

ABSTRACT

The use of civilian drones in armed conflict has changed the battlefield, enabling both state and non-state actors to use inexpensive and commercially available technology for various roles in the battlefield, from reconnaissance to direct attack with civilian drones as weapons. This Development has started several challenges, such as legal, ethical, and humanitarian, especially as civilian drones can be easily misused. This thesis examines how International Organisations, specifically the United Nations and the European Union, address this issue in their responses. Utilising the Sequence Event Analysis method to explore the official documents, reports, resolutions, and other official responses to the use of civilian drones in armed conflict, and finding any pattern in their response. Findings indicate that the United Nations' response is primarily belated and fragmented, with a lag. Their response has developed from a relatively passive counter terrorism concern to a more active response to the use of civilian drones in Ukraine by both sides of the conflict. The European Union response, however, is different, with its unique position as both an International organisation and geopolitical actor, initially responding in a more passive security and market concern to a more active response after the conflict in Ukraine, utilising sanctions, export controls, and reforms of policies, and a proactive response through the white paper released by the EU. Overall, these findings show that a civilian drone has both civilian and military uses and, as such, must be treated as such. Therefore, frameworks regulating it must treat them accordingly, as potential weapons, and policy-making must be adaptable to the development of technology.

Keyword: Civilian drones, Armed conflict, United Nations, European Union, Dual-use technology