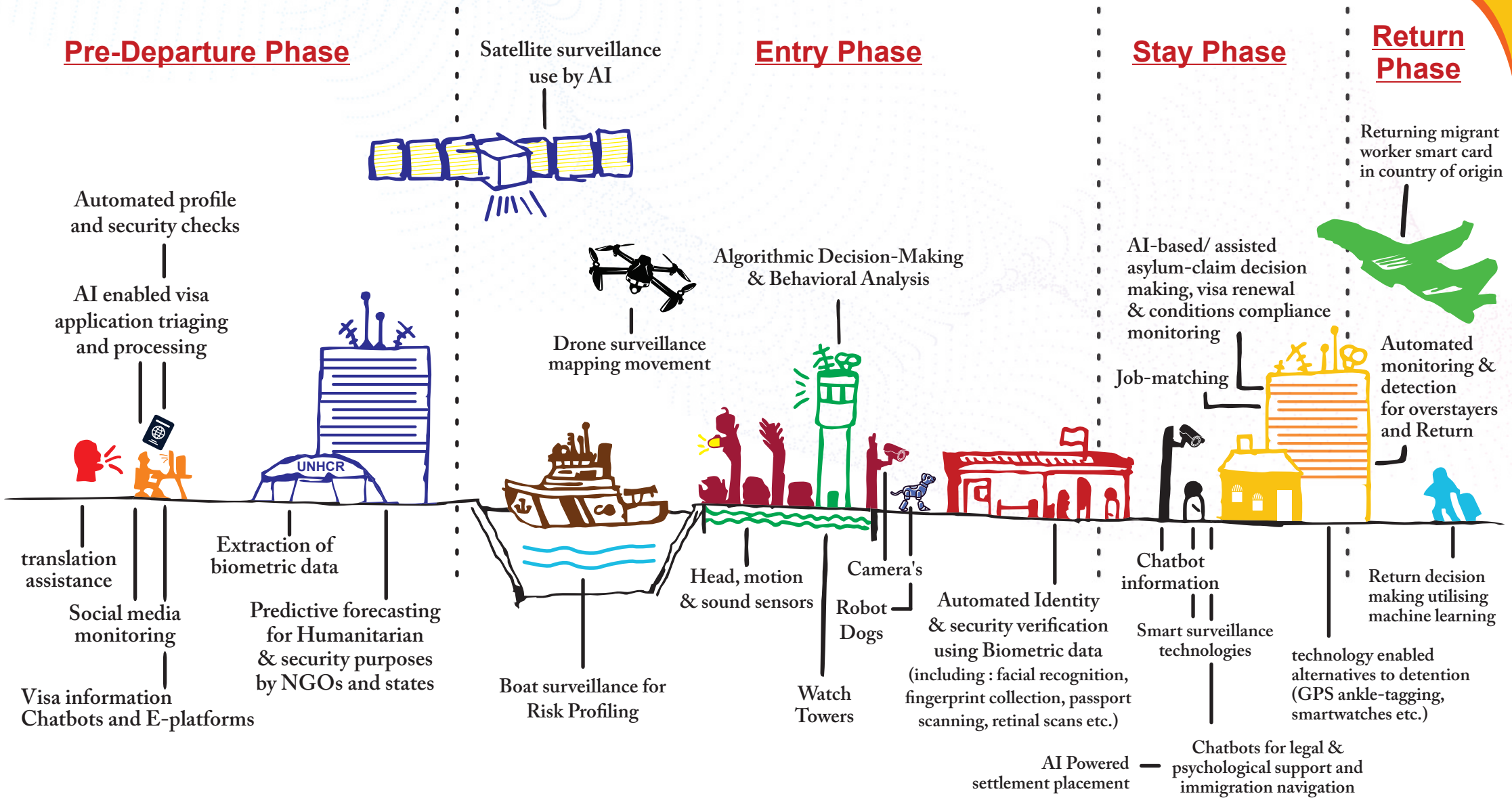
AI *for* Migration

Deployment of AI systems and technologies in the **Migration Cycle**



AI and Migration

As the world has increasingly turned towards the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems and technologies in everyday practices, State authorities, international organizations, and private actors have progressively utilised such technologies for the purpose of migration management and governance, as well as humanitarian efforts and corporate endeavors. Deployment has been observed throughout the whole migration cycle, i.e., pre-departure, entry at the border, stay in the country of destination, and the return phase. Yet, clarity on the exact application of AI systems and technologies and the possible negative consequences for human rights have been obscured due to limited transparency from its users, deployers, and operators. As such, this fact sheet provides a concise, non-exhaustive overview of possible applications of AI systems and technologies throughout the migration cycle, displayed in the graph at the forefront.

Applicability & Increased Efficiency

Deployment of migration management/ governance-related AI systems and technologies have certainly brought considerable advantages for policy and practice. Particularly, actors have argued for increased efficiency, ability to mitigate risks, reduce waiting times, and cut costs. AI algorithms have helped international organisations implement humanitarian assistance by predicting (i.e., forecasting) the likelihood of displacement events. Additionally, States have greatly benefited from the use of AI systems and technologies, particularly concerning border management and visa-related purposes; this includes streamlining of repetitive tasks through the automation of administrative asylum-claim application triaging and decision-making, fast tracking identity verification at borders based on biometric data, border enforcement through surveillance and behavioural analysis, the use of chatbots for advisory services to migrants, AI powered machine-learning tools to support refugee resettlement placement, algorithmic job matching, compliance-checks of visa conditions, and facilitation of return processes. As such, AI systems and technologies provide a pathway towards increased efficiency and effectivity.

Challenges & Considerations

Depending on how AI systems and technologies have been designed, developed, and deployed – particularly the intent behind their application – negative (unintended) consequences may arise. First, migration-related AI systems largely make use of big data sets, which often leads to a cascade of errors due to poor data quality, especially concerning migration trends and dynamics. Algorithms based on big data may also be hidden within black boxes, leading to errors going undetected due understanding difficulty for users, for example for visa application officers, in identifying decision-making patterns. Next, AI systems and technologies are reported to be inherently biased due to their reliance on unavoidably subjective, human-controlled inputs. As such, AI systems, if not dealt with correctly, have the potential to amplify, institutionalise, and systematise existing human biases, including historical and representation biases. Third, critics argue that violation of human rights could become prevalent, as migrants' rights to liberty, privacy, and asylum/protection may be challenged. Collection of biometric data, the storage, processing, and accessing of sensitive personal information, and predictive forecasting tools used to stop people at borders, possibly also asylum-seekers, have all been considered as risks contributing to such violations. Lastly, lack of transparency for mistakes, limited responsibility, and the inability to pursue recourse are also listed as crucial challenges. Therefore, although the deployment of AI systems and technologies in the field of migration provide an opportunity for more effective and efficient migration management practices, risks should be mitigated to prevent its negative consequences on humanity, especially for those at the margins of society.