



CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS

Aotearoa New Zealand

Campaign to **STOP** Killer Robots,
c/o Peace Movement Aotearoa
PO Box 9314, Wellington 6141
Tel + 64 4 382 8129
Email pma@xtra.co.nz

6 June 2014

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

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots which is coordinated by Peace Movement Aotearoa, a founding member of the global Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is an international coalition of civil society groups that is working to pre-emptively ban the development, production and use of weapons that would be able to select and attack targets without any human intervention. Such a ban must be developed through an international treaty, as well as through national laws and other measures, to ensure that there is always meaningful human control over targeting and attack decisions.

This letter is in part to follow up on our correspondence with you in 2013, and in part to let you know about further opportunities for New Zealand to make a significant contribution to alleviating global concern about the serious danger posed by fully autonomous weapons.

With regard to the first, we were pleased to see New Zealand participate in the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in Geneva in May 2014. The strong turnout for this first multilateral meeting on the topic indicates there is significant interest in urgently addressing the challenges posed by fully autonomous weapons; and we hope that New Zealand will support a renewed CCW mandate in November 2014 to create a more formal Group of Governmental Experts that dedicates more substantive time, such as three to four weeks, to the topic in 2015.

However, we were concerned to note that despite your letter of 12 July 2013 stating that New Zealand will develop national policy in this area, this has apparently not yet been done - the New Zealand statement delivered to the CCW meeting on 13 May 2014 referred to New Zealand only "beginning to consider the implications of these developments". It is crucial that national policy on fully autonomous weapons be developed as soon as possible in order for New Zealand to contribute fully to the international debates about the legal, technical, moral and ethical implications of these developing technologies.

With regard to the second purpose of this letter, we draw your attention to the new report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Professor Christof Heyns (A/HRC/26/36, 1 April 2014) - available at <http://bit.ly/1pxN1RJ> - which will be delivered to the Human Rights Council on Thursday, 12 June 2014. The 2014 report by the UN Special Rapporteur welcomes the CCW's decision to address the topic of fully autonomous weapons, describing the mandate as "an important and serious step forward".

We agree with the UN Special Rapporteur's finding that fully autonomous weapons pose "far-reaching potential implications" to human rights, in particular the rights to life and dignity. The possibility that the weapons will be used in circumstances outside of armed conflict raises additional concerns. We support his conclusion that fully autonomous weapons must remain on the agenda of the Human Rights Council to ensure that the human rights implications are fully considered and taken into account.

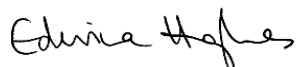
Given the serious danger that fully autonomous weapons pose, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots supports efforts to address them in any fora. We therefore urge New Zealand to:

1. develop and articulate a national policy on the multiple challenges posed by fully autonomous weapons, and support the call for a pre-emptive ban;
2. publicly support and implement the call by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions to impose a moratorium on the development, transfer, deployment and use of fully autonomous weapons as an interim measure;
3. take action in the Human Rights Council to ensure that the human rights implications of fully autonomous weapons are taken into account; and
4. support a renewed mandate at the CCW Meeting of High Contracting Parties in November 2014 for the CCW to create a more formal Group of Governmental Experts that dedicates three to four weeks to this topic in 2015, with a view to negotiating a new CCW protocol.

Please note that the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is holding a briefing on human rights, disarmament and killer robots in Geneva on Wednesday, 11 June 2014 (details attached) and your representatives are invited to attend and express their views during this event.

We look forward to hearing from you and welcome the opportunity to discuss further the significant threat to international peace and security posed by fully autonomous weapons.

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
Ms 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, ACT Party
Ms Mary Wareham, Global Coordinator, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

*The **Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to STOP Killer Robots** is supported by: the Human Rights Foundation, Human Rights Lawyers Association, Pax Christi, Peace Movement Aotearoa, Quaker Peace and Service, The Peace Place, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Aotearoa section.*