



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva at the **2018 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW)**

*Geneva, 21-23 November 2018*

Mr. Chair,

The increasingly active participation and interaction among States, civil society and the scientific community clearly indicates the urgency and far-reaching implications of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). The Holy See Delegation believes that the two sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) held in 2018 have been particularly helpful to generate even greater convergence, in particular around ethical and legal considerations. We are especially pleased that this has been duly reflected in the report of the GGE under the guiding principles section.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Chair,

the issue of LAWS has been on the CCW agenda for five years now. The Holy See has expressed its concerns on several occasions: the development of LAWS will provide the capacity of altering irreversibly the nature of warfare, becoming more detached from human agency, putting in question the humanity of our societies and, in any case, compelling all States to reassess their military capabilities.

Various proposals for possible concrete outcomes have been put forward; what these proposals have in common is the underlying need for a multilateral approach and the need to retain the human person at the heart of decisions exerting injurious or lethal force.

In this regard, the Holy See reiterates its previous and repeated position that relying on the principle of precaution and adopting a responsible attitude of prevention are the only options that will ensure a sound and lasting outcome. In order to prevent an arms race and the increase of inequalities and instability, it is an imperative duty to act promptly: now is the time to prevent LAWS from becoming the reality of tomorrow's warfare. The CCW should make a courageous and enlightened decision of prohibiting LAWS like it did in the past concerning other types of weapons. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Document CCW/GGE.1/2018/3, available at :

[https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/20092911F6495FA7C125830E003F9A5B/\\$file/2018\\_GGE+LAWS\\_Final+Report.pdf](https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/20092911F6495FA7C125830E003F9A5B/$file/2018_GGE+LAWS_Final+Report.pdf)