Committee: UNHRC

Topic: Ethics of Autonomous Drone Warfare

Delegation: Ukraine

The Need For Autonomous Drones In Modern Warfare

The use of drones in warfare is a topic that has been at the forefront of public debate for many years. A common concern regarding autonomous drone warfare is the ability of drones to make decisions to target and kill people without the input of a human. The usage of drones in warfare has grown immensely, especially in contemporary times (Piesing, 2024). Drones are cheap and replaceable, qualities that human soldiers do not possess. This makes drones a popular tool in war, especially in conflicts like the Russo-Ukrainian War. However, despite their popular use, they have not been without their controversy. Opponents argue against their use, pointing to the scores of innocent, unknowing civilians who have been killed in drone strikes. Proponents argue that drones are a necessary means of conducting modern warfare, being more efficient and cheaper than human soldiers ("*Drones: Should the U.S."*). It is obvious, then, that this topic remains one of constant debate.

This topic is very relevant in Ukraine, which has employed the use of drones in its conflict with Russia. In 2024, Ukraine aimed to make 1 million first-person view (FPV) drones for use on the battlefield (Kryzhanivska and Schwennesen, 2024). These drones are used for both reconnaissance and delivering explosives to a target. These drones are crucial for Ukraine's war strategy as they are inexpensive to make, totaling under $500 per unit, and can be mass-produced (Zafra, 2024). To facilitate the creation of these drones, the number of drone manufacturers in

Ukraine has grown to over 100 in 2024 from just 7 in 2022. In the coming years, Ukraine hopes to increase its drone production to around 4 million drones per year and wishes to diversify its drone portfolio (Kakissis, 2024).

Despite these drone's effectiveness, they still have a major weakness. Electronic warfare has been the most effective defense against drones, becoming increasingly dense on the Ukrainian front lines. Electronic warfare can sever the pilot's link to the drone, making the drone uncontrollable (Zafra et al., 2024). In order to continue using drones and prevent risking pilot's lives, we must support the development of autonomous drones. Ukraine is already underway in developing artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies for use in drones. Such drones would be impervious to signal jamming since the drones would not need input from a pilot to identify and lock onto a target (Zafra et al., 2024). However, the technology still needs more development before it can be fully deployed. The delegation of Ukraine hopes to achieve your support in the developmental efforts in this technology to remedy any qualms about the ethics of autonomous drone warfare.

Works cited

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