



6 April 2022

Letter of Support: 'Act Now on Killer Robots' Petition to Parliament

Dear Petitions Committee members,

I am writing to you on behalf of the publicly appointed members of the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC) in support of the 'Act Now on Killer Robots' Petition to Parliament, which addresses a significant imminent threat to humanity.

We support both requests in the petition: *“That the House of Representatives, as a matter of urgency: a) enact legislation to prohibit the development, production and use of lethal autonomous weapon systems in New Zealand; and b) urge the Government to support negotiations on a new treaty to retain meaningful human control over the use of force by prohibiting such weapons.”*

We note that the Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots' written submission outlines the three key requirements of new law on autonomous weapons as:

- *a general obligation to maintain meaningful human control over the use of force;*
- *prohibitions on autonomous weapon systems that cannot be used with meaningful human control and prohibitions on systems that would target human beings; and*
- *positive obligations to ensure that meaningful human control is maintained over systems that are not prohibited.*

We agree that these key requirements are absolutely essential to ensure that human lives are not taken by autonomous weapon systems, and the requirements of international humanitarian and human rights law that a meaningful level of human control be maintained over any use of force.

We welcomed New Zealand's new policy decision on autonomous weapon systems, released on 30 November 2021, but are concerned that it does not include any prohibition on systems that would target humans. Such a prohibition is crucial to meet the moral and ethical concerns around these weapon systems.

We agree with the statement in the petitioner's written submission: *“The ethical imperative to do everything possible to prevent this entirely avoidable disaster for humanity must take precedence over all other considerations”*; and urge you to recommend immediate action on this petition.

Thank you for your attention to our comments.

Yours sincerely, Mary Wareham

Deputy Chair, Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control

On behalf of the publicly appointed members: Andrew Chen, Dylan Maynard, Edwina Hughes, Jamila Homayun, Kevin Clements, Lucy Stewart and Martin Donoghue.