



# CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

2 June 2017

Izumi Nakamitsu  
United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs  
Office of Disarmament Affairs  
United Nations  
New York, NY 10017  
UNITED STATES

Dear Ms. Nakamitsu,

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots warmly welcomes your appointment as the new United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and looks forward to close cooperation in the years ahead. Established in October 2012, our coalition of non-governmental organizations fundamentally objects to permitting machines to take a human life on the battlefield or in policing, border control, and other circumstances. We call for a preemptive ban on the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons, achieved through new international law as well as through domestic legislation.

I am writing to request an urgent meeting with you for our campaign representatives to discuss the serious challenges that have forced the cancellation of a key UN meeting on fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems.

As [our press statement](#) notes, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is deeply disappointed that the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) has cancelled a crucial week of formal discussions on fully autonomous weapons due to be held on 21-25 August. This step was taken because of the failure of several states, most notably Brazil, to pay their assessed dues for the convention's meetings

We supported the decision taken by states at the Fifth Review Conference of the CCW last December to establish the Group of Governmental Experts as it was time to formalize and expand the deliberations held since May 2014 on lethal autonomous weapons systems. We have been encouraging states to come prepared to participate substantively in the 2017 Group of Governmental Experts meetings to be chaired by India's Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill.

Yet, on 30 May, CCW president-designate Ambassador Matthew Rowland announced at an informal consultation in Geneva that the August CCW meeting has been cancelled due to lack of funds. While several high contracting parties have arrears from previous years, we understand from the [UN's 31 May 2017 finance summary](#) that Brazil accounts for the vast majority of

outstanding contributions due to four core humanitarian disarmament treaties, including the CCW. Brazil last paid its assessed CCW contributions in 2010. We have [appealed to Brazil](#) to arrange for payment of its outstanding contributions without delay.

We are dismayed that multilateral progress to address the multiple ethical, legal, operational, technical, and other concerns raised by fully autonomous weapons is being hindered by the inability of a handful of states to pay their UN dues. The strong support and consensus demonstrated by states in formalizing their deliberations on fully autonomous weapons shows why states should accord top priority to finding a solution without delay.”

The collective failure of countries to find a solution to their financial woes doesn’t mean they can stop addressing concerns over weapons that would select and attack targets without further human intervention. If the CCW is unable to act, nations must find other ways to maintain the momentum toward a ban. In our view, countries that agree with the need to retain human control of weapons systems should move swiftly to adopt national policies and laws and to negotiate a new international treaty prohibiting fully autonomous weapons.

As our [March 2017 letter to UN Secretary-General](#) António Guterres explained, the call for a preemptive ban on fully autonomous weapons has been [endorsed by 19 countries](#) and by other stakeholders, including thousands of artificial intelligence experts. Dozens more states have affirmed the need to retain human control over the selection of targets and use of force. This indicates there is an emerging international consensus on the need to prevent the development of fully autonomous weapons.

Several co-founders of our campaign will be in New York at the end of this month, including Nobel Peace Laureate Ms. Jody Williams, chair of the Nobel Women’s Initiative. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you during the period of 28-30 June, if that fits with your schedule.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Mary Wareham  
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