Established in 2013, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is working to ban fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems or killer robots.

Retaining meaningful human control over the use of force is a humanitarian imperative, legal necessity, and moral obligation.
Message from the Campaign Coordinator

This annual report by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots shows how 2019 was the most important year yet for efforts to generate momentum behind the goal of banning killer robots. Prepared in 2020, the report covers the Campaign’s activities, actions, and achievements in the pre-Covid-19 world.

The Campaign grew in strength and numbers during 2019, which means it is now well-equipped to navigate the global pandemic that was unthinkable one year ago. It is now well-placed to support states to ban fully autonomous weapons and retain meaningful human control over the use of force.

Diplomacy to deal with the killer robots challenge moved forward at a snail’s pace during 2019, while momentum towards regulation grew rapidly elsewhere. 2019 marked the year that the killer robots challenge became widely recognized as a grave, existential threat to humanity that, like climate change, requires urgent multilateral action. Dozens of states affirmed the importance of retaining human control and decision-making in weapons systems.

More political leaders, artificial intelligence experts, private companies, financial institutions, organizations, and ordinary individuals endorsed the call to ban killer robots. The number of countries calling for a ban on killer robots rose to 30 states, with the additions of Jordan and Namibia. Countries investing in civilian robotics and emerging technologies—such as Austria, Brazil, Germany, and Japan—took steps to hold diplomatic meetings and respond to rising demands for regulation.

In May 2019, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres commended the Campaign for its crucial role in bringing public attention to the killer robots issue and its important work to help to advance multilateral moves towards regulation. With such high-level encouragement and support, the Campaign is committed to building unstoppable momentum and creating the conditions necessary for states to launch negotiations on a new international treaty to ban killer robots.

Mary Wareham,
Coordinator, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
2019 at a Glance

Membership increased 63% from 93 member organisations in 53 countries to 150 member organisations in 63 countries.

Jordan and Namibia joined the list of countries seeking to ban fully autonomous weapons, increasing ban states from 28 to 30.

The Campaign sponsored a total of 30 campaigners from around the world to participate in UN meetings in Geneva and New York.

The Campaign supported 42 grants for national campaigning projects, 12 for regional campaigning projects, and 6 for thematic initiatives, totalling 60 projects in 36 countries.

May

In the Netherlands, the national parliament adopted a resolution calling for a legally binding instrument on new weapons technologies, including autonomous weapons.

June

The newly-elected government in Finland committed to “promote the regulation of autonomous weapons systems via international negotiations” and seek a ban on “weapons systems based on artificial intelligence”
July

The parliamentary assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) adopted a declaration urging the 57 OSCE member states “to support international negotiations to ban lethal autonomous weapons”

August

More tech companies committed not to contribute to the development of fully autonomous weapons, including Vision Labs, Boston Dynamics owner Softbank, and Animal Dynamics

October

Dutch Bank NIBC became the first financial institution globally to begin screening investments to preventatively exclude companies that may contribute to the development of fully autonomous weapons

A YouGov poll saw 7 in 10 Europeans respond that they want their governments to work towards an international ban on killer robots

The Campaign sponsored its robot campaigner, David Wreckham, to the UN in New York for the first time!
December

The Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs was issued a mandate letter that included a commitment to “[a]dvance international efforts to ban the development and use of fully autonomous weapons systems”

February 2020

More than 80 campaigners from 35 countries participated in the second Campaign to Stop Killer Robots global meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Campaigners participated in the Rio Symposium on Autonomous Weapons Systems in Brazil, the first meeting on killer robots to be hosted by a state. Austria announced it will hold a multilateral meeting on killer robots in Vienna in February 2021, while Japan announced it will convene a regional meeting in December 2020.

2019-2020 Expenditures

During this period of reporting (April 2019-March 2020), the Campaign’s expenditure totalled US $1.38 million, broken down into five main areas: National Support Programs; International and Regional Cooperation; Media and Communications; Campaign Outreach Team; and Indirect Program Costs & Reserve Fund.
Building Political Will

A key component of Campaign strategy focuses on encouraging high-level political support behind the call for a new international treaty to ban killer robots. The Campaign operates a small grants programme to support civil society groups to undertake activities at the national level as well as build thematic support. During 2019, the Campaign provided two rounds of grant funding each lasting approximately 5-6 months.

The grants supported 60 projects in 36 countries, approximately a quarter in Africa (Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe), a quarter in Asia-Pacific (Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka), a quarter in Europe (Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, United Kingdom), and a quarter in the Americas (Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, United States) and Middle East and North Africa (Egypt, Lebanon). Of the 60 grants, 42 went to national campaigning projects, 12 to regional campaigning projects, and 6 to thematic initiatives under gender, military, and youth streams.
Global Distribution of Grants

National Campaigning

To demonstrate growing public interest and encourage political leaders to act on killer robots, the Campaign is working to establish and encourage national campaigns around the world. In 2019, Campaign membership grew rapidly from 93 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 53 countries to **150 NGOs in 63 countries**, a **63% increase**. With this expansion, the Campaign's reach expanded to Armenia, Austria, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Gabon, Hungary, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, and Nepal.

The Campaign's small grants programme enabled local NGOs to establish coordinated networks and carry out activities, including high-level political meetings, press conferences, parliamentary briefings, roundtables, visual stunts, speaking tours, public seminars, and capacity-building workshops. Grants have also funded translation, production, and dissemination of materials such as briefing papers, short reports, short videos, and social media graphics aimed at educating the public, securing media coverage, and spurring officials and politicians to act.
The impact of national campaigning during 2019 is evident in the advocacy results:

- **Argentina**'s February 2020 Senate proclamation calling for a ban on killer robots, which the Minister of Defense Agustín Oscar Rossi and other political leaders also reiterated;

- **Austrian** foreign minister Alexander Schallenberg’s January 2020 invitation to the Campaign to participate in an international meeting in Vienna in 2021 on achieving a new ban treaty;

- **Canadian** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s December 2019 mandate letter instructing his foreign minister to help “[a]dvance international efforts to ban … fully autonomous weapons systems;”

- **Finland**’s June 2019 governing coalition platform committing to promote international regulation aimed at banning “weapons systems based on artificial intelligence;”

- **France**’s parliamentary inquiry headed by Senators Claude de Ganay and Fabien Gouttefarde to see how France could strengthen its work aimed at resolving concerns over killer robots;

- **German** foreign minister Heiko Maas 2019 conference and workshops on “Capturing Technology. Rethinking Arms Control” as well as the January 2020 federal parliament debate on killer robots;

- **Japan**’s foreign minister Tarō Kōno September 2019 meeting with campaigners and invitation to participate in a regional meeting on killer robots to be held at the end of 2020;

- **Luxembourg** Minister of Defense François Bausch’s June 2019 meeting with the Campaign to discuss how to step up his government’s support to international talks on killer robots;

- **Mexico**’s February 2020 forum on artificial Intelligence convened by Senator Beatriz Paredes, which considered how to help achieve an international treaty to ban killer robots;

- **The Netherlands** parliament’s May 2019 resolution calling for a legally binding instrument on new weapons technologies, including autonomous weapons;

- **The New Zealand** parliament’s review of the government’s weak position on killer robots, which saw campaigners brief parliamentarians in April 2019;

- **In the United Kingdom**, the Scottish National Party’s manifesto for the 2019 general elections, which for the first time called for a ban on killer robots.
Thematic Engagement

The small grants programme expanded in 2019 to support campaigning aimed at engaging specific constituencies such as veterans, women, and youth. Grants have also supported outreach to specific sectors, particularly finance and technology.

The Campaign’s thematic engagement advanced significantly in 2019 and highlights included:

- The July-August 2019 World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia, where the Campaign ran 24 workshops for hundreds of Scouts aged 14-17, operated an exhibition booth, shared educational materials, and provided social media tools;

- A March 2020 partnership agreement between the Interamerican Region of the World Scout Movement and the Campaign’s members in Colombia that will develop educational workshops on killer robots and action to help ban them;

- The May 2019 news that the Campaign had been shortlisted for a peace prize given by the Belgian city of Ypres, which shared educational materials from the Campaign with thousands of school students across the Flemish-speaking region of Belgium;

- Commitments from Vision Labs (Netherlands), Boston Dynamics owner Softbank (Japan), Animal Dynamics (UK), and other technology companies to not contribute to developing killer robots;

- The October 2019 decision by Dutch bank NIBC to preemptively exclude investing in companies that produce killer robots, the first financial institution to do so and followed by GLS Bank;

- The January 2019 position paper by Germany’s industry association BDI that recommends the government work to create an international treaty to ban killer robots;

- An International Women’s Day’s action by the Campaign on 8 March 2020 to draw attention to the connection between gender and killer robots, including new webpage, video, blog, and op-ed.
Encouraging International Cooperation

Through its direct engagement with diplomats, officials, and other key stakeholders, the Campaign works to generate greater international cooperation and foster regional solidarity for the goal of banning killer robots. Campaigners participate in and hold briefings, events and side meetings as well as produce and distribute policy documents and other materials to push diplomats for ambitious commitments.

In 2019 over a third of the Campaign’s budgeted funds were spent on participating in international meetings at the United Nations in Geneva and New York, while a similar percentage was spent on the Campaign’s global meeting and workshops to develop joint strategy and shared policy. A quarter went to regional meetings and advocacy missions by campaigners.
International and Regional Cooperation Expenditures

- Regional Meetings: 20%
- Advocacy Missions: 4%
- CCW: 24%
- General Assembly First Committee: 13%
- Campaign Strategy Meeting: 39%

Fostering International and Regional Cooperation

Highlights from international and regional outreach in 2019 include:

- A strong and diverse Campaign presence at diplomatic meetings on killer robots held at the United Nations in Geneva and New York due to travel and accommodation sponsorship that allowed **30 campaigners** to participate from **22 countries**, thus bolstering outreach to pro-ban states (Argentina, Colombia, Egypt, Pakistan), Security Council members (France, Russia, United Kingdom, the United States), European Union members (Belgium, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway) and countries from Africa (Cameroon, South Africa), the Americas (Canada, Trinidad and Tobago), Asia (Japan, Kazakhstan) and the Middle East (Lebanon);
Campaigning **activities** at the **eighth Convention on Conventional Weapons** meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems at the UN in Geneva in August 2019, where the Campaign hosted a reception, briefed media and engaged in other outreach. At the end of the meeting, states created a principle on the importance of human-machine interaction in guiding their deliberations;

The September 2019 **“Alliance for Multilateralism”** event at the UN in New York, where foreign ministers from Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Mexico, Sweden and other countries endorsed a declaration urging collective action on lethal autonomous weapons systems;

The Campaign’s intensive activities at the **74th session of the UN General Assembly and its First Committee on Disarmament and International Security** in New York in October 2019, where the Campaign held an event with UN disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu, UN press conference, and conducted other outreach;

The Campaign’s side event, Treaty Elements paper, briefing for UN correspondents, and other **activities** in the **CCW’s annual meeting** November 2019, which concluded with an agreement to continue the diplomatic talks on killer robots in 2020 and 2021;

The November 2019 **Paris Peace Forum**, where UN Secretary-General António Guterres **warned** that “killer robots could take the place of soldiers” and said, “We must ban all autonomous weapons;”

The July 2019 **declaration** adopted by the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) parliamentary assembly**, which calls for “international negotiations to ban lethal autonomous weapons”;

The February 2020 **Rio de Janeiro symposium on autonomous weapons** attended by government representatives from Russia, the United States and other states as well as campaigners from Brazil, Colombia, UK, and US;
Six regional meetings and workshops convened by the Campaign to engage political leaders, government officials, journalists, and the general public as well as for campaigners.

1. The Campaign’s regional meeting in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan in April 2019 for NGOs and officials from eight countries from across the former Soviet Union, which issued a communique emphasizing the need for an international treaty to ban killer robots;

2. The Campaign’s April 2019 workshop in Antwerp, Netherlands, where campaigners from seven European states met to share ideas and experiences, discuss parliamentary outreach, and plan joint activities;

3. Outreach at the June 2019 assembly of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in Medellín, Colombia, where a dozen campaigners from seven countries held a side event and met with representatives to encourage them to work for an international ban treaty;

4. The Campaign’s December 2019 meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan, which brought together campaigners from eight countries across Asia to discuss their work and efforts to build support with groups such as ASEAN and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC);

5. In February and March 2020, the Campaign’s Southeast Asia network of members convened two virtual regional meetings with participants from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam to provide updates on national campaigning, and discuss strategies to build regional support for a ban treaty.
Global Campaign Meeting

The Campaign held a major global meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina in February 2020 for its members, hosted by Asociación para Políticas Públicas (APP), a member of SEHLAC. More than 80 campaigners from 35 countries attended, spending three days learning about specific concerns raised by killer robots—particularly with respect to gender and women’s rights—and engaging in strategy and brainstorming sessions on how to achieve the international ban treaty. The global meeting’s public events activities included a press conference on concerns about gender-based violence associated with fully autonomous weapons, lightning talks about killer robots, and a visual stunt at the iconic Plaza de Mayo with new robot mascot “Maria.” The global meeting allowed the Campaign to bring more NGOs into the coalition from countries where there had not previously been a presence, such as Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, as well as Kenya and Nepal.

Advocacy Missions & Retreats

With the Campaign’s support, international lawyer Thompson Chengeta from the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC) conducted advocacy missions to Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe during 2019, where he educated parliamentarians, officials and civil society on the need for African states to take action on killer robots. Thompson briefed the African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights, Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Pan-African Parliament. He conducted media outreach, including an interview with the largest television network in South Africa (SABC TV).

The Campaign’s Steering Committee and staff held an end-of-year retreat in Washington DC in December 2019 to reflect on progress made and discuss strategy and major plans for 2020. The Campaign’s staff team held its first planning retreat in Ottawa in July 2019 and another one in January 2020 to review work, identify opportunities, and plan activities.
Scouts at the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots booth at the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia, USA

Asia regional campaigners group

Campaigner Hayley Ramsay-Jones with the Austrian Foreign Minister

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots in Washington, DC, USA

Media and Communications
Media Work

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and its members conducted significant media work during 2019, generating an array of coverage in local, national, and international media and in many languages.

Media highlights from 2019 include:

- The first in-depth video on killer robots concerns by The New York Times, a 19-minute “mini-documentary” entitled “Killing in the Age of Algorithms,” which has been viewed by nearly one million people since it was published in December 2019;

- The Campaign’s intensive media work at the UN in October 2019, which generated coverage in outlets such as The Guardian, NHK World Japan, Wired, The Washington Post, skyNews, euronews, Telemundo52, and El Universal;

- Coverage of the Campaign’s outreach at the CCW’s annual meeting in November 2019, including a 20-minute piece on CNN Money and other coverage;

- Media interest in the Campaign’s participation in the August 2019 CCW meeting on killer robots, which was covered by Time, The Guardian, DW, Albawaba, Yahoo News, and other outlets;

- National media coverage in Argentina of the Campaign’s global meeting in February 2020, including in Página/12, Clarin, and Telam.

- More reporting on the tech sector and killer robots including Wired, VentureBeat, C4ISRNET, BBC News, Irish Times, with interest generated by tech workers Liz O’Sullivan and Laura Nolan, who joined the Campaign after quitting their respective jobs due to ethical concerns over participating in developing AI for military purposes;

- Profiles of Campaign coordinator Mary Wareham in The Guardian, New Zealand Listener and other outlets as well as her killer robots feature in the Human Rights Watch 2020 World Report that also ran in USA Today;

- The award-winning “Killer Robots” episode by popular US show Madam Secretary, which aired in October 2019 and came about after campaigners met with the show’s scriptwriters;

- The June 2019 question on the long-running US game show Jeopardy: “No!” to fully autonomous weapons, says a group called the “Campaign to Stop Killer ______”?

- The June 2019 opinion piece by The New York Times editorial board member Carol Giacomo on killer robots and the need for US support for regulation.
Communications

The Campaign staff developed several tools to help generate user driven content, manage workload, and produced any array of communications products, which received high engagement over the year.

Communications highlights from 2019 include:

- The Campaign's new and improved website, [www.stopkillerrobots.org](http://www.stopkillerrobots.org), launched at the beginning of 2019, where Campaign staff published a dozen web posts and added new pages to target technology sector support, list ban endorsers, and explore gender and killer robots;

- The “Stop Killer Robots Studio” app, which is enabling campaigners to provide user-generated content by recording and uploading video clips that are edited into short films;

- The Campaign's new Medium blog which is allowing Campaign staff and members to publish in-depth content providing a range of perspectives on relevant topics. opened by the Campaign in mid-2019 has proven a useful outlet;

- The increase in shareable videos and animations available from the Campaign’s Vimeo site, which includes translations subtitled them into Arabic, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Kazakh, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and other languages;

- The 2:20 “Will Killer Robots Spark Wars?” animation release in August 2019, which has been viewed and shared by thousands of people as well as embedded by media outlets;

- The Campaign’s [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) channel, which surpassed 500 subscribers with new videos recapping activities at the World Scout Jamboree and UN General Assembly, showing the popular robot mascot in New York at Times Square and the headquarters of tech companies, and celebrating International Women’s Day;

- The increasing popularity of the Campaign’s @BanKillerRobots Twitter account, which reached 10,000 followers by the middle of 2019;

- The Campaigner’s Toolkit compiled to explore key concerns, unpack Campaign strategy and methodology, as well as provides practical guidance and tips;

- A October 2019 YouGov public opinion poll commissioned by the Campaign, which found that an average of 73% of respondents in ten European states support their government working to ban killer robots.
Campaign Team

From 2012 until 2018, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots had no dedicated staff except the Campaign coordinator Mary Wareham, who is employed by Human Rights Watch. The Campaign staff team expanded from one to three during 2019, with members based in Canada and Switzerland:

- **Isabelle Jones** was promoted to Campaign Outreach Manager in April 2019, after serving as the Campaign’s Project Officer for the previous year. She leads the work to grow and strengthen the Campaign’s coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and its intricate network of endorsers, allies, and supporters.

- **Clare Conboy** began working as the Campaign’s Media and Communications Manager in January 2019. She leads the Campaign’s work to expand and deepen media coverage, as well as manage its communications to bolster the Campaign’s profile and demonstrate popular support for the ban call.

- **Farah Bogani** started in July 2019 as the Campaign’s Project Officer. She provides critical financial, administrative, and logistical support to the staff team and coalition members.

Two consultants provided additional support to the staff team in 2019:

- **Marta Kosmyna** led a pilot project as the Campaign’s Silicon Valley Lead to drive greater technology sector support. She engaged an array of technology sector-related actors from the private sector to Stanford and other universities to financial institutions, investors, and venture capitalists. Marta represented the Campaign at major tech events such as DefCon 2019 and conducted outreach to Silicon Valley-based diplomatic representatives from countries such as Denmark and France.

- **Cindy Ebbs** acted as Government Relations Lead for the 74th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), particularly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security. She met with representatives from 60 countries, organized a high-level briefing and worked closely with the Campaign’s New York-based members.
# Financial Statement

**Statement of Operations For Year Ended 31 March, 2020**

## REVENUE

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## EXPENDITURES

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<td><strong>1,382,708.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finance and Governance

Funding sources

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is a global coalition of non-governmental organisations that is not an independently registered entity at this time. Campaign co-founder Mines Action Canada (MAC), a registered Canadian non-profit incorporation, is the fiscal and legal sponsor for the Campaign. Human Rights Watch (HRW), current coordinator, acts as the fiscal sponsor of the charitable giving program of the Campaign. Both organizations serve on the Steering Committee.
Finance and Governance

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is funded from a diverse range of sources including private donations, online donations, foundations, and government.

Private Donations
Virtually all Campaign funding has been provided by a Geneva-based group of private donors, who wish to remain anonymous. Their donations are made to the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation and then sent on to the Campaign's bank account at Mines Action Canada, where the funds are overseen by the Campaign's treasurer.

Online Donations
The Campaign website and Benevity salary donations from tech workers have brought some funds into the Campaign (US $1,114 from 1 March to 30 September 2019).

Foundations
Some small US- and UK-based foundations have funded the Campaign via Human Rights Watch, such as the Samuel Rubin Foundation (approx. $10k per year since 2012), Oak Foundation ($25k in FY2017) and Network for Social Change ($25k in FY2015). The Campaign currently receives no funding from large foundations.

Governments
Governments that led previous diplomatic processes establishing humanitarian disarmament standard-bearers such as the Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Cluster Munitions and Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons ensured that a portion of that support went towards public education efforts by civil society and related work. Although no governments funded work in FY 2019, the Campaign is approaching countries that have expressed interest in funding the NGO coalition. Such funds go directly to the Campaign, as Human Rights Watch does not accept any government funds.

Commitment to Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion
The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is committed to building and mainstreaming a race-sensitive, intersectional campaign that is diverse, equal, inclusive, and visible of all vulnerable and marginalized groups. The Campaign celebrates and prioritizes diversity, equity and inclusion in its delegations, events and activities.
Our Steering Committee

Amnesty International
Article 36
Association for Aid Relief Japan
Human Rights Watch
International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC)
Mines Action Canada (MAC)
Nobel Women’s Initiative
PAX
Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs
Seguridad Humana en Latino América y el Caribe (SEHLAC)
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Our Team

Mary Wareham
Campaign Coordinator
Isabelle Jones
Campaign Outreach Manager
Clare Conboy
Media and Communications Manager
Farah Bogani
Project Officer