

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
ACLU Foundations of California
ACLU of Massachusetts
ACLU of Washington
New York Civil Liberties Union
18MillionRising.org
A New PATH
Access Now
ALIGN (The Alliance for a Greater New York)
American Friends Service Committee
American Muslim Empowerment Network-Muslim
Association of Puget Sound
American Muslims of Puget Sound
Arab American Institute
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Asian Americans Advancing Justice- Asian Law Caucus
CAIR San Francisco Bay Area
Californians United for a Responsible Budget
Campaign for Accountability
Casa Latina
Center for Media Justice
Center on Policy Initiatives
Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice
Color Of Change
Council on American Islamic Relations, Massachusetts
Council on American-Islamic Relations, California
CREDO Action
Data for Black Lives
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Progress
Densho
El Centro de La Raza
Electronic Frontier Foundation
End Solitary Santa Cruz County
Entre Hermanos
Fair Chance Project
Families for Justice as Healing
Families Belong Together
Fight for the Future
Free Press
Freedom for Immigrants
Freedom of the Press Foundation
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
Grassroots Collaborative
Harrington Investments, Inc.
Harvard Law School National Lawyers Guild
Human Rights Watch
Immigrant Defense Project
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
International Committee for Robot Arms Control
John T. Williams Organizing Committee
Justice for Muslims Collective
LAANE (Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy)
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children

Satya Nadella
Chief Executive Officer

Brad Smith
President
Microsoft Corporation

Dear Mr. Nadella and Mr. Smith,

We are a coalition of organizations dedicated to protecting civil rights and liberties and safeguarding vulnerable communities. We commend Microsoft for acknowledging the grave risks associated with face surveillance and the need for action. We write today to call on Microsoft to commit that it will not provide its face surveillance product, Face API, to governments.

Microsoft has acknowledged the dangers of face surveillance and its responsibility to build and disseminate technology that does no harm. In a speech and [blog post published on December 6th](#), Mr. Smith observed how widespread face recognition can lead to a surveillance society where bias and discrimination are exacerbated, privacy is virtually non-existent, and our democratic freedoms are eviscerated. Mr. Smith also acknowledged Microsoft's responsibility to take internal company steps to address these issues.

The dangers of face surveillance can only be fully addressed by stopping its use by governments. This technology provides the government with an unprecedented ability to track who we are, where we go, what we do, and who we know. With that power comes the ability to target and single out immigrants, religious minorities, and people of color in our communities. Systems built on face surveillance will amplify and exacerbate historical and existing bias that harms these and other over-policed and over-surveilled communities. In a world with face surveillance, people will have to fear being watched and targeted by the government for attending a protest, congregating outside a place of worship, or simply living their lives.

In his [December 6 post](#), Mr. Smith acknowledged many of these dangers, but then proposed wholly inadequate safeguards. Reducing bias, providing notice to consumers, and requiring court orders for individual tracking will not prevent the grave consequences of face surveillance, particularly on vulnerable communities. Those safeguards will do nothing to stop the government from developing face surveillance systems that allow for general and widespread monitoring and tracking. Microsoft should not be helping to build this future.

Microsoft should listen to its employees, the public, and also take heed of competitor commitments. In June, Microsoft's own employees [called on the company](#) to "take an ethical stand, and put children and families above profits" in deciding how to do business with governments. In recent months, there has been widespread public concern about face surveillance, with dozens of members of Congress,

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Make the Road New York
Media Alliance
Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee of
Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court
Mijente
Muslim Justice League
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project of the NLG
National Lawyers Guild - New York City Chapter
National Lawyers Guild - Massachusetts Chapter
New Economy Project
New York Communities for Change
Oakland Privacy
OCCORD (Orange County Communities Organized For
Responsible Development)
OneAmerica
Our Revolution Arlington
Partnership for Working Families
Policing and Social Justice Project at Brooklyn College
RAICES
Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project
Restore The Fourth
Silicon Valley Rising
Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood
Starting Over, Inc.
SumOfUs
Tenth Amendment Center
The Greenlining Institute
The Legal Aid Society (NYC)
The Project on Government Oversight
Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action
War Resisters League
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
X-Lab

shareholders, and over 150,000 members of the public blowing the whistle on the dangers of face surveillance both to communities and to public trust in companies. In contrast to Microsoft, which is currently selling its Face API product, Google announced in December 2018 that it has not, and will not, sell a facial recognition surveillance product until the technology's dangers are addressed.

Microsoft has a responsibility to do more than speak about ethical principles; it must also act in accordance with those principles. This means that Microsoft must ensure that there is a meaningful debate about face surveillance before it is in the hands of government. There cannot be a meaningful debate about ethical use of this technology if it is already spreading to government agencies. We call on Microsoft not to provide a face surveillance product to governments.

We look forward to your written response to this letter.

Signed,

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