



## An Assessment of Human Rights in the Metaverse

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## Introduction

Mark Zuckerberg announced in October 2021 during the annual conference of "Facebook" that the company's name will be changed to "Meta"; While the company's applications such as "Instagram", "Facebook" and "WhatsApp" will remain with the same name unchanged. Mark Zuckerberg reviewed the features and characteristics of metaverses that the company is working to develop and make available to users, and the most important characteristics are experiencing actual reality, but in virtual reality; As a model that simulates the real reality with all that it involves.

It is worth noting that the applications of artificial intelligence are witnessing rapid developments in an unprecedented way than any other time, and the developments of artificial intelligence may pave the way for an easier life, develop and overcome many obstacles that have long faced humans in the past, but on the other hand, they may enhance some risks and threaten human security; Rapid technological development is a "double-edged sword" and this is no secret to anyone.

There is no need to state that the world of metaverse is a new world for everyone, or at least with its current developments and updates, and this raises several questions related to the pros and cons of the world of metaverses on the human rights situation. Therefore, a conception of the metaverse world will be presented in accordance with international treaties related to human rights, and ways to protect them.

Below, the report reviews the applications of metaverse in detail, its most prominent pros and cons, the extent of its impact on human rights, and the international conventions that artificial intelligence applications must observe before they are circulated and made available to users.

## Metaverse technology and its beginnings

The name "Metaverse" is still tainted by some ambiguity and is not circulated by many people, and therefore, first of all, it is necessary to clarify the confusion. The name "MetaVerse" consists of two syllables, the first is "Meta", which means "beyond", and the second "Verse" is derived from the word universe. It is called technology "beyond the world"; It allows access to space





and time back and others that cannot be achieved in the real world, and is the highest level of technology and the supreme goal of technological development is to achieve extraordinary things, as Mark Zuckerberg described. In short, metaverse technology is the "Internet embodied in you."

The metaverse results from the convergence of “virtual reality” technology, symbolized by “VR” technology, with the technology of joint play, and virtual reality technologies in general may seem the result of invention. But, on the contrary, it began to appear in 1838 when the British scientist “Charles Wheatstone” developed glasses that display images in three-dimensional form, it was called a "stereoscope".

**Mark Zuckerberg (developer of Metaverse) divided the alleged release into three sections:**

Horizon One	Home horizons	Once wearing VR glasses, the user can create a virtual version of his home design as he wants and choose all the details of the house himself. The user can invite his friends’ home on the Metaverse to spend time together, watch a football game, film, or even recall lessons.
Horizon II	Work rooms horizons	The user or company can create a virtual copy of the office or company to accomplish the required work tasks, participate in meetings, interact and discuss with managers and co-workers without leaving the home using virtual reality glasses and headset.
Horizon Three	World Horizons	The world's horizons allow students wishing to study space science and geology to simulate these sciences, which may give them the opportunity to go to the moon and study ancient fossils from the earliest ages. Intercontinental travel allows a person to travel from one country to another without leaving his or her home.



From the foregoing, we conclude that the desire of the Metaverse company and the tremendous technological development desires that human interactions take place in actual reality only or even stop at the Internet behind smart phone applications; Rather, it goes beyond that and integrates the first and second tracks into a third track, which is to simulate and experience the real reality in its smallest details, but in virtual reality.

In the metaverse world, humans will be able to work from home, shop, educate, entertain, meet and practice various daily habits virtually, and this is not imaginary, but Facebook deliberately simulates this with the physical sense of things by transforming the user's personality into a hologram or avatar, as if the user Produces a mirror image of himself with his inclinations, desires, and personal traits.

Perhaps most surprisingly, Zuckerberg's desire to add the possibility of achieving dreams that people failed to achieve in reality, such as studying a specific field, living in a different country, occupying a certain position or occupying a certain job. And travel through time, such as back to ancient times such as the era of the ancient Egyptians and the ancient Greek and Roman eras, and allows you to travel to any era as if you are part of it.

## **Advantages and disadvantages of metaverse technologies from a legal viewpoint**

There is no doubt that everything around us is a blessing and a curse, depending on the method of exploitation. Metaverse technology also has advantages and disadvantages.

### **First: Metaverse features**

Metaverse techniques have several advantages; The technological development and the new possibilities it presents will overcome many of the difficulties and obstacles that have long faced man; Perhaps the most prominent of these advantages is the possibility of creating new job opportunities that did not exist before. It will also open wide horizons for content makers, and open up areas for marketing companies; Meta said it plans to hire 10,000 people in the European Union over the next five years to help build what's called metaverse,



an emerging online world where people reside and communicate in shared virtual spaces.

Loss of job opportunities. Strengthening communication between different groups of people with their different nationalities, social class and other belongings; Direct networking opportunities with current and middle officials may increase. Where countries expressed their intention to sell their embassies in the world of metaverse, including the island of Barbados, as it is on its way the first country in the world to open an embassy for "Metaverse", and the platform wrote on Twitter: "We are very proud today to welcome the government of Barbados to Decentraland, the first embassy of metaverses in the world and scheduled It opened last January after this island announced the finalization of a project with "Sargus Space" and "Superworld", a subsidiary of Metaverse.

Among the positives, too, is the promotion of the idea of remote work, which has emerged in dire need during the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, and the technologies introduced by metaverse will save a lot of time and effort. It may also help people with special abilities and those who suffer from mental illnesses in fulfilling their needs, facilitating life for them, and perhaps filling some needs that the actual reality failed to meet.

Metaverse technologies can help bond individuals across borders; It will be possible to hold wedding ceremonies through it and invite guests from all over the world, and a microcosm of this has already happened; Two Indians are scheduled to get married on February 6, and the groom has stated that his deceased father will attend the ceremony. And in an atmosphere inspired by the famous "Harry Potter" series, in front of Hogwarts School, at a cost of more than 10 thousand dollars.

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Also, metaverse applications support the digital economy, which has become a necessity for developed and developing countries; Where individuals and



companies can create new opportunities, buy and sell goods, and help entrepreneurs in facilitating the procedures for their projects and entrepreneurial ideas, and many commercial companies plan to establish stores in metaverses; The stores aim to make the world more open and connected, according to company documents seen by The Times, and they also aim to evoke feelings such as "curiosity and proximity" as well as a sense of welcome while trying the headphones on a "judgment-free journey," according to the documents.

## **Second: Disadvantages and disadvantages of metaverse technologies**

The most prominent drawback expected from virtual reality technology through metaverse, is the increase in users' attachment to virtual reality and the association with illusions to the point of addiction, and reluctance from the actual reality.

The most threatened group is children, because they are still young and unable to distinguish and realize what is beneficial and what is harmful to them. It is possible for them to integrate into the virtual reality and to be associated with games and imaginary characters that make them unable to integrate and interact in the real reality; Which may increase their incidence of mental and psychological diseases such as autism, social phobia, chronic fear, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and others. Children may be exposed to many violations of sexual exploitation, prostitution, pornography and trafficking.

It may increase bullying, discrimination and racism among different human groups; In this technological era, through the applications of Facebook, Instagram, and others, we find many cases of bullying, verbal abuse and sarcasm, which originate the existence of many societal ills and behavioral deviations.

How can we imagine our real personalities in the form of a "hologram" with the possibility of a physical and moral sense of things, and is there any guarantee of verbal violence, bullying and discrimination in light of living in the virtual world.

Parallel to the idea of providing job opportunities for many individuals, others may lose their jobs as a result of relying on holograms.





Metaverse and virtual reality technologies may expose users to privacy and security issues; Since the intensity of openness and the actual embodiment of the personality; It may lead to leaks or breaches of privacy and issues related to espionage and is not only at the level of individuals; but at the state level; This exposes individuals and states to intimidation and insecurity.

It may negatively affect tourism. It is known that tourism is a major source of hard currency, and the economies of countries may be affected and decline in the event that they are affected. Through the arrival of tourists from different countries of the world, hard currencies are generated for countries. If visiting these tourist attractions becomes virtual as performing Hajj by default, or a virtual tour of the pyramids of Giza, or a visit to the Eiffel Tower and other places in the world that will reduce the revenues of countries from the tourism sector, and there is no doubt that it will undermine their economy.

## **Clashes and controversies between companies related to metaverse technologies**

In the midst of Zuckerberg's announcement of his new company name "Meta" and the company's policies and updates, former Meta employee Frances Hogan detonated several leaks and classified documents during her appearance before the US Congress; That is, the latest research and technologies of the Metaverse company have been proven to negatively affect and destroy the lives of millions of users.

"Hogan" stated that the company conducted several secret researches that proved that the company's applications have an algorithm flaw that promotes hate speech and misleading information to users; This reflects positively on the company's advertising revenue. She explained that the company's policies do not preserve privacy, despite the company's claim that it protects the privacy of users.

In this context, Apple announced that it will add a feature to preserve the privacy of its users in response to the company Metaverse, as it will ask users when they download any application to allow the application to track their activity or not; This increased tension between Meta and Apple.



## Do metaverse promote human rights?

There is no doubt now that smartphones and social networking sites have become an indispensable part of our daily lives. But perhaps a question comes to our minds about, in light of the enormous technological development and expansion, will this enhance human rights and human values?

The most prominent human rights values lie in freedom, equality, a sense of security, peaceful coexistence, the right to own property and respect for the human being. Human rights guarantee civil, political, cultural and social rights for individuals. Given the characteristics of virtual reality technologies, we find that there are no real guarantees for the promotion of human rights. It will be conceptualized as follows:

### 1-Freedom of Speech:

Freedom in its entirety includes freedom of thought, opinion, expression and freedom of belief in accordance with international human rights covenants. Virtual reality technologies have made it possible to embody people and play on their physical and moral sense of things; This may expose many who wish to express their opinion to being restricted and suffocated, and not allowing them the right to freedom. Especially since states are committed to the human right to express his opinion, as long as it does not affect the security and personal safety of individuals, and public safety and morals.

On the other hand, it is possible to allow a wide area of freedom of expression of opinion, in contravention of many values in societies according to cultural differences; There are societies that do not accept the promotion of the idea of homosexuality and legally prohibit it, and it is possible that the huge openness that metaverse will allow to promote and spread ideas that contradict the values and legislation of some countries, and this leads to social mobility. Freedom of opinion and expression is among the rights that have restrictive exceptions under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

### 2-Equality:

People should be treated in the same way, with dignity and with each other in a spirit of brotherhood and equality; Equality is the heart of human rights and this



is the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; It also expands its scope to include the circulation of these technologies in the developing world as well as in the developed world; In order not to deprive countries of the advantages of technological development and applications of social reality, it is worth noting that the European Union plays an important role in shaping the new rules of the Internet. European policy makers are also leading the way in helping to embed European values into the day-to-day workings of the Internet, demonstrating that the European Union bases its metaverse policies on European values without paying attention to African and Asian countries in formulating policies consistent with their own values.

Certainly, the repercussions of metaverse may have positive advantages that may lead to facilitation and facilitation of daily procedures in education, medicine, trade and other fields. First world and third world countries. It is certain that the developed countries will be the first to enjoy the technologies of metaverse, but will developing countries find the same luck in technical supplies of metaverse, especially since the second suffers from crises and weaknesses in the technological infrastructure.

### **3- Freedom from discrimination:**

As stipulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Everyone has the right to express their rights regardless of their religion, gender, color or nationality, and it is expected that virtual reality technology may not enhance this; Racial discrimination may appear between different groups, sects and exposure to bullying and ridicule, and this may reinforce hate speeches between individuals and peoples; Especially after the leaks of Frances Hogan, a former Metaverse employee.

This is what the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) emphasized: "We will support the analysis of the effects of artificial intelligence, big data, discrimination and hate speech in the digital space on human rights, and we will work to identify and clarify principles and best practices. We will cooperate with governments and the private sector to protect human rights in the digital space, and address digital discrimination and speech We will also help address the digital divide and seek to integrate human rights into the work of the United Nations system in this area."



#### 4-Safety and privacy:

Privacy and safety are limits on interference with one's life and have four aspects, including: The privacy of information responsible for regulating the circulation of information to individuals and the privacy of the body; to protect the body against any potential harm or coercion of an individual without his or her consent, the privacy of communication, which includes the security of a person's personal communications and communications without listening or spying on them, and the privacy of a space such as the place of residence and workplace. The Metaverse technology aims to collect data on individuals from your residence and workplace and contact details to design your own world on Metaverse, which means further interference with government and private oversight.

In this context, article 3 of the Universal Declaration stipulates that everyone has the right to self-security, and article 12 of the same Declaration: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference in his or her private life, family, residence or correspondence, or to campaigns against his or her honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to be protected by law from such interference or campaigns. " We find that it may not enhance virtual reality; It may violate their privacy, expose users to electronic extortion and the diversion of personal data and may fall victim to attacks and fraud; Which loses them a sense of security and trust. This we have already seen on social media; so what's it going to be like in a massive evolution?

In particular, metaverse techniques are aimed at fully emulating reality, such as entrepreneurship contracting, State embassy-building and the purchase of dedicated land; This could fuel the violation of privacy and security, not only the security of individuals but also the national security of States; It may facilitate the diversion of intelligence and tactical information on States, and therefore the management of the company must undertake to protect the security and privacy of States and individual users and provide every means to ensure this; So far, his investigation on Meta Media has not been able.

We have seen the use of certain tricks by the Governments of some States to manipulate and guide voter votes in support of their policies; The platform lacks accountability for rallies, conspiracies, indiscriminate killings, gang wars, theft, racism, trafficking and much else that notorious online users will achieve.



## 5 -Children Protection

In accordance with all the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is designed to safeguard the child's rights and to raise him or her properly; The most vulnerable groups are children - as we have previously pointed out - who may fall victim to sexual exploitation, increase their opportunities for trafficking and increase their psychological illness. They are a vulnerable group unable to discriminate and defend themselves.

Pornographic and obscene crimes may also appear online within metaverse. For example, in the Second Life app, problems such as the design of symbolic images of child pornography by some users, their use in pornographic images, or even their trade. Moreover, this situation causes minors to be exposed to and easily accessible to such content. Which is likely to happen on metaverse.

In the meantime, article 34 (3) of the Arab Charter on Human Rights may give children the right to be protected from economic exploitation. Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child also imposes a comprehensive obligation on States to take "all appropriate legislative, administrative and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of violence, damage, physical or mental abuse or treatment involving neglect or exploitation, including sexual exploitation."

## 6- Women Rights

Many groups, especially women and girls, under virtual reality techniques may be subjected to verbal harassment, physical abuse or discrimination; Because it's a technique that targets physical and sensory feelings of things; All these practices are rejected before national and international laws. There are provisions in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that bind States parties to take the necessary measures to protect rights holders from discrimination in the private sphere.

Indeed, we have witnessed the rape of a lady named Nina Jane Patel. The 43-year-old and mother of four, who, surprisingly, works as a deputy in a technology company that works for the Metaverse Project, where after joining the Metaverse and designing the Avatar that matches her, she was verbally harassed by 3 or 4 male iconic figures and her image was gang-raped, prompting





her to defile and criticize; She said that the rapists continued to abuse her, such as "don't pretend you didn't enjoy it" and similar slur. In that connection, she said that, at the time of the incident, she had been unable to activate the "safety barrier" that the technique provided after she had been shocked by what had happened.

It may be exaggerated to claim that it is a very similar experience, but Patel assured the press that what happened affected her physiological and psychological response as if in fact it were, because what this technique provides is difficult for one to distinguish from real reality.

Meta, for its part, stated that safety activities were still being developed and improved and that the company was sorry. The company should therefore commit itself to providing protection and safety measures, so that metaverse do not become a safe means and space for crimes and to highlight the evil aspect of human beings. We are faced with virtual crimes such as virtual rape, virtual murder, theft and virtual intimidation that call for new and new legislation to deter virtual criminals.

## **7- Protection of people of disabilities**

Without technological development, we have witnessed numerous incidents of bullying, some of which have led to suicides involving all categories of public figures and private individuals, so much so that bullying has become a phenomenon whose causes need to be explained and solutions sought.(2) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities prohibits any discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantees them equal and effective protection from discrimination on any grounds, with all legislative, administrative, social and educational measures necessary to protect persons with disabilities inside and outside their homes from all forms of violence and abuse, including its gender-based aspects, under article 16 (1).

Several States have introduced legislation to judge bullying and punish bullies such as Egypt in the Penal Code that those found guilty of bullying are liable to a term of imprisonment of at least 6 months and a fine of 10,000 pounds and may be increased, and if they are punishable by one year's imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 pounds.



From the above, the ability of artificial intelligence to serve human beings cannot be denied, nor can it be denied its ability to fuel human rights violations.

## Conclusion

From the above, technological development is necessary under the requirements and variables of reality, but it must be provided with binding legal guarantees, and developments must be gradually introduced to provide an opportunity for the human mind to absorb it.

Before technological development, human rights must be educated and individuals should be made aware of their rights; For the well-being of individuals is essential for the sovereignty and promotion of human rights in different societies.

National Governments have an important role to play in these technological developments, most importantly: Monitoring of artificial intelligence applications and studying their impact; to mitigate threats to human rights; amending its legislation; To guarantee the rights of individuals even on virtual sites. They are responsible for agreeing to cross these technologies; They may not be proportional to the values and culture of society; If such techniques were to be admitted and recognized, controls would have to be put in place. Governments must ensure that the 13 International Principles on the Application of Human Rights are applied to the monitoring of communications, reaffirm existing privileges against government intervention and extend legal protection to other types of data, such as psychological and behavioural data and conclusions.

It is the responsibility of large companies, especially large corporations, to inform the public about developments in artificial intelligence and to commit to clarity and transparency. It is also the responsibility of individuals to educate themselves to raise awareness of what is good or bad for them and to protect their communities from the dangers and toxins that are spread through artificial intelligence developments and to select them well. Companies must be clear with users about who has access to their data, including data shared as part of conditions of employment or school attendance, adopt strong transparency



policies, with explicit reference to the purposes and means of data processing, and allow users to safely access and transmit their data.

All of the above does not mean that technological developments are negative; They certainly have many positives; But it is merely a perception of the human rights situation in the light of the enormous technological developments that have come to light; To fill these gaps before these technologies are established.