

Submission of the Global Commission on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain to the United Nations Secretary-General in terms of resolution A/RES/79/239 on “Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security” adopted by the General Assembly on 24 December 2024.¹

1. Introduction

The Global Commission on Responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Military Domain (GC REAIM) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the United Nations Secretary-General's report pursuant to resolution A/RES/79/239.

GC REAIM recognises that military applications of AI present both opportunities and challenges for global peace and security. Accordingly, the establishment of responsible and ethical governance — consistent with States’ obligations under applicable international law — is essential. The global community must take proactive steps to ensure that military AI is developed and deployed in a manner that de-escalates rather than escalates conflicts; respects and enhances, rather than compromises, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states; promotes rather than threatens the security and safety of civilians; constrains and supports rather than erodes the existing rules-based international order.

In line with GC REAIM's resolute commitment to advancing international governance efforts, this note outlines some of the — non-exhaustive — views expressed by GC REAIM Commissioners and Experts on the implications of AI in

¹ This submission was initially drafted by Prof Dr Thompson Chengeta, a Commissioner and member of the GC REAIM Drafting Committee, incorporating inputs from GC REAIM Commissioners and Experts. The valuable contributions—including edits, drafting specific language and ideas—of the GC REAIM Secretariat, as well as several Commissioners and Experts who supported the drafting process of this statement, are fully acknowledged.

the military domain to peace and security. The views presented are general in nature and will be further elaborated in the forthcoming GC REAIM report. While the Commission plans to present substantive and actionable recommendations for stakeholders in September 2025, this note does not yet include concrete proposals. As discussions among Commissioners and Experts are still ongoing, it instead highlights some of the key opportunities, challenges, benefits and risks posed by AI in the military domain to peace and security.

2. Technological Foundations

GC REAIM holds that meaningful policy deliberations on AI in the military domain must be grounded in a shared, foundational understanding of the underlying technologies and their potential trajectories. The complexity of AI technologies often gives rise to misunderstandings, inflated expectations, or misguided applications. Consequently, it is imperative to demystify AI through formal and well-defined frameworks that distinguish between current capabilities and speculative future developments. To support this objective, GC REAIM is developing a taxonomy which seeks to map the full spectrum of AI applications across military and broader peace and security contexts. The taxonomy differentiates between the implications of AI in operational activities — such as warfighting and intelligence — and administrative activities — such as logistics and personnel training and helps identify the specific applications of AI that should be prioritised in governance deliberations.

In its approach to the creation of a taxonomy, GC REAIM highlights the need for and contributes to a concerted effort to clarify, standardise, and encourage the accurate use of technical language with different layers of abstraction for policymakers, experts, and the public, thereby enhancing transparency, mutual understanding, and public trust. GC REAIM also cautions against the uncritical

multiplication or adoption of new terminologies in AI governance discourse, unless these are clearly defined; and to ensure such terms are not used to circumvent or obscure existing legal obligations. Precision and consistency in language are the basis of responsible AI governance.

3. Implications for Peace, Security, and Stability

GC REAIM recognises that the integration of AI into the military domain presents benefits as well as both foreseeable and unforeseeable risks to international peace and security. A balanced approach to the range of opportunities and challenges emerging throughout the AI lifecycle lies at the core of GC REAIM's method and is essential for responsible AI governance.

AI in the military domain may contribute to international peace and security in several important ways. At the developmental stage, the advancement of military AI capabilities may act as a deterrent to violence, as the mere development and presence of advanced technologies by responsible actors can encourage restraint by aggressors. Military AI may enhance early warning systems, strengthening conflict prevention strategies, and supporting arms control verification through AI-driven tools that foster transparency, trust, and cooperation among states — fundamental elements in conflict prevention. AI can also bolster national security and defence by improving the precision, accuracy, and efficiency of intelligence analysis and situational awareness, enabling real-time threat detection, and facilitating more efficient counterterrorism operations through predictive analytics and autonomous systems. AI-powered systems can rapidly process vast amounts of complex data, enabling military forces to make timely, informed decisions that may prevent escalation and support conflict de-escalation efforts. These traits can also help improve targeting accuracy and precision, potentially reducing the risk of collateral damage or fratricide—attacks on one's own forces—and aiding

compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) to protect the security of protected persons, such as civilians and non-combatants, during armed conflict. Military AI may also reduce certain forms of human bias and enhance accountability by providing precise data, surveillance, and real-time monitoring, enabling clear attribution of actions to specific actors. In these ways, AI offers meaningful opportunities to reinforce adherence to international law and ethical standards, strengthening the normative foundation of the rules-based international order underpinning global peace and security.

AI in the military domain also presents a range of risks. As with the development of other general-purpose technologies, the development of AI in the military domain may accelerate arms races. AI technologies driven by the commercial market may be repurposed by militaries or soldiers in need or increase the access of violent non-state actors to AI-enabled military capabilities, which may intensify ongoing conflicts and contribute to broader instability. There are also concerns that states could employ AI technologies to suppress human rights, entrench internal repression, and destabilise both regional and global peace.

Concurrently, as with AI more broadly, the environmental consequences of military AI—such as the energy-intensive demands of AI systems, resource extraction, and ecological damage from AI-enabled military systems—could aggravate resource scarcity and environmental degradation, fuelling tensions and undermining long-term peace. However, given the impact militaries have on civilian technology development, efforts to reduce the environmental impact of AI in defence settings could have far-reaching beneficial consequences for all uses of AI. As such, considerations of environmental impacts should be a component of responsible AI governance in the military domain.

The large-scale data extraction required for AI development could intensify geopolitical rivalries, facilitate intrusive surveillance, and create distrust through opaque and exploitative data practices. Such deployment of military AI may perpetuate discrimination and exacerbate social divisions, undermining stability and ultimately international peace and security.

There are simultaneously significant concerns regarding the potential of integration of AI within the command, control, and communication (C3) structures of nuclear weapons. A number of Commissioners and Experts have emphasised that this is a red line that must not be crossed. The commitment of several nuclear-armed states to human decision-making surrounding the employment of nuclear weapons is therefore applauded. Further, the development of large-scale lethal autonomous weapon systems—such as swarms of anti-personnel devices—risks creating a new category of weapons of mass destruction, posing serious threats to global peace and security. Relatedly, AI may lower the barriers to creation and use of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons by state or non-state actors, thus generating new challenges for arms control and non-proliferation regimes.

Beyond these strategic risks, AI may affect the character of war and lower the thresholds for armed conflict. By increasing the speed of armed escalation and driving changes in the capabilities of weapons systems, AI in the military domain may reduce states' confidence in their deterrent capabilities—particularly in the face of cyber infiltration risk— thus influencing how decision-makers receive, process, and act on information. AI in the military domain could also exacerbate asymmetric warfare and violence by widening technological disparities that could increase the likelihood of force being used prematurely or disproportionately.

Operationally, inaccurate AI systems used for targeting can undermine the security of protected persons under IHL by increasing the risk of indiscriminate attacks,

violations of proportionality, and failure to distinguish between combatants and civilians. Closely related to this is the risk of fratricide due to potential errors in target identification or decision-making, which can undermine operational effectiveness, escalate conflict, and erode trust within militaries and alliances. Finally, there are views that the use of certain AI systems in the military domain can create accountability gaps absent clear rules. By complicating the attribution of responsibility for unlawful actions, the deployment of AI in the military domain could undermine key principles of international law and state responsibility for internationally wrongful acts. This may complicate efforts to hold individuals or states responsible for violations, leading to a reduced deterrent effect against unlawful conduct. Without avenues to hold actors legally responsible, the enforcement of international law weakens, potentially destabilising peace, encouraging impunity, and exacerbating global insecurity.

4. Decision-Making and Responsibility

GC REAIM acknowledges the ethical and legal challenges that arise from integrating AI into military decision-making which may have a direct impact on preservation of peace and security. The relationship between human judgment and machine outputs is complex and without measures to ensure lawful, responsible and effective development and deployment, there can be an erosion of accountability and increased risks of unintended harm. As AI systems become more sophisticated and integrated within military capabilities, it is plausible that algorithmic decisions may become more commonplace across global battlefields, introducing moral and legal challenges regarding human control, oversight and judgment in diverse contexts.

To address these risks, GC REAIM promotes the need for context-appropriate human judgement over specific uses, capabilities and decisions of AI in military

applications. The GC REAIM report will list considerations and conditions that underpin and support human responsibility, judgment and means of adequately evaluating relevant actions and decisions. This could include the introduction of technical standards for explainability, as well as maintaining appropriate human oversight in targeting decisions, assessments of precautions, proportionality and distinction, and other critical operational choices. However, given that the very definition of autonomy in machines suggests the minimisation or removal of the human, ensuring human responsibility and accountability may require focusing on human decision-making at earlier stages of a system's life cycle, as the systems structure the behaviour of all who work with it. Human oversight is essential to uphold state obligations under applicable international law, in particular, IHL.

Military AI systems must be designed not only to support all individual and collective agents in the military domain to be effective in safely carrying out their lawful tasks, but also to do so responsibly and without compromising or undermining their status as moral human agents. GC REAIM suggests that military AI based socio-technical systems need to be explicitly and demonstrably designed to adequately attribute and apportion responsibilities and is determined to contribute to this process. For the security of protected persons, parties to armed conflicts should at all times be able to demonstrate that everything possible has been undertaken to create the conditions under which military personnel can effectively apply extant and widely shared principles and laws of armed conflict to their own situation, when using or relying upon AI components in the execution of their tasks.

5. Governance and Regulation

In light of both the opportunities and risks associated with military AI, GC REAIM supports a comprehensive governance framework that implements authentic

international law. GC REAIM reiterates that existing legal regimes provide a solid foundation for regulating AI technologies. Governance must incorporate and account for procedural safeguards (due diligence and legal reviews, transparency of testing, evaluation, and validation, accreditation, and verification), substantive obligations drawn from various branches of international law, and soft law tools (military doctrines, national policies and strategies, norms and standards). In principle, all relevant international legal frameworks must be considered and applied. These include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) international law (*jus ad bellum*) which regulates when and how states use force, codifying a general prohibition on the use of force and exceptions such as in the case of self-defence, (2) international humanitarian law (*jus in bello*) which governs conduct during armed conflict and ensures the security of protected persons, (3) international human rights law.

GC REAIM further emphasises the critical role of international, regional, and domestic institutions in implementing and enforcing these legal norms. Effective governance requires collaboration across these levels and the inclusion of both binding (hard law) and non-binding (soft law) instruments. Soft law mechanisms, such as codes of conduct and ethical principles, can complement existing treaties and facilitate rapid, flexible responses to technological developments.

To address the diverse range of challenges surrounding the integration of AI into the military domain, GC REAIM supports proactive risk-mitigation and confidence-building measures. While binding regimes are challenging for general purpose technologies, there may be opportunities for rigorous monitoring, verification, and enforcement mechanisms inspired by successful global arms control regimes. For example, Commissioners and Experts have discussed ideas such as an Autonomous Incidents Agreement to reduce the risks of miscalculation among AI-

enabled autonomous systems, or a committee or consortium that could set guidelines and recommendations surrounding the testing and evaluation of AI systems, including generative AI. GC REAIM also suggests that states and industries should consider adopting human-centred safety-by-design principles, implement red-teaming practices throughout AI system lifecycles, and maintain clear chains of accountability for all actors. Only through robust multilateral dialogue and inclusive multi-stakeholder cooperation can AI be effectively governed to enhance peace and security rather than exacerbate global instability.

GC REAIM acknowledges that the development of a comprehensive governance framework for military AI faces several key challenges. First, there is the challenge of diverse interests and perspectives, with states, private companies, and civil society holding varying and sometimes conflicting views on the regulation of military AI. Second, the sensitivity surrounding national security and defence poses a significant barrier, as many states are reluctant to subject their military technologies to international scrutiny or regulation due to legitimate security interests. Third, achieving meaningful and substantive inclusivity in discussions is often difficult, as key stakeholders may be excluded or marginalised in decision-making processes. Fourth, a trust deficit between states, international organisations, and the private sector complicates efforts to establish cooperative governance. Fifth, the presence of crosstalk, incommensurability, and discursive dissonance arises due to the diverse backgrounds and expertise of stakeholders, making consensus-building challenging. Finally, these obstacles are compounded by the lack of clear frameworks that address the complex ethical, legal, and technical issues at the nexus of AI and the military domain. In light of these challenges, the final GC REAIM report will offer strategies to navigate and overcome these barriers in developing a robust governance framework.

6. Conclusion

GC REAIM observes that the rapid advancement and deployment of AI technologies in military contexts poses opportunities, challenges, benefits and risks for global peace and security. Balancing these considerations must be met with a technologically sound, inclusive, principled, and legally grounded approach to governance.

A clear understanding of AI's technological foundations is necessary to properly address its role in modern warfare. Ethical and legal responsibility should remain human-centred, and governance frameworks must rely on the robust application of international law, supplemented by cooperative multilateral efforts and soft law instruments when appropriate. In its formation and deliberations, GC REAIM has had the opportunity to reflect upon the conversations happening in broader governance processes, finding ways to effectively bridge gaps between disciplines and regional perspectives.

GC REAIM urges the United Nations and all State Parties to place these principles at the heart of global discussions on the implications of AI in the military and broader peace and security, for the present and future generations. Only through concerted international cooperation, guided by a shared commitment to human dignity, peace, and justice, can we ensure that the future of AI in the military domain is one that strengthens our common security.

7. List of GC REAIM Commissioners and Experts

A complete overview of GC REAIM Commissioners and Experts can be found [here](#).

8. Acknowledgements

GC REAIM is an initiative of the Government of the Netherlands that was launched during the 2023 REAIM Summit on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain in The Hague. The GC REAIM Secretariat is hosted by the Hague Centre of Strategic Studies. GC REAIM worked closely with the REAIM Summit held in Seoul, contributing to the production of the “Blueprint for Action” and will continue to collaborate with the Spanish government towards the third REAIM Summit taking place in A Coruña in September, 2025. The work of GC REAIM and the production of 19 policy notes by members of the Expert Advisory Group was further supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom.