



CAMPAGNE CONTRE LES ROBOTS TUEURS

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Killer robots: France should support a ban treaty

Paris, November 7, 2018 – Today, the French members of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots publish a report **"Why France must oppose the development of killer robots"**, which recalls the risks arising from the development of lethal autonomous weapon systems and urges France to take action to ban them. A few days before the first Paris Peace Forum, the Campaign calls on France to support the opening of negotiations for an international treaty on the preventive prohibition of fully autonomous weapons.

"The Paris Peace Forum aims to promote peace and security and to reaffirm the importance of multilateralism and collective action in the face of current challenges. The risk of developing killer robots is a challenge to peace and we hope that France will actively support a multilateral solution to address it, with the adoption of a preventive ban treaty on fully autonomous weapons. Time is running out to prevent their emergence, and we cannot wait for them to make their first victims to act", says Bénédicte Jeannerod, France director at Human Rights Watch.

Killer robots are weapons systems that, once activated, could choose and attack a target without human control. For the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, letting a machine decide on the life or death of a human being is a moral red line and a threat to the respect of international humanitarian law and human rights.

"These weapons systems are devoid of moral judgment and compassion, and in this respect, allowing them to kill is contrary to the principles of humanity and the requirements of public conscience", explains Anne-Sophie Simpère, author of the report. *"In addition, fully autonomous weapons cannot comply with international humanitarian law, in particular the rules requiring the differentiation between combatants and non-combatants, or the principle of proportionality. Only a human being has the precision of analysis to apply these principles in complex and changing combat situations."*

NGOs are also concerned about the difficulties in establishing clear accountability for crime, as well as the high and systematic risks that killer robots could attack the wrong people.

"Computer programs are imperfect, and robots have tenfold capabilities compared to humans. They can act on a large scale, without the ability to assess the morality of their action. The proliferation of fully autonomous weapons could therefore pose a threat to international security, especially since they require fewer human resources and could therefore lower the cost of engaging in a war", comments François Warlop, from Sciences Citoyennes, French member of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

From Stephen Hawking to Steve Wozniak, thousands of scientists, but also religious leaders and Nobel Peace Prize winners denounce the dangers of killer robots and demand their prohibition before they are developed.

For the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, a treaty is urgent and necessary to prevent the proliferation and development of fully autonomous weapons. Since 2013, States have been debating the subject at the United Nations. At the annual meeting of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, from November 21 to 23, they are expected to adopt the terms of reference of the group of government experts on lethal autonomous weapons for the coming year. One of the options is the opening of a mandate to negotiate a treaty on these new weapons.

"France has a contradictory position in these discussions: on the one hand Emmanuel Macron has declared himself categorically opposed to autonomous weapons, while on the other hand, France does not want to start negotiations for a preventive prohibition treaty. The Ministry of Armed Forces maintains it will not allow the emergence of killer robots, while developing weapons programs over which human control is increasingly reduced. One example is the Man Machine Teaming program of Dassault and Thales, one of the announced objectives of which is to "provide the various machine systems with more autonomy and artificial intelligence"', notes Tony Fortin, from l'Observatoire des armements.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots urges France to support the opening of negotiations for an international treaty to ban fully autonomous weapons.

To read the report online, please follow the link: https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/HRW_Rapport_Robots_Tueurs_page_seule_06.pdf

To access all the information and publications of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots: <https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/>

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