




CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS

Statement to the CCW GGE on lethal autonomous weapons systems

Geneva

21 September 2020 

As delivered by Ousman Noor on behalf of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Thank you Chair,

2020 has been a year of many firsts and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is pleased to participate in this first virtual and physically-distanced diplomatic meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems. Also for me personally, I'm pleased to be present here, at my first participation in a meeting of this Group of Governmental Experts.

The Campaign is glad to see diplomacy adapting to the uncertain new circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, through transitioning into the digital world and making this conference accessible to individuals not here present.

The pandemic has also provided time for us to reflect on the importance of being prepared and able to adapt and respond with urgency and unity to existential threats to all of humanity, from our response to the pandemic itself, to combatting climate change and to the prevention of the development of fully autonomous weapons.

Respected representatives, a new legally binding instrument is now widely regarded as the only effective way to deal with fully autonomous weapons, and we see that support continues to build for this goal from civil society all around the world.

Since the last Group of Governmental Experts meeting on killer robots in August 2019, the Campaign has grown from 113 NGOs in 57 countries to now a coalition of 165 NGOs in 65 countries, which is a significant increase in just one year.

CCW High Contracting Parties should bear in mind the growing public awareness of the dangers raised by removing human control from the use of force. Many CCW states are already investing heavily in civilian robotics and emerging technologies, we say that they must immediately provide the necessary regulatory response to killer robots to avoid a technology backlash and for them to retain any competitive edge in the field of robotics.

The clock is ticking and we urge states to make up for lost time and achieve measurable progress by the CCW's Sixth Review Conference in December 2021. We feel that failure to produce an appropriate regulatory response by this milestone meeting would not bode well for the CCW's future.

Focused deliberations this week will help lay the groundwork for negotiating the international treaty, or legally binding instrument, that is now urgently required to ban fully autonomous weapons and retain meaningful human control over the use of force.

We have read and reviewed every commentary and working paper submitted by states to the CCW this year, including those that are not available on the UN website. We shared our own [CCW commentary](#) in June and encourage all states that have not yet done so to provide submissions and make them publicly available.

The Campaign appreciates the commonalities paper prepared by the previous GGE chair. Several submissions highlight the need to determine whether international humanitarian law is sufficient. Many find a clear need for a legally binding instrument.

Almost all submissions draw attention to the guiding principle on human-machine interaction. That desire, to retain meaningful human control over the use of force, provides a solid basis for collective action and focused discussion, and we look forward to urgent progress being made on this frontier.

Thank you.