

**Statement by Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate**  
Co-founder of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

20 October 2015

As you all know, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has been instrumental in building public awareness and strong media coverage as well as pushing the remarkably fast, in diplomatic terms, commencement of diplomatic talks on these weapons. Our efforts provide a counterbalance to the unabated push for the development, production, and ultimate use of fully autonomous weapons systems.

While the nine days of discussions on killer robots in 2014 and 2015 came stunningly fast, we are not lulled into the belief that more unfocused, “informal” discussions will produce any meaningful results. Next month, diplomats at the CCW in Geneva will decide the fate of future deliberations. Not surprisingly, those leading the development of these weapons do not want to change either the length or focus of the Geneva talks. The campaign is calling for a new mandate that takes the talks to the next level by formalizing them and dedicating more time to substantive deliberations, with a goal of leading to an international instrument to preemptively prohibit these weapons.

The moral, ethical and legal arguments against weapons that can make decisions about who to kill and when are legion, but the push-pull relationships between defense contractors and the military continue to fuel their development. Academic and legal circumlocutions abound that drive the notions that technological developments cannot be stopped and that military involvement in advancing technological innovation brings incalculable good to society.

The relentless drumbeat of the “inevitability” of killer robots is meant to have a deadening effect on people who do not support the idea of allowing machines to kill humans on their own. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots rejects the inevitability notion. They are only inevitable if the people in all walks of life who believe that unleashing autonomous weapons systems is wrong do nothing to stop them.

What is inevitable if killer robots make their way to the battlefields of the world is the creation of military necessity where none yet exists. No military has yet fielded such weapons so the argument that it is necessary for the military to have them is specious at best. If killer robots are fielded, military necessity will have been created along with a new arms race spawned by this latest deadly revolution in weaponry.

We can stop this “inevitability.” The development and use of nuclear weapons radically changed the military and security landscape in the world seventy years ago. If we do not stop killer robots now, we are facing another radical transformation of warfare. It is not one we can idly sit back and allow to happen.

# # #