



Mobilization of civil society for a general ban of the use of facial recognition technologies for public security in Brazil

✉ tiremeurostodasuamira@proton.me

Note of repudiation to Smart Sampa video surveillance platform

In August of this year, the Municipal Administration of São Paulo submitted to the process of public consultation a notice for the supplying and maintenance of equipment and infrastructure of Smart Sampa video surveillance platform, [through the system Participe+](#).

By 2024, it is expected that 20 thousand new cameras will be integrated to the 3,5 thousand cameras already installed by the project City Cameras, which has been criticized for its inefficiency and suspended in the middle of 2021. The preposterous amount of 70 million reais (a bit more than 13 million US dollars) for each year will be invested in this operation under arguments of increasement of efficiency and agility in the assistance to the Metropolitan Civil Guard and other law enforcement agencies.

The organizations and people subscribed to the [Tire meu rosto da sua mira campaign](#) manifested complete disagreement with the implementation of public surveillance systems by the Municipal Administration of São Paulo. The systems, such as the [Smart Sampa Video Surveillance Platform](#), are implemented in disregard of Human Rights in contexts in which its contribution to the “enhancing of public security” is not proved. The use of facial recognition technologies by public security forces must be emphasized - for the reasons presented in the [Open Letter to General Ban of the Use of Facial Recognition Technologies in Public Security](#), but also because of the following points:

- a) The system will include equipment for automatic identification of license plates, movement detecting and facial recognition. Additionally to this last functionality, the images taken of faces can be stored amongst data such as date, time and place where the photo was taken, as well as detect partially covered faces (i.e. people using glasses or that have a beard);
- b) These information will be cross referenced with various databases such as health and education public bodies, the Traffic Engineering Company (CET), law enforcement and other;
- c) The notice describes that the video surveillance system will also be used to track individuals deemed suspects. This labeling has as criteria the movements, activities and different types of characteristics such as color and face.

It is a step that creates a scenario in which the population as a whole will be monitored. This is extremely concerning considering the hyper incarceration of black people and the “profile” of the individuals that deal with law enforcement violence. Beyond the reflection over the impacts on Human Rights caused by the violation of the right to privacy, it is necessary to think of the people will suffer the worst consequences of the surveillance in city public spaces.

Being aware of this context, we ask: efficiency and security for whom? The administration of the current mayor of São Paulo defends the use of facial recognition systems as an



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efficient technology and argues that the application will involve human evaluation by the agents of the Metropolitan Civil Guard. Nevertheless we cannot forget that before becoming mayor, Ricardo Nunes was vice-mayor of Bruno Covas whose first mandate took place in the worst period of the COVID-19 pandemic which led to the signature of agreements set between the Municipal Administration and the Public Security Department of São Paulo State “aiming the military police force to Extraordinary Activities of the Military Police Work and result in the amplification of the sensation of public security in the central zones of the city of São Paulo, since there was an increase in the presence of people strange to that environment that continue in the streets during the pandemic”¹.

In this case, the “people strange to that environment” could be, for example, whole families living in the streets due to the public health calamity state². **Who chooses the parameters to define if someone is “strange”?** That said, it is essential to point out the research conducted by the Study Center of Security and Citizenship (Centro de Estudos de Segurança e Cidadania - CESeC) that aimed at a detailed comprehension of the relation of law enforcement activities and racism in Brazil to question the what “suspect individual” is in police operations. The research coordinator, Silvia Ramos, brought to attention that one of the police officers interviewed in the first edition of the study (2003) said that “as officers say on the vehicle radio: ‘the individual approached is always an standard color suspect individual’” (CESeC, 2021, p.16³).

We don't need more cases of wrongful imprisonment based on artificial intelligence technologies to affirm that the [study](#) of the Security Observatory Network (Rede de Observatórios de Segurança) proved that these systems are not only inefficient but also aggravate the imprisonment of black people. Therefore, we call for a mobilization against the Smart Sampa Video Surveillance Platform.

For the reasons stated above, organizations and institutions that subscribed to this letter defend that the public notice related to the Smart Sampa Video Surveillance Platform be suspended. Also, in sight of this context and the urgency and need for more time for the analysis, comprehension and production of robust contribution, we ask for public hearing in order to allow a multi sectoral, interdisciplinary and representative participation of the variety of groups affected by this municipal policy,

São Paulo, November 22, 2022.

Tire Meu Rosto da Sua Mira Campaign

tiremeurostodasuamira@proton.me

¹ This excerpt was in the administrative process of the Military Police of São Paulo n.6029.2020/0016734-0 PMSP.

² [Pandemia ‘empurra’ desempregados para ruas e abrigos em SP - CNN - 05/07/2020](#)

³ [Ramos, Silvia. Elemento suspeito \[livro eletrônico\]: racismo e abordagem policial no Rio de Janeiro / Silvia Ramos...\[et al.\]; ilustração Miguel Morgado. - Rio de Janeiro : CESeC. 2021.](#)