# MASMUN'27

UNFOLDING THE DAWN




## International Airspace Crisis Commission

## Topic 2:

## Aviation Tracking and Cross-Border Coordination after MH370

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## Topic Overview

\There is a huge problem of locating distressed aircraft in an expeditious way, which was starkly exemplified with Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 disappearance in 2014. This is with regard to the inadequate tracking of aircraft, distress signals and information sharing between states. This discussion will look into ways to achieve these objectives.

## Background Information

Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 was on a scheduled passenger flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, when it was lost. The disappearance triggered a large-scale international search effort, along with investigations into aircraft-tracking technology, satellite communications, and inter-agency exchanges of information. The experience of locating the missing aircraft highlighted the difficulties involved in a search when there is a lack of certainty about the aircraft's last known position, and when the available information is held by a number of different parties. Participants are encouraged to understand the distinction between confirmed and purported (i.e., believed to be) event or fact and also to refer to the latest official reports.

## International Norms and Past Actions

The Chicago Convention is the basis for international civil aviation collaboration. ICAO standards cover aircraft operations, communications, search and rescue operations, and the exchange of safety information. In the wake of the MH370 incident, there has been a renewed focus within international aviation on worldwide flight tracking, distress tracking and aircraft location in distress. Delegates should check the current wording and application of applicable ICAO standards – not all are mandatory or applicable across the board.

## Key challenges

A single flight can take an aircraft through many different flight information regions and even several national territories. Tracking data can be incomplete, delayed, inaccessible or stored by different authorities. Search operations for aircraft lost over remote areas of the ocean can be costly and technically challenging. States and airlines must also address concerns about data privacy and cybersecurity as well as equipment costs and the operational requirements of older aircraft. Although improved tracking can reduce uncertainty, there are no guarantees that an aircraft will be found immediately.

# Possible Areas for Resolution

Tracking standards worldwide: need to take into account trusted position reporting and distress tracking with set performance standards.

Interoperable emergency communications: Standardised formats, round the clock points of contact, and secure cross-border information sharing need to be investigated. Education and learning: How the investment in education and learning increases interoperability of the system and improves security against crises.

Search-and-rescue coordination: Consideration should be given to establishing shared procedures for: alerting; designating responsibilities; and coordinating aircraft and maritime resources.

Recorder data and data: Procedures should be specified for the timeous recovery, preservation, analysis and sharing of flight data.

The request would be to consider phased compliance, technical assistance and exercise requests for states and lower operations.

# Guiding Questions

1. What tracking intervals and distress-trigger criteria are appropriate for different flight conditions?
2. How can states share emergency information quickly while protecting data security?
3. Who should coordinate operations when an aircraft's last known position lies near several search-and-rescue regions?
4. How can smaller operators and states afford new tracking equipment?
5. What lessons from MH370 should be incorporated into training and international exercises?
6. How should authorities communicate uncertainty to families and the public during a search?

# Resources

**ICAO: Aircraft Tracking** — https://www.icao.int/operational-safety/aircrafttracking

**ICAO: Understanding GADSS** — https://www.icao.int/operational-safety/Understanding-GADSS

**Malaysia Ministry of Transport: MH370 Reports** — https://www.mot.gov.my/en/aviation/reports/mh370

**ICAO: Search and Rescue** — https://www.icao.int/safety/airnavigation/Pages/Search-and-Rescue.aspx