

Executive Summary

This Policy Brief (“Brief”), developed by the Global Network Initiative (GNI) and its multistakeholder AI Working Group (AIWG), establishes a framework for understanding the human rights implications of government interventions in artificial intelligence (AI), with a particular focus on the rights to freedom of expression, privacy, and non-discrimination.

This analysis is informed by the diverse perspectives and expertise of the AIWG and GNI’s broader membership, as well as GNI’s 17+ years of experience in working collaboratively with tech companies, civil society, investors, and academics to understand and guide responsible business conduct.¹ The Annex to this Brief unpacks the GNI framework and examines its applicability to AI-related corporate conduct in more detail.

The Brief articulates a taxonomy of five broad categories of government interventions (“hard” and “soft” governance, investment, procurement, and informal influence) across three segments of the AI value chain (AI infrastructure, development, and deployment). It provides illustrative examples of each category of government intervention in the context of each aspect of the value chain. The Brief unpacks the international human rights to freedom of expression, privacy, and non-discrimination at a high-level before concluding with recommendations for governments, companies and civil society.

This analysis reveals both opportunities to advance human rights and risks of rights violations from government interventions in AI. Illustrative examples from diverse regions demonstrate this duality: interventions such as mandatory human rights assessments, risk-tiered taxonomies of use-cases with corresponding levels of required risk management, privacy laws, investments to enhance public access, and rights-protecting procurement guidelines can promote and protect human rights. By contrast, overbroad censorship mandates, discriminatory surveillance, restrictive export controls, and the absence of rights-protecting laws and regulations and related state capacity lead to negative rights impacts and entrenched inequalities.

Using international human rights law to ground government interventions in AI, as well as responses to them, facilitates the protection of rights and helps in building public trust, thereby guiding future AI developments toward inclusive and sustainable progress.

¹ For more information on GNI’s framework for responsible tech company conduct and unique assessment process, see [here](#) and [here](#).