

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 10698



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE MAURICIO G. DOMOGAN**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Unmanned systems, commonly known as drones, have become increasingly accessible and are now widely used for recreational, commercial, agricultural, scientific, media, and government purposes. Their rapid advancement has significantly contributed to innovation, improved efficiency, and economic development across various sectors.

However, the proliferation of drone technology has also brought about serious concerns relating to public safety, national security, privacy, aviation safety, and the protection of critical infrastructure. Incidents involving unauthorized drone operations near airports, military installations, government facilities, densely populated areas, and public events have highlighted the need for a comprehensive legal framework governing their possession and operation.

At present, while existing regulations issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) provide operational guidelines for unmanned aircraft, there remains no comprehensive legislation that establishes uniform standards for the registration, possession, operation, accountability, and enforcement mechanisms applicable to unmanned systems. Likewise, there is a need to strengthen coordination among concerned government agencies in monitoring, regulating, and addressing violations involving drone operations.

This proposed measure seeks to establish a comprehensive regulatory framework governing the possession and operation of unmanned systems. It aims to ensure that drones are utilized responsibly while safeguarding public safety,

protecting individual privacy, preserving national security, and promoting the orderly integration of unmanned systems into Philippine airspace. The bill likewise provides appropriate penalties for unlawful possession and operation, unauthorized surveillance, interference with lawful activities, and other prohibited acts, while recognizing the legitimate use of drones for commercial, educational, research, humanitarian, agriculture, disaster response, and other lawful purposes.

By striking a balance between technological innovation and public welfare, this measure promotes the responsible development of the unmanned systems industry while ensuring that emerging technologies are utilized in a manner consistent with the Constitution, existing laws, and the best interests of the Filipino people.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


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**AN ACT REGULATING THE POSSESSION AND OPERATION OF
UNMANNED SYSTEMS, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS
THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

ARTICLE I: GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "**Unmanned Systems Regulation and Safety Act of 2026**"

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the declared policy of the State to promote and govern the use of technology for national development while safeguarding the life, liberty, property, and security of its citizens. The State recognizes the immense potential of drones, formally known as Unmanned Systems (US), for commercial, recreational, scientific, and public service applications. However, the state also acknowledges the inherent risks they pose to public safety, national security, and individual privacy.

Therefore, the State shall establish a comprehensive regulatory framework to ensure that the importation, manufacture, sale, ownership, and operation of drones are conducted responsibly and safely. This framework shall balance innovation with security, empower law enforcement agencies, and prescribe clear penalties to deter unlawful use and exploitation.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a. Agricultural Operation - refers to the use of an Unmanned System for agricultural purposes, including but not limited to, crop dusting, seeding, pest control, crop health monitoring, and livestock management.
- b. CAAP Regulations - Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines rules, including Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) Part 11 and Part 14 and CAAP Memorandum Circular No. 29-15, governing UAS operations.
- c. Commercial Operation - refers to any authorized use of a drone for work, business, or in connection with any form of compensation or hire.
- d. Controlled Airspace - refers to airspace of defined dimensions within which Air Traffic Control service is provided.
- e. Critical Infrastructure - refers to assets, systems, and networks so vital to the Republic of the Philippines that their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating impact on national security, economic stability, public health, or safety.
- f. Drone Operator or Remote Pilot - refers to any natural or juridical person who commands, controls, operates, and manipulates the flight controls of Unmanned System.
- g. Drone Owner - refers to the natural or juridical person in whose name the drone is registered.
- h. Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) - refers to the Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), and other government agencies authorized by law to conduct law enforcement functions.
- i. Law Enforcement Operation - refers to the broad range of activities undertaken by government agents to enforce the law. This encompasses the practical, on-the-ground duties and responsibilities performed by the PNP and other law enforcement agents to maintain public order, prevent and detect crime, and apprehend offenders.
- j. Modification - refers to any alteration to a drone's hardware or software that changes its flight capabilities, payload capacity, or operational range from its original manufacturer specifications.
- k. Prohibited or No-Fly Zone - refers to a designated area over which drone flight is strictly prohibited for national security or public safety reasons.

l. Public Safety and Security Operation - refers to the authorized use of an Unmanned System by a government entity for public service purposes, such as but not limited to search and rescue, law enforcement, reconnaissance, tactical operations, disaster response, and other purposes deemed necessary to promote law and order, safety, and security.

m. Recreational Operation - refers to the authorized use of an Unmanned System for personal interest, hobby, or amusement purposes, with no commercial or professional intent.

n. Restricted Zone - refers to a designated area over which drone flight is subject to specific conditions or limitations.

o. Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) - refers to an unmanned system designed for flight in the atmosphere or aerial surface.

p. Unmanned Ground-Based System (UGS) - refers to an unmanned system designed for operation on land surfaces.

q. Unmanned Maritime System (UMS) - refers to an unmanned system designed for operation on the surface of or underneath the water, including submersible and semi-submersible vehicles.

r. Unmanned System (US) - refers to any remotely, automatically, or autonomously controlled vehicle and its associated control systems, operating in the air, on land, or in water, without a human pilot or operator on board.

s. Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) - refers to the operator's ability to always see the drone with their own eyes (without visual aids like binoculars) during flight.

t. Weaponized Drone - refers to any Unmanned System equipped with or used to deploy any firearm, explosive, chemical, biological, radiological, or any other hazardous payload intended to cause harm, injury, or death.

SEC. 4. Categories and Classifications of Drones. All drones shall be classified based on their Maximum Take-Off Weight (MTOW) and/or operational risk as follows:

a. Based on Weight:

1. Category 1 (Micro): Less than 250 grams. Exempt from registration if used recreationally.

2. Category 2 (Small): 250 grams to 7 kilograms. Requires registration and licensing.

3. Category 3 (Standard): Over 7 kg but not exceeding 25 kg. Requires stricter certification.

4. Category 4 (Large): Over 25 kg. Regulated similarly to manned aircraft.

b. Based on Operational Risk:

1. Class 1 (Low-Risk): Recreational flights in approved areas.

2. Class 2 (Medium-Risk): Commercial operations within VLOS, such as aerial photography or mapping.

3. Class 3 (High-Risk): Specialized operations like Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) flights, nighttime operations, or drone deliveries, which require special permits.

ARTICLE II: GOVERNANCE, REGISTRATION, AND LICENSING

SEC. 5. Inter-Agency Council on Unmanned Systems (IAC-US). - To ensure a holistic and harmonized regulatory approach, an Inter-Agency Council on Unmanned Systems is hereby created. It shall be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and shall be composed of the heads of the following agencies: from the DND, DILG, DTI, DICT, DOST, DA, NSC, CAAP, AFP, PNP, BFP, and PCG. The IAC-US shall be the primary body responsible for policymaking and overseeing the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. Mandatory Unmanned System Registration. All Unmanned Systems, except for UAS weighing less than 250 grams used for recreational purposes, must be registered in the Philippine Unmanned Systems Registry. The IAC - US shall establish this central registry. The CAAP shall manage the registration of UAS. The PCG shall manage the registration of UMS. The DOTr, in coordination with the PNP, shall manage the registration of UGS. Registration shall be renewable every three (3) years.

SEC. 7. Mandatory Operator Licensing. No person shall operate an unmanned system covered by mandatory registration without a valid Remote Operator's License. The IAC-US, through its member agencies, shall establish license categories based on the domain, class, and risk level of the operation. Applicants must pass knowledge examinations and practical skills assessments relevant to their intended domain of operation.

SEC. 8. Accreditation of Importers, Manufacturers, and Sellers. Any entity engaged in the importation, manufacturing, assembly, sale, or lease of drones in the Philippines must secure accreditation from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in coordination with the CAAP. Accredited entities are required to:

- a. Maintain a record of all sales, including the buyer's name, address, and the drone's serial number.
- b. Provide a point-of-sale safety briefing or leaflet to buyers, outlining the key provisions of this Act.
- c. Submit a quarterly sales report to the CAAP and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

ARTICLE III: RULES OF OPERATION

SECTION 9. General Operating Rules. All unmanned system operations shall adhere to the following unless otherwise authorized:

- a. Operate within prescribed operational boundaries.
- b. Maintain continuous visual line of sight (VLOS) with the system, unless specifically authorized for BVLOS or autonomous operations.
- c. For UAS, fly at a maximum altitude of 400 feet (122 meters) above ground level.
- d. Do not fly over crowds, schools, hospitals, or public gatherings.
- e. Do not operate a drone from a moving vehicle.
- f. Yield the right-of-way to all manned vehicles, vessels, or aircraft.
- g. Do not operate over crowds, critical infrastructure, or designated public gatherings without authorization.
- h. The operator must not be under the influence of alcohol or prohibited substances.

SEC. 10. Prohibited Acts. The following acts are declared unlawful:

- a. Operating a drone without a valid registration and/or operator's license.
- b. Import, manufacture, lease, and sell drones, parts, and their peripherals without accreditation.

- c. Sell or lease a drone to any individual without a valid Drone Operator's License.
- d. Weaponizing a drone or equipping it with any dangerous or hazardous material, including firearms, explosives, biological agents, or corrosive substances.
- e. Using a drone for the surveillance, harassment, or violation of the right to privacy of any individual as defined under Republic Act No. 10173 or the "Data Privacy Act of 2012."
- f. Using a drone to aid or commit any crime, including but not limited to smuggling, illegal drug trafficking, and reconnaissance for criminal or terrorist activities.
- g. Interfering with the operations of law enforcement, emergency response, or disaster relief personnel.
- h. Hacking, spoofing, jamming, or illegally interfering with the command, control, or navigation signal of a registered drone.
- i. Operating a drone while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- j. Similar and analogous acts using drones in the commission of illegal activities.

SEC. 11. Prohibited and Restricted Zones. It is strictly prohibited to operate a drone:

- a. Within a 10-kilometer radius of any airport or airfield.
- b. Over Critical Infrastructure and designated national security areas, including but not limited to military bases, Malacañang Palace, and major government installations.
- c. Over areas where a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in effect, as declared by the CAAP for emergencies, major events, or public safety and security operations.

SEC. 12. Protection of Privacy. The use of a drone for surveillance, eavesdropping, or capturing images, videos, or audio of any person or private property without explicit consent is strictly prohibited and shall be punishable under this Act, in addition to penalties provided under Republic Act No. 10173, or the "Data Privacy Act of 2012".

SEC. 13. Regulation on Drone Modification. Any modification to a drone that alters its flight performance, weight, or communication systems must be declared and approved by the CAAP. The weaponization of a drone, by attaching firearms, explosives, biological agents, hazardous materials, or any lethal or non-lethal weapon, is absolutely prohibited.

ARTICLE IV: ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS

SEC. 14. Role of Local Government Units. - Consistent with the Local Government Code, LGUs may enact ordinances to regulate the operation of drones in areas of local jurisdiction, such as public parks, plazas, and heritage sites. Such ordinances shall be supplementary to this Act and its IRR and must not contradict the national policies and standards set by the CAAP and other national government agencies.

SEC. 15. Use for National Security and Law Enforcement. - Duly constituted government agencies, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), may operate unmanned systems for national security, intelligence, law enforcement, border control, and counter-terrorism operations. The use of such systems, including the employment of counter-unmanned system technology, shall be governed by their existing rules of engagement and protocols established in the IRR.

SEC. 16. Use for Disaster and Emergency Response. - Government agencies such as the NDRRMC, PHIVOLCS, BFP, NAMRIA, and PCG are authorized to deploy and operate unmanned systems as a critical component of disaster risk assessment, monitoring, search and rescue, and post-disaster recovery operations. They may apply for exemptions from standard operating rules during a state of calamity, provided safety is ensured through coordination with the IAC-US.

SEC. 17. Use for Research and Development. - The State shall encourage the use of unmanned systems for scientific research and technological development. The Department of Science and Technology (DOST), in coordination with the IAC-US, shall:

- a. Establish designated special-use areas for safe testing and experimentation.
- b. Develop a streamlined process for issuing experimental or research permits to accredited academic and scientific institutions.
- c. Promote partnerships between the government, academe, and industry to advance local unmanned systems technology.

SEC. 18. Use of Drones for Agricultural Purposes. The use of drones for agricultural activities is hereby recognized as a vital tool for enhancing food security and modernizing the agricultural sector. Such use shall be governed by the following:

- a. Authorization and Scope. The State shall support and regulate the use of agricultural drones for purposes including, but not limited to:
 - 1) Precision Dispensing in applying fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, seeds, or water.
 - 2) Crop Management in conducting crop health monitoring, soil analysis, irrigation assessment, and yield estimation through multispectral or thermal imaging
 - 3) Livestock Monitoring to oversee livestock location, health, and grazing patterns.
- b. Special Permit and Operator Certification. The operation of a drone for dispensing any chemical, biological, or agricultural substance shall require a Special Agricultural UAS Permit from the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP).
- c. Operators must obtain a Special Agricultural Drone Operator Certificate in addition to their Remote Pilot License. This certification requires specialized training in the safe handling and application of agrochemicals, spray drift mitigation, and the operation of drone-mounted dispersal systems, conducted by training organizations accredited by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA).
- d. Operational Safety and Coordination. All agricultural drone operations involving chemical dispensing must adhere to safety protocols established by the FPA and the DA, which shall include:

- 1) Buffer Zones: Maintaining mandatory buffer zones from residential areas, schools, bodies of water, and other sensitive areas to prevent contamination.
- 2) Public Notification: Providing prior notification to the local government unit or barangay before conducting large-scale spraying operations.
- 3) Extended Visual Line of Sight (EVLOS): To facilitate operations over large plantations, flight operations beyond the direct sight of the remote pilot may be allowed, provided that trained visual observers are utilized to keep the drone in sight and maintain communication with the pilot, subject to CAAP approval.

SEC. 19. Enforcement Authority. The PNP and other deputized law enforcement agencies are hereby authorized to enforce the provisions of this Act. They shall have the authority, but not limited to:

- a. Demand the presentation of the drone's registration and the operator's license during an inspection.
- b. Order the immediate landing and grounding of any drone believed to be operating in violation of this Act.
- c. Seize, confiscate, and impound any drone operated in violation of this Act or used in the commission of a crime without prejudice to the handling and processing of the drone and all data saved therein of evidentiary value.
- d. Employ counter-drone technology in situations where a drone poses an imminent threat to public safety, national security, or the security of a high-value installation or event, subject to existing rules of engagement protocols and standard operational procedures.

SEC. 20. Counter-Drone Measures. The PNP, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and other authorized national security agencies are hereby authorized to use reasonable and necessary force, including approved counter-drone technologies, to detect, identify, disable, or neutralize any drone that poses an imminent threat to public safety, critical infrastructure, or national security. The use of such measures shall be governed by protocols to be established in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

ARTICLE V: PENAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 21. Fines and Penalties. Any natural or juridical person found in violation of the provisions of this Act shall be subject to the following penalties. The PNP and other deputized law enforcement agencies are hereby empowered to impose the following administrative fines and sanctions for violations of its regulations promulgated in accordance with this Act:

- a. Any person operating an unregistered drone required to be registered, or for failure to mark the drone with its registration number, shall be fined from Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000) to One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000) and temporary suspension of the operator's license.
- b. Any person operating a drone without a valid Remote Pilot License shall be fined One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000) to Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (P200,000) and disqualified from applying for a license for a period of one (1) year.
- c. Any person violating the General Operating Rules under Section 9 shall be fined Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000) to Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000) per violation.
- d. Any person who failed to comply with the accreditation requirements for importers, manufacturers, and sellers shall be fined from Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000) to One Million Pesos (P1,000,000) and suspension or revocation of the entity's business permit and accreditation.
- e. Any person who willfully operates a drone in a Prohibited Zone or in a manner that violates the conditions of a Restricted Zone shall be punished by prisión correccional in its medium and maximum periods and a fine of Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (P200,000) to Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000).
- f. Any person who uses a drone to commit acts of surveillance or recording in violation of Section 10 shall be punished by prisión correccional in its minimum and medium periods and a fine of One Hundred Thousand Pesos

- (P100,000) to Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000). This is without prejudice to any separate liability under Republic Act No.10173 (Data Privacy Act) or Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act).
- g. The act of attaching any firearm, explosive, chemical, biological, radiological, or any other deadly weapon or hazardous material to a drone shall be punished by reclusión temporal in its maximum period to reclusión perpetua and a fine of One Million Pesos (P1,000,000) to Two Million Pesos (P2,000,000).
 - h. Any person who uses a drone to intentionally interfere with the operations of law enforcement officers, firefighters, or other emergency responders shall be punished by prisión correccional in its maximum period and a fine of Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000).
 - i. Any person who uses drone to unlawfully gather, collect, record, or transmit information, images, or electronic data from any military installation, critical infrastructure, or government facility for purposes of espionage or to aid any foreign power or entity hostile to the Republic of the Philippines shall be punished by reclusión perpetua and a fine of Five Million Pesos (P5,000,000) to Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000).
 - j. If the offender is a public officer or employee, the penalty of perpetual absolute disqualification from public office shall be imposed in addition to the imprisonment and fine.
 - k. If the offender is a foreign national, they shall be prosecuted accordingly and deported immediately after serving the sentence without further proceedings.

SEC. 22. Use of a Drone as a Special Aggravating Circumstance. In any crime punishable under the Revised Penal Code or any special penal law, the use of a drone in the planning, commission, facilitation, or concealment of said crime shall be considered a special aggravating circumstance. When this circumstance is present, the penalty to be imposed shall be the maximum period of the penalty prescribed by law for the offense committed.

ARTICLE VI: IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS

SEC. 23. Authority to Promulgate Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The Department of Transportation (DOTr), through the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), as the lead implementing agency, is hereby mandated to formulate, in public consultation with relevant stakeholders, the rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

The IRR shall be prepared in coordination with the following government agencies:

- a. Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- b. Department of National Defense (DND);
- c. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- d. Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT);
- e. Department of Agriculture (DA);
- f. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- g. National Privacy Commission (NPC);
- h. Philippine National Police (PNP);
- i. Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP); and
- j. Other agencies as may be deemed necessary.

SEC. 24. Scope and Content of the IRR. The IRR shall be promulgated within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act and shall provide detailed procedures and standards for the following matters:

- a. **Registration and Marking:** The procedure for drone registration, renewal, transfer of ownership, de-registration, fees, and the specific requirements for displaying registration markings.
- b. **Licensing and Training:** The curriculum, standards, and procedures for the aeronautical knowledge examination, practical skills assessment, and issuance of Remote Pilot Licenses for various categories and classes of operations. It shall also establish standards for accredited drone pilot training organizations.

c. **Airspace and Flight Rules:** The precise definition and publication of Prohibited and Restricted Zones, and the process for establishing Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) for emergencies or special events.

d. **Special Operations Permits:** The application process and safety requirements for Class 3 (High-Risk) operations, including Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS), nighttime operations, and drone delivery services.

e. **Law Enforcement Protocols:** The rules of engagement and standard operating procedures for the PNP and other law enforcement agencies in the inspection, seizure, and disposition of drones, as well as the authorized use of counter-drone technologies.

f. **Governmental Use Protocols:** The specific guidelines for drone use by the BFP, PNP, AFP, and other government agencies, including inter-agency coordination during joint operations.

g. **Privacy and Data Protection:** The specific guidelines to ensure compliance with the Data Privacy Act, particularly for drones equipped with advanced surveillance and data-capturing technologies.

h. **Accreditation and Sales Monitoring:** The detailed requirements and procedures for the accreditation of drone importers, manufacturers, and sellers, and the mechanism for reporting sales data.

i. **Fines and Penalties:** A detailed schedule of administrative fines and a clear procedure for the adjudication of administrative offenses.

SEC. 25. Retroactivity Clause. This Act shall have retroactive effect. All drone owners who have not yet registered their drones or obtained permits to operate their drones are given six (6) months from the effectivity of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act to register and obtain permits without fear of sanction.

SEC. 26. Separability Clause. If for any reason, any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such parts not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 27. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 28. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,