

Facial Recognition Is Out of Control in India

By Agnee Ghosh

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In May 2021, during India's second wave of COVID-19, SQ Masood and his father-in-law were returning home on his silver-coloured motor scooter in Hyderabad, in the Indian state of Telangana. While driving through the busy lanes of Shahran, a Muslim-dominated neighborhood, they were pulled over by two police officers.

Masood wasn't concerned at first because he assumed that he would be asked to show his driver's license or the vehicle registration card. So he and his father-in-law cooperated and they got off the motor scooter.

But instead, they were asked to remove their masks so the police constables could take mugshots of their faces on a handheld tablet.

"As a minority and as a Muslim in India in the current political scenario, I was disturbed because I didn't know where my photograph had been stored, which department has my photograph and how they will use or misuse my data," Masood told Motherboard.

In December of 2021, after inquiring about the incident and receiving no response, Masood, a social activist and cofounder of the Muslim community nonprofit ASEEM, filed a lawsuit against the Indian state of Telangana.

Privacy advocates have sounded the alarm about police use of facial recognition (FRT) in Telangana, with [Amnesty International warning](#) that the capital city of Hyderabad is "on the brink of becoming a total surveillance city."

Source: [Facial Recognition Is Out of Control in India](#)