



**CAMPAIGN TO STOP
KILLER ROBOTS**



Regional Meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWs)

9-10 December, 2019, Islamabad, Pakistan

Sustainable Peace and Development Organization (SPADO)
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Acknowledgement:

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*Raza Shah Khan
Chief Executive, SPADO
Spokesperson for the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots*

The Problem

Over the past decade, the expanded use of unmanned armed vehicles and drones has dramatically changed warfare, bringing new humanitarian and legal challenges. Now rapid advances in technology are resulting in efforts to develop fully autonomous weapons. These Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) also called Fully Autonomous Weapons or Robotic Weapons would be able to choose and fire on targets on their own, without any human intervention. This capability would pose a fundamental challenge to the protection of civilians and to compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law.

Several nations with high-tech militaries, particularly the United States, China, Israel, South Korea, Russia, and the United Kingdom are moving toward systems that would give greater combat autonomy to machines. If one or more chooses to deploy fully autonomous weapons, a large step beyond remote-controlled armed drones, others may feel compelled to abandon policies of restraint, leading to a robotic arms race. Agreement is needed now to establish controls on these weapons before investments, technological momentum, and new military doctrine make it difficult to change course.

Allowing life or death decisions to be made by machines crosses a fundamental moral line. Autonomous robots would lack human judgment and the ability to understand context. These qualities are necessary to make complex ethical choices on a dynamic battlefield, to distinguish adequately between soldiers and civilians, and to evaluate the proportionality of an attack. As a result, fully autonomous weapons would not meet the requirements of the laws of war.

Replacing human troops with machines could make the decision to go to war easier, which would shift the burden of armed conflict further onto civilians. The use of fully autonomous weapons would create an accountability gap as there is no clarity on who would be legally responsible for a robot's actions: the commander, programmer, manufacturer, or robot itself? Without accountability, these parties would have less incentive to ensure robots did not endanger civilians and victims would be left unsatisfied that someone was punished for the harm they experienced.

Pakistan Position

Pakistan was the first country that called for fully autonomous weapons to be prohibited in May 2013 and since then and it has repeatedly urged the creation of a new international ban instrument on autonomous weapons. Pakistan has expressed multiple concerns with these weapons, finding that they will violate international humanitarian and human rights law as well as lower the threshold for going to war. Pakistan participated in the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) meetings on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) in 2014-2016. Its representative Ambassador Tehmina Janjua served as president of the CCW's Fifth Review Conference in December 2016, where states agreed to establish a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on LAWS. Since then Pakistan has championed the process and has actively participated in all the GGE meetings in Geneva calling for a legally binding treaty to prohibit LAWS.

Goals and Objectives:

Regional cooperation and collaboration are one of the important factors to generate greater governmental and public support towards a legally binding instrument on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWs). Despite the existing regional cooperation forums like South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), there is no regional approach developed or being adopted by the governments in the South Asian region that could contribute towards the environment of mutual trust, understanding and appreciation. There is also a lack of collaboration and coordination among the civil society to have collective voices and joint actions. Keeping in view the leading role of Pakistan to prohibit LAWs and a supportive environment in the region to address the issue, a regional meeting inviting members of the campaign and other relevant organizations was held in Islamabad on 9-10 December, 2019. The major objectives of the regional were:

- To discuss and share information and experiences regarding the current and future work on LAWs;
- To generate more regional support for a legally binding instrument on LAWs;
- To explore and promote cooperation mechanisms in the region that could support the goals of the campaign;
- To build momentum in the region and highlight the issue at the national and regional levels through the engagement of media;

Summary

The two days regional meeting brought together civil society activists and members of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots from the South and Central Asia region. Campaigners, diplomats, practitioners and government officials along with staff of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots attended the meeting. The meeting was divided in three sessions, the first session provided an overview about the status of the discussion both within and outside the UN system including the advocacy efforts of the campaign at the national, regional and global levels. In the second session, the focus remained on the promotion of regional support among the civil society organizations and to propose or develop a framework of cooperation for collective actions and sharing of knowledge and information. The Third session provided an open forum for the exchange of information and views among experts and practitioners and offered an opportunity for countries in the region to discuss about the possibilities to build increased momentum towards a comprehensive regional approach in addressing the issue of LAWs.

On the occasion, SPADO hosted an evening reception in which more than 100 participants attended the event including Ambassadors of the countries of the South and Central Asia region, representatives of the diplomatic missions based in Islamabad, think tanks, lawyers, academia, media, government and civil society. On the occasion, Saima Sayed, Director Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a renowned legal expert and ex Minister of Law and Justice, Mr. Ahmer Bilal Soofi, Mr. Raza Shah Khan Chief Executive of SPADO and the Campaign Outreach Manager, Isabelle Jones shed light on various aspects of the autonomous weapons and stressing upon the need for a legally binding treaty to prohibit LAWs. At the end, a media briefing was held where a civil society declaration and press release was issued by the representatives of civil society calling for the regional governments to take urgent steps and enhance regional cooperation toward a legally binding instrument on LAWs.

Day One (December 9, 2019)

Morning Session (09:00-13:00)

Day one of the regional meeting formally started with the campaign's official videos demonstrating the hazards of Fully Autonomous Weapon Systems, and a short introductory clip about the Killer Robots Campaign. The event then began followed by welcome remarks and introductions. Mr. Raza Shah Khan, Chief Executive of SPADO and spokesperson of the campaign explained the goals and objectives of the regional meeting and mentioned that despite many challenges in the region we were able to convene the first ever regional meeting in Islamabad inviting representatives



from South and Central Asia. He said that there are many new and experienced campaigners in the rooms having a variety of experiences and ideas hence it is a good opportunity to learn from each other and share the experiences and information related to various national contexts. He then pointed out the challenges and opportunities for civil society and the need for effective coordination and cooperation to build a strong civil society support for a ban on fully autonomous weapons. He further stated that there are individual approaches rather than a collective regional approach to address disarmament issues such as LAWS. He said that along with cooperation among civil society there is a dire need to promote awareness about the possible devastating impacts of autonomous weapons as awareness about LAWS among the public is lacking in the region. He added that by increasing collaboration among civil society organizations, there is a benefit for all as they are non-political organizations and work beyond biases. He thanked the campaigners for taking their times to attend the Islamabad meeting and extended the gratitude of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots to the Government of Pakistan especially to the office of Director General Arms Control and Disarmament Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the support and facilitation of the visa applications of the participants.

Ms. Isabelle Jones, community outreach manager of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots provided an overview of the autonomous weapons. She elaborated the legal, moral and ethical dimensions of killer robots and said that these weapons will violate fundamental human rights. She said that fully autonomous weapons have not been deployed yet, hence we all need to be extra careful and should continuously strive for a pre-emptive ban on LAWS. These weapons will change the battleground for the future wars reducing the need for soldiers on the ground where the humanitarian drawbacks are far worse than its advantages as perceived.

One of the most important aspects of Isabelle's presentation follows the cyber dimension in which she stated that there are technical concerns over this weapons system as the robots are programmed for certain tasks and for obvious reasons will be operated through devices connected to internet which makes these robots vulnerable to hacking, jamming, spoofing, malfunctioning, etc. They are unable to

handle unanticipated situations on the battlefield. It is hard to decide who should be blamed if the machine takes an action on its own, the programmer or a military commander. Ms. Isabelle emphasized that primary instincts, which also serve as the de-escalation factors such as human compassion and ability to judge etc. will be affected adversely in the wake of the rise of the Lethal Autonomous Weaponry. Thus, the killing will be immoral when the wars will be waged with autonomous weapon systems. As quoted:

“Robots lack situational awareness, contextual understanding and moral reasoning.”

Isabelle also quoted that the machines should not be allowed to take human lives at all costs. The campaign is urging to retain meaningful human control over the use of force and negotiations should start for a new legally binding treaty to prohibit autonomous weapon systems.

Ms. Isabelle, then elaborated the discussions both within and outside the United Nations system and said that in 2014 the LAWs and emerging technologies were discussed in the CCW at the UN in Geneva. From 2014 to 2016, three informal meetings of group of governmental experts were held in Geneva to discuss the issue of LAWs and various possibilities to control such weapons. The latest meeting of CCW on LAWs was held in November 2019 where majority of the states were in favor of a legally binding treaty while another CCW conference is expected in the year 2021. After presentation, the house was open for a question-answer session in which the participants raised points regarding LAWS, the campaign, proliferation, future aspects, legal perspectives, concerns related to regional cooperation etc.



National Overviews and Regional Updates

This session was focused on discussing the positions of regional countries related to fully autonomous weapons systems along with sharing updates at the regional level. During the open and interactive discussions, campaigners from the Central and South Asia regions provided overviews of the national contexts and positions of their countries related to the issue of LAWs.

In the South Asia region Pakistan is championing the cause of prohibiting LAWs through a legally binding treaty and has actively pursued its position in a very constructive way throughout the CCW meetings and during the meetings of the group of governmental experts. It is worth to mention that Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which has 120 member states and another 17 observer states has already issued statements in favor of a legally binding treaty. A regional Conference “Lethal autonomous weapons systems: a preemptive ban” was held in Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan) on April 18-19th, 2019. The Conference was organized by the Kazakhstani non-governmental Center for International Security and Policy with the support of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. The Conference was attended by representatives of various government agencies and non-governmental organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. The goal of this regional Conference that was held in Kazakhstan is to increase awareness about the lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) issue as well as to assist in elaborating the national positions of the states of the region. Campaigners from the Central Asia region also discussed their activities at the national levels and stressed the need for more regional cooperation.



In South Asia the campaigners noted a lack of communication and coordination due to the lack of trust and volatile security situation especially between India and Pakistan



In South Asia the campaigners noted a lack of communication and coordination due to the lack of trust and volatile security situation especially between India and Pakistan. It was also noted that India which was previously supporting the call for a legally binding treaty and the position of NAM in the CCW is unclear and is not explicitly calling for a ban. There were also reports in the international media that India is planning to deploy robots in the Indian held Kashmir. Campaigners from Nepal and Sri Lanka stressed upon the need for a regional approach to address the issue of LAWs and in this regard considered the Islamabad regional meeting as landmark achievement. Both the representatives informed that they will be carrying out advocacy and awareness activities at the national level and will mobilize the civil societies for a ban on killer robots. The need to address the issue of LAWs through the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was also highlighted.



Regional Approaches

During the session, regional approaches to address the issue on LAWs were discussed by delegates from different countries who showed their commitments towards banning fully autonomous weapons.

Kyrgyzstan



Mr. Marat Sadykov and Mr. Taalaibek Bektashev from Kyrgyzstan elaborated the agenda of their organization i.e. Center for Non-proliferation and Export Control, which is an independent, non-profit and nongovernmental organization. They believe that norms should be established to discourage and prohibit the use of Autonomous Weapon Systems. Furthermore, public awareness should be raised about the consequences of using Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems. This would create an environment where the centre is urging the government to take the initiatives against the LAWS. Furthermore, the delegates vowed towards the regulation of the arms control practices under the guidance of the UN. Moreover, remarks were made to carry out the activities in collaboration with the governments to have them on board. because it will not only engage and inform policy makers but at the same time greater public engagement can be ensured. Lastly, the two delegates from Kyrgyzstan emphasized working on regional cooperation and developing a regional approach so as to prevent miscommunication including stressing upon the need for highlighting the legal aspects of prohibiting killer robots.

Nepal



Ms. Shobha Pradhan Shrestha, Executive Chair and Founder of the Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal stressed upon the need for using the artificial intelligence and technology of autonomy towards civilian applications. The delegate insisted that South Asia being a poor region can't afford an arms race in the field of LAWs and hence technology should be used to serve humanity in the field of poverty reduction, health, education etc. The delegate stressed upon the need for acquiring artificial intelligence for civilian uses while minimizing and controlling its military uses. *"We should come out and say no to Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems."* Furthermore, the civil society should act as a watchdog and informed that she will engage her government to do more towards a legally binding treaty. She highlighted the need for regional cooperation and solidarity to address the issue of Autonomous Weaponry.

Kazakhstan



Mr. Alimzhan Akhmetov, Director of the Centre for International Security and Policy, from Kazakhstan in his presentation informed the meeting participants about the work carried out by the Center in Kazakhstan and at the regional level. He emphasized on the national actions along with holding regional meetings and advocacy events to effectively address the issue of LAWs. He mentioned that the

Kazakhstan regional meeting in April 2019 brought together both government and nongovernmental organizations that enhanced knowledge and regional cooperation in the Central Asia region about autonomous weapons. He said that there is a lack of awareness among the general masses about killer robots hence members of the campaign should use the material and resources to promote awareness in the region. He mentioned that the Islamabad regional meeting is a good opportunity for the campaigners where participants from both the Central and South Asia should develop regional strategies and exchange of information and ideas to effectively and collectively raise their voices for a legally binding treaty on LAWS.

Sri Lanka



Mr. Vidya Abhay Gunawardena from the Sri Lanka Campaign to Stop Killer Robots affirmed Sri Lanka as the champion of disarmament and hence can actively contribute towards the struggle to ban autonomous weapon systems. The delegate insisted that the localization of information should be mustered by translating the knowledge about the Killer Robots. Furthermore, the delegate urged that the efforts being made by SPADO and the successful convening of the Islamabad regional meeting should lead us to more coordinated and systematic efforts in our struggle against LAWS. He mentioned that Sri Lanka has always played a positive role in the area of disarmament and will support a legally binding treaty to ban LAWS. He also suggested that joint regional meetings engaging both governments and NGOs should be held to adopt a uniformed regional approach.

Azerbaijan



Mr. Hafiz Safixanov from the Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines reaffirmed his stance to engage both civil society and governments towards a ban on the LAWS in the region. Furthermore, he mentioned Azerbaijan as a state, which is actively involved in the region related to issues of disarmament. He said that we need to engage tech workers and scientists where they can provide more solid and logical support to the civil society in their efforts of prohibiting LAWS. He said that there should be constant efforts at the regional level to keep the agenda of the ban. He mentioned that this is the first meeting he is attending related to LAWS and that it has and will provide knowledge and ideas about working together at the regional level. He assured of his full support and cooperation to promote the cause of a ban on LAWS both at the national and regional levels.

Pakistan



Apart from SPADO being the host organization other experts and youth of various universities attended the meeting. SPADO since the beginning of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is actively engaged at the national, regional and global levels carrying out awareness and advocacy activities and calling for a legally binding treaty. The organization has developed a variety of resources and briefs on the issue of LAWS and has been collaborating with the Pakistan mission in Geneva and Disarmament and Arms Control Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Pakistan is championing the cause of banning LAWs hence can play a very important role at the regional level and from the platform on NAM. The representatives from Pakistan however were concerned about the security situation in Kashmir and the plans of India to acquire and use killer robots. Such kind of events can start a new arm in the field of LAWs where the region being poor and populous need to focus on poverty reduction and economic development. The agenda of banning killer robots should be seen as an opportunity for all the regional states to build trust and consensus towards a Killer Robots free South Asia.

The Islamabad regional meeting has built a new momentum and cooperation among the civil society of South and Central Asia where it was suggested that members of the campaign should focus on regional consensus and carryout joint advocacy events. The future events should build on the lessons learned and success stories of the regional meetings of Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

Challenges and Opportunities

The following were the challenges and opportunities that the participants put forth:

- The support and leading role of the government of Pakistan is an excellent opportunity that could be best utilized in the efforts to ban Killer Robots.
- South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as a regional forum can be a good platform to discuss the issues of disarmament including killer robots. Currently, disarmament is not included in the scope of the SAARC but campaigners in the South Asia region can engage political leaders by sending advocacy letters to the SAARC secretariat.
- Currently there is no such strong opposition to the banning of killer robots in South and Central Asia except Russia. The campaign can effectively engage countries of the region to speak openly and loudly in favor of a legally binding treaty.
- There are issues of inadequate knowledge and capacity in such a big region. Therefore, enhanced regional networking and sharing of information is required.
- Lack of resources with the civil society in South and Central Asia is significant challenge as States are not supporting the civil society in the area of disarmament including LAWs.
- Lack of civil society engagement due mistrust and tensions between neighboring countries have restricted and shrinking the work of civil society in the areas of peace and disarmament.
- The intensions of India to use killer robots in the region may create huge challenges in the South Asian region as other countries may follow, which may lead to a new arms race in the area of LAWs.
- The strong will of the regional campaigners and the Islamabad and Nur Sultan regional meetings should best be cultivated to promote regional collaboration and coordiantion.

Evening Session and Reception

SPADO hosted an evening reception on the occasion of the Islamabad regional meeting, which was largely attended by more than 100 hundred participants from diplomatic missions including Ambassadors of the countries of the South and Central Asia region, civil society activists, lawyers, media, political leaders, academia and think tanks.

The first session was planned to orient the participants about killer robots and the global efforts of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots within and outside the United Nations. Mr. Raza Shah Khan after briefly welcoming the delegates and campaigners of the region explained about the regional meeting and various and its goals and objectives.



Ms. Isabelle Jones mentioned that the campaign to stop killer robots is rapidly growing coalition of non-governmental organizations from civil society, academic partners, individuals who are working together to achieve a ban on fully autonomous weapons also known as Killer Robots or Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. She said “I would like to express my extreme gratitude to the government of Pakistan for encouraging us to hold this regional meeting here in Islamabad and for supporting us to do so, special thank you to Foreign Office for their support and assistance in securing visas for all of our participants of civil society who are joining us from South Asia and Central Asia.

She highlighted the leading role of Pakistan for supporting Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and told participants that in May 2013 Pakistan became the first nation to call for fully autonomous weapons to be prohibited and has repeatedly urged for the creation of new international law and the new treaty on these weapons. She said that Pakistan has expressed multiple concerns with these weapons finding that they will violate the principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law as well as lower thresholds for going to war. She said that the campaign to stop killer robots is extremely grateful for the leadership role that Pakistan has played both in the region and in the world and urges all states to follow calling for the urgent negotiations for the treaty banning fully autonomous weapons.

She told that the campaign was founded in 2012 by a group of disarmament experts who were concerned over increasing autonomy that was found in the development of weapons systems. Many of

the founding members of the campaign to stop killer robots had previously been involved with other successful humanitarian disarmament campaigns that moved to ban other indiscriminate weapons. She mentioned that since it was launched formally in 2013 the coalition has grown to now more than 130 organizations in over 60 countries around the world and it continues to grow more every day. She said that “as the campaign’s Outreach Manager, I’m privileged to work with all of our members around the world to support their work at the national level to urgent action on this very important issue. The Campaign has numerous concerns related to LAWs that how such weapons would lack the meaningful human control and would be able to select and engage targets without human control and intervention.

For the campaign this is an essential element that must be maintained for the good of humanity and the protection of civilians in conflict. Fully Autonomous Weapons raise numerous concerns some of which were outlined in a short video that was presented several times during the event, we believe that they pose a fundamental threat to our future and shared humanity”. She then introduced some of these concerns “Primarily the campaign has ethical and moral concerns we believe that delegating life and death decisions to machines and systems or programs, crosses the fundamental moral line. Fully Autonomous Weapons will lack human judgments and emotions necessary to evaluate the proportionality of an attack, distinguish civilians from combatants and embarked by the other core principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law”.

Even as early if Fully Autonomous Weapons could adequately protect human life that we have our concerns that they would never be able to, they would still be incapable of respecting human dignity. As a machines Fully Autonomous Weapons would not be able to feel compassion or respect for human life or understand the loss. They would make life and death decisions based on algorithms or lines of code producing human as targets to objects. In addition to all the moral and ethical concerns there are also a host of technical issues raised by killer robots has anyone with the cell phone work computer knows technology is not perfect an autonomous system would be no different they would be unpredictable and vulnerable to algorithmic bias hacking, spoofing and other failures.

She told the participants that the campaign to stop killer robots is joined by the thousands of tech workers, programmers and experts in the field of computer science who believe that killer robots would be difficult to tasked, and would be unreliable in the complex and dynamic environments that make a modern warfare and could not be designed to properly comply with the rules of international humanitarian law.

She said that we also know that there are legal concerns around accountability. If they were deployed it's unclear who if anyone could be held responsible for unlawful acts caused by the fully autonomous weapon systems, would it be the programmer? the manufacturer? the commander? Somehow the machine itself? The campaign to stop killer robots seeks a preemptive treaty, this means that we hope that we can



“ If killer robots were deployed it's unclear who if anyone could be held responsible for unlawful acts, would it be the programmer? the manufacturer? the commander? Somehow the machine itself? ”

achieve negotiations over the treaty prohibiting fully autonomous weapons before they are ever used and before there are any victims.

As the campaign we call on all states to launch negotiations for a legally binding instrument that will ensure meaningful human control over the use of force. We also call on states not to develop or acquire fully autonomous weapons and to establish national laws and policies. Around the world the momentum continues to build behind the call to ban killer robots and retaining control. Killer robots are now regarded by many as a major threat to humanity that requires a swift and urgent multilateral action. Our call to ban these systems are echoed by leading experts, world leaders, international institutions and parliamentary bodies, for example, in 2018 the European parliament called for the start of negotiations on a ban on fully autonomous weapons. In July of 2018, the parliamentary assembly of the organization for security and cooperation in Europe also adopted a declaration that includes a line urging participating states to support international negotiations to ban fully autonomous weapons. In addition, the international committee for the Red Cross has called on states to establish internationally agreed limits on autonomy in systems, which address the legal ethical and humanitarian concerns. Secretary general of the United Nations Antonio Guterres has also made repeated and strong calls asking states to urgently launch negotiations to ban fully autonomous weapon systems and has called killer robots morally repugnant and politically unacceptable.

Unfortunately progress forward on a ban at the moment has been blocked by a very small minority of states, however, we believe that it's time for a ban on killer robots and we stand ready to work with all states including Pakistan that are committed to achieve this goal”.

Mr Ahmer Bilal Soofi a renowned lawyer, legal expert and a former caretaker minister from Pakistan shed valuable insight on the issue of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems and its implication based on technical aspects, state-to-state relations, international law, acquisition of the killer robots and the delegation of authority in the theatre of war. Mr. Ahmer Bilal Soofi revolved around briefing that there are certain specialized sensors, processing systems, algorithms, etc. that are used by the Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems to acquire and engage their targets. And, in their entirety, these systems rely on AI and allied technologies for most of the time. These technologies can provide enough grounds for a comprehensive international treaty to ban the use of the LAWS. Furthermore, he also explained the issue in light of three main domains that associate with LAWS. The determination of LAWS is a very tough procedure where the state can become a potential criminal. There are issues with regards to licensing, manufacturing and use of LAWS that if not regulated will leave the state prone to all the critique and prosecution. Therefore, the determining factor is a serious concern for states and industries that contribute towards the introduction of LAWS into the battlefield.



The retention alone by a state can lead to catastrophic consequences. The speaker shed light on Article 51 of the UN Charter that provides a right to states to initiate the Use of Force if the imminence of threat permits. Therefore, every state will have different levels of tolerance in the case of production and procurement of military technology. Therefore, in case of acquiring of LAWS, three cases emerge in front of the states:

If a friendly country begins retaining or manufacturing the Killer Robots, no concerns about safety or pre-emptive strikes will be raised by the other states since both of the Nations enjoy a good relationship. If an unfriendly country retains the LAWS, the state will look towards the diplomatic and political trends in order to determine whether or not there is a need to carry out pre-emptive strikes to deter an imminent threat. Retention of LAWS by Hostile State alone will be enough for a state to carry out pre-emptive strikes inside the hostile nations because the nations do not enjoy a good mutual relationship.

The delegation of commands in the theatre of war is a serious grey field while talking about the issues with procuring or producing LAWS. Mr. Soofi highlighted that weapons can be used to make critical decisions in the event of a war. There are decisions that are not very general in nature sometimes and therefore the higher command sets only the objectives, which are fulfilled through the lower tier of command; i.e. the company commanders. The issue with LAWS is that they do not have the capability to distinguish between specific cases in the war. They are fed by algorithms that generally do not use intelligence as a field commander would. Thus, for a machine processing is steadfast and the rare cases are not an exception to stop killing.

Mr. Soofi in his concluding remarks expressed the lack of understanding and knowledge about the criticality of the Killer Robots pertaining to legal grounds. In general the law bodies are not aware of the of the extent and complexity of the issue to address the legal aspects and implications properly. He expressed his hope that the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots will address the issue to raise awareness within legal forums as well and concluded that the best possible option to avoid future human sufferings and unnecessary arms race is to prohibit the LAWs through a legally binding treaty.

Ms. Saima Sayyed, Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan stated that the pace of emergence of new weapons driven by a never-ending strategic competition constantly facilitated by the new scientific innovations carries a serious implication. The rapid development of new weapons systems and enabling technology poses a threat to peace, security and stability at the regional and global levels. Governing and regulating the development and use of such weapons under international law is proving to be a major challenge. The development of lethal autonomous weapons systems has emerged as a major concern of the international community. LAWs are being described as the next revolution in military affair that could fundamentally change the nature of war. Their introduction will lower the threshold of the armed conflicts, consequently the resort to use a force will become more frequent phenomena. LAWs would also be used in anonymous as well as targeted killings in the territory of others. LAWs would undermine the international peace and security and their introduction would affect the progress on disarmament and nonproliferation. Faced with the prospect of being overwhelmed by LAWs, states possessing weapons of mass destruction capabilities would be reluctant to give them up well others would feel encouraged to acquire them. Any weapon system that delegates life and death decision to machines is by nature un ethical and cannot comply with the international humanitarian laws. The issue of LAWs does not only have legal, ethical and technical dimensions but also carries serious implications for regional and global security. The developments in the field of artificial intelligence needs to be appropriately regulated in all of its dimensions. They should certainly not outpace the evolution of regulations



governing them. She told the participants that the Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems has been the subject of discussions at the United Nations as well within the framework of the certain conventional weapons. The 2016 fifth review conference of the CCW decided to establish the open-ended group of government experts on LAWS which presented its report this year after two years of deliberations. No significant measure could be agreed upon that might possibly constraint the deployment and development of the LAWS. The central question whether the fully autonomous weapons operating outside the human control can comply with the international humanitarian law remains unanswered. It seems that the major powers want to keep the discussion going on and on around the technical and legal complexities as well as the philosophical, ethical debates on the human versus machines question without any substantive outcome. Pakistan has maintained its position throughout these deliberations, supporting the development of internationally legally binding instrument stimulating appropriate prohibition and regulations on LAWS. Pakistan strongly believes that states currently developing such weapons should place a moratorium on their production and become meaningfully engage with the international community in addressing their concerns”.

Saima Sayyed in her closing remarks expressed that overtime the concerns surrounding LAWS have exacerbated and become more pronounced. The consequences especially on international peace and security are too grave to be ignored. The optional political declarations and compendiums of international good practices would certainly not be sufficient to address the international peace and security concerns posed by the lethal autonomous weapons.



Mr. Raza Shah Khan, Chief Executive of SPADO said that we at Campaign To Stop Killer Robots, highly appreciate the constructive and positive role of Pakistan. He informed the participants that Pakistan is president of the CCW this year and hoped that Pakistan will continue to play the positive role as a peace-loving country in the region particularly in the CCW. Mr. Raza once again thanked all the delegates and participants. He expressed that this event was focused to engage civil society of the region to build an environment of trust and regional cooperation in the area of peace and disarmament. He said that that Artificial Intelligence could be effectively used to serve humanity, the creativity, the resources including the financial resources should best be utilized in the sectors of health, education, environment and so on rather developing deadly weapons. This will shift the focus of the AI from development to deadly weapons. Mr. Raza in his concluding remarks thanked all the participants, diplomatic missions, NGOs, media and especially the regional delegates for attending the meeting.

Day Two (10th December 2019)



The second day of the regional meeting started with discussions of delegates to develop a civil society declaration. The participants provided inputs and suggestions for the declaration and for the future work of the campaign in the region. The delegates considered the Islamabad regional conference as a historic event engaging civil society of the Central and South Asia. They stressed upon the need to continue such a momentum and requested SPADO to take a lead role in the region by sharing updates, information and resources related to killer robots. The participants also showed their commitments to initiate national level awareness raising and advocacy engaging important and relevant stakeholders. The session concluded by adopting and signing the civil society declaration and a press release that was later on circulated to the media.

Panel Discussion:

A panel discussion was held with a focus on the military, ethical and moral dimensions of autonomous weapons with Brig. (R) Azam Effendi and Dr. Qibla Ayaz Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology.



Brigadier Azam Efendi, a retired military officer of Pakistan Army and security specialist talked about the military aspects of killer robots. He said that in the absence of the foot prints of soldiers, going to wars with LAWs will be easier and hence the development of such weapons could further increase the threshold of going to war. Such a situation will totally change the dynamics of warfare leading to robotic warfare. There are several precursors that clearly demonstrate the trend to develop such weapon systems. He then quoted the following issues that could pose serious implications if LAWs are used as weapons:

- The LAWS are lacking human characteristics such as empathy and chivalry. This will lead to the machines deciding who will live or die.
- Many countries have started to develop LAWs with a significant degree of autonomy incorporated into them. It is about time that technology would push these states to generate more and more of these systems to replace their militaries.
- This replacement of machines with humans would make going to war easier and more harmful.
- There is no proof that the LAWs will possess human levels of judgment.
- There will be a huge accountability gap to who is responsible for the killings by the Killer Robots.
- The LAWs can also be used in border patrols and policing. They can erect accidental death tolls which will be a huge issue to handle.

While talking about the lethality of the Killer Robots, he said that the argument is that these machines would improve the survivability of servicemen in the battlefield which would result in the use of similar weapons by both sides resulting in significant human losses and chivalry. He then suggested that humans should always be in a position to regulate the use of machines and their conduct in both the times of peace and war. He also stressed upon the need for global transparency to create a stigma around the LAWs and shouldering responsibility on both the government and technology sectors. Mr. Effendi asserted that the armed forces personnel join the call for a ban on the development and deployment of Killer Robots.

Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology considered the topic of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems as thought-provoking. While relating the impact of these weapons with different faiths he shared Cain and Abel's story which marks the first conflict on Earth and elaborated that the great Lord showed liking towards Abel as he was the peaceful one and considered his sacrifice more than that of Cain who killed Abel with a stone. And from this particular early incident, it appears that humanity is above all. And that killings of any kind are discouraged in every religion. Also, Confucianism shows great sympathy for human lives. In all religions dignity of human life is of utmost importance which is clear from the religious teachings. In Islam the value of human life is above all where the lives of innocent people are protected even in extreme circumstances of warfare putting great emphasis on empathy for humankind. Islam has defined a clear code of conduct for warfare where non combatants, innocent people, women, children, places of worships and even crops and vegetations are strictly prohibited to be harmed. Such teachings define the significance of human life and as LAWs that kill humans without knowing the killer should be highly discouraged with regards to the teaching of all faiths and religions. Machines can't understand the value of human life as they have no feelings, emotions and empathy. If we allow machines to fight and kill humans without any human control their effects will be horrible and indiscriminate without being able to differentiate who and who not to kill. He then concluded by saying that the use of killer robots will definitely violate the basic principles of humanity and hence such weapons should be banned to avoid any other future catastrophes .

Civil Society Declaration

Regional Meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems
Islamabad, Pakistan
9-10 December 2019

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots members and guests from eight Asian states met in Islamabad, Pakistan on 9-10 December 2019 at the invitation of the Sustainable Peace and Development Organisation (SPADO).¹

The aim of the meeting was to learn more about the serious ethical, moral, technical, legal, proliferation, and security concerns raised by the ongoing development of fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems or killer robots. The participants strategized on how to achieve the Campaign's goal of a pre-emptive ban treaty to retain meaningful human control over the use of force.

The participants discussed approaches to building coordination between civil society in the region, and considered ways to engage regional bodies, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and states in South and Central Asia and Azerbaijan to create a strong regional position in support of banning lethal autonomous weapons systems. The participants reaffirmed the importance of the private sector in developing technology for peaceful purposes and civilian uses, and discussed disarmament as a tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The participants reflected on some measures that have been proposed to address concerns over killer robots, and the current status of multilateral talks within the United Nations. They agreed that fully autonomous weapons would violate international humanitarian law and international human rights law. They concluded that measures that fall short of a new international treaty to retain meaningful human control over the use of force will be insufficient to deal with the urgent threat posed by the introduction of fully autonomous weapons.

The participants affirmed the urgent need for states from Asia to immediately begin work to negotiate a new treaty to prohibit development, production, transfer, and use of fully autonomous weapons. They acknowledged the need for further actions to address this issue at national, regional and international levels, inter alia:

- Increase national outreach to encourage political support for the goal of banning killer robots. Build and leverage a broad regional coalition that includes civil society groups as well as academics, religious leaders, roboticists and scientists, youth, and other experts, and build their capacity to campaign on the issue;
- Work together to promote peace and stability within the region, and foster greater regional cooperation by and between Asian states towards the goal of immediately launching negotiations of a new treaty;
- Grow the membership of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots in the region, especially in countries where there is not yet a Campaign contact in place;

Islamabad, Pakistan, 10th December 2019

Signatories:

Afghan Youth Association, *Afghanistan*
Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines, *Azerbaijan*
Center for International Security Policy, *Kazakhstan*
Center for Non-Proliferation and Export Control, *Kyrgyzstan*
Forum on Disarmament and Development, *Sri Lanka*
Japan International Volunteer Center, *Japan*
Khudi Welfare, *Pakistan*
Sri Lanka Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, *Sri Lanka*
Sustainable Peace and Development Organisation (SPADO) *Pakistan*
Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal, *Nepal*

¹ Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka

Media Briefing:

At the end of the two days regional meeting a media briefing was held inviting print and electronic media in Pakistan where the media was briefed about the discussions being held during the two days and more generally about the issue of LAWs. Later on the following press release was issued.

Press Release

Civil society joins together to encourage regional cooperation on banning killer robots Campaign to Stop Killer Robots members and guests from eight Asian states (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) met in Islamabad, Pakistan on 9-10 December 2019 at the invitation of the Sustainable Peace and Development Organisation (SPADO) for a Regional Meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems.

Delegates adopted a civil society declaration affirming the urgent need to foster greater regional cooperation by and between Asian states towards the goal of immediately launching negotiations of a new treaty to prohibit development, production, transfer, and use of fully autonomous weapons and retain meaningful human control over the use of force.

A regional meeting of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots brought members of civil society, academia, and the media together in Islamabad to discuss the serious ethical, moral, technical, legal, proliferation, and security concerns raised by the ongoing development of fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems or killer robots.

In May 2013, Pakistan became the first nation to call for fully autonomous weapons to be prohibited, and it has repeatedly urged the creation of a new international ban instrument on these weapons. Pakistan has expressed multiple concerns with these weapons, finding that they will violate international humanitarian and human rights law as well as lower the threshold for going to war.

Delegates of the regional meeting discussed the importance of building regional cooperation between states and civil society across South and Central Asia.

Campaign Outreach Manager for the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, Isabelle Jones said:

“We are grateful for Pakistan’s continued leadership in the efforts to ban fully autonomous weapons, and warmly welcome the efforts of civil society in South and Central Asia to promote greater regional cooperation on this issue.”

“It’s time for states in South and Central Asia to speak up in support of the inevitable treaty to ban killer robots. We must act quickly before technological development outpaces our ability to prevent the great humanitarian harm posed by fully autonomous weapons.”

Raza Shah Khan, CEO of Sustainable Peace and Development Organisation (SPADO) said:

“We thank the government of Pakistan for their support in organizing this historic meeting. The South Asian region cannot afford a new arms race in the area of fully autonomous weapons. Civil society must raise their voices to ban killer robots and promote greater regional peace and security”.



**CAMPAIGN TO STOP
KILLER ROBOTS**



**Regional Meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWs)
9-10 December, 2019
Serena Hotel
Islamabad, Pakistan**

AGENDA

Sunday, 8 December 2019

Arrival of Participants

Monday, 9 December 2019

Morning (09:00-13:00)

- Opening and Welcome Remarks (Raza Shah Khan, Chief Executive SPADO)
- Introduction of Participants
- Objectives of the Regional Meeting (Raza Shah Khan, Chief Executive SPADO)
- Presentation on Autonomous Weapons Systems (Isabelle Jones)
- Update on the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots (Isabelle Jones)
- Coffee/Tea Break
- Regional Overview of States Positions (All Campaigners)
- National Updates and Activities (All Campaigners)
- Lunch (13:00-14:00)

Afternoon (14:00-17:00)

- Regional approaches to address the issue of LAWs (All Participants)
- Challenges and opportunities related to banning LAWs in the region
- Coffee/Tea Break
- Panel Discussion with Guest Speakers
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- **Evening (19:00-21:00)**
 - Reception with Speeches of Guest Speakers. Invitees include diplomatic missions in Islamabad, Think Tanks, NGOs/INGOs, Media, Political leaders and Academia.

Tuesday 10, December 2019

Morning (09:00-13:00)

- Development of a Civil Society Declaration
- Adoption of the Civil Society Declaration
- Next Steps and Future Plan of Action
- Coffee/Tea Break
- Panel Discussion with Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology and Brig (R) Azam Efendi
- Lunch (13:00-14:00)

Afternoon (14:00-15:00)

- Media Briefing/Press Conference
- Coffee/Tea

Glimpses of the Regional Meeting



Invitation for the Reception

AFGHANISTAN AZERBAIJAN BANGLADESH CANADA PAKISTAN KAZAKHSTAN KYRGYZSTAN NEPAL PHILIPPINES SRI LANKA

SPADO

CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS

INVITATION FOR THE RECEPTION

REGIONAL MEETING ON LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS (KILLER ROBOTS)

Monday 9th December, 2019
Serena Hotel, Islamabad

Program

18:45 - 19:00	Arrival of Guests
19:00 - 19:10	Welcome Remarks Raza Shah Khan , Chief Executive, SPADO and Spokesperson for the Campaign
19:10 - 19:20	Message from the Campaign Isabelle Jones , Campaign to Stop Killer Robots
19:20 - 19:30	Legal Aspects and Implications of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) Ahmer Bilal Soofi , Founding President, Research Society of International Laws (RSIL)
19:30 - 19:45	Pakistan's Perspective on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) Kamran Akhtar , Director General, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan
19:45 - 19:50	Vote of Thanks
19:50	Dinner