



Drones

Selected Online Resources

Uncrewed systems – often colloquially referred to as “drones” – can be deployed in a variety of domains, including in the aerial, ground and maritime domains. In his policy brief on a [New Agenda for Peace](#), the Secretary-General noted the proliferation of uncrewed systems in armed conflicts. Such systems have been used to attack civilian targets, including critical infrastructure, and have presented a threat to peace operations. Uncrewed systems are also addressed in the annual report of the Secretary-General on current developments in science and technology and their potential impacts on international security and disarmament efforts.

Source: <https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/emerging-challenges/armed-uncrewed-systems>

What are LAWS? At present, no commonly agreed definition of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) exists. An overview of characterizations of these systems brought forward within the Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS can be found here: [CCW/GGE.1/2023/CRP.1](https://www.un.org/peacekeeping/laaws/) (as of 2023)

Source: <https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/emerging-challenges/lethal-autonomous-weapon-systems>

The United Nations (UN) System increasingly uses unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to support its humanitarian, disaster relief, rule of law, and peacekeeping missions, recognizing their significant potential to enhance mission efficiency, accessibility, and reach.

Source: <https://www.icao.int/UA/UN-Coordination>

UN Entities

- **United Nations. Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)**
 - Armed uncrewed systems: <https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/emerging-challenges/armed-uncrewed-systems>
 - Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems: <https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/emerging-challenges/lethal-autonomous-weapon-systems>
 - Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) - Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems – Meetings: <https://tinyurl.com/47aswys5>
- **United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)**
 - Missiles and drones: <https://unidir.org/focus-area/missiles-drones/>
- **United Nations. Office on Counter-Terrorism**
 - Autonomous and Remotely Operated Systems: <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/en/autonomous-and-remotely-operated-systems>
- **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)**
 - Unmanned Aviation and Advanced Air Mobility: <https://www.icao.int/UA>
 - UN Unmanned Aviation Coordination: <https://www.icao.int/UA/UN-Coordination>
- **Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**
 - E-Agriculture in action: drones for agriculture: <https://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/1200079/>
- **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**
 - Drones: <https://www.itu.int/hub/tag/drones/>

- **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**
 - Drones: Addressing transport, connectivity and better emergency preparedness: <https://www.unicef.org/innovation/drones>
- **World Food Programme (WFP)**
 - WFP Drones: <https://www.wfp.org/wfp-drones>

Further Information

- UN News Centre on "Drones": <https://news.un.org/en/tags/drones>
- UN News Centre on "Lethal Autonomous Weapons": <https://news.un.org/en/tags/lethal-autonomous-weapons>
- AI in conflict: keeping humanity in control (UNRIC, 14/10/2025): <https://unric.org/en/ai-in-conflict-keeping-humanity-in-control/>
- UN addresses AI and the Dangers of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (UNRIC, 06/01/2025): <https://unric.org/en/un-addresses-ai-and-the-dangers-of-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems/>

Selected UN Documents

- A/RES/80/57: Lethal autonomous weapons systems / Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 1 December 2025: <https://docs.un.org/A/RES/80/57>
- A/80/237 (22 July 2025): Current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts: Report of the Secretary-General: <https://docs.un.org/A/80/237>
- Deadly drones: Civilians at risk from short-range drones in frontline areas of Ukraine, 24 February 2022 — 30 April 2025 (OHCHR): <https://ukraine.ohchr.org/en/Deadly-drones-Civilians-at-risk-from-short-range-drones-in-frontline-areas-of-Ukraine-24-February-2022-30-April-2025>
- A/HRC/59/CRP.2 (28 May 2025): "They are hunting us": systematic drone attacks targeting civilians in Kherson - Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coiukraine/a-hrc-59-crp2-en.pdf>
- A/RES/79/62: Lethal autonomous weapons systems / Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2024: <https://docs.un.org/A/RES/79/62>
- A/79/88 (1 July 2024): Lethal autonomous weapons systems: report of the Secretary-General: <https://docs.un.org/A/79/88>
- A/RES/78/241: Lethal autonomous weapons systems / Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 22 December 2023: <https://docs.un.org/A/RES/78/241>
- Our Common Agenda, Policy Brief 9 - A New Agenda for Peace (July 2023): <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4015560>
- Position of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism on the use of armed drones in the context of counter-terrorism (February 2022): <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/terrorism/sr/activities/20230103-Position-Paper-Use-Armed-Drones.pdf>
- A/HRC/44/38 (15 August 2020): Use of armed drones for targeted killings: report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions: <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/44/38>
- A/HRC/RES/28/3: Ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counter-terrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law / Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 26 March 2015: <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/RES/28/3>
- Study on armed unmanned aerial vehicles: prepared on the recommendation of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (2015): <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/833897>

- A/HRC/28/38 (15 December 2014): Summary of the Human Rights Council interactive Panel Discussion of Experts on the Use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft or Armed Drones in Compliance with International Law: report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/28/38>
- A/HRC/RES/25/22: Ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counter-terrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law / Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 28 March 2014: <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/RES/25/22>
- A/HRC/25/59 (11 March 2014): Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, Ben Emmerson: <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/25/59>
Submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 22/8, lists key activities undertaken by the Rapporteur during 2013 and focuses on the civilian impact of remotely piloted aircraft.
- Further documents on "Drone Aircraft": <https://tinyurl.com/mr2bjx9p>
- Further documents on "Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems": <https://tinyurl.com/ydu657pe>

Selected Statements and Speeches by UN Officials

- UN Women statement: Drone attacks by day and sexual violence by night leave no safe window for women and girls to collect water amidst rainy season in Sudan's El Obeid (24 July 2026): <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/statement/2026/07/drone-attacks-by-day-and-sexual-violence-by-night-leave-no-safe-window-for-women-and-girls-to-collect-water-amidst-rainy-season-in-sudans-el-obeid>
- Türk issues high alert on widening Sudan conflict amid increased use of drones (11 May 2026): <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/05/turk-issues-high-alert-widening-sudan-conflict-amid-increased-use-drones>

Selected Publications from the UN System

- Armed and dangerous? A brief overview of uncrewed aerial systems – risks, impacts and avenues for action (UNIDIR, October 2024): <https://doi.org/10.37559/CAAP/24/ERC/11>
- Playbook for Enabling Civilian Drone Operations (World Bank, August 2024): <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/42030>
- Global Report on the Acquisition, Weaponization and Deployment of Unmanned Aircraft Systems by Non-State Armed Groups for Terrorism-related Purposes (United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Global Counter-Terrorism Programme on Autonomous and Remotely Operated Systems (AROS Programme), March 2024): https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/default/files/unoct_car_aros_report_web_en_mar2024.pdf
- The Use of Uncrewed Aerial Systems by Non-State Armed Groups: Exploring Trends in Africa (UNIDIR, January 2024): <https://doi.org/10.37559/CAAP/24/PACAV/01>
- Uncrewed Aerial, Ground, and Maritime Systems: A Compendium (UNIDIR, April 2023): <https://doi.org/10.37559/CAAP/23/ERC/05>
- Uncrewed Aerial Systems: A Primer (UNIDIR, October 2022): <https://doi.org/10.37559/CAAP/22/ERC/12>
- Perspectives on lethal autonomous weapon systems (UNODA Occasional Papers No. 30, November 2017): <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3929837>

Research & Documentation

- United Nations Library & Archives Geneva: Conference Primer – Disarmament <https://libraryresources.unog.ch/conferenceprimers/disarmament>

Non-UN sources

- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
 - Frequently Asked Questions: International humanitarian law and the use of drones in armed conflict (10 December 2025): <https://www.icrc.org/en/article/faq-international-humanitarian-law-drones-armed-conflict>
- European Commission (EC)
 - Drones, counter drones and autonomous systems: https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/projects-and-activities/drones-counter-drones-and-autonomous-systems_en
 - Action Plan on Drone and Counter Drone Security: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/action-plan-drone-and-counter-drone-security>

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<https://unric.org/en/unric-library-backgroundunder-drones/>