



**SOFIMUN**  
**Sofia International Model United Nations**

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Period: 20-27 July 2008  
Location: Sofia, Bulgaria

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*"Search Of Future Ideas, Models Us Now"*

**COMMITTEE:**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**CHAIRPERSON:**  
**AGNES VENEMA & DESISLAVA DIMOVA**

**TOPIC: (B) – BIOMETRIC DATA  
GATHERING**

**BACKGROUND GUIDE**





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## **Topic B: Human Rights Violations in Relation to Biometric Data Gathering - summary**

Biometrics is the field of study which focuses on a person's traits which are used to uniquely identify human beings. Within biometrics, one can broadly distinguish between two different kinds of traits: behavioral and physiological. Behavioral traits are those personal sets of behavior that distinguishes one person from another. The most commonly used biometric data gathering is the signature, which has been used for over a century to verify the identity of a person and is still used this very day.

Physiological traits, on the other hand, are more reliable and more difficult to falsify. Therefore, a lot of innovation and research has been done in the last decades, developing techniques with which one can determine a person's identity through the scanning of the iris patterns in the eye, the imprints of the finger(s), focal points in a person's face and in complex cases even the DNA structure of a person. The only prerequisite for this technique is being in the possession of a database of the biometric features of persons and the equipment to test the live sample to the sample in the data base.

Whilst biometric data gathering has presumed to have made our world a safer place, being able to track down criminals through DNA testing, preventing persons from (ab)using another person's identity, traveling under false documents, and so forth, the question that is asked by critics is whether this is not a false truth? At the moment, those in control over the databases with biometric data have very little obstacles to abuse the information they gather, for instance to monitor all employees within an office, to trace released convicts, even if they have served their sentence, or in extreme cases, to monitor people that are officially not even suspects of crimes or even identity theft. The SOFIMUN 2008 Human Rights Council will be burdened with the task to serve the world population in its best interest, striking the fine line between providing for more safety and security by allowing the use of biometric data gathering, whilst preventing abuse by businesses, governments and international institutions, preventing violations of the right to privacy, misuse and identity theft.

## **Topic B: Human Rights Violations in Relation to Biometric Data Gathering – background guide**



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## **Suggested Reading and Additional Sources**

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