

Customer Due Diligence

Resolved: Shareholders request the Board of Directors commission an independent third-party report, at reasonable cost and omitting proprietary information, assessing Amazon’s customer due diligence process to determine whether customers’ use of its products and services with surveillance, computer vision, or cloud storage capabilities contributes to human rights violations.

Whereas: Amazon Web Services (AWS) serves multiple governmental customers with a history of human rights abuses, and Amazon’s technologies may enable mass surveillance globally.

“Know Your Customer” due diligence mitigates clients’ risks and human rights impacts and informs business decision-making.¹ It reveals whether technologies will be used to facilitate governmental human or civil rights violations.² The Atlantic Council recommended the United States (U.S.) “create know-your-customer policies” with surveillance companies.³ The United Nations found states and businesses have “often rushed to incorporate AI applications, failing to carry out due diligence.”⁴

Inadequate due diligence presents material privacy and data security risks, as well as legal, regulatory, and reputational risks. These risks are present even if surveillance products are used according to Amazon’s guidelines. Despite Amazon’s indefinite moratorium of its Rekognition face comparison feature, it has not clarified how Rekognition is still used by police outside of “criminal investigations.”⁵ Amazon’s Ring continues to infringe on citizens’ privacy, despite an audit and Ring’s resulting changes. Its vague standards regarding information sharing with law enforcement, absent consent, led to sharing of videos with law enforcement 11 times in 2022. Ring continues to expand its thousands of police partnerships.⁶ Civil rights groups have sharply criticized Amazon’s MGM show, Ring Nation, calling it a “transparent attempt to normalize surveillance.”⁷

Amazon’s government-affiliated customers and suppliers with a history of rights-violating behavior pose risks to the company, including:

- AWS will host the Department of Homeland Security’s biometric database, which will reportedly be used to “assemble target lists for ICE raids, expand the tech border wall, and to facilitate surveillance, arrests, immigrant detention and deportation”;⁸
- Amazon sells relabeled surveillance products in the U.S. from Chinese companies Dahua and Hikvision, which have been blacklisted by the U.S. Government and implicated in mass surveillance, internment, torture, and forced labor of the ethnic Uyghur minority;⁹

¹https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/document/Phase%204_%20Impact%20preve nt

²<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2018/07/should-your-company-help-ice-know-your-customer-standards-evaluating-domestic>

³<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Surveillance-Technology-at-the-Fair.pdf>

⁴<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27469&LangID=E>

⁵https://s2.q4cdn.com/299287126/files/doc_financials/2022/ar/Amazon-2022-Proxy-Statement.pdf

⁶https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/amazon_response_to_senator_markey-july_13_2022.pdf

⁷<https://www.cancelringnation.com/>

⁸<https://justfutureslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/HART-Attack.pdf>

⁹<https://ipvm.com/reports/amazon-powers-hikua>

- The Israeli government's "Project Nimbus," protested by Amazon employees,¹⁰ uses AWS to support the apartheid system under which Palestinians are surveilled, unlawfully detained and tortured.¹¹ Israel plans to use AWS as it expands illegal settlements and enforces segregation;
- AWS opened a data center in United Arab Emirates, a country that deploys a state surveillance apparatus targeting human rights defenders, journalists, and political dissidents¹². AWS' first data center in the region opened in Bahrain, which has a poor human rights record.

Amazon's existing policies¹³ appear insufficient in preventing customer misuse and establishing effective oversight, yet Amazon continues releasing surveillance products.

¹⁰ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardnieva/2022/09/09/google-and-amazon-protest-project-nimbus-ai-contract-israel/?sh=68609827d162>

¹¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/11/24/mass-surveillance-fuels-oppression-uyghurs-and-palestinians>;
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>

¹² <https://smex.org/amazon-launches-data-region-in-the-uae/>

¹³ <https://sustainability.aboutamazon.com/people/human-rights/principles>;
<https://ir.aboutamazon.com/corporate-governance/documents-and-charters/code-of-business-conduct-and-ethics/default.aspx>; <https://aws.amazon.com/agreement/>