



CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

New Treaty Needed to Ban Killer Robots

States Meet for the Fifth Time to Discuss Fully Autonomous Weapons

(Geneva, 9 April 2018) – Governments are running out of time to prevent the development of weapons systems that would select targets and attack on their own, without meaningful human control, said the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots today. The fifth Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems takes place at the United Nations (UN) in Geneva on 9-13 April.

“To avoid a future where killer robots, not humans, call the shots, governments need to act now,” said Mary Wareham of Human Rights Watch, coordinator of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. “Governments should move to negotiate an international treaty banning fully autonomous weapons. Any lesser measures will be doomed to failure.”

The [Campaign to Stop Killer Robots](#) is a global coalition of non-governmental organizations that has been working since April 2013 to preemptively ban fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems. The campaign fundamentally objects to permitting machines to take human life on the battlefield or in policing, border control, and other circumstances.

Many states expressed their strong desire to begin negotiating new international law at the last CCW meeting in November 2017. Most agree with the need to retain some form of human control over future weapons systems and several say they have “no plans” to acquire or develop fully autonomous weapons. To date, [22 countries](#) have unequivocally called for a ban on fully autonomous weapons.

“States should make it explicit that meaningful human control is required over individual attacks and that weapons systems that operate without such human control should be prohibited,” said Richard Moyes of Article 36. “For human control to be meaningful, the technology must be predictable, the user must have relevant information, and there must be the potential for timely human judgement and intervention.”

Several autonomous weapons systems with decreasing levels of human control are currently in use and development by high-tech militaries including the US, China, Israel, South Korea, Russia, and the UK. The concern is that a variety of available sensors and advances in artificial intelligence are making it increasingly practical to design weapons systems that would target and attack without any meaningful human control. If the trend towards autonomy continues, humans may start to fade out of the decision-making loop for certain military actions, perhaps retaining only a limited oversight role, or simply setting broad mission parameters.

In a Briefing Note issued in advance of the CCW meeting, the Campaign urges states to identify the relevant “touchpoints” of human/machine interaction in weapons systems and explain how control is applied over existing weapons systems, especially those with certain autonomous or automatic functions. While the exact wording of legal definitions would be finalized during negotiations as required, the Campaign also encourages states to elaborate the key characteristics for a working definition of lethal autonomous weapons systems – based on them being systems operating without meaningful human control in the “critical functions” of identifying, selecting and applying force to targets.

“Measures that fall short of a legally-binding treaty will be insufficient to prevent a future of killer robots,” said Miriam Struyk of PAX. “We expect states to express their firm determination to avoid dehumanizing the use of force by moving to negotiate new international law ensuring meaningful human control.”

France and Germany have [proposed](#) that the CCW conclude a non-legally binding political declaration to affirm that humans should “make ultimate decisions with regard to the use of lethal force and continue to exert sufficient control over the lethal weapons systems they use.” A large group of Non Aligned Movement states [is calling for](#) the development of a “legally binding international instrument stipulating prohibitions and regulations on lethal autonomous weapons systems.”

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is calling on states to conclude a legally binding instrument prohibiting the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons systems by the end of 2019. Other diplomatic options should be explored if the CCW is not up to this task. It also encourages states to quickly adopt national legislation banning fully autonomous weapons systems.

This is the second meeting of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems and the fifth time since 2014 that states have met at the CCW to discuss this issue.

The CCW meeting will not be broadcast live via the web or other means, but selected country statements will be posted online and campaigners will provide live updates on social media, particularly [Twitter](#), using the hashtag #CCWUN.

CCW delegates and UN Geneva-accredited media are invited to attend Campaign to Stop Killer Robots side event briefings at UN Geneva in Conference Room XXIII on:

- [Monday, April 9](#) to consider approaches to defining lethal autonomous weapons systems;
- [Wednesday, April 11](#) to discuss the necessity of maintaining human control over weapons systems.

For more information on the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots see www.stopkillerrobots.org or contact:

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