



CCW REPORT

Civil society perspectives on the CCW Group of Governmental
Experts on lethal autonomous weapon systems
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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of WILPF or the Campaign.

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ADDRESS KILLER ROBOT CONCERNS BY CREATING NEW LAW

Mary Wareham | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

As states gather for the sixth time since 2014 to discuss autonomous weapons at the United Nations, support is now rapidly growing for creating new international law to respond to the many serious challenges raised by lethal autonomous weapons systems, also known as fully autonomous weapons or “killer robots.” The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots believes it is time for states to start negotiating new international law to draw a normative line on autonomy in weapons systems.

States can start now by proposing a new mandate to move the talks at the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) from discussions to negotiations, as Austria and others have proposed. International law must be strengthened to ensure protections against arbitrary and unlawful taking of life.

There now appears to be convergence on the urgent need for a new ban treaty to retain meaningful human control over the critical functions of weapons systems and the use of force. States should take note of the many significant developments in the five months since the last CCW meeting.

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres pledged on 24 May to support states to elaborate new measures such as “legally binding arrangements” to ensure that “humans remain at all times in control over the use of force.” The offer is contained in the UN head’s 74-pp disarmament agenda launched, which notes how “a growing number of States, including some with advanced military capabilities, have called for a preventative prohibition on lethal autonomous weapon systems.”

Google issued a set of ethical principles on 7 June that state that Google is “not developing AI for use in weapons” and “will not design or deploy AI” for technology that causes “overall harm” or “contravenes widely accepted principles of

international law and human rights.” Days before announcing the principles, Google said it would not renew its involvement in a controversial US Department of Defense program that seeks to autonomously process video footage shot by surveillance drones once the contracts expires in 2019. These moves came after a concerted campaign by technology workers and their allies.

On 5 July, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for the urgent negotiation of “an international ban on weapon systems that lack human control over the use of force.” The day before, Belgium’s national parliament adopted a resolution that calls for a ban on fully autonomous weapons. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has received pledges of support from parliamentarians and the public at events in recent months in capitals including Abuja, Helsinki, London, Pretoria, Seoul, and Tokyo, and Yaoundé.

At a major world congress of leading AI researchers on 18 July, over 200 technology companies and organizations from more than 36 countries and 2,600 individuals issued a pledge committing to “neither participate in nor support the development, manufacture, trade, or use of lethal autonomous weapons.” Citing moral, accountability, proliferation, and security-related concerns over fully autonomous weapons the pledge finds that “the decision to take a human life should never be delegated to a machine.”

The pledges of support for taking meaningful action on killer robots are becoming too numerous to count. It’s time states heed the call and start negotiating a legally binding instrument that prohibits fully autonomous weapons.

During this CCW meeting, states should express their support for a negotiating mandate so that negotiations can begin in 2019 with the objective of adopting a new CCW protocol on lethal autonomous

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weapons systems by 2020. States must be explicit in stating that meaningful human control is required over individual attacks and that weapon systems that operate without such human control should be prohibited.

Therefore, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots stands ready to assist states interested in negotiating

new international law on fully autonomous weapons. We seek preventive action, to pre-empt the development of fully autonomous weapons. We do not intend to turn into a reactive campaign aimed at curbing the widespread proliferation. If the CCW is not up to this task then other multilateral options should be explored. •

**Country Views on Killer Robots**

13 April 2018

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots monitors developments with respect to national policy to address concerns over fully autonomous weapons, including positions on the call for a ban.

Who wants to prohibit fully autonomous weapons?

Twenty-six countries are calling for a ban on fully autonomous weapons

In alphabetical order:

1. Algeria
2. Argentina
3. Austria
4. Bolivia
5. Brazil
6. Chile
7. China*
8. Colombia
9. Costa Rica
10. Cuba
11. Djibouti
12. Ecuador
13. Egypt
14. Ghana
15. Guatemala
16. Holy See
17. Iraq
18. Mexico
19. Nicaragua
20. Pakistan
21. Panama
22. Peru
23. State of Palestine
24. Uganda
25. Venezuela
26. Zimbabwe

* China states that it is calling for a ban on the use of fully autonomous weapons.



BELGIAN PARLIAMENT WANTS TO BAN KILLER ROBOTS. WILL THE GOVERNMENT FOLLOW?

Willem Staes | Pax Christi Flanders

On 19 July 2018 the Belgian parliament adopted a motion¹ that asks the government to take the lead in an international ban on killer robots and to ensure that the Belgian army will never use killer robots.

The adoption of this ground-breaking motion came after more than 1.5 years of parliamentary discussions and hearings. But momentum against killer robots was already rapidly increasing in recent months. In a July 2018 survey,² commissioned by Pax Christi Flanders, 60 % of the Belgian population indicated they want the government to support a ban on the development, production and use of killer robots. 17% was undecided, while only 23% did *not* take issue with killer robots.

Previously, in December 2017, 88 high-level Belgian experts in robotics and artificial intelligence called upon the government to support an international ban and to install a national prohibition on killer robots.

Ban, ban, ban

The motion that was passed by Belgium's right-wing governing coalition asks four things from the government:

- To take a leading role in starting international negotiations for a legally binding prohibition on the use of killer robots.
- To ensure that the Belgian army will never use killer robots in military operations.
- To work towards an internationally recognized definition of killer robots.

- To support the development and use of robot technology for civilian purposes.

Interestingly, during the parliamentary debate several members of parliament of the governing coalition showcased a very broad interpretation of their own motion. When pushed by opposition MPs, they clarified that the motion does include a prohibition on the production and possession and that any research and development for military purposes is also excluded under the motion.

Back in business?

By adopting this motion Belgium becomes the first NATO member state that explicitly argues in favour of a legally binding prohibition on killer robots.

After taking a leading role in outlawing cluster munitions and land mines, Belgium is almost back in the business of humanitarian disarmament. Will the Belgian government now follow in the footsteps of the Belgian parliament, public opinion and Belgium's top robotics and AI experts? •

Notes

1. The full motion (in Dutch and French) can be found here: <http://www.dekamer.be/FLWB/PDF/54/3203/54K3203005.pdf>.

2. See <https://www.paxchristi.be/nieuws/nieuw-onderzoek-60-van-de-belgen-wil-internationaal-verbod-op-killer-robots>.





CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

Convention on Conventional Weapons meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems

SIDE EVENT BRIEFING

Ethical Concerns Over Fully Autonomous Weapons

Conference Room XXIII
United Nations Geneva

Tuesday, 28 August 2018
13:00-14:30

Sandwiches & refreshments will be provided.

Introductory Remarks

- Nobel Peace Laureate Ms. Jody Williams, **Nobel Women's Initiative**

Speakers

- Ms. Bonnie Docherty, **Human Rights Watch**
- Mr. Amr Gaber, **Tech Workers Coalition**
- Dr. Peter Asaro, **International Committee for Robot Arms Control**
- Ms. Ariel Conn, **Future of Life Institute**

Moderator

- Ms. Maria-Pia Devoto, **APP/SEHLAC**

The **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots** works to preemptively ban weapons systems that would select targets and use force without meaningful human control. At this briefing, campaign members and guests will discuss ethical concerns raised by these weapons systems, the relevance of the Martens Clause in determining the appropriate regulatory response, and recent private sector expressions of support for retaining meaningful human control over weapons systems and the use of force.

For more information see www.stopkillerrobots.org or contact: Mary Wareham, Tel. +1-646-203-8292 (mobile), wareham@hrw.org