



# CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS

United Nations General Assembly  
First Committee on Disarmament & International Security

## MEDIA BRIEFING

**Tuesday, 20 October 2015**

11:00am-12:00pm

(with coffee served from 10:30am)

**Church Center for the United Nations - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

*777 First Avenue (enter from 44<sup>th</sup> Street)*

New York

This **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots** media briefing will begin with brief remarks by the speakers then questions and answers, with other campaign leaders on hand to help answer questions. The campaign will elaborate on its call to preemptively ban weapons systems that would select targets and use force without meaningful human control. It will provide its expectations of the emerging international process to address these “lethal autonomous weapons systems” or killer robots.

### *Speakers*

- Prof. Toby Walsh, **University of New South Wales** and **Data61**
- Ms. Mary Wareham, **Human Rights Watch**
- Dr. Ian Kerr, **International Committee for Robot Arms Control**
- Mr. Richard Moyes, **Article 36**

Moderator: Ms. Miriam Struyk, **PAX**

Please see the following backgrounder and biographies of speakers, as well as the **campaign entry** in the **2015 UNGA briefing book** by WILPF’s Reaching Critical Will.

For additional information please see [www.stopkillerrobots.org](http://www.stopkillerrobots.org) or contact:

- Ms. Mary Wareham, Tel. (646) 203-8292 (mobile), [wareham@hrw.org](mailto:wareham@hrw.org)
- Mr. Andrew Haag, Tel. (202) 612-4351, [haaga@hrw.org](mailto:haaga@hrw.org)

## Background information

October 2015

The leadership of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is in New York to attend the UN General Assembly's First Committee on Disarmament and International Security. No formal decisions or resolutions on autonomous weapons will be taken by nations at this month-long meeting, which opens on 8 October. However some nations may express their views on this topic in their First Committee statements as several have done since 2013.

At the United Nations, the matter of "lethal autonomous robots" was first debated by states in May 2013 at the Human Rights Council. This followed a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Prof. Christof Heyns, which called on all states to adopt a national moratorium on autonomous weapons until new international law is achieved.

In November 2013, states party to the [Convention on Conventional Weapons \(CCW\)](#) agreed to explore questions relating to the emerging technologies of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Approximately 90 states participated in the CCW meetings held for nine days in May 2014 and April 2015. The next annual CCW meeting on 13 November will see states whether to continue and expand their deliberations ahead of the CCW's Fifth Review Conference in December 2016.

Since 2013, more than 50 countries have articulated their views on autonomous weapons, but few have elaborated on their own policy and practice. One notable exception is the US where a 2012 Department of Defense [policy](#) directive requires "appropriate" levels of human judgment over the full range of activities involved in the development and use of autonomous weapons.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is a global coalition of more than 55 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to preemptively ban autonomous weapons. Since the campaign was created by seven NGOs at a meeting in New York on 19 October 2012, calls to prohibit autonomous weapons have multiplied. Endorsers include:

- Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Pakistan, State of Palestine, and the Holy See. Additionally, Croatia, Ireland, Sri Lanka, and others say the call for a ban must be considered;
- 21 [Nobel Peace laureates](#) including the former presidents of Poland, Costa Rica, South Africa, and Timor-Leste and more than 70 [faith leaders](#) of various denominations;
- Approximately 2,800 [artificial intelligence and robotics experts](#) and private Canadian company [Clearpath Robotics](#);
- The [European Parliament](#), which adopted by a vote of 534–49 a 2014 resolution calling for a ban on "the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention."

A preemptive ban on autonomous weapons is listed as one possible way forward by the CCW chair's reports on the [2014](#) and [2015](#) meetings. Sri Lanka's Geneva-based Ambassador Ravinath Aryasinha is president-designate of the annual CCW meeting in November 2015, where the decision on proceeding in 2016 must be taken.

## Biographies of speakers

### UNGA First Committee Side Event on Fully Autonomous Weapons

United Nations New York

20 October 2015

#### **Prof. Toby Walsh, University of New South Wales**

Walsh is a professor in artificial intelligence at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. He has served as scientific director of NICTA—now known as Data61—Australia's center for information and communications technology research. Walsh is one of the first signatories on the July 2015 artificial intelligence open letter calling for a ban on autonomous weapons. He helped draft the letter and has engaged in extensive media outreach together other signatories and the Future of Life Institute. Walsh chairs the international committee of the executive council of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI). He is also president of the AI Access Foundation. @TobyWalsh

#### **Ms. Mary Wareham, Human Rights Watch**

Wareham has coordinated the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots since its inception in October 2012. She is advocacy director of the arms division of Human Rights Watch and has played a central role in the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munition Coalition, the civil society engines behind the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty and 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. @marywareham @hrw

#### **Dr. Ian Kerr, International Committee for Robot Arms Control**

Kerr holds the Canada Research Chair in Ethics, Law and Technology at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law in Canada. He also holds cross-appointments to the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Philosophy. Kerr is a member of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC) and signed the July 2015 artificial intelligence open letter calling for a ban on autonomous weapons. @iankerr @icracnet

#### **Mr. Richard Moyes, Article 36**

Moyes is managing partner at Article 36 and an honorary fellow at the University of Exeter. Together with Prof. Heather Roff of the University of Denver, Article 36 has been awarded a Future of Life Institute grant to explore the concept of meaningful human control of weapons systems. The project includes the creation of a dataset of existing and emerging semi-autonomous weapons to examine how autonomous functions are already being deployed and how human control is maintained. @rjmoyes @Article36

#### **Ms. Miriam Struyk, PAX (formerly IKV Pax Christi)**

Struyk works for PAX (formerly IKV Pax Christi), a Dutch peace organization that is active on a range of humanitarian disarmament issues. In 2014, PAX released the first short animated film in support of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, a 32-page report detailing ethical, legal, and other objections to the notion of killer robots, and an interfaith statement signed by more than 70 faith leaders call for a preemptive ban on fully autonomous weapons. @MiriamStruyk @PAXvoorvrede

Other members of the campaign's **Steering Committee** are attending the 2015 UNGA First Committee, including:

- Director the arms division of **Human Rights Watch**, Mr. Steve Goose, and senior researcher Ms. Bonnie Docherty, author of the 2012 report *Losing Humanity* and other publications detailing legal, ethical, and other concerns with autonomous weapons. [@SteveDGoose](#) [@hrw](#)
- The vice-chair of the **International Committee for Robot Arms Control** (ICRAC), Dr. Peter Asaro, a philosopher of technology who directs Graduate Programs at the School of Media Studies at the New School for Public Engagement. ICRAC's Prof. Denise Garcia from Northeastern University and Prof. Matthew Bolton from Pace University are also attending. [@peterasaro](#) [@DeniseGarcia100](#) [@politicalmines](#) [@icracnet](#)
- The director of Ottawa-based **Mines Action Canada**, Mr. Paul Hannon, and Ms. Erin Hunt. Ahead of the country's general election on 19 October, MAC has published a survey of Canadian political party views on disarmament challenges including the call to ban autonomous weapons. [@PCHannon](#) [@erinlynnhunt](#) [@MinesActionCan](#)
- Ms. Ray Acheson, director of the Reaching Critical Will project of the **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom** (WILPF), which celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary earlier this year. Ms. Mia Gandenberger from WILPF's Geneva office will also attend. [@MiaKatGan](#)

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