

HMDC Presents... DISEC: Part 1 (The Topic)

HMDC Presents... Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC): Drone Surveillance and Privacy (Research Report, December 2026)

Prepared for HMDC Forensics delegates attending Harvard Model United Nations Online, December 5-6, 2026. Every fact below comes from a page or official document that was opened and read in October 2026. Each evidence entry repeats its publication and date so the source is always visible.

WHAT OUR CHAIRS WILL FOCUS ON

Harvard explains that this committee looks at drones in two ways: drones that help people in disasters, and drones that are used in war and raise security worries. Harvard splits the topic between two sessions, and our December session is the one about privacy, surveillance and intelligence, which means how drones watch people and gather information. The October session, not ours, covers armed drones and who is held responsible when they are used. In December, we will be asked to build international frameworks, or shared rules between countries, that support the "responsible use of drones" while keeping the world secure.

Harvard Model United Nations, HMUN Online Committee Page, Last Accessed: October 2026

<https://www.harvardmun.org/disec-online>

The parts of this HMDC report that match this focus most closely are the Introduction, Section 1A (the surveillance entries), Sections 1B to 1F, Sections 2B, 2C, 2E and 2F, and Sections 3A to 3C.

How we use this report: This report spends a lot of space on autonomous weapons, sometimes called killer robots, and on drone strikes in Ukraine, Russia and Sudan (Sections 1G, 2D, 2G and 3E, and the war entries in Section 1A). Those topics are about weapons that attack, which is closer to the October session than to ours, so we treat them as background only. We use them to show that the camera on a drone can lead to a strike, but we do not make a killer-robot treaty our main solution. Our speeches, position papers and resolutions should put privacy limits, registration, rules on face scanning, export controls on surveillance tools and transparency first.

INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING THE TOPIC

A drone is an aircraft with no pilot on board. Officials often call it an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) or a remotely piloted aircraft. Drones range from military aircraft that can stay in the air for a day and fly a thousand kilometres, to tiny machines that fit in one hand. Almost all of them carry cameras or other sensors, which means almost every drone is a surveillance tool, whether or not it also carries a weapon.

This topic asks how the world should handle drones that watch people. Governments use them to guard borders, find missing people, fight terrorism and watch protests. Militaries use them to find targets, and in recent wars the camera on a drone has become the tool that chooses whom to attack. Terrorist groups and criminals also use cheap commercial drones to spy on targets. Each of these uses touches the right to privacy, which is protected by Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

DISEC is the General Assembly's First Committee. It deals with weapons, arms control and threats to international peace. DISEC cannot pass binding law, but it can recommend treaties, set norms, ask the Secretary-General for reports and start negotiations. Delegates must decide where the line sits between legitimate security surveillance and harmful intrusion, and which international tools (treaties, export controls, transparency rules, aviation rules) can hold that line.

PART 1, THE TOPIC

1A. THE HARMS

Drone surveillance harms people in several ways. It strips away privacy for whole communities, it discourages people from protesting or speaking freely, it spreads to governments with weak rule of law, and in war and counterterrorism it supplies the targeting information for lethal strikes. The entries below show who is hurt, how many, and how badly.

UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/44/38), August 15, 2020: At least 102 countries have military drones

Tagline: Counting countries with military drones

Source: According to... UN Human Rights Council, August 15, 2020

Link: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/44/38>

Fact: It states... As of 2020, at least 102 countries had an active military drone inventory, and about 40 had or were buying armed drones. At least 20 armed non-State groups, including the Houthis, ISIL and a Mexican drug cartel, had obtained armed or unarmed drones. Exports of commercial drone technology have lowered prices and helped drones spread.

This means... Drone surveillance is no longer limited to a few powerful states. Any rule DISEC writes must cover dozens of governments and also groups that sign no treaties at all.

UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/44/38), August 15, 2020: Large drones can collect private phone conversations

Tagline: Collecting private conversations from the sky

Source: According to... UN Human Rights Council, August 15, 2020

Link: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/44/38>

Fact: It states... The largest military drones (class III) can stay airborne for more than 20 hours, fly over 1,000 km at more than 300 km per hour and carry advanced sensors. The report says they can pick up huge amounts of data, even private conversations sent through mobile phones and computers. Some drones can circle one location for about 14 hours.

This means... A single drone can watch a whole town and listen to its communications for most of a day. Delegates must decide whether international law should limit how much data military and intelligence drones may gather about civilians.

UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/52/39), March 1, 2023: More than 1,000 US police departments use drones

Tagline: Moving drones from war to policing

Source: According to... UN Human Rights Council, March 1, 2023

Link: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/52/39>

Fact: It states... The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and counter-terrorism found that drones have followed a path "from the battlefield to the home front." Research shows more than 1,000 police departments in the United States use drones, and at least 40 police forces in the United Kingdom do. Police in Africa, Europe, the Persian Gulf and the Americas also use them. Newer police drones carry thermal and night-vision cameras, automatic target tracking, loudspeakers and spotlights.

This means... Surveillance tools first justified as exceptional counterterrorism measures become ordinary police equipment. DISEC delegates should ask whether limits written for war also need to cover peacetime use at home.

UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/52/39), March 1, 2023: A 20-gram spy drone is used by about 20 militaries

Tagline: Shrinking drones to pocket size

Source: According to... UN Human Rights Council, March 1, 2023

Link: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/52/39>

Fact: It states... The Black Hornet micro-drone weighs less than 20 grams, fits in one hand, flies almost silently and carries cameras with a range of about 1.6 km. About 20 military forces use it, and thousands have been deployed in five years. The Rapporteur warns that smaller drones are easier to deploy and harder to notice.

This means... People may be watched without ever knowing a drone is there. Any privacy rule that depends on people seeing a drone, or on drones being large enough to register, will miss this kind of device.

UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/51/17), August 4, 2022: Drones are now normal at protests

Tagline: Watching protests from above

Source: According to... UN Human Rights Council, August 4, 2022

Link: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/51/17>

Fact: It states... The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that using drones for surveillance has become normal in many countries, where they monitor protests and other gatherings. The same report notes that more than 40 percent of video surveillance cameras sold by 2016 included video analytics, and that facial recognition and software that flags "suspicious" behaviour are among the most problematic features.

This means... When people know they are filmed and identified from above, many stay home. Drone surveillance therefore harms freedom of assembly and expression as well as privacy, which links this DISEC topic to human rights law.

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 17, 2019: At least 75 of 176 countries use AI surveillance

Tagline: Mapping AI surveillance worldwide

Source: According to... Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 17, 2019

Link: <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2019/09/the-global-expansion-of-ai-surveillance>

Fact: It states... Carnegie's AI Global Surveillance Index found at least 75 of 176 countries (43 percent) using artificial intelligence for surveillance, including 64 using facial recognition. Chinese companies supplied 63 countries, and US companies were present in 32. The study found that regime type is a weak predictor of use: 51 percent of advanced democracies used AI surveillance. The quality of governance, such as the rule of law and independent oversight, matters most.

This means... When drones carry AI cameras, the harm depends less on the machine and more on the laws and courts that control it. Supplier countries and buyer countries will both be in the room, and both will have interests to defend.

UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/27/37), June 30, 2014: Surveillance data has been used to aim drone strikes

Tagline: Linking surveillance data to strikes

Source: According to... UN Human Rights Council, June 30, 2014

Link: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/27/37>

Fact: It states... The High Commissioner's first report on privacy in the digital age noted reports that metadata (information about who called whom, when and where) gathered by electronic surveillance had been analysed to find the location of targets for lethal drone strikes. Such strikes raise serious questions under human rights and humanitarian law.

This means... Surveillance and killing are connected. Data collected about ordinary communications can end in a strike, so privacy protection is also a question of the right to life, which is why this topic belongs in a security committee.

OHCHR, May 28, 2025: Drone cameras used to hunt civilians in Kherson

Tagline: Hunting civilians with drone cameras

Source: According to... OHCHR, May 28, 2025

Link: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/un-commission-concludes-russian-armed-forces-drone-attacks-against-civilians?sub-site=HRC>

Fact: It states... The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine found that from July 2024 Russian forces used live video from drone cameras to pick out visibly civilian targets along more than 100 km of the Dnipro River in Kherson Province and then dropped explosives on them. Nearly 150 civilians were killed and hundreds injured. Hundreds of the drone videos were posted on Telegram channels. The Commission concluded these attacks were the crime against humanity of murder.

This means... In current wars, the surveillance camera is the targeting system. DISEC delegates cannot treat "surveillance drones" and "attack drones" as separate problems.

OHCHR, October 28, 2025: The drone attack zone grows to 300 km

Tagline: Widening the drone attack zone

Source: According to... OHCHR, October 28, 2025

Link: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/10/russian-authorities-committed-crimes-against-humanity-targeting-civilian?sub-site=HRC>

Fact: It states... In its report to the General Assembly, the Commission said the drone attacks had spread along more than 300 km of the Dnipro across three provinces and had continued for over a year. Ambulances and fire brigades were hit, and thousands of people fled. The Commission concluded the attacks were crimes against humanity of murder and forcible transfer. It could not finish its inquiry into Russian claims of Ukrainian drone attacks because it lacked access.

This means... Cheap camera drones allow a military to watch and terrorise a whole region. The Commission's lack of access also shows a weakness delegates must address: investigations depend on states letting investigators in.

Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 13, 2025: Russia launches over 1,000 Shahed drones a week

Tagline: Launching over 1,000 drones weekly

Source: According to... Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 13, 2025

Link: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/drone-saturation-russias-shahed-campaign>

Fact: It states... Russian launches of Shahed-type long-range drones against Ukraine rose from about 130 per week before September 2024 to about 1,100 per week within six months. Each drone costs an estimated 20,000 to 50,000 US dollars. Ukrainian intelligence reportedly found 200 Chinese-made components in Russian strike systems.

This means... Drones are now cheap enough to use in the thousands, and their parts cross many borders. Export controls on components, not only on finished drones, are part of this debate.

Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 28, 2025: Ukraine and Russia use millions of drones a year

Tagline: Flying millions of drones each year

Source: According to... Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 28, 2025

Link: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russia-ukraine-drone-war-innovation-frontlines-and-beyond>

Fact: It states... Experts at a CSIS event estimated that Ukraine made about 800,000 drones in 2023 and about 2 million in 2024, with up to 5 million planned for 2025. Russia may have used up to 4 million drones in 2024, compared with about 2,000 in its fleet before 2022. Drones now provide reconnaissance and watch over the whole battlefield, so most moving targets can be tracked and attacked. Ukraine has used the commercial DJI Mavic, which costs about \$2,000, for surveillance since 2014.

This means... A cheap shop-bought camera drone has become a main tool of war surveillance. Rules that only cover large military drones will miss most of the drones that actually watch people in conflict.

Council on Foreign Relations, June 3, 2025: Smuggled drones struck bombers deep inside Russia

Tagline: Putting precision strikes in anyone's hands

Source: According to... Council on Foreign Relations, June 3, 2025

Link: <https://www.cfr.org/articles/ukraines-operation-spiders-web-shows-future-drone-warfare>

Fact: It states... In "Operation Spider's Web," Ukraine said it used 117 attack drones against airfields deep inside Russia and claimed hits on 41 aircraft; Russia admitted damage but disputed how much. The drones were hidden in commercial trucks for months and launched from places as far apart as the Ukrainian border and Siberia. The Council on Foreign Relations explained that drones now cost from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands, and that "low-cost precision strikes are now accessible to almost any state or militant group."

This means... A weapon that once only rich militaries owned is now cheap, easy to hide and easy to copy. DISEC delegates must plan rules for armed groups and small states, not only for the great powers, because the drone that watches a target today can strike it tomorrow.

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 22, 2026: Drone war spreads from Ukraine to Sudan and Gaza

Tagline: Spreading drone war across continents

Source: According to... Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 22, 2026

Link: <https://carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2026/01/drone-war-ukraine-sudan-gaza-effects>

Fact: It states... Two Carnegie experts discussed reports that about 70 percent of casualties in the Russia-Ukraine war are linked to drones. In Sudan, both the army and the Rapid Support Forces use drones, including strikes on Port Sudan more than 1,000 km from territory the RSF holds. In Gaza, AI systems that sort large amounts of data were said to raise the number of targets produced about tenfold. Armed groups such as the Houthis and the Islamic State use drones, some built with 3D printers. One expert suggested starting with rules for advanced long-range and autonomous drones.

This means... Drone surveillance and targeting are now part of wars on several continents and in the hands of armed groups. A DISEC resolution may need to start with the most dangerous systems, because a single rule for every drone may be too hard to agree.

United Nations News, July 3, 2026: Fifteen drone strikes hit one Sudanese city in three weeks

Tagline: Besieging a city from the air

Source: According to... United Nations News, July 3, 2026

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/07/1167871>

Fact: It states... The UN human rights office recorded 15 drone strikes on El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan in Sudan, and the area around it in just three weeks of June 2026, killing at least 45 civilians. Both the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces launched the strikes, which hit markets, schools, fuel stations, water systems and civilian vehicles. The city holds more than half a million residents and at least 100,000 displaced people, and residents reported drone attacks along the roads they would use to escape. UN High Commissioner Volker Türk said the warning "is not a drill."

This means... Drones now let armed forces trap and frighten a whole city, because people cannot move safely when cameras and bombs watch the roads. Delegates should ask how DISEC can protect civilians when both sides of a civil war use drones and neither has signed any drone rules.

United Nations News, August 19, 2026: Drones caused 80 percent of civilian deaths in Sudan in early 2026

Tagline: Reshaping war against civilians and aid workers

Source: According to... United Nations News, August 19, 2026

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/08/1168153>

Fact: It states... On World Humanitarian Day, the UN aid office (OCHA) reported that armed drones caused 80 percent of civilian deaths in Sudan in the first four months of 2026. Drones killed 80 civilians in Ukraine in April 2026 alone, and attacks with weaponised drones in Colombia quadrupled between 2024 and 2025. An aid worker was killed when a drone hit a residential building in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and four humanitarian convoys were attacked in Ukraine in a single week. UN relief chief Tom Fletcher said drones are "extending the reach of war."

This means... Cheap drones have spread from Ukraine to Africa and Latin America, and they now reach the people who deliver food and medicine. Delegates can argue that drone rules are urgent for the whole world, not only for the countries at war in Europe.

Global Counterterrorism Forum, Last Accessed: October 2026: Terrorists use drones to spy on targets

Tagline: Listing terrorist uses of drones

Source: According to... Global Counterterrorism Forum, Last Accessed: October 2026

Link:

<https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/2019/Berlin%20Memorandum%20EN.pdf>

Fact: It states... The Forum's Berlin Memorandum lists ways terrorists can misuse drones: collecting intelligence and surveillance, watching targets and security routines, filming propaganda, disrupting police operations and infrastructure, smuggling, and spreading panic at crowded events. It notes ISIL used drones for attacks, surveillance and propaganda in Iraq and Syria, and that cheap commercial drones put these abilities within reach of even low-skilled people.

This means... Governments argue they need drone surveillance and counter-drone tools to stop terrorist drones. Delegates must balance that security need against the privacy harms caused by state surveillance itself.

1B. MAJOR SOLUTION 1: STRICT LEGAL LIMITS ON SURVEILLANCE (NECESSITY, PROPORTIONALITY, TIME LIMITS)

This solution asks every state to allow drone surveillance only when it is lawful, necessary and proportionate: limited to specific places and times, with data deleted after a set period and independent approval for intrusive use.

Advantages: it builds on rules already in UN human rights resolutions, it applies to every kind of surveillance tool rather than only drones, and it does not ban useful uses such as search and rescue. Disadvantages: the standard is broad, so each government interprets it differently; it is hard to enforce across borders; and military and intelligence agencies often claim national security exemptions.

OHCHR, September 16, 2022: Limit public surveillance to what is strictly necessary

Tagline: Limiting public surveillance strictly

Source: According to... OHCHR, September 16, 2022

Link: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/09/spyware-and-surveillance-threats-privacy-and-human-rights-growing-un-report>

Fact: It states... The UN High Commissioner recommended limiting public surveillance to what is strictly necessary and proportionate, focused on specific places and times, with limits on how long data is stored. The report urged states to urgently restrict biometric recognition in public spaces and to set up strong export controls for surveillance technologies that pose serious human rights risks. It also warned that tools built for legitimate purposes are often repurposed.

This means... The UN human rights office has already written a model for a DISEC resolution: necessity, proportionality, time and place limits, data deletion and export controls. Delegates can build on this language rather than inventing new standards.

Brookings Institution, November 2014: Regulate surveillance itself, not just drones

Tagline: Regulating the harm, not the machine

Source: According to... Brookings Institution, November 2014

Link: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/drones-and-aerial-surveillance-considerations-for-legislatures/>

Fact: It states... A Brookings policy paper argued that early drone laws focused on the technology (drones) rather than the harm (constant surveillance). It recommended limits on how long any one person can be watched from the air, rules for deleting stored footage, and public logs of aerial surveillance. It also noted that features such as geofencing and automatic blurring could make drones more privacy-protective than piloted aircraft.

This means... A disadvantage of drone-only rules is that governments can switch to helicopters, satellites or fixed cameras. A technology-neutral rule closes that gap, which is an argument for writing the resolution around surveillance in general.

1C. MAJOR SOLUTION 2: REGISTRATION, IDENTIFICATION AND NO-FLY ZONES FOR DRONES

This solution treats drones like vehicles: owners register them, drones broadcast an identity, and authorities draw zones where drones may not fly, for safety and for privacy. The European Union has done this for its 27 member states, and the International Civil Aviation Organization (see Part 3) works on global aviation standards.

Advantages: it makes drone operators identifiable and accountable, and it already works at a regional level. Disadvantages: it mainly covers civilian drones, not military or police ones; small drones and toys may be exempt; and many countries lack the capacity to run registration systems.

EUR-Lex (Regulation (EU) 2019/947), May 24, 2019: Drones with cameras must be registered

Tagline: Registering drones that carry cameras

Source: According to... EUR-Lex, May 24, 2019

Link: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2019/947/oj

Fact: It states... The EU drone regulation divides operations into open, specific and certified categories by risk. In the open category, an operator must register if the drone weighs 250 grams or more, or if it carries a sensor able to capture personal data (unless it is a toy). The regulation says registration is needed because of risks to privacy and the protection of personal data, and the online exam for pilots includes privacy and data protection.

This means... The EU treats a camera as a privacy risk in itself. Delegates could propose that the UN encourage all states to adopt similar registration rules, though poorer states may need technical help to do so.

EUR-Lex (Regulation (EU) 2019/947), May 24, 2019: States may close airspace for privacy reasons

Tagline: Drawing privacy zones in the sky

Source: According to... EUR-Lex, May 24, 2019

Link: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2019/947/oj

Fact: It states... Article 15 allows EU member states to define geographical zones where drones are banned or limited for safety, security, privacy or environmental reasons. Before an operator receives authorisation for higher-risk flights, the operator must confirm compliance with rules on privacy, data protection, liability, insurance, security and the environment.

This means... No-fly zones are a practical privacy tool that already exists. A DISEC resolution could recommend such zones over homes, schools, hospitals and places of worship, while noting that they do not restrict government or military drones.

1D. MAJOR SOLUTION 3: BANNING OR RESTRICTING FACIAL RECOGNITION FROM THE AIR

This solution targets the most intrusive part of drone surveillance: software that identifies individual people by their faces or bodies in real time.

Advantages: it removes the ability to track named individuals in crowds, which is the main threat to protesters and rights defenders. Disadvantages: police argue they need it to find missing children and terrorism suspects, and the strongest current law (the EU AI Act) excludes military and national security uses entirely.

EUR-Lex (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689), June 13, 2024: Live face scanning by police is largely banned

Tagline: Restricting live face scanning

Source: According to... EUR-Lex, June 13, 2024

Link: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj>

Fact: It states... The EU Artificial Intelligence Act prohibits police use of real-time remote biometric identification in publicly accessible spaces, except in a short list of situations: searching for certain crime victims and missing persons, preventing specific threats to life or a terrorist attack, and finding suspects of serious crimes. Each use needs prior approval from a judge or independent authority (or approval within 24 hours in an emergency) and a fundamental rights impact assessment.

This means... A regional model already exists for limiting face recognition, including from drones. Delegates can debate whether a global norm should copy the EU's narrow exceptions or go further.

EUR-Lex (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689), June 13, 2024: Military and national security AI is excluded

Tagline: Excluding military and security uses

Source: According to... EUR-Lex, June 13, 2024

Link: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj>

Fact: It states... The AI Act says AI systems used for military, defence or national security purposes are outside its scope, no matter who uses them. A system used for civilian or law enforcement purposes is still covered.

This means... The exact area DISEC covers, military and security use, is the gap left by the most advanced regional AI law. This gives DISEC a clear reason to act: no one else currently regulates military drone surveillance.

1E. MAJOR SOLUTION 4: EXPORT CONTROLS ON DRONES AND SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY

This solution limits who can buy drones and surveillance systems, so that governments likely to abuse them cannot get them easily.

Advantages: it acts before harm happens and uses arms-control systems that already exist. Disadvantages: control regimes are voluntary and include only some producers; commercial drones and parts are sold freely; and exporting states may see controls as a threat to their industries.

UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/44/38), August 15, 2020: Stricter controls on drone transfers

Tagline: Tightening drone export controls

Source: According to... UN Human Rights Council, August 15, 2020

Link: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/44/38>

Fact: It states... The Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions recommended that states exporting armed drone technology enact stricter controls on military and dual-use drone transfers with clear criteria to prevent irresponsible sales. She also urged states to control drone proliferation through export and multilateral arms control regimes or treaties, and to develop standards of transparency and accountability.

This means... A UN expert has already asked for the exact kind of measure that falls under DISEC. Delegates from exporting countries and importing countries will likely disagree on how strict the criteria should be.

Wassenaar Arrangement, Last Accessed: October 2026: Unmanned vehicles are on the Munitions List

Tagline: Controlling unmanned vehicle exports

Source: According to... Wassenaar Arrangement, Last Accessed: October 2026

Link: <https://www.wassenaar.org/about-us/>

Fact: It states... The Wassenaar Arrangement, based in Vienna since 1996, coordinates export controls among 42 participating states on conventional arms and dual-use goods. Its Munitions List includes "aircraft and unmanned airborne vehicles," and its dual-use list covers sensors, lasers, telecommunications and information security. Each state applies the controls through its own national law.

This means... An export-control tool for drones already exists, but only 42 states take part and the controls are applied nationally. Producers outside the group are not bound, which limits how much this solution can achieve alone.

1F. MAJOR SOLUTION 5: TRANSPARENCY, OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

This solution asks states to publish how and when they use drones, to let independent bodies review that use, and to investigate when harm occurs.

Advantages: it does not ban any technology, so more states may accept it, and it gives victims a path to remedies. Disadvantages: states guard military and intelligence secrets, and without verification, transparency pledges can be ignored.

UNIDIR, December 1, 2017: Transparency and accountability for armed drones are lacking

Tagline: Closing the accountability gap

Source: According to... UNIDIR, December 1, 2017

Link: <https://unidir.org/publication/increasing-transparency-oversight-and-accountability-armed-unmanned-aerial-vehicles>

Fact: It states... The UN Institute for Disarmament Research found that the international community had not agreed on how established international principles apply to armed drones. It said this gap was unsatisfactory for civilian protection, peace and security and the rule of law, and that drones are more open to misuse than many other technologies. The study suggested ways to build shared understandings on transparency, oversight and accountability.

This means... DISEC's own research institute has already mapped this solution. A resolution could ask UNIDIR to update the study for surveillance drones and AI cameras.

UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/52/39), March 1, 2023: Police must plan drone use and investigate harm

Tagline: Planning and investigating police drone use

Source: According to... UN Human Rights Council, March 1, 2023

Link: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/52/39>

Fact: It states... The Special Rapporteur said law enforcement must plan drone operations in advance rather than using drones whenever officers prefer. When drones risk death or serious injury, investigations must be independent, impartial and open to public and family scrutiny. She also warned that states holding powerful drone tools have a heavy duty to keep them from reaching other actors.

This means... Accountability can be written as concrete steps: plan, record, investigate and publish. These steps give delegates specific clauses to include rather than general appeals.

1G. MAJOR SOLUTION 6: A NEW TREATY ON AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS

As drones gain AI, some can find and attack targets without a human decision. This solution asks states to negotiate a binding treaty that bans the most dangerous autonomous systems and regulates the rest.

Advantages: it would set a clear legal line before the technology spreads further, and it has strong support from the UN Secretary-General and the ICRC. Disadvantages: major military powers prefer non-binding guidance, negotiations are slow, and a treaty on weapons may not directly address surveillance and privacy.

ICRC, October 5, 2023: The UN and ICRC call for a treaty by 2026

Tagline: Calling for a treaty by 2026

Source: According to... ICRC, October 5, 2023

Link: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/joint-call-un-and-icrc-establish-prohibitions-and-restrictions-autonomous-weapons-systems>

Fact: It states... UN Secretary-General António Guterres and ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric jointly urged states to negotiate a new legally binding instrument on autonomous weapon systems and finish by 2026. They called for a ban on systems whose effects cannot be predicted, such as those controlled by machine learning, and for limits on where, when and against what other systems may be used. They said: "The autonomous targeting of humans by machines is a moral line that we must not cross."

This means... The 2026 deadline falls in the year of this conference. Delegates must decide whether to push for the treaty now, extend the deadline, or rely on non-binding measures.

ICRC, May 12, 2021: Ban unpredictable and anti-personnel autonomous weapons

Tagline: Banning unpredictable and anti-personnel systems

Source: According to... ICRC, May 12, 2021

Link: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/icrc-position-autonomous-weapon-systems>

Fact: It states... The ICRC recommends new binding rules that ban unpredictable autonomous weapons, ban autonomous weapons designed or used to apply force against people, and limit all others by target type, time, place, scale and situations where civilians are present. It requires effective human supervision and the ability to switch systems off.

This means... An AI drone that watches a crowd and selects people as targets would fall under the ICRC's proposed ban. This connects surveillance (identifying people) directly to the weapons debate in DISEC.

Reaching Critical Will, September 11, 2025: 42 states say they are ready to negotiate

Tagline: Moving the rolling text toward negotiations

Source: According to... Reaching Critical Will, September 11, 2025

Link: <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/news/latest-news/18048-group-of-governmental-experts-on-autonomous-weapons-digs-into-details-of-elements-for-a-treaty-but-needs-to-now-advance-to-negotiations>

Fact: It states... The Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons met in Geneva from September 1 to 5, 2025. Its Chair, from the Netherlands, offered a "rolling text" divided into the possible parts of a future instrument. 42 states issued a joint statement saying they are ready to "move ahead towards negotiations within the CCW on the basis of the rolling text."

This means... A draft text already exists, and a group of states wants to turn it into a treaty. Delegates must decide whether DISEC should support starting negotiations now or wait for full agreement in Geneva.

ICRC, August 25, 2026: The UN and ICRC renew their call

Tagline: Renewing the call before the Review Conference

Source: According to... ICRC, August 25, 2026

Link: <https://www.icrc.org/en/statement/renewed-call-un-secretary-general-and-icrc-president-adopt-rules-autonomous-weapons>

Fact: It states... UN Secretary-General António Guterres and ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric renewed their 2023 joint appeal, saying the risks of autonomous weapons have grown since then. They urged states to start negotiations now on a binding instrument with clear prohibitions and restrictions. They called the Seventh Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in November 2026 "the clearest path available for States," and wrote: "This year must mark a turning point."

This means... The Review Conference happens only weeks before this committee meets. Delegates should check its result and decide whether DISEC should welcome it, push it further, or offer the General Assembly as another path.

Council on Foreign Relations, September 14, 2026: The United States plans about \$55 billion for autonomous warfare

Tagline: Racing to build drone fleets

Source: According to... Council on Foreign Relations, September 14, 2026

Link: <https://www.cfr.org/articles/is-the-u-s-army-backing-off-on-drones>

Fact: It states... In a training exercise in Hohenfels, Germany, in April and May 2026, about 3,500 US soldiers faced a formation that included Ukrainian troops, and press reports said the Ukrainian drone operators performed better than the Americans. The US administration's budget request for 2027 includes about \$55 billion for a Defense Autonomous Warfare Group. The Council's senior fellow describes the new goal of armies as "precise mass": cheap, highly accurate, uncrewed systems used in very large numbers.

This means... This shows a disadvantage of the treaty solution. The largest military powers are spending billions to build autonomous drone fleets, so they have strong reasons to resist bans, and delegates who want a treaty must offer them something they can accept.

1H. LESSER SOLUTIONS

- **Encryption and privacy-protective design:** encourage companies to build drones that blur faces, limit storage and protect data (see A/RES/79/175 and the Brookings entry).
- **Human rights due diligence for companies:** ask manufacturers and sellers to assess how buyers will use drones and AI cameras before selling (see A/RES/79/175).
- **Digital literacy and public awareness:** help citizens understand what drones collect and what rights they have.
- **Counter-drone technology:** help states detect and stop hostile drones, while ensuring counter-drone tools are not themselves used for mass surveillance.
- **Technical assistance:** fund training so developing states can build registration systems and independent oversight bodies.

