

## 60th IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)

Refugees and the role of space communications/Status and Practice of Charter for Man-made Disasters (3)

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SATELLITES AND THEIR HUMANITARIAN APPLICATIONS: TIME TO HIGHLIGHT THEIR  
HUMAN ASPECTS?**Abstract**

Humans are the only species that communicate with words and not only by actions or instinct, and communications involve at least two individuals or entities. Technological progress in the last few years, especially the advent of the 'social media,' such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, youtube, etc., allow us to communicate with anyone, anywhere. But personal messages tend to become impersonal, especially if they 'go viral' on the internet, and can be deleted with the flick of a finger. While the new social media have facilitated the prevention of some disasters, or have brought them to the world's attention and assisted in rescuing people and animals, many communities do not receive the humanitarian aid they need in a timely manner. During natural disasters, electricity and roads are often inaccessible, so that the most basic means of communication are unavailable: no power for TVs, radios or cellular phones, no access to the disaster area. Satellite communications and other forms of radio communications can surmount some of these impediments, with the cooperation of the local authorities, and international organizations. The Disasters Charter, adopted in 1999, has been used extensively in most areas of the world. The Tampere Convention could be more widely used (upon ratification by more countries), and both could be applied to provide aid, assistance or initial responses to humanitarian crises, not only to natural disasters. We need to emphasize the human aspects of these situations, and perhaps rely less on 'hi-tech' solutions when simpler ones may be available, such as the 'ham', or amateur radio operators. Satellite communications need to return to basic communications among people, to 'personalize' them, rather than continue to depersonalize them, as can occur with reliance on the social media 'gone viral'. The Outer Space Treaty states that outer space, the province of mankind, is to be used for the benefit of all humankind. The human aspects of humanitarian endeavors need to be emphasized, these activities need to be facilitated, for the benefit of humankind.