

Article 36

Hi I'm Elizabeth from Article 36, which is a UK-based member of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.

This week states were going to meet in Geneva under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to discuss points of common ground that might be emerging between them on how to approach the regulation of emerging technology in the area of autonomous weapons, and what principles and restrictions should apply, and what way forward there might be.

We would have been participating remotely, but the meeting has now been postponed due to new lockdown restrictions in Switzerland.

Despite the challenges to international discussions this year we think a lot of progress has been made towards recognising some key elements that will be needed within an effective structure for regulating 'autonomy' in weapons systems.

We think there are two key questions that states and others need to work together to solve in this area: firstly which systems within the scope of discussion are fundamentally unacceptable and must be ruled out, and secondly how can we keep meaningful human control over the rest, to uphold legal obligations and also our more profound moral and ethical principles that we have.

To do that, we think that a structure of regulation applying broadly to all sensor-based weapons systems is needed.

This should apply prohibitions to systems that are ethically unacceptable such as those that target people, entailing fundamental dehumanisation.

And, this structure should prohibit systems that cannot be meaningfully controlled, for example because of their complexity and lack of ability to understand them.

Lastly, regulation should apply positive obligations to retain meaningful human control over the rest of the systems within this scope of regulation that we're talking about.

So these are the issues that we would have been discussing and promoting with states within the context of meetings at the CCW this week.

Though we're not able to do that, we're confident that over the year ahead that this type of structure of regulation might be broadly adopted within the international community, and we think that it will address all of the concerns that are being expressed in this area, and cover various types of technologies of concern.