



CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS

Statement to the Convention on Conventional Weapons Group of Governmental Experts on
lethal autonomous weapons systems

Geneva

29 August 2018

AS DELIVERED

Delivered by campaign coordinator Mary Wareham, Human Rights Watch

Thank you Mr. Chair and thank you for your work chairing this Group of Governmental Experts, including your consultations with civil society. I am speaking in my capacity as coordinator of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, the rapidly growing coalition of 76 non-governmental organizations in 32 countries working to preemptively ban weapons systems that, once activated, would select and attack targets without human intervention.

The serious legal, operational, moral, technical, proliferation, security and other challenges raised by fully autonomous weapons have gained widespread attention since the first CCW meeting on the topic in May 2014. However, states *still* have not agreed on the regulatory response needed to address the serious challenges raised.

It's increasingly obvious that the public strongly objects to allowing machines to select targets and use force without any meaningful human control. Doing so would be abhorrent, immoral, and an affront to the concept of human dignity and principles of humanity. It's high time governments heed the mounting calls for a new international law to prohibit killer robots and start negotiating one.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots urges states at this sixth international meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems to recommend a negotiating mandate to create such a ban treaty. We hope that states heed the calls from not only us, but the African Group of states, the Non-Aligned Movement, Brazil-Austria-Chile, Colombia, Panama, and others to begin negotiations on a new treaty to retain human control over weapons systems or prohibit lethal autonomous weapons.

Momentum is starting to build rapidly for states to start negotiating a legally-binding instrument. Requests for more time to further explore this challenge may seem valid, but increasingly sound like excuses aimed at delaying the inevitable regulation that's coming.

Promises of greater transparency, codes of conduct, meek political declarations and more committees are insufficient to deal with the far-reaching consequences of creating fully autonomous weapons. Nothing less than a ban treaty will be needed to effectively constrain the development of autonomy in the critical functions of weapons systems and avoid dehumanizing the use of force.