IHLYI Inputs to the UN Secretary-General's Report on Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security

Submitted by: International Humanitarian Law and Youth Initiative (IHLYI)[1]
Submitted to: To the Secretary-General for seventy- eightieth session of General Assembly

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has gained a universal recognition during the 1950s'. Technological emergence has assisted humans in almost all facets of their lives thereby making work easier and faster. Moreso, the rapid growth of Artificial intelligence in technological field enthralling commercial investors, law makers, defense intellectuals and international competitors can be evidential in theoretical premises of international security. The use of Artificial intelligence (AI) in modern warfare particularly in the In the Middle East and North Africa, Ukraine/Russian armed conflict which has resulted in the killings of thousands of innocent civilians with women and children being the most vulnerable. The emergence of AI is expected to be utilized in improving all sectors in our daily lives However, its Negative application in the military domain continues to create Humanitarian crisis between warring parties making it of regional and international concern. The war in Gaza is one of the deadliest and most destructive war in history with technology playing a central role in enabling mass slaughter and destruction ranging from supplying the dystopian systems used to automate the killings and

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[1] **The International Humanitarian Law and Youth Initiative (IHLYI)** a social movement founded in 2018 by a group of passionate young professionals from Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia, we are honored to speak with you today. Our initiative was created with the shared vision of building a digital space where youth can engage, learn, and collaborate on issues related to International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The heart of our work remains in the MENA region, where conflicts persist, and the relevance of IHL is more urgent than ever. HLYI's grassroots approach and on-the-ground presence in conflict regions position us uniquely as witnesses, documenters, and advocates for justice and change. Through education, collaboration, and grassroots activism, we aim to bridge the gap between legal principles and lived realities, ensuring that the voices of young people in conflict zones are heard and amplified. **Please find the annual activity report available at the following link https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OoTWpWg2UI85x62osa2VCgi5p9UnPF7X?usp=drive_link**

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bombing[2]. Following the October7 2023, there have been extensive reports evidencing the Israeli occupation forces use of surveillance technology, artificial intelligence, and other digital tool to determine who, what and when to attack in Gaza trip. Thus, this violates the principles of international humanitarian law which emphasize the necessity of distinguishing those in active combat and not[3] and to take necessary precautions when conducting an attack to minimize civilian harm.

IHLYI in this paper, responding to the request of the UN secretary general pursuant to a resolution A/RES/79/239, adopted by the General assembly on 24 December 2024 on Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implication to international peace and security therefore, it analyzes AI In modern warfare, its implication to international peace and security and the role of technological companies in armed conflict.

Artificial Intelligence in Modern Warfare: A Legal and Humanitarian Perspective

The rules of international humanitarian law do not explicitly address the use of modern technological tools and artificial intelligence (AI) during armed conflicts. However, its core principles—such as distinction, proportionality, and precaution—remain applicable and binding on all parties. These principles require the differentiation between military objectives and civilians, and oblige parties to take all feasible measures to avoid or minimize harm to civilian populations. In recent years, militaries have contracted private companies to develop autonomous weapons systems. However, the armed conflict in Gaza stands out as one of the most prominent cases where commercially developed AI models—originally created in countries like the United States—have been employed in actual combat operations, despite the fact that these systems were not initially designed to make life-or-death decisions.

This shift highlights a troubling rise in the militarization of technology without clear legal or ethical oversight. While some of these tools may enhance operational efficiency, their unregulated use poses serious risks of human rights violations, especially amid a lack of

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[2]Accessnow. (October 2024) **Big Tech and the risk of genocide in Gaza: what are companies doing? Available at** https://www.accessnow.org/gaza-genocide-big-tech/

[3] Article 48 of Additional protocol I of the Geneva convention

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transparency about how these tools function, the origin of the data they rely on, and the accuracy of their outcomes[4].

One of the most pressing concerns recently raised is the deployment of digital military tools based on unreliable data or flawed algorithms. Some of these systems depend on mass surveillance of Gaza[5]'s population, including the collection of personal data prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Such practices raise legal and ethical questions regarding their compatibility with international obligations to safeguard privacy and prevent the misuse of personal information for the purpose of direct targeting.

Among the tools reportedly in use is a system that tracks population movement through mobile phone data to monitor evacuations from certain areas. Another generates lists of structural targets to be hit militarily. A third tool classifies individuals based on levels of suspicion regarding their affiliation with armed groups, while a fourth seeks to determine the precise location of a target in order to carry out a strike at the opportune moment. These tools largely rely on data extracted from mobile devices—whether through cell tower location information or GPS[6]. However, from a technical perspective, such data is insufficiently precise to confirm an individual's presence at a specific location at a given time, particularly in conflict zones where individuals frequently change phones or numbers. Over-reliance on this technology may lead to fatal mistakes, especially when a mobile phone is used as a substitute for verifying a person's actual presence in a targeted area. Legally, the use of such systems without taking all feasible precautions to protect civilians constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law—particularly Article 57[7] of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which obliges parties to take constant care to spare civilian lives during military operations.

Given this reality, urgent questions must be raised about the future of AI in warfare and the legislative and legal mechanisms needed to regulate it. Without proper oversight,

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[4] Human Rights Watch, "Israel: AI-Powered Targeting Systems May Be Committing War Crimes in Gaza", 2024.

[5] Associated Press, "Documents Reveal Israel's Use of AI Tools in Targeting Gaza", Investigative Report, 2024.

[6] Human Rights Watch(2024). Questions and Answers: Israeli Military's Use of Digital Tools in Gaza Available at Questions and Answers: Israeli Military's Use of Digital Tools in Gaza | Human Rights Watch

[7] Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), Article 57.

these tools risk becoming instruments of systematic human rights abuses rather than technologies aimed at ensuring greater protection for those affected by war.

Implications of Artificial Intelligence on International Peace and Security

Armed conflicts in various regions around the world, such as Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Ukraine, and Libya, have had catastrophic humanitarian and security consequences. These conflicts have led to the mass displacement of civilian populations, depriving thousands of people of their basic rights such as food, water, shelter, and healthcare. These individuals live in dire humanitarian conditions, with a significant increase in deaths due to famine, thirst, and diseases caused by contaminated water, in addition to exposure to harsh weather conditions without protection.

In this context, the increasing use of artificial intelligence and drones as weapons in conflicts, particularly by Israel in the Gaza Strip[8], stands out. Since October 2023, there has been a notable escalation in the use of "quadcopters" to carry out precise and targeted strikes against civilians. These drones are equipped with data analysis algorithms and offensive capabilities, enabling them to target individuals based on tracking their movements or mobile phone signals.

According to documented reports, this technology has led to the death of more than 1,000 Palestinians by May 2024, including a significant number of women and children. This constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian law, particularly Articles 51 and 57 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit attacks on civilians and obligate parties to the conflict to take all necessary precautions to avoid harming them.

The concerns are not limited to the use of artificial intelligence against individuals but extend to the misuse of data. Relying on mobile phone tracking technologies (either through GPS data or cell tower signals) to pinpoint individuals' locations presents serious risks. Recent studies have shown that these systems do not provide enough accuracy to reliably determine someone's location, especially in conflict zones where phones may be swapped or disconnected frequently. This means that relying on these

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[8] TRTWORLD(2024)**Quadcopter strikes: 1000 Palestinians killed by Israeli drones in one year. Available at**
Quadcopter strikes: 1000 Palestinians killed with drones in a year

methods without field verification can lead to erroneous decisions, resulting in unlawful killings.

In a well-known case, a Palestinian woman named "Silah" was killed while carrying a white flag and leading her family to safety. After stepping onto a main street, she was targeted by a small drone that shot her in the head. This incident, witnessed by those around her, serves as a stark example of the disastrous outcomes of unregulated use of technology on the battlefield[9].

In Libya, drones played a decisive role in the battles between conflicting parties, particularly as many of these drones, including Turkish and Chinese models, were operated using data analysis systems to target objectives. Some of these systems are believed to rely on artificial intelligence techniques for targeting, without legal oversight. The use of these tools in urban areas like Tripoli and Sirte has led to the deaths of civilians and extensive damage to infrastructure[10].

All of these events indicate that integrating artificial intelligence into managing and directing armed conflicts without an internationally binding legal framework to regulate its use could open the door to widespread violations, especially if these systems are not subject to independent and transparent oversight to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights.

Roles of Companies Developing AI in Armed Conflicts

Through a rapid increase in artificial intelligence and computer services, U.S. tech corporations have discreetly given Israel the ability to monitor and kill many more militants in Gaza and Lebanon more quickly. However, the death toll among civilians has also skyrocketed, raising concerns that these instruments may be causing the deaths of innocent people. Israel's recent wars are a leading example of commercial AI models developed in the United States being used in active warfare, despite concerns that they were not originally designed to help decide who lives and who dies.

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[9] Gaza grandmother gunned down by Israeli sniper as child waved white flag," *Times Kuwait*, November 2024, https://timeskuwait.com/news/gaza-grandmother-gunned-down-by-israeli-sniper-as-child-waved-white-flag.

[10] France 24. (2021). "Have Killer Drones Been Deployed in Libya?". France 24. Retrieved from https://rb.gy/1m6k43

For years, militaries have hired private companies to create customized autonomous weapons. Numerous American software companies have backed Israel's battles in recent years, including Microsoft and the San Francisco-based startup OpenAI. Under "Project Nimbus," a $1.2 billion contract signed in 2021[11] when Israel first tried out its in-house AI-powered targeting systems, Google and Amazon offer cloud computing and artificial intelligence services to the Israeli military. The military has made use of Dell and Cisco data centers and server farms. Palantir Technologies, a Microsoft partner in U.S. defense contracts, has a "strategic partnership" that provides AI systems to support Israel's war efforts, while Red Hat, an independent IBM company, has also supplied cloud computing technologies to the Israeli military.

Furthermore, through a number of programs, Microsoft also supplies Israel's government with services that have allegedly been used to help the Israeli military, police, Israeli Prison Service (IPS), and illegal settlement operations. Over 10,000 Palestinians are being held by the IPS as of October 2024; half of them have been detained without being charged or having a trial date scheduled. At least 310 medical professionals, UN employees, women, and children are among the Palestinian prisoners from Gaza who are presently detained in prolonged, secret, and incommunicado detention, where they are subjected to torture, mistreatment, and sexual violence and abuse, according to the UN Human Rights Office.

Companies are under obligation to respect human rights within their scope of operations. Companies that directly aid the offender—for example, by offering financial, logistical, military, or intelligence support—may be held criminally responsible for a crime committed during an armed conflict. Companies and their managers or executives may be held accountable in certain situations even if they had no direct involvement in the crime or no intention of supporting it. As the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) noted, companies "should treat this risk in the same manner as the risk of involvement in a serious crime, whether or not it is clear that they would be held legally liable[12]."

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[11] APNEWS(2025). **As Israel uses US-made AI models in war, concerns arise about tech's role in who lives and who dies. Available at** [How US tech giants' AI is changing the face of warfare in Gaza and Lebanon | AP News](#)

[12] Accessnow(2024) **Big Tech and the risk of genocide in Gaza: what are companies doing?**
https://www.accessnow.org/gaza-genocide-big-tech/

In light of the concerns raised in this submission and their implications for international peace and security, IHLYI urges states to:

1. **Refrain from the use of AI in military applications**: States should immediately halt the use of artificial intelligence in military activities and establish national regulations and laws to prevent its deployment in warfare.

2. **Work towards a global ban on the military use of AI**: States should actively pursue international agreements and frameworks to ban the use of AI in military contexts, ensuring that no country utilizes AI for warfare.

3. **Avoid the development of autonomous and AI-enabled weapon systems**: States should refrain from developing autonomous weapon systems or AI-powered weaponry that could be used to target humans, ensuring human oversight and decision-making in military actions.

4. **Ensure the protection of personal data**: States must guarantee that personal data is protected from misuse by military forces, law enforcement agencies, border control, and private contractors collaborating with these entities.

5. **Promote accountability in AI development**: Technology companies, researchers, engineers, and financial institutions should commit to not supporting the development or funding of AI technologies designed for military applications, advocating for responsible innovation in line with humanitarian principles.

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