



# ORBITAL MUN CONFERENCE

Hosted by British International School of Ljubljana

# BLLED 2025

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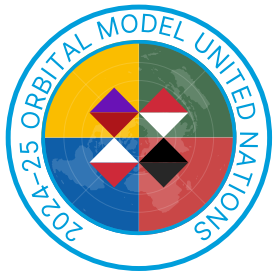
## BACKGROUND GUIDE

# AI IN WARFARE

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*Issue: To what extent should individual countries be held accountable for the use of AI in warfare?*

Prepared by: Lila De Launey and Naomi Goddard



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the second Orbital Model United Nations! We are excited to host our partner schools in Bled, Slovenia from 2–5 February 2025.

The organising committee has worked hard over the past few months to create topics and background guides which represent some of the pressing issues the world faces as we move further into this century. These topics are nuclear energy, AI in warfare, animal cruelty, and immigration.

As the world experiences more effects of climate change, many see nuclear energy as a promising alternative to fossil fuels. Recently, we have seen various new wars spark across the world, with AI being introduced in several. Animal testing has long been a question of whether the ends justify the means, something particularly relevant after the COVID-19 pandemic. Migration is often the product of many factors, some of these being the aforementioned climate change and war. Mass migration has monumental consequences for both the country of departure and the country of destination. The worldwide political landscape seems more and more fraught with danger, and so the need for international cooperation and pragmatism is heightened.

My name is Naomi Goddard, and I am honoured to be Secretary General for this Orbital MUN. I am from London but study at the British International School of Ljubljana and am thrilled that we are the host country this year. For Year 12, my subjects are English Literature, History, French, Spanish, and Psychology.

These background guides have been prepared by the chairs of each committee in order to provide a foundation of information on each topic and to facilitate individual research. They are in no way exhaustive, with the ideas provided serving simply as examples for potential discussion.

You, the delegates, are strongly encouraged to extend your research beyond the background guide. You are invited to further explore the sources cited in each guide as well as others encountered elsewhere.

Together with the Deputy Secretary General, Ema Seršen, the organising team (Isabella Magill, Anna Rozanova, Moises Camarero Trujillo, Zoja Čotar, and Lila De Launey) and Committee Chairs, we are looking forward to welcoming you to discuss these critical issues facing the world today.

Naomi Goddard

MUN Secretary General

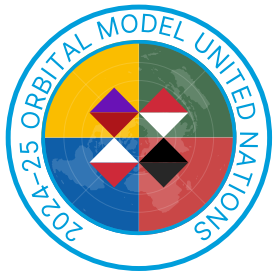
Ljubljana, November 2024



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# INTRODUCTION

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For many countries, AI will be a tool to help them dominate warfare. For others it is an unnecessary evil with a potential to kill millions in the pursuit of victory. Either way, it is a highly contentious and disputed issue today.

It is the UN's opinion that without peace, development cannot occur. Warzones are also at risk of falling into issues tackled by many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including SDG 2: Zero Hunger; SDG 3: Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being; and SDG 6: Ensuring access to water and sanitation. Via the control of AI in warfare, progress specifically towards SDG 9: Building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; and SDG 16: Promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies may be increased.

Perhaps the greatest ethical issue posed by this issue is the potential for a lack of human intervention in deaths and the fear of AI becoming an indiscriminate killer. These fears have been growing in society for years as AI becomes a larger part of everyday life. Without decisive regulation and accountability, concerns about the risk of uncontrolled massacres and spiraling casualties will remain prominent in international debate.



# KEY TERMS

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**Arms Race:** A competition between nations involving the acquisition of weapons

**Artificial Intelligence:** The ability of computing systems or algorithms to imitate intelligent human behavior

**Automation Bias:** The tendency for humans to favour the suggestions from AI over other ideas and factual information

**Automated systems:** Setups using technology to lower human intervention

**Capitalism:** A system determined by the privatization of industry and goods, where the organisation, pricing, and processing of goods are free from external state control

**Civilian:** Someone who is not in active duty in the armed forces

**Collateral Damage:** The death or injury of civilians or the damage to non-military buildings which is caused when targeting something

**Country:** A nation, territory, or political state

**Cyber espionage:** The act of spying via computer networks, especially by a government

**Developer:** An individual or company which develops software

**Drone:** An uncrewed aircraft controlled remotely or by on-board computing systems

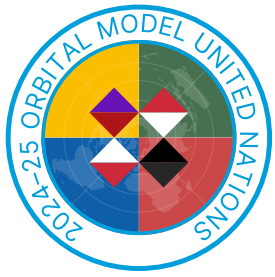
**LAWS:** Lethal autonomous weapon systems

**Military:** Of or relating to the armed forces

**Missile:** A projectile, typically with the intention of striking a target

**Warfare:** The action of continuing or engaging in war

**Warzone:** An area in which military combat occurs



# OVERVIEW

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As of October 2024, there are over 110 armed conflicts worldwide. Some of these, such as those involving Libya, Israel, and Azerbaijan have already implemented AI. For others, AI is just in development. Various experts are considering an AI arms race to have begun, with many countries keen to utilise this technology to secure national safety.

The causes of some of these conflicts include:

- Territorial or resource gain
- Resisting attack or invasion
- Alliances
- Forcing political change
- Countering ideologies and religions
- Racism and xenophobia
- National honour

Over the past couple of years, AI has had more extensive usage in conflicts. It is no longer an idea or a mere development for many parts of the world. These examples include:

## Automated weapons

Automated weaponry may include drones or missiles. Drones in particular can operate in drone swarms. AI could help facilitate the sharing of information between drones in a drone swarm. This term also extends to border monitoring equipment, self-defense systems, and various vehicles used in warfare. Many automated weapons are capable of identifying and engaging targets with or without human authority.

## Target identification

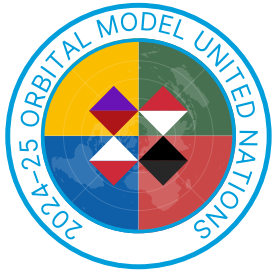
AI has grown in usage for identifying targets. One example of this is in the Israel-Hamas war where AI systems are used to suggest potential suspects to be the targets of military operations. The level of human intervention depends on the programming of the technology and policy of its user.

## Decision making

Various governments are interested in AI's potential to make decisions about warfare. AI can evaluate a battlefield or military situation and provide suggestions that may avoid some aspects of human error, particularly when stress may cloud judgement. Generative AI is useful in this area.

## Cyber operations

AI can be linked to the various cyber operations of different countries in warfare. This could be espionage or increasing their own cyber security.



## Casualty care

AI could be used in the evacuation of injured civilians and soldiers. It may also be used to aid medics in diagnosing illnesses quickly and providing effective treatment where possible. Some believe AI could be highly useful in emotional situations which require impassive precision.

## Combat simulation

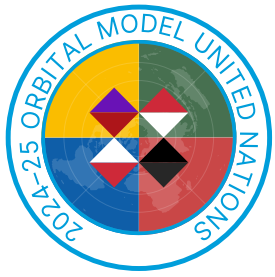
Governments could use AI as a way to more realistically simulate combat events and predict their outcomes. This could help them have better results and limit casualties. This is also useful for the training of new troops.

## Data processing

The use of AI in this task could monumentally reduce the amount of time taken. While human error may allow important data to slip through the cracks, AI could be far more thorough. This is a use of AI which applies to other areas besides warfare.

## Transportation

AI could plan transport routes more efficiently than humans. This means that war zones would have faster access to ammunition as well as humanitarian resources. It could also reduce costs by limiting employee involvement.



# IMPACTS

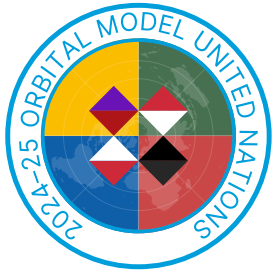
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War and conflict have existed throughout human history, though the use of AI in warfare could raise new consequences which have not been a part of traditional warfare. Some experts argue that there is also the potential for a more ethical form of warfare as a result of automation.

The AI caused impacts include:

- Increased tolerance of collateral damage
- A reduction in human-made ethical decisions due to automation bias
- A shift in dynamics in military due to the role capitalism has in the development of AI and other such technologies
- The vast scaling up of war, leading to more destruction and death due to the efficiency of AI
- More accurate targeting, potentially leading to less collateral damage and more humane casualties
- The delegation of dangerous tasks to AI, lowering human casualties
- Reduced human labour, decreasing fatigue
- Decisions made without human error
- Increased unpredictability of war





# ISSUES AND DEBATES

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- The use of AI poses several moral and logistical questions.
- Critics worry AI could be hacked and manipulated by external parties.
- There is a debate about to what extent AI should be used to take lives.
- Programming errors and malfunctions could result in mass casualties.

**In all of these possibilities, who bears responsibility for AI misuse is becoming more and more unclear. Countries are left to wonder whether they should be accountable if it is a programming error which has caused a fatal malfunction. This is also impacted by the level of influence they have had in the coding of the AI.**

## POTENTIAL PARTIES TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE

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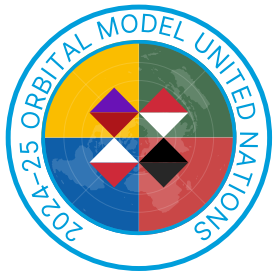
The debate for who should be held responsible for AI in warfare is a large one internationally. Proposed parties include:

### **Individual countries in general**

It has been suggested that it should be the country in general which is held liable for its own use of AI in warfare. It has been suggested that it is the overall government's responsibility, not just specific leaders or developers who must be accountable.

### **Military leaders of individual countries**

Rather than holding an entire country responsible for AI usage, some suggest that it should be down to individuals. This could be the person who authorises the use of an AI attack, or the individual who sets the policy for AI use in an offensive. This argument could be advocated for in the case of the use of AI by terrorist groups, where there is no individual country to be held accountable.



## AI committees of individual nations

Various nations, many discussed in this background guide, have created committees which set the policy for AI use in that country. These committees may be subsets of a country's military. The individuals in this group who create the policy and oversee the ethics of AI usage could be the ones accountable for its use in warfare. However, not every nation has a body specifically assigned to managing its use of AI.

## Developers of AI

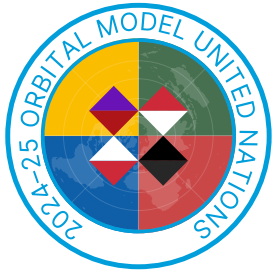
Some argue that it should be the individuals who actually write the code for the AI systems who should be held accountable for its use. This argument is prominent in the case of unclear code and malfunctions. It could also be referenced when discussing terrorism.

## Companies distributing AI

Similarly to holding developers responsible, entire companies who sell AI programs to countries and facilitate the development of AI could also be held responsible. However, rather than holding individual programmers responsible, it could be the general company. This could also be applied to companies which act as dealers rather than developers. In this possibility, organisations separate to governments could be held internationally responsible for state usage of technology.

## International bodies regulating AI

There are various international conferences and some international bodies which inform about the use of AI. In October 2023, the UN formed an advisory body on AI which drafted a final report the next year. However, existing bodies have been largely advisory, and in conferences like the Responsible AI in Military conference, countries have had the option to opt out of legally non-binding documents.



# MAJOR NATIONS INVOLVED

## The United States of America

The United States generally believes that countries themselves are accountable for their use of AI, not the individuals. The United States is keen on improving their warfare strategies using AI, however, they are introducing measures to address the ethical concerns that come with these tools to reduce unintended harm. Under the “Political Declaration on Responsible Military use of Artificial intelligence and Autonomy” (unveiled on November 13th, 2023, at the UN meeting) the USA agrees with abiding to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) but believes in voluntary restrictions from individual countries that are not bound by law and don’t necessarily have direct consequences. These statements have been made during the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) where countries discuss Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS).

## The Republic of Korea

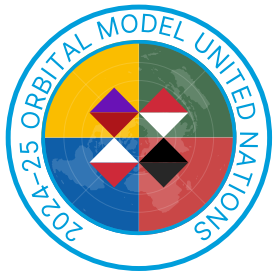
The ongoing threat from North Korea has been a significant driver behind South Korea’s investment in AI warfare and other military technologies. South Korea was one of the 61 countries to validate the blueprint of the responsible use of AI in the military domain (REAIM) and the host of the second summit in 2024. South Korea stands for international cooperation on the topic and ensuring that progress is ethical and abides to international law. They advocate for collaboration between countries and ultimately feel that accountability lies between nations.

## The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The UK is committed to developing their uses of AI in warfare in order to have a military which is on par with the rest of the world and to lessen the burden on commanders and soldiers. The British Army has announced that this could include decision-making and maneuvering. However, it has also been declared that it will have a human-centric approach which accounts for ethics. The Ministry of Defense has stated that “human responsibility and accountability cannot be removed” and the House of Lords has recommended that the government proceed with caution. The British Army has set up the Army AI Centre (AAIC) and has said that this body will manage responsibility for the use of AI in the British Army in a way that corresponds to existing UK law.

## The Republic of India

India is keen to use AI to aid the security of the nation and establish itself as a strong force amongst nearby superpowers. It has a long and ongoing history of border disputes with countries such as Pakistan and China as well as having had various independence movements within the nation. In 2019, India set up a Defence AI Council (DAIC), however, there is still a push to increase AI development and funding as it falls below that of some rivals. In the Responsible AI in Military conference of 2023, India chose not to sign into an



agreement which stated that countries would include Responsible AI (RAI) considerations in their military. In 2022, India published a list of ways it would use AI, including in drones and border security.

## Ukraine

Ukraine's stance has been affected by the ongoing war with Russia. They have heavily relied on AI for defense and survival, not necessarily adhering to all the guidelines. They stress the point of balance between regulation and the ability to use technology when it is urgent and essential. Ukraine has also brought to attention that rules for AI in warfare should differ in context of the size and power of the country. Smaller countries, lacking in resources, need flexibility to rapidly develop and deploy their technologies during crises. Ukraine leans towards the idea that individual countries should be held accountable for their use, however, that they are open to a collective, international approach.

## The People's Republic of China

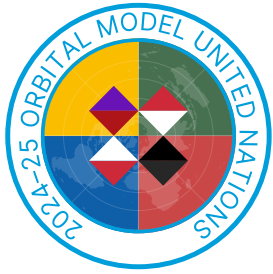
AI is an important tool for China considering it is in constant competition with countries such as the USA to improve their technology. China stands for state-level responsibility and has been involved in discussions with the UN such as the LAWS one. However, China's true focus seems to be making sure any international frameworks don't interfere with its own technological development or strategies. China pushes for state sovereignty where it can tailor guidelines to suit their needs and doesn't want one set of rules internationally.

## The State of Israel

Throughout its history, Israel has faced military threats on several different frontiers. Today, these include Hamas, Hezbollah, and, as of recently, Iran. In order to target Hamas, Israel has used AI in warfare. Israel uses an AI program called Lavender amongst others which identified 37,000 suspects of having Hamas links in October of 2023. This AI has come under international criticism due to the seemingly low amount of human responsibility and the high number of civilian deaths its algorithm tolerates. The Israel Defense Force (IDF) has claimed that these AIs act as tools, rather than being solely responsible for identifying someone linked to Hamas. In April 2024, Lavender was reported to have a 90% accuracy rate. These targets are said to be passed onto IDF officers who then authorise strikes. There have been sources saying that some IDF officers spend very short amounts of time considering AI suggested targets and the location of the strike (sometimes being the suspect's home, rather than a military building) has also drawn controversy.

## The Islamic Republic of Iran

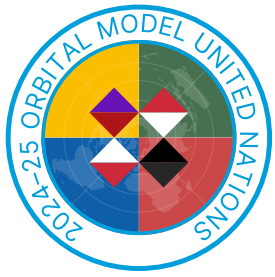
In the recent past, Iran has been building up its use of AI in warfare. The development of such technology is particularly important to Iran as rivals such as Israel, the US, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye are similarly keen to develop defensive AI. AI is now commonplace



in Iran's cyber espionage, a way for it to avoid more conventional battles. This has only increased since the Israel-Hamas war, with Israel being a frequent target. Both officials from the navy and air force have announced they will be adopting AI, specifically mentioning missiles and drones. Iran views AI as a way to reduce human error. An example of this is the 2020 downing of the Ukrainian International Airways flight 752. However, Iran is still quite private about the extent of AI usage. The most senior authority specifically regarding the military in Iran is the General Staff of the Armed Forces (GSAF). It is this body, and the groups beneath it, which oversee AI in the Iranian military.

## RESOLUTION

Through the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), the UN is working on regulating AI driven technologies and states taking responsible actions. Some nations including France have proposed frameworks for future discussions aiming to establish guidelines by 2026. Some countries want to push a ban due to the risk of an arms race. Despite the discussions there is no global agreement as of now. It's a complex issue as a balance needs to be found between developing AI potential and complying with international law whilst ensuring safety.



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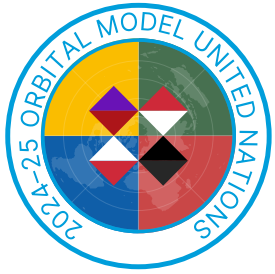
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