

**Second Session of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts (GGE)  
on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, 27-31 August 2018**

**Agenda item 6(b): Further consideration of the human element in the use of lethal force; aspects of human-machine interaction in the development, deployment and use of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems (28 August 2018)**

**Statement by PAKISTAN  
(Delivered by Usman Jadoon, Counsellor)**

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan believes that the absence of human control over weapons with autonomous functions will fundamentally change the nature of war. Any weapon that delegates the power to make life and death decisions to machines, which inherently lack compassion and intuition, would be unethical. They will make war even more inhumane.

LAWS cannot be programmed to comply with International Humanitarian Law, in particular its cardinal rules of distinction, proportionality, and precaution. These rules can be complex and entail subjective decision making requiring human judgment. LAWS also create an accountability vacuum and provide impunity to the user due to the inability to attribute responsibility for the harm that they cause. If the nature of a weapon renders responsibility for its consequences impossible, its use should be considered both unethical and unlawful.

The use of LAWS in the battlefield against a State fighting with human soldiers would amount to a situation of one-sided killing. Besides depriving the combatants of the targeted state the protection offered to them by the international law of armed conflict, LAWS would also risk the lives of civilians and non-combatants as the unavailability of a legitimate human target of the LAWS' user State on the ground could lead to reprisals on its civilians.

Like any other complex machine, LAWS can never be fully predictable or reliable. They could fail for a wide variety of reasons including human error, malfunctions, degraded communications, software failures, cyber attacks, jamming and spoofing, etc. There will always be a level of uncertainty about the way an autonomous weapon system will interact with the external environment.

Mr. Chairman,

We see as a positive development the emergence of a general understanding that weapons with autonomous functions must remain under the direct control and supervision of humans at all times. Although concepts like “meaningful human control” and “appropriate human judgement” have gained some currency and traction in the context of LAWS, we are of the view that these concepts only provide an approach to discussing the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies. They do not provide a solution to the technical, legal, moral and regulatory questions posed by LAWS. Weapons systems *capable* of acting autonomously, regardless of whether the possessor *intends* to use them under human supervision or not, should still be considered as LAWS and brought under the scope of appropriate international regulations and prohibitions.

A key conclusion of this GGE’s work should be that weapons with autonomous functions must remain under the direct control and supervision of humans at all times. Our task in the next phase should be to ascertain the scope and extent of human control necessary to address the various concerns associated with LAWS to ensure that it is meaningful.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.