

Mark Gubrud will make the statement

International Committee for Robot Arms Control opening statement to the Convention on Conventional Weapons Meeting of Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems, United Nations Geneva 13 April 2015

I am speaking on behalf of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (or ICRAC as we are known), a founding NGO of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. We would very much like to thank Ambassador Biontino for chairing this second meeting of experts and for inviting our members to share their expertise. We would also like to thank all of the States Parties for their participation.

ICRAC is an international association of scientists, technologists, lawyers, and policy experts committed to the peaceful use of robotics in the service of humanity and the regulation of robotic weapons.

ICRAC members have carried out research on various aspects of autonomous weapons systems and published their results in scientific journals as well as at conferences and in mass media.

We would like to stress that ICRAC experts are available and willing to provide technical expertise to the High Contracting Parties as they engage in discussions about autonomous weapons systems.

ICRAC urges the international community to seriously consider the prohibition of autonomous weapons systems in light of the pressing dangers they pose to global peace and security. We have produced a new leaflet on problems for global security posed by LAWS that is now available.

We fear that once they are developed, they will proliferate rapidly, and if deployed they may interact unpredictably and contribute to regional and global destabilization and arms races.

ICRAC urges nations to be guided by the principles of humanity in its deliberations and take into account considerations of human security, human rights, human dignity, humanitarian law and the public conscience. The Martens Clause reminds us that such moral principles are the basis for international law. Human judgment and meaningful human control over the use of violence must be made an explicit requirement in international policymaking on autonomous weapons.

ICRAC urges a broader discussion about the arming of autonomous systems beyond just lethal weapons, to include so-called "sub-lethal" or "less-than-lethal" weapons. These could still cause unnecessary suffering to humans. We urge nations to consider the human rights implications of the development and potential use of these weapons in any situation, including domestic policing, border control and internal law enforcement.

In conclusion, ICRAC encourages the CCW to move towards a preemptive ban on the development, production and use of autonomous weapons systems. ICRAC urges delegates to build consensus for negotiating a legally binding instrument to ban autonomous weapons systems.