United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

UNIDIR

INVITATION TO ATTEND A SIDE EVENT ON

Exploring Directed Energy Weapons and the Implications of Their Use Under International Law

UNODA and UNIDIR cordially invite you to attend a hybrid panel discussion on Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) on the margins of the 2023 Annual Meeting of the High Contracting Parties of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

Date: Wednesday, 15 November 2023

Time: 13:15 to 14:45 hrs CET.

Location: In-person at the Auditorium of the H Building of the Palais des Nations and **online via Microsoft Teams.**

To attend this event online, please register using this registration link.

A light lunch will be served to those attending the event in person.

Overview

Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) are weapons which function by concentrated electromagnetic energy, and include lasers, high-powered microwaves, and particle beam weapons. Research and development of DEWs has experienced a recent worldwide surge, stemming in part from advances in technology and a desire to maintain competitiveness on the battlefield. As a result, there have been investments in the technology by multiple Member States.

Since the entry into force of the CCW, High Contracting Parties have continuously discussed emerging technologies, and in some instances, adopted protocols on specific conventional weapons issues they have identified as particularly in need of regulation. One type of DEW, namely blinding laser weapons, has been banned as a means or method of warfare since the 1995 Protocol IV to the CCW on Blinding Laser Weapons. However, to date, there has not been any further structured debate among the HCPs on DEWs more broadly.

This side event will introduce participants to DEWs, the technology behind them, and the legal implications of their use, explored in the context of the CCW and international law more generally.

Panellists

Dr Jürgen Altmann is a physicist and peace researcher (retired) and a lecturer in the Department of Physics at TU Dortmund University, Germany. He specializes in the assessment of new military technologies and preventive arms control. Major studies have covered laser weapons, nanotechnology

and armed uncrewed vehicles. He co-founded and chairs the German Research Association for Science, Disarmament and International Security (FONAS) and has authored book chapters on the relationship of natural science, armament and disarmament.

Dr Lauren Sanders is a senior research fellow with the Law and Future of War project at the TC Beirne School of Law, University of Queensland, Australia. She has published on issues related to international humanitarian law and emerging and disruptive technologies, and researches export controls in this context. Her doctoral studies focused upon the doctrine of universal jurisdiction. Prior to joining the University of Queensland, she spent several decades in the Australian Army, including as a legal and signals officer.

Dr Stuart Casey-Maslen is an associate fellow with the Global Fellowship Initiative of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and an honorary professor at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. He holds a doctorate in the law of armed conflict, and has published several works on international humanitarian law, jus ad bellum, disarmament law, and international human rights law.

This event is organized with the financial support of the European Union, under the project in support of the CCW.