Forum: Security Council (SC)

Question of: Discussing a Legalisation of Autonomic Weapon Systems

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I. Description of the Issue:

Overview of Autonomous Weapon Systems

Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS), which are very often referred to as "killer robot" are systems of weapon that can be identify and engage with targets, that have little to no direct human intervention. Such technologies can be utilised as AI, computer and machine learning and robots with the purpose of performing military tasks independently. Examples of autonomous functions are already existing in modern warfare, including missile defence systems, drones and monitors. However, such autonomous weapons are not fully capable of making major decisions without human control, which remain under constant development. The increase in advancement of AI has increased discussions about the legalisation of autonomous systems that are within the internation law and military actions and operations.

The Debate over the legalisation of Autonomous Weapon Systems:

Supporters of the legalisation of the AWS argue that such systems can improve the efficiency of military action, reducing casualties among soldiers and civilians, reacting faster than humans in an active combat, which could decrease human casualties in the conflict zone.

Opponents of the AWS are debate that such lethal decisions should not be made by machine. This raises ethical, humanitarian as well as legal concerns among the opposition of the AWS. It is a big question if machines can abide by the International Humanitarian Law's principles like, distinction and military necessity.

The international community is divided by the supporters and oppositions, who are advocating for a total ban and regulation, while allowing a continuous development.

Humanitarian and Ethical Concerns:

One of the main concerns that surround AWS is the removal of any human judgement should be removed from major decisions, including the usage of lethal force. Professionals are arguing that machines cannot understand human moral, dignity and responsibility, in combat. Ethical concerns include but not limited to, the loss of human control over lethal decisions, violations of human rights and risk of civil casualties. Civil societies, organisations and groups have been spreading awareness of the ethical and humanitarian concerns.

Se*curity Risks and Global Stability:*

There has been widespread deployment of autonomous weapon systems, which could significantly impact international security. Risks could include, but not limited to, increase in cyber vulnerability and risks of hacking, accidental escalations of conflicts, proliferation of AWS to non-state actors and terrorist groups.

Concerns such as these have been prompts for discussions in the UN, for the establishment of international regulations, before such technologies and systems become widespread.

II. Definition of Key Terms:

Autonomous Weapons - weapons that are capable of selecting and engaging with target, without the direct human intervention and interaction, once it is activated.

Meaningful Human Control - this is a principle that humans should remain involved and responsible in decision regarding the use of lethal force and weapons.

International Humanitarian Law - an international body of international law, regulating conduct of armed conflict and protecting civilians.

Artificial Intelligence - a computer system that is capable of performing tasks, that usually humans are required to do, including but not limited to, pattern recognition, learning and decision - making.

Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) – a category of autonomous weapon systems (AWS), capable of using lethal force, without human intervention and decision - making during the engagement with the target.

III. Background Information:

Autonomous weapons came from the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics. Initially, the autonomous weapons were used in the military, which focused on defensive systems, with the aim to respond to threats. As the improvement of AI, countries began to invest in autonomous weapons and military technologies. Such countries include, but not limited to, the United States of America, Russia, Isreal, China and some European countries that have and continue to develop autonomous systems.

The issue gained international attention, in 2013, when reports from the Human Rights Watch were published, warning and opposing the development of fully autonomous weapons and systems. The responses of the reports began many discussions in the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

Since 2014, the UN has hosted several meeting including governmental experts, to assess the ethical, legal and security implications that have been concerned due to the AWS. Though, some members of the UN have been divided in their decision of banning, permitting or regulating such technologies and weapons.

The Security Council has faced questions about the effects on peace and security internationally, that autonomous weapons may affects, especially when discussing armed conflicts, technological and weapon competition among states and terrorism.

IV. Major Countries and Organisations Involved:

Major countries:

The United States - the USA has continued to develop autonomous systems, with compliance with human rights oversight and international laws.

Russia – Russia opposes the ban of AWS, arguing that such technologies may help and provide advantages for the military, as well as strategic benefits.

China – China is in support of discussing regulations about the AWS, while investing significant funds into artificial intelligence for the military and autonomous systems.

France – France is advocating for maintaining human control over lethal systems, while actively participating in international discussion for the regulation of AWS.

The United Kingdom – the UK supports regulations through already existing laws and legal framework, rather than completely banning AWS.

Israel – Isreal is one of the leading states in autonomous weapon and military technologies and the development of artificial systems.

Major Organisations:

International Committee for the Red Cross – The ICRC is calling for a stronger restrictions and regulations to ensure that everybody will be compliant with the Humanitarian Law.

Human Rights Watch – the Human Rights Watch is one of the main NGOs that is advocating for the ban of fully autonomous weapons.

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots – the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is an international coalition of civil society organisations that advocate for legal binding treaty that bans fully autonomous weapons.

United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) - the main international forum where discussions on autonomous weapons are taking place.

V. Timeline of Events:

Year:	Event:
1945	This was the beginning of the autonomation of military systems, developed after the second World War.
1983	The introduction of autonomous defence systems. Example, Phalanx CIWS.
2013	The Human Rights Watch published major reports on “Killer Robots” and opposing the

	AWSs.
2014	The first UN CCW meeting was held about autonomous weapons.
2016	The establishment of the CCW (UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons) group of GGE (government experts).
2019	Countries have agreed that human responsibility should remain and be maintained under international law.
2021	The ICRC (international committee for the Red Cross) called for new legally biding rules on AWSs.
2023	More international support is growing in favour of the restriction and regulation for AWSs.
Today, present	There have been continued discissions and negotiations for the legal framework and international governance.

VI. Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue:

Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) - it was established under the framework of the CCW, to study the emerging technologies in the lethal autonomous weapon systems, recommending future action.

National Policies - countries have tried to develop national guidelines that require human oversight of AWS. This has however been not legally binding to international treaty, specifically governing autonomous weapon systems.

International Committee of the Red Cross Initiatives - the ICRC has proposed several internationally agreed upon restrictions and regulation on AWS and limitations to their usage.

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) – the CCW has been serving as one of the main spaces for discussion about AWS, since 2014. State representatives and experts have been examining ethical, legal and military implications, concerned by the AWS.

VII. Possible Solutions:

Strengthening the Existing Internation Humanitarian Law – countries can clarify how the existing International Humanitarian Law (IHL) principles are applied to AWS without the creation of a new legal framework.

Defining the Meaning for Human Control – this could help states and the international community to develop a universally accepted definition, that requires human involvement in the lethal decisions.

International Monitoring Mechanisms – the UN could establish an oversight body mechanism which would monitor the deployment and development of AWS and autonomous weapon technologies.

VIII. How to Prepare as a Delegate:

Delegates should research their country's positions on AWS, national military programs using AI and their policies towards that. Delegates should prepare arguments (based on their country's position on AWS) supporting or opposing, for the legalisation of AWS.

Delegates should consider if the AWS should be banned, restricted and regulated or permitted. As well as who should be held accountable based on their decision. What level of human control should be required?

Please submit your position paper no later than the **27/08/2026** to the emails listed above. If any further questions, please reach out to the emails written on the first page.

IX. UN Resolutions:

- The UN Charter (1945) - https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter
- Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (1977) - https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977
- Geneva Conventions (1949) - https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/geneva-conventions
- Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (1980) - https://disarmament.unoda.org/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/

- CCW Group of Governmental Experts reports on LAWS - https://meetings.unoda.org/ccw/convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons-group-of-governmental-experts-on-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems-2025

X. Useful Links:

UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) – https://disarmament.unoda.org

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons – https://www.unoda.org

Human Rights Watch – Killer Robots – https://www.hrw.org

International Committee of the Red Cross – https://www.icrc.org

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots – https://www.stopkillerrobots.org

United Nations – https://www.unUnited

International Humanitarian Law - https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/autonomous-weapons

XI. Resources:

https://disarmament.unoda.org/index.php/en/our-work/emerging-challenges/lethal-autonomous-weapon-systems

https://meetings.unoda.org/ccw-/convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons-group-of-governmental-experts-on-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems-2023 \

https://docs.un.org/en/a/79/88

https://www.icrc.org/en/document/icrc-position-autonomous-weapon-systems

https://www.icrc.org/en/article/autonomous-weapon-systems-and-international-humanitarian-law-selected-issues

https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRIYB20c13sII.pdf

https://www.oxford-aiethics.ox.ac.uk/blog/red-herring-meaningful-human-control-and-autonomous-weapons-systems-debate

https://arxiv.org/abs/2502.10174