

## Swiss Drone and Robotics Centre of the DDPS

- The Centre does not conduct research on the use of completely autonomous weapons systems due to international law, as well as for ethical reasons.
- Research is being conducted to evaluate the possibilities of defending against autonomous weapons systems in order to properly assess the threat and risks that they pose.
- The Centre monitors technological and military developments for better understanding of autonomy in weapons systems.
- The Centre is working on methods to identify ethical risks with AWS.

More information:



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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Defence,  
Civil Protection and Sport  
**armasuisse**  
Science and Technology

## Autonomous weapons systems (AWS)



AWS can be understood as

- **completely autonomous weapons systems:** These systems use sensor input and algorithmic decision-making systems to function independently. They select targets after activation **without** direct human supervision or control and use force against them.
- **Partially autonomous weapons systems:** These do the same, but are designed such that they are capable of operating within a defined framework **with** a sufficient degree and quality of human supervision and control.



Graphic: Starting points for human control over autonomous weapons systems (sources: SIPRI/ICRC; FDFA)

Switzerland does not intend to procure completely autonomous weapons systems. However, it does have an interest in exploiting the potential offered by advances in AI and greater autonomy of weapons systems for military defence capabilities.

### Swiss position in arms control

- The Swiss approach focuses on the aspiration to ensure compliance with international law.
- From the Swiss perspective, autonomous weapons systems which cannot be used in accordance with international humanitarian law should not be developed or used and are de facto already prohibited. In particular, systems must be sufficiently transparent and their effects must be reasonably foreseeable.

- For all other autonomous weapons systems which can basically be used in accordance with international law, specific measures are required. For example, to maintain human control and to meet ethical requirements.
- Switzerland cooperates with other countries to prevent the development of completely autonomous weapons systems, and to regulate partially autonomous weapons systems with an appropriate international instrument.

### Guiding principles of the Swiss Armed Forces

- **Legitimacy:** The Armed Forces only use weapons systems for which the use and impact are proven to be compatible with international humanitarian law.
- **Responsibility:** The use of Armed Forces systems is always embedded in a chain of command in which a human being exercises control over the assessment and the decisions.
- **Reliability:** The Armed Forces only use weapons systems for which the impact and consequences are reasonably foreseeable.
- **Agility:** The Armed Forces pursue technological innovations in the area of autonomy and exchanges best practices with other armed forces as well as relevant partners.

More information:

