

Eastern religions join call for ethical AI

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Sect leaders from major Eastern religions on Wednesday signed on to a Vatican-led code for AI ethics that also includes major tech companies at a ceremony in the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

The "Rome Call for AI Ethics" says artificial intelligence should be developed "with [ethical principles](#) to ensure it serves the good of humanity", given concerns over the impact on warfare, elections and employment.

More than a dozen leaders from various religions with roots in Asia, including Buddhist, Sikh and Shinto groups, gathered at the Peace Park in Hiroshima, which was decimated by a US nuclear bomb attack in 1945.

Tech firms such as IBM, Microsoft and Cisco, as well as [religious leaders](#) from Christianity, Islam and Judaism, have already joined the pledge launched in 2020.

Signatories agree that AI systems "must not discriminate against anyone" and "there must always be someone who takes responsibility for what a machine does".

The systems should be reliable, secure, straightforward to understand, and "must not follow or create biases".

Concluding a two-day forum on the topic, the president of World Fellowship of Buddhists, Shinto sect leaders and the secretary general of the Baha'i International Community among others signed the call.

Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh, chair of the Sikh organization Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, told the ceremony that the Rome Call for AI Ethics "provides a much-needed global moral check".

AI "should never, ever exploit or destroy God's creation, it should only seek its betterment and flourishing", he said.

A moment's silence was held before the ruins of a domed building that

stands as a memorial to the 140,000 people killed in the atomic bombing at the end of World War II.

At the G7 summit last month in Italy, Pope Francis made an unprecedented address about artificial intelligence.

Researchers at the Institute for Ethics in AI at the University of Oxford have separately deemed the issue "urgent and important".

"Every day brings more examples of the ethical challenges posed by AI, from face recognition to voter profiling, brain machine interfaces to weaponised drones, and the ongoing discourse about how AI will impact employment on a global scale," the institute says.

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