Change the World MUN
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Associazione Diplomatici

BACKGROUND GUIDE

SC I

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL
FIRST

CHANGE THE WORLD ACADEMY

The Biggest Model United Nations in the World

Distinguished Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 Change the World Model United Nations (CWMUN).

As your committee Dais, we are looking forward to meeting you and hearing your ideas about how to solve international problems.

The United Nations (UN) depends on the cooperation and goodwill of its 193 member States. Because each State has unique interests and concerns, it is challenging to write, negotiate and pass resolutions. Every stage of the process demands creativity and diplomacy.

By reading this Background Guide, you are taking the first step in a journey that goes far beyond preparing for a conference. Over the coming weeks, you will analyse one of the most pressing global challenges of our time, understand how governments and international organisations respond to it, and learn how diplomats transform ideas into international action.
This guide is not meant to provide all the answers. Its purpose is to help you ask better questions, because diplomacy is not about knowing everything. It is about making responsible decisions with the best information available.

Remember: every solution begins with informed leadership.

You will be discussing this topic:

Should Autonomous AI Systems Be Allowed to Make Life-and-Death Decisions in Humanitarian and Educational Crisis Zones?

While we may all lead different lives and face different struggles, we have to bear in mind that we all share the same world and the same resources. Whether it is environmental problems or political unrest, what is happening in the world concerns all of us. Only through mutual understanding, unity, and collaboration can we lay the foundations of a worthier world.

As your committee Dais, we will work to keep the committees running smoothly. We will do our best to help you understand the procedures and to ensure that the perspectives of all delegates are heard and respected.

Sincerely,

The CWMUN Staff Board



What is this activity about?

The Change the World Model United Nations is a role-playing game. Your task is to impersonate a diplomat of the assigned Country and present the perspective of this Country's current government.

What should you do now?

Before the Simulation, you should:

☐ Create your handbook, a collection of relevant UN resolutions, reports, academic studies, and news from reliable media.

☐ Write the Position Paper, describing the position of your country on the topic you have been assigned to.

☐ Prepare some topics for Moderated Caucus debates, i.e. short formal debates which cover narrow aspects of each topic. For example, within the topic "Violence against women"; delegates can hold a caucus with the subtopic "Ways of preventing genital mutilation".

☐ Think about some ideas for the Resolution, at least two or three clauses that your State would like to include in the main body of the Resolution.

☐ Learn and practice the Rules of Procedure.

Why does this Background Guide Matters?

The strongest delegates are not those who memorise the greatest number of facts, but those who understand the issue from different perspectives.

As you read this guide, challenge yourself to think critically: ask why different countries defend different positions, identify competing priorities, question assumptions, and begin developing your own strategic understanding of the topic.

Remember: You are not preparing to pass an exam; you are preparing to participate in an international negotiation.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this experience, you should be able to:

- Understand the international context surrounding the topic
- Explain your country's official position
- Develop evidence-based policy proposals
- Negotiate with other delegations
- Build consensus
- Translate ideas into diplomatic action
- Think like an analyst, not just a reader.

Tips (!)

Before attending the simulation, go beyond this Background Guide. Explore official UN documents, government statements, reports by international organisations, academic research, reliable news sources. Ask yourself: has the situation changed since this guide was written? Real diplomacy requires continuous learning. Learn about your Country from the official website of your State's permanent mission to the United Nations, and from other government websites (for example, the website and social media profiles of the Royal Family or President, Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs...). Make sure to know as much as possible about the foreign relations of your Country! Consider that at the United Nations, Countries generally lean towards their own geopolitical blocs: Western, Former Soviet, African, Middle Eastern, Asian, Latin American... Consider also organisations such as the European Union (EU), the African Union, the Arab League, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Union of South American Nations (USAN)...

REMEMBER!

Your task is to present the official position of your assigned Country. Misrepresenting this position and/or representing your private views is against the rules, even if you do not agree with your Country's position. In any case, you must not hyperbolize nor satirise the position of your Country. Humour, and especially sarcasm, is generally not typical for formal writing nor formal debates. Although MUN welcomes wit and smart puns, please always be extremely considerate when using humour.

Think Like a Diplomat

As you prepare for the conference, do not ask only: “What does my country think?”, but also ask: “Why does my country think this?”. And even more importantly: “How can different countries move from disagreement to cooperation?”.

Because diplomacy is not about defending positions. It is about building solutions.

SECURITY COUNCIL I

Historical Background and Establishment of the SC

On January 1, 1942, the President of the United States, Roosevelt, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Churchill, Maxim Litvinov of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and T. V. Soong of the Republic of China signed a brief document, later known as the United Nations Declaration.[1] In the following years, 26 other States ratified the Declaration, and by March 1st, 1945, 21 additional states had signed. At this point, the "Big Four", namely the four main Allied nations (the US, the UK, the USSR, and the Republic of China), who had envisaged the organisation first in 1942, became the foundation of the Security Council.

In mid-1944, the "Big Four" met for the Dumbarton Oaks Conference[2] to negotiate the structure of the United Nations. There, it was established that France, the Republic of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America would be the permanent members of the Security Council (also known as the "Big Five", the "Permanent Five" or "P5").

The Charter of the United Nations[3] was signed on 26 June 1945, at the end of the United Nations Conference on International Organisation in San Francisco, founding the United Nations. The Charter established the main bodies of the United Nations, among which is the Security Council.[4]

Later on, at the Yalta Conference in 1945, the American, British, and Soviet delegations agreed that the permanent members of the Security Council could veto any council actions, but the procedural resolutions.

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[1] http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1942/420101a.html

[2] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2022, August 14). Dumbarton Oaks Conference. Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/event/Dumbarton-Oaks-Conference

[3] The Charter of the United Nations, October 24, 1945.

[4] Main Bodies. (n.d.). United Nations . https://www.un.org/en/about-us/main-bodies

The Security Council met for the first time on 17 January 1946 at Church House, Westminster, in London, United Kingdom, and adopted provisional rules of procedure. Since its first meeting, the Security Council has taken permanent residence at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.[5]

Each member of the Security Council has one vote and the Permanent Members are endowed with veto power.

Mandate, Structure and Core functions

The functions and objectives of the Security Council (SC) are established in Chapters V, VII, and XII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Security Council of the United Nations is the body primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security, according to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. All UN member states have agreed to accept and carry out the Council's decisions under the Charter.

When evaluating whether there is aggression or threat to peace, the Security Council is in charge. It has the option of using sanctions or even approving the use of force to preserve or restore global peace and security.[6]

The Security Council investigates disputes or situations which might lead to international tensions, to determine the existence of any threat to peace and recommend what actions should be taken. It suggests methods of adjusting the terms of the settlement and recommends that the parties to a conflict settle it peacefully. One of its functions is to recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or terms of the settlement. To promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and

[5]Security Council. (n.d.). United Nations . https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/security-council
[6]United Nations Charter, Chapter V: The Security Council. (n.d.). https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-5

security, the Security Council formulates plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations to establish a system for the regulation of armaments.[7]

The Security Council is empowered to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to stop aggression. Or else, it is empowered to take military action against an aggressor.[8]

Moreover, one of the functions of the Security Council is to recommend to the General Assembly the admission of new Members, the appointment of the Secretary-General, and, together with the Assembly, to elect judges of the International Court of Justice.

Lastly, the Security Council exercises trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas", namely the performance of administrative and supervisory functions to maintain peace and security in such areas.[9]

Major Actions and Historical Impact

The Security Council has been particularly active after the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, mainly because of the lack of constant vetoes from the USSR or the US, as it had previously happened. Things changed, with the cooperation between East and West becoming a reality. During the Gulf War of 1990, the Security Council started to get together and meet continuously until today (in many different situations and with many contrasting positions among the permanent members).[10] Before the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the Council had used sanctions only twice: in 1966, enacting a trade embargo against Zimbabwe (former Southern Rhodesia)[11], and, in 1977, an

[7] United Nations Charter, Chapter V: The Security Council. (n.d.). https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-5

[8] United Nations Charter, Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression. (n.d.). https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-7

[9] United Nations Charter, Chapter XII: International Trusteeship System. (n.d.), from https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-12

[10] Secretary General reviews lessons learned during "sanctions decade" in remarks to international peace academy seminar| UN Press. (n.d.)., from https://press.un.org/en/2000/20000417.sgsm7360.doc.html

[11] UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 232 (1966) [Southern Rhodesia], 16 December 1966, S/RES/232 (1966), available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f23414.html

arms embargo was imposed against South Africa during the apartheid regime.[12] In the 1990s, starting with Iraq and the former Yugoslavia, the Security Council began to make recurrent use of sanctions. As of 2022, there are fourteen Security Council sanctions regimes in force, including more than six hundred individuals and almost three hundred companies.

The Security Council in its history has established sixty-two Peacekeeping operations and three advance or observer missions.[13] Peacekeeping is the UN's largest and most expensive endeavour, which can be divisive, particularly when "strong" operations involve the use of lethal force. Peacekeeping operations are overall aimed at “assisting conflicting parties in consolidating peace and national reconciliation, enhancing confidence-building, and creating an environment conducive to long-term stability, democratic development, and rehabilitation of the country”.[14]

Among such operations, it is worth mentioning the Iraq-Kuwait conflict in 1990, gathering all the SC means and modus operandi. It was a turning point, marking the beginning of the Security Council activism, not only on Peacekeeping missions but also in the use of sanctioning power. In dealing with the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, the SC has taken decisions under Chapter VII of the UN charter. Under this chapter, conceived as a key element of the UN system of collective security, the Security Council "shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security". Such measures could include partial or complete interruption of economic relations and means of communication and the severance of diplomatic relations. Should those measures prove inadequate, the council can take "such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to restore international peace and security”. The Security Council had adopted sixteen resolutions by 2002, and then Resolution 1441 was adopted, giving an ultimatum for disarmament to Saddam Hussein.[15]

The Council has authorised the use of force in two other prior situations, although Chapter VII of the Charter was not explicitly invoked in the enabling Resolutions. In 1950, as the Korean War began,

[12] UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 418 (1977) [South Africa], 4 November 1977, S/RES/418 (1977), available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f16e30.html
[13] Peacekeeping Operations. (n.d.), from https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/peacekeeping-missions#reg35
[14] UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 1118 (1997) [Angola], 30 June 1997, S/RES/1118 (1997), available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f16f4.html
[15] https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/478123

the Security Council, with the USSR absent, recommended to all Member States to provide military forces and other assistance, placing them under a unified command under the US. Secondly, in the case of Congo in 1961, the SC, under exceptional circumstances, authorised the UN peacekeeping operation known as Opération des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC) to use force as a last resort to prevent civil war in that country.[16]

The activism of the Security Council has also enlarged recognition of unprotected categories. SC Resolution 1325[17] (2000) was the first landmark resolution on women, peace, and security. It addresses the effects of war on women and the significance of women's full and equal participation in post-conflict reconstruction, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping efforts. The resolution also deals with the UN's gender-related obligations in many political and programmatic spheres and demands special steps to safeguard women and girls from sexual abuse associated with conflicts.[18]

Current Relevance and Ongoing Challenges

The international scenario has changed profoundly since 1945, but the Security Council still reflects the post-war distribution of power. The UN has expanded to 193 Member States, while the Council's composition has remained largely unchanged apart from limited adjustments in 1963 and the replacement of China and the Soviet Union with their successors. As a result, the Council is often seen as numerically and geographically unbalanced.

Recent wars have exposed the limits of its effectiveness. Russia's invasion of Ukraine showed how difficult it is for the Council to act when one of its permanent members is itself a party to the conflict. While the General Assembly condemned the aggression in Resolution ES-11/1, the Security Council could not respond in a unified way because of the veto.[19] The war in Gaza has raised similar concerns

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[16] UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 161 (1961) [The Congo Question], 21 February 1961, S/RES/161 (1961), available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f2bc1c.html

[17] UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) [on women and peace and security], 31 October 2000, S/RES/1325 (2000), available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f4672e.html

[18] Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security. (n.d.)., from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/

[19] UNGA, Resolution ES-11/1 of 2 March 2022, *Aggression against Ukraine*, available at: https://documents.un.org/en/A/RES/ES-11/1 ; Security Council Report, *UN Documents for Ukraine: General Assembly Documents*, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/general-assembly-documents/?cbtype=ukraine&ctype=Ukraine

about the capacity of the UN to respond to large-scale civilian suffering. Divisions among member states weakened the Council's ability to produce strong and consensual action. At the same time, within the wider UN system, some officials and expert mechanisms described Israel's conduct in Gaza as consistent with genocide or as reaching the threshold of genocide.[20]

More recently, the escalation involving Israel, the United States, and Iran added further pressure on the UN system. Following Israeli strikes, the United States attacked Iranian nuclear facilities in June 2025. Iran denounced these actions before the Security Council as acts of aggression, while the United States invoked self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter.[21]

The Secretary-General warned that this escalation marked a "perilous turn" and posed grave risks to international peace and security.[22]

Taken together, these crises show that the Council remains indispensable, but also increasingly constrained. This matters directly for the present topic. If the international system is already struggling to regulate conventional war, regulating AI-enabled violence will be even harder.

Future Outlook and Questions for Delegates

The future of the Security Council depends on whether it can remain credible in a world that no longer resembles that of 1945. Demands for reform have grown because the Council's structure no longer reflects the broader membership of the United Nations, while the veto continues to undermine confidence in its impartiality.

- Should the veto be restricted, formally or informally, in situations involving mass atrocities or grave humanitarian crises?

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[20] OHCHR, *UN Special Committee finds Israel's warfare methods in Gaza consistent with genocide*, 14 November 2024, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/un-special-committee-finds-israels-warfare-methods-gaza-consistent-genocide

[21] United Nations, Security Council document S/2025/426, 22 June 2025, https://digitallibrary.un.org/nanna/record/4084793/files/S_2025_426EN.pdf?withWatermark=0&withMetadata=0&registerDownload=1

[22] UN News, *US strikes on Iran's nuclear sites "marks perilous turn": Diplomacy must prevail, says Guterres*, 21 June 2025, https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/06/1164756; UN News, *UN chief "gravely alarmed" by US bombing of Iranian nuclear sites*, 20 June 2025, https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/06/1164741

- How can the Security Council remain credible when a permanent member is directly involved in the conflict under discussion?
- To what extent have the wars in Ukraine and Gaza weakened confidence in the Council's ability to protect civilians?
- How should the United Nations react to escalatory military actions such as the Israeli and U.S. strikes on Iran?
- Would procedural reform be more realistic than Charter reform in the short term?

Should Autonomous AI Systems Be Allowed to Make Life-and-Death Decisions in Humanitarian and Educational Crisis Zones?

Introduction and Context of the topic

Autonomous artificial intelligence is no longer a theoretical issue confined to research or science fiction: it is already reshaping the way armed conflict is planned, managed, and justified. The central question is therefore whether systems capable of identifying targets and making life-and-death decisions should ever be permitted to operate in humanitarian and educational crisis zones, where the margin for error is already dangerously thin.

This question has become even more urgent in today's international climate, where the institutions meant to contain war are under intense pressure. The conflict in Ukraine and in Gaza, together with the recent escalation involving Israel, the United States, and Iran, have shown how quickly violence can outrun diplomacy and how limited multilateral restraint can become. In such a context, autonomous systems risk accelerating warfare, reducing transparency, and weakening accountability.

The debate cuts across international humanitarian law, human rights law, military ethics, and global security governance. Proponents of military AI argue that these systems can improve efficiency and precision, while critics warn that in environments marked by displacement, destroyed infrastructure, and the presence of civilians, speed can easily become error and automation can become a way of avoiding responsibility.[23]

[23] United Nations News, *Autonomous Weapons that Kill Must Be Banned, Insists UN Chief*, 24 March 2019, available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/03/1035381; International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Autonomous Weapons*, 2023, https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/autonomous-weapons.

What initially appeared as a debate about hypothetical future scenarios has become a practical discussion concerning accountability, algorithmic bias, technological reliability, escalation risks, and civilian protection. The development of increasingly sophisticated AI systems has demonstrated that autonomy does not necessarily require complete independence from humans; rather, it exists along a spectrum in which different levels of human involvement remain possible. This has made the concept of "meaningful human control" central to international discussions. Although there is no universally accepted legal definition, the concept generally refers to the requirement that humans retain sufficient understanding, supervision, and decision-making authority over the use of force.

This context is particularly relevant because autonomous systems are not developing in a period of strong international consensus, but rather at a time when multilateral institutions face significant challenges. The United Nations Security Council has repeatedly struggled to achieve unified responses to major conflicts, while technological competition between States continues to accelerate. As a result, the possibility of AI-enabled weapons becoming widespread before comprehensive international regulation is established has become a major concern among humanitarian organisations and legal scholars. The central challenge is therefore not only technological but institutional: whether international law and diplomacy can adapt quickly enough to govern technologies that may fundamentally change the nature of armed conflict.[24]

Root causes and Historical development

The roots of this issue lie in the long history of mechanising warfare. States have long sought weapons that increase efficiency while reducing direct human exposure to danger. Artificial intelligence represents the latest stage of this process, making it possible to imagine systems that not only assist human operators, but also identify targets and select responses with diminishing human intervention.[25]

[24] United Nations Policy Brief, *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A. New Agenda for Peace*. 2023, pp. 1 ss.
[25] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Autonomous Weapons*, 2023, https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/autonomous-weapons

Over the last decade, international concern has grown steadily. What began as a debate on future risks has become a more concrete discussion about accountability, bias, unpredictability, civilian protection, and escalation. The issue has therefore moved from speculative debate to practical diplomacy.[26]

The current historical moment has accelerated this concern. In a world already marked by prolonged wars, humanitarian collapse, and political deadlock, autonomous systems are not appearing in a stable legal environment. They are emerging precisely when the institutions of collective security are under visible stress. This makes the stakes of regulation even higher. The roots of the debate surrounding autonomous artificial intelligence systems in warfare lie in the long historical process of technological transformation that has continuously reshaped the relationship between humans and weapons. Throughout history, States have sought to develop military capabilities that increase operational effectiveness while reducing risks for their own personnel. From the mechanisation of warfare during the Industrial Revolution to the development of long-range missiles, remotely piloted aircraft, and cyber capabilities, technological innovation has progressively moved human operators further away from the immediate battlefield. Artificial intelligence represents the most recent stage of this evolution: unlike previous technologies, AI does not merely increase the range or destructive capacity of existing weapons, but introduces the possibility that machines may independently analyse information, classify objects, predict behaviour, and recommend or execute decisions traditionally reserved for human judgement.

The development of autonomous systems is therefore not an isolated technological phenomenon but the result of decades of military research into automation, robotics, and information processing. Early examples can be found in automated defensive systems, such as missile interception technologies and surveillance platforms, where machines were designed to react rapidly to incoming threats. However, the integration of machine learning has fundamentally changed the debate. Traditional automated systems operate according to predefined instructions, whereas AI-enabled systems can process complex and changing environments, identify patterns, and adapt their responses based on new data.

[26] United Nations News, *Autonomous Weapons that Kill Must Be Banned, Insists UN Chief*, 24 March 2019, https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/03/1035381

This distinction has created uncertainty regarding the extent to which human beings remain responsible for decisions involving the use of force.

During the twentieth century, international humanitarian law developed around the assumption that decisions in armed conflict would ultimately be made by human actors capable of understanding circumstances, evaluating proportionality, and exercising moral judgement. The principles of distinction, proportionality, military necessity, and precaution established under international humanitarian law reflect the idea that warfare must remain subject to human responsibility and legal accountability. The emergence of autonomous weapons challenges this traditional framework because it raises questions about whether a machine can adequately interpret complex battlefield situations, recognise protected persons, or assess the consequences of an attack in the same way as a human decision-make[27]

Current Situation and Actors

The current situation is marked by growing technological development and insufficient international regulation. Autonomous functions already exist in several military systems, even if fully independent lethal decision-making remains contested. The General Assembly has acknowledged that such systems may have serious negative consequences for international peace and security, including escalation, proliferation, and humanitarian harm.[28] States are both actors — developing, deploying, evaluating and justifying the use of military technologies — and part of a network of interdependence with multinational institutions, the global economy and major technology companies, which provide them not only with the most advanced technological weapons, but also with the knowledge required to build and develop them. The United Nations still needs to play a central role in framing the debate, especially through the Secretary-General and the General Assembly, interacting with humanitarian organisations, like the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has become a major actor by

[27] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). *Autonomous Weapon Systems and International Humanitarian Law: Selected Issues*. Geneva: ICRC. available at: https://www.icrc.org/en/article/autonomous-weapon-systems-and-international-humanitarian-law-selected-issues

[28] UNGA, Resolution 79/62 of 2 December 2024, *Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems*, https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/391/35/pdf/n2439135.pdf

calling for legally binding rules prohibiting unpredictable autonomous weapons and systems designed to target persons.[29]

The main controversy lies on the fact that some states consider existing international humanitarian law as sufficient if properly applied, while others argue that once machines are given the power to make life-and-death decisions, the problem is no longer only legal, but moral and political as well.[30] Following this direction, it is clear that debate is not simply about weapons, but about the place of human judgement in war. The concept of autonomy in military systems must be understood as a spectrum rather than a simple distinction between human-controlled and fully independent machines. Many contemporary weapons already incorporate automated or AI-supported elements while maintaining some degree of human supervision. For example, systems may analyse large amounts of battlefield data, identify potential targets, or recommend courses of action to military operators. However, as technological capabilities increase, the distance between human decision-makers and the use of lethal force may become progressively greater. This raises fundamental questions regarding whether human operators possess sufficient understanding of the system's functioning, whether they can effectively intervene, and whether responsibility remains clearly identifiable when harm occurs. The humanitarian implications of autonomous weapons are particularly significant in environments characterised by civilian vulnerability. Humanitarian and educational crisis zones often involve complex conditions: large numbers of displaced persons, damaged infrastructure, limited access to reliable information, and the presence of civilians in proximity to military objectives. In such contexts, even advanced AI systems may face difficulties distinguishing between combatants and civilians, understanding changes in circumstances, or evaluating proportionality. Unlike controlled laboratory environments, armed conflicts involve uncertainty, deception, cultural complexity, and rapidly changing human behaviour. These factors create serious challenges for the reliability of

[29] United Nations / International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Joint Appeal by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the ICRC on Autonomous Weapon Systems*, 4 October 2023, https://press.un.org/en/2023/sg2264.doc.htm ; United Nations, *Lethal Autonomous Weapon System "Politically Unacceptable, Morally Repugnant", Secretary-General Says in Message to Informal Consultations*, 11 May 2025, available at: https://press.un.org/en/2025/sgsm22643.doc.htm

[30] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Autonomous Weapons*, 2023, https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/autonomous-weapons ; United Nations / International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Joint Appeal by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the ICRC on Autonomous Weapon Systems*, 4 October 2023, https://press.un.org/en/2023/sg2264.doc.htm ; United Nations, *Lethal Autonomous Weapon System "Politically Unacceptable, Morally Repugnant", Secretary-General Says in Message to Informal Consultations*, 11 May 2025, https://press.un.org/en/2025/sgsm22643.doc.htm

algorithmic decision-making.[31] The United Nations has increasingly recognised that autonomous weapons represent a potential challenge to international peace and security. Within the General Assembly, States have discussed concerns related to the humanitarian, legal, ethical, and security implications of lethal autonomous weapon systems. These discussions have highlighted several risks, including the possibility of accelerated military escalation, increased proliferation of advanced weapons technologies, reduced accountability for violations of international humanitarian law, and the destabilising effects of allowing machines to influence decisions involving the use of force.[32]

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has become one of the most influential humanitarian actors in this discussion. While recognising that technological developments are inevitable, the ICRC has repeatedly called for new international rules ensuring that human control remains central over the use of force. The organisation has highlighted concerns regarding unpredictability, accountability gaps, and the protection of civilians, particularly in densely populated areas. According to the ICRC, autonomous weapons that cannot be sufficiently understood, predicted, or controlled should not be permitted, as they may undermine the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

The role of the technology sector has also become increasingly important. Private companies developing artificial intelligence technologies contribute significantly to innovation but also raise questions regarding responsibility, transparency, and dual-use risks. Many AI technologies are not exclusively military; tools initially developed for civilian purposes can potentially be adapted for surveillance, targeting, or autonomous operations. This creates governance challenges because regulation must address not only traditional defence manufacturers but also broader technological ecosystems involving software developers, cloud computing providers, and research institutions.

The European Union and other regional organisations have attempted to address these challenges by developing broader frameworks for responsible artificial intelligence governance. Although instruments such as the European Union Artificial Intelligence Act primarily focus on civilian applications, they reflect a wider international movement towards establishing principles of

[31] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Autonomous Weapon Systems and International Humanitarian Law: Selected Issues.International Committee of the Red Cross*, 2025/2026. https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/autonomous-weapons

[32]UNGA, *Resolution 79/62: Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems,* 2024, United Nations Digital Library:https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4071100?ln=en&v=pdf

transparency, accountability, human oversight, and risk management in AI development. However, military applications remain largely outside the scope of many civilian AI regulations, leaving international humanitarian law and diplomatic negotiations as the primary frameworks for addressing autonomous weapons. [33]

International Response and Committee Action

The international response has become stronger, though still incomplete. In 2024, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 79/62 on lethal autonomous weapons systems, affirming that international law applies to such systems and recognising the risks they pose.[34]

The Secretary-General has taken a particularly firm line. In 2025, António Guterres declared that machines with the power and discretion to take human lives without human control are politically unacceptable and morally repugnant, and that they should be banned by international law. A joint appeal by the Secretary-General and the President of the ICRC similarly insisted that human control must remain central in decisions on the use of force.

These developments show that the international community is moving towards a clearer normative position, but major obstacles remain: states disagree on definitions, enforcement, and the scope of any future ban or regulation. At the same time, technological innovation continues to advance faster than diplomatic agreement. This gap between political awareness and legal restraint is especially dangerous in the current international climate. When war is already difficult to regulate, the prospect of increasingly autonomous violence threatens to deepen the crisis of accountability and multilateral governance.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Consequently, its concern is not limited to the legality of autonomous weapons under international humanitarian law, but extends to their potential

[33] European Union.*Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689)*, 2024, European Parliament and Council of the European Union. https://artificialintelligenceact.eu

[34] UNGA, Resolution 79/62 of 2 December 2024, *Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems*, https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/391/35/pdf/n2439135.pdf

impact on conflict prevention, regional stability, arms proliferation, and the protection of civilian populations. The increasing availability of AI-enabled military technologies raises the possibility that autonomous systems could lower the political cost of using force, accelerate military escalation, facilitate proliferation to non-State actors, or complicate efforts to de-escalate ongoing conflicts. These risks directly affect the Security Council's mandate to prevent threats to international peace and security.

Within this context, the Security Council possesses several instruments that may contribute to international governance even in the absence of a dedicated international treaty. Acting under Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter, the Council may adopt resolutions condemning unlawful uses of autonomous weapons, establish investigative mechanisms or Panels of Experts, request reports from the Secretary-General, strengthen peacekeeping mandates concerning emerging military technologies, impose targeted sanctions or arms embargoes where autonomous weapons contribute to threats to international peace and security, and encourage Member States to improve transparency regarding the development and deployment of AI-enabled military systems. While the Council cannot by itself create a universal regulatory framework, its decisions can shape international expectations, reinforce compliance with existing international law, and respond rapidly when autonomous technologies contribute to the escalation of armed conflict

Ultimately, the international response demonstrates that autonomous artificial intelligence has evolved from a technological issue into a question of international peace and security. For the Security Council, the challenge is not only to respond to the consequences of autonomous weapons once they are used, but also to consider preventive measures capable of reducing escalation risks, strengthening civilian protection, and preserving meaningful human responsibility in decisions involving the use of force. As military technologies continue to evolve, the Council will remain at the centre of efforts to balance innovation with the fundamental purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Future challenges and possible approaches

The central controversy therefore remains divided between two competing visions of the future of warfare. The first considers artificial intelligence as a technological instrument that, if properly controlled, may enhance military effectiveness while reducing unnecessary suffering. The second views autonomous lethal systems as a fundamental challenge to human dignity and legal accountability because they introduce the possibility that decisions over life and death may occur without meaningful human judgement. This disagreement explains why international negotiations have progressed slowly despite growing recognition that regulation is increasingly necessary.

Ultimately, the debate surrounding autonomous AI systems is not only about weapons technology. It concerns the future relationship between humans and machines in situations where the consequences of error are irreversible. The question confronting the international community is whether technological capability should automatically translate into military legitimacy, or whether certain decisions — particularly those affecting civilian life, humanitarian protection, and education in conflict zones — must remain under direct human responsibility.

The main future challenge is to prevent autonomous military systems from becoming normalised before meaningful legal limits are in place. Once such systems are integrated into active theatres of war, it will be far more difficult to regulate them effectively.

Another challenge is strategic competition. If states believe that rivals are developing more advanced autonomous systems, they may feel compelled to accelerate their own programmes, thereby increasing mistrust and reducing space for restraint. In this way, military AI may contribute not only to battlefield risk, but also to broader instability in international relations.

A realistic diplomatic approach may combine long-term and short-term measures. Delegates could support a legally binding instrument prohibiting autonomous systems that target persons without meaningful human control. At the same time, they could discuss interim solutions, such as stronger national weapons reviews, transparency obligations, reporting requirements, and restrictions on the deployment of such systems in areas densely populated by civilians.

The fundamental question remains unchanged: whether the international community is prepared to preserve meaningful human responsibility in the use of force. This is not merely a technical matter; it speaks to the future of war, the authority of law, and the very dignity of the human person.

Annotated Bibliography

Hereafter, you can find some links that we think may be helpful to deepen your knowledge of both the committee and the topic you will be discussing.

- When talking about the UN, its official website is the most inspiring and complete: https://www.un.org/. Especially useful is their Official Document System (ODS) https://documents.un.org/prod/ods.nsf/home.xsp.

- The website of your committee is always a good place to start. In the case of the SC, it is the following: https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/

- Charter of the United Nations, 26 June 1945, especially Chapters V, VI and VII, available at: https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter
- UNSC, Resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000, *Women, Peace and Security*, available at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/426075?v=pdf
- UNGA, Resolution ES-11/1 of 2 March 2022, *Aggression against Ukraine*, available at: https://documents.un.org/en/A/RES/ES-11/1 ; see also Security Council Report, *UN Documents for Ukraine: General Assembly Documents*, available at: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/general-assembly-documents/?cbtype=ukraine&ctype=Ukraine
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- F. ALBANESE, *Anatomy of a Genocide*, A/HRC/55/73, UN Human Rights Council, 2024, available at: https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/a-hrc-55-73-auv.pdf ; OHCHR, *States must adhere to obligations under Genocide Convention to prevent further loss of life in Gaza*, 26 March 2024, available at:

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- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Autonomous Weapons*, 2023, available at: https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/autonomous-weapons
- UNGA, Resolution 79/62 of 2 December 2024, *Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems*, available at: https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/391/35/pdf/n2439135.pdf
- United Nations / International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Joint Appeal by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the ICRC on Autonomous Weapon Systems*, 4 October 2023, https://press.un.org/en/2023/sg2264.doc.htm ; United Nations, *Lethal Autonomous Weapon System "Politically Unacceptable, Morally Repugnant", Secretary-General Says in Message to Informal Consultations*, 11 May 2025, available at: https://press.un.org/en/2025/sgsm22643.doc.htm