VEDIC INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL MUN 2025

UNGA - DISEC (Disarmament and International Security Committee)

Agenda- Addressing the Weaponization of Artificial Intelligence in Modern Warfare

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Greetings Delegates,

It is time to switch from your routine school life and step into the shoes of a diplomat, something that most of us have dreamt about at least once. It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you to this simulation of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA-DISEC) at the prestigious Vedic International School Model United Nations (VISMUN). We look forward to an enriching and rewarding experience.

The agenda for the session being **“Addressing the Weaponization of Artificial Intelligence in Modern Warfare”** We are delighted to facilitate this crucial committee simulation, addressing one of the most significant global issues today. As your Executive Board Members, we are committed to ensuring a productive and insightful experience, where you can not only learn but also enjoy the process. Your resilience and dedication will be key in making this simulation a success. Please remember the gravity of the topic at hand and approach it with the seriousness and care it deserves. We hope that you have started your initial, most basic research on the agenda and associated issues from this point on. We must first grasp the Committee's scope and that, while there may be broad discussion on this agenda, council decisions cannot address issues that fall outside the purview of the committee.

We hope that the study guide that follows will shed some light on the composition and operations of the committee. We must caution you, though, that this guide is only meant to be a helpful tool and should not be used to cover all aspects of your study for the agenda. Although the Executive Board members do anticipate that the committee debate will take a specific path as outlined in this guide, we would greatly value delegates presenting other

perspectives and approaches to the topics on the agenda. Your Executive Board is meant to facilitate discussion; substantive discussion will only occur in response to updates and inquiries from you. Unless we are making decisions regarding points of order, we shall not express our opinions on topics. We would like you to be familiar with the Rules of Procedure, but please do not view them as rigid and unalterable. In addition, we would appreciate it if the delegates had some internal discussion and swiftly informed the Executive Board of any changes they would like to see made to the rules in order to enhance debate. We strongly advise using this background information merely as the starting point for your research. It should never be your only source of support. We can only guarantee fruitful discourse when you conduct research beyond the guidelines. The Executive Board anticipates that you will provide an analysis of the data you have, not only a recitation of it. Even though there will be a lot of pressure, the fast-paced committee will be a welcome change from the typical MUN debate pace. Never be scared to make unconventional suggestions if you can effectively lobby, your peers will discuss them. We anticipate that the delegates will perform well by balancing their procedural and substantive expertise.

Finally, we want to appeal to All delegates to sincerely prepare and research for the simulation and work hard to ensure that everyone has a positive learning experience. Please get in touch with us if you have any questions or concerns.

As we enter the substantive part of this guide, we would like to take this moment to give you a brief insight into our MUNing careers as well. We also started doing MUNs back in school and hence we do understand that most of the terms might appear alien or zoom past you as bouncers! But then again we are here to help you navigate through the battlefield of blazing guns!

All the Best! Executive Board | UNGA-DISEC

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)[1] was established in 1945 and serves as the First committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). As stated in Chapter 4, Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, the DISEC core working principle revolves around maintain international peace and security to which extent it may, consider the principles governing disarmament and regulation of armaments, discuss any questions that may pose a threat, immediate or not, to international peace and security and may deem necessary to call upon the attention of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to situations which may threaten the international peace and security. At no point do these responsibilities limit the general scope of the UNGA and by extension the DISEC stated forth in Article 10 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The UNGA-DISEC works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament based in Geneva, Switzerland. The UNGA-DISEC is headquartered in New York City in the United States of America where it usually holds sessions once a year for a period of approximately 4 to 5 weeks. All member nations of the United Nations Organization are members of the UNGA-DISEC and currently the membership stands at 193. Furthermore, the UNGA may award observer member status to any entity or international organisation as is currently held by Palestine and the Holy See. Only full members of the UNGA-DISEC are awarded a vote on resolutions; however, observer members may cast a vote on non-substantive procedural matters.

The UNGA-DISEC was established to oversee the actions of various national and non-state actors and review situations whose level of urgency do not attract the attention of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In the past, UNGA-DISEC resolutions have dealt with a wide range of issues threatened global peace with resolutions carrying out a wide range of functions like establishing new commissions, as was done in the very first resolution in 1946 which established a commission to deal with problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy; draft treaties as it did in 213 where a treaty was reached to establish a nuclear weapon free zone in Africa. (The United Nations Organisation, n.d.) I deemed necessary the UNGA can “unite for peace” as established under the UNGA resolution 377 A which states that if there if the lack of unanimity among the five permanent members of the UNSC has failed the UNSC in performing its primary responsibility, then

[1] UN General Assembly - First Committee - Disarmament and International Security. (n.d.). the United Nations. Retrieved March 18, 2022, from https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/index.shtml

the UNGA shall consider the matter immediately and may make recommendations including the use of armed force if a special majority is reached in the UNGA-DISEC (2/3rd's of the members). At no points shall the delegates overstep and discuss issues outside the mandate of this committee.

In addition, DISEC has passed the very first General Assembly resolution that was cosponsored by all the Member States of the time. This resolution, adopted in 2001, reaffirmed all resolutions on the situation in Afghanistan and confirmed that the United Nations would play an important role in the country. It also called for the establishment of a transitional administration leading to the formation of a new government.

Keep in mind that all resolutions passed by this committee are non-binding resolutions and must be formatted as recommendations to the 193 nations in the committee.

Furthermore, given its direct association with the United Nations General Assembly (being a subsidiary organ as authorised under Article 22), it retains the powers and responsibilities of the General Assembly as outlined in Chapter IV of the Charter of the United Nations, including:

- *Article 10* "make[ing] recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters."
- *Article 11(2)* "discuss[ing] any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security brought before it..."
- *Article 11(3)* "call[ing] the attention of the Security Council to situations which are likely to endanger international peace and security."
- *Article 14* "recommend[ing] measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation..."

MANDATE OF UNGA - DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

The United Nations General Assembly's Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), also known as the First Committee, is tasked with addressing issues related to global peace and security. The primary mandates of DISEC include:

1. Establishing General Principles: Formulating general principles of cooperation for the maintenance of international peace and security.
2. Disarmament and Regulation of Armaments: Developing principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments.

3. Recommendations: Making recommendations to UN Member States and the Security Council regarding these principles.
4. Proposing Topics for Security Council: Suggesting specific topics for the Security Council's consideration, although it does not directly influence the Council's decision-making process.
5. Collaborating with UNODA: Working with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) to support disarmament initiatives at various levels, including nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, and conventional weapons.
6. Norm-Setting Support: Providing substantive support in norm-setting within the General Assembly to further disarmament initiatives.

DISEC plays a crucial role in fostering international dialogue and cooperation on disarmament and security issues, contributing to global efforts to maintain peace and stability.

OVERVIEW ON THE AGENDA

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in military affairs is one of the most debated issues in international security today. Modern militaries are increasingly adopting AI to improve surveillance, targeting, cyber defense, logistics, and even autonomous weapons. While these developments promise efficiency and precision, they also create risks when machines are given the power to make decisions traditionally reserved for humans.

The United Nations has taken note of these risks. Since 2014, the **Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)**, under the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)**, has been meeting in Geneva to discuss the challenges posed by autonomous weapons. The GGE has highlighted concerns over accountability, compliance with international humanitarian law, and the ethical question of allowing machines to decide matters of life and death.

Several UN reports have underlined the urgency of the issue. The **UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament (2018)** called for a ban on weapons that function without meaningful human control. In 2021, the **UN General Assembly First Committee** debated the risks of AI-enabled weapons, with many states calling for legally binding restrictions, while others supported voluntary norms and confidence-building measures.

Beyond the CCW, the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** in 2021 issued a report stressing that autonomous weapons must always comply with international human rights law. The **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** has also urged states to establish clear limits on autonomy in weapons to ensure human control is preserved.

Despite ongoing discussions, no binding treaty currently regulates AI in warfare. Member States remain divided: some argue AI can enhance precision and reduce casualties, while others warn it could lower the threshold for war and create uncontrollable risks. The General Assembly's First Committee (DISEC), as the main deliberative body on disarmament and international security, plays a central role in guiding the global response to this emerging challenge.

The weaponization of AI is therefore not only a technological issue but also a question of international peace, security, and the protection of humanitarian principles.

STRATEGIC AND LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN WARFARE:

A. Definitions & Categories:

Autonomous Weapons System (AWS)

AWS are defined as weapons systems that, once activated, can select and engage targets without further human input, unlike remotely piloted weapons systems. The UN GGE working definition is in line with this nuanced distinction. Unlike unmanned military drones where human operators make the decision through algorithms alone. The UN group of governmental experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, established under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, has been working since 2013 to address emerging technologies in this area.

Examples include autonomous drones, mines with autonomous functions (anti-personnel, anti-vehicle), and AI-enabled targeting systems as per UNODA descriptions.

AI in Cyber Warfare

The integration of AI in cyber warfare represents a significant evolution in digital conflict capabilities. AI supports automation of cyber threat detection and rapid responses but remains under human oversight due to risks of escalation and uncontrolled outcomes. These applications raise concerns about the acceleration of conflict tempo and the potential for AI to operate beyond meaningful human oversight in cyberspace operations.

Example being AI automated cyberattack processes. Improvises threat detection and enables rapid responses, raising concerns about conflict escalation and actions beyond meaningful human control.

AI-Enabled Surveillance Technologies

Modern surveillance systems increasingly incorporate AI for automated target identification, behavioural pattern analysis, and predictive threat assessment. These technologies enhance military intelligence capabilities but raise concerns about privacy, civilian protection and the potential; for algorithmic bias in target selection processes.

Example would include AI systems analysing satellite imagery and communications to automatically identify potential threats, enhancing military intelligence capabilities while raising privacy concerns.

AI-Enhanced Targeting Technologies

Contemporary targeting systems utilize machine learning algorithms to process vast amounts of sensor data, satellite imagery, and intelligence information to identify and prioritize military targets. While these systems can increase precision, they also raise questions about accountability and the application of international humanitarian law principles.

Real-time example includes AI algorithms process sensor data to assist in prioritizing and engaging military targets, requires strict human oversight to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law.

B. Existing International Law Framework

Existing international law is fundamentally technologically neutral, and its core tensest, especially those embodied in International Humanitarian Law(IHL), the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC) , and the UN Charter are widely recognised to apply all methods and means of warfare, including those that involve artificial intelligence.

The UNODA highlights that while no universally accepted legal definition for LAWS presently exists, the application of international law to systems involving autonomy and AI remains unambiguous. Ihl- rooted in the Geneva Conventions and there, Additional Protocols-governs the conduct of hostilities, enforcing principles such as distinction, proportionality, precautions, and the necessity to prevent unnecessary suffering. These obligations bind all parties to a conflict irrespective of the technological means they employ, and thus states are required to ensure that any use of AI-enabled weapons is in strict compliance with these rules.

The UN Secretary-General has consistently called for legally binding instruments to address LAWS that cannot comply with international humanitarian law, emphasizing this position in the 2023 New Agenda for Peace. The CCW Group of Governmental Experts operates under the principle that all AI weapons development must undergo legal review under Article 36 of Additional Protocol I and comply with existing humanitarian law obligations. The UN Charter's technology-neutral framework on the use of force applies fully to AI-enabled military operations, requiring states to resolve disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law. The UN continues to work toward clarifying and strengthening legal protections as military AI technology evolves.

International Humanitarian law (IHL) Application

International humanitarian law (IHL), the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC), and UN Charter principles apply fully to AI-enabled weapons systems. The technological neutrality principle means that existing legal obligations remain binding regardless of the specific technology employed. Key IHL principles that govern AI weapons include distinction—the obligation to differentiate between combatants and civilians; proportionality—the need to avoid excessive civilian harm relative to military advantage; precaution—taking all feasible measures to minimize civilian harm; and necessity—the requirement that force used is limited to what is needed to achieve legitimate military objectives.

Laws of Armed Conflicts (LOAC)

The Laws of Armed Conflict establishes the binding legal framework governing AI weapons systems in armed conflict. Article 36 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions requires states to conduct legal reviews of new weapons, means, and methods of warfare to determine compliance with international legal obligations. The principle of technological neutrality in international humanitarian law ensures that states retain full responsibility for verifying that AI-enabled weapons systems comply with established legal standards, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution.

UN Charter Principles

The UN Charter’s fundamental principles regarding the use of force, state responsibility, and international peace and security remain fully applicable to AI-enabled warfare. States must ensure that their development and deployment of AI weapons systems align with Charter obligation, including the proportionate use of force and respect for sovereignty.

C. Ethical Principles in AI Warfare

Distinction Principle

The principle of distinction requires parties to armed conflict to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. AI systems must be capable of making this fundamental distinction with reliability comparable to or exceeding human decision-makers. The challenge lies in programming machines to understand the complex and contextual nature of civilian protection requirements.

Article 51 of Additional Protocol I (AP I) of the Geneva Convention highlights the safeguarding of civilians by barring indiscriminate violence that cannot differentiate among military targets and civilian persons or items in the framework of principle of distinction. This principle proves to be confronted with complicated issues as autonomous and AI-enhanced weapon systems must have the capability to detect and strike military targets without causing harm to the civilian populace.

An example of these challenges in the real world is the Turkish Kargu-2 drone that demonstrated autonomous ability to target and strike during the 2020 conflict in Libya. Although these types of autonomous targeting increase precision and military efficacy, there are concerns that these systems comply with the principle of distinction fully, e.g. how well the AI of the drone can guarantee that it will not attack civilians or civilian infrastructure?

Proportionality Principle

Proportionality requires that anticipated military advantage from an attack outweigh expected civilian harm. The principle poses significant challenges for AI systems, as it requires complex moral and strategic judgements that may exceed current technological capabilities. The assessment often requires understanding of broader strategic context and cultural considerations that may be difficult to program into algorithmic systems.

The principle of proportionality is a key principle of an International Humanitarian Law (IHL), It is used to restrain the scope of incidental damage to civilians and civilian objects in case of armed conflict, the balance between military benefit and the potential damage to civilians. It is not that the principle rejects the incidence of civilian damage but rather offers a legal threshold against the disproportionate use of force to protect civilians by giving an example of recent cases;

the recent incidence of AI-guided precision missile strikes in the conflict in Ukraine. Although AI was found highly effective in targeting the targets with high accuracy, some reports have mentioned strikes on civilian infrastructure where the destruction was arguably not in commensuration to the military benefit of the attack, casting doubt on the method of real-time proportionality evaluation by autonomous or AI-enhanced systems.

Accountability Framework

Clear chains of accountability must be maintained for AI weapons systems. Human operators, commanders and states must retain responsibility for decisions made by AI systems under their control. This principle requires that AI systems operate within command structures that preserve meaningful human oversight and decision-making authority.

Transparency Requirements

Military AI systems operate with sufficient transparency to enable legal compliance verification and accountability. While operational security may limit full transparency, sufficient information must be available to ensure that AI systems meet international legal standard and enable post- incident when necessary.

Meaningful Human Control

The concept of meaningful human control ensures that human operators retain authority over critical decisions involving the use of force. This principle requires that AI systems operate within parameters that preserve human judgment over life and death decisions and maintain human responsibility for compliance with international humanitarian law.

"Meaningful human control over AI weapon system is a core principle strongly endorsed by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 79/62 (2024) and ongoing discussions within the group of Governmental Experts (GGE) under the Convention on certain Conventional weapons (CCW), ensuring that humans retain authority over critical functions involving the use of force.

2.MULTILATERAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WEAPONIZATION

A. UN-Based Mechanisms

UN office for Disarmament affairs (UNODA)

UNODA has recognized that while AI has potential to improve health, well being, and contribute to Sustainable Development Goals, certain military applications could undermine international peace and security. The office has highlighted concerns about the security of AI technology, its potential to accelerate and conflicts, and the risk of loosening human control over the means of war. UNODA serves as the secretariat for various disarmament processes addressing emerging technologies, including AI in warfare.

UNGA first committee (DISEC) Activities

The first committee has became the primary forum for addressing AI in warfare at the UN level. In 2023, the Committee approved a new resolution on lethal autonomous weapons systems, with speakers emphasizing that "an algorithm must not be in full control of decisions involving killing." The committee has heard testimony that even if algorithms can determine legal compliance under international humanitarian law, they cannot determine what is ethical. Recent debates have focused on the rapidly closing window of opportunities to establish guardrails against autonomous weapons as the world prepares for a "technical breakout."

Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) under CCW

The Group of Governmental Experts on Legal Autonomous Systems operates under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The GGE has been mandated to examine issues relating to emerging technologies in the area of LAWS within the context of CCW objectives and purposes. The group is open to all high contracting parties and non-state parties to the CCW, as well as international organizations and civil society observers.

Recent GGE sessions have been held in 2023, 2024, and 2025, with each meeting comprising 10 days of deliberations split across two sessions. The GGE has developed a two-tier approach aimed at prohibiting autonomous weapons systems that cannot align with international humanitarian law requirements while regulating to ensure legal compliance. The group emphasizes requirements for understandability, predictability, and meaningful human control in weapons systems.

B. Reginal approaches

European Union Regulatory Initiatives

The European union has taken a leading role in developing comprehensive AI governance frameworks that address military applications. EU initiatives focus on ensuring that AI development aligns with democratic values, human rights, and international law. The EU's approach emphasizes the importance of maintaining oversight in critical AI applications, including those with military or security implications.

African Union Peace and Security Framework

The African Union has integrated emerging technology considerations, including AI, into its continental peace and security architecture. The AU's approach emphasizes the importance of ensuring that new technologies contribute to rather than undermine continental stability and security objectives.

Asia-Pacific dialogues on Emerging Technologies

Various Asia-pacific forums have addressed the implications the AI in warfare, with discussions focusing on regional stability, responsible development, and the importance of maintaining strategic balance. An additional concern that requires urgent multilateral attention is the risk of proliferation of autonomous weapons systems to non-state actors, including terrorist groups, which could exacerbate conflict dynamics and undermine international peace and security. Existing UN mechanisms have yet to fully address the control and verification challenges posed by such diffusion.

C. Other Key Stakeholders

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC has emerged as a legal voice calling for new international rules or autonomous weapons. The organization advocated for prohibiting autonomous weapons that cannot predictably comply with international humanitarian law and restricting the use of others to ensure meaningful human control. The ICRC's position emphasizes that legal obligations and moral responsibilities in war must never be outsourced to machines or software.

The ICRC has developed a "human-centred approach" to AI in armed conflict, focusing on retaining human control and judgement based on legal obligations and ethical responsibilities. The organization's immediate concerns c enter on high-risk applications where AI systems might make life and death decisions without adequate human oversight.

International Telecommunication Union(ITU)

The ITU contributes to discussions on AI standards and governance with particular attention to the technical specifications that could ensure AI systems meet international legal and ethical requirements. The organization's work focuses on establishing technical standards that support compliance with international law.

Private Technology Companies

Major Technology companies play a crucial role in AI development with military applications. Many companies have established ethical guidelines and governance frameworks for AI development, with some explicitly prohibiting the development of autonomous weapons systems. Industry engagement in policy discussions has become increasingly important as the line between civilian and military AI applications continues to blur.

Global Commission on Responsible AI in the Military Domain (GC-REMAIN)

GC-REMIAN represents a multi-stakeholder initiative bringing together states, international organizations, civil society, and academia to address responsible AI development in military

contexts. The commission focuses on developing shared understanding of challenges and opportunities in military AI applications while promoting adherence to international law and ethical standards.

The commission's work emphasizes the importance of maintaining human responsibility in AI-enabled military systems and ensuring that technological development serves humanitarian objectives. GC-REMAIN has become an important forum for building consensus on standards and principles for responsible military AI development.

POLITICAL AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN GOVERNING WEAPONISATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

A. Risks posed by dual-use technologies (civilian AI innovations adapted for military use)

One of the biggest political and security challenges in regulating artificial intelligence (AI) in warfare is the issue of **dual-use technologies**. The term "dual-use" refers to technologies that are developed for peaceful, civilian purposes but can also be adapted for military applications. Unlike traditional weapons such as missiles or tanks, many AI innovations originate in the civilian and commercial sectors—research labs, universities, and private companies—before being repurposed for defense. This dual-use nature makes AI extremely difficult to regulate, monitor, or restrict without also limiting beneficial civilian progress.

Civilian AI adapted for military use

- **Computer vision**, widely used in self-driving cars and medical imaging, can also power autonomous drones to identify and track targets.
- **Natural language processing**, designed for translation or customer service, can be exploited for propaganda or cyberattacks.
- **Facial recognition systems**, deployed in airports and smartphones, can be transformed into mass surveillance or military targeting tools.
- **Commercial drones**, originally created for photography and delivery services, have already been modified by armed groups to drop explosives in conflict zones such as Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine.

These examples highlight how innovations meant to benefit society can easily be turned into tools of war.

UN perspectives and discussions

The **UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament (2018)** warned that emerging technologies, including AI, present serious risks because of their dual-use potential. The Agenda called for limits on weapons that remove meaningful human control, stressing that AI research cannot be divorced from its possible military consequences.

At the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)** meetings of the *Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)*, states have repeatedly raised the dual-use dilemma. Many delegations expressed concern that efforts to regulate military AI might also restrict civilian research, while others argued that without regulation, civilian AI would continue to be weaponized with few safeguards. This tension has prevented agreement on a binding treaty so far.

The **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** has also emphasized the risks of dual-use, noting that military applications often appear only a few years after a technology is introduced in the civilian market. This short timeline makes early governance and international dialogue critical.

Case studies and real-world examples

- **Libya (2020)**: A UN Panel of Experts reported the possible use of the Turkish-made Kargu-2 drone, which has autonomous targeting features. While designed as a loitering munition for defense, it illustrated how relatively small-scale technologies can be deployed in active conflict.
- **Ukraine Conflict (2022–present)**: Civilian drones bought from commercial markets have been weaponized by both Ukrainian and Russian forces. Many of these drones rely on AI-based navigation and targeting software initially designed for harmless commercial uses.
- **AI surveillance systems**: Technologies designed for civilian policing and security, such as predictive policing software and facial recognition, have been reported as being integrated into counter-insurgency and battlefield surveillance by several states.

These cases demonstrate how the civilian sector, often unintentionally, becomes a supplier of military capabilities.

Political and security implications

1. **Arms race dynamics**: Because civilian companies drive much of AI innovation, states can rapidly militarize commercially available AI without the long timelines traditionally needed for weapons development. This fuels a new kind of arms race that is faster and harder to control.

2. **Export control challenges**: Unlike missiles or nuclear material, AI algorithms and models can be copied and shared digitally. This makes export restrictions far less effective, and civilian research often cannot be neatly separated from military applications.
3. **Verification problems**: Inspecting or monitoring AI development is complex. A research paper or open-source code can be used peacefully or militarily, making it nearly impossible for regulators to distinguish between benign and harmful uses.
4. **Risk of misuse**: Because AI is so widely available, non-state actors—including terrorist organizations—can access and modify dual-use technologies with little oversight, as has already been observed with drones in conflict zones.

The **UN General Assembly First Committee (DISEC)** has consistently emphasized that addressing dual-use risks requires international cooperation, transparency, and confidence-building. Without these, the weaponization of AI through civilian innovations will outpace regulation, destabilizing international security and eroding humanitarian protections.

B. Challenges in attribution, accountability, and preventing misuse by non-state actors and rogue states

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in warfare raises unique governance challenges, particularly in **attribution, accountability, and the risks of misuse by actors outside established international frameworks**. Unlike conventional weapons, AI systems often operate in complex, opaque ways, making it harder to determine responsibility when violations of international law occur. At the same time, the widespread availability of AI and related technologies makes it easier for non-state actors and rogue states to exploit them for military or terrorist purposes.

Attribution difficulties

Attribution refers to the ability to identify who is responsible for a specific action or attack. In AI-driven warfare, attribution is complicated because:

- **Autonomous systems can act with minimal human input**: Once deployed, an autonomous drone or cyberweapon might carry out actions unforeseen by its operators.
- **Digital nature of AI makes tracing origin difficult**: AI models, algorithms, and code can be copied and shared anonymously online, obscuring their source.
- **Cyber-AI operations blur boundaries**: For example, AI-enhanced cyberattacks may be launched from servers in one country, coded in another, and used by a third, making accountability murky.

UN discussions at the **Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)** under the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)** have highlighted that unclear attribution undermines international humanitarian law (IHL). The principle of state responsibility requires that acts of war be traceable to a state or actor, but AI weakens this chain of accountability.

Accountability gaps

Accountability is a cornerstone of both IHL and human rights law. States are legally obligated to ensure that decisions about life and death are made by responsible humans, not machines. However, AI complicates this because:

- **Who is responsible?** The commander who deployed the weapon, the programmer who coded it, the manufacturer who built it, or the state itself?
- **Opaque decision-making**: AI systems often function as "black boxes," making it hard even for their designers to explain why a system made a particular decision.
- **Legal grey zones**: International law has not yet clearly addressed accountability for autonomous actions, leading to uncertainty and possible impunity for war crimes committed through AI.

The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** in 2021 stressed that states must never delegate life-and-death decisions to machines and that accountability must remain with humans. Similarly, the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** has urged that "meaningful human control" be preserved to safeguard accountability.

Risks of misuse by non-state actors and rogue states

Another pressing issue is preventing the misuse of AI by **non-state armed groups, terrorist organizations, or rogue states** operating outside international norms.

- **Non-state actors**: Terrorist groups can easily access commercial drones, retrofit them with explosives, and use simple AI-based navigation or facial recognition tools. This has already been seen in Iraq, Syria, and Ukraine, where drones bought from commercial markets have been weaponized.
- **Rogue states**: States that reject international cooperation or transparency can pursue AI weapons secretly, undermining global trust and fueling arms races.
- **Proxy warfare**: Rogue states may supply AI-based weapons to militias or proxies, further blurring accountability and destabilizing regions.

The **UN Panel of Experts on Libya (S/2021/229)** reported that the Turkish-made Kargu-2 drone, capable of autonomous targeting, may have been used in combat by proxy forces. This case highlighted how advanced AI systems can be diffused into conflicts without transparent oversight.

Political and security implications

- **Destabilization of global norms**: If accountability is unclear, the enforcement of humanitarian law becomes weaker, eroding international legal norms.
- **Difficulty in deterrence**: States may hesitate to respond to AI-driven attacks if attribution is uncertain, weakening deterrence and risking escalation.
- **Terrorist empowerment**: Easy access to AI tools lowers the barrier for terrorist groups to carry out sophisticated attacks, threatening both national and international security.
- **Erosion of trust in multilateral frameworks**: Rogue state behavior undermines international cooperation, making consensus on arms control even harder.

For these reasons, the UN General Assembly's First Committee (DISEC) and the CCW GGE continue to stress the need for **transparency measures, international legal clarity, and cooperative frameworks** to preserve accountability and prevent misuse. Without these, the spread of AI weapons risks weakening the very foundations of international peace and humanitarian protection.

GEOPOLITICAL COMPLEXITIES AND STRATEGIC AMBIGUITIES SURROUNDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN WARFARE

A. Divergent National Policies and Doctrines on Artificial Intelligence Enabled Warfare

The weaponization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not developing in a vacuum. Different countries are shaping their own doctrines and policies, often guided by security priorities, economic capabilities, and geopolitical ambitions. This has created **divergent approaches** that complicate global governance.

United States

The United States views AI as central to preserving military superiority. The *Department of Defense Directive 3000.09* (2012, updated 2023) states that AI-enabled weapon systems must allow for "appropriate levels of human judgment." However, the directive **does not prohibit autonomous systems**, leaving room for flexibility. The U.S. has also launched the *Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC)* to accelerate military AI adoption. In UN forums like the **CCW Group of**

Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), the U.S. has opposed calls for a binding treaty, instead promoting voluntary best practices and confidence-building measures.

Russia

Russia has been openly resistant to binding restrictions on AI-enabled weapons. In CCW discussions, Russian diplomats have argued that bans on emerging technologies would be "premature" and could limit legitimate military innovation. Russia's doctrine emphasizes AI as a force multiplier in "information warfare" and autonomous combat vehicles, such as unmanned ground tanks tested in Syria. Russia's stance reflects both strategic interest in AI weapons and skepticism of Western-led disarmament frameworks.

China

China's position is more complex. In UN debates, China has supported prohibitions on the use of fully autonomous weapons without human oversight. However, at the same time, it continues investing heavily in AI for military use under the concept of "intelligentized warfare." This doctrine envisions AI integration across surveillance, decision-making, and combat operations. Analysts note that China's dual stance—supporting some restrictions while pursuing AI militarization—illustrates the tension between **diplomatic posturing and strategic ambition**.

European Union

The European Union and several of its member states have adopted a more cautious approach. The **European Parliament Resolution of 2018** explicitly called for a ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems ("killer robots"). Germany and France have supported restrictions but stopped short of demanding a full prohibition, preferring a regulatory framework that still allows military innovation under "meaningful human control." Austria, however, has been a leading advocate for a pre-emptive ban.

Global South and Developing States

Countries in the Global South, particularly in Africa and Latin America, have raised concerns that the militarization of AI will **deepen global inequalities**. During UNGA First Committee debates (2021–2023), nations like Brazil, Mexico, and Pakistan highlighted that the AI arms race could undermine international peace and stability, while also diverting resources away from development priorities. These states often advocate for binding global rules to prevent an "AI divide" in warfare.

Implications

These divergent doctrines create a **fragmented landscape**:

- Some states see AI militarization as unavoidable for defense and deterrence.
- Others see it as a threat to international law, human rights, and global stability.
- Developing states fear marginalization in security decision-making.

As a result, progress in international negotiations—whether at the CCW, UNGA First Committee, or DISEC—remains limited.

B. Strategic Ambiguity over "Human-in-the-loop" vs. "Human-out-of-the-loop" Systems and its Impact on Arms Control Negotiations

The issue of **human control** over AI weapons is one of the most divisive topics in global disarmament debates. The terms describe the degree of human involvement in decisions to use lethal force:

- **Human-in-the-loop**: A human operator makes the final decision before the weapon fires (e.g., a drone pilot launching a missile).
- **Human-on-the-loop**: The system operates autonomously, but a human can monitor and intervene.
- **Human-out-of-the-loop**: The system selects and engages targets entirely without human intervention.

UN Position and Humanitarian Concerns

The **UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament (2018)** explicitly warned against the dangers of removing humans from lethal decision-making, stating that "machines with the power and discretion to take lives without human involvement are politically unacceptable and morally repugnant." Similarly, the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** insists on "meaningful human control" to comply with international humanitarian law (IHL).

Strategic Ambiguity and Competing State Positions

Despite these warnings, states disagree on what level of human control is required:

- **Supporters of human-in-the-loop** (e.g., Austria, Brazil, New Zealand) argue that life-and-death decisions must always involve humans to ensure accountability under IHL.
- **Supporters of human-on-the-loop** (e.g., the U.S., UK, Israel) argue that supervision is enough, and that autonomy could even reduce civilian casualties by increasing precision.
- **States resisting restrictions** (e.g., Russia, sometimes China) argue that banning human-out-of-the-loop systems is unnecessary, as these technologies may evolve to comply with IHL.

This ambiguity is not accidental—it allows powerful states to keep their options open while negotiating. The phrase "meaningful human control," while widely used, remains **undefined in international law**, leaving states free to interpret it in ways that suit their military needs.

Impact on Arms Control Negotiations

This lack of clarity has **stalled progress** at the CCW. For nearly a decade (2014–2023), the GGE has met to discuss autonomous weapons, yet no binding treaty has been agreed upon. Proposals for a ban, advanced by states like Austria, Chile, and Costa Rica, are consistently blocked by major military powers. Instead, discussions often circle around voluntary principles and non-binding frameworks.

The result is a **strategic stalemate**:

- Advocates of regulation push for binding treaties to prevent an AI arms race.
- Opponents prefer flexibility, arguing regulation would be premature.
- The ambiguity over human control provides cover for delaying concrete agreements.

Case Example: Israel–Gaza Drone Operations

During recent conflicts, reports of AI-enabled target selection by drones and surveillance systems raised questions about whether humans had sufficient control over strike decisions. These real-world cases illustrate the **urgent need** for international clarity on what counts as "human-in-the-loop."

C. Perceptions of Technological Asymmetry and Risks of an Artificial Intelligence Arms Race among States

The rapid weaponization of Artificial Intelligence has raised concerns not only about humanitarian law and ethics but also about **global power imbalances**. Many states fear that advanced AI-enabled military technologies will **widen the gap** between technologically advanced nations and the rest of the world, fueling a new arms race with destabilizing consequences.

Technological Asymmetry

- **Advanced states** such as the United States, China, Russia, Israel, and select European nations are investing heavily in AI-driven warfare. These investments include autonomous drones, battlefield decision-making systems, predictive logistics, and cyber operations. Their ability to combine cutting-edge research with vast military budgets creates a **monopoly of capabilities**.

- **Developing nations**, on the other hand, lack the infrastructure, funding, and research capacity to compete. This risks leaving them **dependent on powerful states** or vulnerable to coercion in conflicts.

This imbalance is often described as **technological asymmetry**. For many states in the Global South, it recalls earlier experiences where nuclear weapons, cyber capabilities, and missile defense systems were concentrated in the hands of a few, creating structural inequalities in international security.

Fears of an AI Arms Race

The UN Secretary-General has repeatedly warned against a global AI arms race. In his 2018 *Agenda for Disarmament*, he called for prohibiting "machines with the power and discretion to take lives without human involvement." He emphasized that unregulated competition in AI weapons could undermine global stability in the same way that nuclear weapons once did.

The **UN General Assembly First Committee debates (2020–2023)** have also highlighted this issue. Developing states like Pakistan, Mexico, and Egypt raised concerns that without collective regulation, AI militarization will spiral into an arms race, diverting resources away from sustainable development.

Case Studies and Emerging Trends

- **U.S.–China competition**: Analysts widely describe the U.S. and China as engaged in a "race" for AI supremacy. Both countries have national AI strategies with strong military components. The Pentagon's *AI Strategy (2019)* emphasizes maintaining technological dominance, while China's *Next Generation AI Development Plan (2017)* calls for global leadership in AI by 2030, including military applications.
- **Russian approach**: Russia has declared AI a "strategic priority" and invests heavily in autonomous weapons and information warfare. In forums like the CCW, it opposes bans, signaling its intent to retain strategic flexibility.
- **Regional insecurities**: Smaller states fear being caught in the crossfire of great power rivalries. For example, Southeast Asian nations have expressed concern that AI-enabled military competition between China and the U.S. could destabilize the South China Sea region.

Destabilizing Consequences

An AI arms race would have several negative outcomes:

- **Lower thresholds for conflict**: Autonomous weapons could make initiating conflict cheaper and less risky for powerful states.
- **Proliferation to non-state actors**: Once developed, AI systems could spread through illicit trade, empowering terrorist groups and insurgents.
- **Marginalization of developing nations**: States without access to AI technologies may lose influence in security negotiations, weakening global equity.

Multilateral Concerns and Calls for Restraint

Several countries and international organizations have called for urgent measures to prevent an AI arms race:

- The **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**, during the UNGA First Committee sessions, stressed that disarmament must not be dominated by technologically advanced states, and demanded safeguards against widening inequalities.
- The **ICRC** and many NGOs (such as the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots) warn that unchecked AI competition could replicate the destructive cycles of the nuclear and chemical weapons races of the 20th century.
- Proposals for **"responsible innovation" frameworks** have emerged, advocating international transparency, technology sharing, and equitable development of AI to avoid a zero-sum competition.

QUESTIONS THAT THE COMMITTEE MUST ANSWER

1. How can the international community define and ensure "meaningful human control" in the use of AI-enabled weapon systems?
2. Should there be a binding international treaty banning lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), or are voluntary guidelines sufficient?
3. What safeguards are needed to prevent dual-use civilian AI technologies from being adapted for military purposes?
4. How can accountability be established for AI-enabled military decisions, especially when attribution of responsibility is unclear?
5. What measures can be taken to prevent AI-enabled weapons from falling into the hands of non-state actors and terrorist groups?

6. How can states balance national security interests with international obligations to maintain peace and humanitarian law in the development of AI in warfare?
7. Should the use of "human-out-of-the-loop" autonomous systems be considered a violation of international humanitarian law?
8. How can the UN promote trust and transparency among states to avoid an AI arms race?
9. What role can existing international frameworks (e.g., the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, UNGA resolutions, or the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament) play in regulating AI weaponization?
10. How can technological asymmetries between advanced and developing nations be addressed to ensure equitable participation in AI governance?
11. Should international arms control agreements include specific provisions on AI-enabled cyber warfare and information warfare?
12. How can ethical principles (human dignity, proportionality, discrimination between combatants and civilians) be integrated into the design and use of military AI systems?

IMPORTANT LINKS

1. **UN General Assembly Resolution 79/62 on lethal autonomous weapons systems, adopted December 2, 2024, with 166 countries in favor, emphasizes meaningful human control and international legal compliance: https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/62**
2. **https://meetings.unoda.org/ccw/convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons-group-of-governmental-experts-on-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems-2025**
3. **UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA): Overview and legal reviews under international humanitarian law concerning lethal autonomous weapons: https://disarmament.unoda.org/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/background-on-laws-in-the-ccw/**
4. **https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2023-10-05/note-correspondents-joint-call-the-united-nations-secretary-general-and-the-president-of-the-international-committee-of-the-red-cross-for-states-establish-new**
5. **Global Commission on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (GC-REAIM) supporting responsible military AI development and adherence to international norms. https://hcss.nl/gcreaim/**

6. **UN General Assembly reports consolidating Member States' submissions regarding lethal autonomous weapons and international humanitarian law analysis.: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4059475?v=pdf&ln=en**
7. **United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) – UNODA: https://disarmament.unoda.org/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/background-on-laws-in-the-ccw/**
8. [https://disarmament.unoda.org/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/background-on-laws-in-the-ccw/]
9. https://meetings.unoda.org/ccw/convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons-group-of-governmental-experts-on-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems-2025
10. **UN Secretary-General, "Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament" (2018)** – emphasizes human control over lethal force.
11. **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) – GGE Reports (2014–2023)** – official debates on autonomous weapons.
12. **European Parliament Resolution on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (2018)** – calling for a ban on "killer robots."
13. **ICRC Position on Autonomy in Weapon Systems (2021)** – advocacy for "meaningful human control."
14. **DoD Directive 3000.09 (2012, updated 2023)** – U.S. policy on autonomy in weapons systems.
15. **Statements from Austria, Brazil, and New Zealand in UNGA First Committee Debates (2021–2023)** – strong advocacy for binding rules.
16. **Case Studies: Reports from conflicts in Syria and Gaza** – illustrate operational use of AI-enabled targeting.