

Universal Space Criminal Justice Act (USCJA)

# UNIVERSAL SPACE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT (USCJA)

*An International Legal Instrument for Outer Space*

Promulgated under the Auspices of

Sovereign Nations and International Governmental Organizations  
(IGOs)

Signed and Agreed to by Participating Space Agencies, and other  
Stakeholders



XI•III•MMLVII

Pisa, Italy

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## Introduction

In the vast course of human history, our curiosity for exploration has driven us to venture beyond known boundaries, seeking to unravel the mysteries of the cosmos. As we embark on an era of unprecedented space exploration and development, the Universal Space Criminal Justice Act calls upon all nations to unite in their commitment to justice and the protection of the universe.

In the boundless expanse of space, where knowledge and possibilities intertwine, the values of security and safety are of utmost importance. The Universal Space Criminal Justice Act serves as a unifying force, bringing together nations, space agencies, and intergovernmental organizations in a determined effort to ensure that space remains a realm free from criminal activities.

As we journey through the cosmos, the pursuit of justice guides us, illuminating the path towards responsible exploration and cooperation in space. Whether it be on celestial bodies or orbiting satellites, we must be guardians of justice, providing fair trials and due process for all, regardless of their origins or endeavors.

The challenges we encounter in our cosmic exploration call for innovative solutions. Let us leverage our collective intelligence to overcome these challenges, with the knowledge that advancements in propulsion, communication, and sustainable resource management will benefit humanity on Earth as well.

Let our journey into the stars strengthen the bonds of cooperation, transcending borders and fostering partnerships to protect the cosmic realm. Together, we will share intelligence, resources, and technology to uphold peace and harmony in the

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universe, recognizing that space exploration belongs to all of humanity, united in our voyage into the unknown.

The Universal Space Criminal Justice Act symbolizes our shared determination to preserve the wonders of the cosmos, uphold justice, and maintain the sanctity of space, safeguarded from criminal activities. As we make our mark among the stars, let justice be our guiding constellation, leading us toward a future of harmony and unity, where the mysteries of the universe unfold peacefully, and the beacon of justice shines eternally.

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### Commitment

1. We, the signatories of the USCJA, declare our commitment to safeguard the sanctity of outer space by preventing and combatting criminal acts that threaten its harmony and sustainability. Through robust law enforcement mechanisms, we aim to deter and penalize space environmental crimes, organized space crime, human and civil rights violations, unauthorized spacecraft interference, and unauthorized celestial body access. Our commitment is to protect celestial bodies and the space environment from intentional harm and exploitation.

2. We intend to establish specialized law enforcement bodies within our respective jurisdictions, as well as encourage cooperation and coordination among space agencies, international organizations, and relevant IGOs. By pooling our resources and expertise, we will strengthen international cooperation in investigating and prosecuting transnational space crimes, ensuring that criminals are brought to justice regardless of their location.

3. The USCJA embodies our commitment to providing fair and impartial trials for all individuals accused of space crimes. We shall uphold the principles of due process, equality before the law, and the presumption of innocence in all space criminal proceedings. Specialized space courts or tribunals may be established to handle complex space-related legal matters.

4. As responsible stewards of the cosmos, we pledge to implement proportionate penalties and sanctions for space crimes, ensuring they serve as an effective deterrent against future transgressions. By imposing accountability and enforcing consequences, we strive to preserve the peace and security of outer space, safeguarding the interests of all spacefaring nations and entities.

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5. We intend to foster a culture of transparency and accountability in space activities, working towards the establishment of ethical global governance frameworks for space. International organizations, such as the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), shall play vital roles in facilitating cooperation and information-sharing among signatories.

6. Our collective commitment is to promote peaceful exploration and cooperation in space, transcending national boundaries and advancing the boundaries of scientific knowledge. We recognize that space exploration is a global endeavor that should be in the interest of all of humanity. By encouraging diverse perspectives and collaboration, we aim to inspire future generations to embark on a journey of discovery and wonder in the cosmos.

7. Through the USCJA, we endeavor to ensure equitable access to space exploration, regardless of economic or political status. By reducing barriers to space access and promoting technology transfer, we aspire to foster inclusivity and diversity in the pursuit of cosmic knowledge. Space agencies, both governmental and private, shall commit to sharing knowledge and expertise to advance collective understanding.

8. We, the signatories of the USCJA, commit to reviewing and updating this Act periodically to adapt to evolving challenges and advancements in space technology. A dedicated International Space Criminal Justice Council (ISCJC) shall be established, comprising representatives from space agencies, governments, and relevant IGOs, responsible for overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of the Act.

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9. In agreeing to the USCJA, we dedicate ourselves to harmonizing human progress with the preservation of cosmic environments. With mutual respect and collaboration, we shall explore the universe, leaving a legacy of responsible custodianship for future generations to cherish and continue. By upholding the principles enshrined in this Act, we affirm our commitment to a shared vision of a secure, just, and thriving cosmos for the benefit of all humanity.

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### **Preamble**

We, the parties to this Act, comprising sovereign nations, international governmental organizations (IGOs), space agencies, and other stakeholders, come together in profound acknowledgment of the unprecedented opportunities and challenges that lie within the vast expanse of outer space. As humanity ventures into this cosmic frontier, we are committed to forging a new era of space exploration that upholds justice, ensures security, and enforces the rule of law in the celestial realm. The Universal Space Criminal Justice Act (USCJA) stands as a testament to our collective determination to create a safe, just, and sustainable cosmos where all nations and entities can partake in the wonders of space exploration with mutual respect and cooperation.

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## Article 1: Definitions

1.1 "Outer Space" is defined as the region beyond Earth's atmosphere, starting at an altitude of 100 kilometers (60 miles) above Earth's mean sea level, commonly known as the Karman line, unless otherwise agreed upon by international consensus.

1.2 "Spacecraft" denotes any vehicle or device designed for travel or operation in outer space. This includes manned and unmanned spacecraft, satellites, space probes, and any other objects launched into space for scientific, commercial, or military purposes.

1.3 "Space Station" refers to any artificial structure or facility designed for human presence and activities in outer space. This includes orbital space stations, moon bases, and other habitable structures constructed beyond Earth's atmosphere.

1.4 "Celestial Body" includes planets, moons, asteroids, comets, and other natural objects in space. It also encompasses any extraterrestrial environments that may be subject to exploration or potential exploitation in the future.

1.5 "Human and Civil Rights Violations" encompass violations of human rights, including forced labor, trafficking, or unlawful detention, in the context of space exploration and utilization. This also extends to the protection of indigenous rights and cultural heritage when dealing with celestial bodies that may have historical or cultural significance.

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1.6 "Space Environmental Crime" encompasses intentional damage to space habitats, space debris generation, or pollution that harms the space environment and celestial bodies. This includes the deliberate release of hazardous substances, space mining activities that disrupt the balance of celestial bodies, and any actions that compromise the sustainability of outer space.

1.7 "Organized Crime" involves criminal (state and/or corporate) activities organized or conducted by a group of individuals or entities with the intent to commit offenses in outer space. This may include illegal trafficking of space technology, black market operations involving space resources, and other criminal enterprises that exploit the unique environment of space.

1.8 "Piracy in Outer Space" encompasses any violent act, detention, or depredation committed for private ends by the crew or passengers of a private spacecraft or space station, directed against another spacecraft or space station, or against any personnel or property on board such spacecraft or space station. This includes acts of space piracy aimed at hijacking or stealing space assets, technologies, or resources.

1.9 "Generic Space Crime" refers to any criminal act committed in outer space that is not specifically covered under the definitions provided in Article 1. This includes a wide range of offenses, including but not limited to:

1.9.1 "Manslaughter": The act of unintentionally causing the death of another person through reckless behavior or negligence while in outer space.

1.9.2 "Murder": The intentional and unlawful killing of another person while in outer space.

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1.9.3 "Rape": Any non-consensual sexual act committed against an individual while in outer space.

1.9.4 "Assault": Any act of physical violence or harm directed towards crew members, space travelers, or visitors on spacecraft, space stations, or celestial bodies.

1.9.5 "Kidnapping and Unlawful Detention": The unlawful abduction or confinement of an individual against their will while in outer space.

1.9.6 "Robbery": The act of stealing or attempting to steal property or resources from another person, crew, or facility while in outer space.

1.9.7 "Fraud": Deceptive practices aimed at obtaining resources, funding, or information through false pretenses, misrepresentation, or dishonest acts during space missions or related projects.

1.9.8 "Drug Trafficking": The illegal production, distribution, or trafficking of controlled substances while in outer space.

1.9.9 "Smuggling": The illegal transportation of goods, technology, or resources across space borders without proper authorization.

1.9.10 "Unlawful Weapon Possession": The unauthorized possession, use, or trafficking of weapons on spacecraft, space stations, or any space-related facilities.

1.9.11 "Destruction of Property": The intentional and unlawful damage or destruction of property, infrastructure, or equipment related to space missions.

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1.9.12 "Trespassing": Unauthorized entry into restricted areas, space facilities, or spacecraft without proper authorization.

1.9.13 "Extortion": The act of obtaining resources, services, or information through coercion or threat while in outer space.

1.9.14 "Harassment": Persistent and unwanted behavior causing distress or discomfort to individuals or crews in outer space.

1.9.15 "Hate Crimes": Crimes committed based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or any other discriminatory motive while in outer space.

1.9.16 "Cybercrimes": Any illegal activities involving the use of computers, networks, or communication systems that may compromise the security or operations of space missions.

1.9.17 "Other Unlawful Activities": This category includes any criminal activities not explicitly mentioned in Article 1, which may arise during space exploration or utilization and pose a threat to the safety, security, or ethical conduct of space missions.

1.10 "Unauthorized Spacecraft Interference" involves intentional interference with the normal operation of spacecraft or space stations, including unauthorized access, communication disruption, or cyberattacks. This also includes the interception or manipulation of space communications and navigation systems.

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1.11 "Unauthorized Celestial Body Access" refers to any unauthorized landing, exploration, or exploitation of celestial bodies. This includes unauthorized mining, excavation, or extraction of resources from celestial bodies without proper authorization from the relevant authorities.

### Article 2: Jurisdiction

2.1 Jurisdiction over criminal acts committed in outer space shall be determined by the nationality principle. Any person who commits an offense while onboard a spacecraft or space station that is registered in a particular state shall be subject to the jurisdiction of that state. This extends to private space companies and commercial spacecraft.

2.2 For offenses committed on celestial bodies, jurisdiction shall be determined by the principle of territoriality. The state that establishes a base or facility on a celestial body shall have jurisdiction over offenses occurring within that facility. In cases where multiple states have established bases on the same celestial body, jurisdiction shall be determined through bilateral or multilateral agreements.

2.3 States parties shall have extraterritorial jurisdiction over criminal acts committed in outer space that affect their national security or interests. This includes offenses that may have implications for global peace, security, or the protection of critical space infrastructure.

### **Article 3: Prohibited Criminal Acts**

**3.1 Space Environmental Crime:** Any intentional damage to space habitats, space debris generation, or pollution that harms the space environment and celestial bodies. This includes acts that jeopardize the safety of space missions, jeopardize the sustainability of space habitats, or cause irreversible harm to the space environment.

**3.2 Organized Crime:** Any intentional criminal activities organized or conducted by a group of individuals or entities in outer space. This may include illicit trafficking of space technology, clandestine operations involving space resources, or any other criminal enterprises exploiting the unique space environment.

**3.3 Piracy in Outer Space:** Any intentional violent act, detention, or depredation committed by the crew or passengers of a private spacecraft or space station, directed against another spacecraft or space station, or against any personnel or property onboard such spacecraft or space station. This includes acts aimed at hijacking or stealing space assets, technologies, or resources for private gain.

**3.4 Unauthorized Spacecraft Interference:** Any intentional interference with the normal operation of spacecraft or space stations, including unauthorized access, communication disruption, or cyberattacks. This also includes the interception or manipulation of space communications and navigation systems.

**3.5 Unauthorized Celestial Body Access:** Any intentional unauthorized landing, exploration, or exploitation of celestial bodies. This includes unauthorized mining, excavation, or extraction of resources from celestial bodies without proper authorization from the relevant authorities.

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**3.6 Generic Space Crime:** Any intentional criminal act committed in outer space that is not specifically covered under the definitions provided in Article 1. This includes a wide range of offenses and other unlawful activities that may arise during space exploration or utilization, such as but not limited to:

**3.6.1 Manslaughter:** The act of unintentionally causing the death of another person through reckless behavior or negligence while in outer space.

**3.6.2 Murder:** The intentional and unlawful killing of another person while in outer space.

**3.6.3 Rape:** Any non-consensual sexual act committed against an individual while in outer space.

**3.6.4 Assault:** Any act of physical violence or harm directed towards crew members, space travelers, or visitors on spacecraft, space stations, or celestial bodies.

**3.6.5 Kidnapping and Unlawful Detention:** The unlawful abduction or confinement of an individual against their will while in outer space.

**3.6.6 Robbery:** The act of stealing or attempting to steal property or resources from another person, crew, or facility while in outer space.

**3.6.7 Fraud:** Deceptive practices aimed at obtaining resources, funding, or information through false pretenses, misrepresentation, or dishonest acts during space missions or related projects.

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3.6.8 Drug Trafficking: The illegal production, distribution, or trafficking of controlled substances while in outer space.

3.6.9 Smuggling: The illegal transportation of goods, technology, or resources across space borders without proper authorization.

3.6.10 Piracy: Any violent act, detention, or depredation committed for private ends by the crew or passengers of a private spacecraft or space station, directed against another spacecraft or space station, or against any personnel or property onboard such spacecraft or space station.

3.6.11 Unlawful Weapon Possession: The unauthorized possession, use, or trafficking of weapons on spacecraft, space stations, or any space-related facilities.

3.6.12 Destruction of Property: The intentional and unlawful damage or destruction of property, infrastructure, or equipment related to space missions.

3.6.13 Trespassing: Unauthorized entry into restricted areas, space facilities, or spacecraft without proper authorization.

3.6.14 Extortion: The act of obtaining resources, services, or information through coercion or threat while in outer space.

3.6.15 Harassment: Persistent and unwanted behavior causing distress or discomfort to individuals or crews in outer space.

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3.6.16 Hate Crimes: Crimes committed based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or any other discriminatory motive while in outer space.

3.6.17 Cybercrimes: Any illegal activities involving the use of computers, networks, or communication systems that may compromise the security or operations of space missions.

3.7 Other Unlawful Activities: This category encompasses any intentional criminal activities not explicitly mentioned in Article 1, which may pose a threat to the safety, security, or ethical conduct of space missions and exploration.

### Article 4: Penalties and Sanctions

4.1 States parties shall establish appropriate penalties for criminal acts committed in outer space within their jurisdictions. Penalties for prohibited criminal acts in outer space shall be proportionate to the severity of the offense, taking into account mitigating and aggravating circumstances. The penalties may include fines, imprisonment, confiscation of assets, and other punitive measures.

4.2 Sanctions for prohibited criminal acts shall include measures to prevent and deter further offenses, including asset forfeiture, international travel restrictions, and coordination with other states for extradition purposes. States parties shall cooperate in enforcing sanctions against individuals and entities involved in criminal acts in outer space.

## **Article 5: Investigation and Prosecution**

5.1 States parties shall establish specialized investigative and prosecutorial bodies to handle criminal cases related to outer space. These bodies shall be adequately trained and equipped to address the unique challenges of investigating and prosecuting space crimes.

5.2 International cooperation and information-sharing among states parties shall be encouraged to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of transnational space crimes. States shall share relevant information, evidence, and intelligence in a timely and secure manner to support effective criminal investigations.

5.3 States parties shall adopt uniform rules and procedures for the gathering and preservation of evidence in outer space. This includes guidelines for conducting forensic examinations in space environments, protocols for collecting samples from celestial bodies, and ensuring the chain of custody for space-related evidence.

## **Article 6: Fair Trial Rights**

6.1 Individuals accused of criminal acts in outer space shall have the right to a fair trial before an independent and impartial tribunal. Defendants shall be presumed innocent until proven guilty and shall have the right to legal representation, access to evidence, and the right to remain silent.

6.2 Trials involving criminal acts in outer space shall be conducted with due process and in accordance with the principles of international law. States parties shall ensure that the rights of defendants are protected throughout the judicial process.

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6.3 Defendants shall have the right to a public trial unless necessary to protect sensitive information related to national security or the space environment. In such cases, the trial may be conducted with appropriate safeguards to protect classified or sensitive space-related information.

### **Article 7: Judicial Review**

7.1 States parties shall establish mechanisms for judicial review of convictions and sentences related to criminal acts in outer space. Individuals convicted of such offenses shall have the right to appeal to a higher court. States parties shall ensure that appeals processes are fair, efficient, and transparent.

7.2 Defendants shall have access to legal representation throughout the appeals process. States parties shall provide legal aid and support to indigent defendants to ensure equal access to justice in space-related criminal cases.

### **Article 8: International Cooperation**

8.1 States parties shall engage in international cooperation to prevent and combat criminal acts in outer space. The establishment of an International Criminal Court for Outer Space (ICCOS) shall be explored to address complex and transnational space crimes. The ICCOS shall be a judicial body responsible for prosecuting individuals and entities accused of committing serious space crimes with global implications.

8.2 States parties shall cooperate in the exchange of information, evidence, and intelligence related to criminal acts in outer space. This includes sharing information on criminal organizations involved in space crimes, emerging threats to space security, and strategies to combat space piracy and other offenses.

## **Article 9: Responsible Authorities**

9.1 An International Space Criminal Justice Council (ISCJC) shall be established to coordinate and oversee international efforts in addressing criminal acts in outer space. The ISCJC shall be composed of representatives from states parties and relevant international organizations, including the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

9.2 The ISCJC shall develop guidelines and best practices for the investigation and prosecution of criminal acts in outer space. It shall also provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to states parties in enhancing their capabilities to address space-related crimes.

## **Article 10: Implementation and Compliance**

10.1 States parties shall take all necessary measures to implement and enforce this Act within their jurisdictions. This includes enacting domestic legislation, establishing specialized space crime units, and training law enforcement and judicial personnel on space-related legal matters.

10.2 Regular meetings and reporting mechanisms shall be established to monitor compliance with this Act and address challenges in its implementation. States parties shall submit periodic reports on their progress in combating space crimes and complying with the provisions of this Act.

10.3 States parties shall provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to other states in implementing the provisions of this Act. This includes sharing expertise in space law, law enforcement practices, and cybersecurity measures to enhance the collective ability to address space-related criminal threats.

### **Article 11: Amendments**

11.1 Amendments to this Act may be proposed by any state party or the International Space Criminal Justice Council (ISCJC). Proposed amendments shall be reviewed and adopted by consensus at meetings of states parties. Amendments shall enter into force upon ratification by a majority of states parties.

### **Article 12: Entry into Force**

12.1 This Act shall enter into force upon ratification by a majority of states parties. Each state party shall deposit its instrument of ratification with the depositary, which shall be the United Nations Secretary-General. States that become parties to this Act after its entry into force shall deposit their instruments of ratification with the depositary.

### **Article 13: Final Provisions**

13.1 This Act shall be registered with the United Nations in accordance with Article 102 of the UN Charter. It shall be available in the official languages of the United Nations to ensure widespread accessibility and understanding.

13.2 This Act shall remain in force indefinitely, subject to amendments as provided for in Article 11. States parties shall regularly review the implementation and effectiveness of this Act and may propose amendments to address emerging challenges and advancements in space technology.

13.3 States parties shall engage in international cooperation and collaboration to achieve the objectives of this Act and advance the peaceful and secure exploration and utilization of outer space. By working together, states shall promote the responsible use of outer space and ensure that space remains a domain free from criminal activities and threats to humanity's common interests.

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13.4 States parties shall strive to uphold the principles and values enshrined in this Act and work towards a future where criminal acts in outer space are effectively addressed, and justice prevails for all humanity, leaving no one behind. The shared goal is to protect the space environment, uphold human rights, and ensure that the benefits of space exploration are accessible to all nations and peoples, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation in the pursuit of common goals in space.