

Ethics and Law in Drone Operations

In the field of drone warfare and society, ethics and law play a critical role in ensuring that drone operations are conducted in a responsible and legal manner. This explanation will cover key terms and vocabulary related to ethics and law in drone operations in the context of the Global Certificate in Drone Warfare and Society.

1. **Drone:** A drone, also known as an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), is an aircraft that operates without a human pilot on board. Drones can be remotely controlled or can fly autonomously using pre-programmed flight plans or artificial intelligence.
2. **Drone warfare:** Drone warfare refers to the use of drones for military purposes, such as targeted killings, surveillance, and intelligence gathering. Drone warfare has become increasingly prevalent in recent years, particularly in the context of the "War on Terror."
3. **Ethics:** Ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with questions about morality, including what is right and wrong, good and bad, and just and unjust. Ethics are concerned with guiding human behavior and decision-making in a way that promotes the well-being of individuals and society as a whole.
4. **Law:** Law is the system of rules and regulations that governs the behavior of individuals and organizations within a society. Laws are enforceable by the state and are designed to maintain order, protect individual rights, and promote the common good.
5. **International humanitarian law (IHL):** IHL is a set of rules that govern the conduct of armed conflict. IHL is also known as the laws of war and is designed to minimize the suffering and casualties caused by war. IHL applies to all parties to an armed conflict, including states and non-state actors.
6. **Targeted killing:** Targeted killing is the deliberate killing of a specific individual or group of individuals who are believed to pose a threat to national security or public safety. Targeted killings are typically carried out using drones, and are a controversial aspect of drone warfare.
7. **Due process:** Due process is the legal requirement that individuals be treated fairly and impartially under the law. Due process guarantees individuals the right to be informed of the charges against them, to have access to legal representation, and to have their case heard by an impartial tribunal.
8. **Proportionality:** Proportionality is a principle of IHL that requires that the military advantage gained by an attack must be proportional to the expected harm caused to civilians and civilian objects. In other words, an attack that is expected to cause disproportionate harm to civilians is considered to be a violation of IHL.
9. **Double tap strike:** A double tap strike is a tactic used in drone warfare where a drone fires a missile at a target, waits for individuals to gather at the site of the attack to provide assistance, and then fires a second missile at the same target. Double tap strikes are controversial because they can result in the death of innocent civilians who are attempting to provide assistance.
10. **Autonomous weapons:** Autonomous weapons are drones or other unmanned systems that are capable of operating without human intervention. Autonomous weapons raise ethical and legal concerns because they have the potential to make decisions about the use of lethal force without human oversight.
11. **Accountability:** Accountability is the principle that individuals and organizations should be held

responsible for their actions and decisions. In the context of drone warfare, accountability requires that those responsible for drone operations be held responsible for any ethical or legal violations that occur.

12. Transparency: Transparency is the principle that information about drone operations should be made available to the public. Transparency is important in ensuring that drone operations are conducted in a responsible and legal manner, and in promoting public trust and confidence in the use of drones.

13. Civilian harm: Civilian harm refers to the unintended harm caused to non-combatants during military operations. Civilian harm can take many forms, including death, injury, and property damage. Civilian harm is a major concern in drone warfare, as drones are often used in densely populated areas.

14. Risk assessment: Risk assessment is the process of evaluating the potential risks and benefits of a particular course of action. In the context of drone warfare, risk assessment is important in ensuring that the use of drones is justified and that the potential harm to civilians is minimized.

15. Human rights: Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms to which all individuals are entitled, regardless of their nationality, race, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life, liberty, and security of person, as well as the right to freedom of expression and assembly.

16. Jus ad bellum: Jus ad bellum is a principle of IHL that governs the decision to go to war. Jus ad bellum requires that a state have a just cause for going to war, that it have exhausted all peaceful means of resolving the conflict, and that it have a reasonable chance of success.

17. Jus in bello: Jus in bello is a principle of IHL that governs the conduct of war. Jus in bello requires that parties to a conflict distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, that they use only the necessary force to achieve their military objectives, and that they take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians.

18. War crimes: War crimes are serious violations of IHL, such as deliberate attacks on civilians, the use of torture, and the forced displacement of populations. War crimes are considered to be among the most serious violations of international law and are subject to prosecution by international criminal tribunals.

19. International Criminal Court (ICC): The ICC is a permanent international court established to prosecute individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The ICC has jurisdiction over crimes committed in states that have ratified the Rome Statute, the treaty that established the court, as well as over crimes committed by nationals of states that have ratified the Rome Statute.

20. Due diligence: Due diligence is the process of taking reasonable steps to ensure that one's actions do not harm others. In the context of drone warfare, due diligence requires that states and other actors take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians and to ensure that their actions are in compliance with international law.

21. Humanitarian intervention: Humanitarian intervention is the use of military force to protect a population from serious harm, such as genocide or war crimes. Humanitarian intervention is a controversial aspect of international law, as it can be used to justify the use of force without the authorization of the United Nations Security Council.

22. Remote warfare: Remote warfare is the use of drones and other unmanned systems to conduct military operations from a distance. Remote warfare raises ethical and legal concerns because it can result in a lack of accountability and transparency, and because it can lead to the depersonalization of warfare.

23. Duty of care: The duty of care is the legal and ethical obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of others. In the context of drone warfare, the duty of care requires that states and other actors take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians and to ensure that their actions are in

compliance with international law.

24. **Military necessity:** Military necessity is the principle that military action must be necessary and proportionate to achieve a legitimate military objective. Military necessity is a central principle of IHL, and is designed to ensure that military action is not taken for its own sake, but rather to achieve a specific military objective.

25. **Precautionary principle:** The precautionary principle is the principle that in the face of scientific uncertainty, actors should take a cautious approach to avoid harm to human health and the environment. The precautionary principle is relevant to drone warfare because of the potential risks associated with the use of new and emerging technologies.

In conclusion, the field of drone warfare and society raises a number of ethical and legal challenges, many of which are related to the use of drones for military purposes. Understanding the key terms and vocabulary related to ethics and law in drone operations is essential for anyone seeking to engage in this field in a responsible and legal manner. By adhering to the principles of IHL, human rights, and the precautionary principle, and by taking all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians, states and other actors can help to ensure that drone operations are conducted in a responsible and legal manner.