

Statement by iPRAW at the GGE on LAWS on 09 March 2022 (informal session)

The International Panel on the Regulation of Autonomous Weapons (Twitter @iPRAW_org) delivered by Vanessa Vohs (Twitter @VohsVanessa) on March 9th, 2022

Thank you Chair, for giving us the floor.

We, the international Panel on the Regulation of Autonomous Weapons (iPRAW), have been closely following the GGE process since 2017. Our international conglomerate of researchers has published reports on the various elements regarding the potential regulation of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems.

We would like to stress the relevance of keeping up discussions on this pressing issue. Thus, we appreciate any input on substantial matters in this Group of Governmental Experts, to which we, as one civil society representative among many others in this room, can contribute. In particular, since we find ourselves in an informal setting not livestreamed on UN TV, it is key to include non-state actors' voices in this room.

iPRAW submitted a report last year called “Building Blocks for a Regulation of LAWS and Human Control”, which can be found on our website ipraw.org, including an interactive infographic summarizing our work. We concluded that the adoption of a Montreux-style document and the sharing of best practices respectively are important steps forward with a view to finding adequate solutions for the challenges posed by LAWS. However, iPRAW wishes to emphasize that such measures should not prejudice the future adoption of a legally binding treaty. Rather, states should be open to any regulatory option in order to guarantee compliance with IHL but also ethical concerns.

So far, we are engaging here with three proposals on the table, ranging from implementing “Good Practices” over a “manual on the application of IHL” to building a “legally binding instrument”. It is crucial to be grateful for any effort put forward engaging in a legal, ethical and responsible use of LAWS. As highlighted by some delegations, we do not see any of those proposals to be mutually exclusive. Quite on the contrary, good practices can serve as a good starting point for acting now. The precise application of international law in the context of LAWS will evolve over time and should be dealt with. In addition, engagement on a future legally binding instrument is not obstructed by the two other proposals.

We encourage you to engage throughout the remaining time on the specificities of the proposals made to build consensus on the regulation of Autonomous Weapon Systems.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.