



CARICOM Conference The Human Impacts of Autonomous Weapons Statement of Stop Killer Robots

Delivered on 6 September 2023
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

Thank you Chair. I am speaking on behalf of the Stop Killer Robots campaign, a global coalition of over 230 civil society organisations across 70 countries, advocating for new international law on autonomous weapons to ensure meaningful human control over the use of force, and reject the automation of killing.

We would like to express our gratitude to the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS) and the Office of the Attorney General Trinidad and Tobago, for convening and hosting this conference, which we, along with our campaign partners Soka Gakkai International, have been honoured to partner on.

We would also like to applaud the representatives from CARICOM member states, for your collective leadership in recognizing the need for safeguards to protect against increasing autonomy in weapons systems, and for your clear calls in support of a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons systems.

Autonomous weapons systems change the relationship between people and technology. They disempower, disconnect and dislocate humans in the use of force and raise fundamental ethical, moral, legal, security, and technical concerns. Machines cannot see the world as people do. They cannot understand the value of human life, human rights, or human dignity. Allowing sensors and software to determine who lives and who dies is the ultimate form of digital dehumanisation, and should be considered morally and legally unacceptable. We must take action now, to respond to the risks autonomous weapons systems pose to our shared humanity, and to protect future generations.

For 10 years, multilateral discussions on this issue have taken place at the CCW, which has developed important areas of policy convergence amongst states, in particular the two-tier approach of prohibitions and regulations, and has brought global attention to the need to establish legally binding rules on autonomous weapons. The call for a legally binding instrument is supported by over 90 States, the UN Secretary General, experts in technology and artificial intelligence, faith leaders, and civil society organisations all around the world.

To achieve the legally binding instrument that is so urgently needed, states must commit to action, and make progress to establish new legal rules to promote peace, justice and global security, safeguarding our rights and dignity. This process must be transparent and inclusive, and motivated by a shared determination to ensure that life and death decision making is not delegated to machines.

We call upon States to urgently engage with all multilateral fora capable of delivering this outcome, including - and in particular - at the upcoming UN General Assembly and First Committee.

At this conference, the Caribbean Community and its member states have demonstrated genuine leadership. A Declaration from this region calling for a legally binding instrument is a historic milestone, and will significantly contribute to the international political and policy landscape on autonomous weapons.

The Stop Killer Robots coalition deeply values your efforts, and the contributions this Conference will make towards an international legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons. We stand ready to support States that take leadership in this effort, and would like to assure you that our campaign will work to support you and encourage all other regions of the world, to follow your lead, and join the call to urgently launch negotiations on a legally binding instrument.

Thank you.