

Federal Decree by Law No. (26) of 2022
Regulating the Civil Use of Drones and Activities Affiliated With It

We Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates,

- Having reviewed the Constitution;
- Federal Law No. (1) of 1972 Concerning the Competences of the Ministries and Power of the Ministers, as amended;
- Federal Law No. (20) of 1991 Promulgating the Civil Aviation Law;
- Federal Law No. (4) of 1996 on the General Civil Aviation Authority, as amended;
- Federal Law No. (3) of 2003 on the Regulation of the Telecommunications Sector, as amended;
- Federal Law No. (14) of 2016 on the Violations and Administrative Penalties in the Federal Government;
- Federal Decree Law No. (20) of 2020 on Standards and Metrology;
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law;
- Federal Decree Law No. (37) of 2021 on the Establishment of the Commercial Register; and
- Based on the proposal submitted by the Minister of Economy and approved by the Cabinet,

Hereby Enact the Following Decree Law:

Article (1)

Definitions

For the purpose of applying the provisions of this Decree-Law, the following words and expressions shall bear the meanings assigned next to each of them respectively, unless the context requires otherwise:

The State : The United Arab Emirates

The Emirate : Any emirate of the state

The GCAA	: The General Civil Aviation Authority
The Competent Authority	: The local authority in charge of civil aviation affairs in the Emirate
The Security Authorities	: Federal or local government security and military authorities
The Government Entities	: The federal and local ministries, agencies, institutions, and government departments
The Person	: Natural or legal person
Aviation	: Taking off and staying in the air through the air reactions that are not reflected from the land surface, until the flying object touches down again on the ground
Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)	: Any machine, vehicle or similar object that can fly without a pilot on board, is controlled remotely or autonomously, its control systems are considered part thereof, and is used for civil purposes
The Airspace	: The UAE's horizontal and vertical airspace
The Airways	: The specified routes in the airspace in which UAVs are authorized to fly
The Airport	: A specified area on the surface of land, water or facilities, that meets all applicable international standards and requirements in this regard, is designated for the landing, take-off, stay and maintenance of UAVs, and includes the buildings, towers, runways, devices, equipment, systems and other objects connected therewith
The Registration	: The official register created in accordance with Article No. (4) of this Decree-Law, and which contains the data of UAVs across the UAE, in addition to the data of permits and certificates issued, and the operations carried out, with regard thereto
The License	: An official document issued by the local government entity in charge of licensing economic activities in each emirate, and which allows the practice of activities in relation to the trading of UAVs and related

- activities
- The Trading** : All activities of sale, possession, chartering, exploitation, import, export, re-export, stage freight, transit freight or transport between ports
- The Operations** : All operations of use and operation UAVs and their operational experiments and related activities, including operations for recreational, commercial, service and research purposes
- Related Activities** : Activities relating to UAVs such as the design, manufacturing, assembly, modification, checking or maintenance, developing simulation systems, training and qualification, building infrastructure, airports and fuel and energy supply stations or other activities in relation to UAVs, as determined under a decision of the GCAA in coordination with the competent authorities
- The Permit** : The approval issued by the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be, whereby the owner or operator is permitted to use or operate the UAV or perform any relevant operations
- The Certificate** : An official document that proves fulfillment of applicable conditions, requirements and procedures in relation to UAV, and is issued by the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be
- The UAV Information Map** : A map that shows the approved, restricted and prohibited areas for a UAV, and contains flight range information and restrictions
- Approved Areas** : Areas with specific dimensions and in which UAVs are allowed to be used and operated for aviation without any restrictions, and in accordance with the UAV information map
- The Restricted Area** : Areas with specific dimensions and in which UAVs are allowed to be used and operated for aviation based on specific conditions, and in accordance with the UAV information map
- The Prohibited Area** : Areas with specific dimensions and in which aviation is prohibited

- for a UAV, according to the UAV information map
- The Operator** : The person authorized to carry out any of the operation activities in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law and the resolution issued in implementation hereof
- UAV Pilot** : The person who is qualified and authorized in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law to operate a UAV
- The Observer** : A person qualified in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law, and is assigned by the Operator to assist the UAV pilot operate it safely or to oversee UAV operations
- Crew Member** : : Any person qualified in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law and is assigned by the operator to carry out duties in relation to UAV systems throughout the aviation time
- The Owner** : The person who owns the UAV or its systems, infrastructure, airports or fuel supply stations
- Safety Certificate** : The document issued by the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be, whereby the operator is permitted to carry out operation activities.
- Acquisition** : Keeping the UAV within the spatial scope specified in the permit, including possession and custody.
- Independent Safety Assessor** : The person authorized in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law to verify the extent to which the owner or operator satisfies the safety conditions, requirements and procedures approved by the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be

Article (2)

Objectives of the Decree-Law

This Decree-Law aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Ensure the safe use of UAVs and maintain the security and safety of the UAE's airspace;

2. Regulate and control air navigation services for UAVs;
3. Manage, regulate and monitor the operations of UAVs and related activities in the UAE in a safe and effective manner, and standardize relevant the systems and procedures in the UAE; and
4. Minimize the risks arising from the UAV operation and determine the competences of the relevant bodies in this regard.

Article (3)

Scope of Application

1. The provisions of this Decree-Law shall apply to all types of UAVs and related activities in the UAE, including the free zones.
2. The provisions of this Decree-Law shall not apply to:
 - a. UAVs that are used or operated by the security authorities;
 - b. UAVs that are excluded under a Cabinet resolution based on the GCAA's recommendation; and
 - c. UAVs that are used by government entities and are excluded under by a Cabinet resolution based on the GCAA's recommendation.

Article (4)

Competences of Gcaa and the Competent Authority

1. The GCAA shall, in coordination with the competent authority, perform the following functions:
 - a. Create a unified register for registration of UAVs owned by persons and government entities across the UAE, specify the data and mechanisms for registration therein, and connect such a register with all relevant government entities.
 - b. Determine and approve the conditions and procedures for issuance of permits and certificates necessary to carry out operation activities.
 - c. Define and approve controls and standards for the safe operation of UAVs.
 - d. Develop and approve security, safety and aviation environment regulations and services for UAV systems, manage and evaluate risks arising from the UAV operation,

and issue the necessary guidebooks to ensure safe use.

- e. Define and approve the categories, conditions and procedures for issuance of qualification certificates for the operator, UAV pilot, the Observer and crew member, depending on the type of UAV and its control systems.
 - f. Determine and approve the permitted heights and horizontal range for carrying out operation activities, including operational experiments, provided that the same does not affect the air navigation operations of civil and military aircraft.
 - g. Define and approve the approved, restricted and prohibited areas, in which the use of UAV is permitted, develop the UAV information map and define and announce the publication procedures.
 - h. Approve the air ranges and airways in which UAVs are allowed to fly.
 - i. Determine and approve the types and categories of UAV permitted to be operated, the activities of use and the conditions, requirements and specifications required to be met in this respect.
 - j. Determine and approve the conditions and measures in relation to preserving the environment when using UAVs.
 - k. Any other competencies or powers entrusted thereto by the Cabinet.
2. The GCAA or the competent authority shall, as the case may be, perform the following functions:
- a. Receive application for registration of UAVs for persons and government entities and record the same in the register.
 - b. Issue the necessary permits and certificates to carry out operation activities in accordance with the applicable conditions, requirements and procedures, including:
 - 1. Issuing the operator's certificate according to the classifications of activities mentioned in Article (6);
 - 2. Issuing a qualification certificate for the operator, UAV pilot, Observer and crew member; and
 - 3. Issuing certificates for design, manufacturing and maintenance of UAV.
 - c. Issue certificates for the training and qualification bodies on UAV systems and their use.

- d. Issue the necessary approvals for the establishment of airports for UAVs, engineering designs and plans, stations, facilities and infrastructure required for them.
 - e. Issue certificates for safety assessment bodies and accreditation of independent safety assessors.
 - f. Inspect the permit holders and certificate holders to ensure their compliance with the provisions of this Decree-Law and the decisions and permits issued in implementation thereof.
3. The competent authority shall make all data, certificates and permits issued by it available to the GCAA and record the same in the unified register.
 4. The GCAA shall, in coordination with the relevant local authorities, issue the necessary permits and certificates in the event of overlapping operation activities between the emirates of the UAE.

Article (5)

Competences of Government Entities

1. The local government entity in charge of licensing economic activities shall issue licenses for UAV trading activities and related activities, and shall inspect the extent to which licensees comply with the provisions of this Decree-Law and the decisions issued for its implementation within the limits of its functions.
2. The customs authorities in the UAE shall ensure that there is a product status statement or a certificate of conformity with standard specifications when releasing any UAVs at any of the customs ports.
3. The Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority shall, in coordination with the GCAA, set conditions, requirements and procedures for the use of radio systems for UAVs and their systems in the UAE.
4. The Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology shall develop the mandatory regulations and standards (the technical regulations) of UAVs and shall grant and supervise its conformity certificate.
5. The Cabinet may, based on the GCAA's proposal, in coordination with the competent authority, stipulate that in order to grant any of the permits stipulated in this

Decree-Law, an insurance policy shall be submitted with an insurance company operating in the UAE against any risks that may result from the use of the UAV and its related operating activities.

Article (6)

Use of UAVs

1. UAVs may be used and operated in the UAE to practice any of the following activities:
 - a. Commercial activities;
 - b. Service activities;
 - c. Scientific, research and experimental activities;
 - d. Recreational activities, hobbies and air sports;
 - e. Providing any public services by government entities and carrying out the process of control, inspection and follow-up or other activities in relation to the areas within its competencies; or
 - f. Any other activities determined by the Cabinet.
2. The terms of use and operation of the aforementioned activities shall be determined by a decision of the GCAA in coordination with the competent authority. The competent authority may add any other conditions to these activities.

Article (7)

UAV Registration

1. The owner shall get the UAE registered with the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be, before carrying out operation activities. It shall also notify the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be, if it wishes to remove its registration, in accordance with the conditions, requirements and procedures approved by it.
2. It shall be prohibited to use or operate any UAV before it is registered in the register, and it shall clearly bear registration numbers or symbols thereon or through any other means specified by the GCAA to identify it, in order to track and distinguish it from other UAVs.

Article (8)

Operation at Restricted and Prohibited Areas

1. Operations, including the operational experiments, shall be prohibited at restricted or prohibited areas.
2. As an exception to the provisions of Clause (1) of this Article, the GCAA or the competent authority may, as the case may be, allow government entities and companies to operate UAVs in restricted or prohibited areas for purposes in relation to the public interest, after obtaining the approvals of the security authorities.

Article (9)

Prohibited Acts or Activities

It shall be prohibited for any person to perform any of the following acts or activities before obtaining a license or permit from the GCAA, the competent authority or the government entity, as the case may be:

1. Flying, using or co-piloting a UAV, performing or monitoring operations or any activity in relation to its operating systems.
2. Flying over restricted or prohibited areas.
3. Installing or equipping UAVs with cameras or any other devices or equipment that may be used for filming or recording.
4. Making a modification to the UAV, its parts or systems that changes its registered functions and specifications.
5. Carrying out any of the trading activities stipulated in this Decree-Law, including importing, introducing, exporting, re-exporting, selling, renting, exploiting, possessing or acquiring UAVs or any of their parts or systems.
6. Designing, manufacturing, assembling, modifying, examining or maintaining UAVs and their systems, developing their simulation systems, providing training regarding flying the same or establishing their service centers.
7. Establishing the infrastructure for operating UAVs, constructing or operating airports for UAVs and their stations or making any modification thereto.
8. Any other acts or activities determined by the GCAA or the competent authority, as the

case may be, and taking into account coordination between them to ensure the standardization of these acts and activities.

Article (10)

Obligations of the Operator and the Like

The operator, UAV pilot, Observer and crew members shall, as the case may be, comply with the following requirements:

1. Abide by the airways specified in the permit, as well as the heights and horizontal range determined by the GCAA in coordination with the competent authority.
2. Comply with the conditions, requirements and procedures specified in the permits for practicing training operations or operational experiments in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law and the resolution issued in implementation hereof.
3. Adhere to safety conditions and standards when using airports or places designated for take-off and landing of UAVs in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law and the resolution issued in implementation hereof.
4. Not carry out operations, including operational experiments, except in the approved area.
5. Take into account the sufficient safety and security distance to protect individuals, property, civil and military aircraft, installations, buildings and other UAVs from the risk of collision.
6. Inform the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be, in the event of the UAV being lost or being flown outside the approved area and follow the instructions issued in this regard.
7. Adhere to the controls and standards for the safe operation of UAVs in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law and the resolution issued in implementation hereof.
8. Not make any substantial changes to the UAV without obtaining the approval of the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be.
9. Any other obligations determined by the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be.

Article (11)

Safety Certificate

1. The operator shall obtain a safety certificate before using the UAV or its systems, operating the airport for the UAV and fuel and energy supply stations for the UAE or after completing the construction of the infrastructure.
2. This certificate shall be issued in accordance with the conditions, requirements and procedures approved by the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be. This certificate shall be deemed valid for the period specified therefor, unless it is revoked for any of the reasons specified by a decision issued by the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be.

Article (12)

Issuance and Assignment of the Permit or Certificate

1. The GCAA or the competent authority shall, as the case may be, issue the permit or certificate, and the GCAA shall determine the data contained therein.
2. The permit holder or the holder of the certificate shall perform the contents of the permit and the certificate issued thereto.
3. The permit and certificate may not be assigned or transferred to a third party without obtaining the necessary approvals as determined by the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be.
4. The GCAA or the competent authority may, as the case may be, refuse to grant or renew the permit and may restrict it with any restrictions, for considerations it deems appropriate.

Article (13)

Withdrawal or Revocation of the Permit or Certificate

1. The GCAA or the competent authority may, as the case may be, temporarily withdraw the permit or certificate issued pursuant to the provisions of this Decree-Law and the resolution issued in implementation hereof, or revoke the same before their expiration

date.

2. A decision by the GCAA shall, in coordination with the competent authority, determine the cases in which the permit or certificate may be temporarily withdrawn or revoked, the procedures to be followed by the party against whom the temporary withdrawal or revocation decision was issued and the grievance mechanism against the said decision.
3. The permit holder may request the revocation of the permit on its own while continuing to possess the UAV within the spatial range specified in the permit. The competent authority or GCAA may, as the case may be, grant it a time limit to dispose of the same.

Article (14)

Death, Incapacitation, Dissolution or Bankruptcy of Permit Holder

If the permit holder dies, loses its capacity, is dissolved or is declared bankrupt, the heirs, guardian, trustee, custodian, liquidator or bankruptcy trustee shall notify the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be, within a maximum period of (60) sixty days from the date of death, loss of capacity, dissolution, or declaration of bankruptcy. Furthermore, the heirs or legal representative may, as the case may be, dispose of the UAV for any of them or third party, provided that the provisions and conditions stipulated in this Decree-Law and the resolution issued in implementation hereof are taken into account.

Article (15)

Penalties

Imposing the penalties stipulated in this Decree-Law shall not prejudice any more severe penalty stipulated in any other law.

Article (16)

A fine of not less than (AED 50,000) fifty thousand dirhams and not more than (AED 500,000) five hundred thousand dirhams shall be imposed on whoever:

1. Performs operation activities or operational experiments before registering the UAV with the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be, or after the same is

deregistered.

2. Flies or causes the UAV to fly without permit or in a manner that jeopardizes the lives or property of third parties.
3. Performs the operation activities or operational experiments of the UAV or its systems or the operation of the airport for the UAE or after the completion of the construction of the infrastructure, prior to obtaining the safety certificate.
4. Makes any substantial changes to the UAV without obtaining the approval of the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be.
5. Uses the UAV in a manner that breaches the privacy or values of the family life of individuals.

Article (17)

Whoever engages in any of the following activities before obtaining a license or permit from the GCAA, the competent authority or the government entity shall, as the case may be, be punished with a fine of not less than (AED 100,000) one hundred thousand dirhams and not more than (AED 2,000,000) two million dirhams.

1. Design, manufacture, assemble, modify, test or maintain UAVs and their systems or develop, provide training or qualify simulation systems.
2. Carry out any of the acts of trading stipulated in this Decree-Law, including importing, introducing, exporting, re-exporting, selling, renting, exploiting, possessing or acquiring UAVs or any of their parts or systems.
3. Establish the infrastructure or establish a special airport to carry out the operations of the UAVs or make modifications thereto.
4. Supply UAVs with fuel or energy.

Article (18)

1. Whoever commits any of the following acts shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not less than (6) six months and not more than (5) five years and / or a fine of not less than (AED 50,000) fifty thousand dirhams and not more than (AED 1,000,000) one million dirhams:

- a. Uses the UAV in a manner that jeopardizing the security and safety of airspace or air navigation.
 - b. Operates UAVs in restricted or prohibited areas without a permit from the GCAA or the competent authority, as the case may be.
 - c. Unlawfully seizes the UAVs.
 - d. Takes control of a UAV or hack into its operating systems illegally with the intent to commit a crime.
 - e. Unlawfully installs a dangerous or prohibited device or substance on a UAV.
 - f. Installs any devices or equipment with the intent to collect information and data illegally, or photograph facilities, buildings and restricted or prohibited areas, in cases other than those authorized by law or without obtaining approval from the GCAA or the competent authority.
 - g. Deliberately conceals violations and accidents in relation to UAVs or incidents affecting the safety and security of airspace.
2. If the commission of any of the crimes stipulated in the previous clause results in damage to funds or property, the same shall be considered an aggravating circumstance.
 3. Using the UAVs when committing any crime not stipulated in this Decree-Law shall also be deemed an aggravating circumstance.

Article (19)

The penalties prescribed for the crimes stipulated in this Decree-Law shall be doubled in the event of recidivism.

When rendering a judgment of conviction, the court may, in addition to the penalty prescribed for the crime, order to impose one or more of the following penalties, as the case may be:

1. Revoke the license or permit for a period not exceeding one year with regard to any of the crimes stipulated in Article (16).
2. Close down the facility for a period not exceeding one year with regard to any of the crimes stipulated in Article (17).
3. Confiscate the UAV and the seized items that are obtained as a result of the crime or

used therein or that would have been used therein with regard to any of the crimes stipulated in Article (16), Article (17.1 and 17.2) and Article (18), without prejudice to the rights of bona fide third parties.

Article (21)

Administrative Violations and Penalties

Violations and administrative penalties for acts committed in violation of the provisions of this Decree-Law and the resolution issued in implementation hereof, the entities imposing penalties and the mechanism for grievance against them and the entity competent to collect administrative fines shall be determined by a Cabinet resolution based on the GCAA's proposal in coordination with the competent authority.

Article (22)

Conciliation

1. The Public Prosecution may enter into conciliation in respect of any of the crimes stipulated in Articles (16) and (17) of this Decree-Law before referring the case to the competent court against the payment of an amount not less than half the minimum limit and not more than half the maximum limit for the fine prescribed for the crime. Conciliation may be made after referring the criminal case to the competent court against the payment of an amount not less than two-thirds of the minimum limit and not more than two-thirds of the maximum limit of the fine prescribed for the crime, unless it is proved that the intent of committing it is to harm the security and interests of the UAE.
2. In all cases, the criminal case shall be terminated by conciliation, and the conciliation shall have no effect on the rights of the victim of the crime to resort to the civil courts to claim compensation.

Article (23)

Capacity of Judicial Enforcement Officers

1. The employees, who are named under a resolution of the Minister of Justice or the head

of the local judicial authority in agreement with the chairman of the Board of Directors of the GCAA or the government entity, as the case may be, shall have the capacity of judicial enforcement officers with regard to crimes committed in violation of the provisions of this Decree-Law or the resolution issued in implementation hereof, within the scope of the competencies of each of them.

2. The judicial enforcement officer shall have the right to seize the UAV and its parts in the event that it is confiscated and has not obtained a permit until the necessary permits are issued. A resolution from the GCAA, in coordination with the competent authority, shall determine the procedures for seizure and release of the UAV.

Article (24)

The Cabinet shall, based on the proposal of the Minister of Finance, issue a resolution specifying the fees necessary to apply the provisions of this Decree-Law.

Article (25)

Delegation of any Competencies

The Cabinet may delegate any of the GCAA's competencies to any competent authority or other government entity or may delegate any of the same to the private sector in accordance with the controls it deems appropriate.

Article (26)

Every person, who owns, possesses, trades or operates a UAV, shall adjust its own affairs in compliance with the provisions of this Decree-Law and the resolution issued in implementation hereof, not later than (3) three months from the date of entry into force of this Decree Law or upon the expiration of its license term, whichever is earlier. The affairs adjustment period may be extended for similar periods by a decision of the Board of Directors of the GCAA.

Article (27)

Executive Decisions

The GCAA shall, in coordination with the competent authority, issue the necessary decisions to apply the provisions of this Decree-Law.

Article (28)

Repeal

Any provision that goes against or conflicts with the provisions of this Decree-Law shall hereby be repealed.

Article (29)

Publication and Entry into Force

This Decree-Law shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall enter into force (3) three months following its publication date.

Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates

Issued by us at the Presidential Palace - Abu Dhabi:

Date: 30 Safar, 1444 AH

Corresponding to: 26 September, 2022 AD