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The demands of future operations and the promise of non- or less-lethal weapons / Mirko Sossai

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Abstract:	<p>Non-lethal technology continues to attract the interest of States, individually and in the context of regional and universal organisations. Peace operations deployed in asymmetric threat environments are in need of equipment more suited to the requirements of such operations: non- or less-lethal weapons might offer a valuable alternative to firearms in certain scenarios, particularly when armed forces are involved in the protection of the civilian population as well as in law enforcement activities. It is important to distinguish between conduct of hostilities and law enforcement scenarios, as different legal paradigms apply with regard to the use of armed force. Moreover, whereas under the latter, there is at least an implicit obligation under human rights law to equip State officials with less-lethal weapons, the prevalent view is that no such duty exists under the former. What characterises the most recent developments in the field of the regulation of non- or less-lethal weapons is the effort to offer practical guidance as concerns testing, procurement, training and monitoring, on the assumption that, in a law-enforcement situation, the cumulative principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and precaution govern the use of force by State agents.</p>
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