Reaction of HI on the increasing use of drones against civilians

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FPV drones against civilians

Attacks using FPV drones are widely employed in armed conflicts and have devastating consequences on civilians.

“FPV (First Person View) drones play a central role in modern conflicts, exposing civilians and civilian infrastructure to serious harm. They are used on an industrial scale in the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, in Sudan, and in many other countries. The growing danger that drones pose to civilians is deeply alarming. In many conflict contexts, such attacks raise serious concerns about the deliberate targeting of civilians, who are protected under international humanitarian law.

Their constant presence in the sky also creates intense psychological pressure, contributing to fear, anxiety, and other mental health consequences among the population. In these armed conflict settings, patterns of drone attacks against civilians suggest that these weapons are being used not only to inflict direct harm but also to spread terror among civilian populations.

Four years ago, 83 States gathered in Dublin, Ireland, to adopt the Political Declaration aimed at strengthening the protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. To date, 92 States have endorsed it. As the increasing use of drones in current conflicts adds new complexities to modern warfare and civilian protection, the Declaration provides an important framework for States to assess civilian harm and adapt their military policies and practices, including with regard to the use of drone-delivered explosive weapons in populated areas.

Now, more than ever, States must translate these commitments into concrete action, strengthen the protection of civilians, and ensure respect for international humanitarian law.

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