

Country: Colombia

Committee: GA DISEC, Disarmament and International Security

Topic: Assessing the Risks of Weaponizing Increasingly Automated Technology

The growth of AI seems inevitable as it is being used in every sector of technology and development. AI is being developed for all different reasons - for our computers, for healthcare, for apps and websites, and also for warfare. While there are these risks to autonomous weapons, governments, companies, and nonstate groups seek to develop and produce autonomous weapons because they cost less, are easier to mass produce, and give armies a significant advantage over the battlefield. Drone swarms can do as much damage as the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima for a much lower price, only it can target specific populations, people, or areas, without destroying the entire country. China, US, Russia, Israel, and other leading country developers race each other to develop and produce these weapons. Developing countries, by contrast, have very little resources to spend on autonomous weapons, as well as the big data, computing power, and manpower necessary to develop AI and autonomous weapons. These developing countries do not include those which are leading in AI, although they may be below a certain poverty threshold. This will exacerbate poorer countries' disadvantages on the battlefield as wealthy countries have the ability to kill from safety and developing countries don't have the technology.

Until 2016, Colombia was fighting a civil war between the FARC, rightist guerrilla groups, and the government army. The civil war was entangled with the Colombian drug trafficking business, which also exacerbated the civil war. After 50 years of fighting a civil war, the Colombian government's fourth and finally successful attempt to negotiate with the FARC was the 2016 Peace Accord. The diversion of small arms and light weapons to non-state actors is connected to the illegal drug trade, terrorism, and crime that has poses a threat to Colombia. There is the fear then that autonomous weapons would allow nonstate groups to preserve their impunity with more effective and accurate weapons for a lower cost. It also means that nonstate groups are able to degrade states' monopoly on force, which is one of the core pillars of state sovereignty. The non-state acquisition of small arms and light weapons, and now a more dangerous form of small arms and light weapons (LAWS) is one of the key issues Colombia has been trying to solve. Colombia has urged concrete laws, regulations, and policies to enforce these principles in governments, companies, and NGOs with transparency and accountability. The current President of Colombia Iván Duque has stated, "Technology must be harmonized with the Human Rights."

Colombia has, on numerous occasions, stood with organizations such as the Stop Killer Robots Campaign, against using AI. In 2001, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade In Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects (PoA) was signed and since then Colombia has been working to implement and maintain the conditions under which the programme stands. The country has also annually submitted a draft resolution to the Illicit Trade In Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects where States reaffirm the importance of the Programme's implementation. The Arms Trade Treaty was signed by Colombia in 2013, and throughout 2014-2019, Colombia participated in every CCW meeting, becoming increasingly involved in the problem. Following this, Colombia's past president, Juan Manuel Santos endorsed a ban on autonomous weapons in 2017 and in 2018 called for an international treaty to sustain control over the use of force with AI. Colombia has officially stated its stance on LAWS, calling them "unethical, and a military and legal threat."

In the interest of preserving state sovereignty and regional and international security, Colombia proposes a treaty between countries - to prevent these threats and risks - that would restrict the commercial and private development and usage of autonomous weapon systems. The treaty would ensure full government control over autonomous weapons, such that nonstate actors cannot incite violence, engage in conflict, or cause civil war. This treaty could consist of four sections. Nonstate groups and companies need government supervision, involvement, or approval to pursue the development of AI for autonomous weapons, and governments should have the right to assess if the case of the development of AI could risk the deployment of autonomous weapons by nonstate groups and subsequently, deny the project approval. State Parties should monitor and track the development and trade of AI for autonomous weapons. The State Parties should submit reports of their domestic and international development and trade of AI for autonomous weapons and submit those reports to the Secretariat. Through these requirements, any trade or development of AI done without government approval is considered illicit arms trade and should be prosecuted by countries.

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