

### III. Sample Position Paper

Delegation from Lebanon

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Position Paper for the General Assembly First Committee

The topics before the General Assembly First Committee are: “The Prohibition of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems” and the “Control of Biological Weapons in Today’s Modern Era”. Lebanon strongly advocates multilateral approaches through Confidence-Building Measures as well as the regulation and control of both fully-autonomous and biological weapons in order to maintain international peace and security.

#### I. The Prohibition of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems

Since the technology of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) is just evolving and currently in an early state, data on the topic still remains scarce. Nevertheless, Lebanon endorses the importance of further exploration on this matter, as binding agreements and accurate definitions remain yet to be found and this poses a potential threat to international peace and security.

This is why Lebanon strongly supports the pre-emptive work started by the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to ensure the protection of civilians from new, advanced technologies. In the past, the International Community has dealt with the topic only indirectly, primarily in the context of the Geneva Convention 2013. Even though Lebanon is not one of the High Contracting Parties, the Lebanese Republic recognised the utter importance of discussing LAWS when participating as an observer state in the first meeting on the topic, the 2014 informal Meeting of Experts on LAWS.<sup>1</sup> Following their lead, as a first step, an official language needs to be drafted in order to establish exact definitions on the topic and to build up a framework upon which the protection of humanitarian law and human rights specifically addressed to the protection of civilians can be based. Technical and functional specifications have to be regarded as essential so as to establish common ground for any kind of future agreements between states.

However, beyond this basic means, Lebanon urges further assessment regarding the violation of International Humanitarian Law. Article 36 of the 1949 Geneva Convention Additional Protocol states that “in the study, acquisition or adoption of a new weapon, means or method of warfare” a state “must determine whether [a weapon] would, in some or all circumstances, be prohibited by international law.” For the sake of guaranteeing said adherence, Lebanon asks to provide surveillance as well as a binding agreement or possible constraint treaties signed by those nations conducting in concrete research on the field of LAWS. This would be efficient in order to guarantee the protection of nations lacking the capacity or technology. Any violations of sovereignty in particular would have to be addressed in such agreements.

As the recent history of the Lebanese Republic shows, the use of autonomous weapons increases the risk of intervention: Only in 2006, years after the end of the civil war, an Israeli

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[https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/350D9ABED1AFA515C1257CF30047A8C7/\\$file/Report\\_AdvancedVersion\\_10June.pdf](https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/350D9ABED1AFA515C1257CF30047A8C7/$file/Report_AdvancedVersion_10June.pdf) (last accessed on 18.02.2019)

mission was conducted to bomb South Lebanon, using new technologies potentially falling under the definition of LAWs.<sup>2</sup> The risk of casualties is effectively reduced, which, as a consequence, affects the decision-making process of whether to enter into a conflict. At this point, Lebanon voices its concerns of probable unilateral law violations of those nations using and exploring these new technologies that, such as Israel or the UK, are possibly engaged in current conflicts or unstable situations.

Thirdly, Lebanon expresses its concerns that above all legal issues a moral line is crossed by delegating moral judgment to machines, consequently endorsing the point of constraint treaties. This is why, as a preemptive measure, Lebanon advocates an increased education of political leaders as well as the public on the topic of LAWs, thereby raising a better understanding and awareness on the topic.

## II. The Control of Biological Weapons in Today's Modern Era

In the course of the last decades, the issue of biological weapons has played a crucial role in negotiations within the United Nations. As outlined in UN resolution 1977, the “proliferation of biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery” is a threat to international peace and security. As one of the first signatories of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Lebanon stresses the importance of this convention and urges all Member States that have signed the Convention to exercise adherence with its obligations, and all Member States that have not accepted yet to withdraw their reservations. The Lebanese Republic is deeply concerned by the neglect of certain states, not limited to but including Israel, to sign the conventions against weapons of mass destruction including the BWC and their failure to comply with international legitimacy, which makes them a threat to all States in the region. Recalling the tensed situation in the Middle East, it is particularly important that all States implement the BWC in their national legislation with view to GA Resolution A/67/28 that suggests the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in this area.

In the context of biological weapons, Lebanon believes that the ability of terrorists to obtain biological agents for harmful purposes poses a great danger and therefore effective measures to prevent the proliferation of such weapons shall be enforced by all Member States according to S/RES/1540. Lebanon itself has taken measures to prevent terrorists to acquire biological weapons both on the level of security as well as on the level of legislation by restricting their availability. Lebanon invites other states to follow this example and encourages Member States to offer assistance to other states in terms of training or structural support as suggested by S/RES/1540 and further encouraged in S/RES/1977.

With reference to acts of bioterrorism in the past, Lebanon suggests that the GA extends the mandate and the resources of the Implementation Support Unit to facilitate the education of the medical community of Member States whose own resources or experiences lack the capability of promoting sufficient preventive measures in case of an attack.

In order to provide greater confidence within the International Community in general, the Republic of Lebanon calls upon all States Parties to cooperate according to Article X of the BWC and to report their implementations as suggested by GA Resolution A/67/416. Lebanon strongly encourages the General Assembly to approach this topic with a cooperative spirit to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2008/02/16/flooding-south-lebanon/israels-use-cluster-munitions-lebanon-july-and-august-2006#> (last accessed on 18.02.2018)