



CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

26 September 2019

Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
Minister of Foreign Affairs
No:8 Balgat
Ankara, 06100
TURKEY

Sent via post

RE: KARGU Autonomous Tactical Multi-Rotor Attack

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, the rapidly growing international coalition of 118 non-governmental organizations in 59 countries working to retain meaningful human control over the use of force by banning fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems.

The Campaign seeks more information from the government of Turkey on the KARGU - Autonomous Tactical Multi-Rotor Attack unmanned aerial vehicle manufactured by STM [Savunma Teknolojileri Mühendislik ve Ticaret A.Ş.](#), which is owned by the Turkish Armed Forces.

According to the company's promotional video, [uploaded to YouTube](#) on 28 April 2018, the KARGU has the "ability to autonomously Fire-and-Forget through the entry of the target coordinates." The company stated in the Turkish newspaper, [Hürriyet](#), that it will use Artificial Intelligence and Facial Recognition to locate targets.

Could you please elaborate on how the KARGU will function in terms of human control over the system's critical functions of targeting and attack? Can you confirm the company's claim that Turkey will use the KARGU weapon system in Syria next year, as this 20 September 2019 article by the [NewScientist](#) alleges? Does Turkey intend to use the weapon system in other circumstances?

Does Turkey intend to allow this weapon system to fire autonomously--without meaningful human control—on targets that the weapon system has identified, tracked, and selected? How will Turkey ensure this weapon system is not used in this out-of-the-loop mode? We ask these serious questions in an effort to determine if Turkey has decided to develop and use fully autonomous weapons that operate outside of the human decision-making loop.

Previously, in June 2016, Campaign coordinator Human Rights Watch wrote to Mr. Efkan Ala, Minister of Interior, to inquire about the [ASELSAN](#) stationary weapons system that Turkey is installing along its southern border with Syria. We asked similar questions following the publication of an [article](#) in *Yeni Şafak* that described ASELSAN as a system of stationary towers armed with machine guns and equipped

with thermal cameras and alert systems that “will be activated if any element comes within 300 meters of the border line.”

Mr. Ufuk Güneş from the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations Offices in Geneva responded to this letter on 2 March 2017, stating that “there will not be any autonomous weapon system in the [ASELSAN] project” and “installation of any weapon systems is not projected.”

As you know, around the world, concerns are mounting at the ethical, legal, operational, technical, and other serious challenges raised by removing meaningful human control from weapons systems and the use of force. A [26-country public opinion survey](#) conducted by Ipsos in December 2018 found the strongest opposition in Turkey, where 78% of those polled said they opposed “weapons systems that would be capable of independently selecting targets and attacking those targets without human intervention.” Only 12% of those polled in Turkey supported lethal autonomous weapons systems, while the rest were undecided or unsure. Those opposed in Turkey objected because such weapons would be “unaccountable” while 54% expressed concern that lethal autonomous weapons systems would “cross a moral line because machines should not be allowed to kill.”

Turkey [states](#) that lethal autonomous weapons systems do not exist and affirms the “need for human control and accountability for such weapon systems.” Yet, in April 2018, Turkey [said](#) it does not support the call to for a ban treaty as it considers fully autonomous weapons to be “an issue which is still hypothetical.”

We encourage Turkey to reassess that stance and support the mounting calls for a new treaty to prohibit weapons systems that would lack meaningful human control over the critical functions of selecting and engaging targets.

I look forward to your reply and would be happy to discuss this further with your representatives to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) in Geneva during the next CCW meeting on 13-15 November 2019.

Yours sincerely,



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