

**Archivio Disarmo, Colombe d'oro per la pace, 40th Edition
Golden Dove for Peace Prize, International Award 2024
Acceptance speech by Peter Asaro on behalf of the Stop Killer Robots
Campaign**



October 12, 2024, Rome, Italy

The Stop Killer Robots Campaign is greatly honoured to receive the Golden Dove for Peace International Award. As it becomes increasingly clear that artificial intelligence and automated decision-making will play a key role in the way we live as individuals, as societies, and as a global community, it is crucial to establish rules for how this applies to the use of violent force. Our campaign has worked for over a decade to ensure that there will always be meaningful human control and accountability in the use of force, calling for the creation of new international law to regulate autonomy in weapons systems. We believe that setting legal standards through the creation of a treaty is critical to ensuring peace and global stability, and codifying global norms to respect human rights and human dignity.

Over the last twelve months, we have seen increasing reports on the use of military AI for targeting, and weapons with autonomous capabilities in ongoing international conflicts. This has profound humanitarian implications, especially as these are used in civilian areas and to target individuals. The use of algorithms in lethal decision making may also be used to obscure accountability and conceal responsibility for war crimes and atrocities committed against civilians in conflicts. Accepting AI-enabled dehumanisation, through the targeting and killing of people in military contexts, is untenable and will have significant consequences in policing, border control and wider society. These technologies also pose serious threats to global peace and stability, promising low-risk warfare and threatening new arms races. It is imperative that regulation catch up to the pace of technological development and reflect universally accepted norms of human rights and human dignity. It is time for the global community to ensure that life or death decisions cannot be delegated to machines which lack the capacity for moral and legal responsibility.

We have seen clear and building momentum toward achieving our goal of new international law on autonomous weapons systems. In 2023, our coalition of over 250 civil society organisations in 70 countries successfully lobbied states to adopt the first ever United Nations General Assembly resolution on autonomous weapons. This resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority of states, and demonstrates that there is political will to address the risks posed by autonomous weapons. Further, in the last two years, we have seen cross-regional support manifest through a number of declarations adopted on autonomous weapons which underscore their legal, ethical, humanitarian impacts and the need for new international law, with over 120 states calling for a legally binding instrument to regulate autonomous weapons.

While I wish this award had been to recognize the forging of such a treaty, it is my hope that it will draw greater attention to the issue and motivate political leaders and diplomats to action

towards making this treaty a reality. The 79th UN General Assembly is currently underway, offering states the chance to act with urgency and show continued political leadership on this issue. Members of our Campaign are there in New York lobbying for a new resolution to initiate discussion within the General Assembly towards negotiating a treaty. The UN Secretary General and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross have jointly called for the negotiations on such a treaty to be conducted urgently and conclude by 2026.

In this time of global crisis and conflict, it is more necessary than ever that countries work together to find common ground and agreement, and reaffirm faith in international cooperation and respect for international norms and laws. We also hope that such a treaty on autonomous weapons could be a model for the global governance of artificial intelligence beyond its use in weapons and the military. The risks to humanity if we fail to reach such agreement and adopt a legally binding treaty are too great to let our fears and distrust continue to stall the process.

In accepting this year's Golden Dove for Peace International Award on behalf of the Stop Killer Robots Campaign, it is my greatest hope that by highlighting our work on autonomous weapons this award will signal the broad global public support for the need to act now to build peace and safeguard humanity for current and future generations.