StamfordMUN I

2026

CHAIR REPORT

Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)

Establishing a normative framework for the development, proliferation, and ethical oversight of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS).

Prepared by:

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1. Letter from the Chair(s)

Dear Delegates,

My name is Akhil Dasgupta, and I am going to be your head chair of DISEC for StamfordMUN 2026. I am currently in Grade 9 in UWC East, and have been doing MUN for 3 years, and this will be my 9th conference as a delegate and chair, and second time chairing. I am really looking forward to debate on this topic, as autonomous systems are soon going to play a big role in militaries worldwide, and with both artificial intelligence systems and technology developing at rapid rates, and the question of the usage of such destructive and efficient weapons is one that needs urgent attention.

My name is Henrik Riediger and I am going to be one of your deputy chairs for the upcoming StamfordMUN 2026 conference. Currently, I am in Grade 8 at GESS and I have one year of MUN conference and this is going to be my first time chairing. I am really excited about this topic, as it gives delegates a chance to consider how war is changing and helps set new rules for modern warfare. At a time when old structures are crumbling and world peace is under increasing threat, this topic is more important than ever. It addresses the question of whether machines should be permitted to make life-and-death decisions and how the world can prevent an uncontrolled AI arms race. You will learn how to balance international law, ethics, and national security interests when new technologies outpace existing rules.

My name is Justin Park, and I am going to be serving as one of your deputy chairs for the StamfordMUN 2026 conference. I am a grade 10 student and have been doing MUN for 3 years as a delegate. This conference will be my second time chairing. Our debate on *LAWS* is interesting because it forces us to confront how fast warfare is changing. We must also confront whether our rules and ethics are keeping up. It’s also a debate where small choices and language framing can have real consequences for global security and future conflicts.

IIf this is your first conference, we promise you that you will have a fantastic time at this conference! Exchanging ideas and discussing matters with other delegates will definitely be a lot of fun. We completely understand if you're feeling nervous; we felt the same way before my first conference, but it's perfectly normal!

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask — you can find our email addresses at the bottom of the page.

We look forward to seeing you at the committee!

Sincerely,

Akhil Dasgupta, Henrik Riediger, and Justin Park; DISEC

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2. Committee Overview

2.1 Committee History and Purpose

The General Assembly was established in 1945 when the UN Charter was signed, following the aftermath of World War II. DISEC was the first Main Committee formed by the United Nations.

DISEC addresses issues of disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace that impact the international community. Its core mission is to uphold global peace and security.

2.2 Powers and Limitations

DISEC provides member nations a space to discuss issues related to peace and security. DISEC cannot pass binding resolutions; it can only recommend actions to member nations or the Security Council (SC). Only the Security Council (SC) can authorize military force and pass binding resolutions.

2.3 Voting Procedures

Voting Procedures follow General Assembly rules; each member state has one vote. Decisions generally pass by a simple majority, meaning that for something to pass, it needs more votes in favor than opposed. Votes are cast as “yes”, “no”, and “abstain”.

3. Topic Introduction

3.1 Topic Overview

Today's Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWs) are a form of military drones or robots that operate autonomously, meaning that they are able to independently search, locate, and engage targets based on their programming and restrictions. These LAWs are able to engage in air, on land, water, underwater, or even in space. However, most of these systems are used as defence, such as anti-vehicle or anti-tank systems. The land mine is the oldest known autonomous weapon, able to be traced back to the early 1600s. It is essentially an explosive mine laid under or just on top of the ground, exploding when enough pressure is placed upon it, obliterating anything above it. However, since then, autonomous weapons have gone through major advancements, and these systems are now able to be equipped with missiles, rockets, artillery, and even nuclear warheads.

The increasingly rapid development of LAWs is massively outpacing the corresponding legal, ethical, and security frameworks and regulations, which creates a lack of oversight, which in turn can lead to violations of international law, sovereignty, and humanitarian law. These systems are prone to misuse and abuse, leading to rising concerns over unsupervised usage or potential malfunctions in these systems, which can lead to innocent civilian casualties, escalate conflicts, and directly disrupt global peace. While there are ongoing efforts to implement legally binding rules around the restrictions and usage of LAWs, such as the UN Group of Governmental Experts on LAWs, they have faced considerable criticism for their slow progress.

3.2 Key Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
LAWs	LAWs is an acronym for Lethal Autonomous Weapons, which are weapon systems that do not require human intervention to engage in combat
Autonomous	Able to act or operate on its own without someone directly controlling it.
International Law	A set of rules, agreements, and principles that govern how countries (states) and other international actors behave toward one another.

4. Historical Background

4.1 Origins of the Issue

The first ever Lethal Autonomous Weapons developed was the landmine in the 1700s, as mentioned above. The first major conflict in which these systems and weapons were used was the Russo-Japanese War, which began in 1904 and ended in 1905. It was the first war with large-scale deployment of both naval and land mines, which caused much damage to both combatants and neutrals, and also led to early questions about international law regarding unmanned weapons. As these systems began to become more and more advanced, eventually in the 1970s and 80s, radar-guided systems began to appear in combat. These systems, like the US Phalanx CIWS found on battleships, enabled machines to autonomously defend against missiles and other artillery without risking human lives. The first autonomous drones began to appear in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These drones were mainly what are known as loitering munitions. These are essentially unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that use both the drone's surveillance features and guided missile precision to strike targets. They are programmed to survey and loiter(hover) around a specific target area, and are able to subsequently locate and destroy these targets on their own accord, using sensors. These drones posed a major threat, as they were essentially able to act as anti-personnel mines, which are strictly prohibited in warfare, and oftentimes struggled to differentiate between civilians and combatants, leading to potential violations of international law.

Currently, there are several bans concerning weapons such as landmines and other anti-personnel weapons, such as the Ottawa treaty (Anti-Personnel Mines Convention). However, there are no such established treaties concerning the usages of Lethal Autonomous Weapons, which is a strong solution; however, it would require substantial detail, and

4.2 Key Historical Events

- 1700 - The invention of the Landmine, the first Lethal Autonomous Weapon System
- 1940 - [Early Autonomous guidance systems, During WWII, Germany developed the V-1 flying bomb, which was able to strike targets without human control
- 1980 - The United States developed the Phalanx CIWS, which was one of the most advanced autonomous weapons systems, able to automatically track down and shoot incoming missiles
- 1990 - The early emergence of drone LAWs, such as loitering munitions and precision guided weapons, is known to be the earliest modern lethal autonomous weapons
- 2013 - The United Nations begins to initiate diplomatic discussions around LAWS at the Conventions on Certain Conventional Weapons
- 2020 - A UN Panel of Experts reports that a Turkish Kargu-2 loitering munition may have autonomously engaged targets in Libya.

4.3 Evolution of International Response

The perception of LAWs varies throughout the globe. Early on, many civilian-led campaigns, such as the Human Rights Watch “Losing Humanity”, called for the complete and permanent ban of the usage of such weapons, due to the high threat it posed to injuring and killing innocent

civilians. These protests successfully put LAWs on the global diplomatic agenda, and were able to massively increase awareness about such systems and weapons. However, the UN did not establish any binding agreements. However, after the multiple real-world incidents recorded by the UN, the UN Secretary-General made a public announcement calling for regulations or even a complete ban on these weapons due to the uncomfortable lack of human intervention.

5. Current Situation

5.1 Present-Day Overview

The United Nations, along with many other countries, is continuing to facilitate discussions under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), with the aforementioned GGE set to meet in Geneva in 2026 to discuss possible international measures around LAWs. The majority of the nations attending are against the usage to some degree, with countries like Austria, Brazil, and New Zealand being heavily against any such weapon system, with the latter even having a legally binding treaty to enforce human input. However, a handful of powerful nations, including the United States, the UK, Russia, India, Israel, and Japan, are all against binding regulations, and all prefer a non-binding code of conduct, which nations are not mandated but instead encouraged to adhere to.

Another up-and-coming factor in the development of these LAWs is the role of AI in autonomously identifying targets, instead of using traditional sensors or radar systems. Many believe that AI holds the potential to change the field, as its ability to analyse and make decisions in real time is otherworldly compared to its older counterparts. However, the use of Artificial Intelligence also raises significant concerns and questions around whether or not it can be trusted to make such complex decisions, especially ones that entail life or death situations. However, these AI-enabled drones have already been reported to be used in combat scenarios.

5.2 Key Stakeholders

The United Nations:

The United Nations plays an important role in passing and implementing binding resolutions, which means that they also have a very powerful position in managing global affairs and issues such as this one

United States, China, Russia, Israel, South Korea, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom:

These nations are all actively developing, testing, and even deploying LAWs in real-world contexts. While their individual systems have varying degrees of autonomy and human involvement, they are all considered to be the global frontrunners in this field, and are also among the countries that strongly oppose having binding regulations on the usage of LAWs

Civil Rights and Advocacy Groups:

These groups play a powerful position in influencing the public's opinion on the usage of these weapons, while also raising awareness about the major threat they present if allowed to be used in real conflicts without any restrictions. These groups, such as the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, are consistently and strongly against the usage of LAWs

5.3 Current Challenges

Conflicting stances of parties involved:

There are a plethora of different views and stances on such a complex topic, and this makes it extremely difficult to navigate and come to a compromise or solution where all parties are satisfied. For example, Israel strongly opposes a legally binding ban on LAWs, many countries in Africa and Latin America all support such a law to be passed.

Technical Complexity:

The definition of what exactly is a Lethal Autonomous Weapon is a gray area, with no set criteria to meet to qualify as one. This makes it complicated to decide on what to ban and what to regulate, as many autonomous weapons today are still only partially autonomous and still require human input. The rapid development and evolution of AI systems also make it difficult to have a rigid set of rules and regulations.

Accountability:

If an Autonomous Weapon were to injure or kill a civilian in a combat zone, there are no clear rules on who is legally responsible for the crime. This obviously makes it problematic to decide who has to face the punishment, as somebody has to take the fall for such a serious incident.

6. Past International Actions

6.1 UN Resolutions and Declarations

Resolution 79/62 (2024): It expresses a deep concern over the potential impact of autonomous weapons on international security, humanitarian law, and the risk of escalation.

Resolution 78/241 (2023): It urges states to address the legal, ethical and security risks posed by lethal autonomous weapons systems, and to ensure that the use of force is subject to meaningful human control.

Resolution 80/57 (2025): It calls on states to continue addressing the legal, ethical, humanitarian, and security risks of lethal autonomous weapons systems and reaffirms that international law applies to their development and use.

A New Agenda for Peace (2023): Urges all countries to prohibit all LAWS by 2026

6.2 International Treaties and Agreements

So far, there are no major international treaties or agreements concerning LAWS. While the UN and other NGOs (e.g. the International Red Cross) have drafted non-binding resolutions, as detailed in section 6.1, there are currently no binding international treaties or agreements in place.

6.3 Assessment: What Has Worked and What Hasn't

As stated in Section 6.2, there are no binding resolutions regarding the use of LAWS. Consequently, the resolutions listed in 6.1 were not as effective as intended. Many countries, including China, Israel, Russia, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States, are reported to be investing in the development of autonomous weapons systems. In order to ban the use of LAWS, binding resolutions are required from the UN.

7. Bloc Positions and National Perspectives

7.1 Humanitarian + Treaty-First Bloc: Austria, Ireland, New Zealand, Mexico, Costa Rica, Chile

This bloc argues LAWS need a legally binding treaty, not just principles, because voluntary rules won't stop an arms race. Their red line is banning or tightly limiting systems that can select and engage targets without meaningful human control, since that raises civilian harm and accountability problems. They frame it as a human dignity + IHL issue: humans must stay responsible for lethal decisions.

7.2 Western Military-Tech Powers: United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Australia

This bloc supports regulation mainly through IHL compliance, Article 36 weapons reviews, testing standards, and clear command responsibility, instead of a blanket ban. They prioritize workable guardrails like human supervision, reliability, explainability/audit trails, and secure control chains. They're cautious about definitions because an overly broad treaty could restrict legitimate defensive systems and existing automated tech.

7.3 "Sovereignty-based" Major Powers:China, North Korea

This bloc is skeptical of broad binding bans and tends to emphasize state sovereignty and strategic stability. They often argue IHL already applies, so the focus should be on how weapons are used, not banning an entire category that's hard to define. In debate, they usually push for narrow definitions, non-binding principles, and national-level discretion over implementation. There have been records of certain nations in this block violating current international guidelines.

7.4 High-Conflict / Drone-Heavy Security States: Israel, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Ukraine, Iran, Russia

This bloc is shaped by real conflict conditions where drones and rapid targeting already matter, so they prioritize operational realism and flexible rules. Some resist strict bans because they want room to innovate and respond fast, while others worry about escalation and civilian harm and push clearer limits. What they share is pressure for clear definitions and workable enforcement, not just ethical statements.

8. Key Questions for Debate

1. Where should the line be drawn between “automation” and “autonomy,” and who gets to decide whether a system counts as LAWS?

2. If states agree on “meaningful human control,” what should that actually require in practice (timing, information, ability to override, accountability, rules), and how do we prevent it from becoming a loophole?

3. How do we balance military arguments for speed and force, with humanitarian concerns about unintentional civilian harm and escalation—especially in crowded urban or border environments?

4. What responsibilities should fall on different actors—states, commanders, developers/companies, and weapons manufacturers—when an autonomous system causes unlawful harm?

5. What would credible enforcement look like: transparency reporting, inspections, shared testing standards, export controls, or something else—and how do you enforce it without exposing sensitive military tech?

6. What should the global priority be right now: an immediate moratorium/ban to stop proliferation, or a step-by-step framework that starts with standards and transparency and tightens over time?

7. Should restrictions focus on the type of weapon (blanket limits) or the context of use (rules based on environments/targets), and what are the risks of each approach?

9. Country List

Countries in **Bold** play an integral role in this debate

Australia
Austria
Brazil
China
Costa Rica
Egypt
France
Germany
India
Iran
Israel
Japan
Libya
Mexico
Morocco
Netherlands
Pakistan
Russian Federation
Singapore
South Africa
South Korea
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States

10. Resources for Further Research

- Certain Conventional Weapons: CCW_GGE1_2023_CRP.1_0.pdf

10.1 Official UN Resources

- Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems: Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems | United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (brief overview over LAWS and position of the UN about LAWS)
- UN addresses AI and the Dangers of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems: UN addresses AI and the Dangers of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems
  (UN addresses AI and the Dangers of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems)
- Lethal autonomous weapons systems: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly: Lethal autonomous weapons systems : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly
  (UN Resolution 79/62 in different languages)
- Lethal autonomous weapons systems: report of the Secretary-General: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4059475?v=pdf
  (report of the Secretary-General about LAWS)

10.2 News and Current Events

- UN News - https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/05/1163256 -
  (important message of the UN chief)
- CNA - Commentary: Southeast Asia can't afford to sit out the 'killer robots' debate - CNA (important for Asian countries)
- statista - Twelve Countries Say No to Banning Autonomous Weapons | Statista -
  (helpful for your own position as a delegate)
- Reuters - Nations meet at UN for 'killer robot' talks as regulation lags | Reuters
  (similar to DISEC)

10.3 Accessible Explainers

- What are Autonomous Weapons Systems? - What are Autonomous Weapon Systems? | The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs -

(brief description of LAWS)
- What Are Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems? - What Are Lethal Autonomous Weapons? Nobel Peace Prize Winner and Researcher Explain -
(brief video-explanation of LAWS)
- Killer Drones: Can We Stop Autonomous Weapons? -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqCMkXftDx8 -
(official UN video-explanation of LAWS)

10.4 Country Research Resources

- CIA World Factbook (for basic country information): cia.gov/the-world-factbook/
- UN Member States Portal: un.org/en/about-us/member-states
- Automated Decision Research: State positions | Automated Decision Research
- statista: Twelve Countries Say No to Banning Autonomous Weapons | Statista