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Drones and targeted killings: the need to uphold human rights

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Marina SCHUSTER and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The Parliamentary Assembly is worried about the widening use of unmanned combat air vehicles (thereafter combat drones) for the purpose of carrying out targeted killings as counter-terrorism strategy.

It welcomes the United Nations initiative for the launch of an inquiry into the civilian impact, and the human rights implications of the use of drones and other forms of targeted killing for the purpose of counter terrorism and counter-insurgency.

Such killings carried out by forces of the United States of America, an observer State of the Council of Europe, have increased in number and scope over the past years, not only where non-international armed conflicts take place.

The Assembly is concerned about the research activities of several member States of the Council of Europe that aim at the development of combat drones.

The Assembly is worried that targeted killings may violate International Humanitarian Law and questions in particular the legal legitimacy of targeted killings outside the geographic scope of armed conflicts.

The increasing collateral damage caused by such attacks raises the concern whether the principle of distinction between civilians taking no active part in the hostilities and combatants is sufficiently fulfilled.

Furthermore, it stresses the limitations of targeted killings if conducted as means of law enforcement from the point of view of the protection of human rights as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and other human rights treaties.

The Assembly therefore resolves to examine more closely the legal and human rights issues connected with the use of combat drones for targeted killings.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left