

Autonomous Fishing Vessels and the Law of the Sea: Legal Challenges in the Age of Maritime Autonomy

Speaker

Abdullah-Al Arif

Dr Abdullah-Al Arif is an internationally experienced researcher specialising in ocean governance and the law of the sea. He completed his PhD in Law at Macquarie University in 2019 with the International Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship. He earned LLB and LLM degrees from University of Dhaka and another LLM from South Asian University, where he received the University Gold Medal for academic excellence. Dr Arif has taught law courses at Macquarie Law School since 2016 and previously worked at Queensland University of Technology. He has published widely in leading international journals and authored the book *Sustainable Fisheries Management and International Law: Marine Fisheries in Bangladesh and the Bay of Bengal* (Routledge, 2022).



This presentation explores the legal challenges posed by Autonomous Fishing Vessels (AFVs) under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and related international frameworks. AFVs disrupt long-standing human-centric assumptions in maritime law, raising issues of vessel status, navigation, flag State jurisdiction, safety, environmental protection, and fisheries management. The analysis considers implications under COLREGs, the IMO's work on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS), the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and RFMOs. It identifies major gaps in law enforcement, reporting, and regulatory oversight, arguing that AFVs require targeted legal adaptation to ensure safety, accountability, and sustainable fisheries governance.

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**Room 610, Building 19, Waseda University,
Waseda Campus**