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## THE ASTRONAUT RESCUE AGREEMENT AT 50 YEARS.

**Abstract**

The year 1967 saw the first two major accidents in human spaceflight. The Apollo 1 spacecraft's command module caught fire during a launch rehearsal and Soyuz 1 crashed at landing because of a mishap with the parachutes. In both cases the crews were lost. One year later, the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, also referred to as the Rescue Agreement, was adopted. The history of this agreement goes back to 1959, when report by UNCOPUOS made reference to the very issues the rescue agreement intends to address. In 1962, the superpowers decided to bring these issues to legal codification, thus paving the way to the adoption of the Rescue Agreement in 1967. The mishaps of 1967 may have or have not contributed to the adoption of the Rescue Agreement. However, the Agreement has seen wide acceptance throughout the world over the last 50 years. Although the Rescue Agreement has – fortunately – seen little application it remains an important legal instrument and it will be seen how its role will evolve and/or remain in the coming future.