
Group of Governmental Experts of the 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

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Examination of various dimensions of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention

General principles on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems

Submitted by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Other States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

1. The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other States 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), re-emphasizes the position of the Heads of State or Government of NAM States Parties to the Convention on Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and its Protocols as reflected in the Final Document adopted at the XVII Summit of the NAM, which took place in September 2016, in Margarita Island, Venezuela.
2. In this regard, the NAM Group is of the view that Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) raise a number of ethical, legal, moral and technical, as well as international peace and security related questions which should be thoroughly deliberated and examined in the context of conformity to international law including international humanitarian law and international human rights law.
3. Therefore, NAM believes that the following elements shall be included in the substantive discussion of this matter:
 - (a) The implementation and enforcement of International Law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, in the context of lethal autonomous weapons systems;
 - (b) The responsibility of States for internationally unlawful acts caused by lethal autonomous weapons systems;
 - (c) Ethical and moral concerns about lethal autonomous weapons systems. The discussion on the autonomy, lethality and critical functions of these weapons;
 - (d) Common understandings, definitions and other concepts including of semi-autonomous weapons;
 - (e) Military technology and risk of an arms race of fully autonomous weapons, and the technology gap amongst States;
 - (f) The impact on international and regional peace and security;
 - (g) Legally binding international instrument on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

4. The NAM States Parties and Other States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) welcomed the third informal meeting of CCW experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems held in Geneva from 11–15 April 2016. NAM also supports the establishment of the current open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) of the High Contracting Parties related to emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention as decided by the Fifth Review Conference on CCW.

5. The Group of NAM considers that the Food-for-thought paper presented by the Chairperson is a good basis and will contribute to the useful discussion that we have had in the past three years on the technological and security dimensions as well as legal and ethical issues of relevance to LAWS. The Group hopes that the GGE will make progress from discussions of a general nature towards the development of concrete recommendations including elements of a legally binding instrument on LAWS.

6. The NAM supports continued deliberations on this issue in the current open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), taking into account all proposals past, present and future. We look forward to the further consideration of this issue in a holistic and substantive manner in the framework of the open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE).

7. In this sense, the Group of NAM recognizes that the debate on autonomous weapons has continued to intensify, in recent years and has included lawyers, ethicist, human rights advocates, scientists and diplomats and others, in a range of venues, and there have been mounting expressions of concerns about how these weapons can change warfare. Hence, NAM believes that the discussions shall always be held in an open, transparent and universal participatory nature. This will guarantee that the High Contracting Parties and the international community can be part of the evolution of this debate.
