

# India's #DestroyTheAadhaar: Is the FBI's Secret Biometric ID Program to be Transferred to US Department of Defense?

India's Aadhaar Project. There is a lawsuit filed against FBI for information about the agency's plans to transfer biometric data to the Department of Defense. It is now commonly known that American firms with links to CIA were given contract for Aadhaar and acknowledged by the Ministry of External Affairs itself, will Aadhaar database than be transferred to the US Department of Defense?

By [The New Delhi Times](#)

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*There is a growing movement brewing up in the country [India] regarding the dangers of Aadhaar and how it is being pushed through the backdoor without adequate security on unsuspecting Indians. While the general public is still in the dark about the dangers of biometric identification that is taking place in nearly every walk of life, even privacy defenders who have been closely following these developments don't have sufficient information.*

Like the Indians even the Americans are fighting a similar battle on their homefront. But unlike Indians the American public are far more informed and organized in their approach. It would do well for the defenders of privacy and the advocates of [#DestroyTheAadhaar](#) to follow up on a lawsuit that is filed against the US Federal Bureau of Investigation for running a Biometric ID program for years in secret. The FBI case could provide the Indian activists with a better reorientation and understanding of the process.

A shocking report came to light early this year about a massive FBI database that has been collecting millions of faceprints of American citizens – for years. Known as the Next Generation Identification system, since 2014 the FBI has amassed more than 50 million images scoured from facial recognition alone; and, as reported by the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the images have merged into the FBI's legacy database of fingerprints and other identifiers to create a centralized hub of surveillance:

As per a 2014 EFF report titled [FBI Plans to Have 52 Million Photos in its NGI Face Recognition Database](#):

NGI builds on the FBI's legacy fingerprint database—which already contains well over 100 million individual records—and has been designed to include multiple forms of biometric data, including palm prints and iris scans in addition to fingerprints and face recognition data. NGI combines all these forms of data in each individual's file, linking them to personal and biographic data like name, home address, ID number, immigration status, age, race, etc. This immense database is shared with other federal agencies and with the

approximately 18,000 tribal, state and local law enforcement agencies across the United States.

Worst of all, the FBI has admitted that the system contains non-criminal identification as well as criminal, including:

- suspects and detainees,
- fingerprints for job applicants
- licenses
- military or volunteer service
- background checks
- security clearances
- naturalization

It's been estimated that [half of all adult Americans](#) appear in a biometric database.

Despite what is clearly a sweeping program of surveillance and a violation of numerous Amendments to the US Constitution, the FBI has resisted all inquiries made by privacy organizations and even the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Now one of the most respected privacy defenders, Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC), is urging Congress to do its job and fully examine the secret FBI program. EPIC [summarized](#) the scope of the program, as well as measures taken by the FBI to exempt itself from privacy protections:

EPIC has sent a statement to the House Appropriations Committee in advance of a hearing on the FBI's budget. EPIC urged the Committee to examine the FBI's Next Generation Identification program. EPIC explained that the program "raises far-reaching privacy issues that implicate the rights of Americans all across the country." The FBI biometric database is one of the largest in the world, but the Bureau proposed to exempt the database from Privacy Act protections. EPIC and others supported strong safeguards for the program. In an early FOIA case against the FBI, EPIC obtained documents which revealed high error levels in the biometric database. EPIC has recently filed a FOIA lawsuit against the FBI for information about the agency's plans to transfer biometric data to the Department of Defense.

Has Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) done the privacy assessment of the entire Aadhaar project before awarding contracts to American firms? Have the Aadhaar activists asked the UIDAI to furnish the Privacy Impact Assessment Document if at all there is one? There is a lawsuit filed against FBI for information about the agency's plans to transfer biometric data to the Department of Defense. It is now commonly known that American firms with links to CIA were given contract for Aadhaar and [acknowledged](#) by the Ministry of External Affairs itself, will Aadhaar database than be transferred to the US Department of Defense?

*Featured image: DNA India*

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