

*CalsMUN 2019*  
*Future Technology*

**Research Report**

**Forum:** United Nations Security Council

**Issue:** The efficiency of the SC and possible reform

**Chairs:** Thomas Koning and Nando Temming



## Personal Introduction

### Thomas Koning

Hi delegates! I'm Thomas and I'll be one of your presidents of the Security Council, together with my best friend and MUN partner in crime, Nando. I currently attend the University of Leiden at the campus in The Hague where I study International Relations and Organisations (IRO). I have attended over 10 MUNs, both at high school level and university and both national and international. CalsMUN is close to my heart as I have participated in all forms all three of the conferences. First as delegate, then as chair and finally as conference manager of the organising committee. I look forward to meeting all of you and hearing and leading your debate.





## Introduction

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the most important council of the UN, and with importance, comes controversy. The UNSC is the only body in the UN that can make binding resolutions. In other words, the council can put obligations on all the members of the UN which it can enforce with sanctions and military actions. There have been several issues regarding the UNSC and its powers. These are: 1) veto power, 2) skewed power distribution of the veto powers, 3) regional representation of the veto powers, 4) peace keeping operations, 5) membership and 6) Interaction with the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). These are the main issues that delegates must resolve.

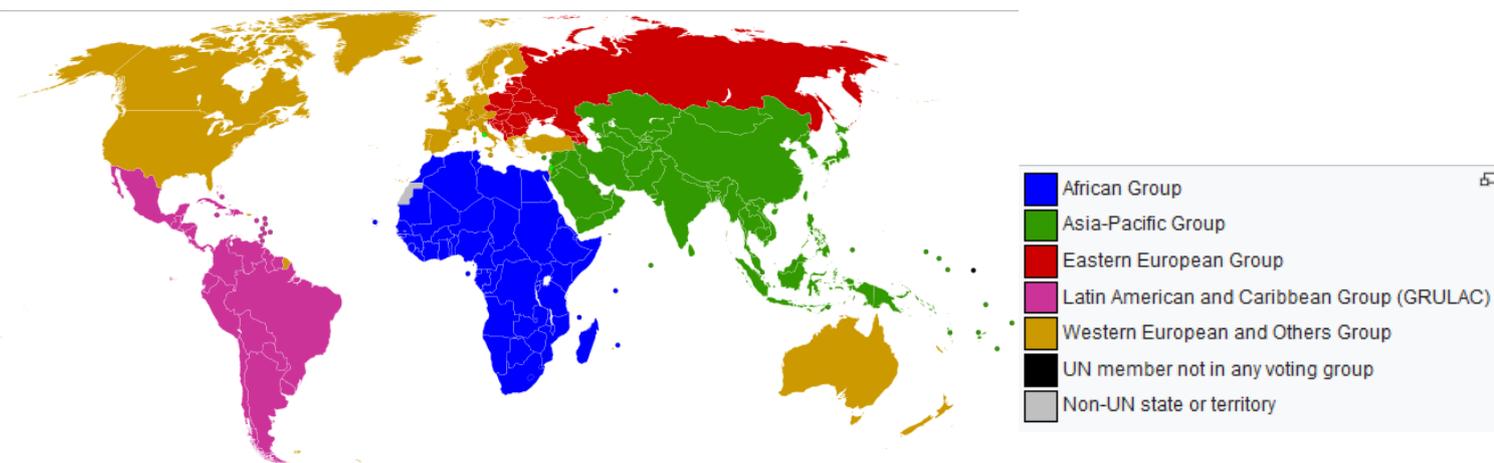
## Definition of Key Terms

### P5

The P5 (the Permanent 5) are the states that always sit on the UNSC. These are: The United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), France, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China (PRC). The P5 states have veto power and are legally the only states allowed to have nuclear weapons.

### Non-permanent members

Apart from the P5, the UNSC has 10 non-permanent members. These change every two years and are chosen from groups that present a certain region and/or ideological affiliation.





## G4 Nations

The G4 Nations are 4 states that back each other for permanent membership, and thus, veto power. These are India, Germany, Brazil, and Japan. The UK and France support the G4 nations.

## Uniting for Consensus

The Uniting for Consensus Group is a coalition of states that are against the expansion of permanent, veto power wielding seats in the UNSC. They are thus in direct opposition to the G4 nations. They have made proposals on reform of the UNSC, mainly by expansion of the non-permanent member seats<sup>1</sup>.

## The Charter

The charter of the UN is the founding document of the UN, detailing how it operates. It can be seen as the constitution of the UN.

## R2P

Responsibility to Protect. A principal adopted unanimously in 2005 that states have a responsibility to protect people outside of their borders if they are the victim of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes or crimes against humanity.

<sup>1</sup>Take for example this source: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2005/ga10371.doc.htm>



### General Overview

#### 1) Veto power

The veto power for the P5 was obtained during the San Francisco negotiations on the establishment of the UN charter after the second world war. After WWII, the victors, the UK, the US, France, the PRC (then the ROC) and Russia (then the Soviet Union) were the most powerful nations of the world. They demanded veto power, giving an ultimatum: either a charter with veto or no charter at all. The smaller countries reluctantly accepted, bearing in mind the failure of the League of Nations, that lacked the participation of the United States. However, now, the P5 states often have conflicting interests and thus vetoing resolutions and blocking constructive progress. Some people have called for the abolition of the veto power completely, arguing that it is undemocratic and hypocritical for an organisation that advocates democracy. This argument certainly is true as it gives a lot of power to the P5. The P5 states can, and have, used this power for their own interest rather than for the collective good. One case often referred to in this part of UNSC reform is the Rwandan genocide. A more recent example would be the Syrian civil war.

#### 2) Skewed power distribution of the veto powers

As explained in point 1, the P5 states were determined after WWII. However, over time, the power of the UK and France, in relation to other countries has severely diminished. Countries like India currently have a bigger population, bigger army and a sizable defence budget. As the logic of the P5 states having veto power was based on their power, France and the UK having veto power seems out of date. It must be noted, however, that the UK and France have not used their veto power since 1989. Still, using the same logic, a state like India should have veto power. Here the G4 comes into play. The G4 states all think they deserve veto power (see definition of G4 in key terms). For a state to obtain veto power the charter of the UN must be amended. This amendment process, among other checkmarks, requires the UNSC to approve any amendment, meaning that amendments can be vetoed. The problem for the G4 is that, even though there is widespread support for Indian veto power, China requires that India surrenders their support to Japan, which would be contradictory to the principles of the G4. The Uniting for Consensus group is against expansion of the veto power.

#### 3) Skewed regional representation

The UNSC determines its members through groups that represent certain regions and/or ideologies. As can be seen in the figure in the key terms section, the biggest supplier of



members to the UNSC is the WEOG (Western European and Others Group), however, this is largely due to three out of the five P5 being part of that group. This distribution is contested and is seen as not representative of the world population.

#### 4) Peace keeping operations

Peace keeping operations, though not established as part of the UN charter, have become one of the primary tools for the UNSC to address regions with violent political instability. Regardless of their alleged success there are a lot of issues with peace keeping operations. First of all, their use of violence is a point of contention. As one of the key aspects of a peace keeping operation is non-partiality, blue helmets are not allowed to commit acts of violence against parties to a conflict or dispute. This does, however, also mean that they are not allowed to use violence when innocent people's lives are at stake. Examples are the operations in Bosnia and Rwanda. Second, peace keeping operations fail to perform comprehensive state building<sup>2</sup>, which is necessary to prevent further conflict. There have been improvements in this area like observing and guarding elections.

#### 5) Membership

The size of the UNSC is hotly debated. It was the last significant change to the UNSC, when in 1965 the number of non-permanent members changed from 6 to 10. Still, there are voices that the size of the UNSC should increase in order to accommodate for a more accurate regional representation and to add more diverse voices. However, the UNSC was kept small to retain efficiency and the ability to respond quickly in case of a crisis<sup>3</sup>. The Uniting for Consensus is an example of a group of states that want to increase the UNSC's size (to in this case 20).

#### 6) Interaction with the UNGA

The General Assembly and the Security Council are the two most important organs of the UN. They are quite the opposite in their set-up. The UNSC is small, the UNGA is big. The UNSC votes by qualified majority whereas the UNGA votes either by simple or two third majority. The UNSC's resolutions are binding, contrary to UNGA resolutions. These differences are there because of the tasks bestowed upon them. The UNSC is tasked with keeping peace and

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<sup>2</sup> State building is the process by which governments become more competent in holding elections, performing government duties and being stable in general.

<sup>3</sup> Delegates of the states that are in the UNSC have to be able to respond to calls for a meeting within 24 hours.



security while the UNGA can make resolution on anything it wants to. However, because of differing opinions and interests among the P5, a resolution cannot always be passed, thus the UNSC can, and does, fail at its task to maintain the peace. Using the *Uniting for Peace* resolution, the UNGA can recommend actions when international peace is at stake. This interaction has been the basis for calls for more interaction between the more democratic and inclusive GA and the more powerful SC.

## Major Parties Involved

### Organisations

#### Uniting for Consensus

The Uniting for Consensus group is lead by Italy and contains the following states: Republic of Korea (ROK), Canada, Spain, Mexico, Turkey, Argentina, Pakistan, Malta, Costa Rica, Colombia and San Marino.

#### G4

Contains India, Japan, Germany and Brazil. India seems to be the member with the highest possibility of attaining veto power of the 4.

### States

#### P5 states

Includes PRC, USA, UK, Russia and France.

## Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of Event
24-10-1945	UN charter entered into force and thus the Security Council was established.
3-11-1950	Uniting for Peace resolution (Resolution 377 A) was adopted.
1965	Last significant change of the UNSC when the number of non-permanent members changed from 6 to 10.



23-12-1989	Last time that France and the UK use their veto.
April-July 1994	Rwandan genocide that showed the consequences of UN failure.
2004	HLP proposal for the responsibility not to veto.
2005	Secretary-General Kofi Annan presents the <i>In Larger Freedom</i> report, calling for the expansion of seats on the UNSC.

## Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There have been academic studies and UN commissioned reports on Security Council reform. For example, the 2004 High-Level Panel's (HLP) proposal for the P5 states to refrain from vetoing in case of mass atrocities in line with the adopted principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Moreover, in 2005, the then Secretary-General Kofi Annan advocated for the expansion of the UNSC in his *In Larger Freedom* report. In 1950 the *Uniting for Peace* resolution was adopted in the UNGA. This states that the UNGA can recommend action in case the UNSC fails due to lack of consensus among the P5.

## Possible Solutions

First, as far as the veto power is concerned, it is highly unlikely that any of the P5 states will give up their veto right. There have been suggestions, supported by France, to not veto resolutions when mass atrocities such as genocide are being discussed. This is called the "Responsibility not to veto". Veto power can also be expanded to more accurately represent the distribution of power in the world today. Second, regional representation could be improved by increasing the number of seats in the council, granting these to the Asian, African or Latin America group. Some have also argued for a permanent seat for Africa as a continent, represented by one African state. Moreover, there has been a suggestion for a Muslim seat as well. Continuing with this logic, one could also choose to create new groups. As it stands now these groups are large and not nuanced. For example, North-African states are quite different than those in East, West or South Africa. Third, peace keeping operations should get a clearer and more comprehensive mandate, one which is more befitting of their task.



## Bibliography

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