



## **Background Paper**

**Committee:** General Assembly of the United Nations

**Topic A:** Addressing the Proliferation of Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) in Modern Warfare

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The rapid advancement of technology has led to the development of Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS), which, alongside Artificial Intelligence, now perform tasks that were once handled by humans in military operations. These AWS range from unmanned aerial vehicles to robotic ground vehicles and naval vessels. Technological advancements have enabled these machines to take human lives without human oversight, raising concerns and presenting potential threats to humanity. However, these advancements also have positive aspects, as they can enhance military effectiveness and reduce risk to human soldiers.

One of the first AWS creations was the sentry gun, initially used for close defense to intercept and destroy short-range incoming missiles to protect ships. Today, these systems are also used on land for surveillance and protection. Over time, more machines have been developed, including the controversial “killer robots” capable of attacking independently. Though they once required an initial command, certain systems are currently being tested that would allow full autonomous decision-making. In 2013, the U.S. created autonomous drones controlled by a distributed network, assembling into swarms to serve as powerful weapons. Experts argue that such autonomous weapons will never fully distinguish between civilians and military targets, and this problem worsens with large swarms of drones.

The debate over AWS has become a global issue, with nations divided in their views. Some countries, like the U.S., are in favor of AWS, while others are against it due to fears over

their capabilities. Additionally, some nations lack the resources to develop these technologies, which may contribute to their opposition. These weapons are not only in development but are also currently being used, as seen in the Russia-Ukraine war, where thousands of drones equipped with bombs were deployed miles into Russian territory. The United Nations has expressed concern, with some officials advocating for a ban or prohibition through international law. Countries like Pakistan, Ecuador, Egypt, and Cuba support these restrictions, while major powers such as the U.S., Russia, and China favor further development.

The focus of this debate should be to address the problem of AWS proliferation around the world. Delegates should explore solutions to either ban and regulate Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS) or legalize and manage their use. Delegates are also encouraged to suggest alternative solutions to this urgent issue. These weapons represent a significant advancement in technology, but if not controlled, they could become tools of mass destruction that endanger humanity. Delegates, be prepared to find a solution before it's too late. We trust that you will make the right choice to address this critical global issue.

## Works Cited

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