



CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** KILLER ROBOTS

Aotearoa New Zealand

Campaign to **STOP** Killer Robots,
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7 April 2016

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 the international coalition of civil society groups working to pre-emptively ban the development, production and use of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), also known as “killer robots”.

This letter is in part to follow up on our correspondence with you in previous years, 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 LAWS.

With regard to the first, we were pleased that New Zealand attended the second Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in Geneva in April 2015. The strong turnout for the multilateral meeting again indicated there is significant global interest in urgently addressing the challenges posed by LAWS.

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 first CCW Meeting of Experts in May 2014 referred to New Zealand only “beginning to consider the implications of these developments”, and there was no New Zealand statement at the second. It is crucial that national policy on lethal autonomous weapons systems 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 anticipate New Zealand will be attending next week’s third CCW Meeting of Experts, which will be held at the United Nations in Geneva from 11 to 15 April 2016? We strongly urge New Zealand to go beyond simply attending, and to actively and constructively participate in the Meeting.

The Chairperson of the Meeting, Ambassador Michael Biontino of Germany, has asked states to articulate national policies and to prepare recommendations for future action on this topic.

As a high contracting party to the CCW, we expect New Zealand:

1) to elaborate its views on the widespread call for a pre-emptive ban, and on the 2013 call by UN Special Rapporteur Christof Heyns for national moratoria - both at the third CCW Meeting of Experts and in other appropriate international fora; and

2) to support substantive recommendations that states can take at the CCW's Fifth Review Conference in December 2016. After three years of work on the issue, it is time for states to agree to a mandate to begin formal negotiations on a new CCW protocol on LAWS, and to set aside at least four weeks in 2017 for this work.

Given New Zealand's often-stated commitment to international peace and security, we anticipate New Zealand will take a leading role in progressing a pre-emptive ban on LAWS.

We draw your attention to the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots' side-events on LAWS that will take place in Geneva on Wednesday 13 April, Thursday 14 April, and Friday 15 April 2016 (details attached) - your representatives are invited to attend and express their views during these events.

We look forward to your reply to our letter and welcome the opportunity to discuss further the significant threat to international peace and security posed by LAWS.

Yours sincerely,

Edwina Hughes,
Coordinator, Peace Movement Aotearoa

CC: Hon David Cunliffe, Disarmament Spokesperson, Labour Party
Mr David Shearer, Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, Labour Party
Dr Kennedy Graham, Disarmament and Global Affairs Spokesperson, Green Party
Ms Marama Davidson, Human Rights Spokesperson, Green Party
Rt Hon Winston Peters, Leader, New Zealand First
Ms Marama Fox, Co-Leader, Maori Party
Hon Peter Dunne, Leader, United Future
Mr David Seymour, Leader, 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 (WILPF) Aotearoa.*