



CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

5 March 2018

Kang Kyung-Wha
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
60, Sajik-ro 8-gil, Jongno-gu
Seoul 03172
REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots with respect to the new Research Center for the Convergence of National Defense and Artificial Intelligence opened in the Republic of Korea on 20 February 2018 by KAIST and Hanwha Systems Co., Ltd.

According to an [announcement by KAIST](#), the center's goal is to "contribute to research on national defense incorporating artificial intelligence" and it will operate four principle projects such as "AI-based command and decision systems" and "AI-based smart object tracking and recognition technology." We request clarification about the weaponization of these systems and on reports that the center intends to develop fully autonomous weapons.

Around the world, concerns are mounting over the prospect of weapons systems that, once activated, would select and engage targets without further human control intervention. The Republic of Korea has participated in the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) meetings on lethal autonomous weapons systems since their inception in 2014. The Republic of Korea chaired a session at the 2015 CCW meeting on this topic while a representative from KAIST gave [a presentation](#) to the 2016 CCW meeting.

At the 2015 meeting, the Republic of Korea [expressed its determination](#) "to enhance the peaceful applications of robotic technology in various civilian areas" but elaborated concerns, stating, "we are wary of fully autonomous weapons systems that remove meaningful human control from the operation loop, due to the risk of malfunctioning, potential accountability gap, and ethical concerns."

We understand the Republic of Korea's [stated desire](#) to use "robot technology to better protect soldiers exposed to serious risks" such as in the safe removal of improvised explosive devices. However, it should explain the center's purpose in relation to reports that it is developing lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Please address this issue at the next CCW Group of Governmental Experts meeting this April and explain the Republic of Korea's views on how to retain maintain meaningful human control over the critical functions of identifying, selecting, and engaging targets and over individual attacks.

We also suggest that the Republic of Korea swiftly adopt national policy and legislation to prevent the development of fully autonomous weapons. Please work in coordination with like-minded states, the UN, civil society, and other stakeholders towards a legally binding instrument and other normative standards with a view to prohibiting these weapons systems through the CCW or another means.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns with the Republic of Korea's delegation in Geneva during the CCW meeting next month.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Wareham', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mary Wareham
Coordinator, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

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CC:

- Ambassador Kyong-lim Choi, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations in Geneva
- Professor Sung-Chul Shin, President, KAIST