



Report on Activities 2018



CAMPAIGN TO **STOP**
KILLER ROBOTS

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Our Mission

Established in 2013, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is working to ban fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous weapons systems or killer robots.

Retaining meaningful human control over the use of force is a humanitarian imperative, legal necessity, and moral obligation.

Message from the Campaign Coordinator

2018 provided powerful new allies to the [Campaign to Stop Killer Robots](#), who will prove critical to our mission.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appealed for a new international treaty to prohibit machines from taking human lives, describing such weapons as “politically unacceptable and morally repugnant.”

Thousands of tech workers demanded Google never build “warfare technology,” leading the company to drop a hotly contested Pentagon project and adopt ethical principles pledging not to “design or deploy” artificial intelligence for use in weapons.

Parliamentarians began scrutinizing their government positions on calls to ban fully autonomous weapons, spurred on by pressure generated by the Campaign’s rapidly growing global coalition of non-governmental organizations.

Yet, by the end of 2018 all that states could agree to do at the international level was keep talking about concerns over killer robots. As in previous years, Russia and the United States, as well as Australia, Israel, South Korea repeatedly dismissed calls to launch negotiations to address mounting concerns over lethal autonomous weapons systems.

The poor diplomatic outcome shows the fundamental weakness of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW): its mode of consensus-based decision-making. Unambitious lowest-common denominator decisions result when a single state or small group of states abuses consensus to thwart bolder measures sought by the majority.

The spotlight on the multilateral talks has only grown brighter, the longer they drag on without resolution. Meanwhile public expectations are rising and pressure is increasing on states to take swift action now to regulate before it’s too late.



Mary Wareham,

Coordinator, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots



2018 at a Glance



The Campaign grew to **100 members in 54 countries** by the end of the year



Austria, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Djibouti, and Morocco joined the growing list of countries calling for a ban on fully autonomous weapons, bringing the total number of states to **28**



April

In early April, an **African Group statement** recommended that diplomatic talks proceed by negotiating a legally binding instrument “at the earliest”, stating that “fully autonomous weapons systems or LAWS that are not under human control should be banned”



June

Following employee protests and consultations with the campaign coordinator, **Google** issued its first set of ethical principles, committing not to “design or deploy” artificial intelligence for use in weapons. Google also agreed to end its participation in the controversial US Department of Defense initiative, Project Maven

July

After outreach and advocacy efforts by campaigners in Brussels, **Belgium's** national parliament adopted a resolution supporting the call to prohibit killer robots

The **European Parliament** issued a recommendation calling for urgent negotiations on “an international ban on weapon systems that lack human control over the use of force”

Over **200** technology companies and organizations, and **2,600** individuals from more than 36 countries signed a Future of Life Institute pledge to “neither participate in nor support the development, manufacture, trade, or use of lethal autonomous weapons”

September

The **European Parliament** adopted a resolution urging the start of “international negotiations on a legally binding instrument prohibiting lethal autonomous weapons systems”

August

Austria, Brazil, and Chile proposed a negotiating mandate at the CCW calling for a legally-binding instrument to retain meaningful human control over autonomous weapons systems



October

Nearly 50 states raised concerns about killer robots in their statements to the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in October. This marked the highest number of countries to comment on this topic at the annual UNGA



November

UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated “machines that have the power and the discretion to take human lives are politically unacceptable, are morally repugnant, and should be banned by international law”



December

A global Ipsos poll surveying 26 countries found 61% of respondents oppose the use of fully autonomous weapons, with the strongest opposition in Turkey (78%), South Korea (74%), and Hungary (74%)



March 21-23, 2019

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots held its first global meeting in Berlin, Germany



Building Political Will

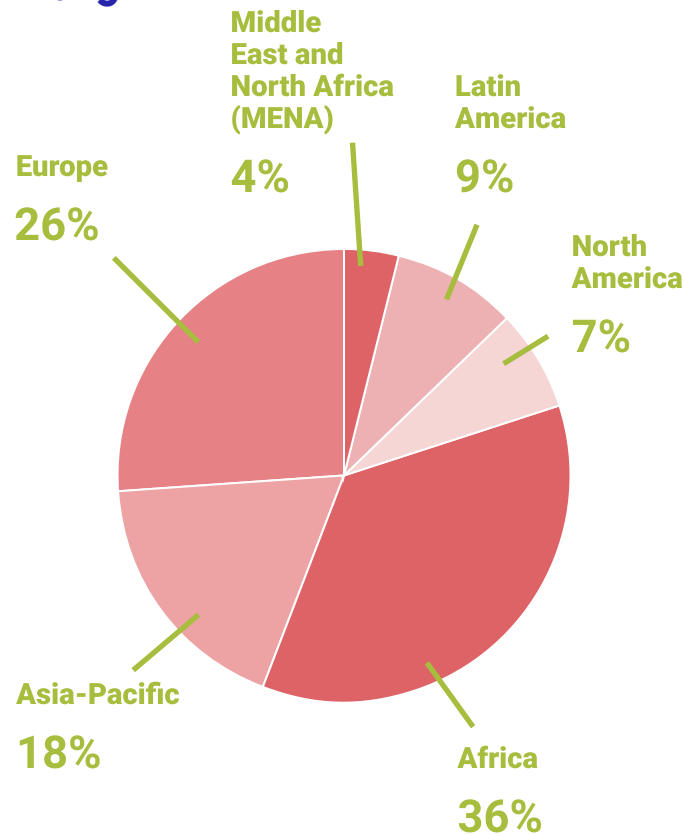


Campaigners Hayley Ramsey-Jones and Maria Pia Devoto want a ban on killer robots!

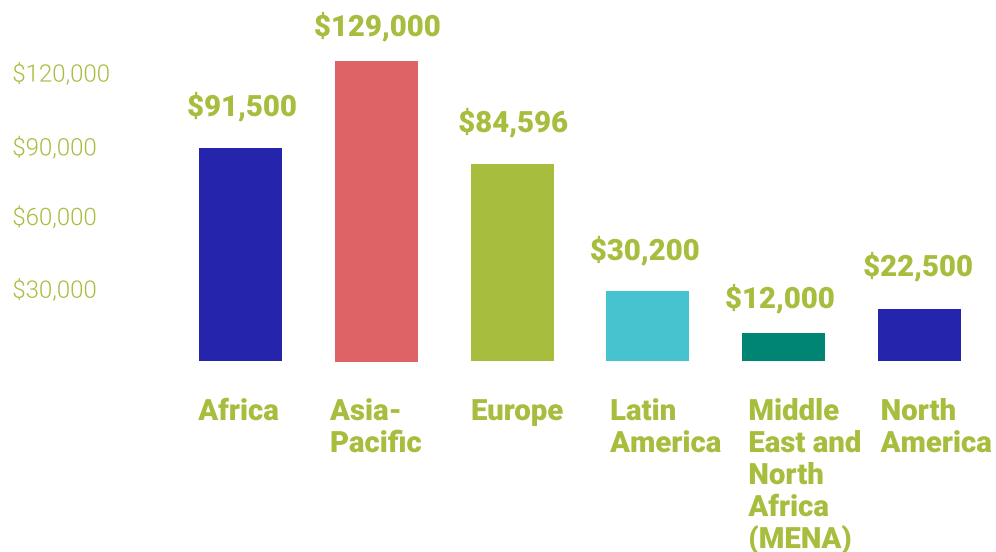
In 2018, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots launched a small grants programme to support civil society groups in their national and regional campaigning efforts to increase awareness and encourage political support for the calls to ban fully autonomous weapons.

From April 2018 to March 2019, the Campaign processed three grant rounds, each lasting from 3 to 5 months. The small grants programme supported **69 projects in 34 countries**, including **Africa** (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe), **Asia-Pacific** (Australia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand), **Europe** (Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, United Kingdom), **the Americas** (Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Guatemala, United States) and the **Middle East** and **North Africa**. Of the 69 grants, 56 grants went to national campaigning projects and 13 to regional campaigning projects.

Regional dispersal of small grants distributed over three grant cycles in 2018-2019



Small grants distributed over three grant cycles in 2018-2019 (in US \$)



National Campaigning

The small grants programme has driven rapid growth of the Campaign with [membership](#) growing from 68 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 29 countries in January 2017 to 100 NGOs in 54 countries at the end of 2018. With this expansion, the Campaign's country membership grew to include Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, El Salvador, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Slovenia, and Uganda.

National campaigning grants encouraged members of the Campaign to establish national networks of campaigners to carry out joint activities. Campaigners engaged in a wide variety of activities from local and national advocacy efforts (parliamentary briefings, high-level political meetings, roundtables), to generating public interest and awareness (public stunts, speaking engagements, capacity-building workshops), to growing media attention (press conferences, op-eds, interviews). The programme also funded translation of existing materials, and the production and dissemination of new resources and publications (reports, toolkits, papers, videos). After funding these activities, the small grants programme grew in-country public interest and engagement, and encouraged political leaders to take action.

In 2018, national campaigning made great strides and impact in advocacy and outreach to new stakeholders:

- In April, [UNA-UK](#), along with tech companies, NGOs and academics, [sent a joint letter](#) urging the UK to take pre-emptive action to prohibit fully autonomous weapons. This came ahead of a House of Lords committee on artificial intelligence [report](#) that recommended the government amend its far-fetched definition of fully autonomous weapons systems.
- After artificial intelligence experts [issued a letter](#) calling for the boycott of Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), the university [clarified](#) it "does not have any intention to engage in development of lethal autonomous weapons systems."
- In June, Professor Noel Sharkey, chair of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC), a co-founder of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, visited Helsinki to address a parliamentary seminar on autonomous weapons systems. Hosted by the Committee of 100 in Finland (*Suomen Sadankomitea ry*) and other Finnish non-governmental organizations, Sharkey met with major political party representatives, spoke to local media, and engaged with top AI experts in Finland.

- After outreach by Norwegian campaigners, the leader of Norway's Christian Democratic Party (*Kristeleg Folkeparti, KrF*) [asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs](#) what the government was doing to develop new political and legal regulations to retain meaningful human control over weapons systems and the use of force.
- Outreach by campaigners in Brussels led the Belgian parliament's defence committee to adopt a resolution ([available in Dutch and French](#)) urging the government to support international efforts to prohibit the use of fully autonomous weapons. The resolution also committed to ensure these weapons stay out of the Belgian military.
- In July, *Rete Italiana per Il Disarmo* (the Italian Network for Disarmament) convened an event at the national parliament in Rome with experts in artificial intelligence and related subjects to explore challenges raised by fully autonomous weapons and the need for a stronger government position.
- WILPF Africa conducted outreach to new organisations in the Central African region, including Femmes des Presses Pour la Paix et la Sécurité en Afrique Centrale (FEPPSAC) and engaged with new stakeholders including the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).
- In November, Project Ploughshares held an event with tech workers, university students, and local community members. The event featured remarks by Ryan Garipey, Chief Technology Officer of Clearpath Robotics, the [first private company to call for a ban](#).
- WILPF Ghana held a seminar in March 2019 on the potential use, challenges, and impacts of fully autonomous weapons attended by representatives from the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, Small Arms Commission, as well as technical experts and NGOs. Following this, Ghana's National Peace Council [announced support](#) for the campaign to get parliament to call for a ban on fully autonomous weapons.



Robot mime stunt at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany

Regional Campaigning

In addition to national campaigning efforts, the small grants programme supported regional activities.

This includes holding high-level political meetings with regional leaders and organisations, and holding campaign meetings to bring members together and strengthen regional coordination.

Highlighted impacts of regional campaigning:

- In July, the Campaign supported an African Seminar on lethal autonomous weapons systems. African state representatives¹, tech-industry leaders, academics, and the International Committee of the Red Cross attended. Professor Christof Heyns, former UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions and current member of the UN Human Rights Committee, presented on the danger of killer robots to human rights norms. Following this seminar in August, the African Group on Disarmament made its [second statement](#) to the UN CCW GGE meeting calling for an international ban treaty.
- In August, Non-violence International Southeast Asia (NISEA) held a civil society regional strategy meeting to share updates on activities and explore ways to organise civil society in the region. Participants included campaigners from Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- In mid-February 2019, Association and Aid Relief Japan (AAR Japan) held the first two-day Asia-Pacific regional meeting with participants from 10 countries in the region (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand). The meeting featured a video message from Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, a series of presentations and workshops, and a press conference.



The first Asia-Pacific regional meeting brought together campaigners from across the region



¹ Algeria, Benin, Central African Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Kenya, Mauritius, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

Encouraging International Cooperation

In 2018, the Campaign participated in three meetings on lethal autonomous weapons systems (“LAWS”) at the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) in Geneva, as well as the CCW’s 2018 annual meeting. The Campaign also attended the 73rd UN General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee on Disarmament and International Security session in October.

As part of growing international cooperation, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots sponsored campaigners globally to attend UN and other multilateral diplomatic meetings to campaign for an international ban treaty. During 2018 and into 2019, there was a strong Campaign presence at diplomatic meetings on killer robots held at the United Nations in Geneva and New York. Travel and accommodation sponsorship allowed 29 campaigners to participate from 22 countries. Sponsorship of campaigners led to supported outreach to states in Africa (Cameroon, South Africa), Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago), North America (Canada, the United States), Europe (Belgium, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Russia, Slovenia), Asia-Pacific (Australia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka), and the Middle East and North Africa (Egypt).



Celebrating five years of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots



During these meetings, the Campaign held side event briefings, launching new reports produced by campaigners and presenting the growing number of voices supporting the call for a ban treaty.

Highlights from international outreach include:

- During the [April CCW](#) meeting, the Campaign held two CCW side event briefings. The first briefing on Defining Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems featured [remarks](#) by Johan Henrik Andresen, Chair of the Council on Ethics of the Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global, including presentations from Article 36, ICRAC, and WILPF. The second briefing on Meaningful Human Control of Weapons Systems featured remarks by Paul Scharre from the Center for a New American Security, and presentations from Article 36, Human Rights Watch, and ICRAC.
- Due to the sustained and coordinated efforts of European campaigners, the [European Parliament adopted a resolution](#) in July calling for urgent negotiations on “an international ban on weapon systems that lack human control over the use of force.” The resolution also called on the European Council to work towards such a ban and “urgently develop and adopt a common position on autonomous weapon systems.”
- A group of lawmakers in Japan held a parliamentary seminar on killer robots in April, together with local NGOs and AI experts.
- In August, Canadian campaigners from Mines Action Canada, Project Ploughshares, WILPF, and ICRAC co-hosted a CCW side event briefing with the Government of Canada. The briefing was moderated by Canada and emphasized the need for stronger considerations of gender in the context of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) and the work of the CCW.
- To commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Campaign, ambassadors and other diplomatic representatives interested in growing international cooperation with the Campaign (such as Austria, Brazil, Holy See, Ireland, Panama, and Peru, amongst others) attended a social reception in August to commemorate our fifth anniversary and foster relationships.
- During the 73rd UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September, the Campaign held a [side event briefing](#) on Retaining Meaningful Human Control of Weapons Systems in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations in New York. The briefing featured presentations by the Arms Control Association, International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC), and Project Ploughshares (Canada). State representatives including Brazil, Ecuador, France, New Zealand, and Portugal attended.

Global Campaign Meeting

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots held its **first annual global meeting** in Berlin, Germany from 21-23 March 2019. The Campaign is grateful to its hosts, the German section of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), for making this event possible, and to the support of the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy and Facing Finance.

The meeting mobilized the Campaign's network behind the goal of convincing states to launch treaty negotiations. German members of the Campaign used the opportunity provided by the global meeting to call upon Germany's foreign minister, Heiko Maas, to follow-through on his pledge to ban fully autonomous weapons and work actively towards that goal. Campaigners and the German public were invited to the [public event](#), "We are the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots". Jamila Schäfer (German Green Party Vice President), Noel Sharkey (ICRAC), Raza Shah Khan (SPADO), Thompson Chengeta (ICRAC), Ray Acheson (WILPF), Laura Nolan (ICRAC), and Jody Williams (Nobel Women's Initiative) spoke about the moral, ethical, and legal challenges of fully autonomous weapons and why we urgently need a ban treaty.

Other activities included a press conference, parliamentary visits, and a visual stunt at the Brandenburg Gate with campaigners and unofficial robot mascot, David Wreckham, calling to launch treaty negotiations. The meeting consisted of workshops and plenary discussions on the strategy necessary to achieve a ban on fully autonomous weapons.



Visual stunt at
Brandenburg Gate,
March 2019



Speakers at the public
event "We are the
Campaign to Stop Killer
Robots"



Media and Communications

Media Work

In 2018, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and its members generated local, national, and international coverage across the world in different languages.

Media highlights include:

- The Campaign's first global meeting in Berlin and visual stunt at Brandenburg Gate with unofficial robot mascot, David Wreckham, featured in [Politico](#), [Reuters](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [E&T](#), [Wallstreet Online](#), [Deutschland Today](#), and [Süddeutsche Zeitung](#).
- Campaign presence in Geneva during the April 2018 CCW meeting featured in outlets including [CBC News](#), [The Guardian](#), [Time](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Ripples Nigeria](#), [Lawfare](#), [Telesur](#), [Pressenza](#), [Daily Times](#), and [Christian Today](#), amongst others.
- During the August 2018 CCW meetings, campaigners participated in a visual stunt with white boiler suits outside the UN beneath the Broken Chair sculpture. The Campaign was featured in outlets such as [Global News](#), [Politico](#), [Voice of America](#), [The Verge](#), [Nikkei](#), [Techxplore](#), [News Channel 9](#), [Merkur.de](#), [Watson](#), [Vita](#).
- During the 73rd UN General Assembly in New York in October, campaigners sporting red bandanas and white boiler suits participated in another visual stunt outside the UN and were featured in the [New York Times](#).
- In December, Campaign members participated in a visual stunt outside Capitol Hill and the White House in Washington, DC, USA.
- The release of Ipsos poll results in December 2018 led to significant media coverage from [Politico](#), [Reuters](#), [The Times](#), [Independent](#), [Big News Network](#), [Political Economist](#). Coverage of poll results also appeared in other languages such as Dutch ([dewereldmorgen.be](#)), Spanish ([europapress](#)), Italian ([pressenza](#)), and Tagalog ([Philstar.com](#)).
- During the March 2019 CCW meeting in Geneva, the Campaign's presence featured in outlets such as [swissinfo.ch](#), [Voice of America](#), [UN News](#), [The Guardian](#), [Catholic News Service](#), and [The Times](#).
- Some campaigners penned op-eds ([The Nation](#), [Mail & Guardian](#), [Open Canada](#)), while others were featured in interviews and profiles ([Forbes](#), [Verdict](#), [TimesNowNews.com](#), [Blueprint Newspapers](#)).

Communications

The growth of communications content and resources received high engagement over the year.

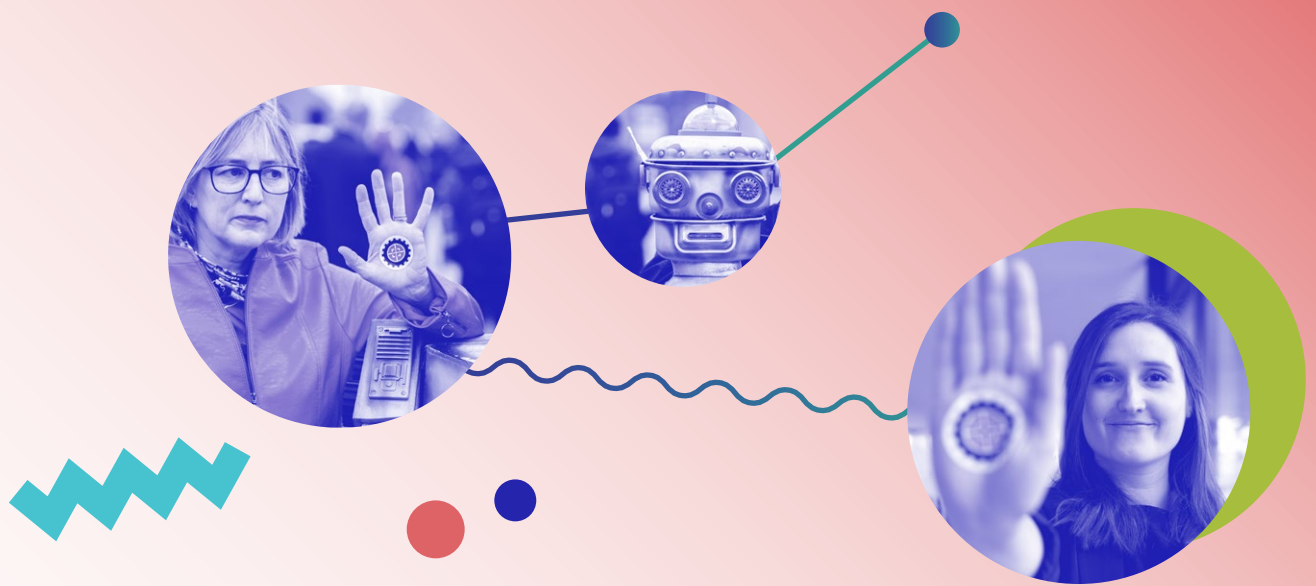
Communications highlights from 2018 include:

- The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots website (www.stopkillerrobots.org) underwent a major revamp in 2018 to grow public engagement by making it more aesthetically appealing and user-friendly. The website now includes animations and infographics, videos, resources for campaigners, publications, a page to showcase our members, an actions and achievements page, and other useful features.
- To provide more resources to campaigners and grow content production, the Campaign began producing its own animated videos including [No Country Would Be Safe](#) (translated into [Arabic](#), [Dutch](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Italian](#), [Japanese](#), [Kazakh](#), [Polish](#), [Russian](#), [Spanish](#)). The video first played during the April 2018 CCW GGE meeting. The Campaign also produced a second animated video, [Facing Fully Autonomous Weapons](#) (translated into [Dutch](#), [French](#), and [Italian](#)).
- A global Ipsos [poll](#) commissioned by the Campaign in December 2018 surveyed 26 countries and found 61% of respondents oppose the use of fully autonomous weapons. A previous [Ipsos poll](#) of 23 countries in January 2017 showed 56% opposed killer robots, while 24% were not opposed and 19% were unsure.



Campaigner Rasha Abdul-Rahim talks about human rights and killer robots





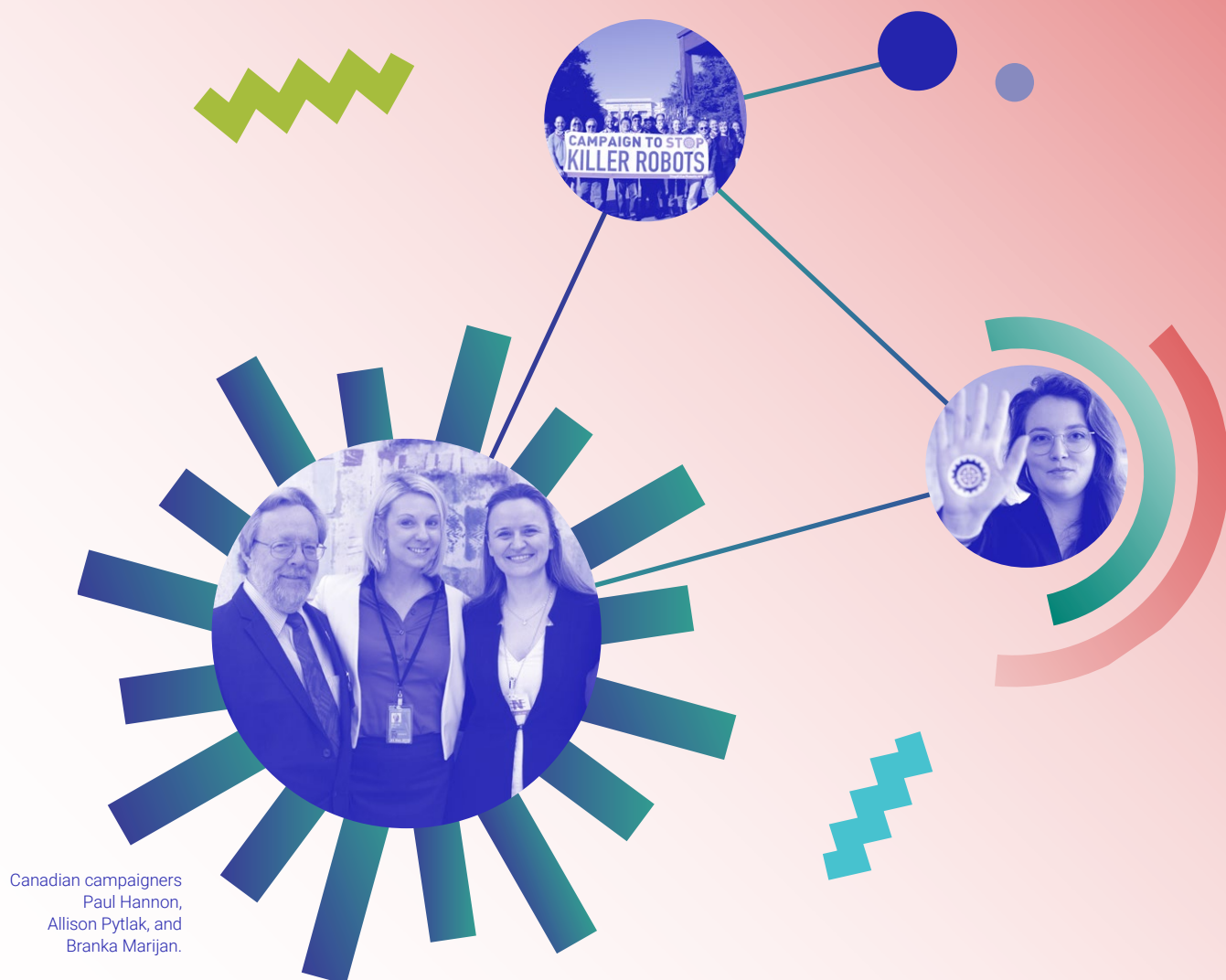
Campaign Team

Until 2018, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots had no dedicated staff and was serviced by the Campaign coordinator Mary Wareham, employed by Human Rights Watch.

In June 2018, the Campaign hired a Project Officer based at Mines Action Canada in Ottawa, Canada. Isabelle Jones provided critical financial, administrative, and logistical support to Campaign staff and members.

In January 2019, the Campaign hired a Media and Communications Manager based in Geneva, Switzerland. Clare Conboy provided essential media support and managed communications outputs to bolster the Campaign's profile and support for a ban.

In January 2019, the Campaign hired a consultant to act as Silicon Valley Lead based in San Francisco, USA. Marta Kosmyna conducted outreach to tech workers and related stakeholders in the tech sector.



Finance and Governance

Funding sources

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is not an independently registered entity but an ad hoc global coalition of non-governmental organisations. The Campaign is overseen by a Steering Committee of 11 Campaign members. Mines Action Canada is the fiscal and legal sponsor of the Campaign. Human Rights Watch serves as its host and coordinator as well as fiscal sponsor of the Campaign's charitable giving program in the US.

The end of 2018 and beginning of 2019 marks a period of growth in funding for the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots through private donations, online donations, foundations, and a government contribution.

Private Donations

The Campaign received funding for the first time from several anonymous individual donors through the Geneva-based Swiss Philanthropy Foundation. This support saw the Campaign successfully raise its USD/CHF 1.2 million project budget for calendar year 2019. This funding was received through the Campaign's bank account at MAC and overseen by the Campaign's treasurer.

For the full audited statement of finances in 2019, please see the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots [2019 Annual Report](#), which contains an annual audit for the year ending March 2020.

Online Donations

From April 2018 to March 2019, the Campaign received close to US \$1,000 in online donations from members of the public.

Foundations

The Campaign received initial funding support from foundations including the Oak Foundation (\$25k in FY2017) and Network for Social Change (\$25k in FY2015).

Governments

Governments that have led diplomatic processes establishing humanitarian disarmament standards such as the Mine Ban Treaty and Convention on Cluster Munitions have also provided funding to civil society for public education, treaty monitoring and related work.

In September 2018, Austria became the first government to fund the Campaign, with a contribution of €6,500 from the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Our Steering Committee

Amnesty International

Article 36

Association for Aid Relief Japan

Human Rights Watch

International Committee for Robot Arms Control (ICRAC)

Mines Action Canada

Nobel Women's Initiative

PAX

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

Seguridad Humana en Latinoamérica y el Caribe (SEHLAC)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Our Team

Mary Wareham, Campaign Coordinator

Isabelle Jones, Project Officer

Clare Conboy, Media and Communications Manager