

# A Rogue Killer Drone 'Hunted Down' a Human Target Without Being Instructed To, UN Report Says

by *Joshua Zitser*, published on *Business Insider*, May 30, 2021

*Editor's Note: In full disclosure, I think this is an interesting story, but I'm not sure I buy it as stated. For one thing, it isn't clear why the drone was armed and flying without a target. Also, it isn't clear whether the target was on the same side as the drone or was an opponent in the war. Even so, this is a problem with piloted drones as well. The intention of the pilot or whomever released the drone is often implemented in a way that is not reliable. I also think this kind of story distracts from the main story, which is that no drone, not even a remotely piloted one, can be safely armed. [jb]*

A "lethal" weaponized drone "hunted down a human target" without being told to, likely for the first time, according to a UN report seen by the New Scientist.

In the March 2020 incident, a Kargu-2 quadcopter autonomously attacked a person during a conflict between Libyan government forces and a breakaway military faction, led by the Libyan National Army's Khalifa Haftar, the Daily Star reported.

The Turkish-built Kargu-2, a deadly attack drone designed for asymmetric warfare and anti-terrorist operations, targeted one of Haftar's soldiers while he tried to retreat, according to the paper.

The drone, which can be directed to detonate on impact, was

operating in a “‘*highly effective*’ autonomous mode that required no human controller,” the New York Post reported.

*“The lethal autonomous weapons systems were programmed to attack targets without requiring data connectivity between the operator and the munition: in effect, a true ‘fire, forget and find’ capability,”*

the report from the UN Security Council’s panel of experts on Libya said.

This is likely the first time drones have attacked humans without instructions to do so, Zak Kallenborn, a national-security consultant who specializes in unmanned systems and drones, confirmed in the report.

Kallenborn has concerns about the future of autonomous drones. *“How brittle is the object recognition system?”* he said in the report. *“How often does it misidentify targets?”*

Jack Watling, a researcher on land warfare at the Royal United Services Institute, told the New Scientist that the incident demonstrates the *“urgent and important”* need to discuss the potential regulation of autonomous weapons.

Human Rights Watch has called for an end to so-called *“killer robots”* and is campaigning for a *“preemptive ban on the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons,”* according to a report by the nonprofit.

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**\*Featured Image:** *Stock photo of a drone flying. Getty Images*