

## Automated Criminals: Analysing the Use of Drones in Transnational Crime

DCN Hapuarachchi<sup>1</sup> and SUW Jayaratne<sup>2#</sup>

<sup>1</sup>14<sup>th</sup> Rocket Regiment, Sri Lanka Artillery

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

# nishieuma@gmail.com

Frank W. Abagnale once stated, “Technology breeds crime and we are constantly trying to develop technology to stay one step ahead of the person trying to use it negatively”. As complementary to Abagnale’s statement on the nexus between crime and technology, on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022 Spanish police seized three underwater drones utilized for drug smuggling in the sea from Morocco. These unmanned submarines were capable of transporting 200kg of cargo. As a result of the investigation, eight people were taken into custody in Cadiz, Malaga, and Barcelona. However, such incidents of drug smuggling by drones have opened a new chapter in transnational crime, making the security forces and law enforcement authorities think innovatively in dealing with the utility of technology in criminal activities. As a result, this research is conducted to 1) understand the nexus between technology and crime 2) examine how drones have been used in criminal activities 3) understand the measures being implemented to counter the threat of drones being used in transnational crime 4) understand how this threat is applicable to Sri Lanka 5) comprehend the gap between the existing countermeasures and the threat of drones being utilised in criminal activities in Sri Lanka. This research will be based on primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected through interviews and questionnaires while secondary data will be accumulated from books, reports, journal articles, statements, videos etc. Case studies are also being utilized to analyse and emphasise the threat of drones being used in criminal activities.

**Keywords:** *drones, transnational crime, technology*