



# Resource Guide

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## **WFUNA International Model United Nations New York City 2024**

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*Intercontinental Times Square and The Westin Times Square*

**General Assembly First Committee**

**Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)**





Welcome to WFUNA International Model United Nations New York 2024.

We are very pleased to introduce you to the most authentic simulation of the United Nations in the world; and hope to contribute to your understanding of the Organisation, its mandate, and its critical role in global affairs.

Through a series of pre-conference webinars that will be offered and documents – like this resource guide – we aim to educate you not only about the global issues on the UN agenda, but also about the ways and means through which those topics are discussed, debated and negotiated by real UN diplomats.

This resource guide will provide you with a head start in doing research to gain a deeper understanding of the global issue that you will be discussing and the actions that the government you have been assigned recommends that the international community should take to address this issue. To make the research process a bit easier, the resource guide has been divided into sections and subsections to assist you in researching these two components. We strongly recommend you to give a careful look through the sources listed below so that the interaction with your peers is as exciting as possible.

We wish you all the very best in this journey of learning!





## Topic Description

According to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs there is no agreed definition for Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). However, they can be broadly characterized as weapons systems that select and apply force to targets and enemy combatants without direct human intervention.

Although there is agreement that International Humanitarian Law (IHL) applies to regulating these weapon systems, there is broad agreement that they pose unique risks and challenges that pose profound ethical and legal questions. Some of these risks and challenges, such as, the loss of control of the system, risk of proliferation ,and risk of acquisition by terrorist groups could result in catastrophic threats to international peace and security.

Given that these technologies are increasingly being developed and tested and might soon be deployed, there is an urgent need for the international community to not only commit to upholding and strengthening compliance with IHL, but to develop effective and multilateral agreements that limit the development, deployment and use of LAWS and that prohibit those that cannot be used in compliance with IHL.

According to IHL, the lawful use of autonomous weapon systems, as broadly defined, will require that combatants retain a level of human control so that a human operator can maintain the ability to cancel an attack if it will violate some aspect of the IHL. Human combatants must be held accountable if these regulations are violated. Consequently, these legal obligations cannot be transferred to a machine, computer program or weapon system.

In 2019, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres stated that, “machines with the power and discretion to take lives without human involvement are politically unacceptable, morally repugnant and should be prohibited by international law.” He has called on Member States to agree on a legally binding instrument by 2026, that will prohibit lethal autonomous weapon systems that function without any human control or oversight.



## Official Resources on the Topic

- [The challenge of regulating lethal autonomous weapons](#)  
**Summary:** Short video that tries to answer the questions What are countries doing to regulate LAWS? And how can international law and the UN respond to this challenge?  
**Published:** 2023
- [Counter-terrorism 'rhetoric' used to justify rise of surveillance technology: human rights expert](#)  
**Summary:** The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights warned that the unregulated transfer of high-risk technologies to States engaging in systematic human rights violations must end. In her report she calls for the prohibition of LAWS based on their potential to evade accountability for the violation of basic human rights.  
**Published:** 2023
- [Weighing Benefits, Risks of Digital Revolution, Speakers in General Assembly Urge Action, Regulation to Ensure Technology Facilitates Development, Not Inequality](#)  
**Summary:** The UN website Meetings Coverage provides summary records of meetings and is a good source for what Member States have said during meetings. This is an example from the General Debate at the start of the General Assembly's 78th Session when high level representatives from Member States made speeches some of which touched on LAWS.  
**Published:** 2023
- [Treaties Trampled, Tenets of World Order Contested, Disarmament Machinery Mired in Chronic Paralysis, First Committee Speakers Hear During Debate](#)  
[With Peace and Security Architecture Imperilled, First Committee Must Spotlight Disarmament in Multilateral Efforts to Ease Tensions, Says High Representative](#)



**Summary:** The UN website Meetings Coverage provides summary records of meetings and is a good source for what Member States have said during meetings. This is an example from two recent meetings in the First Committee on 2 and 10 October 2023 where some comments were made on this issue. Some statements made by Member States touched on LAWS. Delegates should regularly check this site for any recent comments that may be made prior to the conference.

**Published:** 2023

- [Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons](#)

**Summary:** Updated website of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems first convened in 2014 to discuss the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS). All documents including final reports from recent sessions and working papers submitted from Member States can be accessed through this website.

**Published:** 2022

- [UNIDIR on Lethal Autonomous Weapons](#)

**Summary:** The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has been studying the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies since 2013. Over this period, the Institute has produced 15 in-depth studies on this issue that have largely focused on considerations that the Group of Government Experts (GGE) on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) has identified as having particular relevance to this issue. To support the GGE's ongoing discussions in 2021 and beyond, this report summarizes a range of key contributions that these studies have made in these areas. Each section provides a brief summary of the topic as it has been discussed within the context of the GGE.

**Published:** 2021



- [Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems \(LAWS\)](#)  
**Summary:** First approach to the concept of Legal Autonomous Weapons and the United Nations Position. The UNODA Site must be the primary UN resource on this topic for delegates. Definition of the concept and description of AI's role in the use of LAWS.  
**Published:** n.d.
- [Autonomous weapons that kill must be banned](#)  
**Summary:** Call from the UN Secretary General to ban autonomous weapons. News on the latest statement of the UN Secretary General to address the use of LAWS.  
**Published:** 2019
- [The role of the UN in addressing emerging technologies in the area of LAWS](#)  
**Summary:** The chapter "The role of the United Nations in addressing emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems" will help to understand what the United Nations can and cannot do in addressing LAWS.  
**Published:** 2019
- [A legal perspective: Autonomous weapon systems under international humanitarian law](#)  
**Summary:** Legal perspective on issues raised by autonomous weapon systems under international humanitarian law (IHL) by the International Red Cross (IRC). Chapter two describes how International Humanitarian Law lacks regulations to address LAWS. Chapter 7 describes how the use of LAWS can violate IHL and raises the issue of accountability gaps that would make it difficult to prosecute human rights violations. Great introduction to the intersection of LAWS and humanitarian law.  
**Published:** 2018



- [A robotocist’s perspective on lethal autonomous weapon systems](#)

**Summary:** Robotocist’s ethical perspective on lethal autonomous weapon systems. Describes the ethics on the autonomy of robots, robots architecture, governors, etc.

**Published:** 2017

- [Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions](#)

**Summary:** An early document published by the Human Rights Council that identified concerns early on about the development of LAWS which a decade ago were referred to as Lethal autonomous robotics (LARs). These concerns included whether they can be programmed to comply with the requirements of international humanitarian law and the standards protecting life under international human rights law. The report recommends that States establish a national moratoria on aspects of LARs, and calls for the establishment of a high level panel on LARs to articulate a policy for the international community on the issue.

**Published:** 2013

- [Final report : Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects](#)

**Summary:** The CCW Convention's Group of Governmental Experts has adopted 11 guiding principles (originally proposed by France and Germany) emphasizing the necessity of human control and the applicability of international humanitarian law to “all weapons systems, including the potential development and use of lethal autonomous weapons systems. The document contains the 11 guiding principles in Annex III to the report.

**Published:** 2019



## Official Statements/Documents issued by Member-States

### Statements

- [Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems](#)

**Summary:** Video links to all 10 meetings of the 2nd Session Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems from 15-19 May 2023, where Member States considered proposals and possible measures related to the framework on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems .

**Published:** 2023

- [Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects](#)

**Summary:** This non-paper was prepared by the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) at the request of the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on emerging technologies in the area of LAWS, in order to facilitate discussions of the Group. It contains a compilation of definitions and characterizations of Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) or Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) submitted by individual and groups of Member States in various Working Papers from 2017-2023. Good source of country positions on this topic. Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. Member States identify important elements in order to define LAWS.

**Published:** 2023





- [Remarks by Ambassador Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan at the meeting of Group of Governmental Experts \(GGE\) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems \(LAWS\)](#)

**Summary:** From page 3 to 5, the representative expounds Pakistan's proposal to address the use of LAWS and the national efforts implemented.

**Published:** 2023

- [Statement of the Chinese Delegation at the Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons at the First Committee of the 77th Session of the UNGA](#)

**Summary:** Statement of the Chinese Delegation at the Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons at the First Committee of the 77th Session of the UNGA. It is the summary of China's position regarding LAWS and other weapons. It was well described by the Global Security Initiative (GSI), which is the mechanism proposed by China to tackle this issue.

**Published:** 2022

- [Statement delivered by Ambassador Ichiro OGASAWARA of Japan](#)

**Summary:** Japan's statement during the meeting of The Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems.

**Published:** 2022

- [Joint Statement on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems First Committee, 77th United Nations General Assembly Thematic Debate](#)

**Summary:** Joint Statement on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in the GA First Committee submitted on behalf of 77 Member States

**Published:** 2022

- [U.S. STATEMENT AT THE GGE ON LAWS DURING THE DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEM 5\(D\)](#)

**Summary:** U.S. STATEMENT AT THE GGE ON LAWS DURING THE DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEM 5(D). The statement describes the internal



procedures for review and testing and application of IHL requirements in three general scenarios for the use of autonomous functions in weapon systems.

**Published:** 2021

- [Document of the Russian Federation «Considerations for the report of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems](#)

**Summary:** Considerations for the report of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems on the outcomes of the work undertaken in 2017-2021. From page 3 to 4 Russia declares explicitly its commitments to tackle the issue.

**Published:** 2021

- [Operationalization of the 11 guiding principles at national level - Comments by France](#)

**Summary:** The CCW Convention's Group of Governmental Experts has adopted 11 guiding principles (originally proposed by France and Germany) emphasizing the necessity of human control and the applicability of international humanitarian law to “all weapons systems, including the potential development and use of lethal autonomous weapons systems. The document provides comments by France on how these 11 guiding principles can be operationalized.

**Published:** 2019

- [States Call for Enhanced Arms Control Strategies to Regulate ‘Killer Robots’, Stem Rising Tide of Illegal Weapons, Delegates Tell First Committee](#)

**Summary:** A statement made by the Nigerian representative exposed some of the steps taken by the government to address the use of LAWS.

**Published:** 2019



- [Statement on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems \(LAWS\) Weapon Legal Review by Counsellor Deputy Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament](#) **Summary:** Position of Israel exposed in the Group of Experts meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). From page 2 to 3, Israel exposes legal aspects that must be considered in the framework to address the use of LAWS.

**Published:** 2016

- [CCW STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA AT THE MEETING OF EXPERTS ON LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS \(LAWS\)](#)

**Summary:** CCW STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA AT THE MEETING OF EXPERTS ON LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS (LAWS), GENEVA, SWITZERLAND 2014. Statement exposing South Africa's position.

**Published:** 2014

### **Documents**

- [Proposal for an international legal instrument on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems \(LAWS\)](#)

**Summary:** Proposal for an international legal instrument on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) submitted by Pakistan. Provides a possible categorization for types of LAW. It also includes important dimensions that should be considered in a legal instrument to regulate LAWS.

**Published:** 2023

- [Draft articles on autonomous weapon systems – prohibitions and other regulatory measures on the basis of international humanitarian law \(“IHL”\)](#)

**Summary:** Draft articles on autonomous weapon systems – prohibitions and other regulatory measures on the basis of international humanitarian law (IHL) submitted by Australia, Canada, Japan, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Provides the agreement among some countries on the principles on Emerging Technologies.

**Published:** 2023



- [Defense Primer: U.S. Policy on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems](#)  
**Summary:** Provides a summary of the United States Policy on Lethal Autonomous Weapons.  
**Published:** 2023
- [International Discussions Concerning Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems](#)  
**Summary:** Document published by the United States Congressional Research Service that provides an overview of which countries support the ban of LAWS and which countries do not want to ban them. It also includes a brief summary of the arguments for and against a LAWS ban including a focus on the positions held by the United States, Russia and China.  
**Published:** 2023
- [LATIN AMERICAN AND THE CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON THE SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS.](#)  
**Summary:** A timeline that describes the efforts done by Latin American countries to address the use of autonomous weapons. In 2021, Costa Rica launched the national campaign “For a country free of autonomous weapons: technology at the service of peace” and pledged to work for a legally binding instrument to ban fully autonomous weapons systems and maintain meaningful human control over the use of force.  
**Published:** 2023
- [Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons](#)  
**Summary:** Updated website of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems first convened in 2014 to discuss the questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS). All documents including final reports from recent sessions and working papers submitted from Member States can be accessed through this website.  
**Published:** 2022



- [Presentation and position of France](#)

**Summary:** Member State positions are sometimes found on their official governments websites. This is an example of how one Member States, the Government of France published its position on Lethal Autonomous Weapons. It describes the challenges posed by LAWS and summarizes how France thinks they should be defined.

**Published:** n.d.

- [Proposal: Roadmap Towards New Protocol on Autonomous Weapons Systems](#)

**Summary:** Roadmap Towards New Protocol on Autonomous Weapons Systems submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Sierra Leone, State of Palestine, Uruguay. It recognizes the need to define LAWS and outlines ethical considerations that must be taken into account.

**Published:** 2022

- [Approach to the delivery of AI-enabled capability in Defence](#)

**Summary:** The executive summary on page 3 describes the national strategy that the UK proposes a Defense AI Strategy ensuring safety and responsibility.

**Published:** 2022

- [ELEMENTS FOR A FUTURE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK CONDUCTIVE TO A LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT TO ADDRESS THE ETHICAL HUMANITARIAN AND LEGAL CONCERNS POSED BY EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN THE AREA OF \(LETHAL\) AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS \(LAWS\)](#)

**Summary:** From page 4 to 5, the three countries enlist recommendations that must be considered for a legal framework regarding LAWS. From page 6 to 8, the three countries enlist recommendations for regulations and prohibitions regarding LAWS.

**Published:** 2021



- [OPINION ON THE INTEGRATION OF AUTONOMY INTO LETHAL WEAPON SYSTEMS](#)

**Summary:** Position of France in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons: LAWS. From page 4 to 8, France describes its position regarding LAWS and enlists the principles and guidelines that must be followed to tackle the issue.

**Published:** 2021

- [National commentary by the Kingdom of the Netherlands regarding the national interpretation and implementation of the Guiding Principles affirmed by the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons System](#)

**Summary:** National commentary by the Kingdom of the Netherlands regarding the national interpretation and implementation of the Guiding Principles affirmed by the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons System. The Kingdom of the Netherlands explicitly shows its commitment with each guiding principle made and any further comment.

**Published:** 2020



## Official Statements/Documents issued by Intergovernmental Organizations, Regional & Political Groups

- [CARICOM STATES CALL FOR URGENT NEGOTIATION OF NEW INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT TO PROHIBIT AND REGULATE AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS.](#)

**Summary:** Declaration adopted by CARICOM at a two-day regional Conference on the Human Impacts of Autonomous Weapons in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 5-6 September 2023. The Declaration represents a significant step for the Region in advancing CARICOM's position regarding autonomous weapons systems.

**Published:** 2023

- [Emergence of lethal autonomous weapons systems \(LAWS\) and their necessary apprehension through European human rights law](#)

**Summary:** Draft Resolution the emergence of LAWS from the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights within the European Council.

**Published:** 2020

## Official Documents about the situation in UN Regions or Member-States Non-Official Resources about the Topic

- [33 states call for urgent negotiation of new international law to limit autonomous weapons](#)

**Summary:** Article about the historic call from 33 Latin American and Caribbean States for “the urgent negotiation of an international legally binding instrument on autonomy in weapons systems.”

**Published:** 2023

- [Special Committee on AI in Weapon Systems hears evidence from experts on ethical and human rights issues](#)



**Summary:** The fourth session of the newly created Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in Weapon Systems heard evidence from experts on ethical and human rights issues. The Special Committee was established by the UK's House of Lords Liaison Committee.

**Published:** 2023

- [GGE on lethal autonomous weapons systems](#)

**Summary:** Provides a short concise summaries of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems. The *Digital Watch* is an initiative of the Geneva Internet Platform, supported by the Swiss Confederation and the Republic and Canton of Geneva.

**Published:** 2023

- [Laws on LAWS: Regulating the Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems](#)

**Summary:** This article examines the ongoing debate on LAWS, and proposes options for regulation. It categorizes the positions on LAWS into three approaches: the pessimistic, the optimistic, and the realist viewpoints, analyzes arguments for and against regulation, and discusses potential pathways for addressing the challenges posed by LAWS and highlights the risks of unregulated adoption of LAWS.

**Published:** 2023

- [Stop Killer Robots in UK Universities](#)

**Summary:** Investigation into the role of UK universities in the development of autonomous weapons systems (AWS). It was discovered that some universities in the UK received significant funding from the UK's Ministry of Defence and have links with the developers of AWS technology.

**Published:** 2022

- [Killer Robots Are Here—and We Need to Regulate Them](#)

**Summary:** Opinion piece on "Killer Robots" published in the magazine FP (Foreign Policy).on what we need to do to regulate them. .

**Published:** 2022





- [The threat of killer robots](#)

**Summary:** An opinion Article written for the UNESCO journal named *Courier* on the threat of killer robots. It argues that while AI will provide assistance to combatants, the time has come to start to worry”about the day when armies of robots are capable of conducting hostilities with full autonomy, without humans to command them.” This article examines why we should be concerned.

**Published:** 2018

- [Regulating autonomy in weapon systems](#)

**Summary:** A PowerPoint from the Institute of European Studies on the regulation of autonomous weapons represents. Provides an overview on current concerns about the use of LAWS and recommendations that must be taken into consideration.

**Published:** n.d.

- [Stop Killer Robots Campaign](#)

**Summary:** Website of an NGO promoting a campaign to Stop “Killer Robots”. You can find information on the problems with autonomous weapons, how to join the campaign and more.

**Published:** n.d.

- [The push to prohibit Slaughterbots](#)

**Summary:** Main page of Future of Life Institute that looks to steer transformative technologies away from extreme, large-scale risks and towards benefiting life. You can find news related to autonomous weapons and actions by the Institute to promote the regulation of the usage of this kind of weapons. The Institute aims to ensure that artificial intelligence remains safe, ethical and beneficial.

**Published:** n.d.



## Non-Official Resources about Member-States or UN Regions

- [Australia is Lagging in its Approach to Autonomous Weapons](#)  
**Summary:** The Australian Institute of International Affairs describes Australia's position and government efforts to control the development of new technologies.  
**Published:** 2023
- [US: New Policy on Autonomous Weapons Flawed](#)  
**Summary:** Report by the Human Rights Watch of the flaws in a new policy on autonomous weapons systems published by the USA.  
**Published:** 2023
- [Africa's participation in international processes related to AI](#)  
**Summary:** African diplomats are involved in discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) and some countries have clear positions regarding this topic. So far, 30 African states have called for a ban on lethal autonomous weapons – including their development and production. This article provides an overview of the involvement of African countries in these discussions.  
**Published:** 2021
- [Stopping Killer Robots Country Positions on Banning Fully Autonomous Weapons and Retaining Human Control](#)  
**Summary:** Description of 97 different countries' positions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons published by Human Rights Watch. It includes countries such as Argentina, Belgium, China, Canada, France, etc. It works as one of the first approaches towards knowing different countries' positions.  
**Published:** 2020
- [Legal and Policy Implications of Autonomous Weapons Systems](#)  
**Summary:** Legal and Policy perspective of the Implications of Autonomous Weapons Systems taking into account International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law. Provides an overview of some countries' positions



on LAWS (USA, India, China, Cuba, Finland, Estonia, France, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, UK and the Netherlands).

**Published:** 2020

- [South Africa should lead effort to ban killer robots](#)

**Summary:** The Institute for International and Comparative Law in Africa (ICLA) based in South Africa outlines its position on LAWS.

**Published:** 2018

- [China's Strategic Ambiguity and Shifting Approach to Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems](#)

**Summary:** This article provides an overview of China's shifting approach to LAWS.

**Published:** 2018



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