



CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

27 March 2017

António Guterres
Secretary-General
United Nations
S-3800, United Nations Secretariat Bldg
New York, NY 10017

RE: Banning fully autonomous weapons

Dear Secretary-General,

I am writing on behalf of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots to warmly welcome your appointment as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Our coalition of non-governmental organizations is working to address multiple ethical, legal, military, security, and other concerns raised by fully autonomous weapons, also known as “lethal autonomous weapons systems.”

We urge you to help us retain meaningful human control of weapons systems by endorsing the call for a preemptive ban on the development, production, and use of weapons that, once initiated, would select and attack targets without any human input or interaction.

Since the launch of our campaign in 2013, a broad range of countries, organizations, and individuals have endorsed the call to preemptively ban fully autonomous weapons, including:

- Nineteen countries: Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, Holy See, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, State of Palestine, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.
- The European Parliament, which [adopted a resolution](#) by a vote of 534–49 calling for a ban on “development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention.”
- The UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in [their joint report](#) that drew attention to potential law enforcement use of weapons systems that would lack meaningful human control.
- More than 21 Nobel Peace Laureates, who [expressed concern](#) that “leaving the killing to machines might make going to war easier.”
- More than 160 religious leaders and organizations of various denominations, who [called](#) fully autonomous weapons “an affront to human dignity and to the sacredness of life.”
- More than 270 scientists in 37 countries, who [warned](#) that interactions by devices controlled by complex algorithms “could create unstable and unpredictable behavior ... that could initiate or escalate conflicts, or cause unjustifiable harm to civilian populations.”

- More than 3,000 artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics experts, who [signed an open letter](#) affirming that they have “no interest in building AI weapons and do not want others to tarnish their field by doing so.”
- Canadian technology company Clearpath Robotics, which [issued a pledge](#) to not manufacture “weaponized robots that remove humans from the loop” because it has “chosen to value our ethics over potential future revenue.”
- Google DeepMind, which in its [submission to a UK parliamentary committee](#) described a ban as “the best approach to averting the harmful consequences that would arise from the development and use of such weapons.”

Our Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has been pleased to discuss this topic with high-level UN officials, particularly UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo and his predecessor Angela Kane, as well as the UN Office at Geneva Director-General Michael Møller.

We enjoy excellent relations with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and its support unit for the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), which is currently preparing to host the first meeting of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems at the UN in Geneva in August 2017 under chair Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill of India.

We also appreciate the priority that the UN Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters has attached to considering fully autonomous weapons as well as the ongoing contributions of the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

Again, we urge you to address concerns over fully autonomous weapons by endorsing the call for a preemptive ban. Our campaign’s high-level representatives would be pleased to discuss this topic with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Mary Wareham

Coordinator, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

www.stopkillerrobots.org

c/o Human Rights Watch
1630 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20009
Tel. +1 (646) 203-8292 (mobile)
wareham@hrw.org

CC:

- UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo
- UN Office at Geneva Director-General Michael Møller
- UNIDIR Director Jarmo Sareva