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Statement by Stop Killer Robots; Delivered Access Now
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Thank you Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of Stop Killer Robots, a coalition of over 300 civil society organisations across more than 75 countries working to counter threats to humanity and human dignity through the adoption of a new international treaty to prohibit and regulate autonomous weapons systems. We support the development of legal and other norms that ensure meaningful human control over the use of force, counter digital dehumanisation, and reduce automated harm.

Deliberations on autonomous weapons systems and military AI at the First Committee this year come at a critical point. Reports of the use and testing on the battlefield of systems that fall within the scope of autonomous weapons are rising, for example in Ukraine. This includes reports of systems that could detect and kill people. There are also reports of the use of broader military AI tools to generate target suggestions, with minimal human approval, that have the potential to cause serious harm to civilians, for example by Israel in Gaza.

New military tools pose threats to civilian protection and longstanding, core principles of international humanitarian and human rights law. Harm runs the risk of being unevenly distributed, disproportionately affecting populations that are already subject to greater violence and discrimination. Public alarm and the demand for regulation is growing. This is not a theoretical debate: the next steps states choose to take in setting international rules on automation and AI in the use of force will have a real impact on people living through war. We urge states to keep this fact at the forefront of their work.

130 states have now expressed their support for an international legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons systems, and over 70 have expressed their readiness to move forward to negotiations on an instrument based on their work at the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

Negotiations on a legally binding instrument are the only acceptable next step. We urge states to take this step now, and establish strong legal rules that prohibit autonomous weapons systems that do not allow for meaningful human control and prohibit systems that autonomously target humans, as well as including positive obligations to ensure meaningful human control over the use of force.

We also urge states to recognise that they cannot stop at working toward and negotiating a treaty on autonomous weapons systems. Rules, standards and guarantees will be needed to prevent humanitarian consequences, ensure accountability, and meet the legal and ethical challenges of AI and automation in military systems beyond autonomous weapons. Until these are put in place, given the alarming reports we are seeing, we demand states place an

immediate moratorium on using any AI system, as the basis for targeting decisions, and that they provide immediate transparency on the role of AI in the use of military force, and on its impacts on civilians and their human rights.

Finally, we call on states to support and respect the full participation of civil society and all relevant stakeholders in international work on autonomous weapons systems and AI in the military domain.

Thank you, Chair.