



**CCW GGE Meeting, 4-8 March 2024**  
**Statement by Stop Killer Robots**

4 March 2024

Thank you, Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of Stop Killer Robots, a global coalition of over 250 civil society organisations across more than 70 countries with a shared commitment to achieving international law prohibiting and regulating autonomous weapons systems, to ensure meaningful human control over the use of force.

As this meeting takes place, we **implore** States to remember that **the CCW is not taking place in a vacuum**. The protection of civilians, the reinforcement of **multilateralism** and international humanitarian law are needed now more than ever. In an increasingly fractured world, States have an opportunity to play a positive role by taking tangible steps towards the creation of essential safeguards on autonomous weapons.

These steps must be taken urgently and decisively. The lack of clarity around the capabilities of weapons systems and their autonomous functions, and a trend towards increasing autonomy in warfare including in current conflicts, highlight why new international law on autonomy in weapons systems is desperately needed. States must act, to ensure meaningful human control over the use of force, to reject digital dehumanisation, and prevent the automation of killing.

This is the first meeting of the CCW since the **pivotal** vote at the UN General Assembly last year where resounding support for the first resolution on autonomous weapons demonstrated widespread desire from States to make progress towards new international law. To meaningfully advance a normative response to autonomy in weapons, States must embrace all inclusive processes to foster multilateralism and to promote engagement amongst States and other stakeholders on this issue. We strongly encourage all States **to submit their views on the role of humans in the use of force and the ways to address the challenges and concerns autonomous weapons systems raise from humanitarian, legal, security, technological and ethical perspectives**, to be included in a report of the UN Secretary-General later this year.

Here at the GGE, substantive discussions over the last decade have contributed to shared policy understandings - in particular on the need for both prohibitions and regulations, and the key elements required for maintaining meaningful human control. **Chair**, for the Stop Killer Robots campaign, we see increasing agreement on the characterisation of autonomous weapons systems as those that select and apply force to targets without human intervention.

The primary autonomous function of concern is the autonomous identification and application of force to a target without direct human control and judgement over the effects of an attack. Autonomy can be described in this instance as the use of sensor processing to automatically select and engage targets, **such that a human operator does not determine specifically where, when or against what force is applied.** The automation of certain functions, including target selection and engaging of targets, are critical functions which should remain within meaningful human control. Meaningful human control is necessary to ensure that states meet existing legal and moral obligations, and to ensure that accountability and responsibility in the use of force is maintained.

The call to negotiate a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons is now supported by over 100 states, experts in technology and artificial intelligence, faith leaders, and civil society organisations all around the world. Last year, several regional conferences were convened to address the challenges posed by autonomous weapons, including in Costa Rica, Luxembourg, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Philippines, resulting in political declarations and commitments to action towards such an instrument. This year, we expect that conferences to be held in Sierra Leone and Austria will continue to advance discussions on the need to regulate autonomous weapons.

The path ahead is clear; to prevent digital dehumanisation and a reckless slide towards the automation of killing, the international community must come together to strengthen international law and achieve a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons systems to ensure meaningful human control in the use of force.

Stop Killer Robots stands ready and willing to support all States in this effort. Our coalition of more than 250 civil society organisations across 70 countries is united and unwavering in this goal, and will not cease pushing for this outcome using all forums that are available to make real progress on this issue.

Thank you.