



CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS

Statement to the Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of High Contracting Parties

Geneva

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Delivered by Mary Wareham, Human Rights Watch for the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

I am speaking on behalf of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, the international coalition of 87 non-governmental organizations in 49 countries formed six years ago to preemptively ban fully autonomous weapons, known here as lethal autonomous weapons systems.

This year's meetings of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts covered significant ground, resulting in the report delivered yesterday. We are grateful to the chair for his work to achieve this substantive outcome.

The principles contained in that report affirm that "human responsibility for decisions on the use of weapon systems must be retained." For us, this was the most significant take-away as it confirms what we have heard here over and over again since 2013.

The work this year demonstrated to us that states here at the CCW are able to rise to the challenge and negotiate on substantive matters and reach agreement. Yet the end result was a report and not the legally-binding instrument that we demand.

We remind you that public expectations are rising rapidly that states will take serious action to respond to the multiple, serious challenges posed by killer robots. We commend the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for his strong appeal made at the Paris Peace Forum marking 100 years since the end of World War I, where he said, "I call upon States to ban these weapons, which are politically unacceptable and morally repugnant."

Today and yesterday more than 80 country statements have referred to the need to continue deliberations here at the CCW next year on lethal autonomous weapons systems. Not a single state has opposed continuing this work.

Many states have proposed moving to prohibit fully autonomous weapons and we warmly welcome Morocco's call today. We support Austria, Brazil, and Chile's [recommendation](#) "to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to ensure meaningful human control over the critical functions" of weapons systems.

CCW high contracting parties should not simply roll over the current mandate and consider options. Most states here have expressed their strong preference to meet for 10 days next year. We believe you should set aside at least four weeks of time for your deliberations next year. The objective should be to adopt a new Protocol VI no later than 2020.

It's abundantly clear there is an urgent need for bold leadership to address this imminent challenge before it is too late. It's time to launch negotiations. We ask: if not now, then when? If not here, then where? If the CCW is really the "appropriate forum" then let's get started.

Thank you