



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

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Item 3 : Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

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The International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) and the Europe - Third World Centre (CETIM) welcome the decision of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, in order to draw attention to the use of drones and other lethal robots. These new weapon systems, which could be used to assassinate suspects all around the world, pose a very serious threat to international peace and security. US drone strikes have been launched in several countries and have already killed approximately 3.000 people in Pakistan alone. Many of them were civilians.

We express our grave concern about the development and future proliferation of Lethal autonomous robotics (LARs). Although they would pose many of the same dangers as robotic drones, which are currently in use, LARs would take these dangers to the extreme by omitting human beings from the decision about whether and when to kill other human beings. This has profound implications for violating the prohibition of the arbitrary deprivation of the right to life as well as the IHL principles of *proportionality* and *distinction*. *Distinction* prohibits the targeting of civilians and indiscriminate attacks. *Proportionality* requires measuring the expected harm to civilians against the anticipated military advantage. These principles require distinctively human judgment, often involving qualitative rather than quantitative judgments.

Because of the aversion to risking lives of human soldiers, States that use LARs may more readily deploy LARs than real human soldiers, and lower the threshold for using lethal force, thereby violating the principle of *last resort*. This principle requires that the use of lethal force be the last resort after all peaceful means have been exhausted. Moreover, LARs are unable to distinguish legal from illegal orders. LARs cannot be held legally accountable for violations of international law.

As stated by the Special Rapporteur, the use of these robots can threaten State sovereignty, creating serious international division and weakening the rule of international law. Moreover, “military technology is easily transferred into the civilian sphere,” and LARs could thus be used by States to suppress all kind of social protests and peaceful demonstrations. There are serious concerns about legal accountability. Indeed the many levels likely to be involved in decisions about deployment could result in a potential accountability gap or vacuum.

However we consider that the SR did not draw the necessary conclusions from his study. National

moratoria are not a sufficient solution. The development, production and use of LARs must be outright banned under any circumstances. Peoples of the world need peace and not “higher force projection”, “force multiplication” or other ‘benefits’ offered by these new lethal technologies.

Thank you.