Regulating the use of AI systems for military and mass surveillance purposes

SPC

Issue Description:

While AI systems are continuing to develop rapidly, most systems can also serve a military purpose. AI is being used for military intelligence reports, logistics, and even up to autonomous weapons. The Purpose of AI in the military keeps increasing and we must decide if a moral line is being crossed. Furthermore, Mass surveillance systems use facial recognition and other biometric identification to mass monitor and identify individuals. The UN finds that this goes against human rights,

Why has this issue not been resolved?

Governments face a prisoner's dilemma between putting restrictions in place and not wanting to limit themselves.

The definitions are unclear; many states disagree on term such as 'autonomous' 'lethal' 'meaningful control' regarding this issue.

Few legal restrictions are currently in place. When these restrictions are in place they are very broad and can be interpreted in different ways.

Important stances on the issue

The UN Secretary General has called for regulations to be made on autonomous weapons.

The ICRC has similarly argued that autonomous weapons must be strictly prohibited.

Many governments have instead adopted AI systems to survey their citizens to ensure safer communities. Many have also begun integrating AI into their military.

What organizations are currently involved (or have been involved) and what have they achieved?

The UN has placed autonomous weapon systems on the international disarmament agenda. It has also adopted resolutions on this topic, such as in the General Assembly in 2024.

The EU AI Act has established restrictions on surveillance systems and biometric identification.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons has acted as a forum for discussion regarding this issue.

Useful Sources:

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2. Independent UNWatch. (2026, August 25). UN and Red Cross demand urgent rules on autonomous weapons. Independent United Nations Watch. https://www.iunwatch.org/un-and-red-cross-demand-urgent-rules-on-autonomous-weapons/
3. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2026, April 27). UN experts: Safeguard human freedoms from systematic digital interference, surveillance and chilling effects on civic space. OHCHR. https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/04/un-experts-safeguard-human-freedoms-systematic-digital-interference
4. Waldersee, V. (2026, February 5). US, China opt out of joint declaration on AI use in military. Reuters. https://www.yahoo.com/news/articles/us-china-opt-joint-declaration-184843972.html

Good luck with your research reports delegates!

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