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# 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

19 March 2019

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## Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems

Geneva, 25–29 March 2019 and 20–21 August 2019

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Organization of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts

### Provisional Programme of Work<sup>1</sup>

Submitted by the Chairperson

Monday, 25 March 2019

10:00 – 13:00

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Confirmation of the rules of procedure
4. Organization of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts
- 5 (c) Review of the potential military applications of related technologies in the context of the Group's work (presentations on experiences from High Contracting Parties invited)
  - How and to what extent is human involvement in the use of force currently exercised with existing weapons that employ or can employ autonomy in their critical functions, over different stages of their life cycle?
  - How is responsibility ensured for the use of force with existing weapons that employ or can be employed with autonomy in their critical functions? Relevant existing weapons could include types of:
    - Air defence weapon systems with autonomous modes or functions;
    - Missiles with autonomous modes or functions;
    - Active protection weapon systems with autonomous modes or functions;
    - Loitering weapons with autonomous modes or functions;
    - Naval or land mines with autonomous modes or functions;
    - "Sentry" weapons with autonomous modes or functions.

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<sup>1</sup> For 25-29 March 2019.



**15:00 – 18:00**

- 5 (d) Characterization of the systems under consideration in order to promote a common understanding on concepts and characteristics relevant to the objectives and purposes of the Convention
- Which characteristics of autonomous weapons systems would be important from the point of view of International humanitarian law (IHL) and 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) specifically?
  - Is autonomy an attribute of a weapon system as a whole or should it be attached to different tasks of weapons systems?
  - Is the environment of deployment, specific constraints on time of operation, or scope of movement over an area, important from an IHL/CCW perspective?
  - Is a differentiation between anti-personnel and anti-materiel weapons meaningful from an IHL/CCW perspective?

**Tuesday, 26 March 2019**

**10:00 – 13:00**

- 5 (a) An exploration of the potential challenges posed by emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems to international humanitarian law
- Does autonomy in the critical functions of weapons systems challenge the ability of States or parties to a conflict, commanders, and individual combatants to apply IHL principles on the conduct of hostilities (distinction, proportionality, precautions) in carrying out attacks in armed conflict?
  - Does autonomy in the critical functions of weapons systems challenge the maintenance of combatant and commander responsibility for decisions to use force?
  - What is the responsibility of States or parties to a conflict, commanders, and individual combatants in decisions to use force involving autonomous weapons systems, in light of the principles of international law derived from established custom, from the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience (Martens Clause)?
  - How can legal reviews of weapons with autonomous functions contribute to compliance with IHL? What are past or potential challenges in conducting weapons reviews of weapons with autonomy in their critical functions, and how can these challenges be addressed?

**15:00 – 18:00**

- 5 (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
- Specifically, what type and degree of human involvement (in the form of control, oversight and/or judgement) is required or appropriate when using weapons with autonomy in their critical functions to ensure compliance with IHL?

Including:

- What is the form and degree, if any, of human supervision – such as the ability to intervene and abort – which, during the operation of a weapon that can autonomously select and attack targets, may be deemed sufficient for compliance with IHL?

- Is there a level of predictability and reliability that would be required or appropriate in the autonomous functions of such a weapons system, considering the weapon's foreseeable tasks and operational environment, for its use to be consistent with IHL? How has the level of predictability and reliability been assessed in practice?
- How do factors such as a weapon's foreseeable tasks, its intended targets (e.g. materiel or personnel), scope of movement and its operational environments (e.g. populated or unpopulated area), affect the type and degree of human involvement required in order to ensure compliance with IHL?
- Can IHL-compliant human-machine interaction be ensured in a weapons system with autonomy in its critical functions?

### **Wednesday, 27 March 2019**

#### **10:00 – 13:00**

- 5 (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

#### **15:00 – 18:00**

- 5 (e) Possible options for addressing the humanitarian and international security challenges posed by emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention without prejudicing policy outcomes and taking into account past, present and future proposals
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed approaches to ensuring compliance with IHL and responsibility for decisions on the use of weapons systems and the use of force?
    - legally binding instrument;
    - political declaration;
    - guidelines, principles or codes of conduct;
    - improving implementation of existing legal requirements, including legal reviews of weapons.
  - Given that these options are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and the common goal of ensuring compliance with IHL and maintaining human responsibility for the use of force, what are possible next steps to be taken by the GGE?
  - How can the GGE build upon the areas of convergence captured in the 'Possible Guiding Principles' agreed in 2018? How can those principles be operationalized?

### **Thursday, 28 March 2019**

#### **10:00 – 13:00**

Continuation of any list of speakers that have not been exhausted

#### **15:00 – 18:00**

Multi-stakeholder facilitated discussion

**Friday, 29 March 2019**

**10:00 – 13:00**

A consideration of any emerging elements and commonalities

**15:00 – 18:00**

Discussion on the way ahead

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