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**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

# If Mars attacks, she's our leader

The UN is set to appoint an obscure Malaysian astrophysicist to act as Earth's first contact for any aliens that may come a-knocking

*Jonathan Leake* Published: 26 September 2010



Dr Mazlan Othman has been chosen to lead the response to any alien contact (V. Martin)

When aliens arrive on Earth, they will no longer have to worry about who will greet them. The United Nations, tackling head-on the problem of what to do if an alien says "take me to your leader", is poised to designate a specific individual

for the task.

Some would argue that the job should fall to the US president, the leaders of Russia or the European Union. Others might suggest the Pope. One thing is certain: humanity's lack of a leader would not make a good impression.

Instead the UN is set to select an obscure Malaysian astrophysicist who is head of its little-known Office for Outer Space Affairs (Unoosa). Mazlan Othman will describe her potential new role next week at a scientific conference at the Royal Society's Kavli conference centre in Buckinghamshire.

She will tell delegates that the recent discovery of hundreds of planets around other stars has made

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