

COMMITTEE GUIDE

UNGA



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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1. Presidents' Letter

Honourable leaders,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to this year's CCB MUN. It would be rather impolite to continue without introducing ourselves, so let's get right to that. Our names are Carla Perea and Ana Marcela Ramírez Cabal, and we are in 11th and 12th grade at the Colegio Colombo Británico. Together, we have participated in over 20 models, have received several recognitions as both delegates and presidents, and have even been part of the secretariat team of our school's model.

Moreover, our experience in models has helped us develop a deep passion for debate, diplomacy, and international affairs as well as aiding us in the development of numerous skills. Thus, we are highly aware of the intrinsic enrichment this experience holds — we want to congratulate you for deciding to participate in the conference, and we hope you will get the most out of it!

The committee we will be chairing is an exciting opportunity for all those involved. The debates will be a breeding ground for enriching discussions. It is because of this that we expect all delegates to think critically and creatively about each of the issues that may arise. We want you to be well-researched and eloquent, while also demonstrating the most important attributes in a delegate: resilience and effort.

We will carry out our duty and endeavour to make this a memorable event. Furthermore, we encourage you to contact us in case you have any questions about the committee..

Best of luck,

Carla & Ana Marcela (UNGA Chair)

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2. Committee Information

I. History and Structure

The United Nations General Assembly is the central policy making organ of the UN. It is part of the six main organs of the UN and is composed of all member states. The UNGA provides a particular space for discussions covering the entire spectrum of international matters addressed in the UN Charter. The UN is composed of 193 members, all of which hold an equal vote. Alongside general multilateral discussions, the UN General Assembly is in charge of appointing the Secretary-General on the proposal of the Security Council. As well as selecting the non-permanent members of the Security Council and Trusteeship Council; selecting new members of the Economic and Social Council, approving the UN budget, and being a part of the election process of International Court of Justice judges. Additionally, the General Assembly receives activity reports from other UN Organs, and it is its job to supervise said organs.

The General Assembly operates by discussing distinct issues organised by a meticulous agenda. The agenda is divided into items and sub-items, which then leads to the adoption of resolutions. The General Assembly gathers annually and in special sessions to discuss the agenda topics. Each year, a new president is elected from a group of five regional groups of states. At the start of each routine session, a general debate is held, where all member states have the opportunity to raise any international concern. Even though the Assembly does address international matters, most of the work is delegated to a separate six main committees: “(1) Disarmament and International Security, (2) Economic and Financial, (3) Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural, (4) Special Political and Decolonization, (5) Administrative and Budgetary, and (6) Legal.” (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2023)

Each committee has a number, and they are known by this number. A consensus is reached by a simple majority vote on regular disputes. However, more complex matters such as peace and security issues, budgetary affairs, and admission of new members require a two-thirds majority vote. The purpose of the Assembly is to discuss pertinent issues, however the Assembly has no power to compel state action or to enforce its resolutions.



The first session of the General Assembly occurred on January 10th, 1946 in London, where 51 countries were represented. There were 192 members of the General Assembly as of 2006. Many non-member entities such as states and organisations (for example, the African Union, Palestine and the International Committee of the Red Cross), have observer status, this allows them to participate in General Assembly work despite not being UN members.

The UN General Assembly has managed to pass more than 300 resolutions a year in recent years, and many have been passed without opposition. Despite this feat of cooperation, many states continue to disagree on impactful issues such as human rights, the Cold War, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. These issues demand international action, and the General Assembly is a crucial vessel for all parties to unite and chart a course for the future.

II. Special Procedures

The General Assembly differs from other committees in the following aspects:

- **Power:** Because the General Assembly is the only United Nations organ in which all members have an equal vote, it has the ability to make changes to the functions and structure of this IGO.
- **Voting majority:** Decisions on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. All other procedural matters shall be made by a simple majority.
- **Method of voting for resolutions:** A roll call in alphabetical order will be taken for each resolution, and delegates must reply with “yes”, “no” or “abstention”.
- **Minute of silence:** After first opening session for the plenary meeting and prior to closing session, the chair will invite the delegates to observe a minute of silence for praying and meditation.



- **Statements by the Secretariat:** At any time, the Secretary-General or a representative designated by them, may take oral or written statements regarding the topic of discussion to the assembly.

- **Resolutions**

Draft resolutions

These documents will be drafted in the traditional format for draft resolutions, utilised in all other committees. Proposed modifications to the charter and declaration will be explained thoroughly and specifically in these resolutions. This format also allows for the delegates to propose additional solutions that would not be included in the two official documents.

Re-writing the charter and declaration

This re-drafting of the UN Charter and Declaration of Human Rights will offer the delegates the chance to directly revise the documents. Amendments will be made as modifications to the texts; as such, the format for resolutions would be the charter and declaration, verbatim, and leave it to be subject to changes. All blocs would have to accompany their proposed new charter and declaration with a short press release explaining their reasons for presenting the documents as they did.

Amendments

All amendments will be proposed and voted on individually. The chair will modify the documents accordingly throughout the process.

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3. Topic 1: A legally binding Universal Declaration of Human Rights

I. History/Context

Human rights are defined as “a wide continuum of values or capabilities thought to enhance human agency or protect human interests” (Weston, 2023). Whether conceived as moral or legal, these describe the entitlement to have or do something regarding physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of human beings. Human rights can be categorised either as negative or positive, according to how they should be fulfilled — as liberties or claims. While negative rights give others a duty of non-interference, positive rights require others to act or provide certain benefits; both, however, impose responsibilities and restrictions on other individuals and the government that rules over them.

The scope and nature of human rights is debated; nonetheless, they commonly have the following underpinning characteristics:

- *Universal*: Applicable to all, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, age, sex, or other status. They can be claimed by all human beings everywhere and in the present or future.
- *Inherent*: Possessed by all human persons by virtue of their humanity. That is to say, all individuals and groups are entitled to human rights simply because they have the condition of being human.
- *Inalienable*: Not subject to being transferred, taken or given. Individuals should not be denied any of their rights, except in specific situations and according to due process.
- *Indivisible*: All rights have the same status and importance, as they are tied to the dignity of human persons. As such, impeding one right amounts to a violation of all human rights.

- *Interdependent & interrelated*: Achieving a right is conditional upon the fulfilment of all rights.
- *Egalitarian*: Everyone has equal rights, without distinction or discrimination.
- *Fundamental*: Their value is significant to all, as they protect life and freedom.

The enduring concept of human rights — historically referred to as natural rights and rights of man — is rooted in an essential aspect of societies: ensuring collective and individual wellbeing. As such, most instruments for the correct maintenance of human rights operate under the assumption that there is universal accessibility to the idea of human rights. Simply put, this assumption entails the belief that everyone, everywhere knows, or has what is necessary to find out, that they have human rights (Huhle et al.). When met with the realisation that rights are not guaranteed and difficult to achieve, different societies crafted legal processes that would facilitate the maintenance of human rights.

A brief history of human rights

Various lenses can be utilised to understand the history of human rights as a philosophical, legal, and sociopolitical concept. Because varied manifestations of rights have existed, fragments of the ideology of human rights are as old as civilisation. In fact, what is considered to be one of the first forms of protection of justice for humans can be traced to the Cyrus Cylinder, around 539 BC. Despite this baked-clay document not prescribing universal laws, it provided guidance for further advances in rights for humans.

Before 200 BC, the foundation of most major religions and belief systems had occurred; this includes Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, and the humanistic philosophy of Ancient Greece. These all referred to the inherent dignity of humans, and our entitlement to pursue it. On the other hand, the idea of equality surged in the work of Greek Stoics, who considered men and women to be equal, children to deserve respect, and barbarians to be

worthy of inclusion into society. People's representation was promulgated in the 12th century, evidenced in the English Magna Carta of 1215. The Renaissance promoted the rediscovery of a philosophy that advocated for human rights; consequently, many influential writers are considered a form of human rights activists. Voltaire supported freedom of religion; Locke advocated that all people are born free and equal and are only subjected to authority by civil society; Beccaria promoted legal systems for the greater good and humane punishments; Paine proposed that politics must not take away the rights of people (e.g. freedom) and that the people provide the state with power; Wollstonecraft championed the rights of women as fully equal to men. Later, in the 18th century, the right to freedom was recognised in the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789. Furthermore, the 19th century saw the rise of abolitionist movements and fights for socioeconomic rights, such as protection in labour. The early 20th century was marked by women's suffrage, which sought equal rights for women (Amnesty International, 2019). For a more detailed description of events, please refer to the timeline in the following link <https://www.amnesty.nl/a-brief-history-of-human-rights>.

The United Nations and Human Rights

In the 19th century, the international community first demonstrated an interest in protecting the rights of people. The International Law of Human Rights began to be moulded by diverse efforts to ensure rights for foreigners such as the Congress of Vienna of 1814 and the covenant of the League of Nations of 1919. It must be noted that it was only after World War II, and the atrocities convicted in the Nürenberg trials, that human rights became an active international concern.

The aforementioned led to the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human



Figure 1. Eleanor Roosevelt holding a poster of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. From UN Photo, <https://dam.media.un.org/asset-management/2AM9LOOC508?FR=-1&W=719&H=764>

Rights (UDHR). It was passed by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10th of 1948, as an instrument for the international community to not permit crimes against humanity such as those that occurred in WWII. The UDHR was adopted in a meeting in Paris, with all but eight nations in favour and none dissenting. The draft of this document, the Declaration on Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, was first evaluated by the General Assembly on 1946; after consideration by part of the Commission of Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council, the declaration that is still upstanding as of 2023 was drafted by over 50 member states of the United Nations. The UDHR acts as a complement to the UN Charter, such that the fulfilment of rights of people all around the world is accounted for by the most prominent Intergovernmental Organisation in the world.



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights responds to the UN charter's affirmation that "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small" by setting forth 30 articles that define inalienable rights and freedoms of all human beings (United Nations, 1948). It is highly recommended to familiarise yourself with the declaration in

Figure 2. Poster outlining human rights according to the UDHR. From *You Have the Right To...*, by Woven Teaching, 2022, <https://www.woventeaching.org/blog/free-udhr-poster>



the following link <https://www.un.org/en/about-us /universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

As an agreement that is *legally non-binding*, this declaration represents a commitment by UN member states to implement human rights recognition at a domestic level; but this translates to there being no legal tool to guarantee that states answer for the human rights of those under their jurisdiction in the declaration. Some critics have claimed that parties to the UN charter and UDHR do no more than accept a vague promotional responsibility that the UN cannot insist on, and that the international community cannot legitimately intervene in. While it is true that, because the UDHR is not legally binding, this reduces its efficiency and applicability as the United Nations has no supranational authority, the UN has taken action related to human rights in the past. Examples of this include impositions from the Security Council against South Africa in 1977, Somalia and Haiti in the 1990s, Ivory Coast in 2003, and Libya in 2011 (Weston, 2023). These actions were based on a principle that was officialised in 2005, the responsibility to protect (R2P). R2P urges the international community to intervene and defend victimised populations after a state has forfeited their sovereign immunity by committing or permitting mass human right atrocities.

Since the Security Council is the only organ of the UN with power of intervention, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Human Rights Council — previously the Commission on Human Rights — mainly focuses on: setting human rights standards; drafting instruments; investigating alleged violations; monitoring compliance with international human rights law; and advising or condemning nations. Consequently, the provisions from the declaration that have been translated into domestic laws are the only substantial mechanism for individuals to demand the fulfilment of their rights.

II. Current Situation

Contemporary global and national affairs are undeniably affected by a growing demand for the recognition of human rights; this can be attributed to the work of the United Nations, allied agencies, and other human rights mechanisms. Globalisation has led to the emergence

of a transnational civil society, accompanied by the proliferation of the study of human rights and conferences regarding them. Additionally, globalisation has led to universal rights being utilised as the standard approach to human rights.

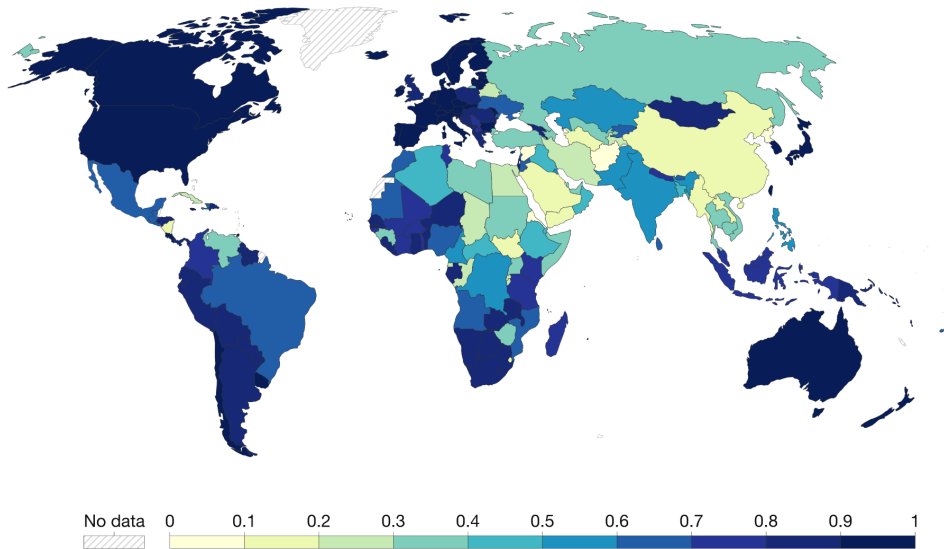
In actuality, it is generally accepted that a pillar of human rights is the accountability of duty-bearers, namely governments. States must be compliant with human rights norms and standards, and they must also work to ensure that all persons within their territories have their rights fulfilled. Human rights also relate to the rule of law, as there must be transparency in rights procedures and accessibility to impartial justice. Rights-holders whose governments have failed to uphold their rights, or have perpetuated rights abuse, can call for legal action. However, the reach of legal proceedings is limited by domestic law.

Contemporary challenges for human rights include accountability for upholding rights, financing of implementation of human rights compliance, and cultural differences. Human rights abuses and inability to protect them in the modern world is also an issue, with increasing human rights violations — at times even by duty-bearers and states — and a lack of liability for them. In the past few years, more than 167 nations have been found to have abused the human rights of their citizens, and many more have been accused of the same.

An example of HR violations is modern slavery, prevalent in nations such as North Korea, Eritrea, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Afghanistan, Mauritania, South Sudan, Pakistan, Cambodia, and Iran (*Countries that violate human rights*, 2022). Additionally, some forms of discrimination (based on gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, religion) and persecution still occur in most countries around the world. The state of rights is observable in the map below.

Human rights index, 2022

Based on the expert assessments and index by V-Dem¹. It captures the extent to which people are free from government torture, political killings, and forced labor; they have property rights; and enjoy the freedoms of movement, religion, expression, and association. The variable ranges from 0 to 1 (most rights).



Source: OWID based on V-Dem (v13)

OurWorldInData.org/human-rights • CC BY

Figure 3. Human rights index. (n.d.). Our World in Data.
<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/human-rights-index-vdem>

Criticism of UDHR

It has been argued that the UDHR is a Western document that discriminates against the culture and practices of Asian and African societies, citing the need to recognize different perspectives when building universal standards. Notably, an Iranian representative to the United Nations once deemed the document as a “secular understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition”. He went on to say that could not be implemented by Muslims, most specifically, whenever it is found to be incompatible with shari‘a law (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): The Cairo Declaration*, n. d.). This criticism is furthered by the fact that no Islamic individuals were part of the drafting committee of the UDHR, and the one Middle Eastern representative was a Christian. This leaves the question of whether the declaration can really be considered universal if it was not created by people from all cultures and beliefs.



This debate can be better understood through the lens of cultural relativism: the belief that values and norms are defined by local culture as opposed to global ideology. Moral standards reflect the context they are derived from, so judgements cannot be made across cultures, as there is no absolute “good” or “bad” (Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, s. f.). Relativists argue that treaties and covenants should reflect cultural traditions and challenge universality. Furthermore, they do not believe in imposing one way of doing things on all nations of the world.

However, it is argued that cultural relativism is often used as an excuse for archaic discrimination and lack of cultural progress. An example of this is the case surrounding civil marriage. Article 16 of the UDHR states that “Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution”. Non-discrimination is clearly presented in the article, stating that there should be no limitations for marriage between consenting adults and that women have the same rights as men. The implications of this article for different cultures are:

- **Inter-racial marriage**

The article mentions race, nationality, and religion as a response to the Nazis criminalising inter-racial unions. However, multiple religions (e.g. Hinduism, Serer religion, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism) prohibit interfaith marriages, and many cultures oppose inter-racial, inter-cultural, and inter-caste marriages. So, can the UDHR judge these religions and cultures to be against human rights?

- **Gender equality**

Article 16 emphasises that women have equal rights in marriage. At the time of drafting, communists had been critical of restrictions on women’s rights in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, so it was imperative to reflect the equality of the sexes in the document. Nonetheless, some religions (e.g. Christianity,

Islam) promote gender roles within marriage or grant the power to divorce to men only. So, should there be sex equality within marriage, even if it disobeys religion?

- **Child marriage**

Article 16, paragraph 2 states that “marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses”. In combination with the first paragraph, which says that parties of a marriage must be “of full age” essentially results in child marriage and arranged marriages being considered against human rights. Today, 1 million girls under 18 get married monthly, demonstrating that the cultural prevalence of such marriages makes certain cultures disregard human rights (OHCHR, s. f.). The people most affected by forced marriages are women, and the International Criminal Court has even ruled that systematic forced marriage is a crime against humanity. So, is it appropriate to outlaw child and arranged marriages despite their cultural and historical value?

- **Same-sex marriage**

The wording of this article is different to others in the declaration, as it utilises gendered language; instead of using “everyone” or “all” have the right to marriage, it employs “men and women”. This has led to interpretations that this human right applies solely to heterosexual couples, and the statement that “gay rights are not human rights”. Nonetheless, the United Nations urges all member states to recognise same-sex unions, which would be more consistent with interpretations that any person can enter marriage with any man or woman. This presents an issue for many countries, as cultural and religious opposition to homosexuality is widespread; not only is same-sex marriage prohibited in various countries, but homosexuality is punishable by death. So, should countries be able to deny marriage to same-sex couples on the basis of religion?

III. Key points of the debate

- State accountability and rule of law
- The jurisdiction of the international community
- Domestic efficiency of treaties and declarations
- Historical vs contemporary human rights abuses
- Universalism as a tool for a globalised world
- Cultural relativism: a necessary good or a facade for evil

IV. Guiding questions

1. Does your delegation support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Why or why not?
2. How does your country protect human rights?
 - a. Does your country have a history of human rights abuse (e.g. genocide, enslavement)?
3. Should amendments be proposed for the UDHR? If so, which ones?
4. Should universal rights take precedence over cultural relativism in the formation of human rights covenants?
5. Can universalism respect all cultures?
6. What strategies could be utilised to ensure compliance with a legally binding UDHR?
7. How can states maintain collective wellbeing while respecting individual rights?
8. Should human rights be irrevocable or partially revocable?
 - a. If partially revocable, who should dictate the conditions in which rights can be taken away and what can be considered due process?

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4. Topic 2: Amending the UN Charter

I. History/Context

During World War II the idea of creating an international peacekeeping organisation emerged. In 1942, the 26 allied nations gathered in Washington DC and created the "Declaration of the United Nations," proclaiming their support of the Atlantic Charter, and dedication to defeating the Axis powers. The UN Charter is the foundational document that establishes the UN as the international organisation it is. On June 26th 1945, the United Nations Charter was signed in San Francisco and later came into force on October 24th 1945.

1943 - Moscow and Tehran Conferences:

From October 18th to November 1st 1943 the United States, United Kingdom, USSR, and China attended a Conference in Moscow where they agreed on a Joint Four-Nation Declaration. This declaration stated they "recognize[d] the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organisation, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States, and open to membership by all such States, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security". (United Nations, n.d.) Then these four nations appointed experts in various areas - members of national committees - to draft a charter for a future organisation.

The Tehran conference was a series of meetings between Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States, Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister and Joseph Stalin, Soviet Premier, held from November 28th to December 1st, 1943 in Tehran, Iran. The key goals of the conference were to organise military strategies and establish post-war plans. During this conference, allied leaders agreed to launch Operation Overlord, which was the D-day invasion of Normandy in 1944. Additionally, they planned to open a secondary front in Europe against Nazi Germany.

In addition to military strategies, they also discussed the establishment of the United Nations as an international peacekeeping organisation. The Tehran conference was key in defining the final states of the war and shaping post-war world order.

1945 - Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta:

Between August 21st and October 1944 conversation between the USA, UK, USSR and China occurred under the context of the “Washington Conversations on International Peace and Security Organization”. This series of dialogues is known as the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, which was held with the purpose of discussing previously prepared reports following the Moscow conference.

A committee was charged with reaching an agreement regarding pressing issues at the time, and a joint group was entrusted with drafting a document detailing the negotiations in the form of a treaty. This treaty became known as the “Proposals for the Establishment of a General International Organization” which then played a key role in the San Francisco Conference of 1945.

The Yalta Conference was the continuation of international negotiations regarding the future organisation. Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt and Premier Stalin were present at the Yalta Conference. The “World Organization” was an important topic discussed at the conference, and there were also talks about which countries would be invited to the conference. Post-war Europe and the main goals of the UN were heavily discussed, as nations involved



(© AP Images)

Figure 1: U.S. delegates, including President Harry Truman, far left, stand around Senator Tom Connally as he signs the U.N. charter in San Francisco on June 26, 1945. (2020, June 23). U.S. Embassy & Consulates in the United Kingdom. <https://uk.usembassy.gov/the-charter-of-the-united-nations-turns-75/23766dccc09f0df36afc4166fad31f0c/>

confirmed their commitment to an international peacekeeping organisation.

San Francisco Conference:

Finally, the UN Charter was drafted in San Francisco from April to June 1945. Negotiations were held between delegates from 50 allied countries that later went on to sign the finalised charter on June 26th, 1945. After being ratified by most of the signing countries, the UN Charter came into effect on October 24th 1945.

Structure:

The UN Charter can be divided into separate sections. The preamble of the charter details the objectives and aims of the UN: Fostering social progress; creating better living standards; human rights; promoting friendly relationships between nations; and maintaining international security and peace. The Charter also outlines the main organs of the UN: The Security Council, the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and the Secretariat, alongside special agencies. Additionally, the Charter states crucial principles, such as the peaceful settlement of disputes, sovereign equality of member states, and non-interference in domestic affairs.

Amendments:

The UN Charter has been amended a limited number of times since its establishment. On December 17th, 1963 the General Assembly adopted amendments to articles 23, 27 and 61 that eventually came into force August 23rd, 1965. On December 20th, 1971 a further amendment was made to article 61 that came into force on September 24th 1973. Additionally, article 109 was amended on December 20th 1965 and came into force on June 12th 1968.

- Articles 23 and 27: The amendment made to Article 23 enlarged the number of members of the Security council from 11 to 15. The amendment made to Article 27

declared the decisions made by the Security Council concerning procedure and other matters required an affirmative vote of nine members (previously seven) alongside the votes of the 5 permanent Security Council members.

- Article 61: The amendment made to article 61 increased the number of members of the Economic and Social Council, making it 27 instead of 18. This amendment came into force on August 31st, 1965. This article was further amended to increase the number of members of the Economic and Social Council from 27 to 54. This amendment came into effect September, 24th, 1973.
- Article 109: This amendment was related to the first paragraph of the article, and it stated that a General Conference of Member States held with the objective of reviewing the UN Charter could occur at any date and place to be fixed by a two-thirds majority vote by members of the General Assembly and the 9 members of the Security Council.

II. Current Situation

There are many circumstances which would influence a decision to amend the UN Charter, this may include global power shifts, security council reforms, global conflicts, economic issues, etc. The geopolitical climate is changing and shifts in power dynamics may affect emerging challenges. An International Organization like the UN plays a key role in global conflicts; therefore, its members believe it should stand in the best position to combat these conflicts. By amending the charter, and including policies which better serve our current geopolitical climate, countries believe the organisation could do its job more efficiently.

Discussions surrounding the effectiveness of UN Organs and their policies have become more prevalent due to recent global conflicts; however, these ideas have been around for decades. In December 1992 the General Assembly developed an open-ended group to work on the council having equitable representation. This body continues to meet almost three decades later and has still failed to achieve any tangible results. Later, in October 2008, the United Nations authorised negotiations on the “question of equitable representation and

increase in the membership of the Security Council.” This led to 15 years of ineffectual dialogue, due to the fact that members failed to come to any considerable agreements.

Recent global challenges have prompted conversations surrounding the effectiveness of the UN as an international peacekeeping organisation. The Security Council's failure to effectively act on Russia's invasion of Ukraine has brought about demands to reform the “world's premier body for international peace and security”.(UN Security Council Reform: What the world thinks, n.d)



Figure 2: CNN, A. by A. S. (2022, April 15). Analysis: Why isn't the UN doing more to stop what's happening in Ukraine? CNN.
<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/04/15/politics/united-nations-ukraine-russia/index.html>

“You need to act immediately” President Zelensky of Ukraine said to the Security Council, when he begged them to act on the ongoing war, and criticised them for their lack of action up to that point. President Zelensky brought up Russia's veto power and its ability to block any action it does not agree with. Key players agree that the Security Council finds itself powerless in our current world. The Security Council was formed after World War II with a veto power system that today restricts its ability to take action and intervene in global conflicts. Other UN organs, which deal with refugee crises and humanitarian aid, have been able to make enormous contributions and have a lasting impact. However, the Security Council which deals with international security has found itself unable to act in any way. The UN Director for the International Crisis Group, Richard Gowan said, “This is the single biggest

crisis to hit the UN since the end of the Cold War,” referring to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, “It is possible that this does mark the beginning of a sort of fundamental rupture amongst the great powers that will make UN diplomacy see vastly harder going forward.”

A study was conducted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace where multiple countries and regions were asked to report their discontent with the Security Council. Africa reported its belief that under its current structure, the Security Council is unable to fulfil its mandate to protect international security and peace. Africa desires a stronger voice, and wishes for the Security Council to include more members. The UN itself has expanded to include nations from all over the world, yet the Security Council has not followed suit. Brazil reported a similar desire to play a larger role in international negotiations. Since the establishment of the UN, Brazil has been looking to secure a permanent seat on the Security Council. China stated its stance on Security Council reform in 2005 and has not changed it since. It made five key points in its report: (1) The council should include additional representatives from developing nations; (2) more nations, particularly small and medium-sized states, should have more chances to rotate in and take part in decision-making; (3) restructuring the Security Council should conform to the idea of geographic balance, ensuring that "different cultures and civilizations" are represented; (4) the reform ideas that pertain to each regional grouping should be agreed upon; and (5) any reform consensus should, in accordance with the UN Charter, be the product of thorough democratic deliberations. Every country consulted in this study has a similar report to give regarding Security Council reforms.

All of this discontent points toward council reform, but the road to actually coming to an agreement and making a change is daunting. The process involves amending the UN Charter; facing disagreements over veto powers, their implications, and possibly adding new permanent members; the plausibility of council enlargement; and diverging stances in general. Considering the emerging geopolitical rivalries and arising international polarisation, the chances of updating the Security Council and the Un Charter in general remain slim.

Reforming the Security Council seems to be the most pressing concern for many nations, considering it is the committee that deals with international conflict. However, it is also important to remember that there are other articles that could be amended. The world's geopolitical climate is rapidly changing, and it is crucial that the UN's approach to conflict resolution is able to address cyber warfare, hybrid conflicts and other new challenges. Additionally, it has become vital to take a second look at the UN's role in conflict intervention, given that it may violate state sovereignty. The stances on the UN's ability to mediate conflict are diverse, still, it is significant to understand the UN's current dilemma regarding each state's sovereignty.

Furthermore, the UN's role in addressing crimes such as war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity could become stronger. This might entail expanding the scope and stature of international criminal courts. In addition, cybersecurity has become vital, so defining norms for countries' behaviour in cyberspace could be considered, along with amendments regarding data privacy, cyber threats and emerging technologies.

On a different note, recent struggles have brought to light the importance of a detailed environmental protection plan. There could be an effort to change the UN Charter to publicly acknowledge the significance of environmental preservation and sustainable development as top priorities. Also, the recent COVID-19 pandemic revealed the need for a unified, effective response to a global health crisis. Lastly, the UN is known to play an effective role in providing humanitarian aid and dealing with humanitarian crises, still, the charter could change to protect the rights of migrants and refugees. Plus, strengthen the mechanisms through which the UN delegates responsibilities among member states.

III. Key points of the debate

- Viability of Amending the UN Charter
- Jurisdiction of the UN
- Member Representation within the UN



- Prevalence of Sovereignty
- Conflicts over amendments of the UN Charter
- The current geopolitical climate.

IV. Guiding questions

1. Has your delegation suggested amendments to the UN Charter? If so, what specific areas or provisions of the UN Charter does your country believe need to be amended, and why?
2. Does your delegation believe the current UN Charter needs amendments?
3. Does the current UN Charter serve the interests of your delegation? If not, what amendments should be made?
4. Is maintaining sovereignty one of your delegations main concerns? If so, does your delegation believe the current UN Charter serves that interest?
5. Does your delegation believe that the UN Charters outlines serve our current geopolitical climate?
6. What is your delegation's position regarding the veto power of the permanent members of the UN Security Council?
7. Currently, countries have proposed amendments that would give the Security Council more power in the international community. What is your delegation's opinion on the potential impact of the proposed amendments on the sovereignty of member states?
8. Does your delegation believe that the process to amend the UN Charter should be simpler? If so, how could the process be facilitated?
9. Considering the UN is a peacekeeping organisation, how does your country believe conflict over UN Charter amendments can be avoided?

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