



CCW REPORT

*Civil society perspectives on the CCW Group of Governmental
Experts on lethal autonomous weapon systems
25–29 March 2019*



Reaching Critical Will

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of WILPF or the Campaign.

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TIME TO GET SERIOUS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

Mary Wareham | Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

The goal of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots has not changed since it was co-founded in October 2012: We are working to preemptively ban the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems or killer robots.

A stigma is already becoming attached to the prospect of removing meaningful human control from weapon systems and the use of force. That's because delegating life-and-death decisions to machines crosses a moral "red line". The many fundamental legal, operational, moral, technical, proliferation, and other concerns with fully autonomous weapons are not going to disappear, but rather multiply.

It's increasingly clear that killer robots must be regulated via a new treaty. Calls to ban killer robots are multiplying rapidly, from the United Nations Secretary-General to the European Parliament. Media interest is increasing, not diminishing. A new Ipsos poll of 26 countries shows that public opposition to fully autonomous weapons has grown over the past two years from 56 percent to 61 percent.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is rapidly expanding and is now comprised of 100 non-governmental organizations in 54 countries. Over the past year, campaign members in 50 countries have undertaken activities at the national level to build awareness and secure political support for the goal of a new treaty to ban killer robots. Our campaigners are talking with officials and government representatives at the African Union and other regional bodies in an effort to foster greater understanding and solidarity around the goal of a new ban treaty.

We have come here this week from Berlin, where more than 100 campaigners from 34 countries met to strategise on how to build greater support for the goal of banning killer robots, especially at the national level. There was strong interest in

a public event convened by the Campaign to invite support for our goal of a preemptive ban treaty.

Such a new treaty is achievable and, we believe, inevitable. But will it be too late? A new treaty is urgently needed, before advances in artificial intelligence and related technologies make these weapons a reality.

Representatives from more than 80 states have participated in the six Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) meetings on lethal autonomous weapons systems since 2014. As this seventh meeting begins, those states should feel good about the efforts they have made to explore some of the concerns raised by allowing machines to select and attack targets without further human intervention.

The strong interest that countries are showing in these diplomatic talks indicates their desire to be seen to be doing "something" about this concern. Those CCW meetings have shown that there is now widespread agreement on the need to retain some form of human control over future weapons systems and the use of force. The time is now ripe to move to negotiations.

This week we urge states to elaborate their views on the concept of human control over weapons systems and the use of force. We hope to hear from states on their preferred option for dealing with the multiple challenges raised by killer robots and urge those that have not yet done so to express their support for the goal of prohibiting fully autonomous weapons.

We're not leaving the CCW, yet. However, we're working hard to build the political and public support necessary for creating a new treaty. By November, it should be abundantly clear that the only viable option for the CCW is to move to a negotiating mandate. If that fails then it's obvious that states must pursue another path to create the ban treaty. •

GETTING THERE, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER*Allison Pytlak | Reaching Critical Will, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*

“We’ll get there, one way or another” was a key takeaway from the first-ever Global Meeting of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots held in Berlin on 22-23 March. Around 100 campaign members from nearly three dozen countries participated in the meeting, designed as an opportunity to build knowledge and skills, discuss strategy, and foster in-person networking and communication among the membership. It was organized jointly with ICAN Germany, demonstrating the strong partnership and support that exists across humanitarian disarmament campaigns.

Sessions covered a broad spectrum of topics, from understanding what autonomous weapons are; the ethical, moral, and legal challenges they present; to how different parts of society are mobilising against them, including through the Campaign. This includes technologists, parliamentarians, and various financial actors. It’s evident that public interest in this issue is strong, and that across several countries public opinion squarely sees the importance of not allowing weapons and machines to take life-and-death decisions. An Ipsos survey of 26 countries commissioned by the Campaign in late 2018 found that more than three in every five people responding to the new poll oppose the development of weapons systems that would select and attack targets without human intervention. Twenty-six countries support a ban on autonomous weapons. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has signaled his strong support for a ban late last year, stating, “This is the kind of thing that in my opinion is not only politically unacceptable, it is morally repugnant and I believe it should be banned by international law.” An increasing number of tech workers, academics, and scientists, are standing up to say they do not want their technologies and work to be weaponised.

WILPF sees that autonomous weapons are being developed in the context of the established norms of gender and power, norms that can and do affect how we think about weapons, war, and violence and reinforcing the historic symbolism of weapons as a form of power. This comes from a dominant understanding of masculinity as violent and militaristic. Autonomous weapons would further dehumanise fighting and conflict, a process that would likely include gender-based violence. WILPF is also concerned about killer robots being programmed with biases in terms of gender, race, socioeconomic status, ability, and sexual orientation.

This view was outlined by Reaching Critical Will’s Director during a public event in Berlin on Thursday, 21 March and reinforced in the course of a panel discussion during the weekend meeting organised jointly with the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy.

The event “We are the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots” used personal stories, videos, and a special appearance by campaign robot David Wreckham to introduce and highlight the diversity of the Campaign’s membership and its collective concern about the misuse and weaponisation of technology.

Meeting participants also discussed various pathways to a ban. The process within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is moving slowly and at present offers little promise of an effective solution. Supporters of a new legally-binding instrument have found their interests marginalised and sidelined, including through procedural tactics and rules that are built into how the CCW functions. Positively, other options exist, such as through the UN General Assembly or external processes, both of which have successfully facilitated the development of other international weapons treaties, including because of deadlock and failure within the CCW. With the clock running out on the CCW’s Group of Governmental Experts process and no treaty negotiating mandate in sight, these other options are increasingly becoming valid possibilities for states and other stakeholders who are serious about establishing new law to prohibit autonomous weapons, before it’s too late. •

The CCW Report will be produced periodically throughout the Group of Governmental Experts

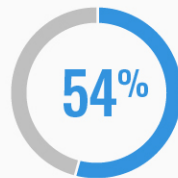
Previous editions, as well as statements and documents, can be found at www.reachingcriticalwill.org



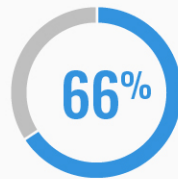


A Clear Message: It Crosses A Moral Line

66% of those who opposed the use of killer robots said their main concern was that it would "cross a moral line because machines should not be allowed to kill." 54% said the weapons would be unaccountable.



"The weapons would be unaccountable."



"It would cross a moral line because machines should not be allowed to kill."

Source: IPSOS survey: Public perceptions of lethal autonomous weapons systems, December 2018.



Photo by Ralf Schlesener, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots





CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

Convention on Conventional Weapons meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems

SIDE EVENT BRIEFING

Public Views on Fully Autonomous Weapons

Conference Room XXIII
United Nations Geneva

Tuesday, 26 March 2019
13:00-14:30

Sandwiches & refreshments will be provided.

Speakers

- Ms. Alena Popova, **Ethics and Technology**
- Dr. Thompson Chengeta, **International Committee for Robot Arms Control**
- Ms. Liz O'Sullivan, **special guest**

Moderator

- Ms. Mary Wareham, **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots**

The **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots** is a coalition of 100 non-governmental organizations in 54 countries working to preemptively ban weapons systems that would select targets and use force without meaningful human control. This briefing will look at public views on killer robots, including a recent Ipsos poll, and new expressions from the tech community for the goal of a treaty to prohibit fully autonomous weapons.

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