

Abstract

The thesis deals with the armed conflict phenomenon of past several years – unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). Despite the fact that the present deployment of UAVs is often presented as a revolutionary, it is possible to track down the roots of remotely controlled planes without crew on board back to the years short after the Second World War. Today's versions of UAVs represent this historical concept brought to perfection thanks to the modern technologies. Their deployments raise legitimate considerations whether they may represent prohibited mean of warfare in terms of humanitarian law or whether their usage is not in contrary to law of armed conflict. This thesis aims to identify those differences between UAVs and traditional piloted aircrafts that may cause different legal classification of the UAVs to the traditional piloted aircrafts.

First chapter includes short historical background which may bring interesting connections with political atmosphere after Second World War. It is also pointed out that the concept of unmanned aircrafts is not new. This chapter also includes technical facts and details about current modern UAVs like Predator, Reaper or Global Hawk which may serve for an easier legal analysis.

Second chapter deals with the definitions and differences between two main types of armed conflict in current law of war – international and internal armed conflicts. At the same time it identifies concrete legal provisions applicable to UAVs itself and its deployment from both types of armed conflict perspective.

The legal analysis is part of the third chapter. In its first part UAVs are subject of assessment whether they represent prohibited means or method of warfare causing superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering. Following chapters includes concrete situations and take into account characteristics of the UAVs for the purpose of the legal analysis. It includes evolution whether the UAVs can meet the principle of distinction, proportion and prevention strict criteria set by the humanitarian law. At the end of this chapter short part is dedicated to the problem of deploying UAVs by non-combatants.

Last chapter includes a summary of the thesis where the results are presented. Author concludes that the current UAV characteristics do not represent significant revolution which would be problem for humanitarian law to cover up.