



**80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, First Committee
Statement by Stop Killer Robots; Delivered by Yanitra Kumaraguru 17 October 2025**

Thank you, Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of Stop Killer Robots, a coalition of over 270 civil society organisations across more than 70 countries working to counter threats to humanity and human dignity through the adoption of a new international treaty to prohibit and regulate autonomous weapons systems. We support the development of legal and other norms that ensure meaningful human control over the use of force, counter digital dehumanisation, and reduce automated harm.

Autonomous weapons systems, particularly those that do not allow for meaningful human control and systems that target people, raise serious humanitarian, legal, security, technological, and ethical concerns with implications for their use during both conflict and peacetime. Despite these serious risks, new weapons and other militarised technologies are being rapidly developed without specific legal rules or limits to govern their use. After over a decade of multilateral discussions, States must urgently begin negotiations of a legally binding instrument to prohibit and regulate autonomous weapons systems.

The quest for speed through AI and automation in the use of force threatens commitments to international humanitarian law, protection of civilians, human rights, and dignity. We are already witnessing the military use of AI decision support systems in current conflicts in Gaza, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen, which in some cases have contributed to immense harm. We have also seen increased interest and investment in autonomy in weapons systems by the private sector, and concerning new partnerships between the defence and tech sectors. As the gap between development and regulation continues to grow, the international community has an obligation to establish rules for developers and militaries to prevent the unconscionable slide towards machines making life-and-death decisions.

States must heed the repeated calls by the Secretary-General and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross to negotiate a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons by 2026. Just last month, the Secretary-General warned the Security Council that “humanity’s fate cannot be left to an algorithm. Humans must always retain authority over life-and-death decisions.” These appeals are supported by thousands of technology and artificial intelligence experts, Nobel Laureates, faith leaders, and civil society across the world. The race to regulate autonomous weapons is at a critical juncture and legal red lines have never been more urgent. The clock is ticking and time is running out.

The Stop Killer Robots campaign welcomes the resolution on autonomous weapons systems being proposed in this First Committee and applauds the leadership of states



that are continually pushing for progress on this issue. States committed to taking action on autonomous weapons must support this resolution.

Autonomy in weapons systems is an issue that impacts all states and requires robust international cooperation and political courage to tackle. Stop Killer Robots remains ready to support all states willing to turn the common ground they have developed over the past decade into law.

Autonomy in weapons systems is a problem that raises profound questions about our shared humanity, but it is not a problem that is out of our hands. We have the collective power and collective responsibility to build a world that is peaceful and just – a world where we make decisions to protect human dignity today and for future generations.

Thank you.