Police use of data from the sky – dissecting the human rights implications associated with deploying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in law enforcement in England and Wales

To develop an effective rights-based national regulatory framework for police drones that addresses their human rights implications.

Key details

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Police region	North East
Level of research	PhD
Project start date	January 2021
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Research context

Emerging technologies can be highly effective in supporting human capabilities, especially in law enforcement.

Police drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles, have improved various police procedures, including:

- missing person searches
- collection of evidence from dangerous situations
- the observation of crime hotspots

However, as a novel technology, drones used for surveillance purposes can create public mistrust. Therefore, greater transparency created between the police and the public allows for the effective deployment of police drones.

The purpose of this research project is to develop a rights-based national regulatory framework for the use of police drones, which ensures that there are explicit national legal safeguards in place.

Research methodology

This study uses a combination of socio-legal analysis, as well as questionnaires with as many of the 43 police forces in England and Wales as possible.

Research participation

The research will provide up-to-date information on how many police forces in fact use drones in their operations. Therefore, the co-operation of the police forces to answer the survey questions greatly appreciated, even if the police force does not use drones.

If you would like to take part, please follow the link to the participant information sheet and confidentiality details. This questionnaire can be completed by any police officer in England and Wales.

Complete the participant information sheet and confidentiality details