



2024

Special Assembly on UNSC Reform



RMUN

Letter from the chair

Hello!

My name is Juan Pablo Cajiga-Pena, and I am your chair for the UNSC. I am a sophomore philosophy and art history double major who has been doing MUN since high school. Outside of MUN, I like to bike, read, and go to museums. I am also the head of our philosophy club at Rice, and I really enjoy recreational philosophy writing. I can't wait to host RMUN and listen to lively debate over such important topics!

Regards,
JP

Committee outline

This committee will be an abnormal meeting of United Nations delegates outside of the scope of the General Assembly. The official title will be a "special assembly" on UNSC reform, meaning that resolutions will not be adopted by this committee directly. Rather, the goal is for delegates to agree on recommendations to the UN to be considered by the official General Assembly. All delegates will be representatives of their country, meaning that a popular resolution could likely evolve into an amendment directly in our hypothetical world. The UN General Assembly can pass amendments to the UN Charter with the approval of $\frac{2}{3}$ of nations and the consent of all permanent UNSC members. Thus, this committee should focus on consensus building with those numbers in mind. To understand our mission, we will have to consider the nature of the UNSC.

The UNSC is the UN's most authoritative organ, as it can make unilateral directives to maintain peace. Various UN security initiatives are actively managed by the UNSC, such as the UN's peacekeeping missions. To maintain its efficacy, the UNSC is a small body with only 15 members. There are 5 permanent members (termed the "P-5") and 10 spots which rotate to other states bi-annually. It is unofficially recognized that there should be 2 spots for each of the multinational continents. The five permanent members are dictated by the UN charter according to power relations following The Second World War.

The UN Charter & Committee Goal

The UN charter lays out the operational procedures of the United Nations, including the mechanisms by which the UNSC maintains peace. Some of the codified points are the identity of the permanent members, the role of the veto power, the procedures of debate, and the selection process for non-permanent members. The charter does not lay out how the UNSC might be accountable to the broader UN. Because the UN Charter gave the UNSC the primary position in peacekeeping, United Nations peacekeeping forces are directed solely by the UNSC (though this is not expressly a part of the Charter, it is understood). The goal of this committee

will be to consider reforms to the UN Security Council. Here are some contentious issues which committee might choose to address:

Current situation

Permanent Members

The identity and number of the permanent members is a crucial part of the UN's procedural methodology. The current arrangement is meant to cement the power relations directly following World War 2, and many nations have argued that there are now nations which are comparably powerful and important to international peace. Further, many have looked at the war in Ukraine as evidence that Russia does not belong as a member of the permanent UNSC powers. Another critique is that of the amendment process. Since nations on the P5 must consent to amendments, it is not possible that a P5 nation can be removed without their own consent. Many nations argue that there should be a stringent, but feasible, method of removing P5 powers without their consent. The justification of permanent members is in part that these actors must be included in the dialogue to build peace. So, the choice to remove them would serve as an indication they aren't actually required for international peace.

Temporary Members Selection

The 10 non-permanent members of the UNSC are elected by the United Nations General Assembly (5 terms expire every year). There is an informal understanding that nations are elected in a way that distributes membership geographically, holding together regional interests. However, this is not an official part of the UN charter. Further, many nations argue there should be more or less temporary members, that temporary members should be rotated out faster or slower, or that certain nations should be guaranteed a spot at the table, even if they don't have veto power (particularly those which are consistently considerations of UNSC peacekeeping efforts).

Peacekeeping Mandates

United Nations peacekeepers are notoriously ineffective. This is because of stringent mandates which require that all uses of force are directly authorized by the UNSC. Particularly, UN Peacekeepers are often deployed to conflict zones without authorization to use force, even when under attack. In this way, they are often required by international law to exhaust all methods of conflict de-escalation even if they are under imminent physical threat. UN Peacekeeping mandates are complicated, and delegates should research individual current and previous conflicts to understand how they play out in practice.

Veto Power

The veto power is understood to be one of the biggest roadblocks to international peacekeeping efforts. If nations use their veto power as a bargaining chip, they have the ability to hold international peacekeeping efforts hostage in exchange for political credit. Further, P5 nations which are themselves threatening international threats may shelter themselves from the retribution of the UNSC. This has been the case in the Russia-Ukraine war. However, many argue this is a form of peacekeeping. If the UNSC were able to intervene into the affairs of any

of the P5 nations, it may be the case that an international war would break out. Delegates should consider why the veto power exists, whether it should exist in its current form, and who should have it.

Accountability & Transparency

This is a catch all for a variety of issues. The UNSC is dominated by the P5, and many argue that the structure of the UNSC defends this imbalance. The issues above are particular issues, but many argue that the structure of debate, the lack of recourse by the UN General Assembly, and the absence of a right for impacted states to consult the UNSC during their meetings all lead to one-sided dialogues which reflect a narrow political agenda without allowing nations to reveal through discourse the underlying political motivations of the UNSC.

Relevant International Law

Ex UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was a proponent of a plan titled 'in larger freedom.' In this plan, he sought to enlarge the council to 24 members.

UN Charter, Article 108 outlines the validity conditions of an amendment to the UN Charter, and Article 109 lays out the procedure for the introduction of such an amendment.

UN Charter, Article 52 is often credited with giving the UNSC authority over the UN Peacekeeping apparatus.

Un Charter, Article 23 establishes the UNSC and gives its operational procedures.

Questions to consider

- What are some issues arising from the current organization of the UNSC, and how could reforms alleviate them?
- What is the current power balance of the international community, is it reflected in the UNSC?
- What is the role of UN Peacekeepers? Does the UNSC share this goal and enable their success?
- What are the interests of the nations involved? What is a feasible way of convincing the current security council to sponsor reforms?