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FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW APPLICATION TO  
STATE ACTIVITIES IN SPACE

**Abstract**

The paper analyses the current stage of applicability of international humanitarian law to state activities in space and future perspectives due to development of technologies and creation of national space forces.

The focus is given to what norms and principles of international humanitarian law shall be applied by State parties to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and three Additional Protocols to them in state activities in space. While under the current legal framework not all states are parties to five core treaties of international space law (the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, the Agreement of the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies), the distinction is made in the light of presence or absence of legal obligations under mentioned treaties.

Meanwhile the international space law is *lex specialis*, related to area of application, and international humanitarian law, in its turn, is also *lex specialis* due to circumstances (armed conflict), the clash of the principle of the peaceful uses of outer space under international space law and international humanitarian law obligations is considered. Shall international humanitarian law norms eliminate regulations under international space law on use of weapons and establishment of semi- and demilitarized zones? How “non-aggressive” and “non-military” activities correlate to possibility of recourse to countermeasures and self-defense in space? Following answers on these questions the paper draws attention to the issues of distinguishing of combatants from civilians on space stations, lawfulness of attacks on space objects, which registered in several states, and destruction of space objects in light of damage caused by space debris.

Based on the done analysis the paper consequently elaborates on proper modes of actions in the situation of international armed conflict, self-defense and countermeasures in space from the point of view of both, international space and humanitarian law obligations fulfillment.