Paper ID: 18376
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56th IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)
Poster Session (P)

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CONTAMINATION: THE UNSPOKEN THREAT TO LUNAR STATIONS

Abstract

The lunar space stations have a continuous threat of contamination while the docking of the spacecraft's on its docking mechanism. The paper will highlight the need of inclusion of articles in the Outer Space Treaty,1967 as to refuse docking on lunar space stations if there is a threat of propellant leak so as to prevent contamination. Article XII of the Outer Space Treaty clearly lays down that "maximum precautions" may be taken to assure safety and to avoid interference with normal operations in the facility to be visited. But there is a contradictory provision of the principle of "reciprocity" attached to the same article. The paper shall assess the topical issue and draw an analogy with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas, municipal legislation's and case laws of other nations whereby the states have denied docking to the ships as a threat of contamination even during times of distress posed to the ships. The paper shall also explore the differences in the concept of docking and berthing in Maritime Law and docking as per Space Law highlighting the cases of denial of docking on a lunar station and the seas, stressing on the the issue of contamination.