



MODEL UNITED NATIONS KARACHI II

Disarmament and International Security Committee

Study Guide

AGENDA

**Regulating the Use of Lethal AI-Enabled Autonomous
Weapons in Contemporary Armed Conflict**

Table of Contents

Letter from the Secretary-General	1
Introduction to DISEC	2
Mandate of DISEC	2
Voting in DISEC	3
Introduction to the Topic	4
Key Terms to Remember (KTR)	4
History of Autonomous Weapons Development	6
Legal and Regulatory Frameworks	6
Case Studies	8
Case Study A: The Kargu-2 Incident, Libya (2020)	8
Case Study B: The Nagorno-Karabakh War (2020)	8
Case Study C: Israel's AI-Assisted Targeting Systems in Gaza (2023 to 2024)	9
Case Study D: Autonomous Drone Warfare in the Russia-Ukraine War (2024 to 2026)	10
Case Study E: South Korea's SGR-A1 Sentry Gun on the Korean Demilitarized Zone	10
Case Study F: Operation Sindoor, the India-Pakistan Drone Escalation (2025)	11
Perspectives of Key Stakeholders	13
The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and Civil Society	13
Major Military Powers	13
The Global South and the Like-Minded Group of States	13
The United Nations Secretary-General and the ICRC	14
Current Situation	14
Key Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)	15
Bibliography	16

Letter from the Secretary-General

Esteemed Delegates,

On behalf of the entire MUNKR II team, it is my privilege to welcome you to this year's conference. Over the course of the next few days, you will be asked to do far more than defend a position. You will be asked to question assumptions, engage with perspectives different from your own and work towards solutions to some of the most pressing issues of our time.

MUNKR II has been designed to place you at the centre of meaningful discussion. Across every committee, you will encounter issues that rarely have simple answers. Whether you are addressing questions of international security, economic development, human rights, environmental policy or domestic governance, the challenge will not simply be to identify what is wrong, but to understand why it persists and determine what can realistically be done about it.

We have not created MUNKR II simply to recreate the debates that take place beyond these walls. We want you to challenge existing approaches, engage with opposing perspectives and explore the political, economic, social and legal realities that shape every decision. The strongest solutions will not necessarily be the most ambitious ones, but those that demonstrate a genuine understanding of the circumstances in which they must operate.

Throughout the conference, I encourage you to approach every discussion with curiosity, confidence and an open mind. Research thoroughly, debate respectfully and never hesitate to challenge an idea simply because it is conventional. Most importantly, remember that MUN is not only about representing a country or defending a position. It is about learning how to listen, negotiate, collaborate and lead.

I hope MUNKR II gives you an experience that extends far beyond the committee room. I hope you leave with new perspectives, meaningful friendships and a greater confidence in your ability to contribute to the world around you.

I look forward to seeing the ideas you challenge, the solutions you develop and the memories you create throughout the conference.

With warm regards,

Zekiel Gulab

Secretary-General

MUNKR II

Introduction to DISEC

The Disarmament and International Security Committee, more commonly known as DISEC, is the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. Established alongside the other five Main Committees under the UN Charter, DISEC deals with disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace that affect the international community as a whole, and it seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.

Unlike the Security Council, DISEC is open to all 193 Member States of the United Nations, each holding one equal vote regardless of size, military capacity, or economic power. This universality gives the committee a unique legitimacy when addressing questions of disarmament and arms control, since its outcomes reflect the broadest possible consensus of the international community rather than the narrower interests of a handful of powerful states.

DISEC works in close coordination with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament, and its resolutions frequently set the political tone and momentum for negotiations that later take place within specialised frameworks such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which is the primary forum currently discussing autonomous weapons regulation.

Mandate of DISEC

DISEC's mandate flows directly from Article 11 of the UN Charter, which empowers the General Assembly to consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and to make recommendations to Member States or to the Security Council on such matters.

Article 10 (General Powers): Allows the General Assembly to discuss any question within the scope of the Charter and to make recommendations to Member States or the Security Council.

Article 11 (Disarmament Mandate): Grants the General Assembly authority to consider general principles of cooperation on the maintenance of peace and security, including disarmament and arms regulation, and to make recommendations accordingly.

Article 13 (Progressive Development): Directs the General Assembly to initiate studies and make recommendations for encouraging the progressive development of international law.

Because DISEC operates under the General Assembly rather than the Security Council, its resolutions are recommendatory rather than legally binding. This is an important distinction for delegates to understand. A DISEC resolution cannot compel a state to sign a treaty or destroy a weapons system, but it carries significant normative and political weight, shapes the negotiating mandate of specialised bodies such as the CCW Group of Governmental Experts, and can build the international consensus required to eventually produce a binding legal instrument.

Voting in DISEC

Voting procedure in DISEC follows the standard rules of the UN General Assembly rather than the Security Council. Every Member State present holds exactly one vote, and there is no veto power held by any country, unlike in the Security Council where the five permanent members can unilaterally block a resolution.

Most resolutions in DISEC are adopted by a simple majority of members present and voting. However, under Article 18 of the UN Charter, decisions on important questions, which include recommendations concerning the maintenance of international peace and security, require a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. Given that disarmament and weapons regulation fall squarely within this category, most substantive DISEC resolutions require this higher threshold to pass.

In practice, DISEC and its parent forum the CCW often try to work by consensus wherever possible. Consensus does not mean unanimous enthusiasm, but rather that no delegation formally objects to the adoption of a text. This is especially significant in the LAWS debate, where the CCW's consensus-based rules have historically allowed a small number of militarily advanced states to slow the pace of negotiations, a frustration that has driven many Global South states toward pursuing a General Assembly track instead.

Introduction to the Topic

Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, commonly abbreviated as LAWS, are weapons systems that can select and engage targets, including human targets, without direct human intervention at the point of decision. This distinguishes them from remotely piloted systems such as the well-known Predator or Reaper drones, where a human operator retains constant control over whether and when to fire.

The core anxiety driving this debate is what scholars and diplomats often call the removal of meaningful human control from the use of lethal force. For the entire history of armed conflict, a human being has made the final decision to kill another human being. Autonomous weapons threaten to delegate that decision, in whole or in part, to an algorithm, raising urgent questions of legal accountability, moral responsibility, and compliance with the existing laws of war.

This is not a distant, futuristic concern. As the case studies in this guide will demonstrate, autonomous and semi-autonomous targeting systems have already been used in active combat in Libya, in Gaza, and in Ukraine. The technology is advancing far faster than the international legal framework meant to govern it, and DISEC delegates are being asked, this year, to help close that gap.

“The decision to take a human life, in the context of armed conflict, should never be delegated to a machine.”

— António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

Key Terms to Remember (KTR)

The following terms will help you navigate the technical and legal vocabulary of this committee:

Lethal Autonomous Weapons System (LAWS): A weapons system that, once activated, can select and engage targets without further intervention by a human operator.

Meaningful Human Control: A proposed regulatory standard requiring that a human retain a substantive, informed role in decisions to use lethal force, rather than merely rubber-stamping a machine-generated output.

Human in the Loop: A system design in which a human operator must actively authorise each individual engagement before the weapon fires.

Human on the Loop: A system design in which a human can monitor and intervene in the weapon's operation, but is not required to authorise each individual engagement.

Human out of the Loop: A fully autonomous system that operates and engages targets with no human supervision or ability to intervene once activated.

Loitering Munition: A weapon that can circle, or loiter, over an area for an extended period while searching for a target before striking, often described informally as a kamikaze drone.

Martens Clause: A provision found in the preamble of the 1899 Hague Convention and reaffirmed in later humanitarian law treaties, stating that in cases not covered by existing rules, civilians and combatants remain protected by the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience.

Article 36 Review: The obligation under Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions requiring states to legally review new weapons to determine whether their use would be prohibited under international law.

Two-Tier Approach: The regulatory model favoured by the CCW rolling text, which would prohibit certain categories of the most dangerous autonomous weapons outright while regulating the remainder through binding operational safeguards.

Algorithmic Bias: Systematic errors in an AI system's output that arise from skewed, incomplete, or unrepresentative training data, which can lead autonomous weapons to misidentify or disproportionately target certain groups.

History of Autonomous Weapons Development

Automation in weapons systems is not new. Naval mines, landmines, and heat-seeking missiles have all, in a limited sense, engaged targets without a human pulling a trigger at the final moment. What has changed in the past decade is the introduction of artificial intelligence and machine learning into the target identification process itself, allowing a system to visually or electronically classify an object or a person as hostile and then decide, independently, to engage it.

Early automated defensive systems, such as the Phalanx Close-In Weapons System used by naval forces since the 1980s and South Korea's SGR-A1 sentry gun deployed along the Korean Demilitarized Zone in the 2010s, operated within narrow, pre-programmed parameters and were generally defensive in nature. The shift toward offensive autonomy, where a system actively searches for and attacks human targets across an open battlefield, is a much more recent and far more controversial development.

International concern began forming in earnest around 2013, when the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings called for a moratorium on the development of lethal autonomous robotics. This led to the first informal expert meetings under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in Geneva in 2014, and eventually to the formal establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS in 2016, which continues its work to this day.

The reported use of the Kargu-2 drone in Libya in 2020 marked a turning point in the public debate, transforming LAWS from a theoretical concern discussed by academics into a documented feature of a real armed conflict. Since then, the pace of deployment has only accelerated, most visibly in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, where both sides are racing to field AI-assisted targeting on a mass scale.

Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

No treaty currently exists that specifically prohibits or comprehensively regulates lethal autonomous weapons. Instead, their use is governed by the broader framework of International Humanitarian Law, primarily the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols, alongside the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, under which the ongoing negotiations are taking place.

Principle of Distinction (Additional Protocol I, Article 48): Requires parties to a conflict to distinguish at all times between civilians and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives, directing attacks only against the latter.

Principle of Proportionality (Additional Protocol I, Article 51(5)(b)): Prohibits attacks expected to cause civilian harm that would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.

Principle of Precaution (Additional Protocol I, Article 57): Obliges commanders to take all feasible precautions to avoid or minimise incidental harm to civilians when planning or deciding upon an attack.

Article 36 (Weapons Review): Requires states, in the study, development, acquisition, or adoption of a new weapon, to determine whether its employment would be prohibited by international law.

The central legal question facing DISEC is whether an algorithm can ever meaningfully apply these principles. Distinction, proportionality, and precaution all require contextual human judgment, an ability to weigh unpredictable battlefield circumstances in real time. Critics argue that no current or foreseeable AI system possesses this kind of judgment, and that removing a human from the final decision therefore risks a structural violation of International Humanitarian Law in every single engagement, regardless of how the weapon actually performs.

Proponents of continued development counter that, in principle, a sufficiently precise autonomous system could in fact reduce unlawful harm by removing fear, fatigue, and revenge from the decision to fire, and that the correct regulatory response is not prohibition but strict technical and legal standards, such as mandatory human oversight, predictable and explainable system behaviour, and rigorous pre-deployment testing under Article 36.

It is this exact disagreement, between those who believe LAWS can in principle be made compliant with the laws of war through regulation, and those who believe delegating lethal decisions to a machine is inherently unlawful and must be prohibited outright, that has produced the current deadlock within the CCW and that your resolution will need to address.

Case Studies

The following case studies are drawn from verified reporting and official investigations. Delegates are strongly encouraged to research each incident further, as they form the factual backbone of this debate and will likely be referenced repeatedly during formal and informal sessions.

Case Study A: The Kargu-2 Incident, Libya (2020)

In March 2020, during fighting between the internationally recognised Government of National Accord and forces loyal to General Khalifa Haftar, a Turkish-made Kargu-2 quadcopter loitering munition was reportedly used against retreating Haftar-affiliated soldiers near Tripoli. A March 2021 report by the United Nations Panel of Experts on Libya stated that the system was programmed to attack targets without requiring data connectivity between the operator and the munition, describing it as a true fire-and-forget capability.

The report did not conclusively confirm that a human being was killed by the system while it was operating without a human controller, and the manufacturer STM has disputed characterisations of the drone as fully autonomous. Nonetheless, the incident is widely regarded as the first documented instance of an AI-enabled weapons system potentially engaging human targets on its own initiative in an active conflict, and it fundamentally shifted the tone of the CCW debate from theoretical to urgent.

For DISEC, Libya illustrates two recurring problems that will resurface throughout this guide: first, the difficulty of verifying after the fact whether a system truly acted without human input, and second, the ease with which increasingly capable autonomous systems are already proliferating to a wide range of state and non-state actors well outside the small group of established military powers.

Case Study B: The Nagorno-Karabakh War (2020)

During the 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region in the autumn of 2020, Azerbaijani forces made extensive use of Israeli-manufactured Harop and Harpy loitering munitions alongside Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones. The Harop in particular is capable of autonomously searching a designated area for radar emissions consistent with enemy air defence systems and then diving into the target without further human authorisation, a mode widely referred to as fire-and-forget anti-radiation attack.

Analysts credit this drone and loitering munition heavy campaign with playing a decisive role in Azerbaijan's rapid battlefield success, effectively destroying much of Armenia's ground-based air defence network and armoured vehicle fleet within weeks. The conflict is frequently cited by defence analysts as the first war in which loitering munitions with autonomous targeting functions had a clear, war-deciding operational impact rather than a marginal or experimental one.

Nagorno-Karabakh raises a distinct concern for DISEC delegates, namely the demonstrated military effectiveness of these systems. Any regulatory proposal must contend with the reality that autonomous and semi-autonomous loitering munitions are not merely a legal or ethical curiosity; they are already proving to be a decisive conventional military advantage, which gives many states a strong incentive to resist restrictive regulation.

Case Study C: Israel's AI-Assisted Targeting Systems in Gaza (2023 to 2024)

Following the outbreak of the war in Gaza in October 2023, investigative reporting by the Israeli publication +972 Magazine, corroborated by other outlets, revealed that the Israel Defense Forces had been using at least two artificial intelligence based decision support systems, known as The Gospel and Lavender, to generate targets at a scale and speed that would have been impossible for human analysts working alone.

According to the reporting, Lavender was designed to flag individuals suspected of links to Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad, reportedly generating a list of approximately 37,000 potential targets during the early weeks of the war. Sources described human review of each machine generated recommendation as extremely brief, in some cases reported at around 20 seconds per target, largely to confirm that the flagged individual was male before authorising a strike. A related system, nicknamed Where's Daddy, was reportedly used to track when a targeted individual returned to a family residence so that a strike could be carried out there.

It is important for delegates to note that these were decision support and target recommendation systems rather than fully autonomous weapons that independently fired without any human authorisation; the final decision to strike was still made by a human commander. The Israel Defense Forces have publicly disputed several characterisations in the original reporting. However, the case remains central to the DISEC debate because it demonstrates how AI can compress human oversight to the point of near meaninglessness, even in a system that technically still keeps a human in the loop, and it has become a key reference point for advocates arguing that meaningful human control must be defined with strict, enforceable minimum standards rather than left to the discretion of individual commanders.

Case Study D: Autonomous Drone Warfare in the Russia-Ukraine War (2024 to 2026)

The war between Russia and Ukraine has become the largest live testing ground for AI-enabled weapons in history. Faced with intense electronic warfare and jamming from Russian forces, which severs the radio link between a drone and its human pilot, Ukrainian defence companies have increasingly turned to onboard artificial intelligence for what is known as terminal guidance, allowing a drone to independently lock onto, track, and strike a target during the final phase of its attack run even after communication with its operator has been lost.

In 2024, Ukrainian officials disclosed a battlefield test of ten fully autonomous quadcopter drones, reportedly nicknamed Terminator drones, which patrolled a designated area and engaged targets without any human input for the duration of the test. By 2025 and into 2026, Ukrainian companies had moved from experimental testing to what industry reporting describes as scaled, battle-proven deployment of AI terminal guidance modules across dozens of military units, extending the capability from short-range first-person-view drones to longer-range strike drones operating well behind the front line. Russian forces have responded with their own autonomous systems, including AI-assisted interceptor drones designed to detect and destroy incoming Ukrainian drones with minimal operator input.

This case study is arguably the most urgent for DISEC to consider, because it shows autonomous targeting migrating from a rare, isolated incident into a routine, mass-produced feature of a major, ongoing interstate war involving tens of thousands of units. It also illustrates a powerful counter-argument to regulation efforts, namely that in an environment of heavy electronic jamming, autonomy is increasingly presented by military planners not as an optional enhancement but as an operational necessity for a weapon to function at all.

Case Study E: South Korea's SGR-A1 Sentry Gun on the Korean Demilitarized Zone

Developed by Samsung Techwin in cooperation with a South Korean university and deployed in a limited capacity along sections of the Korean Demilitarized Zone, the SGR-A1 is a stationary sentry gun equipped with cameras, sensors, and a mounted machine gun capable of detecting, tracking, and firing upon a human target within its programmed range. The system includes a manual override and, according to South Korean officials, is generally intended to be operated with a human in the loop for the final decision to fire, though independent reporting has raised questions about whether a fully autonomous firing mode exists and could be activated.

Unlike the other case studies in this guide, the SGR-A1 is a fixed, defensive system rather than a mobile offensive one, and it has operated for years without a confirmed lethal engagement. It nonetheless remains one of the most frequently cited real-world examples in the LAWS debate precisely because it shows that the underlying sensing and targeting technology for a fully

autonomous lethal system has already existed, in a deployed and operational form, for well over a decade, long before the more recent and more controversial offensive applications seen in Libya, Gaza, and Ukraine.

Case Study F: Operation Sindoor, the India-Pakistan Drone Escalation (2025)

In May 2025, following a terrorist attack in Kashmir that killed 26 people, India launched Operation Sindoor, striking nine locations in Pakistan it described as terrorist infrastructure. What followed is widely described by South Asian strategic analysts as the region's first drone-centric war, and the first time two nuclear-armed, territorially contiguous rival states used loitering munitions and swarm drones against each other at scale.

India's strikes were reportedly reinforced by a large number of Israeli-made Harop and Harpy loitering munitions, alongside Polish-made Warmate drones and indigenous systems such as the SkyStriker and the newly inducted Nagastra-1. These are fire-and-forget systems capable of loitering over a target area before autonomously diving into a radar signature or a designated target without further human authorisation at the final moment. Pakistan responded with Operation Bunyan al-Marsus, reportedly deploying between 300 and 400 drones across 36 locations along a 1,700-kilometre front to probe Indian air defences, using Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 and Songar drones, Chinese-made Wing Loong II platforms, and domestically produced Shahpar II systems.

Both sides also adapted tactics in real time to counter the other's autonomy. Pakistan reportedly deployed decoy radars specifically designed to lure India's Harop drones into wasting their loiter time, so that the munitions would fall to lower altitude and become easier to shoot down once their onboard logic committed them to a strike. This shows a distinct escalation dynamic that DISEC has not yet had to consider in the same way: an emerging arms race not just in autonomous weapons themselves, but in autonomy-specific countermeasures designed to exploit how these systems make decisions.

Beyond the battlefield use of loitering munitions, India has separately built out a large-scale AI-enabled surveillance and cueing network along its contested borders. Since 2022, the Indian Army has deployed roughly 140 to 145 AI-based smart surveillance systems along the Line of Control with Pakistan and the Line of Actual Control with China, fusing satellite, drone, radar, and electro-optical sensor feeds to automatically flag suspected infiltration for human decision makers.

For DISEC, this case study matters for three reasons distinct from the others in this guide. First, it is the clearest example yet of loitering munitions being used not experimentally but as a central instrument of coercion between two nuclear-armed states, which raises the stakes of any misidentification or malfunction far beyond a conventional conflict. Second, it demonstrates a full regional arms race dynamic, with India, Pakistan, and China all racing to field and counter autonomous systems simultaneously, rather than a single state deploying the technology in isolation. Third, it shows autonomy expanding beyond offensive strike roles into persistent, AI-assisted border

surveillance and threat cueing, a use case that most existing LAWS debate has focused on far less than offensive drone strikes.

Perspectives of Key Stakeholders

Understanding where different blocs and actors stand is essential to drafting a resolution capable of securing the two-thirds majority required in DISEC. The debate does not divide neatly along traditional political lines, and delegates should research their assigned country's specific record at the CCW and in First Committee voting rather than assuming a position based on general alliances.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and Civil Society

A coalition of non-governmental organisations, led by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots alongside the International Committee of the Red Cross, has for over a decade pushed for a legally binding treaty that would prohibit weapons systems lacking meaningful human control outright, rather than merely regulating their use. Civil society actors argue that the accountability gap created by autonomous targeting, namely the difficulty of assigning legal and moral responsibility when a machine rather than a human makes the final lethal decision, cannot be solved through technical safeguards alone and requires a clear legal prohibition on the most dangerous categories of these weapons.

Major Military Powers

States with advanced military technology sectors, including the United States, Russia, China, and Israel, have generally resisted a comprehensive, legally binding prohibition, arguing instead that existing International Humanitarian Law already applies to these systems and that additional political declarations or narrowly targeted regulations, rather than a new treaty, are the more realistic and effective path forward. These states have consistently emphasised the military utility of autonomous systems, particularly in contested electronic warfare environments, and have expressed concern that overly broad or vaguely worded prohibitions could be technically unworkable or could disadvantage states that comply while others do not.

The Global South and the Like-Minded Group of States

A large and diplomatically active coalition, including states such as Austria, Costa Rica, and a broad cross-section of African, Latin American, and Southeast Asian nations, has pushed consistently for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument under the CCW's two-tier approach, which would prohibit unpredictable or unregulatable autonomous weapons outright while placing strict operational conditions on the remainder. In September 2025, a joint statement delivered by Brazil on behalf of 42 states declared that the CCW's negotiating text already contained a sufficient basis to begin formal treaty negotiations, reflecting growing frustration among these states with the slow pace of consensus-based talks.

The United Nations Secretary-General and the ICRC

Secretary-General António Guterres and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross have jointly and repeatedly called on states to conclude a legally binding instrument establishing clear prohibitions and restrictions on autonomous weapons systems by the end of 2026, a target date that continues to serve as the informal benchmark against which the CCW's Group of Governmental Experts measures its own progress.

Current Situation

The primary venue for LAWS negotiations remains the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, operating under the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in Geneva. The Group's current mandate runs through 2026, and it is expected to submit a final report to the CCW's Seventh Review Conference, scheduled to take place in Geneva in November 2026.

At this Review Conference, High Contracting Parties will face a genuine fork in the road: they may agree to a mandate for formal treaty negotiations based on the Chair's rolling negotiating text, they may extend the Group's current discussion-only mandate without committing to negotiations, or they may allow the process to lapse altogether without a clear path forward. The rolling text itself, developed and refined since 2024 under the chairmanship of Ambassador Robert in den Bosch of the Netherlands, already outlines a broad two-tier framework, and in September 2025 a group of 42 states declared it a sufficient basis on which to begin formal negotiations.

In parallel to the CCW process, DISEC itself has taken up the issue directly. In December 2023, the General Assembly adopted its first-ever resolution on autonomous weapons systems, mandating a Secretary-General report collecting the views of Member States and other stakeholders on the humanitarian, legal, security, technological, and ethical dimensions of the issue. A follow-up resolution, adopted in the First Committee in the autumn of 2025 with the support of 156 states, reaffirmed the urgency of the issue and called on the CCW to complete the elements of a future instrument with a view toward eventual negotiation.

For your committee session, the central diplomatic task mirrors the real-world stakes precisely: DISEC delegates are being asked to produce a resolution that can command the broadest possible international support ahead of the pivotal Seventh Review Conference, bridging the divide between states seeking a binding prohibition and states seeking continued flexibility, without allowing the text to become so watered down that it fails to meaningfully advance the regulatory process.

Key Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

1. Should DISEC support the negotiation of a new, legally binding treaty on lethal autonomous weapons, or should it instead recommend a political declaration alongside stronger enforcement of existing International Humanitarian Law?
2. How should a resolution define meaningful human control in a way that is precise enough to be enforceable, yet flexible enough to be accepted across a wide range of military doctrines?
3. Which categories of autonomous weapons, if any, should be prohibited outright under a two-tier approach, and which should instead be permitted subject to strict regulation?
4. What verification and accountability mechanisms could realistically be attached to a LAWS instrument, given that autonomous behaviour is often difficult to detect or prove after the fact?
5. How should the resolution address the proliferation of autonomous weapons technology to non-state armed groups and to states outside the traditional CCW membership?
6. What role should DISEC play relative to the CCW process, and how can the committee's resolution most effectively support progress ahead of the Seventh Review Conference in November 2026?
7. How should legal responsibility be assigned when an autonomous system causes unlawful harm: to the state that deployed it, the commander who activated it, or the company that designed its targeting algorithm?

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