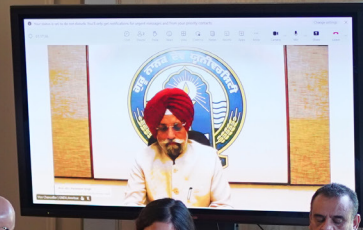




UNIDIR
Security and
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POLICY BRIEF

Faith-Based Perspectives on AI, Security and Ethics: Reflections from an Interfaith Dialogue

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1. Introduction

Faith-based thinking, ethics and traditions have long played an important role in the formulation of multilateral norms. Now, at a critical juncture in global security, the development of artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities is accelerating. In this high-stakes security environment, an interfaith exchange can identify unifying narratives that transcend borders and that reinforce trust, responsibility and restraint in the development,

deployment and use of these technologies. Thus, in the lead-up to UNIDIR's Global Conference on AI, Security and Ethics 2026 (AISE26), the Institute, in partnership with the Holy See, organized an interfaith dialogue on AI, security and ethics hosted in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 12 June 2026.

The dialogue sought to explore pathways towards developing values and norms that are shared across faiths and that can inform and

support ongoing intergovernmental discussions on the governance of AI in the military domain. By aiming to extend the debate around AI, security and ethics beyond State-focused and technical discussions, the dialogue was designed to provide a unique and inclusive forum for engagement between the multi-lateral ecosystem, multi-stakeholder communities and representatives of faith-based organizations. Representatives from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish and Sikh traditions were invited to share their distinct views on AI, security and ethics by addressing fundamental questions of the AI domain from their respective perspectives and traditions of thought.

The dialogue opened with a welcome and opening remarks by Dr. Robin Geiss (Director, UNIDIR) and by H.E. Archbishop Ettore Balestrero (Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Office at Geneva). Initial observations were then shared, under the moderation of Dr. Yasmin Afina (Researcher, UNIDIR), by a panel consisting of:

- **Sakyadeeta Nishanie**, Buddhist Nun and Meditation Teacher from the Buddhist Community of Montenegro
- **Father Ghislain-Marie Grange**, OP, Professor of Theology and Philosophy at the Institut Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, Toulouse
- **Swami Vedanishthananda**, Spiritual Head and Director of the Vedanta Centre, Geneva

- **Mohamed Levrak**, President of the Interreligious Platform of Geneva and Deputy Director of the Islamic Cultural Foundation of Geneva
- **Leon Saltiel**, Director of Diplomacy at UN Geneva and UNESCO for the World Jewish Congress
- **Prof. Karamjeet Singh**, Vice-Chancellor of the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

Their remarks were then followed by an interactive exchange with the audience.

This policy brief reflects on the main themes and insights that emerged from the discussion. It also seeks to identify key areas of convergence, contextualized within the wider international policy landscape on AI, security and ethics. By combining faith-specific perspectives with concrete approaches and foundational elements for principles, norms and guidelines, these takeaways can make a valuable contribution in informing ongoing multilateral discussions and processes and can serve as a reference point for emerging faith perspectives on the governance and ethics of military AI.

2. General observations

2.1. Why discuss faith and ethics in the AI context?

Traditionally, reflections on how to approach and harness a technology would come after it leaves the laboratory and after it is produced for use. However, the pace of AI development and deployment has outrun this process, and these reflections are now happening simultaneously with technical progress.¹ Moreover, AI devel-

1 M. D. Langford, "Artificial intelligence and theological personhood", in *AI, Faith, and the Future: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, eds M. J. Paulus Jr. and M. D. Langford (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2022), <https://digitalcommons.spu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1172&context=works>.



opment introduces distinctly novel questions to the international peace and security debate that transcend the battlefield, with profound implications on the ethical, legal and societal fronts. While technical discussions focus on what AI could do, ethical considerations take a step back and consider what it should or should not do.² Conversations on these underlying, foundational questions on AI should therefore happen in close interaction with international governance processes, frameworks and other regulatory approaches.³ To this end, it will be critical for input to come from a range of stakeholders that extends beyond State representatives alone – which is something that the wider international community has acknowledged over the years.⁴

Religious thought traditions have reciprocally constituted and drawn from ethical paradigms on morality and purpose that, while centuries old, have always been applied to new knowledge and technologies through lived practice.⁵ Having emerged in diverse cultural and social contexts at different times, faith traditions possess long-standing institutional experience in organizing communities and shaping ethics in societies.⁶ Experiences in Geneva attest to this observation, with faith traditions' knowledge base on ethics and morality playing an instrumental role in shaping international humanitarian law, particularly through the 1949 Geneva Conventions.⁷

2 As noted by Mohamed Levrak, President of the Interreligious Platform of Geneva and Deputy Director of the Islamic Cultural Foundation of Geneva.

3 As noted by Robin Geiss, Director of UNIDIR, in his opening remarks.

4 Geiss. See also General Assembly, resolution 79/239, 2024, <https://docs.un.org/A/RES/79/239>; and resolution 80/58, 2025, <https://docs.un.org/A/RES/80/58>.

5 Matthew J. Gaudet et al. (eds), *Encountering Artificial Intelligence: Ethical and Anthropological Investigations* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.55476/001c.91230>.

6 Future of Life Institute, "Traditional religions on AI Futures", n.d., <https://futureoflife.org/project/traditional-religions-on-ai-futures>.

7 Geiss. See also Andrew Bartles-Smith, "Religion and international humanitarian law", *International Review of the Red Cross*, nos 920–921 (August 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1816383122000376>.



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For the AI and security debate specifically, faith traditions not only help shape thought about, interactions with and governance of AI systems. Translated into concrete technical requirements, they could also influence the technology's trajectory, including by ensuring that development, testing, procurement and deployment align with ethical norms and expectations.⁸

2.2. Language and foundational terms

All of the panellists at the dialogue shared a common set of vocabulary in their interventions, taking the themes of dignity, responsibility and accountability as a starting point. At the same time, the representatives approached each of these themes with their distinct and technical vocabulary. The same term may thus have different meanings and carry particular cultural depth and nuance.⁹ By addressing shared concepts while acknowledging

these nuances and specificities, the dialogue established a common reference point that can contribute to the definition of foundational terms in AI, security and ethics.

On a deeper analytical level, the faith representatives also challenged the prevailing definitions conventionally used, beginning with the constructs of “intelligence”, “consciousness” and “personhood” in relation to AI. This drew notably diverse responses.¹⁰ Father Ghislain-Marie Grange noted how a system may produce intelligible content without being intelligent. This reasserts what, fundamentally, AI is as a technology: it imitates a set of functions of human intelligence. This echoes *Magnifica humanitas*, Pope Leo's encyclical letter discussing AI.¹¹ However, Father Grange noted that the popular discourse has conflated the superficial performance of consciousness

8 Y. Afina and G. Persi Paoli, *Governance of Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective on Priority Areas* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2024), https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/UNIDIR_Governance_of_Artificial_Intelligence_in_the_Military_Domain_A_Multi-stakeholder_Perspective_on_Priority_Areas.pdf.

9 As noted by Sakyadeeta Nishanie, Buddhist Nun and Meditation Teacher from the Buddhist Community of Montenegro.

10 As noted by Father Ghislain-Marie Grange from the Institut Saint-Thomas d'Aquin Toulouse.

11 Pope Leo XIV, “*Magnifica humanitas*: Encyclical letter on safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence”, Vatican, 15 May 2026, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/encyclicals/documents/20260515-magnifica-humanitas.html>.

and intelligent behaviour by these systems with possession of consciousness. Sakyadeeta Nishanie from the Buddhist Community of Montenegro tied consciousness to the distinctly human conditions of craving and ignorance, rendering it inapplicable to the “mathematical logic” of AI: without cravings, AI cannot, by this definition, be conscious. However, she further suggested that “intelligence” as a construct may in itself be too conservative a word – a new one may be needed that acknowledges these new divergences. Consciousness, on the other hand, has been defined in many ways across human languages and may be understood as the thread connecting all that exists – it might therefore be less a technological term than a philosophical one.¹² The Vedantic tradition¹³ holds that consciousness, *Brahman*, is the singular ground of all existence, ultimately encompassing everything – the self, the other and AI alike.¹⁴ Accordingly, AI would be regarded as merely one manifestation of a single unified consciousness.

Taken together, these positions indicate that the meaning of the vocabulary with which AI systems are named, described and interpreted is fundamentally charged normatively, even before these terms are discussed in multilateral forums.

2.3. Unique perspectives and concepts

Each of the panellists grounded their contribution in concepts distinctive to their own tradition’s structure of thought. Applied to AI and security, these concepts offered unique approaches – thus enriching international AI governance discussions with principles that otherwise rarely find their way into international forums.

The Hindu contributions drew on *karma*, its universal causal law, and *dharma*, the ethical code of principles, as frameworks for ethical accountability.¹⁵ From the Buddhist standpoint, AI was presented as an instrument whose output mirrors the intention behind it.¹⁶ The Sikh contribution anchored governance in the welfare of all humanity, rather than any single nation, and in an ethics of service.¹⁷ The Jewish contribution contrasted the Talmudic value of genuine and constructive debate with machine sycophancy and AI-driven disinformation.¹⁸ The Catholic speaker anchored his remarks in core Christian values, including the sacredness of human life and respect for God-given human dignity.¹⁹ The Islamic contribution equally emphasized inherent universal dignity, alongside peace, justice and equal global access to the benefits that these technologies could bring.²⁰

¹² Nishanie.

¹³ As noted by Swami Vedanishthananda, Spiritual Head and Director of the Vedanta Centre, Geneva, Advaita Vedanta is one of the principal schools of Hindu philosophy. Accordingly, consciousness – *Brahman* – is the singular ground of all existence, and the apparent diversity of the world is a superimposition upon this non-dual reality.

¹⁴ Vedanishthananda.

¹⁵ Vedanishthananda.

¹⁶ Nishanie.

¹⁷ As noted by Prof. Karamjeet Singh, Vice-Chancellor of the Guru Nanak Dev University.

¹⁸ As noted by Leon Saltiel, Director of Diplomacy at UN Geneva and UNESCO for the World Jewish Congress.

¹⁹ As noted by H.E. Archbishop Ettore Balestrero, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

²⁰ Levraik.

2.4. Technology

Beyond AI, the discussion explored the deeper relationship between the faith traditions and technology itself, and the tension between a continuously evolving state of technological progress and the preserved teachings of the faiths. Literature demonstrates that each of these faith traditions has long advanced, supported and restrained technological change, offering societies both the ethical grounds and the narratives by which to accept or refuse it.²¹ In fact, the faiths' embrace of science and technology does not sit at odds with offering clear moral guidance on their development and application.²² Both science and spirituality are, in essence, a quest for truth—a fundamental assertion that was re-iterated at the dialogue.²³

However, technical progress does not automatically equal moral progress, and the challenge lies in synchronizing the two.²⁴ For instance, Pope Leo's call for "disarming AI", as voiced in his encyclical,²⁵ does not call for the hindering of technological progress but, rather, for preventing technology from dominating humanity.²⁶ He thus calls for both deepening scientific research on AI and the exercise of moral and spiritual discernment.

2.5. Security

Speakers also consistently argued for a more nuanced understanding of security in the context of AI, extending beyond immediate

strategic considerations. This wider approach to security resonates in particular with the encyclical *Magnifica humanitas*, in which Pope Leo warns that cyberattacks and data manipulation, enabled with AI, can potentially destabilize States even before conventional armed conflicts erupt.

Beyond the battlefield, the dialogue pointed to a major but generally overlooked security risk that lies in societal cohesion itself. As AI advances faster than the capacity to weigh its implications, one way for such risk to be manifested is through the risk of amplified hatred and disinformation, which erodes a shared understanding of the facts and moral responsibility on which societies depends.²⁷ AI-generated content and influence campaigns, for instance, can put youth and the wider public at risk of manipulation, no longer able to distinguish the real from the fabricated. On a deeper level, AI systems lack the inherent capacity for debate and for critical questioning that the Talmudic tradition considers as central to its teachings. AI's inherent technical characteristics along with its sycophantic tendencies when users express disagreement with a model sit at odds with this approach in addition to causing security concerns.²⁸ This approach of critical questioning is aligned with that of the Pope, for whom power over and ownership of means of communication, including digital platforms, should ultimately be used to cultivate an environment where critical thinking can mature, rather than to homogenize and dominate.²⁹

21 Michael Paulus, "Introduction", in *AI, Faith, and the Future*, eds Paulus and Langford, <https://digitalcommons.spu.edu/works/218>.

22 Gaudet et al., *Encountering Artificial Intelligence*.

23 Vedanishthananda.

24 Levrak.

25 Leo XIV, "*Magnifica humanitas*", paragraph 110.

26 Balestrero.

27 Saltiel.

28 Saltiel, who also noted security concerns with respect to the integrity of the information space (covered in more detail in Section 3.4 below).

29 Leo XIV, "*Magnifica humanitas*".



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Security should thus be deliberated within its broader societal context.³⁰ The panelists nevertheless expressed optimism about AI's potential to benefit the security domain, including efforts to alleviate poverty and enhance disaster response.³¹

3. Key areas of convergence

The dialogue enabled the identification of four key areas of convergence across faiths – the human element; the cross-cutting nature of responsibility and accountability; the need for restraint of power; and the value of knowledge-building and information integrity. Each is accompanied by closely related principles commonly discussed in relation to the governance of AI in the military domain, and international peace and security more broadly.

3.1. The human element

The uniqueness and centrality of the human being were consistently featured across every consideration of AI, security and ethics throughout the dialogue. However varied their practical teachings, the panellists converged on a shared set of core commitments: human accountability must be preserved, human dignity is inherent and inviolable, and governance should ultimately serve humanity.³² This centrality of the human element echoes its prominence in current international debates on AI, peace and security, including in military contexts.³³

Speakers rooted the inherent dignity of the human person in the resources of their respective traditions. As a fundamental principle in Islam, dignity is held by every person regard-

³⁰ Vedanishthananda.

³¹ Vedanishthananda.

³² Levvak.

³³ UNIDIR Security and Technology Programme, *Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain and Its Implications for International Peace and Security: An Evidence-Based Road Map for Future Policy Action* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2025), <https://unidir.org/publication/artificial-intelligence-in-the-military-domain-and-its-implications-for-international-peace-and-security-an-evidence-based-road-map-for-future-policy-action>.

less of faith or background, and it is therefore neither granted by the State nor reducible to a variable.³⁴ In Sikh tradition, the dignity of humanity is expressed through selfless service.³⁵ The Vedantic traditions point to the fundamental unity of existence: although humans appear separate, all are interconnected, which carries profound ethical implications. From the Catholic perspective, the discussion is one of safeguarding the human person in times of AI development and preserving a human-centred approach.³⁶ To this end, the Pope's encyclical further calls for awareness of the perils of the weaponization of AI and for shared effort to be mobilized in safeguarding human dignity.³⁷

Humanity was thus consistently stressed as a critical compass and benchmark for ethical AI development, which fundamentally arises from human creativity.³⁸ This argument rested on a firm distinction between human and machine: the latter “merely imitate certain functions of human intelligence”, as further re-asserted in the Pope's encyclical.³⁹

In addition to the overarching centrality of human dignity, the “technocratic paradigm” also recurred as a concern throughout the dialogue.⁴⁰ By establishing control, certainty and efficiency as the ultimate criteria to the detriment of morality, this approach carries

the risk of undermining the latter in decisions surrounding the development, deployment and use of AI technologies.⁴¹ Amid this trend towards ever more intelligent systems, a meaningful sense of purpose and dignity should be positioned as prior to, and as a constraint upon, capability. Progress must promote, rather than undermine, the development of the human being and humanity as a whole.⁴²

3.2. The cross-cutting nature of responsibility and accountability: A nod to international law, corporate responsibility and responsible AI principles

A shared understanding of agency, responsibility and control also emerged throughout the dialogue. From the outset, the dialogue emphasized the diverse and cross-cutting nature of the ethical concerns that AI introduces in the military domain specifically. Among these are the need to preserve meaningful human agency, the risk of loss of control, concerns over maintaining accountability, harmful biases and the overall dehumanization of warfare.⁴³ Humans are, ultimately, those responsible for the development of AI. Responsibility over what AI technologies do should thus remain, at every stage throughout their life cycle, with human beings. It can be neither outsourced nor externalized to an algorithm.⁴⁴

In the Hindu tradition, all actions have conse-

34 Levrak.

35 Vedanishthananda.

36 Balestrero.

37 Grange.

38 Grange.

39 Leo XIV, “*Magnifica humanitas*”, paragraph 99.

40 Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “What does Pope Francis mean by ‘the technocratic paradigm’?”, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 4 September 2026, <https://www.britannica.com/question/What-does-Pope-Francis-mean-by-the-technocratic-paradigm>.

41 Balestrero.

42 Grange.

43 Geiss.

44 Vedanishthananda.

quences: the concept of *karma* extends to the morality of what one sets in motion – including if its outcomes are foreseeable or unconsciously intended. In the context of the development and use of an AI system, the distribution of accountability across the designers, developers, technology suppliers, commanders and policymakers should thus not equate to dissolution of accountability. When applied to autonomous technologies, ethical accountability cannot, fundamentally, be outsourced. Rather, ethical accountability may require a clear and defined structure of responsibility division.⁴⁵ Independently of technological evolution, human intelligence – and responsibility, in whatever shape or form – would thus remain guided by wisdom and *dharma*, the ethical code in society.

The Buddhist view holds any technology to be a mere tool, with the moral weight and purpose of any such tool determined entirely by the intent behind its use. If AI is left in the hands of those who delegate judgement to the AI, rather than handling it themselves with discernment and intent, then there is a risk of a catastrophic loss of human agency. If AI is wielded with malicious intent, it has the potential to amplify harm – which may be reflected, for instance, through harmful biases. Fundamentally, AI systems thus merely reflect – and magnify – the positive and negative intentions behind their development, deployment and use.⁴⁶

In the context of international peace and security, this has implications for the human element, and its critical role throughout these technologies' entire life cycle⁴⁷ – from design and development, through testing and deployment, to updates and decommissioning.⁴⁸ The Pope's encyclical argues that any decision to engage in lethal force “cannot be delegated to opaque or automated processes”; rather, human control must remain “effective, self-aware and responsible”.⁴⁹ With respect to autonomous weapons, the Pope calls for a clearly identifiable and verifiable chain of responsibility, meaning that “those who design, train, authorize and employ technology must be held accountable for their decisions”.⁵⁰ Accordingly, systems must be built so that each decision can be traced back and reconstructed in order to maintain accountability and responsibility – spanning across State responsibility, corporate responsibility and individual accountability.

3.3. The need for restraint of power

A recurring theme across the traditions is the principle of self-restraint. During the dialogue, the Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh contributions each drew on their respective traditions' engagement with compassion. Moreover, the Pope's encyclical expresses a critical stance on war and force and seeks to build a “civilization of love”, echoing the Christian non-retaliation tradition.⁵¹ With concrete precedent, the panel

⁴⁵ Vedanishthananda.

⁴⁶ Nishanie.

⁴⁷ Levrak.

⁴⁸ UNIDIR Security and Technology Programme, *Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain*.

⁴⁹ Leo XIV, “*Magnifica humanitas*”, paragraph 200.

⁵⁰ Leo XIV, “*Magnifica humanitas*”, paragraph 199.

⁵¹ Leo XIV, “*Magnifica humanitas*”.



acknowledged that the impulse towards self-restraint gave rise to international law, including in the form of the United Nations Charter and as reflected in international humanitarian law through, notably, the 1949 Geneva Conventions.⁵² In this sense, the faith traditions share a common concern for the future of the technology, and a common understanding that restraint is a source of security, rather than a concession of security.

Another specific security risk emerges out of this emphasis on self-restraint: the prospect of miscalculation and unintended escalation that arises from the integration of AI and autonomy into military decision-making.⁵³ These concerns are particularly pronounced at the strategic level: risks of miscalculation and unintended escalation are closely tied to regional and international stability, parti-

cularly in contexts of historical competition.⁵⁴ The ethic of restraint that the traditions commend is thus a practical appeal against the escalatory concerns that AI technologies introduce and then amplify into conflict dynamics.

Finally, the traditions were clear that restraint must be formally institutionalized, rather than being left to individual conscience alone. Moving towards a shared sense of moral responsibility would require broad frameworks and, perhaps, specific guardrails, particularly for the companies that develop these systems.⁵⁵ Here, the participants identified a distinct role for institutions such as UNIDIR that have convening power: an opportunity to bring together diverse stakeholders, including States, industry and civil society, in a common forum where the principle

52 Geiss. In public international law, this principle of self-restraint can be particularly tied to the prohibition on the use of force, by virtue of Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter – and the limited exceptions where the use of force may be lawful under Articles 42 and 51.

53 UNIDIR Security and Technology Programme, *Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain*.

54 Y. Afina, *The Global Prism of Military AI Governance: Reflections from the 2025 Regional Consultations on Responsible AI in the Military Domain* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2026), <https://unidir.org/publication/the-global-prism-of-military-ai-governance-reflections-from-the-2025-regional-consultations-on-responsible-ai-in-the-military-domain>.

55 Saltiel.

of self-restraint can be translated into shared and enforceable expectations for responsible State and industry behaviour.⁵⁶

3.4. The value of knowledge-building and information integrity

The dialogue further addressed the integrity of knowledge and information. Speakers noted that thoughtful interpretations of knowledge are often drowned out by voices that are the loudest – yet not necessarily the most constructive.⁵⁷ These concerns are further exacerbated by risks to the integrity of information and knowledge itself that AI amplifies or even creates. Together, they attest to the inherent limitations of communication means to share knowledge.⁵⁸ This knowledge would be subject to both the personal biases and understandings of those seeking to transmit the information in question and the biases of algorithms – this brings to the fore the need to mitigate risks of misrepresentation of enduring values and knowledge, particularly against a backdrop of shifting social contexts and how this could, in turn, develop into wider security risks.⁵⁹

These concerns relate directly to UNIDIR's own capacity-building efforts: the governance of AI in international peace and security is, inevitably, subject to diverging approaches and interpretations by States and the wider international community. This is partly a reflection of wider differences in local contexts, realities, strategic values, linguistics, history and traditions.⁶⁰ These differences are subsequently reflected not only in policy approaches and positions, but also in interpretations of international law.⁶¹ While not intrinsically harmful, these differences could lead to a fragmentation of the international policy landscape surrounding AI in international peace and security. As such, building a solid knowledge base will be critical to ensure that these differences do not constitute a challenge to finding common ground for the international governance of AI in international peace and security.⁶²

To this end, faith organizations can play a critical role, using their convening power to support efforts to build a shared knowledge base.⁶³

56 Saltiel. One example is UNIDIR's Roundtable for AI, Security and Ethics (RAISE), the only standing multi-stakeholder platform with expert members in which nationals of all five permanent members of the Security Council and all United Nations regional groupings are represented: <https://unidir.org/raise>. In addition, UNIDIR launched in February 2026 a project to develop a collaborative Framework of Responsible Industry Behaviour for AI in the Military Domain, in close consultation with the private sector, government and civil society: <https://unidir.org/framework-of-responsible-industry-behaviour-for-ai-in-the-military-domain>.

57 Saltiel.

58 Nishanie.

59 Vedanishthananda.

60 Y. Afina, *The Global Kaleidoscope of Military AI Governance: Decoding the 2024 Regional Consultations on Responsible AI in the Military Domain* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2024), <https://unidir.org/publication/the-global-kaleidoscope-of-military-ai-governance>; Afina and Persi Paoli, *Governance of Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain*.

61 In the context of lethal autonomous weapons systems, see for example Y. Afina, *Regional Perspectives on the Application of International Humanitarian Law to Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2025), <https://unidir.org/publication/regional-perspectives-on-the-application-of-international-humanitarian-law-to-lethal-autonomous-weapon-systems>.

62 Building a knowledge base was the first priority area identified by the multi-stakeholder experts consulted for the report Afina and Persi Paoli, *Governance of Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain*. To this end, UNIDIR is revitalizing its digital tools and is building a Lexicon on AI, Peace and Security, building on the model of the UNIDIR Space Security Lexicon, <https://spacesecuritylexicon.org>.

63 Grange.



4. Suggested approaches

Turning to concrete norms, Swami Vedanishthananda from the Vedanta Centre in Geneva suggested key Hindu concepts as guiding principles for approaching AI in the military domain:

- *Karma* and *dharma* offer a valuable moral basis and a framework for distributing accountability across the full chain of design, development, deployment and decommissioning of AI systems used in the military domain.
- *Viveka*, the fundamental quality of discernment and conscious judgment, should be a substantive standard for meaningful human oversight and control.
- *Mahabharata*, the ancient Indian parable, illustrates the consequences of power exercised without commensurate ethical discipline, restraint and effective governance – speaking to the dangers of developing and using military AI capabilities without adequate oversight.

Father Grange argued that clear guidelines are needed. He proposed three necessities for the governance of AI in the military domain. Drawing on the Pope's encyclical, he suggested:

- *Clarifying responsibilities.* On the basis that AI, as a technology, does not have moral judgement and therefore bears no moral responsibility, the first necessity will thus be to clarify and identify who is responsible. The chain of responsibility must be established and verified at every level to ensure that blame and accountability are not displaced onto the machine. This requirement applies not only to weapons, but to any application of AI.
- *Establishing time frames.* As technological progress is proceeding at breakneck speed, AI is also poised to accelerate decision-making. At some point, humans may no longer be able to decide according to their conscience and exercise judgement. This emphasizes the need to establish, as a second necessity, specific time frames or, at least, a pace at which these high-stakes decisions may be taken in order to preserve self-awareness and human control.

- *Prioritizing the protection of civilians.* Building on ethics and, fundamentally, international humanitarian law, the third necessity corresponds to prioritizing civilian protection. To this end, a shared framework may be needed to slow down the arms race and ensure the protection of civilians.

Prof. Karamjeet Singh equally set out four concrete principles that the Sikh tradition offers for guidance towards a shared AI future:

- To act without fear or animosity
- To take honest and responsible action, with integrity and accountability
- To ensure that its benefits are widely shared
- To build AI governance that is inclusive

5. Conclusion and the way ahead

In an era when multilateral discussions struggle to reach common ground amid growing geopolitical tension and competition, an inter-faith dialogue can make an important contribution. Such a dialogue can move beyond State perspectives and can identify considerations that are shared across faith traditions. The faith representatives underscored that the city of Geneva, specifically, has traditionally

provided a platform for convening and for unity over shared values despite differences and fragmentation.⁶⁴

The dialogue's shared spirit of seeking to converge around a common set of principles provides an important and valuable basis for future conversations. As polarization and distrust make it harder to find common understanding, convergence between faiths can constitute an increasingly important basis to advance multilateral discussions by offering a broadly shared ethical baseline of the kind that State representatives often struggle to reach.⁶⁵

Beyond the technical debate, all speakers ultimately addressed to humanity a broad moral appeal: while AI may mark one of the greatest advances in human development, it must, in turn, serve humanity's deepest commitments – dignity and global peace.⁶⁶ Used wisely, it can become an instrument for these ambitions.⁶⁷ The governance debate must urgently shift to a genuine “culture of negotiation” – one in which dialogue and diplomacy become the primary means for conflict resolution.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Grange.

⁶⁶ Levrak.

⁶⁷ Nishanie.

⁶⁸ Leo XIV, “*Magnifica Humanitas*”.



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