



STUDY GUIDE

United Special on Military

AGENDA ITEM

Ban on “Killer Robots” in Military Warfare

CHAIRING PANEL

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Welcome



Paul Gabriel L Cosme

Delegates, we express our utmost gratitude for taking part in UWC Robert Bosch College Model United Nations (MUN) Day.

MUN is one of the best experiences that any aspiring “changemaker” can ever have. Imagine yourself in a room with other delegates while you discuss disarmament of nuclear weapons, the Syrian War conflict, sustainability issues and among others. Developed countries may try to slither their way out of the issue. Developing countries may pursue for global reforms. But, it could also be the other way around, or none of those at all! For a moment, you are given the chance to change the world. This simulation allows us to feel how our own diplomats deal with these detrimental issues. This is a platform for us to learn and train ourselves in the art of diplomacy and change.

In this special committee, we will face an arising issue in the modern world—banning killer robots in warfare. With the dawn of the technological age, it is inevitable that robots will be used in war, and result to the commission of crimes against humanity and other forms of oppression, unless proper legislation and limitations will be enforced, all of which are non-existent at this moment. Also, self-vested interests may come in course and cause conflicts!

We have supplied adequate information for you to be able to grasp this issue, thus helping you in your own research. We hope and expect that every delegate will be able to represent their countries well with conviction, even if means going against your own personal stand in this issue. Also, we hope that all of you will be able to propose solutions about this issue independently.

As many delegates have said, MUN will always be fun if and only if delegates are prepared to start heated debates and arguments. But at the end of the day, it is most fulfilling to propose solutions to global issues that humanity is facing right now.

So, should the world ban killer robots in military warfare? Well, it is all up to all of you. We wish you luck and we hope to see a great conference ahead of all of us!



Introduction

At the dawn of age of technology, humans have taken to advantage the comfort and efficiency that robots have displayed. From basic household tasks to large scale factory production, technology has undisputedly helped in the advancement of human lifestyle and knowledge. However, technology, in all the power that it possesses, may also be the catalyst of a new age of conflict.

Many movies such as “The Terminator” have portrayed the dangers that robots may pose to humans. However, that is not the danger that many technological experts have raised. In fact, it may be more concerning than what movies portray. Experts are afraid that humans may use technology to turn against their own kind—nations against nations.



At this moment, many countries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and even the United Nations have discussed the possible implications of killer robots and what its future could be.

For now, there are no concrete solutions nor agreements that countries and the UN have adopted, making this issue controversial, timely, and concerning.



Definition of Key Terms

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The capability of a machine to imitate intelligent human behavior.

Military Robots

Autonomous robots or remote-controlled mobile robot designed for military applications, from transport to search & rescue and attack.

Killer Robots

Lethal autonomous weapons systems—weapons that can make lethal decisions without human involvement. (according to Human Rights Watch)

Syrian Civil War

An armed conflict taking place in Syria. The unrest grew out of the 2011 Arab Spring protests, and escalated to armed conflict after President Bashar al-Assad's government violently repressed protests calling for his removal.

South China Sea Disputes

The South China Sea disputes involve both island and maritime claims among several sovereign states within the region, namely the Nation of Brunei, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (Taiwan) (ROC), Malaysia, Indonesia, the Republic of the Philippines, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. As a high proportion of the world's trade passes through the South China Sea, there are many non-claimant nations that want the South China Sea to remain as international waters, with several nations (e.g. the United States of America) conducting "freedom of navigation" operations to promote this situation.



General Overview

Committee Background

The United Nations Special Committee on Military Robots (UN-SCMR) is a committee specially organized for this conference. This committee is tasked to define military robots, automated weapons, and killer robots, and to specify their use and suggest limitations and the dangers that these pose to humanity.

UN-SCMR is also responsible for monitoring the production, distribution, and the use of military robots throughout the globe.

The ultimate goal of this special committee is to regulate the use of military robots and ensure that it does not commit any human rights violations and crimes against humanity.

Topic Background

Military Robots

In the wake of technological advancements, military warfare has started to upgrade itself by utilizing artificial intelligence arms and autonomous weapons in war.

The use of military robots has dated back in World War II and the Cold War through German and Soviet teletanks—remote-controlled tanks. As time progresses, technology has brought robot drones, autonomous warplanes, robotic guns and tanks, and surveillance bots.

Many developed countries have invested in autonomous robot research. The United States of America has invested millions of dollars for the development of military robots since 2003. Russia has developed a humanoid military robot called “Iron Man” last 2016. The Chinese Army has also developed biomorphic robots that is specialized for urban reconnaissance and bomb disposals.

Currently, unmanned military devices have been used in wars to kill humans, spy on enemies, and for transportation. However, recently, classified documents from the USA have been exposed detailing the US drone warfare which has assassinated a large number of people without confirmation of who the victims are.





Last year, during the International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Buenos Aires, Argentina, a group of 1000 AI experts and leading researchers who include Steve Wozniak, Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, and others, has signed an open letter warning of a “military artificial intelligence arms race” and calling for a ban on “offensive autonomous weapons.”

This is due to concern of growing use of AIs and robots in wars, causing a potential mass killing of humans without any liability. This has also voiced concern to ban these “offensive weapons” such as the latest ban on blinding lasers.

There are no currently effective resolutions or treaty created by the United Nations on banning AIs and automated weapons in warfare.

Potential AI Warfare Threats

As of this time, majority of AI producers and innovators are developed countries such as the USA, Russia, and China. These are also the countries involved in major global conflicts such as the Syrian Civil War and the South China Sea Disputes. Many of these countries have been utilizing technological warfare to advance in conflicts.

Many AI experts and researchers such as Steve Wozniak and Stephen Hawking have already voiced their concern over the potential threat that AIs might bring to humanity. It might be brought as a tool to quickly annihilate each other. Another possibility is that developed countries might use technology to influence and take over developing countries especially in major conflicts.





Many also worry that these automated weapons might reach the hands of terrorists in large scale numbers. This will intensify the danger and casualties of both terrorist and military forces.

Automated weapons and AIs are without a doubt are more efficient in wars as with most activities. However, the current society is not yet equipped with proper legislation and system that can handle such power.

Major Parties Involved

Many **DEVELOPED COUNTRIES** such as the United States of America (USA), Russia, China, and South Korea use robots in their military, both in external and internal military activities. They also lead in the invention of new military robots that is now used in many parts of the world.

CONFLICT AREAS such as Syria and Palestine, are those that are mostly affected using killer robots. There are high chances that killer robots are deployed in these areas to engage in warfare. Also, nations may use robots to exert power over opposing countries.

COUNTRIES IN DISPUTES such as Southeast Asian countries, China, and North and South Korea may use military robots to their advantage in these conflicts. However richer countries in dispute may have more access to this kind of technology.

Formed by the ten non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Human Rights Watch, Nobel Women's Initiative and among others, at a meeting in New York on 19 October 2012 and launched in London in April 2013, the **CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS** is an international coalition working to preemptively ban fully autonomous weapons.



Timeline of Key Events

2009

September: Noel Sharkey, Jürgen Altmann, Peter Asaro, and Rob Sparrow agree to establish the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC), calling, inter alia, for “prohibition of the development, deployment and use of armed autonomous unmanned systems”

2010

August: A report by United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Prof. Philip Alston, finds that, “Urgent consideration needs to be given to the legal, ethical and moral implications of the development and use of robotic technologies, especially but not limited to uses for warfare.”

October: ICRAC convenes its first workshop in Berlin where its members call for an international treaty to prohibit development, acquisition, deployment, and use of armed autonomous robot weapons.

2012

March 5: British NGO Article 36 calls for a ban on military systems that are able to select and attack targets autonomously.

October 19: Representatives from seven NGOs meet in New York and agree to form a coordinated civil society “Campaign to Stop Killer Robots” aimed at securing a preemptive prohibition on the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons.

November 19: Human Rights Watch and Harvard Law School’s International Human Rights Clinic launch a 49-page report Losing Humanity: The Case Against Killer Robots, which calls for a pre-emptive ban on fully autonomous weapons.

November 21: The US Department of Defense issues a policy directive on autonomous weapons, making the US the first government to spell out its policy on these weapons.

2013

May 30: During the first Human Rights Council debate on lethal autonomous robotics following the presentation of the report by the UN special rapporteur on extra-judicial killings.

June 17: UK parliament holds its first-ever adjournment debate on lethal autonomous robots.

September 3: More than 20 countries attend a seminar convened by France at the UN in Geneva on fully autonomous weapons systems.

October: During the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security in New York.



2013

November 11-15: At the Convention on Conventional Weapons in Geneva, 35 nations expressed their views on autonomous weapons systems.

November 15: States parties to the Convention on Conventional Weapons agree to a mandate to begin work in 2014 on the emerging technology of “lethal autonomous weapons systems.”

2014

February 6-7: US Naval War College holds a workshop on “legal implications of autonomous weapons systems” attended by armed forces representatives from the US, Australia, Canada, Israel, and UK

February 27: By a vote of 534–49, the European Parliament adopt its first resolution calling for a ban on “development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention”

May 13-16: Representatives from 87 nations, UN agencies, the ICRC, and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots participate in the first multilateral meeting on “lethal autonomous weapons systems” at the UN in Geneva. Convened under the auspices of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), the informal meeting features presentations by 18 experts on technical, ethical, legal, and operational questions raised by the weapons.

October: During the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security in New York, 23 governments include killer robots in their remarks.

November 14: Nations agree to hold a second Convention on Conventional Weapons meeting 2015 on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

2015

April 13-17: Representatives from 90 nations, UN agencies, the ICRC, and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots attend the second Convention on Conventional Weapons meeting on lethal autonomous weapons systems, chaired by Ambassador Michael Biontino of Germany.

July 28: More than 1,000 artificial intelligence and robotics researchers and 15,000 other endorsers sign an open letter calling for a ban on autonomous weapons. By January 2016, more than 3,000 AI experts have signed the call.

October: At the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security in New York, 32 governments and five groups of states raise autonomous weapons concerns.

November 13: Nations agree to hold a third meeting in 2016 to continue deliberations on lethal autonomous weapons systems at the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW).



2016

January 21: The World Economic Forum and TIME convene a panel of disarmament, weapons, and robotics experts to consider “what if robots went to war?” in Davos, Switzerland. Killer robots were first raised at the forum during a 2015 panel on technology.

February 4: A report for the Human Rights Council on the proper management of assemblies by two Special Rapporteurs recommends that: “Autonomous weapons systems that require no meaningful human control should be prohibited.” This upgrades a moratorium call first issued by one of the Special Rapporteurs in 2013.

March: The ethics council of the \$830 billion Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global announces that it intends to begin monitoring companies investing in the potential development of fully autonomous weapons systems and see if such investments would be contrary to the fund’s investment policies and ethical guidelines.

April 11-15: Third Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems

April 17-19: Campaign to Stop Killer Robots strategy retreat, meetings in the Hague with officials and parliamentarians, public forum at De Balie in Amsterdam

April 20-22: International Committee for Robot Arms Control meeting in London

October: At the 71st session of the UNGA First Committee on Disarmament, at least 36 states have expressed support for the CCW process to address lethal autonomous weapons systems during the general and/or conventional weapons debates. Almost every country to address killer robots at UNGA expressed strong support for creating a Group of Governmental Experts at the CCW’s Review Conference in December. Russia, UK, and the US were notable exceptions.

December 16: At the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons states establish a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to formalize the process on lethal autonomous weapons and meet for two weeks in 2017. China for the first time called for new international law on killer robots.



Appendix

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