



Unmanned Systems
Systèmes Télécommandés

CANADA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
UNMANNED SYSTEMS CANADA CONDEMNS GATWICK AIRPORT DRONE
INTRUSION**

(OTTAWA): Unmanned Systems Canada/Systèmes Télécommandés Canada (USC-STC), the national industry association representing the unmanned vehicle systems sector, condemns the deliberate, illegal and irresponsible use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (drones) to disrupt commercial flights at Britain's Gatwick Airport.

Since Wednesday local time, drones flying in the immediate vicinity of the airport have caused the diversion of many flights and the cancellation of nearly 700 other planned commercial flights so far. It is anticipated Gatwick will remain closed Friday December 21, as much of the world heads into its heaviest annual travel period. Many thousands of commuters have been severely inconvenienced and frightened by the incident. In addition to the inconvenience, the disruption has massive financial implications.

"As an association, we are appalled at what has been unfolding in Gatwick," says USC Chair Mark Aruja. "Unmanned Systems Canada has long worked closely with Transport Canada to help develop the regulatory framework to ensure that flights in Canadian airspace are safe and rules are followed.

"Every day, hundreds of **responsible** operators in Canada utilize drone technologies for good. Lives have been saved through Search and Rescue operations, the health of crops and wildlife can be monitored and improved, climate changes documented, and first responders are able to quickly assess situations following a disaster," says Aruja. "In addition, human beings can now avoid risky jobs and let drones do work that is often characterized as Dirty, Dangerous, or Dull."

Unfortunately, the overwhelmingly positive contributions that drones make on a daily basis – both in Canada and globally – can be undermined by a single rogue incident like this, which in no way reflects the vast majority of operators who take safety, regulations, and separation from manned aircraft very seriously.

But, says Aruja, Gatwick should also serve as a warning: Canada must be prepared to respond should a similar event occur in Canadian airspace.

"Technologies are now available to counter the malicious use of drone technologies, and we encourage joint efforts between industry, NavCanada, Transport Canada and

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Canada's national non-profit association representing public and private innovation in unmanned vehicle systems
Association nationale canadienne sans but lucratif pour l'innovation dans les secteurs public et privé en matière de
systèmes de véhicules télécommandés

airport authorities to protect Canadians and the international commerce which relies upon the continued safe management of our airspace.”

In addition, Aruja stresses that the time has come for the release of new standards for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) operators across Canada, whether professional or recreational.

“Effective training is a key to ensuring that safety risks are minimized in our aviation professions. We call for Minister Hajdu to move forward with our proposal to establish a national certification program for drone operators. Furthermore...we call upon Minister Garneau to take no further delays in promulgating the regulations which we believe are central to safe operations, and underpinning the Canadian drone industry.”

Mark Aruja is available for media comment on this issue. He can be reached at 613 882 3077 or by email @ mark.aruja@unmannedsystems.ca

ABOUT USC: Unmanned Systems Canada / Systèmes Télécommandés Canada (USC-STC) is a not-for-profit association representing entrepreneurs, businesses, students academia, industry, and government organizations working in the aerial, ground and marine remotely-piloted and unmanned vehicle systems sector.