

W. Kilan, Thomistic Ethics of Lethal Actions of State

Every attentive observer of social and political life recognizes that in certain circumstances states carry out actions, which cause someone's death or at least carry the risk of causing someone's death. They seem somehow inevitable, since sooner or later circumstances arise in which taking such action is necessary in order to save the community and the state from destruction. However, it is also evident that not all of the state's lethal actions are justified. It is proved by the history of the world, filled with descriptions of great wickedness done at the behest of rulers, when countless innocents were killed during sieges or pillaging raids. Even today, many political and social events highlight the difficulty of certain lethal actions of the state. The ongoing war in Ukraine, caused by unjust and unjustified aggression of the Russian Federation against the Republic of Ukraine has made this abundantly clear.

While such events arouse righteous anger and sadness, they should also be an impulse to rethink what is permissible in the field of lethal actions of the state. While recognizing, after St. Thomas Aquinas, that interpersonal relations are regulated by the moral virtue of justice (which has the rights of others as its object), it must be noted that lethal actions of the state are indeed a realization of the state's right which has life and health of individuals as its object. The aim of this research project is to systematically present, in the framework of Thomistic ethics and political philosophy, the issue of lethal actions of the state by: (i) analysing the general norms governing such actions, (ii) applying the identified norms in the assessment of specific lethal actions performed by states. At the same time, the difference between private and public rights to undertake lethal actions will be examined. The proposal is designed to provide a comprehensive and practically useful theory of the lethal actions of a state that that would allow for a moral evaluation of current political and social events.

The project will address the following issues: (i) the moral meaning of the concept of murder; (ii) the permissibility of capital punishment and a study of a contemporary dispute regarding this problem inside Thomistic tradition; (iii) permissibility of intentional killing by police officers; (iv) a reconstruction and analysis of the classical Thomistic theory of just war; a presentation of the actuality of this theory in contemporary times; a detailed study of specific ways of waging war; (v) examination of other types of lethal actions of the state, i.a.: border actions in peacetime, usage of special forces against internal and external enemies without declaring war.

This research is justified because as far as there are many works and articles concerning different specific types of lethal actions of the state, there is no study focused on the difference between public and private rights to cause the death of an individual.

Partial research results will be presented in the form of scientific articles or chapters in monographs. It is also planned to present them during international scientific conferences (i.a. conference organized by *Naukowe Towarzystwo Tomistyczne* to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the canonization of St. Thomas Aquinas).