



# Parliamentary

## engagement

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While parliamentarians won't participate directly in the negotiation of an international treaty banning and regulating killer robots – diplomats do under instructions from their government – parliamentarians will have a vital role in rejecting the automation of killing and ensuring meaningful human control over the use of force and building momentum towards a treaty. Engaging with them is therefore important in our lobbying efforts.

This guide aims to assist campaigners in parliamentary engagement. Although there are specificities in approaching and engaging parliamentarians and you will have to adjust based on your national context, parliamentary outreach should be a critical part of your overall advocacy and lobbying activities.

This guide is adapted from the 'Advocacy and Lobbying' and 'Working with Parliamentarians' chapters of the 'Campaigners Toolkit' prepared by Erin Hunt of Mines Action Canada for the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots in March 2019 and updated in February 2021.

### 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 are prohibited and regulated to ensure meaningful human control over the use of force.

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. An advocacy strategy does not have to be long, just a paragraph or two to cover each of the following topics:

<b>Context</b>	What is the current situation
<b>Strategy</b>	What's the plan to achieve a certain aim
<b>Goals/ Objectives</b>	Concrete goals or objectives of the strategy
<b>Activities</b>	Specific steps (actions and their results) that will lead to the goals
<b>Key messages / Asks</b>	What we want others to learn or do
<b>Partners</b>	Key people or organizations you can work with
<b>Timeline</b>	Key dates and activities
<b>Key resources</b>	News, articles, resources to provide more information and how to take action



## Why parliamentarians?

Why should we engage with parliamentarians if they are not actively participating in diplomatic negotiations?

Being part of the legislative branch of the political system, they have several (political) means at their disposal to put the issue of killer robots on the agenda (nationally) and urge their government to engage actively in the negotiations of an international treaty.

Each national parliamentary system might be different and have its specific procedures, but the general way of proceeding for parliamentary bodies is often similar.

First, parliamentarians have legislative initiative. They can propose **national laws** prohibiting and regulating autonomous weapons systems. While few countries might have the intention to draft and vote a national law before the acceptance of an international treaty, it is a path that shouldn't be neglected. Approaching parliamentarians about national legislation might be a good way to draw their attention to the risks of autonomous weapons systems and therefore useful for putting the subject on the political agenda.

Secondly, the parliament has a supervisory role over the government's actions. The government has the duty to expose and justify its actions and to answer **parliamentary questions**. Parliamentarians can question the government's

policy on autonomous weapons systems. As an activist, you can help your parliamentarians by asking them the right questions to be addressed to the relevant minister, state secretary, cabinet member, or committee.

Finally, most parliaments have the right to propose and vote **resolutions** (different terms might be used for each country). These resolutions are a request from the parliament to the government to guide its policy. E.g. a parliamentary resolution urging the government to play an active role in or call for an international legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons systems. These resolutions are not legally binding themselves, but their value lies in putting pressure on the government so that it can't deny the importance of the subject.

Of course, you can ask all parliamentarians you engage to sign the campaign's **Parliamentary Pledge**.

### Don't forget!

Parliamentarians represent the citizens and are sensitive to public opinion (they want to be re-elected). Raising awareness amongst the population and creating a national movement against killer robots is fundamental for successful parliamentary engagement.

## Who?

Success in other humanitarian disarmament treaties has shown that the identification of **'parliamentary champions'** is paramount.

Champions can be parliamentarians that have previously been involved in the promotion of other disarmament treaties, that have shown interest in the campaign's work, or individuals who have signed the campaign's parliamentary pledge.

Champions can also be found amongst the members of the parliamentary commissions dealing with defense and foreign policy, since those commissions also typically discuss disarmament related topics.

In your search for champions, you will have a greater chance of success when looking at parties that are traditionally open to disarmament and peace movement issues.

## Resources

To help you in your parliamentary outreach, here are some additional useful resources:

- [Stopping Killer Robots: A Guide for Policy Makers](#) (in English and French)
- [The Stop Killer Robots Parliamentary Pledge](#) (in different languages)
- The list of members of the [IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security](#)

Those parties are generally (but not exclusively) situated on a certain side of the political spectrum, but it can also be helpful to strive for non-partisan engagement and support.

Another useful pool of possible champions can be found in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). In March 2024, the IPU adopted a resolution on autonomous weapon systems. The IPU is an international organization representing national parliaments from all over the world. The IPU supports parliamentarians in their work and includes groups of different Committees. One of those Committees (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security) drafted the recent resolution. You might look for parliamentarians representing your country, especially if they participate in the Peace and International Security committee's work.

### Other campaigners!

Don't hesitate to ask for or share advice amongst other campaigners on how to engage parliamentarians. You can share your experience with partners in your national campaign and in regional groups.