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España

# The anti-drone system used by the Interior Ministry to seize drugs and telephones at prisons

Incidents with these drones in prisons have multiplied in the past year. Ángel Luis Ortiz's department is finalizing a plan to neutralize them.



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It's called '**EnforceAir**' and it's the counter-drone system that the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions, under the Ministry of [Interior](#), that is being tested in different prisons to neutralize the unmanned aerial vehicles that have been trying, at least for the last two years, to bring prohibited objects inside the facilities. This has become [a booming enterprise](#) whereby prisoners have managed to receive all kinds of illegal goods in prison, including **drugs, cell phones, cash, alcoholic beverages, medicines, and more...**

Penitentiary sources informed this newspaper that the Ángel Luis Ortiz's department has tested this device for a month in the penitentiary center of Málaga I, in Alhaurín de la Torre and, given its success, will expand the use of this system, manufactured by the Israeli company **D-Fend Solutions**, to the prisons of **Ceuta, Melilla and Cádiz**, where drone sightings have also been constant. This measure is part [of a plan finalized by the Prisons](#) to put an end to the small UAVs in Spanish prisons, as indicated by the same sources.

The use of these devices in prisons has doubled compared to last year. According to the latest data from the General Secretariat, as of July this year, 33 drone incidents have been recorded – 30 sighted and 3 impeded – compared to 14 in all of 2021.

## **Taking cyber control**

“We are studying different options for detection, disablement or mitigation of drones. Tests have been carried out in Alhaurín with this system and now they are going to be conducted in other prisons”, explain the Prison officials. Specifically, 'EnforceAir' is designed to [control the threat of drones](#) by means of **a cyber takeover technology**, explain the experts consulted by [THE OBJECTIVE](#).

This autonomous 'anti-drone' system can detect, locate and identify drones with GPS precision, and then take full control of the drone. The EnforceAir system has three deployment options: vehicular —including military and civilian vehicles—, tactical —at high altitude and ground level— and stationary —at high altitude and for long range. In the case of the Malaga prison, the system has been placed on the roof of the main building, as can be seen in the photo that illustrates this article.

The drones, in addition to carrying different types of loads, can also be **“armed or self-destructing”**, experts warn. As such, they can cause serious damage to facilities. Nevertheless, what worries prison officials the most is that they could introduce **weapons**, although no cases have been registered so far. The majority of seizures are of drugs, cell phones and alcohol.



### Two bottles of whiskey



The last drone seized by the National Police at the Cádiz prisons | Inside

Without going any further, on November 18, the National Police mitigated the smuggling of [a high-end mobile phone and two mini bottles of whiskey](#), perfectly packaged and attached to a drone, into **the El Puerto de Santa Maria (Cádiz)** prison. A police patrol was watching the perimeter security of these prisons when, in a path near the facilities, it noticed three individuals in a parked vehicle. Upon inspection of the [car](#), they discovered the drone, its controller, three batteries, fishing line with four loops, and the package with the load.

Everything was ready for the drone to take off to deliver these goods into the prison. The three individuals, who had no type of license to fly the drone, are being investigated for infringement of the AESA and Citizen Security Protection regulations. A week earlier, **in the Botafuegos prison**, in Algeciras, another failed attempt was also noted, according to the officials at **ACAIP-UGT** Prison officials intercepted a drone flying over the prison that, upon

losing control, landed on a neighboring terrace. The device carried **hashish, cocaine and two mobile phones**.



## Former convicts

The first line of defense against these remote-controlled devices is the **Civil Guard** or the **National Police**, in charge of external surveillance of the prisons. However, if they manage to get past that obstacle, it is the prison officials who monitor the entry of the drones into the prison facilities.

In the Ceuta prison, for example, it is something they have been experiencing practically every day. Penitentiary sources report that, on average, between **30 to 40 drones per day** fly over the prison. In the last year, according to data from Penitentiary Institutions, the Civil Guard has intercepted a total of 22 drones that directly or indirectly targeted this prison alone.

"In many cases, drone entry inside walls is dangerous. For instance, one crashed into the officials' parking lot; another one injured an official and caused bleeding from the propellers which are barely visible and move at high speed... In general, the drones move packages with hashish and medication, but it is also possible that they could also carry weapons and so this *modus operandi* is much more dangerous," warns a prison official from Ceuta, in a conversation with [THE OBJECTIVE](#).

Those sending the goods are usually former convicts, prison sources indicate, who take advantage of the night to fulfill orders and go unnoticed. "Afterwards, they send the drone to a **geopositioned** location with exact coordinates. They always look for the window of a specific prisoner. If we see them, it's from the surveillance window. If not, it's because they've crashed and ended up in the yard", they conclude.

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PRISONS

## Alhaurín de Torre, benchmark test against drug trafficking by drones in prisons

The Penitentiary Institutions assert that several systems are being tested in various prisons to determine which one will be installed.



Image of the device placed in the Alhaurín de la Torre prison // ABC

**J.J. MADUEÑO**

Malaga  
29/12/2022 at 07:05am

The Alhaurín de la Torre prison is being used by the Ministry of the Interior as a benchmark test. Penitentiary Institutions have tested a system against drone flights. The objective is to stop the trafficking of drugs and other prohibited products, such as cell phones or cash. Sources consulted by ABC explain that, for some time now, at the prisons of southern Spain, these unmanned vehicles have been used to circumvent the outer walls and security controls. "This type of illicit trafficking is seen in Andalusia, especially in the prisons of Algeciras and Malaga," says Sergio Garcia, spokesman from CSIF, who explains that the drone system is largely related to the level of offenders in these prisons and their significant economic resources.

According to the Union, the capture of large drug traffickers in Andalusia is what leads to this type of practice, "which is costly". "In Madrid's prisons there are almost no drones crossing the perimeter to bring drugs and other prohibited objects, such as cell phones. In Andalucía, yes there are", affirms García. In view of this, the Ministry of the Interior has chosen the Malaga I Penitentiary Center to begin its fight against these new trafficking methods into the prison.

Penitentiary Institutions staff explained to ABC that various systems are being tested. One of them has already been installed in the prison in Malaga.

"Several tests are underway. Several systems will be tested. One of them has been tested here, but there will be more systems until it is decided which one will be definitively installed in all prisons," they said.

**"This type of illicit trafficking is being seen in Andalusia, especially in the prisons of Algeciras and Málaga."**

**Sergio García, CSIF spokesman**

This is in response to a "serious security problem", which the prison Union officials themselves have denounced on several occasions. In Alhaurín de la Torre, on November 8, seven smartphones and cash were seized in Module 2 of the Malaga I penitentiary center.

These are prohibited objects that crossed the prison walls via drones. Earlier, in January, drones were detected flying over the prison for several days. Officials believe that cell phones were smuggled into the prison for communications with the outside world and for drug dealing.

In February, CSIF requested a system against these drones. On June 27, the officials, in view of the security risk posed by these drones, once again called for a system against this type of illegal flights. The Union did so after a drone was detected by the Civil Guard on June 26.

The drone that day was close to Module 2. It carried drugs and several mobile phones. Despite these examples, security against these flights was still not forthcoming, and on September 7 an anti-drone system was again requested. Now, finally, at the end of 2022, possible solutions are already being tested to tackle this traffic.

## EnforceAir, a system developed by D-Fend Solutions, has been tested in Alhaurín de la Torre

In the case of Alhaurín de la Torre, 'EnforceAir' has been chosen. It is D-Fend Solutions' flagship product against unmanned aerial systems. The company explains on its website that it is the world's premier cyber, radio frequency-based anti-drone takeover technology. The system operates in autonomous or manual mode. It can detect, locate and identify hostile drones present in the airspace and neutralize them.

The system being tested in the Malaga prison allows taking full control of the drone and landing it safely in a predefined area. Therefore, it is not only downed, but it also allows for the seizure and examination of the cargo. The company states that this system does not depend on jamming technologies, thus avoiding collateral damage, disruptions and disturbances.

This technology has been tested in Alhaurín de la Torre, according to CSIF, and will be tested in other prisons in southern Spain. Officials explain that more tests will be carried out in Ceuta, Melilla and Cádiz prisons. "This is where more drones are being detected as they deliver drugs into prisons," Sergio Garcia tells ABC, while explaining that officials welcome measures that are being taken to try to solve "the serious security problem" involving the smuggling of prohibited objects into prisons by this method.

<https://sevilla.abc.es/andalucia/malaga/alhaurin-torre-banco-pruebas-trafico-drogas-drones-20221229070517-nts.html>



<https://elfarodeceuta.es/control-prision-anulo-negocio-narcodrones/>

# The Prison Authority that Cancelled the Narco-drone Business

During the last year alone, the Civil Guard impeded more than 150 drones, most of which were destined for inmates of the prison in Ceuta. Now the trend has collapsed under exerted pressure.

by [Carmen Echarri](#) - 04/01/2023



Stock Image

During the last year alone, [the Civil Guard](#) of Ceuta impeded [over 150 drug carrying drones](#). Many of them were directed to the Mendizábal prison to supply drugs or cell phones to certain inmates. Today the situation has changed and the drones are intercepted by Civil Guard professionals or otherwise detected by [prison officials](#).

The reopening of the border and the control measures implemented at the prison level and by the security forces have been responsible for practically eliminating what had become an entire business.

When in the middle of the pandemic one of the local drug traffickers in Ceuta came up with the idea of using drones to exchange hashish for pills, he started what became a money-making machine.

## Ceuta took trial measures, which were fully effective, to guarantee protection

So much so that two major operations were carried out with the objective of eliminating the infrastructure that was operating at full capacity as an alternative [to traditional drug trafficking routes](#). The impact on drug traffickers' business was timely, as they always knew how to rearm themselves to organize drug flights relying on collusion with contacts in the neighboring country.

The Mendizábal prison, the target of many of these attempts, will shortly implement the EnforceAir stationary mitigation system, which has already been successfully tested. One of the precise capabilities of this system is its ability to distinguish between authorized friendly drones and unauthorized hostile ones.

The prison of Alhaurín de la Torre has been the pioneer in the area, in the face of a real siege that was occurring, with the constant introduction of illegal goods, especially drugs and mobile phones, as well as alcohol and all kinds of pills. The goods were destined for prisoners.

## Control has been taken not only by the security forces, but also by Civil Guard and prison officials

Ceuta, [as well as Melilla](#), will implement fixed installations of the mitigation systems with the objective of ensuring greater protection, and preventing contact between the prison population and the outside world, as well as preventing the introduction of materials that could cause trouble for the security at an enclosed facility such as a prison.

In many of the interceptions, the security forces discovered ongoing contacts between ex-convicts and inmates to move the illegal merchandise and fulfill the requests from the inmates.

## The same situation that took place in Ceuta occurred in other prisons in the Peninsula, which will also gradually adopt this mitigation system

Prison officials have recently warned about the danger of these alternative methods for the commission of crimes, since, just as drugs or telephones can be smuggled in, small bladed weapons or parts for the manufacturing of devices can also be introduced, which could be dangerous for the prison officials themselves, unaware that the internal population may have these harmful capabilities at their disposal.

The common objective of the prisons in Spain most affected by the intrusion of these drones is to improve their security by preventing them from accessing private enclosure, through mitigation that will cause the drone to fall and, therefore, the loss of the cargo that it could carry, stopping the delivery to the recipient.

## Key Points

### The business. The lost operation

**Once the border is open**, and due to the pressure exerted by the security forces, as well as the protection that the prison has adopted, the business of shipping drugs by direct orders of the inmates has been almost eliminated.

### The fear of prison officials

Drones are not only intended to carry drugs or cell phones, but there have also been attempts to sneak in small parts that can also have lethal effect.

<https://elfarodeceuta.es/control-prision-anulo-negocio-narcodrones/>

<https://elpueblodeceuta.es/art/79039/fuerte-mendizabal-inicia-las-pruebas-del-sistema-de-inhibicion-antidron>

**J.M. Rincón**

Wednesday, March 01, 2023

PRISON / ANTI-DRONE SYSTEM

## 'Fuerte Mendizábal' begins testing of anti-drone mitigation system



Ceuta becomes the second penitentiary in Spain to implement this innovative system, which will prevent the use of drones from the outside from bringing in drugs, money, cell phones, alcohol and medicine.

'Fuerte Mendizábal' has started testing this week the new fixed anti-drone detection and mitigation system, making Ceuta prison the second penitentiary center in Spain to install a system with these features, since this same system was installed in the Penitentiary Center of Málaga I in Alhaurín de la Torre at the end of December 2022.

In fact, given the success of this new system, called 'EnforceAir', which was tested for a month in the prison of Malaga I, by the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions under the Ministry of Interior, it has been decided to extend it to other prisons in the country, currently being installed at the 'Fuerte Mendizabal', where it has begun the mandatory testing period, in order to, pending positive results, finally keep it permanently. Although the duration of this testing period has not been disclosed, everything seems to indicate that it will be the same, that is between 20 days to a month, as in the Alhaurín de la Torre prison.

It should be recalled that in recent months, the Anti-Drone Unit of the Civil Guard, in coordination with prison staff, has been operating in the prison on a permanent basis, demonstrating great performance and offering a priceless and invaluable service to the security of the institution.

Now this good work has culminated with the installation of this innovative and sophisticated fixed 'anti-drone' system at the 'Fuerte Mendizábal' Penitentiary Center.

So far, the tests carried out have been a success, and if this continues during this trial period, it could be said that the anti-drone system has been installed to remain in Ceuta.

For some time now, prison officials have been denouncing the significant increase in the delivery of drugs, money, cell phones and other substances into prisons with the use of drones from outside the prison, which has led the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions to study possible countermeasures to be adopted in order to neutralize these drones and thus prevent prohibited objects from entering the prison.

This anti-drone system is manufactured by D-Fend Solutions, and, after Malaga and Ceuta, the authorities intend to continue implementing it in the prisons of Melilla and Cadiz, where drone sightings have also increased and are effectively ongoing.

Specifically, 'EnforceAir' is designed to control the drone threat through cyber takeover technology.

This autonomous 'anti-drone' system can detect, locate, and identify drones with GPS precision, and then take full control of the drone. In the Ceuta prison, the system has been placed on the roof of one of the buildings.

Drones, in addition to carrying contraband of various kinds, can even be "armed or self-destructive", according to experts. That is, they can cause severe damage to facilities. However, what worries prison officers the most is that they could bring in weapons, although no cases have been registered so far. The majority of seizures are of drugs, cell phones and alcohol.

Specifically, in the latest news issued by the prison authorities, it was pointed out that, "in many cases, the entry of drones within the walls is dangerous. For example, one crashed in the employees' parking lot; caused a bleeding injury to an officer, as the propellers are barely visible and move at high speed. Generally, the drones move packages with hashish and medication, but there is a possibility that they may also contain weapons and then this routine becomes much more dangerous".

Those sending the goods are usually ex-convicts who take advantage of nighttime to fulfill orders and go unnoticed. "Then they send the device to a geoposition with exact coordinates. They always look for a window of a specific prisoner. If we see them, it's from the surveillance window. If not, it's because they crashed and end up in the yard." In this sense, one of the last complaints made by the APFP (Professional Association of Prison Officials) and the 'Leaving Me Behind' association, formed in response to increased violence from inmates and a corresponding lack of response from the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions) highlighted that the high level of drugs that could have reached the prison is a "tremendous aggravating

factor", highlighting that "in this situation we have a great problem, because up to today, as far as we know, drones have managed to mainly bring in drugs and cell phones, but who knows if one day a weapon is brought in by this means, then we will have a very severe problem," they acknowledged.

<https://elpueblodeceuta.es/art/79039/fuerte-mendizabal-inicia-las-pruebas-del-sistema-de-inhibicion-antidron>