




# DISEC

Combating the Proliferation of  
Autonomous Weapons  
Systems.





# Intro to DISEC

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), also known as the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, addresses global peace, disarmament, and security issues. Its mandate includes curbing the arms race, promoting disarmament, and fostering international cooperation to manage threats posed by conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction, and emerging technologies. DISEC has played a key role in facilitating treaties and resolutions on nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, as well as addressing newer threats like cyber warfare and autonomous weapon systems. Through dialogue and negotiation, the committee aims to build a safer, more secure world by advocating diplomatic solutions to complex global security challenges.


# Agenda overview




The rapid development of Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) has raised critical concerns about their impact on global security, ethics, and international law. AWS, also known as lethal autonomous weapons, are systems capable of selecting and engaging targets without direct human control. These technologies range from autonomous drones to robotic ground units and are powered by artificial intelligence, enabling them to operate independently on the battlefield.

The agenda focuses on the growing deployment and development of AWS and the challenges they pose. While proponents argue that these systems can reduce risks to military personnel and improve precision in combat, critics highlight the ethical dilemmas, such as the lack of accountability and the potential for misuse. Moreover, the unregulated proliferation of AWS could lead to new arms races and destabilize international security.

This agenda calls for a comprehensive examination of the implications of AWS, including discussions on the ethical and legal frameworks necessary to govern their use. Member states are urged to explore options for regulation, control, or even a complete ban on these systems, ensuring that technological advancements do not undermine global peace and security.



# Background



The development of Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) began with advancements in drones and robotics, initially used for tasks like surveillance. Over the past two decades, improvements in AI have allowed these systems to operate independently, leading to the creation of more sophisticated autonomous weapons. Countries like the United States, Russia, and China have invested significantly in AWS, viewing them as strategic assets, which has sparked concerns about an arms race and the ethical implications of their use. International discussions on AWS began in 2013 under the UN's Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Despite growing calls for regulation from advocacy groups and some nations, there is still no binding agreement to limit or ban AWS, as major powers remain divided on the issue. The ongoing debate highlights the need for international cooperation to address the future of autonomous warfare responsibly.

## Global Security Concerns

The proliferation of Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) poses significant risks to global security. These systems could trigger a new arms race, as nations strive to develop and deploy increasingly advanced technologies. AWS also raise concerns about unintended escalation, as automated systems might misinterpret actions, leading to conflicts. The absence of human oversight increases the risk of mistakes, misidentifications, and unanticipated consequences during warfare.

## Ethical Concerns

AWS bring forward profound ethical dilemmas. The delegation of life-and-death decisions to machines raises questions about accountability and moral responsibility. Critics argue that allowing machines to autonomously decide when to use lethal force undermines human dignity and erodes ethical standards in warfare. There are also concerns about AWS being programmed with biases or flaws, leading to discriminatory actions in conflict situations.

## International Law Challenges

Current international legal frameworks, including the Geneva Conventions, were not designed with autonomous weapons in mind. AWS could potentially violate principles of international humanitarian law, such as distinction, proportionality, and accountability. Without clear regulations, it is challenging to determine who is responsible for unlawful actions carried out by these systems, creating a legal gray area that must be addressed to ensure accountability and compliance with international standards.



# Case Study- Israel




## 1. Gospel AI System

- The "Gospel" system generates lists of potential military targets, including critical infrastructure such as buildings and power grids. It relies on data analytics and machine learning to identify strategic objectives based on surveillance and intelligence inputs. However, its criteria for permissible civilian casualties lack transparency, raising ethical concerns about dehumanizing warfare and the potential for collateral damage



## 2. Lavender AI System

- The "Lavender" system assigns threat ratings to individuals, guiding military decisions on targeting. It processes large amounts of data, including surveillance feeds and communication records. Critics argue that the opaque nature of how this system determines threat levels poses risks of unlawful targeting, including the killing of non-combatants. Mistakes or biases in the algorithm can lead to significant humanitarian consequences
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### 3. Human Rights Concerns


- Human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, have highlighted that the use of these AI systems often fails to align with international humanitarian law. Instances where strikes intended for militants resulted in civilian casualties underscore the risks associated with AI in warfare. The reliance on surveillance data complicates adherence to principles of proportionality and distinction, crucial for legal and ethical military conduct

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# US



U.S. Drone Strikes in Afghanistan: The U.S. military has utilized drone strikes extensively in Afghanistan, where AI and machine learning algorithms have been employed to analyze data and identify potential targets. However, these strikes have led to numerous civilian casualties. Reports indicate that around 90% of the individuals killed in some drone strikes were not the intended targets, with misidentifications often based on flawed intelligence and automated assessments.

U.S. Airstrikes in Iraq: In 2016, U.S. airstrikes in Mosul, Iraq, intended to target ISIS operatives, resulted in significant civilian casualties. The use of automated targetingsystems led to strikes that reportedly killed over 100 civilians, raising concerns about the effectiveness of AI in distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants

Investigations revealed that many of the airstrikes relied on faulty data inputs, leading to tragic outcomes.

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