

Position Paper

Committee - United States Security Council

Agenda - Addressing the Proliferation and Militarisation of Autonomous Weapons Systems and Artificial Intelligence in Armed Conflict

Country- South Africa

AI has already brought about a major paradigm shift. From altering basic Google searches to incorporating AI into weapons. To regulate the use of AI in weapon systems, legislation needs to be developed. The negative shift towards weaponised AI is visible everywhere. Although the incorporation of AI in weapon systems dates back to the 1950s and 1960s, where AI was used in computer simulations to direct missiles, the practical use of autonomous Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems was achieved in the late 2010s.

South Africa sees totally autonomous weapons as both a threat to human integrity and security. South Africa has played a foundational role in this topic at the UN. It rejects any voluntary or politically motivated guidelines on completely autonomous weapon systems in favour of an international treaty that would be legally binding. We had a fundamental part in this field at the UN. The call to address "killer robots" was first formally raised to the UN Human Rights Council by former Special Rapporteur Christof Heyns in 2013. An example of this was in 2020, when a Turkish STM Kargu drone reportedly targeted combatants autonomously.

South Africa acknowledges that AI can be used to optimise data responsibly in order to aid UN early warning systems, but it is also adamant that a line be drawn operationally between algorithms and kinetic action.

We stress that the security architecture of the Global South is susceptible to the secondary proliferation of AI software and dual-use

commercial hardware. Unlike traditional weaponry, AI-based weapon systems can easily be replicated, altered, and illegally transferred over boundaries, evading the usual embargoes on such weapons. As a result, non-state armed militias and terrorist outfits pose a threat to acquire highly accurate and virtually undetectable targeting technology. It argues that some technologically advanced militaries should not take advantage of their privileged position to prevent any binding restriction on autonomous weaponry, thus leading to an asymmetric world where the safety of the Global South becomes vulnerable to software-based proxy wars.

In summary, the Republic of South Africa requests that the Security Council incorporate the following security measures into its active mandate:

- **Create Security Council Panel of Experts:** Create a specialised panel under the UNSC for a systematic review of dual-use proliferation of military AI software and hardware to non-state actors in the embargoed territories.
- **Create a Universal Framework:** Create a special framework under the UNSC to restrict the capabilities of the AI autonomous weapons.
- **Make a set of Universal Framework:** Form a dedicated set of rules and regulations to control the AI autonomous weapons' ability within the UNSC.
- **Implement Strict Technology Sanctions:** Integrate software-defined autonomous capabilities and AI algorithmic target-generation databases into existing UNSC weapons sanctions regimes to stop illicit regional transfers.