

Who Wants to Ban Killer Robots?

Since the launch of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots in 2013, a broad range and growing number of countries, regional bodies, private companies, organizations, and individuals have [endorsed](#) the call to preemptively ban fully autonomous weapons.



Governments: The vast majority of the 97 countries that have commented on concerns raised by killer robots have expressed their desire for a new treaty to retain human control over the use of force, including [thirty countries](#) that have explicitly called for a ban on fully autonomous weapons: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China (on use only), Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Holy See, Iraq, Jordan, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, State of Palestine, Uganda, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

Top United Nations officials: Since November 2018, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres has repeatedly [called on states](#) to negotiate a new international ban treaty on weapons systems that could, by themselves, target and attack human beings, calling them “morally repugnant and politically unacceptable.” In 2016, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, and UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Christof Heyns, issued a [joint report](#) on law enforcement use of advanced technology. They found that “autonomous weapons systems that require no meaningful human control should be prohibited” and urged states to exercise “great caution” regarding police use of remote controlled weapons.



Artificial intelligence experts: More than 4,500 artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics experts, who [signed an open letter](#) in 2015 affirming that they have “no interest in building AI weapons and do not want others to tarnish their field by doing so.” Since then, another 30,000 individuals have signed [various open letters](#) supporting a ban on lethal autonomous weapons. Signatories include more than a dozen current and past presidents of professional organizations such as the American Association for Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), IEEE Robotics and Automation Society (IEEE-RAS), International Joint Conferences on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI), and the European Association for Artificial Intelligence (EurAI). Notable female AI experts include Professors Barbara Grosz of Harvard University, Martha E. Pollack of the University of Michigan, Carme Torras of the Robotics Institute at CSIC-UPC in Barcelona, Francesca Rossi of Padova University, and IBM Watson design leader Kathryn McElroy.

Scientists and academics: More than 270 scientists in 37 countries have [warned](#) that interactions by devices controlled by complex algorithms “could create unstable and unpredictable behavior ... that could initiate or escalate conflicts, or cause unjustifiable harm to civilian populations.” Signatories include Professors Geoffrey Hinton of the University of Toronto, Alan Bundy of the University of Edinburgh, Bruno Siciliano of the University of Naples, and James Hendler of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (former Chief Scientist of the Information Systems Office at the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, “DARPA”). Professor [Stephen Hawking](#) endorsed the call to ban lethal autonomous weapons systems before he died.



Nobel laureates: More than 26 Nobel Peace Laureates issued a joint statement in 2014 that calls for a ban on killer robots and expresses strong [concerned](#) that “leaving the killing to machines might make going to war easier.” Signatories includes Campaign co-founder Jody Williams (1997), Juan Manuel Santos (2016), Leymah Gbowee (2011), Tawakkol Karman (2011), Shirin Ebadi (2003), José Ramos-Horta (1996), F.W. de Klerk (1993), Rigoberta Menchú Tum (1992), His Holiness the Dalai Lama (1989), Oscar Arias Sánchez (1987), Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1984), Lech Walesa (1983), Mairead Maguire, and Betty Williams (1976).

Faith leaders: More than 160 religious leaders and organizations of various denominations [support the call](#) to ban killer robots, calling them “an affront to human dignity and to the sacredness of life.” Endorsers include South Africa’s Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Fouad Twal, the Archbishop of Liverpool Rev. Malcolm McMahon, the Archbishop of Juba in South Sudan Rev. Daniel Deng Bul Yak, Religions for Peace Secretary General Dr. William Vendley, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns Executive Director Gerry Lee, and the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land Reverend Dr. Munib Younan.

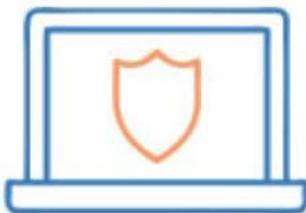


Parliamentary assemblies: In February 2018, the European Parliament [adopted a resolution](#) by a vote of 534– 49 calling for a ban on “development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention.” Before that it [adopted](#) another [resolution](#) calling for the urgent negotiation of “an international ban on weapon systems that lack human control over the use of force.” In July 2019, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) parliamentary assembly, which [adopted a declaration](#) urging the 57 OSCE member states “to support international negotiations to ban lethal autonomous weapons.” In 2020, [Parliamentarians for Global Action](#), joined the Campaign. This non-governmental organization services a multi-party network of over 1,200 legislators in 134 countries and has launched a [global parliamentary petition](#) calling for a treaty to ban fully autonomous weapons

Financial institutions: Banks, pension funds, and other financial institutions have started to endorse the call to ban killer robots. In June 2020, the ethics committee of the world’s largest pension fund—Norwegian Pension Fund Global—[recommended](#) that lethal autonomous weapons systems be added to the exclusion list of weapons that it will not invest in. In October 2019, Dutch bank NIBC became the first financial institution worldwide to preventively exclude investments in companies that produce lethal autonomous weapons systems. In 2019, major German industry association BDI [called on](#) Germany’s government to work for a new international treaty banning fully autonomous weapons.



Technology companies: More than a dozen technology companies have endorsed the call to ban killer robots. In 2014, **Clearpath Robotics** became the first private company to pledge not to contribute to the development of fully autonomous weapons, despite its military contracts to provide autonomous platforms. In 2018, **Google** issued [a set of ethical principles](#) committing not to “design or deploy” AI for use in weapons systems. In 2019, **Vision Labs** said that it has “explicitly” prohibited the use of the company’s technology for “military applications” in its contracts. **Boston Dynamics** owner Softbank says it does “not have a weapons business” and has “no intention to develop technologies that could be used for military purposes.” **Animal Dynamics** says that “under our company charter, and our relationship with Oxford University, we will not weaponize or provide ‘kinetic’ functionality to the products we make.” In July 2020, a US firm **Skydio**, which specializes in autonomous flight called pledged not to put weapons on our drones and will oppose fully autonomous lethal weapons systems.



Tech workers: Since 2017, employees of tech companies such as Microsoft have pushing back on their research, products and platforms being adapted for use in warfare. Several tech workers who left their jobs due to ethical concerns over the potential development of technology to be used in Autonomous Weapons systems including Laura Nolan, Liz O’Sullivan, and Meredith Whittiker.



Business leaders: Individual signatories to the 2015 letter calling for a ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems include Tesla CEO Elon Musk, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, Skype co-founder Jaan Tallin, and [Google DeepMind](#) chief executive Demis Hassabis.