The Biometric ID Grid: A Country-by-Country Guide

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Below is James Corbett's introduction and list of the adoption of various forms and levels of bio-metric ID by countries around the world, *[The Biometric ID Grid: A Country-by-Country Guide](#)*, replete with his links, published January 31, 2017.

In [last week's report](#) on [India's demonetization disaster](#) I began to connect the dots between demonetization, the push for a cashless society, and the biometric identification schemes that will eventually tie everyone's fingerprints, iris scans, and other identifying details to every transaction they ever make.

Well, that game of "connect the dots" just became even easier to play.

First, it was [reported last week](#) that a key panel advising the government on its implementation of the "digital payments ecosystem" (that is being [pushed and funded by USAID](#)) is now recommending that India links its national biometric ID database directly to tax returns.

And now [comes word](#) that India is "working on a biometrics-backed payment system that will be connected to a user's unique ID number, or Aadhaar." (Who could have seen that coming?)

No, it doesn't take a Nostradamus to understand where this is all heading: From the cashless society and the biometric ID grid to the cashless biometric grid. And we already know about [the cashless society](#). Now it's time to collect the data on the biometric ID grid.

And let's not be naive: As I've [demonstrated before](#), this is a coordinated plan to institute a worldwide biometric id system to track every human on the planet.

But given how fast and furious these new biometric databases are coming online, no one person can possibly keep track of them all. That's why I'm calling on Corbett Report members to help assemble this information. Like last year's open source investigation into the [War on Cash](#), this country-by-country guide will be updated with input from the Corbett Report community. [Members of the site](#) are invited to log in and leave links to information about the biometric ID grid in their country in the comments section below.

The Biometric ID List

Afghanistan - In 2016 the US [bragged](#) about their role in helping the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior roll out biometric ID systems for their workers. Also in 2016 the Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority [revealed](#) that they wanted to "start linking biometrics to new SIM card registrations, to improve national security." As has been widely reported, the US military has been waging "[biometric warfare](#)" in the country as part of its invasion, occupation and (de)stabilization effort since at least [2010](#). The Afghanistan National Security Forces has now deployed their own [Automated Biometric Information System](#) with fingerprint, iris, and facial scan capabilities and is "compatible with the U.S. DoD ABIS and the FBI Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System."

Albania - In 2009 Albania began issuing a new type of [biometric identity card](#). The card is in compliance with ICAO standards and contains an embedded chip that stores fingerprints and a digital photograph along with biographical information.

Australia - Australia has been [issuing biometric passports](#) since 2005 and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) has been running [biometrics collection centres](#) for years to issue visas tied to visitors' biometric details. But now, Australia is about to lead us into a Brave New World with a world first: The DIBP is going to [introduce the first "self-processing system"](#) for travelers at Australian airports later this year using biometric details instead of a passport. Australian schools have implemented [fingerprint scans as a method of tracking attendance](#) at schools despite a [strong backlash from parents](#) that led to similar programs being suspended in the past.

Bahamas - [Last month](#) the Bahamas began issuing [biometric passports](#). In keeping with international standards, the passports will require a digital photograph and fingerprints from the passport holder.

Bermuda - From June 2016 Bermuda has outsourced printing of its passports to the UK so that Bermuda's "citizens" could enjoy the "benefits" of [biometric passport technology](#), "which includes the highest level of internationally recognised security standards."

Bolivia - In 2009 Bolivia's elections were held using an electoral voter list created by [using biometric data](#). In 2016 the Bolivian government began a 12-month program to perform a [biometric census](#) on the country's foreign population.

Bulgaria - Bulgaria began issuing [biometric identity cards](#) (mandatory for all citizens) in March 2010. Bulgaria also issues [biometric passports](#) and driver's licenses containing embedded biometric data.

Brazil - Brazil began issuing [biometric identity cards](#) in 2011 with the intention of issuing cards as part of its Registro de Identidade Civil, which intends to capture the biometric

details of all 150 million citizens by 2020. Also in 2011 the Brazilian Electoral Justice [approved the roll out](#) of a biometric voter registration system that requires voters to register their fingerprints in order to vote ([which is mandatory](#)).

Canada - Under [NEXUS](#), the joint Canada-US "preferred traveler" program, [iris scans are used](#) to identify passengers. In 2015 the Canadian government [expanded biometric screening](#), including fingerprints and digital photos, to visitors from all 151 visa-required countries.

Chad - The European Union is funding a program in Chad to [register the biometric details](#) of refugees and returnees fleeing war-torn neighboring countries.

Chile - In 2013 Chile rolled out its [new national ID and passport infrastructure](#) including an eID card which "is based on a multi-biometric system comprised of an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and a Facial Recognition System." The country aims to issue all of its 18+ million citizens with a card by 2022.

China - In 2016 China debuted its first airport [biometric entry system](#). The system takes travelers' photos at security checkpoints within the airport, linking their faces to their boarding passes. In 2017, the Chinese government [unveiled new biometric travel passes](#) (including fingerprint scans) for mainland visitors to Taiwan.

Finland - Finland introduced biometric [residence permit cards](#) in 2012. The cards include a chip that stores a digital photograph and two fingerprints.

France - France has issued only [biometric passports](#) since 2009. The passport requires the collection of a biometric digital photo and eight fingerprints.

Germany - Germany introduced [biometric passports](#) in 2005 and [biometric residence permits](#) in 2011, both of which require a biometric digital photograph and two fingerprints to be collected and stored on an embedded chip. Germany's [identity card](#) does require a biometric photo, but so far fingerprint collection is optional.

Greece - In compliance with the [dictates of Washington](#), the Greek government is set to issue new biometric IDs this year. As [Greek Report notes](#): "Failure to create the new IDs in a timely manner could lead to a suspension in the visa-free travel to the US that Greeks currently enjoy."

India - India has been [fingerprinting and iris scanning its population for years](#) in its quest to construct the largest biometric ID database in the world. The plan to collect and store biometric details on all 1.2 billion Indian citizens is proceeding apace, and has so far [registered over 1.1 billion people](#), including over 99% of all Indians over 18.

Iraq - In 2016 the Iraqi government began a [national identity card](#) system that uses biometric identifiers. This system has been [widely criticized](#) for legally allowing discrimination of minorities.

Israel - In 2009 the Knesset enacted the controversial [Biometric Database Law](#) to pave the way for the implementation of a national biometric ID database. Last July [it was reported](#) that the "pilot program" had come to an end and all Israeli residents would be forced to register their biometric details with the government. In December [it was announced](#) that the mandatory implementation of the database was being delayed and that fingerprints may no longer be required.

Japan - In 2007 the Japanese government began [requiring fingerprints and digital photographs](#) from all foreign travelers. Now, the government is considering implementing a [biometric ID payment system](#) which will "allow" (sic) tourists to "register their fingerprints or finger vein patterns among other personal information with the service and then deposit a set amount of money in a connected account," from which they can make purchases while in the country.

Kenya - In 2012 Kenya began [biometric voter registration](#) and in 2015 the government implemented a [biometric registration system](#) for all citizens aged 12 and over. The registration includes fingerprint collection and is tied to a national database.

Kuwait - In 2015 Kuwait passed a law requiring all citizens and visitors to submit to [DNA testing](#) for a national database. After a wave of protest, legal challenges, and opposition from the emir of Kuwait the parliament [announced in October 2016](#) that they would "scale down" and potentially revoke the law.

Luxembourg - In accordance with EU standards Luxembourg issues [biometric passports](#) with a chip containing a digital photograph, two fingerprints and an image of the holder's signature.

Mexico - In 2011 the Mexican government [began a program](#) to issue biometric identification cards to all children between 4 and 17 years old. The cards contain a digital photograph, a fingerprint and an iris scan. The scheme is part of a [broader National Population Register](#) that will eventually extend to adults and contain the biometric details of the entire population of Mexico.

Netherlands - Since 2009 the Netherlands has issued [biometric passports](#) containing an embedded chip with a digital photograph and fingerprints. Four Dutch citizens challenged the legality of the practice of collecting fingerprints but it was [approved by the European Court of Justice](#). Although only two fingerprints are stored on the passport's chip, four fingerprints are taken and [stored by the local government](#) in a central database that is [also used to pursue criminal investigations](#).

New Zealand - New Zealand's Inland Revenue Department [rolled out "Voice ID" in 2011](#) to register "customers'" voice prints and identify them in future interactions. By 2015 [1.4 million](#) of the country's 6.1 million taxpayers had registered their voice prints with the "service."

Nigeria - Nigeria is contracting with Bio-Metrica to [collect citizens' fingerprint and facial biometrics](#) for the nation's 2018 census.

Paraguay - In 2009 Paraguay revamped its passports and [mandatory identity cards](#) for its New Identification System by [adding biometric details](#) including a thumbprint and digital photograph.

Peru - Last year Peru announced a 3-year program to issue [1.6 million biometric passports](#) noting that these biometric documents are "required to consolidate the Schengen visa waiver process."

Philippines - In 2014 the Commission on Elections [announced](#) that biometric registration would be mandatory for all voters in the Philippines' 2016 election. However, "[technical problems](#)" meant the government had to allow some voters with incomplete or corrupted biometric data to vote anyway. Voters continue to register for polls, with the Philippines' Commission on Elections allocating US$201,000 [last month](#) to voter registration machines (VRMs) and peripherals.

Saudi Arabia - In 2015 Saudi Arabia finalized its [Automated Central System](#) to collect and store the biometric details (including fingerprints) of all citizens and expatriates. Also in 2015 the country's [biometric border security system](#) was launched.

Sierra Leone - Just last week the Sierra Leone government confirmed receipt of [4,066 biometric registration kits](#) that will be used to register voters for the 2018 elections. The aim is to construct a single, biometric voter register "that will capture every resident in Sierra Leone."

South Korea - In 2012 the Korean government began [collecting fingerprints and digital photographs](#) of all foreign visitors (except foreign government officials/international organization representatives and their accompanying immediate family members as well as persons under 17 years of age).

Switzerland - Switzerland [launched its biometric passport](#) in 2010 after a referendum was held to approve the measure. The referendum passed with 50.14% of the vote, making it one of the closest referendums in Swiss history. The passports adopt the "international standard" of collecting two fingerprints (one from each index finger) and a digital photograph of the holder's unsmiling face.

Trinidad and Tobago - In 2012 [it was reported](#) that the country was moving to fully implement biometric passports within five years. In 2013 the Ministry of the People and Social Development [announced](#) they were launching a fingerprint-based biometric smart card for citizens to access social benefits, citing fraud and security as reasons for the switch. The very next year the company that was manufacturing the cards [warned](#) that the system was vulnerable to identity theft and left the door open for frauds and scams.

The cards were [rolled out in 2015](). Last year Major General Edmund Dillon, the Minister of National Security, [announced]() the government was considering the implementation of biometric border screening at the country's two international airports in keeping with a "United Nations security resolution requiring the implementation of security mechanisms to stop terrorists from returning to the country from abroad, with passenger screening systems being an important component of such efforts."

Ukraine - A law passed by the Yanukovych government in 2012 requires all Ukrainian citizens, regardless of age, to obtain a [biometric passport]().

United Kingdom - The UK under the Labour government of Tony Blair and later Gordon Brown attempted to implement a [national identity register]() and ID card system that would have required the logging of an extensive amount of personal and biometric information in a central database. However, the program caused waves of protest and the government eventually gave in to the public outcry, [scrapping the plan]() for the national registry and instead only implementing the biometric id scheme for [foreign nationals](). The UK does [issue biometric passports]() and [recent polling]() suggests UK adults "are now willing to embrace biometric identity for online banking."

United States - President Trump's [new Executive Order]() on "terrorist" (sic) entry calls on the Department of Homeland Security to "expedite the completion and implementation of a biometric entry-exit tracking system for all travelers to the United States." (This comes as no surprise to those who warned that Trump's transition team was [swarming with biometric industry workers and lobbyists]().) The United States already takes [digital fingerprints of all foreign tourists]() (except Canadians) and stores them in a database for 75 years. The DoD [has announced]() plans to replace Common Access Card access to information systems with biometric authentication. The US [issues biometric passports]() and coordinates with the Canadian government on the biometric NEXUS preferred traveler program (see **Canada**).

Uruguay - In 2013 the Uruguayan government opened a open call for tenders for a new eID "solution." In 2014 Gemalto won the tender and began work on the [new biometric eID cards]() that can store up to four fingerprints.

Yemen - In 2014 [it was announced]() that the country of Yemen would be deploying M2SYS Technology's TrueVoter biometric voting platform for the upcoming constitutional referendum and national elections. The system is capable of fingerprint, iris, palm print, finger vein, palm vein, and facial recognition, but only fingerprint and facial recognition are collected by the Yemeni government.

Zambia - In 2015 Zambia [announced]() that they would be phasing in biometric National Registration Cards for the 2016 election.

Zimbabwe - The government of Zimbabwe has ruled out biometric or electronic voting in the country's 2018 elections, but [will proceed with biometric voter registration](#) this year.