.

Chinese regulators implemented strict scrutiny of the country's biggest tech companies, increasing oversight of data security and overseas listing policies. While the technology sector is still recovering from the impact of the crackdown since two years ago, some regulatory easing has been reported. Now facing more severe competition in the world, China looks again to its tech sector for more leverage.

Progress in Shanghai: China's first provincial-level regulation for AI development

Shanghai has also accelerated its pace in developing its AI sector. The city's AI industry scale has expanded significantly in the past few years. In 2021, the combined output value of Shanghai's AI enterprises above the designated size reached RMB 305.68 billion , according to China Securities Journal. The number of talented professionals working in the AI field has soared from 100,000 in 2018 to 230,000 in 2021 in Shanghai. AI is one of the three leading industries that Shanghai seeks to develop with concentrated efforts, along with integrated circuits and biomedicine.
The Shanghai AI Regulation also clarifies bottom lines and ethical norms for the industry's development by setting up an ethics council. Entities that carry out AI-related research and development, to ensure the sound and safe development of the industry.

Challenges to China's AI development

The two supreme powers China and the US are in a race to increase respective commercial and technical comparativeness in AI. The US has imposed a series of export restrictions that could hit China' AI industry, which still relies on foreign chips to a certain extent.China's AI industry still depends heavily on advanced chips produced in the US to conduct computing activities. As China's technology and manufacturing capabilities still lag behind, increasing tensions with the US have raised concerns in both technology and commercial development. A record number of Chinese chip firms have also gone out of business. As many as 3,470 firms have closed since January, including those using the word 'chip' in their brands or operations.

In August, chip exports from China plummeted by nearly a quarter, the biggest monthly drop since records began in 1997. These new rounds of export restrictions will give a massive blow to China's AI development.

How can businesses cope with the situation in China ?

The domestic and international marketplaces have delivered mixed information. Facing growing uncertainties, particularly given the international competition, investors are suggested to remain agile and keep multifold strategies in place. While the export bans may take some time to be in effect, companies can make efforts to stockpile chips to maintain enough reserves.

On the other hand, China's AI industry is a priority area for development and growing rapidly. Restrictions will motivate China to invest more assertively and to increase the pace towards self-sufficiency. While China lacks certain software and equipment capabilities for advanced AI, the environment remains open for foreign investment and talent. Companies must adapt to the changing business and political climate or will likely face decline or closure. Taking full advantage of China's supportive policies, companies can adjust their business strategies to put more investment in R&D and talent. The AI industry is still promising in China with space for business development and scalable enterprise, alongside a host of incentives for R&D innovation.

How China has been exploiting the privacy of its citizens by using AI.

In China, there has also been an uptick in concerns about privacy in recent years. The passage last year of two major laws, including the Personal Information Protection Law and the Data Security Law means that China has one of the strongest data governance regimes in the world on paper. However, even before the advent of advanced technology systems using AI, Chinese public security organizations were quite adept at tracking and monitoring criminal suspects and regime dissidents. Facial recognition systems are now used to enhance the public security apparatus' surveillance capabilities, which can alter the privacy of the local citizens. For example, there is strong evidence that some systems using facial recognition are being used specifically to target citizens of Uyghur background in Xinjiang province.

Myanmar's usage of china's AI

Amid the political turmoil in Myanmar, the military Junta of the nation is reported to be using facial recognition technologies made by China, to increase its capacity for public monitoring which has been raising worries about the safety of opposition groups and democracy campaigners there. Human Rights Watch (HRW), a non-governmental organization, warned of a "serious threat" to human rights in a report on Myanmar's usage of Chinese-made face recognition technology. The systems will be used to identify persons of interest, follow their movements, identify their motorcycles and cars, and ultimately follow them to resistance safe houses where junta forces can attack, arrest, and kill those opposed to the military regime". The cameras, sourced from Chinese tech conglomerates Huawei, Dahua and Hikvision, are equipped with artificial intelligence technology that automatically scans faces and vehicle license plates in public places and alerts authorities to those on a wanted list. In order to keep track of and fight online "traitors," there have also been rumours that the junta has planted spyware on telecom and internet service providers.

These technologies can be of great use to the government but the human rights of commoners are unavoidably tormented by the Government. Overall, the situation in Myanmar with the usage of China's AI is hazardous and can cause adjustments in the trustworthiness among the people in the government and thus paving a way for the pressing need for effective measures and regulations.

Use of AI in Russia in the Breach of privacy and military.

There have been increasing cases of Russian Authorities using AI enabled systems to Censor, control and monitor online content and data. In February the agency that supervises the media Roskomnadzor, said it was launching Oculus and an AI system that looks for banned material in online photos and videos and two other systems are to search written material. The new systems will be used to identify extremist comments, calls for protest and “LGBT propaganda”.There have been many cases of people being prosecuted and facing court over their social media posts by authorities who have started using AI to police the web.

Russia has passed an array of legislation in recent years to boost what it calls its internet “sovereignty” and tighten control over cyberspace.

Parallelly Russia’s AI-enabled military capabilities and autonomy have made its forces more lethal. The Russian armada of the latest AI-enabled weapon system includes Altius RU drone, an unmanned craft equipped with AI capabilities that can operate independently and interact with SU-57.

The anonymity with the use of AI-enabled asymmetric warfare like cyber warfare and information warfare allows countries to flex their asymmetric power without any retribution. The exacerbating threat to global security with the advent of these technologies is a subject of debate.