

# ACLU Wisconsin: Calls for accountability after Milwaukee police chief announces facial recognition moratorium

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MILWAUKEE— The ACLU of Wisconsin issued the following statement after Milwaukee Police Chief Jeffrey Norman [announced](#) today that he would no longer consider a proposal to acquire facial recognition technology and would instead prohibit the department from using the technology.

The move comes after Milwaukeeans packed a Fire and Police Commission meeting Thursday night, testifying for almost three hours against a proposed agreement with Biometrica that would have provided the Milwaukee Police Department with two “free” software licenses in exchange for millions of images and data from Milwaukeeans.

Amanda Merkwae, Advocacy Director at the ACLU of Wisconsin, said the following:

“Thanks to an outpouring of public opposition, Milwaukee Police Chief Jeffrey Norman announced that he will no longer seek to acquire facial recognition technology and will ban its use within the department. While this is certainly welcome news, it is still incumbent upon Chief Norman to prove that MPD will follow through on the moratorium.

For years, Milwaukee Police have used facial recognition in secret despite publicly claiming otherwise. Under immense public pressure, MPD officials have admitted to borrowing facial recognition technology from other jurisdictions without any internal policy in place, unbeknownst to the Fire and Police Commission, for *at least two or*

three years, meaning that Milwaukee police have been using a tool that allows them to identify, track, and monitor people in public spaces without consent, notice, or meaningful accountability.

For the past nine months, countless Milwaukee residents and community leaders have engaged in thoughtful community education, spent hours upon hours in public meetings, and contacted their local elected officials to voice their unequivocal opposition to the use of FRT. This step forward is a testament to that work.

However, given the department's lack of transparency concerning FRT, we must remain vigilant and continue to hold MPD accountable. This ban can't just be lip service or a hollow gesture meant to ease public backlash. It must actually mark an end to the use of facial recognition by Milwaukee police."

This statement is available online

at: <https://www.aclu-wi.org/press-releases/aclu-of-wisconsin-calls-for-accountability-after-milwaukee-police-chief-announces-facial-recognition-moratorium/>