POLICY TRACKER

AI Weapons Treaties and Regulation Tracker

Milestones, state positions and what to watch in 2026

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There is still no international treaty that specifically regulates autonomous weapons. This page tracks the main legal and policy milestones, who stands where, and what to watch. It is written from public sources and reviewed on **2 October 2026**; diplomacy moves quickly, so check the original documents for the latest status.

The short version

- **Binding rules:** none yet. Existing international humanitarian law applies to all weapons, and countries disagree about whether more is needed.
- **Main forum:** the Group of Governmental Experts under the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), where decisions need consensus. That makes blocking easy and progress slow.
- **Pressure for a treaty:** the UN Secretary-General and the ICRC want a legally binding instrument by 2026, and two UN General Assembly resolutions passed with large majorities.
- **The main military powers** have generally preferred non-binding approaches and national rules.

Timeline

When	What happened and why it matters	Source
Apr 2013	The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots launches, calling for a pre-emptive ban on fully autonomous weapons. Created the civil-society coalition that still drives the debate.	Wikipedia: Stop Killer Robots
2014	States hold the first informal expert meeting on lethal autonomous weapons under the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in Geneva. Moved the topic from advocacy into formal diplomacy.	Wikipedia: Lethal autonomous weapon
2016	CCW states agree to set up an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on lethal autonomous weapons systems. The main negotiating forum ever since.	Wikipedia: CCW GGE on LAWS
2019	The CCW meeting endorses eleven guiding principles, including that international humanitarian law applies to all weapons systems and that humans must remain responsible. The only politically agreed text so far; not legally binding.	Wikipedia: Lethal autonomous weapon
May 2021	The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) publishes its position: ban autonomous weapons that are unpredictable or designed to target people, and restrict the rest. Gave the call for new rules a legal-humanitarian basis.	ICRC position
Jan 2023	The US Department of Defense updates Directive 3000.09 on autonomy in weapon systems, keeping a senior-review requirement rather than a ban. The main US national rule; sets review, not prohibition.	DoD Directive 3000.09
Feb 2023	The Netherlands and South Korea host the first Summit on Responsible AI in the Military Domain (REAIM) in The Hague. The US launches its Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of AI and Autonomy.	Wikipedia: REAIM summit

When	What happened and why it matters	Source
	Created a parallel, non-binding track led by militaries.	
Feb to Apr 2023	Regional meetings in Costa Rica (Belén Communiqué) and Sierra Leone (Freetown Communiqué) call for a treaty. Showed support for new rules across Latin America, the Caribbean and West Africa.	Stop Killer Robots
Jul 2023	UN Secretary-General António Guterres calls for a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapons to be concluded by 2026. Set the 2026 target now framing the debate.	UN: A New Agenda for Peace
Dec 2023	The UN General Assembly adopts Resolution 78/241, its first on lethal autonomous weapons, by 152 votes to 4 with 11 abstentions. Put the issue formally before all UN members.	UN General Assembly A/RES/78/241
Apr 2024	Austria hosts a conference in Vienna on autonomous weapons and the challenge of regulation. Kept pressure on states to negotiate.	Austrian Foreign Ministry
Aug 2024	The EU AI Act enters into force. It excludes AI systems used exclusively for military, defence or national security purposes. The world's broadest AI law does not cover weapons.	Wikipedia: Artificial Intelligence Act
Sep 2024	The second REAIM summit takes place in Seoul. Continued the military-led, non-binding process.	Wikipedia: REAIM summit
Dec 2024	The UN General Assembly adopts a second resolution on lethal autonomous weapons (79/62) by 166 votes to 3 with 15 abstentions and calls for consultations in New York. Support for action grew compared with 2023.	UN General Assembly A/RES/79/62
2026	The CCW GGE works from a draft rolling text. Public summaries say it reached provisional consensus on twenty-two points on elements of a possible instrument. The CCW's Seventh Review Conference is due in November 2026. The decisive moment for the 2026 treaty target.	Wikipedia: CCW GGE on LAWS

Where major states stand

State	Position (simplified)	Source
United States	Prefers voluntary norms and existing humanitarian law over a new treaty. Directive 3000.09 requires senior review of certain autonomous systems; the Political Declaration is non-binding.	DoD Directive 3000.09
China	Supports banning an "unacceptable" category of fully autonomous weapons but defines it narrowly, and has generally favored discussing non-binding measures.	Wikipedia: Lethal autonomous weapon
Russia	Opposes new legally binding rules, arguing existing humanitarian law is sufficient. Voted against both UN General Assembly resolutions.	UN A/RES/78/241
India	Voted against the 2023 General Assembly resolution and prefers the CCW process.	UN A/RES/78/241

State	Position (simplified)	Source
United Kingdom	Says existing humanitarian law is adequate and has not backed a new treaty.	Wikipedia: Lethal autonomous weapon
Austria	Leading advocate of a legally binding instrument; hosted the 2024 Vienna conference.	Austrian Foreign Ministry
Pakistan	Among the first states to call for a prohibition on fully autonomous weapons.	Stop Killer Robots

Positions are summarised and can shift; they are not official statements by the governments named. See individual country pages for systems and industry context, and the AI ethics and policy sections for background.

What to watch

- The CCW Seventh Review Conference in November 2026, which decides whether talks move toward negotiating an instrument.
- The fall 2026 session of the UN General Assembly's First Committee.
- Whether major military powers join any new voluntary declarations on responsible military AI.

Spotted an error or a missing milestone? Tell us and we will check and correct it.