CFMUN

Security Council

Topic B: *"How existing International Humanitarian Law (IHL) applies to New Military Technologies, including Human Enhancement and Autonomous Weapons Systems."*

I. Welcoming letter

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the Security Council committee. It is our pleasure to have you participate in this committee as we address the topic **“How existing International Humanitarian Law (IHL) applies to new military technologies, including human enhancement and autonomous weapons systems”** during the CFMUN XII edition. This issue is at the core of today’s humanitarian and security challenges, as advancements in military technology raise new questions about how existing IHL principles should be applied. You will have to think critically, communicate clearly, and work alongside the other delegates to accomplish the best possible solution for this issue.

We encourage you to approach this committee with professionalism, respect, and an open mind. Whether you are an experienced delegate or it is your first time in the Security Council, your

contributions will shape the progress and quality of the debate. Remember that diplomacy, collaboration, and creativity are key to achieving meaningful outcomes. We are excited to see your dedication throughout the sessions and are confident that your participation will make this CFMUN XII edition a memorable and enriching experience.
We wish all delegates the best of luck, and welcome once again to CFMUN XII.

Sincerely,
Fabiola Castro and Inés Hernández

Table of contents

I. Committee Background

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the UN body with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is the only UN body with the power to adopt coercive measures and decisions that are legally binding on all Member States.

It focuses on:

Peaceful settlement of disputes: The main focus is on conflict prevention, urging disputing parties to resolve their differences through peaceful means such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, or judicial settlement.

Peacekeeping: When conflicts arise, the Council establishes and deploys peacekeeping operations to stabilize situations, monitor ceasefires, and protect civilians.

II. Introduction to the Topic

The fast pace of military technology is changing the way wars are fought. Tools such as autonomous weapons systems (AWS), AI-assisted targeting, human enhancement technologies, and advanced surveillance systems are making the application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) increasingly complex. IHL establishes rules for the conduct of hostilities protecting civilians, regulating the use of force, and defining lawful combatants, yet these rules are challenged as machines take over roles traditionally performed by humans.

Autonomous weapons capable of selecting and engaging targets without human intervention raise questions regarding accountability, distinction, and proportionality. Similarly, human enhancement technologies, including exoskeletons, genetic modifications, and neuro-optical devices, complicate classifications of

combatants and the ethical boundaries of military conduct. While these technologies provide operational advantages, they also carry risks such as escalation of conflicts, potential misuse, and widening of accountability gaps. Despite growing concern among states, NGOs, and UN agencies, no comprehensive international regulation currently governs these emerging systems.

This topic requires delegates to evaluate whether existing IHL is sufficient or if new frameworks are necessary to address the humanitarian and security implications of rapidly evolving military technologies.

III. Evolution of the Topic

Early Legal Foundations (1864–1977)

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) finds its origins in the Geneva Conventions of 1864, with later expansions in 1906, 1929, and 1949, which established core protections for wounded soldiers, prisoners of war, and civilians. The 1977 Additional Protocols introduced modern principles such as proportionality and distinction, anticipating the need to regulate advanced weapons, although autonomous or AI systems were not fully envisioned at that time.

Technological Acceleration (1990s–2010s)

The rise of digital warfare, including cyber operations, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and automated targeting created questions about the applicability of traditional IHL to non-human decision making systems. By the early 2010s, discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) gained importance in United Nations forums.

Formal Global Debates (2013–present)

IIn 2013, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) established a dedicated Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to study Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). Since then, debates have focused on defining meaningful human control, identifying accountability gaps, and evaluating whether fully autonomous lethal systems should be restricted or prohibited. Despite years of discussion, states remain divided on these issues.

Emergence of Human Enhancement (2020–2024)

Parallel to autonomous weapons, militaries worldwide have experimented with programs to enhance soldiers' physical, cognitive, and sensory capabilities. This includes biotechnology, neural implants, and AI-powered exoskeletons. These developments raise concerns regarding consent, long-term health effects, and adherence to IHL standards for combatant status and human treatment.

IV. Relevant Events

A. Panorama

The global landscape shows rapid adoption of AI-driven and autonomous systems in military operations. Several states have displayed semi-autonomous weapons for surveillance, missile defense, and precision targeting. Civilian technologies such as facial recognition, big data analytics, and robotics have helped speed up the creation of dual-use systems that can be adapted for warfare.

International organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), have warned that delegating life and death decisions to machines goes against humanitarian principles. NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have highlighted the risks of surveillance based targeting, algorithmic bias, and inappropriate use during armed conflict.

Despite these concerns, the absence of an international treaty leaves a regulatory gap,

which could allow the deployment of fully autonomous systems without adequate safeguards.

B. Points of View

Support for Regulation

Countries such as France, Germany, and several Latin American states advocate for clearer rules governing autonomy and human control. These states support transparency, ethical guidelines, and human accountability.

Calls for Flexibility

Countries like China support restricting fully autonomous lethal systems but emphasize maintaining freedom to develop non-lethal and partially autonomous systems.

Opposition to New Restrictions

The United States, Russia, and other states consider existing IHL enough and oppose a treaty that imposes prohibitions. They prioritize military innovation and argue that additional regulation

could limit legitimate defense capabilities.

NGO and Expert Community

Organizations including the ICRC, UNIDIR, and Human Rights Watch call for new legally instruments to limit or ban fully autonomous lethal systems, emphasizing on the potential of humanitarian consequences.

V. UN and External Actions

UN Actions

- The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has hosted expert meetings on LAWS since 2013.
- The UN Human Rights Council has issued reports emphasizing the risks of fully autonomous decisions in warfare.
- The UN Secretary-General has constantly called for prohibitions on weapons operating without meaningful human control.
- UNIDIR has published policy frameworks and technical analyses on autonomy, human control, and accountability.
- The ICRC has released multiple position papers recommending new legal binding rules to ensure human responsibility in the use of force.

External Actions

- Human Rights Watch's "Campaign to Stop Killer Robots" has mobilized global advocacy for banning on autonomous lethal systems.
- The European Union has debated regulatory limits on AI in security contexts.
- Countries such as the United States, Israel, South Korea, and China continue to develop autonomous and AI-assisted weapon systems.
- Private sector actors, including defense companies and AI laboratories, are influencing technological development without coordinated international oversight.

VI. Conclusion

Emerging military technologies confront a significant number of complex challenges to the established framework of International Humanitarian Law. As AI, autonomy, and human improvement reshape warfare, questions of accountability, proportionality, and civilian protection become increasingly urgent. Although IHL continues to apply, its interpretation must evolve to ensure that technological advancements do not dismiss humanitarian principles. The Security Council plays a central role in guiding international responses, promoting transparency, and encouraging a responsible development and use of these technologies.

VII. Committee Focus

The Security Council must determine how to balance national security needs with the protection of civil liberties. Key areas include:

- How should the international community apply existing IHL to autonomous weapons without limiting the states' ability to develop necessary defense technologies?

- What minimum rules or standards should be established to ensure that human enhancement technologies act in accordance with IHL principles such as distinction and proportionality?

- How can the UN help prevent the misuse of autonomous systems, such as fully independent targeting or engagement during armed conflict?

- Should the deployment of fully autonomous weapons be considered a threat to

international peace and security, and how should the Security Council address this issue?

- What level of human oversight should be required when states use autonomous weapons capable of identifying or engaging targets?

- What role should the UN, states, and private technology developers play in monitoring and regulating the creation and use of emerging military technologies?

VII. Participation List

- Argentine Republic
- Canada
- The Commonwealth of Australia
- Federative Republic of Brazil
- Federal Republic of Germany
- French Republic
- Italian Republic
- Japan
- Kingdom of Denmark
- Kingdom of Norway
- Kingdom of Spain
- Kingdom of the Netherlands
- New Zealand
- People’s Republic of China
- Republic of Chile
- Republic of Colombia
- Republic of Iceland
- Republic of India
- Republic of Kenya
- Republic of South Africa
- Republic of South Korea
- Republic of Türkiye

- Republic of the Philippines
- Russian Federation
- State of Israel
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- United Mexican States
- United States of America

XI. References

Acheson, R., & Moyes, R. (2021). *Lethal autonomous weapons: Reframing the debate*. UNIDIR. https://unidir.org/publication/lethal-autonomous-weapons-reframing-debate

Amnesty International. (2023, December 12). *EU's decision not to ban mass public surveillance in the AI Act sets a devastating global precedent*. https://www.amnistia.org/en/news/2023/12/25534/ue-la-decision-del-bloque-de-no-prohibir-la-vigilancia-masiva?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Boulanin, V., Saalman, L., & Topychkanov, P. (2020). *Limits on autonomy in weapon systems: Identifying practical elements of human control*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. https://www.sipri.org/publications/2020/other-publications/limits-autonomy-weapon-systems

Derechos Digitales. (2022). *Informe vigilancia masiva OEA / RELE*. https://www.derechosdigitales.org/wp-content/uploads/Informe-RELE-vigilancia-masiva_cerrado.pdf?

High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations. (2023, June 2). *Artificial intelligence: Regulation is essential to curb surveillance and disinformation*. United Nations. https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1137302

Heyns, C. (2013). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (Autonomous weapons systems)*. United Nations Human Rights Council. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/748183

Human Rights Watch. (2023, October 3). *It is time to ban facial recognition in public spaces and borders*.

https://www.hrw.org/es/news/2023/10/03/es-hora-de-prohibir-el-reconocimiento-facial-en-espacios-publicos-y-fronteras?

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2014). *Autonomous weapon systems – Technical, military, legal and humanitarian aspects*. https://www.icrc.org/en/document/report-icrc-meeting-autonomous-weapon-systems-26-28-march-2014

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2018). *Ethics and autonomous weapon systems: An ethical basis for human control?* https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/document/file_list/icrc_ethics_and_autonomous_weapon_systems_report_3_april_2018.pdf

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2024). *Submission on autonomous weapon systems to the United Nations Secretary-*

General. https://www.icrc.org/en/document/autonomous-weapons-icrc-submits-recommendations-un-secretary-general?

International Committee of the Red Cross. (n.d.). Autonomous weapons. https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/autonomous-weapons

International Committee of the Red Cross. (n.d.). Decisions to kill and destroy are a human responsibility. https://www.icrc.org/en/document/statement-icrc-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems?