



# MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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# **DIRECTORS WELCOME LETTER:**



Dear Delegates and Faculty Advisors,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the American University of Sharjah Model United Nations (AUSMUN) 2020. This conference has been the home of fruitful debate, practical resolutions, dedicated moderators, spectacular delegates, and diligent advisory and executive boards for the past twelve years and is continuing to do so for its thirteenth year. With 1000 delegates registered from more than 45 national and international educational institutions, this conference will be the biggest one yet!

This year's theme 'Embracing Diversity, Shaping the Future' has been designed to capture the essence of issues that surround our globalized society. Even though we have come this far in time, there has been little to no improvement in accepting diversity as portrayed by the latest atrocities in several countries around the world. However, the future can be successfully shaped for us, the youth, only by embracing diversity in every sector of life and we hope to draw attention to this.

This background guide has been formulated by our hard-working chairs and the research team to provide delegates with the starting point of their preparation for this three-day conference. The guide is initially divided into two sections based on the two topics and is further split into logical components. Firstly, the Summary and History section acts as an introduction to the issue by highlighting important events, terms, history, and global implications. Secondly, the Discourse on the Issue section establishes a link between the issue, its implications, significance, and the United Nations Charter. Lastly, the Past International Organization (IO) Actions and Latest Developments section elaborates on the previous action that has been taken and latest development in terms of the last actions taken with regards to the issue. At the end of each issue, delegates will find sections of Questions the Discussions and Resolutions Should Address and Suggestions for Further Research that aim to streamline the process of delegate's research. However, in order to grab a better understanding of the topic and be able to position yourself better to participate during the conference, it is advised to go beyond the background guide since this guide does not encapsulate enough information to be sufficient for every country and is only a brief introduction to the issues at hand. It is highly encouraged for delegates to view the 'Delegate Handbook' on the AUSMUN website and the 'How to Research' video on YouTube created by AUSMUN.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all the contributors to this background guide. It is the collaborative work of the Moderators, AUSMUN Research Team, and the AUSMUN Media Team. On behalf of them all, I truly hope that this guide will be of great help to you.

All the very best for the conference and if you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [research@ausmun.com](mailto:research@ausmun.com).

Sincerely,  
Manaswi Madichetty  
Director of Research  
AUSMUN 2020

# **MODERATORS WELCOME LETTER:**



**Mohrah Shamaa**

**Yara Jitan**

**Hanadi Janajrah**

Dear delegates!

To begin with, we would like to welcome all the delegates who will be joining us in the Fourth General Assembly (GA4) Committee of AUSMUN2020, the thirteenth edition.

GA4 was founded in 1990 and is also referred to as Special Political and Decolonization Committee or SPECPOL and C4. It deals with a diverse set of political issues. These include issues such as decolonization, peaceful usage of the outer space, effects of atomic radiation and questions relating to information. However, majority of the committee's time is spent on decolonization and Middle East issues.

During this three-day conference we will be discussing the topics: 'The Issue of Space Debris: The Prevention and Minimization of Space Junk' and 'Criminal Accountability of UN Peacekeepers'. Both the issues are elaborated on as follows to streamline your process of research. However, we do advise you to conduct research of your own regarding the issue, your country's stance, and capabilities to generate fruitful debate across the weekend.

We are sure that we will witness astonishing debates and we hope that this will be a fun and enjoyable experience for all the delegates. In addition, we look forward to meeting all of you, and we hope that everyone can learn something from AUSMUN.

Please do not hesitate to contact us ([g00068608@aus.edu](mailto:g00068608@aus.edu)) if you have any queries.

Sincerely,  
GA4 Chairs



**GA4**

**Fourth General Assembly**

# Topic I

## The Issue of Space Debris: The Prevention and Minimization of Space Junk

### 1. Summary & History

For the past fifty-five years, the space around our planet has gone from a debris-free environment to a zone cluttered with human-made objects that threaten active satellites, launches, and the International Space Station (ISS).

More than 21,000 pieces at least the size of a softball was being tracked, and an estimated 500,000 pieces at least the size of a marble are thought to exist according to NASA as they reported in 2013 (Hobe, 2019). This is excluding the 100 million smaller objects, ranging down to the size of a tiny needle, are too small to be detected.

In the late 1970s, when research on space debris was simply starting, Kessler proposed a startling plausibility: that one day, there could be such a great amount of debris in our orbit that any contact with it would prevent us from launching any more satellites. We would basically become captives on Earth (Hall, 2014).

NASA's preferred terminology is "orbital debris," which it defines as "all man-made objects in orbit about the Earth which no longer serve a useful purpose." The debris may originate in one of three ways: mission-related operations, accidents, or intentional creation. So, it's important to tackle these parts of the problem to reach a solution that can actually make a difference.

Taking Mission-Related Debris Satellite activities as an example, alone it can produce numerous objects of different sizes, and they represent around 12 percent of today's evacuating orbital debris are being examined (UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, 2018). They incorporate catch components, laser shafts that would ease back their circles to advance rot, or procedures to help move them into a higher circle over the most valuable zones for satellites. A few conspires even call for repurposing useful pieces of old satellites. Taking care of the issue of space debris has been procrastinated on for quite a long time since it is troublesome and expensive. Finally, the space network and community is understanding that the inability to take care of the issue would be catastrophic.

### 2. Discourse on the Issue

The issue of space debris is extremely important as humans are already inflicting enough harm on earth, there should be a limit to our harm. Space debris is artificial material that is orbiting Earth but is no longer functional. With pollution and terrible environmental issues on earth, we are not aware of the effects of our space junk and we need to minimize it if not prevent it. The issue needs to be prevented and minimized before it escalates like our environmental issues on earth. Currently, we are now trying to reverse the damages that have been done to Earth. Will we wait until the damage in space escalates to the point where we will have to reverse it? The fourth committee on November 1st of 2019, approved a draft resolution on peaceful uses of outer space.

The Russian Federation's representative mentioned that they reject the effort in replacing the committee on the peaceful uses of outer space with informal platforms that lack an intergovernmental mandate. Other countries, in addition to Russia, that are trying to prevent issues are Egypt, China, United States, Cuba, Republic of Korea (UN, November 1st, 2019).

### **3. Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments**

As can be seen, the issue of space debris is one that has picked up on significance and urgency over the past few years. A significant agreement that is helping in minimizing the issue is the 1968 Rescue agreement which requires states to return any forgiven space object in their territory to its owner. Alongside the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), the European Space Agency (ESA) and the International Space Station (ISS) have worked to scrutinize and reduce the threats of space Junk. A lot of progress has been made through the efforts of research as global scientific communities have joint their work to create the "Space Debris Mitigations Guidelines" which was endorsed by the General Assembly on 2007 (UNOOSA, 2019). The document mainly encourages actors partaking in space activities to be cautious and limit long term interference in the low-earth orbit (LEO) and the geosynchronous Earth orbit (GEO) (UNOOSA, 2010). Legal discussions are handled by a legal subcommittee and the discussions are aided by a the compendium of space debris mitigation standards which puts forth the different instruments and measures that states and international organizations have used (UNOOSA, 2019).

Unfortunately, the lack of global awareness and international cooperation on the matter has kept the situation from any significant progress. The fact that there is no central authority that deals with the matter, and no way to hold actors accountable, the issue keeps growing with time. Aside from the barriers and complications of legal and political interest, it is also challenging to find affordably technology that safely and practically removes space debris.

### **4. Questions the Discussions and Resolutions Should Address**

- Could a central authority be established to maintain space debris?
- Who should be responsible for the funding of such projects?
- Should international law make it an obligation to limit space debris?
- What affordable and practical solutions could arise to effectively lower the amount of space debris?
- Which countries and international organizations should be at the forefront of solving and investing in this crisis?

### **5. Suggestions for Further Research**

- Identifying the obstacles that arise when reducing space debris.
- Identifying the actors and actions responsible for such damage.
- Locating possible solutions to the space debris crisis.
- Assessing the ways in which resources should be pooled.



# Topic II

## Criminal Accountability of UN Peacekeepers

### 1. Summary & History

Since it was founded in 1945, the 193 individuals of the United Nations General Assembly have persistently called for an increment in transparency and responsibility inside the administering body. Agreeing to the UN Transparency and Responsibility Activity, amid the 2005 World Summit at the 60th General Assembly, the issue of responsibility and transparency ruled the conference. This dominance caused a number of the targeted issues to be executed. In 2006, revelations have come to light with respect to authoritative offense within the United Nations which advance raised the issue and driven to the arrangement of an initiative called the United Nations Transparency and Accountability Initiative (UNTAI). It pointed to find solutions and usage to the ever-growing issue at hand (Paudel & Gupta, 2019).

Since its development 74 years ago, the members of the United Nations General Assembly have persistently required an expansion in transparency and responsibility inside the administering body. Transparency goes past making more data accessible, the requested data should be applicable, precise, convenient, and open, particularly to the individuals who need it and whenever they request it. Accountability requires at least essential qualities, for example, standard-setting, examination, answerability, and sanctions for non-execution. To survey how the UN framework is handing this, careful monitoring of the funding, accounting for dollars and results, oversight, and staff management have to be established and regularly monitored.

Whether driven by political, military or psychological purposes to control land, population or income, sexual violence is frequently used to target vulnerable populations, inflicting psychological trauma, humiliation and displacement. As said by António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General: "Sexual violence is a threat to every individual's right to a life of dignity, and to humanity's collective peace and security" ("UN Chief", 2017).

Over the years of law implementation, the UN peacekeeping missions have planned and established innovative protection tools and practices, including those that specifically enhance prevention and response to all kind of violence.

### 2. Discourse on the Issue

Any person should be held accountable for their actions, that includes UN peacekeepers. It is their job to keep peace and restore it in other situations. In the sixth committee meetings on 22 October and on 5 and 7 November 2014, the countries that spoke mentioned their appreciation for the experts and peacekeepers work. However, they also mentioned that some of the negative actions committed by the experts and peacekeepers inflicts a bad image and reputation of the organization. The UN has a zero-tolerance policy regarding crimes such as sexual abuse. It was stated that the responsibility falls on the member states and the UN to make sure the peacekeepers abide by the laws of the countries they're helping in. In addition to that, the committee wants to fix any jurisdictional gaps to make sure everyone is held accountable for their actions (UN, 2019).

In recent years, the condemnable actions of UN Peacekeepers have been the increased sexualized exploitation and abuse against the people they are expected to protect. Conflict-related sexual violence is no longer seen as an unavoidable by-product of war but institutes a crime that is preventable and punishable under International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law.

Discussions in typical media around the accountability of the United Nations has recently viewed sexual abuse cases in peacekeeping operations and calls for the organization to accept legal responsibility for these cases. The ongoing reaction to these and other challenges by the UN's leadership will be examined by people around the world and will affect small countries and islands such as the Pacific islands.

### **3. Past IO Actions and The Latest Developments**

The issue of crime among peacekeepers erupted in the early 2000s as scandals gained global attention. In 2006 and 2007, the General Assembly released two significant resolutions addressing the crimes of UN peacekeepers, resolution 68/105 and A/C.6/69/L.11. These resolutions generally aim to eliminate jurisdictional gaps, enhance international cooperation, and ensure accountability (UN, 2019). Moreover, the UN has released the "Commanders' guide on measures to combat Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations military" and "The Ten Rules: Code of Personal Conduct" to outline appropriate behavior among peacekeepers. It also developed a three-point strategy to address misconduct that includes prevention, enforcement, and remediation (UN Peacekeeping, 2019). The stages are executed through actions such as training, awareness campaigns, assisting victims, investigations, and disciplinary measures. Furthermore, to ensure transparency, the contributing countries are asked to provide a legal framework alongside a factsheet for their respective officers. Lastly, despite many efforts by the UN to enforce their zero-tolerance policy against crimes by peacekeepers, mainly Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), the occurrences did not come to a stop (Jennings, 2015). The policy mainly prohibited buying sex, taking part in a sexual act with a child under the age of 18, and discouraged sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance. Conduct and discipline teams are sent to oversee this, alongside reporting guidelines for the locals and peacekeepers.

One can generally begin to comprehend the issues that arise with the UN's dealings of these crimes. To begin with, this issue requires the UN and contributing countries to report themselves, raising suspicion as they attempt to protect their reputation. With that being said, many instances may not be reported and factsheets may be inaccurate, especially since peacekeepers will avoid reporting other peacekeepers as they are not protected anonymously and locals gain monetarily from such actions and doubt it would make a difference – which is true more often than not. Moreover, the rights of the locals and peacekeepers clash. In addition to that, the UN's zero-tolerance policy is very broad and unproportioned which means that details such as consent are not addressed, allowing for rape, and crimes such as raping a minor and buying sex being treated equally. Lastly, issues such as instable and militarized environments, weak chains of command, impunity among peacekeepers, and race and gender stereotypes add to the complexity of the issue (Jennings, 2015).

### **4. Questions The Discussions and The Resolutions Should Address**

- How can the Peacekeepers' actions be effectively monitored?
- Should there be a uniform legal standard for all peacekeeper regardless of their country of deployment?
- How should peacekeepers and locals be motivated to report inappropriate behavior?

- Is the peacekeeper's expected standard of behavior excessive, lax, or both? What should it be changed into, if at all?
- Are the rights of peacekeepers and locals clashing? If so, how should this be addressed?

### **5. *Suggestions for Further Research***

- Outlining the laws governing peacekeepers.
- Identifying the social and political barriers that impede criminal accountability, transparency, and reporting.
- Identifying peacekeeper's immunities.
- Locating weaknesses in the current chain of dealing with such instances.

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