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Should the use of autonomous weapon systems «killer robots» be banned and restricted?

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From an international security perspective, [Autonomous Weapon Systems \(AWS\)](#) are defined as robotic weapons that can sense and act unilaterally, and depending on how they are programmed, have enormous potential. However, their use poses challenges to human rights – in particular, AWS threaten the fundamental right to life and principle of human dignity. AWS, which can make [their own decisions](#), pose some legal and moral questions. Autonomy in these weapons means [no human intervention](#). [The problem stems from this feature](#). [What if autonomous weapons not only destroy enemy weapons but also kill civilians?](#)

Should «killer robots» be banned and restricted?

While [significant progress](#) has been made in autonomous weapon technology, it has divided the world into three fronts: those who oppose these weapons, approve autonomous weapons, and those who prefer the middle way, including Germany, Switzerland, and France.

The USA, Israel, Russia, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, which allocate a lot of resources for the use of artificial intelligence for military purposes, are among those who are against the prohibition of autonomous weapons. The reasons for which they are in favor of AWS is to reduce the number of people who will fight, to minimize political responsibility for military losses, and to maximize military success. Regarding this issue, at least 28 countries are demanding a ban on the use of artificial intelligence weapons. However, the United States and Russia are blocking any such legally binding initiative.

As [Hannah Arendt](#) argues, scientists working in the production of these weapons often follow the logic that though they “do not want to work in [the development of weapons that will kill people](#), if others are developing, they must continue to improve to protect themselves.” This emphasizes how evil has become ordinary, especially with the loss of thinking and reasoning ability.

In 2017, 19 countries have called for a pre-emptive ban on autonomous weapons: Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, Holy See, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, State of Palestine, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. Currently, 26 states and 230 international organizations oppose autonomous weapons. On an international level, the United Nations has been evaluating the banning of killer robots for a long time.

The Position of Switzerland

Despite these dangers, some countries oppose such a ban, including Switzerland. The reason given is that a ban would hinder the development of autonomous systems. Germany and France think that after setting standards for the weapons of the future, artificial intelligence can be banned. According to this perspective, artificial intelligence is a transformative technology that can be used for any purpose such as electricity or in computer technology. It can be used for good purposes as well as dangerous ones.

According to the [Swiss policy perspective on Autonomous Weapon Systems \(AWS\)](#), the first step is to gather as much information as possible on what applications an AWS could have and whether policy analysts consider them to be acceptable or unacceptable. In a second step, the

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In the literature, it is assessed that once such robots are developed, the extent of armed conflicts will be larger than ever. The frightening thing is that these machines can decide who will live and who will die.

Just as many chemists and biologists don't want to produce chemical or biological weapons, many AI experts don't want to produce autonomous weapons either. Besides, as long as defense contractors make billions producing this equipment and use those funds to buy their "democratic" representation, expecting any of the prominent producers to accept bans and restraints is a fantasy.

Still, [security analysts](#) have to adapt to future technological developments and deal with the resulting threats and vulnerabilities. The complexity of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and [Autonomous Weapon Systems \(AWS\)](#) may be understood through an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach in which experts at various levels and in various fields may address the subject of AWS and seek to shed light on it from different angles.

As a consequence, politicians have to find a response to how AWS technologies can make human rights more powerful rather than weakening them in future. In order to do this, however, negotiating on autonomous weapon systems is necessarily required on an international level. At the very least, the international community should engage in more discussion on AWS.

Picture by Emrah AYVALI retrieved from [Pexels](#)



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