



**CCW GGE Meeting, 26-30 August 2024**  
**Statement by Stop Killer Robots (full statement)**

Thank you, Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of Stop Killer Robots, a global coalition of over 250 civil society organisations across more than 70 countries with a shared commitment to ensuring meaningful human control over the use of force.

Time is running out to take action on autonomous weapons systems. In his new report, the UN Secretary-General called again on States to urgently negotiate new law by 2026 - we must heed this. Political will is growing: we commend all the States that have committed to pursue negotiations and convened regional conferences, as well as Austria for its landmark 'Humanity at the Crossroads' conference.

This year should be an inflection point for the international community.

Those that support new law - including, importantly, States developing autonomous weapons capabilities that have recognised the importance of legal regulation - must now move to negotiate this in an inclusive forum that can hear the perspective of all States as well as civil society; that can consider all the issues with autonomous weapons systems comprehensively and holistically; and where progress cannot be blocked by a small minority.

There is a clear way forward: we strongly urge States to adopt a resolution mandating negotiations at UNGA this year. Countries that join these efforts will save lives and draw legal red lines for humanity that we desperately need.

We value the common understandings States have built on autonomous weapons systems and their regulation in this forum, and appreciate the hard work of delegations. But, we must now move from this basis to treaty negotiations, and address critical issues that are not in the rolling text under discussion this week, including fundamental ethical issues with targeting people, and human rights concerns.

We are at a crossroads: we know what we need to do, and we are out of time.

Since the GGE of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) last met, the Stop Killer Robots campaign has been horrified by reports emerging of the use of AI-powered "decision support systems" by Israel in Gaza, which suggest human targets to strike. According to reports, human approval of these suggestions has been minimal, directly contributing to massive and devastating harm to civilians.

We are deeply concerned by all uses of technology that erode meaningful human decision-making and control and entail digital dehumanisation in the use of force.

Alongside clear legal rules on autonomous weapons systems, which we have consistently called for, all developments in military AI and autonomy which threaten our safety, security, and humanity must be adequately addressed by the international community, with unacceptable practices prevented.

We ask States that have said they are looking to shape international norms on the “responsible use” of military AI in upcoming discussions such as REAIM to answer whether the current direction of practice – which is not limited to one State – is indeed responsible or acceptable.

To return to autonomous weapons systems specifically, we know that many countries, including the United States, Russia, and others, are competing for military advantage in weapons development, with grave risks for global peace and security. More autonomous weapons systems are reaching the battlefield: for example, there are reports of the use of drones that manufacturers claim integrate AI capabilities to select and engage targets automatically in Ukraine.

With huge harm already being caused by developments in AI and autonomy in the use of force, we need to start acting.

It would be utterly unacceptable if we were to return to the CCW in coming years amid reports of harm from autonomous weapons systems, but with the international community still not having commenced negotiations on new law. And yet, this could be the direction in which we are currently headed.

States must have the courage to stop this now: the risks and harm we are already seeing are enough.

Thank you.