Since 2013 the discussion about the production and the use of fully autonomous weapons has been a topic in the UN General Assembly (UNGA). A total of 93 countries have publicly elaborated their views on lethal autonomous weapons systems in a multilateral forum since 2013. It has brought up numerous ethical questions, and there is a broad agreement about “developing a normative framework” that would address autonomous weapons. Yet, there is little agreement about what that means in practice. Does this mean more informal guidelines, or a new international treaty to prohibit or restrict lethal autonomous weapons systems? IUSY supports the latter alternative.

The last decades the US, China, Israel, South Korea, Russia, and the UK have developed weapons systems with significant autonomy in the critical functions of selecting and attacking targets. IUSY expresses great concern about this development.

These systems will replace troops with machines, and it can make the decision to go to war easier and shift the burden of conflict even further on to civilians.

It’s also unclear who, if anyone, could be held responsible for unlawful acts caused by a fully autonomous weapon: the programmer, manufacturer, commander, and machine itself. This accountability gap would make it difficult to ensure justice, especially for victims.

This is why we are calling for:

- An international treaty to ban the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons.
- Legisllate the ban through national laws and by international treaty.