

# ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

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To reach the goal of a ban on autonomous weapons systems, campaigners need to use strategic advocacy and lobbying.

## ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Advocacy is a way to persuade others to change their minds or policies. It is a means to an end, a way to achieve the better future we are working towards; which in this case is a future where autonomous weapon systems, also known as fully autonomous weapons, are prohibited before they are used.

An advocacy strategy is a plan of how we are going to use advocacy to reach those ends. It will help keep you on track and focused on your goals.

Have you seen good advocacy? Any bad advocacy? The difference is in the plan.

A good advocacy strategy has a few key components. These components allow you to have most of the information you need to carry out your advocacy in one document. An advocacy strategy does not have to be long, just a paragraph or two to cover each of the following topics:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Context           | what is the current situation  |
| Strategy          | a brief of what's the plan   |
| Goals/Objectives  | a couple concrete goals of the strategy                                |
| Activities        | specific steps (actions and their results) that will lead to the goals |
| Key messages/Asks | what we want others to learn or do and our targets                     |
| Partners          | key people or organizations you can work with                          |
| Timeline          | key dates and activities   |
| Key resources     | news, articles to provide more info and how to take action             |

The format can look a little daunting to actually create an advocacy strategy yourself but it is totally do-able. Often the best way to come up with your advocacy strategy is through a group conversation. I like to use a series of questions when I am planning advocacy work:

### 1. What is the issue we want to work on?

To start with think about the causes and consequences of problem you want to work on – here the problem is the development of autonomous weapons. Ask yourself, how does the problem relate to what my organization does already and what we are good at?

### 2. What do we want to achieve?

It is good to think about both goals (the solution to the problem that you want to see – aka a pre-emptive ban on autonomous weapons) and objectives (the steps towards reaching those goals – national policies and laws, the start of negotiations etc). Make sure your goals and objectives are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound)!

### 3. How is our issue linked to policies, people or institutions in government/politics?

At this stage you need to consider: what policies impact the issue of autonomous weapons, who are the key people or institutions on your issue, how are decisions about this policy made and what is the social and political situation right now?

### 4. Who has power and influence?

Here is where you look for who has influence over the issue and who makes decisions. Make sure you consider who can be helpful and who can be a hindrance. It's just as dangerous to overlook possible champions as it is to overlook possible naysayers. You also can look at how to influence these power brokers.

## 5. What do we have?

Take an honest look at the situation for your organization and your capacity. It is good to think about your strengths, your weaknesses, opportunities and threats you face (a SWOT analysis). The greatest advocacy strategy in the world won't help if you don't have enough time, people or resources to implement it so tailor the strategy for what you have. You will be amazed how much can be accomplished with few resources.

## 6. Who is our target audience?

Examine who you need to educate or motivate to take action on your issue. Make sure to consider both the decision makers and the people who influence decision makers (this could be different depending on your country or your community – the media, social media, religious leaders, celebrities, NGOs and business leaders, etc). Don't forget who could be opposed.

## 7. What do we want our target audience to do?

Be clear and concise about what you want your target audience to do and why. Make sure to show the positive results that could occur if they do what you are asking.

## 8. So what are we going to do and how will we do it?

Here's where you start looking at specific actions and activities you will undertake to achieve the goals and outcomes. Remember these activities do not have to be set in stone, you can change them later.

## 9. Ok so who is going to write this down?

The thankless job – write up an advocacy strategy using the guidance above or your own organization's format. Once it's written circulate the draft to your team and make sure everyone is in agreement. Then start doing the plan!!!!

Having a conversation with your team or even better with your national campaign partners can help ensure that everyone is on the same page and build a stronger partnership. Once you have a strategy make sure to review it occasionally to make sure that it is still working for you. Go forth and advocate!

## LOBBYING

A big way we are going to make change is by lobbying states directly at the UN, at other international forums or at home.

The humanitarian disarmament community has learned a lot through lobbying states at the UN and other international forums since the Ottawa Treaty was signed twenty years ago.

First off, it is important to **coordinate**. Working together as a team is one of the strengths of humanitarian disarmament campaigns. Campaign briefing documents, lobbying kits or other documents can help make sure everyone is on the same page and the campaign is focused on key messages tailored to the context.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, like many other campaigns, has found that designating regional leads to organize all the lobbying on states in a specific region has been very useful. A regional lead is usually from that region. They can track who is meeting with which states and help you tailor your messaging to each state. Making sure we work together in an organized manner is crucially important to ensure that every state gets spoken to and we do not waste time repeating ourselves.

That point gets to the second key to good international lobbying, we need to **take notes and report back** to the Campaign on our

lobbying activities. Note-taking and reporting is important for a number of reasons including:

- It helps with coordination so the Campaign knows who met with who and when
- Notes can remind you of any follow up you need to do
- Reports build the Campaign's institutional memory and help us all remember what was done last time
- Reports from meetings indicate where states are in their policy process
- It helps track changes in government positions over time

Notes and the report back don't have to be anything fancy. Your notes and the report should include the date and location of the meeting, who was there, what the key points discussed were, any follow-up necessary and the contact information of the person(s) you met with.

Third, to be successful in lobbying at the international level, you need to **know your stuff**. Keep in mind that the government officials you will be meeting with usually cover a large number of files so they need you to be up-to-date on the issue. To help you with this, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has resources like the campaigner's kit, campaign briefing papers and publications. Make sure you read these!

Going into the meeting, **be clear about what you want**. Set out your goals and your key messages. Are you just introducing yourself? Are you responding to a specific statement? Providing an update? Trying to get them to change their policy? Knowing what you want out of the meeting will help you stay on track.

If you are nervous about the meeting or if you are

worried that you don't have the expertise to deal with a specific issue, ask another campaigner to join us. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has a wide range of expertise so bring in a teammate.

In the lobby meeting, make sure to introduce yourself and the Campaign. Don't be afraid to say I don't know in response to a question. You can say that you will ask someone from the Campaign and get back to them. Just make sure you do the follow up. It's good to leave the meeting with a few action items, maybe you want to share a campaign publication with more information about what you were talking about or you want to write a follow-up email that summarizes your key point or maybe you want to include some suggested language for a statement. Just don't forget to thank them for meeting with you!

Not only will successful lobbying help get more states calling for a ban on autonomous weapons but lobbying can also help to build a "core group" of like-minded states who will take on a leadership role on the issue. A core group is going to be very important moving towards negotiations so it's important to **start building relationships** with the diplomats from supportive states. Even if a state is not very supportive of a ban on autonomous weapons right now, building relationships with their diplomats will be helpful. Make sure they know that you are resource and can provide information; also feel free to share some of the campaign materials like bumper stickers, pens or other giveaways to help people feel excited about this work. Diplomats do rotate out of their positions so try to build relationships with more than one member of any country delegation.

With good advocacy strategies and strong lobbying, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots can reach our goal of banning autonomous weapons.