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Opening statement on the *Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) (Amendment) Bill*

In seeking policing FRT legislation a second time, Ireland runs the risk of inadvertently imposing a technology that is ineffective, inherently flawed, and proven to be discriminatory.

Although often presented as a cost and resource effective aid to policing, FRT has proven to be ineffective and intrusive. For example, in a recent survey by [Big Brother Watch](#) reviewing police use of FRT across Wales where over 508,542 faces were scanned, over 3,000 people were wrongfully identified, over 88% inaccuracy recorded in the period of 2016-2023, and only 3 arrests made.

Although computer vision – the basis for FRT – has come a long way since the misidentification of Black people as gorillas (in 2015) and huge error rates in identifying dark skinned faces (Buolamwini & Gebru's 2018's study that found error rates of 34.7% for Black women compared to 0.8% for white men), the technology remains deeply flawed. In a recent audit of the latest state-of-the-art computer vision models on classification tasks, we found that black people, more particularly black men, have a much higher rate of being misclassified as 'criminal' and 'suspicious person'. So far, in the US alone, we know of 6 people that have wrongfully been arrested due to errors in FRT, 5 of whom are Black men and a black woman.

Furthermore, although the technology is deployed to surveil the public, it operates in the dark without oversight, transparency, and accountability. Due to proprietary rights, training data, model architecture, and other critical information necessary to audit and evaluate the technology remain hidden to the public and independent auditors.

If Ireland goes ahead with this technology, it is a matter of time before it becomes another cautionary international headline.