

IKV Pax Christi
Statement to the CCW Meeting of High Contracting Parties
14 November 2013

Thank you Mr President.

The Dutch peace organisation IKV Pax Christi is one of the co-founders of the campaign to stop killer robots. This coalition was established only 7 months ago out of concern on the current development towards fully autonomous weapons. Next month we will issue a paper outlining our ethical concerns, as well as the legal objections we foresee.

As a peace organization we have many objections to fully autonomous weapons, to be short I mention three of them:

- One, we doubt these weapons can comply with the IHL principles of distinction and proportionality.
- Two, we do not see who would be held accountable.
- Three, we are afraid these systems might lower the threshold to use military force.

But our main objection is an ethical one. We strongly believe there should be adequate human control on decisions of life and death. Outsourcing human judgement and morality to machines is simply unacceptable.

The ethical dilemma is thoroughly formulated by UN Special Rapporteur Christof Heyns and I quote:

Even if it is assumed that Lethal Autonomous Robotics could comply with the requirements of IHL, and it can be proven that on average and in the aggregate they will save lives, the question has to be asked whether it is not inherently wrong to let autonomous machines decide who and when to kill.

Mr. President, technology moves fast and its implications often take us by surprise, so urgency is of the essence.

It is therefore encouraging to see how since May this year over 40 states raised the issue. My own government, the Netherlands for example has expressed their concerns and we are hoping to welcome a national policy on this issue in the near future and welcome other states to develop a policy as well.

We hope that tomorrow a mandate will be adopted that will reflect the urgency of the issue and we are looking forward to future discussion in this process.

Thank you Mr. President.