



JEANPIMUN 2026

**COMMITTEE MANUAL
SECURITY COUNCIL**

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Introduction

The Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations system, and is the primary organ charged with ensuring international peace and security. The Security Council held its first session on 17 January 1946 at Church House, Westminster, London. Currently, the Security Council is permanently based at United Nations Headquarters in New York. It has also met in many other cities, holding sessions in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1972; Panama City, Panama, in 1973; and Geneva, Switzerland, in 1990.

A representative from each member state must be present at United Nations Headquarters at all times so that the Security Council can convene as needed.

The council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or acts of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

According to the Charter, the United Nations has four purposes:

- Successfully maintaining international peace and security.
- To develop friendly relations among nations.
- To cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights
- To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

All members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. It is stated that only the Security Council has the power to make decisions, and so members are obligated to implement them under the Charter.

Key functions

When a complaint concerning a threat to peace is brought before it, the Council's first action is usually to recommend that the parties try to reach an agreement by peaceful means. The Council now may:

- Set forth principles for such an agreement.
- Undertake an investigation and mediation, in some cases, dispatch a mission, appoint special envoys; or
- request the Secretary-General to use his good offices to achieve a peaceful settlement of the dispute.
- When a dispute leads to hostility, the Council's primary concern is to bring it to an end as soon as possible. In that case, the Council may:
 - Issue ceasefire directives that can help prevent an escalation of the conflict;
 - Dispatch military observers or a peacekeeping force to help reduce tensions, separating opposing forces and establishing calm through peaceful solutions.

Beyond this, the Council may opt for enforcement measures depending on the situation, including:

- Any economic sanctions, arms embargoes, financial penalties and restrictions, and travel bans
- Severance of diplomatic relations or blockades.
- Collective military action.

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A chief concern of the Security Council is to focus action on those responsible for the policies or practices condemned by the international community, while minimizing the impact of measures taken on other parts of the population and economy.



Topic: “The impact of the United Nations Security Council Permanent Members' Veto Power on Populations Affected by Humanitarian Crises”

Background of the topic

The veto power in the UNSC was initiated to ensure that the primary founding members, the P5 (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States), have significant control over the Council's decisions, reflecting their crucial roles and interests in maintaining international peace and security. This power allows any permanent member to block any substantive resolution, thereby preventing the adoption of substantive resolutions not aligned with the interests of a permanent member and ensuring their continued participation and cooperation in the UN framework. The veto power in the UNSC was initiated primarily to address concerns about the sovereignty and interests of the major powers involved in its formation after World War II.

Since the UN's establishment in 1945, the veto has been used over 300 times, primarily by the U.S., Russia (or the Soviet Union), and, to a lesser extent, China, France and the United Kingdom. The veto has often been invoked due to the strategic interests of these nations rather than broader international consensus.

Occasions where the use of the veto has been implemented:

1.-The Cold War Period: In the early years of the Security Council, marked by intense rivalry between the U.S. and the USSR, the Soviet Union frequently exercised the veto to [block the admission of new Member States](#) it viewed

as aligned with the West. The U.S. also used its veto, often to shield Israel from resolutions it deemed unfavorable.

2.- Post-Cold War Era: Following the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, the use of the veto declined temporarily but resurged in response to conflicts in the Middle East and other geopolitical crises. Again, the U.S. frequently used its veto to block resolutions critical of Israel, while Russia used its veto to block draft resolutions condemning its actions in Ukraine.

Context

The extensive use of veto power by the P5 and its disturbing impact have been a concern in the UNSC. In the Seventy-Eighth Session of the General Assembly, 36th Meeting (PM), GA/12563, dated 17 November 2023, Ukraine referred to the veto as a weapon of hatred and war. At the time of the formation of the UN, the major powers were hesitant to join due to a fear of a hostile majority in the Council. Since the international community considered that without them, the UN was doomed to fail in its mission, a compromise was accepted in the form of a veto power for the five permanent members.

Some countries have also argued that the composition of the P5 is outdated, reflecting the power structure of 1945 rather than today's geopolitical realities and evolving global demographics. Emerging powers such as India, Brazil and South Africa have advocated for a more inclusive Security Council, with either an expansion of permanent membership or limitations on veto power.

Various proposals for reforming the veto system include the introduction of a [“responsibility not to veto” principle](#), which would limit the use of the veto in cases involving mass atrocities. Another proposal would require at least

two or more P5 members to exercise a veto for it to be effective, thereby reducing unilateral obstructionism.

In conclusion, similar structural limitations contributed to the paralysis of the League of Nations. It continued to be a point of contention within the United Nations. Efforts to reform the current system and address the challenges associated with veto power are essential to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of international organizations in maintaining peace and security worldwide.

Guiding questions

- To what extent does veto power reflect the original post-World War II balance of power, and is this structure still representative of contemporary global realities?
- How does the existence of the veto shape the decision-making dynamics within the Security Council during humanitarian emergencies?
- To what extent does political deadlock within the Security Council contribute to the escalation or prolongation of humanitarian emergencies?
- Can the veto power indirectly facilitate impunity in cases involving alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide?
- Should there be legal or procedural limitations on the veto in cases involving mass atrocities? If so, what form could these limitations take?
- To what degree does the veto reflect national interests rather than collective humanitarian responsibility?
- Can the moral responsibility to protect vulnerable populations outweigh the political sovereignty defended through veto use?

- What reform proposals regarding the veto have gained international support, and what obstacles limit their implementation?
- Is the complete abolition of the veto politically realistic, or would structural reform be a more viable approach?
- What role can the General Assembly play when the Security Council is paralyzed due to veto use?

References

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