

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CIVIL AVIATION: CHANGES IN THE REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

ORGANISED BY:
THE CENTRE FOR AVIATION AND SPACE LAWS
WBNUJS, KOLKATA

AUGUST 14, 2021

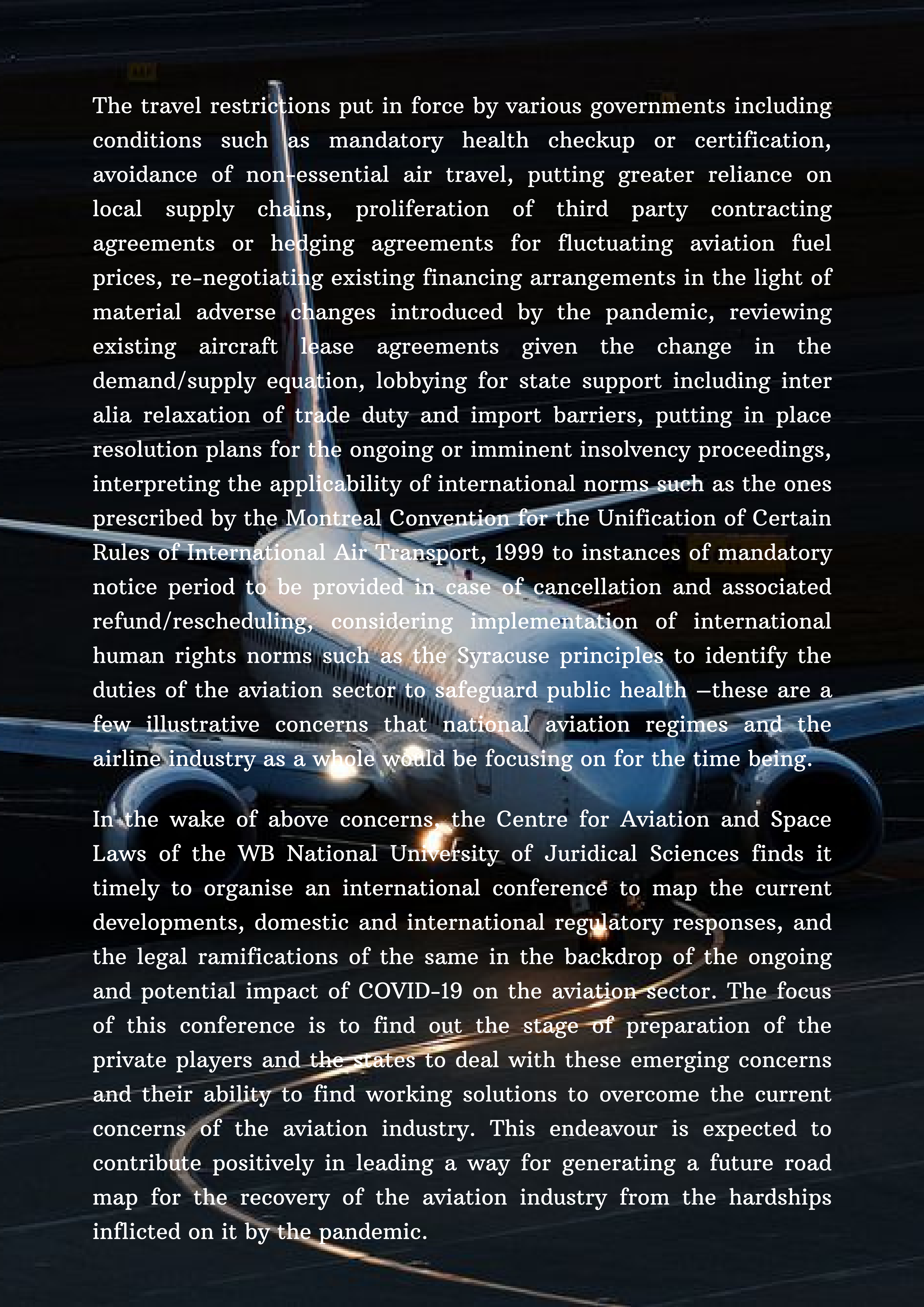


BACKGROUND

A large commercial airplane is shown on a runway at night. The aircraft is illuminated by ground lights, creating a bright glow around it. The background is dark, with some lights visible in the distance. The overall scene is a dramatic, low-angle shot of the plane.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had an immense impact on the global economy and industries, and the aviation sector is one of those to have borne the brunt of its effect. Commercial flights to many countries have become either impossible or financially non-viable, with governments across the world closing down their respective airspaces either generally or selectively to flights from specific countries. Almost all the players in the aviation market have been left with insufficient income to satisfy their liabilities owed to a range of persons including the financiers, passengers, consignors and consignees. Legal assistance is being sought on an urgent basis to review such liabilities and the possibilities to suspend those temporarily or to escape those altogether given the surrounding circumstances.

The aviation industry, under considerable stress even in the days before the pandemic, has been left reeling under such a huge blow. Several airline majors have already been compelled to file for insolvency, while others have to impose severe cost-cutting measures including lay-off and furloughs merely to stay afloat. Given the uncertainties surrounding the pandemic, it appears that the aviation sector as a whole may need to revisit its regulatory framework not only for the remaining duration of the pandemic, but also to cope with the legal, financial, and operational after-effects of the same during the years to come.

The background of the text is a photograph of a large commercial airplane on a runway at night. The plane is illuminated by ground lights, creating a bright glow around it. The runway lights are visible in the foreground, and the sky is dark. The overall scene is a typical airport at night.

The travel restrictions put in force by various governments including conditions such as mandatory health checkup or certification, avoidance of non-essential air travel, putting greater reliance on local supply chains, proliferation of third party contracting agreements or hedging agreements for fluctuating aviation fuel prices, re-negotiating existing financing arrangements in the light of material adverse changes introduced by the pandemic, reviewing existing aircraft lease agreements given the change in the demand/supply equation, lobbying for state support including inter alia relaxation of trade duty and import barriers, putting in place resolution plans for the ongoing or imminent insolvency proceedings, interpreting the applicability of international norms such as the ones prescribed by the Montreal Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules of International Air Transport, 1999 to instances of mandatory notice period to be provided in case of cancellation and associated refund/rescheduling, considering implementation of international human rights norms such as the Syracuse principles to identify the duties of the aviation sector to safeguard public health –these are a few illustrative concerns that national aviation regimes and the airline industry as a whole would be focusing on for the time being.

In the wake of above concerns, the Centre for Aviation and Space Laws of the WB National University of Juridical Sciences finds it timely to organise an international conference to map the current developments, domestic and international regulatory responses, and the legal ramifications of the same in the backdrop of the ongoing and potential impact of COVID-19 on the aviation sector. The focus of this conference is to find out the stage of preparation of the private players and the states to deal with these emerging concerns and their ability to find working solutions to overcome the current concerns of the aviation industry. This endeavour is expected to contribute positively in leading a way for generating a future road map for the recovery of the aviation industry from the hardships inflicted on it by the pandemic.

MAJOR SUB-THEMES OF THE CONFERENCE

- **Revisiting contractual obligations in the aviation sector following the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Liability towards passengers and consumers and extenuating circumstances**
- **Restricting air-travel: Domestic practices and international responses**
- **Changes in the national aviation policies during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Aviation financing and leasing concerns**
- **Changing role of aviation insurance during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Aviation and public health norms: Measures already taken and the road ahead**
- **Insolvency and restructuring proceedings in the aviation sector during the pandemic and beyond: Challenges and concerns**
- **Dealing with airline staff, agents and independent contractors**

CALL FOR PAPERS

Those who are interested in presenting a paper on any of the above themes must send an abstract of 400 words along with a brief biographical note (not more than 100 words) on or before June 25, 2021. The acceptance of the paper for presentation would be informed by June 30, 2021. A full length paper of 5,000 - 6,000 words must be sent by August 5, 2021. If the full length paper is not submitted before the last date, authors will not be allowed to present the paper in the Conference. Submission of the full paper would be presumed as unconditional consent of the author/s for a possible publication by the organisers.

**LAST DATE FOR
SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACT: JUNE 25, 2021**

**LAST DATE FOR
SUBMISSION OF FULL
PAPER: AUGUST 5, 2021**

**E-MAIL I.D. FOR
SUBMISSIONS: CASL@NUJS.EDU**

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SANDEEPA BHAT B.)**

CONFERENCE DATE: AUGUST 14, 2021

EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS

As this academic exercise is on the current concern faced by the international community, participation from various segments of the society is expected. While academicians, students and researchers would benefit immensely out of the discussions, the legal practitioners would also be able to acquaint themselves with this emerging branch of law. With the participation of internationally renowned aviation law experts as resource persons, even the law makers and other government representatives would be benefitted out of their participation in this international conference.

**Note: Certificate would be issued to only those participants who attend all sessions.*

CHIEF PATRON

PROF. DR. N.K. CHAKRABARTI

VICE-CHANCELLOR, NUJS

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