POSITION PAPER

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COMMITTEE: United Nations
General Assembly

COUNTRY: Russia

AGENDA: Evolution of Surveillance Technology for Security
Purposes.

The term surveillance technology includes any digital device,
software or system that gathers information on the activities or
communications of an individual or a country. Due to the rapid
advancements in surveillance technology, the governments of
various countries can deter crime, maintain records, gather
evidence etc.

Surveillance is big in Putin's Russia. As per sources, Russia
ranked as the third country in usage of surveillance technology in
2020. One of the main reasons is fear, provoked by the Arab
Spring, a growing and diffuse protest movement that uses social
media to organize itself. The authorities have also been using DPI
(deep packet inspection) tools, which are essential in monitoring
the internet throughout the country.

In 1995 the Russian government began laying the legal
framework for extensive surveillance that includes intercepting
calls and monitoring the internet, social media and Wi-Fi,
according to Valentin Weber, research affiliate at the Centre for

Technology and Global Affairs at the University of Oxford. Those laws also regulate blogging and encryption and require data storage to be based in Russia.

After several years of testing, Russia launched a facial-recognition system in January 2020. More than 100,000 cameras that had already been installed in Moscow were fitted with this technology. Subsequently, at the beginning of the pandemic, Russia had a system in place that allowed authorities to supervise whether people were complying with quarantine rules.

In June 2020, Russia signed a contract for a facial-recognition system known as "**Orwell"** for all its schools, more than 43,000 in total. According to authorities, this was done to monitor children's movements and identify potential outsiders on school premises in an effort to increase safety. Russian police are also reportedly developing a system that would recognize people by their tattoos, irises, voice, or body movements. Gait recognition can identify a person from 50 meters away even when he or she is not facing the camera. It analyses a person's walk based on the length of steps, the angle of the feet, or the movement of the arms and can't easily be fooled.

As all surveillance technologies rely heavily on databases, Russia wants to create a centralized bank of fingerprints, facial images, and other biometric data. The database would collect information on both Russians and foreigners so as to help identify criminals and terrorists. Though rights activists claim that excess surveillance interferes with personal life of people, yet it is for their safety.