

**AMNESTY
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Amnesty International supports calls for a prohibition on lethal autonomous weapons systems, including less-lethal robotic weapons, used in and out of armed conflict situations

CCW Informal Meeting of Experts
On Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)
13-16 May 2014

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you Ambassador for this opportunity for Amnesty International to outline its main concerns.

Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) raise serious human rights concerns, threatening the right to life, potentially undermining other human rights, and raising important issues related to accountability for human rights violations and individual criminal responsibility.

Amnesty International views the CCW mandate as a positive step towards establishing an internationally agreed response to LAWS. Amnesty International believes it imperative to address the human rights implications of LAWS both in and out of situations of armed conflict. An important aspect of the discussion of LAWS in the CCW will be exploration of whether the CCW process can effectively address or contribute to addressing the use of LAWS in situations not involving armed conflict, in particular in law enforcement situations.

Amnesty International foresees that the use of LAWS, including “less lethal” robotic weapons that can result in deaths and serious injuries, would result in unlawful killings and injuries both in situations of armed conflict, where international humanitarian law and international human rights law apply, and in law enforcement operations, where only human rights law applies. It is crucial that the applicability of international human rights law, as well as international humanitarian law, be addressed at this meeting.

Amnesty International believes that in law enforcement operations, automated weapon systems without meaningful human control would not be able to correctly assess complex policing situations and comply with relevant standards, which prohibit the use of firearms except in defence against an imminent threat of death or serious injury. Furthermore, in armed conflict situations, we believe that LAWS would not be able to comply with the rules of international humanitarian law, including the requirement to distinguish adequately between combatants and civilians, take necessary precautions to minimize harm to civilians, and to evaluate the proportionality of an attack.

Consequently, Amnesty International supports the call for a prohibition on the use of LAWS, including such weapons when they are “less lethal” and can result in death and serious injury. Even if your government does not share this position at this time, we urge all governments represented here to publicly support and implement the call by the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions to impose a moratorium on the development, transfer, deployment and use of LAWS. Such a moratorium should also cover robotic weapons that are “less lethal”, because they could easily cause injuries with fatal consequences.

We further urge countries represented at this meeting to develop and articulate a national policy on the multiple challenges posed by LAWS including “less lethal” automated robotic weapons;

And we urge delegations to support a renewed CCW mandate in November 2014 that creates a formal Group of Governmental Experts that dedicates more time to the topic in 2015, and expands the work with a view to future negotiations.

We encourage each delegation to send a representative to the side events each day this week hosted by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, of which Amnesty International is a member.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.