

The Lebanese Republic

Positions for the General Assembly First Committee

I. Reaffirming and Developing the Use of the Outer Space Treaty in an Age of New Technologies and Emerging Threats

Militarization of outer space, especially within efforts made by G10 (The top 10 most economically developed countries/global powers) member states, is an increasing threat to the international community due to lack of robust regulations. Characteristically, as the prevalence of anti-satellite defense systems and space military groups from G10 member states increases, there is a growing concern towards the lack of regulations on weapons in space outside of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). And as technologies such as SmallSat become more accessible to smaller member states and non-state actors (NSAs), demonstrated by the 1000 SmallSats predicted to be launched every year in the 2020's, it is clear that existing regulations must be expanded both for the safety of the general population, and individual member states. An additional concern in the new age of space technologies is private NSAs such as SpaceX and Blue Origin becoming more prevalent launch providers, with comparable relevance to government agencies such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the European Space Agency (ESA). Current regulations treat these NSAs as extensions of the country that they originate from, which may become immensely problematic in the near future as these programs continue to grow. The Lebanese Republic recognises the loose reaches of current precedents towards emerging technologies, NSAs, and weapon regulations in space, and is deeply committed to both strengthening existing regulations, and innovating new procedures that will have a sufficiently robust framework such that they will stay relevant long into the future.

As a member state that is a ratifier of A/RES/2222 (XXI) (also known as the Outer Space Treaty), the Lebanese Republic has invariably stood with the international community on space-related matters. Initially through the Lebanese Rocket Society (LRS), which was founded in 1960 as a tool for university students to explore the facets of rocket engineering, the Lebanese Republic has also been an education and science driven participant in the space technology community. The LRS set precedent for space innovation in the Middle East, and has fostered many space-focused entrepreneurial and academic movements. More recently, in 2019 we hosted the inaugural SG (Space Generation) conference event in collaboration with key Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the Planetary Society and Exosphere Ltd, which discussed the looming challenge of constructing colonies on the surface of Mars. The Lebanese Republic has continued to advance conversations in ensuring the sustainability of emerging technologies within modern societies, and would like to emphasize the Sixty-fourth DPI/NGO Conference NGO/740-PI/2009, which focused on community-driven change through NGOs.

The Lebanese Republic believes continued work with NGOs is a vital key to producing lasting solutions to protect the international community from space-based weapons and more, and urges fellow member states to collaborate with these groups as much as possible within their policy-making and implementations. Though space technologies are becoming vastly more affordable to less economically developed member states, it is key that as new regulations are developed to keep in mind the effect of oppression that larger countries may have, especially with high-tech non-WMD weapons in space. Bearing this in mind, the Lebanese Republic recommends that any sort of weapons should be avoided being placed into orbit around our planet, as we are concerned that even small weapons will lead to a slippery-slope into a new age of space warfare. Another issue to consider as space becomes more accessible is the sustainability of launch methods, as well as long-term space debris. Supportively, the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development encourages in its twelfth goal support for responsible consumption and production, which we believe can be used in combination with goals 9 and 16 to promote a better utilization on a global scale of the advancements made in rocket reusability by many NGOs. The Lebanese Republic looks forward to working with fellow member states to innovate strong advancements in space technology regulations, and hopes that a swift consensus can be made on this matter.

II. Acting to Limit the Harmful Effects of Mercenaries and Private Military Contractors

Private Military Contractors (PMCs) and Mercenaries have long been used as a blanket-fix to make up for the disparities in governmental/military power relative to financial leverage within a given country or region. Especially when used in conflicts affecting new or underdeveloped member states, these virtually unregulated bodies often leave target regions devastated, with innocent civilians caught in the crossfires of poorly executed military action. Within the Lebanese Republic, PMCs have been used to protect against non-state actors with mixed results. Consequently, we are eager to work multilaterally with the international community to achieve more consistent results from PMCs, and with equal substance, move towards a safer future in which PMCs can be leveraged better for keeping the peace. Harmoniously, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) supports this transition in its third, fifth, and seventh articles discussing the security, right to life, protection against cruel treatment, and equality before the law of a person. And due to the consequences of the world entering a new age of increased socioeconomic disparities, as well as inequality, it has become clear that regulations must be set into place that will be lasting, effective, and efficient.

The Lebanese Republic recognises that there is an innate need for PMCs to a certain degree, as they provide the opportunity for easier multilateral support for necessary military operations within the scope of the international community, as well as peacekeeping operations. However, the current lack of international regulations for contractors generates a system prone to corruption. PMCs can set up foreign subsidiaries, which are viewed as separate entities, and work through them to avoid legal responsibility for their actions. This is increasingly dangerous relative to the heightened usage of contractors, with some examples such as Blackwater having targeted operations of over 10,000 individuals. Consequently, the United Nations has made attempts to provide standards for PMCs to conduct themselves with, nameingly A/RES/44/34 the International Convention against the Recruitment Use, Financing, and Training of Mercenaries, and A/RES/34/140. Though these resolutions have provided a solid framework to begin the transition to a more regulated body, they fall short within implementation and actual ability to hold Mercenaries and PCMs accountable for their actions, which has led the Lebanese Republic to avert its support for this initiative. Within Lebanon, however, we have taken many national actions to hold PCMs and mercenaries accountable. The Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), born out of security council resolution 1757 prosecutes and holds trials for individuals involved with the attack of 14 February 2005, which injured many innocent civilians. Further, during the Seventy-Third session of the General Assembly Third Committee GA/SHC/4246 the Lebanese Republic discussed the destabilizing effect of PMCs and Mercenaries on rule of law, emphasizing its effects on socioeconomic disparities, as well as xenophobic based discrimination as violence leads to continued political polarization. The SDGs provide an explicit form for the international community to follow as it moves into a more peaceful setting. For the issue of limiting effects of mercenaries and PCMs, goal 16 which seeks to provide the framework for peace, justice, and strong institutions is highly relevant to the Lebanese Republic, as our systems are constructed with these goals in mind, bringing us to the bottom 30% of all member states in terms of corruption. This provides a stable platform for the Lebanese Republic to work multilaterally with fellow member states to bring strong actions and regulations into actualization.

It is with these goals in mind that the Lebanese Republic urges member states to work towards more concrete actions in securing a peaceful future. In order to be able to regulate PMCs and mercenaries, proper monitoring and classification systems must be implemented in order to identify where specific action is needed. The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRR) provides an exceptional body to work through in order to achieve this, demonstrating collaborative, independent, and fair reporting across over 9000 companies within 180 countries in its current efforts. Further, as an NGO, the BHRR is free from government corruption and influence, making it a strong organization for monitoring groups such as PCMs. The Lebanese Republic recommends that member states work closer with NGOs both on a local and international level in order to allow both personalized and powerful solutions to hold malicious groups accountable for their actions. The Lebanese Republic also realizes that blanket-policy may not always be the ideal way to ensure strong institutions, and calls upon member states to work individually with the United Nations to achieve individualized action planning in addition to standard international regulations. With this in mind, the Lebanese Republic draws attention to the lack of action from G6 member states on the international scale, and invites these countries to re-evaluate their current commitments to international action. We look forward to working collaboratively with fellow member states in order to provide lasting and effective solutions that will bring the international community as a whole to a more peaceful state.