For the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots to be successful internationally, we’ll need to create strong national campaigns working to change national policies and campaigning in support of the international efforts. It can be daunting to try to change national policy but with a strong and smart national campaign, it is possible. Based on my experience campaigning nationally on landmines, cluster munitions and nuclear weapons, this chapter outlines a few of the key points to building and maintaining a national campaign.

SET GOALS AND PLAN YOUR CAMPAIGN

First things first, you and your team should determine what the goals of the national campaign are. It is going to be much easier to build a national campaign if you can tell people what you are working towards. Since this is the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots campaign kit, I’m going to assume that the overarching goal is to get your country to support the negotiation of a new treaty banning autonomous weapons systems, also known as fully autonomous weapons. That’s great but you should have some smaller goals along the way as well that tell people how you are going to achieve our collective goal.

I always aim for SMART goals, you know specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. So instead of our country supports a ban on autonomous weapons, a better goal would be ‘in 2018 our country states their current policy regarding autonomous weapons in an international forum.’ When you are starting out small realistic and achievable goals will help build momentum.

Once you set some goals, it’s time to come up with a plan. Different organizations have different ways of planning their campaigns; for some it is a formal strategic development process, for others it is an informal discussion. More resources on how to plan your advocacy strategy are available in another chapter. Just make sure your team is onboard with the plan and that everyone knows the plan.

A campaign plan will help you stay on track to meet your goals and will keep us all focused on banning autonomous weapons. The plan should be flexible to accommodate new developments but clear enough that you won’t get distracted. Once you know what you want to do, it’s time to find the people to help you do it.

ENLIST ALLIES

You can create a successful national campaign with a small number of people, but you will need to enlist some partners in your country. You do not all need to do the same things the same way but allies or partners will be very helpful. There may be people already working towards a ban on autonomous weapons systems in your country, but you will also need to bring some more people into the campaign. If you haven’t seen the Dancing Guy Leadership video, have a watch http://youtu.be/fW8amMCVAJQ because it is the best demonstration of why it is important to bring others into your campaign.

As part of Campaign to Stop Killer Robots you will likely already have some ready-made allies. Other partner organizations of the Campaign should be willing and eager to join forces. Don’t forget to check and see if you have local branches of any of the large international organizations in the Campaign like Human Rights Watch, WILPF, ICRAC or Amnesty International. You can see the list of Campaign to Stop Killer Robots members here: www.stopkillerrobots.org/members.

The Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement (RC/RC) is starting to work on this issue, but they aren’t quite ready to call for a pre-emptive ban on autonomous
We need your help! The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is working to ban autonomous weapons systems. To help our work, we need you to bring your expertise and enthusiasm to the campaign. Here are some things you can do to support our work:

1. **Become a Member:** Join the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and touch the lives of people affected by autonomous weapons systems. Your membership will help us fund our research and outreach efforts.

2. **Share the Plan:** Share the campaign plan with your allies so they can be prepared to support our work. Keeping people informed is the Campaign's priority.

3. **Coordinate:** Coordinate with your allies and keep the lines of communication open. By working together, we can build a strong movement for disarmament.

4. **Communicate:** Communicate with your allies about the campaign and the progress we are making. Keeping your allies informed is crucial to our success.

5. **Take Action:** Take action to influence decision makers. Meet with politicians and government officials to discuss the issue and support our campaign.

6. **Join the Movement:** Join the RC/RC movement and contribute to reaching those goals. Keep your allies informed about the campaign and what's going on and what's next.

7. **Support:** Support the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots by donating to our work. Your support will help us continue our important work.

By working together, we can make a difference and bring an end to autonomous weapons systems. Thank you for your help!
• **Dress the part** – it sounds superficial but it is easier to be taken seriously by parliamentarians when you dress appropriately. You’ll know what is appropriate in your country but in all countries if you look like someone who knows their stuff people are more likely to listen.

• **Tailor your message** – know who you are meeting and research their interests, their issues and their biography so you can shape your message to them. A ban on autonomous weapons systems will be relevant to everyone you just need to figure out how the issue is relevant to the person you are meeting. For example, if you are meeting someone who represents an area with a university you might want to mention how the development of autonomous weapons could affect public perception of robotics more generally and harm researchers at universities.

• **Staff members are important** – having good relationships with political staff is as important as maintaining a good relationship with the parliamentarian. The staff are more likely to have time to talk to you, they will be the ones who help write speeches, they can influence the priorities of the parliamentarian and they may be the ones who decide if you get a meeting or not.

### ADAPT TO YOUR NATIONAL SITUATION AND HAVE FUN

In addition to your campaign plans, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots will send out action alerts when a collective effort is needed. The action alert is a great opportunity to get your national campaign mobilized. Make sure to adapt your actions to the national context to help the action gain traction in your country. Maybe you might need to make changes for cultural, environmental or political reasons. For example, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines held a “lend your leg” campaign that involved rolling up a pant leg for a day to draw attention to the landmine issue. To allow the action to adapt to cultural contexts they provided suggestions that did not involve exposing skin; to adapt to a tense political situation one national campaign changed their plan and two mascots led the campaign with an awareness message rather than issuing political call for their country to join the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty and to adapt to the remarkable cold in Ottawa, Canadian campaigners asked people to only roll up their pant leg only long enough for a photo.

National campaigning is hard work so make sure you have fun while doing it. Public events often get better reception if they are fun and unusual. One very fun campaign action that comes to mind is when colleagues in South Korea rode the subway dressed as cluster bombs to bring attention to their country’s continued presence outside of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Not only was the action fun for the campaigners, it was fun for spectators and newsworthy. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons campaigners have used art actions to convert images of nuclear weapons into other things through the Bombs No More activity or allowed to people to Eat the Bomb using nuclear bomb shaped cookies or cake (delicious and fun). Even if it is just celebrating your team members’ birthdays or bringing a treat to a meeting, having fun in your campaign will keep everyone motivated and engaged.

### CELEBRATE AND KEEP MOMENTUM GOING

I won’t lie to you there will be setbacks, some governments aren’t going to be supportive of a ban on autonomous weapons systems right away and you might not achieve all your goals on the timeline you want. With national campaigning, you risk getting tunnel vision and feeling very discouraged by national setbacks. There are a number of ways to deal with setbacks. The first is to find a win in every loss. For example, in our lobbying of Canada’s Parliament about cluster munitions, we were not able to get the changes we want in the legislation but we have forced a small concession from the government and had our campaign actions cited in parliamentary debate. We may not have gotten everything we want but we have got the government to admit the legislation was flawed and fix one of those flaws so that’s worth celebrating.

Another way to deal with setbacks is to use them as campaigning opportunities. If your country does not announce its policy or makes statements about how autonomous weapons could be helpful, despite your best efforts, take it as an opportunity to reach out to the media and friendly parliamentarians to ask your government to explain themselves. Disappointment can open a window for further discussion and a better result in the future. I keep this I.F Stone quote near my desk for just these disappointing setbacks:

> “The only kinds of fights worth fighting are those you are going to lose, because someone has to fight them and lose and lose and lose until someday, somebody who believes as you do wins. In order for somebody to win an important, major fight 100 years hence, a lot of other people have got to be willing – for the sheer fun and joy of it – to go right ahead and fight, knowing you’re going to lose. You mustn’t feel like a martyr. You’ve got to enjoy it.”

If you are just not reaching your goals, always keep an eye on the global progress towards a ban on autonomous weapons systems. Global success can be very motivating even if you aren’t seeing much progress at the national level.

Regardless of whether or not you are meeting all your goals, make sure you celebrate your successes and the small victories that will come your way. Good news keeps your partners excited about the campaign, shows progress and keeps your momentum going. Did your government attend an international meeting on autonomous weapons systems? Great, let people know! Did you get a response to a letter? Wonderful, celebrate that the government is paying attention! Did AI experts release a public letter calling for a ban? Amazing, share the text! You get the idea – if you are excited, the energy will be infectious and spread through your campaign.

A strong national campaign will help move the global conversation along. We need national campaigns to ensure that states are not sleepwalking towards a future of autonomous weapons. Your victories are our victories and our victories are your victories.

“We need national campaigns to ensure that states are not sleepwalking towards a future of autonomous weapons. Your victories are our victories and our victories are your victories.”