Disarmament and International Security Committee

Novice Committee

Chair: Emma Brown

Co-Chair: Shelinna Chen

Topic 1: Regulating the Development and Use of Autonomous Weapons

Introduction

Autonomous weapons, often called "killer robots," are a new and controversial type of military technology. Unlike traditional weapons, these systems use artificial intelligence (AI) to find, track, and attack targets without needing a human to control them. This raises important concerns about safety, ethics, and international security. Some countries believe that these weapons can make wars safer by reducing human casualties, while others worry that they could make conflicts worse, become uncontrollable, or break international laws. Currently, there are no global rules on how these weapons should be used or regulated. The lack of clear guidelines makes it difficult to ensure they are used safely and responsibly. This discussion is crucial because AI-powered weapons have the potential to change warfare forever.

Context

Technology has always played a key role in warfare. In the past, countries have used automated defense systems, such as missile shields and drones controlled by humans. However, fully

autonomous weapons that can make decisions without any human input are a newer development. In 2013, the United Nations (UN) began discussing the risks of lethal autonomous weapon systems under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Organizations like the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots have since called for a complete ban on these weapons, while other countries argue that they can be useful in modern warfare. Despite many discussions, no international agreement has been reached on how these weapons should be controlled.

Current Situation

Right now, different countries have different opinions on what should be done about autonomous weapons. The Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) at the UN have been discussing regulations, but no official rules have been put in place. Meanwhile, powerful countries like the United States, China, and Russia continue developing these technologies, making the issue even more urgent. **Case Study: The Use of Autonomous Drones in Conflict**

There have been reports that autonomous drones have already been used in conflicts. In Libya, Turkish-made Kargu-2 drones may have identified and attacked targets on their own. During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, drones with limited human control were used. These events have made many people question whether stricter rules should be put in place to control the use of autonomous weapons.

Risks

One of the biggest concerns with autonomous weapons is that they do not have human judgment. AI systems can follow programming, but they cannot understand the complex moral decisions

involved in war. This creates the risk that they could make mistakes and harm innocent people. Another challenge is figuring out who is responsible if an autonomous weapon commits a war crime. Would it be the military, the manufacturer, or the programmers who created the AI? There is also concern that these weapons could make wars more common. If a country can fight a war without risking the lives of its soldiers, it might be more willing to enter conflicts. Additionally, because AI technology is not perfect, there is always a risk that these weapons could malfunction and cause unintended destruction.

Questions to consider

1. Should autonomous weapons be banned completely, or should they just be regulated?

2. How can we make sure autonomous weapons follow international laws?

3. Should humans always be involved in making life-or-death decisions in war?

4. What can be done to stop autonomous weapons?

5. Are there situations where using autonomous weapons could be beneficial?

Topic 2: Strengthening International Efforts to Combat Illicit Arms Trafficking

Introduction

The illegal trade of weapons is a global issue that fuels conflicts, terrorism, and organized crime. The ability of criminal groups to access illegal weapons has prolonged wars, escalated violence, and destabilized regions. This issue affects not only war-torn areas but also peaceful societies,

where illicit firearms contribute to violent crime. While governments and international organizations have attempted to address this issue through treaties and security initiatives, arms trafficking networks remain resilient, adapting to new challenges and technologies. The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) plays a crucial role in finding solutions to this problem. Addressing illicit arms trafficking requires coordinated efforts between countries, stronger enforcement of existing regulations, and the development of new strategies to prevent illegal weapons from being transported across borders. Without stricter control, weapons will continue to flow into the hands of criminals, insurgents, and terrorist organizations, threatening global security.

Context

The problem of illicit arms trafficking has existed for centuries, but it became especially concerning after the Cold War. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, large stockpiles of weapons were left unaccounted for, many of which were sold or stolen and later ended up on the black market. This influx of weapons contributed to conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, where people gained access to military-grade firearms and explosives. To combat this, the United Nations introduced several initiatives, including the **Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)** in 2001. This initiative encourages countries to improve national laws and border controls to stop the spread of illegal weapons. Another significant step was the **Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**, which came into force in 2014. The ATT aims to regulate the legal arms trade and prevent weapons from being diverted to criminal organizations or war zones. Despite these efforts, enforcement remains a challenge due to corruption, weak governance, and loopholes in international laws. Today, arms traffickers exploit

modern technology, such as 3D printing and online marketplaces, to continue their illegal trade. The dark web has become a hotspot for illicit arms sales, making it easier for buyers and sellers to remain anonymous. Additionally, in some regions, warlords and armed groups operate their own supply chains, smuggling weapons through poorly monitored borders. This evolving landscape makes it even more critical for the international community to strengthen regulations, enhance tracking mechanisms, and work together to dismantle trafficking networks.

Current Situation

Even though agreements exist, the illegal arms trade is still a major issue because it is difficult to control. Smugglers take advantage of weak borders, corrupt officials, and gaps in international laws. Modern technology, such as 3D-printed guns and online weapon sales, has also made it harder to stop illegal arms deals. To solve this problem, countries need to work together, improve their tracking systems, and strengthen law enforcement.

Case Study: The Role of Illicit Arms in the Syrian Conflict

The Syrian Civil War is a key example of how dangerous illegal arms trafficking can be. Many weapons have been smuggled into Syria, helping armed groups continue fighting. This has made the war last longer and more difficult to resolve. It also shows how important it is to stop weapons from being sold illegally.

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges in stopping illegal arms trade is weak border control. Many countries do not have enough resources to properly monitor their borders, allowing smugglers to move weapons undetected. Corruption is another major issue, as some officials accept bribes to ignore illegal transactions. Additionally, differences in laws between countries make it easy for traffickers to find loopholes and continue their operations. Modern technology has also made it easier to produce and sell illegal weapons. The rise of 3D-printed firearms and online black markets has created new challenges for law enforcement. Governments need to find ways to track and prevent illegal arms sales without restricting legal trade.

Questions to consider

1. How can countries work together better to stop illegal arms trafficking?

2. What can be done to stop weapons from getting into the hands of terrorists?

3. How does corruption make arms trafficking worse, and what can be done about it?

4. Can innovative technology help prevent illegal arms transfers?

5. Should border security be strengthened to stop arms smuggling?

Works Cited

Autonomous Weapons. (2017, November 12). *Front page*. Ban Lethal Autonomous Weapons.

https://autonomousweapons.org/

CAIMUN. (n.d.). *Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)*. CAIMUN.

https://caimun.ca/disarmament-international-security-committee

Canada, G. A. (2017, November 6). *Canada and Non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament*. GAC. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/peace_security-paix_securite/weapons_mass_destruction-armes_destruction_massive.aspx?lang=eng

Caruso, C. (2024, August 7). *The Risks of Artificial Intelligence in Weapons Design*. Harvard.edu. https://hms.harvard.edu/news/risks-artificial-intelligence-weapons-design

Etzioni, A., & Etzioni, O. (2017, June). *Pros and Cons of Autonomous Weapons Systems*. Military Review. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/May-June-2017/Pros-and-Cons-of-Autonomous-Weapons-Systems/

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2022). What you need to know about autonomous weapons. *Www.icrc.org*. https://www.icrc.org/en/document/what-you-need-know-about-autonomous-weapons

Nations, U. (2025, January 6). *UN addresses AI and the Dangers of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems*. United Nations Western Europe. https://unric.org/en/un-addresses-ai-and-the-dangers-of-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems/

United Nations. (2022). Disarmament. *United Nations*. https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/disarmament