

# **The Legality and Ethics of Autonomous Weapons: A Critical Appraisal**

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## **Abstract:**

Autonomous weapons, also known as killer robots, are weapons that can select and engage targets without human intervention. The development and deployment of these weapons have raised significant legal and ethical concerns. This article critically appraises the legality and ethics of autonomous weapons. It analyzes the current international legal framework governing autonomous weapons and argues that there is a need for new regulations to address the unique challenges posed by these weapons. The article also examines the ethical concerns associated with the development and deployment of autonomous weapons, such as accountability, responsibility, and the potential for unintended harm. Finally, the article proposes recommendations for addressing the legal and ethical challenges posed by autonomous weapons.

## **Introduction:**

Autonomous weapons, also known as killer robots, are a new generation of weapons that can select and engage targets without human intervention. The development and deployment of these weapons have raised significant legal and ethical concerns. This article critically appraises the legality and ethics of autonomous weapons.

## **The Legal Framework:**

The current international legal framework governing autonomous weapons is inadequate. The Geneva Conventions and other international humanitarian law treaties do not specifically address autonomous weapons. This leaves a legal gap that requires new regulations to address the unique challenges posed by these weapons. The article examines the legal and policy developments in this area, including the work of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts.

## **The Ethical Concerns:**

The development and deployment of autonomous weapons raise several ethical concerns. One of the most significant ethical concerns is accountability. With no human decision-making involved, it is difficult to determine who is responsible for the actions of autonomous weapons. Another ethical concern is the potential for unintended harm. Autonomous weapons could make decisions that result in unintended harm to civilians or other non-combatants.

## **Recommendations:**

To address the legal and ethical challenges posed by autonomous weapons, several recommendations are proposed. First, a new legal framework that specifically addresses the unique challenges posed by autonomous weapons should be developed. Second, the development and deployment of autonomous weapons should be subject to strict regulation and oversight. Third, a mechanism for accountability and responsibility should be established. Fourth, efforts should be made to promote transparency and public dialogue on autonomous weapons.

**Conclusion:**

Autonomous weapons pose significant legal and ethical challenges. The current international legal framework governing autonomous weapons is inadequate. There is a need for new regulations to address the unique challenges posed by these weapons. The development and deployment of autonomous weapons should be subject to strict regulation and oversight. A mechanism for accountability and responsibility should be established. Finally, efforts should be made to promote transparency and public dialogue on autonomous weapons. By addressing the legal and ethical challenges posed by autonomous weapons, we can ensure that these weapons are used in a responsible and ethical manner.