

NEW
VERSION

23rd Session Human Rights Council

AGENDA ITEM 3: INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

STATEMENT BY SIERRA LEONE

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to first of all thank the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions and the Special Rapporteur on Internally Displaced Persons for their comprehensive reports.

Mr. President,

The Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions focused his report on Lethal Autonomous Robotics (LAR). The development of LAR is now becoming increasingly prevalent, and it is but timely that such a technology be viewed under a human rights lens.

From the military standpoint, the use of drones is considered advantageous in terms of saving the lives of the combatants of the attacking side during wars. It is also argued that robots can be programmed to minimise errors and reach their targets with a high degree of accuracy. But robots are machines and as we have seen, can indiscriminately kill innocent victims, including women and children.

The international instruments IHL are clearly targeted at conventional warfare and the use of robots raises questions about accountability. Who is to blame, when a breach of these laws occurs through the use of these robots? In addition, we have seen with semi-automatic devices that these robots that can be deployed outside conflict zones to hit targeted individuals, who have been considered to be terrorists, but who are tried through due processes. What are the implications of this under IHRL? Could this be considered as "extrajudicial execution"? Furthermore, as with all other technology, these robots can fall into

the wrong hands and used indiscriminately. How does the international community guard against that to safeguard the right to life of the victims? These are all questions, which need to be answered, before the use of robots become widespread.

My delegation agrees with the recommendations that the Human Rights Council should call on all states to declare and implement national moratoria on at least the testing, production, assembly, transfer, acquisition, deployment and use of LARs until such time as an internationally agreed upon framework on the future of LARs has been established and that the High Commissioner convenes a multi-sectoral High Level Panel as a matter of urgency, to take stock of technical advances of relevance to LARs; evaluate the legal, ethical and policy issues related to LARs; propose a framework to enable the international community to address effectively the legal and policy issues arising in relation to LARs, and make concrete substantive and procedural recommendations in that regard.

Mr President,

I will now move on to the report of the Special Rapporteur on Internally Displaced Persons. Throughout the years, internally displaced persons have suffered, and continue to suffer from a lack of adequate attention to their plight. And yet, in certain cases, such as those prevalent in Africa, they should be seen almost in the same light as refugees and assisted accordingly.

Victims from hostilities from the same location can move in different directions. Some can move two kilometres and cross a border, while others may move hundreds of kilometres within their own countries. Those who cross the border become refugees and have a right to claim protection and assistance as refugees and have an international oversight mechanism monitoring their plight. Those who happen not to have crossed a border are, all too often, not been granted international protection, even if their governments cannot or will not protect them, and are denied systematic assistance. Without the necessary protection, women in these situations are thus prone to violence and exploitation.

The recommendations of the Special Rapporteur are in line with putting protection and assistance for internally displaced women in the same light as refugees. My delegation would like to suggest that the Human Rights Council

takes up the matter of differential attention to refugees and displaced persons, with a view of ensuring that the human rights of internally displaced persons are not ignored, merely because they did not cross a border. A mandate for assistance to internally displaced persons, and their protection when their countries cannot or will not protect them, must be entrusted to a United Nations entity or an inter-agency body.

Mr President,

I thank you.

