



CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS

Aotearoa New Zealand

Campaign to **STOP** Killer Robots,
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23 May 2013

Hon Murray McCully,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Parliament Buildings,
Wellington.

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots Aotearoa New Zealand, for which Peace Movement Aotearoa - a founding member of the global Campaign to Stop Killer Robots - is the national contact point.

Launched on April 23 in London, this international coalition of civil society groups is working pre-emptively to ban lethal autonomous robot weapons that would have the ability to select and attack targets without any human intervention. The prohibition should be achieved through an international treaty, as well as through national laws and other measures.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots would like to draw your attention to a new report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Professor Christof Heyns (A/HRC/23/47, 9 April 2013) which is available on the website of the UN Human Rights Council at <http://bit.ly/15SIX8W>. The report will be presented to the Human Rights Council during its forthcoming twenty-third session, on 29 May 2013.

We welcome this report and concur with its finding that lethal autonomous robotics:

"[R]aise far-reaching concerns about the protection of life during war and peace. This includes the question of the extent to which they can be programmed to comply with the requirements of international humanitarian law and the standards protecting life under international human rights law. Beyond this, their deployment may be unacceptable because no adequate system of legal accountability can be devised, and because robots should not have the power of life and death over human beings."

We urge New Zealand to consider and publicly elaborate on its policy on fully autonomous weapons, particularly with respect to ethical, legal, policy, technical, and other concerns that have been raised in the Heyns report.

In view of the government's stated commitment to multilateral disarmament and arms control measures, we call on New Zealand to welcome the Heyns report on lethal autonomous

robotics and to endorse its four recommendations that call on all states to:

1. Place a national moratorium on lethal autonomous robotics (paragraph 118);
2. Declare – unilaterally and through multilateral fora – a commitment to abide by international humanitarian law and international human rights law in all activities surrounding robotic weapons and put in place and implement rigorous processes to ensure compliance at all stages of development (paragraph 119);
3. Commit to being as transparent as possible about internal weapons review processes, including metrics used to test robotic systems. States should at a minimum provide the international community with transparency regarding the processes they follow (if not the substantive outcomes) and commit to making the reviews as robust as possible (paragraph 120); and
4. Participate in international debate and trans-governmental dialogue on the issue of lethal autonomous robotics and be prepared to exchange best practices with other States, and collaborate with the High Level Panel on lethal autonomous robotics (paragraph 121).

Please note that the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is holding a side event on Tuesday, 28 May from 2pm to 4pm in Room VIII at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. All UN member states are invited to attend and use this opportunity to express their views, and we would particularly welcome the attendance of New Zealand representatives. The Campaign will also hold a press briefing on 28 May, at 12 noon, in the UN Press Association Library, Palais des Nations, further details are available at <http://bit.ly/ZRxnpX>.

We look forward to hearing from you and welcome the opportunity to discuss this important topic further.

Yours sincerely,

Edwina Hughes,
Coordinator, Peace Movement Aotearoa

CC: Hon Maryan Street, Disarmament and Arms Control Spokesperson, Labour Party
Hon Tariana Turia, Co-Leader, Maori Party
Dr Kennedy Graham, Disarmament and Arms Control Spokesperson, Green Party
Jan Logie, Human Rights Spokesperson, Green Party
Hon Peter Dunne, Leader, United Future
Rt Hon Winston Peters, Leader, New Zealand First
Hone Harawira, Leader, Mana Party
Hon John Banks, Leader, ACT Party
Mary Wareham, Global Coordinator, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

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