Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

15 November 2024

English only

Geneva, 13-15 November 2024
Agenda item 7
General exchange of views

Working Paper*

Submitted by Greece

1. The CCW is a forum that brings together expertise from different fields, allowing us to address a wide range of both long-standing and emerging issues. Its inclusive nature, with the participation of all major stakeholders, including producers, creates a platform that naturally ensures the necessary balance between military necessity and humanitarian concerns.

2. We therefore firmly believe that universal adoption of the Convention and its Protocols is crucial to the success of our efforts to prohibit or restrict the use of certain types of weapons that are deemed to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to have indiscriminate effects on civilians. In this regard, we urge all States not yet party to the Convention and its Protocols to take the necessary steps to become parties as soon as possible.

3. Operational planning in the military domain is inherently complex and dynamic, particularly given the rapidly changing nature of the battlefield environment. As military capabilities continuously evolve and the conduct of military operations changes, mainly due to technological developments, it becomes increasingly essential to establish clear restrictions that ensure compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL), thereby minimizing harm to civilians and safeguarding fundamental human values.

4. In this regard, initiatives such as the Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA) Declaration serve as platforms to promote the exchange of best practices regarding the use of explosive weapons in urban environments to minimize harm to civilians. By integrating such initiatives into operational planning, military forces can strengthen their commitment to IHL.

5. Regarding Mines Other than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPMs), Greece acknowledges that they are legitimate weapons necessary for its national defense planning. While we take note of the humanitarian concerns arising from the indiscriminate use of these weapons, it is also necessary not to overlook the military concerns and considerations on this issue. Greece is using MOTAPMs with a full range of safeguards to ensure that potential harm to civilians is minimized.

6. Greece is deeply concerned about the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), which can take various forms and be activated in multiple ways. Tactics, techniques, and procedures for deploying IEDs are evolving alongside technological advances. Therefore, we must continue our efforts to address this threat and mitigate the human suffering caused by their use.

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7. Moreover, the incorporation of emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning, in weapon systems raises important political, legal, moral, and ethical considerations.

8. In this context, the potential applications of generative AI in weapon systems introduce a new layer of complexity and uncertainty, as these systems would have the ability to autonomously generate novel solutions and adapt to evolving battlefield conditions by continuously analyzing and learning from new data

9. Therefore, as we have stated in the past, we have grave concerns about the possibility of pre-programming autonomous weapon systems to comply with legal requirements and evaluative concepts, such as the principles of target discrimination and proportionality, especially in the ever-changing environment of the battlefield.

10. Greece supports the so-called "two-tier" approach to weapon systems in the area of LAWS (Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems) and strongly believes that the CCW remains the appropriate forum to continue discussing this issue, with a view to further enhancing our common understanding of the multiple technical, legal, ethical, and military aspects involved.

11. Last but not least, we commend Ambassador Robert in den Bosch for his efforts as Chair of the GGE on LAWS in reaching a common understanding on the characterization of LAWS, which will pave the way for concrete actions to address this multidimensional issue.