

## 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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University of North Dakota, United StatesASSESSING REFUGEE CRISES THROUGH THE LENS OF THE OUTER SPACE TREATY AND  
SPACE TECHNOLOGIES**Abstract**

The past several years have seen a marked increase in migrants seeking to escape intolerable conditions in their homelands, and the concomitant creation of a refugee crisis. These effects are seen most pointedly in Europe and the Middle East, but their impacts have been global in nature. States across the globe have used their laws and technologies to manage this crisis, either by assisting refugees during their time of need, by shifting some or all of the responsibility to other States, or some combination thereof. There are several international charters, declarations, and other instruments that are designed to alleviate the human suffering that accompanies such situations, and the Outer Space Treaty is one of them. This presentation attempts to analyze the presence and value of the Outer Space Treaty to current humanitarian migrant crises, with emphasis on how space assets—including telecommunications and remote sensing—can be used to achieve the dual goals of mutual cooperation between States, and the peaceful uses of outer space for all States, regardless of their economic or technical capabilities. There is a long, if somewhat sparse, history of the international community attempting to organize legal mechanisms, via laws, treaties, or regulations, in order to address humanitarian needs. The Outer Space Treaty integrates such international rules into space activities, and, therefore, this presentation argues that current space activities ought to be more fully utilized in managing and assisting modern, man-made disasters, such as that seen in the refugee situation. The so-called Disasters Charter has arisen to account for some of the needs of those facing displacement due to disaster, and this Charter can be interpreted to include man-made events. Given these efforts, this presentation aims to show that positive change can be affected by an integration of multiple space assets into a global humanitarian network, modeled after older, yet effective, telecommunications and relief legal structures.