



CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS

Statement to the Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties

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On behalf of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Thank you Mr. Chair.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots appreciates the opportunity to make a brief contribution to this general debate.

We join other delegations in thanking Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill of India for chairing last week's Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems and for engaging with our Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

We are grateful to the CCW implementation support unit for its essential support to the CCW and for its staff's professional engagement with our global coalition of non-governmental organizations.

We have listened very carefully to the interventions made today and last week. It appears that no country will oppose continuing the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems next year. That consensus is welcome, but the lack of ambition is not.

We are disappointed that all states seem able to do is roll-over the mandate agreed at the 2016 Review Conference. Meeting for just 10 days during 2018 does not reflect a sense of urgency and we question if it is sufficient time for the CCW to make significant progress to address concerns over these weapons systems. We urge you to divide that precious time into at least two meetings and hold at least one of those meetings in the first half, ideally first quarter, of the year.

The 2017 GGE meeting included several panels featuring external experts on wide-ranging questions relating to artificial intelligence and emerging technologies at a time when the formal setting raised the expectation of more substantive engagement by various experts working in government. Next year's GGE meetings should be more action-oriented and focus on facilitating in-depth discussions between states to foster common understandings and agreement on key elements.

We believe that these CCW deliberations should pave the way to international negotiations on a legally binding instrument. States Parties should agree to a formal negotiating mandate at the end of next year. Then work conclude a new protocol by the end of 2019 – a protocol that bans the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons.

We strongly urge states here at the CCW to focus and work towards a specific objective as developing “options” is unambitious and the options are clear. After last week, it is evident that most states now see a need to move swiftly to develop new international law on fully autonomous weapons.

Moreover, at least 22 states now want that legally binding instrument to prohibit these weapons. We welcome Brazil, Iraq, and Uganda to the growing group of ban states and hope those states can now start working together to determine how to conclude a prohibition as soon as possible.

The other measures that have been proposed do not make much sense to us given the multiple and serious ethical, legal, operational, technical challenges raised by these weapons systems. Political declarations, codes of conduct, and other measures fall far short of what is needed. Some of these steps presuppose that lethal autonomous weapons systems will be developed and that sends the wrong message.

We note that nearly all states that have spoken at these CCW meetings accept that some form of human control must be maintained over weapons systems. As you know, the campaign seeks to prohibit weapons that would select and attack targets without further human intervention. We hope that can be the main subject for discussion at the GGE next year and encourage states to make explicit where they draw the line on increasing autonomy in weapon systems.

From the officials, parliamentarians, artificial intelligence experts and roboticists, celebrities, journalists, activists, and ordinary people following these deliberations from our Twitter and other social media accounts it is abundantly clear that the world is watching this diplomatic process. Expectations are running high that the killer robots challenge will be confronted before it is too late. We cannot let them down. We do not have the time or money to waste on inconclusive deliberations.

Thank you.