



## **Drones and the Law 2014**

A drone or “unmanned aerial vehicle” (UAV) is an unmanned aircraft that can be piloted remotely. Drones vary in size and weight.

In the UK the following apply:

- It is legal to fly your own drone in the UK without any special permission if it weighs less than 20kg and it is flying more than 150m from a congested area
- Permission from the CAA is required if it is used for a commercial activity like aerial photography
- Permission has been given for inspecting power lines, police use and crop surveillance
- Direct visual contact with the drone is currently required at all times
- Drones larger than 20kg would have to be approved for use by the CAA for use in UK airspace in the same way as commercial aircraft
- The CAA has made clear that it will not ok their use until it is convinced the drone can automatically 'sense and avoid' other aircraft

In international law:

- The operation of a UAV over another State’s territory requires either valid consent or a lawful exercise of rights under a recognized legal basis.
- The use UAVs for conducting armed strikes is subject to the law governing the use of force under the UN Charter & customary international law.
- To the extent a use of force constitutes the existence of an armed conflict; the use of UAVs to conduct strikes is subject to the international humanitarian laws rules and principles governing the conduct of hostilities. This applies equally to the deliberate targeting of a specific individual subject to attack under international humanitarian law.

*Compiled by Chris Waller, ACT 2014*