



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

UK Section Limited Company number 14007981

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Consultative
Status with
United Nations
ECOSOC,
UNCTAD and
UNESCO

Special
Consultative
Relations
with FAO,
ILO and
UNICEF

30 September 2023

Dear Prime Minister

United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Autonomous Weapons Systems

We are writing to urge the United Kingdom to support the resolution on autonomous weapons systems to be tabled at the First Committee on Disarmament and International Security of the upcoming 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York in October 2023.

After 10 years of multilateral discussions without concrete outcomes, progress is urgently required to safeguard against the serious legal, ethical, humanitarian and security risks posed by autonomous weapons systems. The call for an international legally binding instrument to address these challenges is supported by over 90 States, the International Committee of the Red Cross, experts in technology and artificial intelligence, and civil society organisations around the world. The UN Secretary-General has repeatedly issued calls on States to urgently launch negotiations for new international law, describing autonomous weapons as 'morally repugnant and politically unacceptable'.

The First Committee resolution calls for the UN Secretary-General to seek the views of States and stakeholders and submit recommendations for a way forward. It is crucial to support international engagement on this issue and build momentum towards launching negotiations. We call upon the United Kingdom to support the resolution by co-sponsoring it and by voting in favour of it at the First Committee in October and at the UNGA voting session in December. Beyond this resolution, we also urge the UK to commit to making urgent progress towards establishing a new international law on autonomous weapons systems, and to articulate this commitment in statements to the UNGA high-level debate in September and to the First Committee in October.

Given your desire to position the UK as an AI governance leader, it is imperative to stay ahead of the ethical, humanitarian, industry and legal developments afoot. It is therefore surprising that His Majesty's Government appears slow to take heed of such recommendations as set out in the recent *Governance of Artificial Intelligence: interim report – Report Summary*, dated 31 August 2023, which warns that "its proposed approach is already risking falling behind the pace of development of AI" as well as that "this threat is made more acute by the efforts of other jurisdictions and the frameworks that they lay down may become the default even if they are less effective than what the UK can offer."

A briefing paper by Stop Killer Robots, a coalition of 230+ civil society organisations from 70+ States, containing five reasons why States should support the resolution, is enclosed.

Thank you for your support.
Yours in peace

Taniel Yusef
for WILPF UK Executive Committee

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
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Challenge militarism: invest in peace





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for WILPF UK Executive Committee

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
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