AMBMUN '27

UNGA Background Guide

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Welcome Letter

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

It is with immense honor and enthusiasm that we, your chairs, Nada AlMudhareb and Rayan Shqeir, welcome you to the United Nations General Assembly at the 4th edition of AMBMUN.

In the words of Aristotle, “At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; separated from law and justice, he is the worst.” The UNGA exists as the central organ of the United Nations, wherein having been established in 1945, it is labeled the parliament of nations. Here, it is dedicated towards providing an international forum for diplomacy and managing global affairs - aiming to fulfill the promise that the United Nations was not created to bring mankind to heaven, but to save it from hell.

With this, over the course of the conference, we hope you will find that despite the simulated nature of Model UN, every accusation, every attack, every avoidance of accountability, and so on, stems from reality. While pushing you to think critically, challenging your view, demanding diplomacy, negotiating emergencies, it is a part of our mission to cultivate a generation of thinkers who are capable, just, and active global citizens.

Moreover, as your chairs, our goal is to create an engaging, intellectually stimulating, and respectful environment where every delegate, regardless of experience, can confidently express their nation’s stance and contribute meaningfully to debate. However, simultaneously, we wish to push you all to put yourselves out there, to meet new people, to form new connections, and to discover the reality of the world you reside in and the systems that govern you.

Welcome Letter

In the following background guide, we provide you with only an introduction to your topic, and so you should not rely on it solely and exempt yourself from further research. We encourage you to delve into your country's stance, position, allies, historical context, offenses, defenses, and so on, so as to ensure the heated and authentic nature of the upcoming debates.

Now, to end this letter, we leave you with congratulations for being allocated to the UNGA - and we promise you that this is a sign of immense luck. We can't wait to meet you all in January - whether it's your first or 12th conference, this will be one to remember and miss.

Good luck everyone!

Best Regards,
Nada AlMudhareb and Rayan Shqeir
Chairs, United Nations General Assembly
AMBMUN 2027

Committee Brief

In the wake of the global bloodshed from World War II, The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) was created to protect international security and prevent future tragedies. The General Assembly is the UN's main forum for discussion among Member States and gives all nations an equal voice in international affairs. Unlike the Security Council where five permanent members hold veto power, all 193 Member States of the UNGA hold an equal vote no matter their political influence.

The UNGA has the role of discussing and solving international problems. This encompasses international security, human rights, economic development, humanitarian crises and international law. The Member States discuss global issues and adopt resolutions in the sessions, reflecting the overall position of the international community. The committee also has the role of electing members to the UN bodies and appointing the Secretary-General following the Security Council's nomination.

The General Assembly may make recommendations on issues within the scope of the UN Charter, but the resolutions are not binding on Member States. Its impact is brought about by international cooperation and support. While it does not have the power to enforce its decisions or authorize military action (like the Security Council), the UNGA is still an important platform for addressing global challenges and drafting peaceful solutions. The General Assembly therefore ensures that the future belongs to everyone, and for that reason, everyone deserves to have a say.

Introduction

In contradiction of the legal principle which declares all states equal, veto power introduces a privilege granted to great powers. In allowing the 5 permanent nations - Russia, France, China, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America - to block a Security Council resolution with a single negative vote, the United Nations renders 14 conclusions null. Therefore, from its birth as a power in 1945, as per the United Nations Charter, the veto has remained unchanged - legally protected and upheld by its very definition, no matter the efforts for reform and the subsequent increase in transparency and political pressure.

Trailing back to the aforementioned blessing's origin, the League of Nations' failures serve as a primary explanation for the modern grant. the veto power stemmed Having relied on a system of unanimity amongst its members, the organization suffered the difficulties of an inability to establish decisive collective action - thus culminating in its vulnerability when aggression arose. From Japanese violence in Manchuria, to Italy in Ethiopia, and ultimately to the Nazis in Germany, the Second World War emerged, standing as a prime catalyst for the eventual creation of a new international body - the United Nations…which aimed to be strong in every area where its predecessor was weak. With this came the recognition that international superpowers would not take part - refusing to participate if they were to be bound against their interests - and so, in negotiating the structure of the replacement, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Premier Joseph Stalin introduced the "great power unanimity" during the Yalta Conference in February of 1945. The aforementioned proposition, known as the Yalta Formula, granted the five major powers permanent seats in the UNSC along with beneficial voting positions when matters were substantive.

Introduction

Article 27 of the UN Charter

- Each member of the Security Council shall have one vote.
- Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members.
- Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.

Thus, the veto power became an instrument for geopolitical competition - wherein since the Cold War nations such as the Soviet Union and the United States of America repeatedly abused their grant so as to block decisions which impeded on their military strategies and agendas for dominion. Herein, General Assembly attempts at peace and pushing for collective action despite the Security Council's inability to act increased to address the need for mitigation, nevertheless, such resolutions such as 1950's "Uniting for Peace" did not possess the binding power specialized to the UNSC.

In today's world, from undermining humanitarian crises - whether this be China vetoing resolutions targeting Syria, Russia those regarding Ukraine, and the USA those protecting Israel, the veto power has become a matter of controversy. It ultimately prevented accountability and enforcement measures, as nations could block resolutions which assessed their respective conduct - a prime example being the Russian Federation, following its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Introduction

Truly, responses have come to light and been presented, from the General Assembly's April 2022 Resolution 76/262 - Veto Initiative - and others which demand accountability and political transparency. Through this, moreover, GA meetings surrounding Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan, South Sudan, non-proliferation, and the Western Sahara, were convened and labeled as successful. However, once again, they cannot override the power. Various proposals have arisen - from those restricting veto usage in genocide, gross breaches of human rights, and mass atrocity, to those which push for voluntary restraint and the Act of Conduct. Herein, some even suggest expanding the permanent seats so as to provide greater inclusion to regions such as Africa and Latin America. And, as per the radical nature of human extremity, there also comes proposals for complete abolition - nevertheless, as per Article 108, any amendment to the UN Charter requires two thirds of the UNGA's vote, along with ratification by two thirds of the UN's members, specifically including all of the permanent five.

Ultimately, in all propositions, as with all worldly matters, there exists a 'fatal flaw' which renders them ineffective, perilous, and a cure which may prove to be worse than the disease it seeks to expunge.

Past Actions

The United Nations Security Council has struggled to respond to major international crises due to disagreements between its permanent members and their use of veto power. Political rivalries continue to prevent the Council from taking action, and this is shown through conflicts in countries such as Gaza and Ukraine. For that reason, the United Nations General Assembly and its Member States have taken initiative to strengthen international peace and security.

In 1971, the International Court of Justice clarified that a permanent member's voluntary abstention does not count as a veto. This meant that only an explicit negative vote could block a resolution. In 1993, the General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group to discuss Security Council expansion and possible reforms. This discussion continued up to 2008, where the Intergovernmental Negotiations framework was introduced to address Council membership and veto privileges.

Other efforts have focused on holding permanent members accountable for their actions. In 2015, France (one of the P5 nations) and Mexico introduced an initiative encouraging permanent members to refrain from using their veto in situations involving mass atrocities. In April 2022, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 76/262. Under this resolution, when a permanent member uses its veto, the General Assembly must hold a meeting within 10 working days to discuss the decision and allow other Member States to express their positions.

Reforms, however, remain difficult to achieve. Article 108 of the UN Charter requires any amendments to receive approval from all five permanent members, giving them significant influence. Regardless, these initiatives have strengthened the General Assembly's ability to question veto use and have brought greater attention to the need for a more representative Security Council.

Timeline

June 1971: The International Court of Justice issued its Namibia Advisory Opinion, recognizing that a permanent member's voluntary abstention does not count as a veto.

1993: The General Assembly adopted Resolution 48/26, establishing the Open-ended Working Group to discuss Security Council expansion and possible reforms.

2008: The General Assembly adopted Decision 62/557, establishing the basis for Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council reform. Formal negotiations began in 2009.

2015: France and Mexico introduced an initiative encouraging permanent members to limit their use of the veto during situations involving mass atrocities. The ACT Group also introduced its Code of Conduct.

April 2022: The General Assembly adopted Resolution 76/262, requiring a formal debate within 10 working days whenever a permanent member uses its veto.

Country Matrix

The Russian Federation
The United States of America
The United Kingdom
The People's Republic of China
The French Republic
Republic of Türkiye
Kingdom of Spain
Federative Republic of Brazil
Federal Republic of Germany
Republic of India
Japan
United Mexican States
Republic of South Africa
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- What alternative legal pathways, procedural adjustments, or voluntary political commitments can Member States utilize to reform Security Council working methods without requiring a Charter amendment?

- How can Member States establish clearer consensus on the application of Article 27(3), and what voluntary frameworks or thresholds should guide the exercise of the veto during mass atrocity crimes and acute humanitarian emergencies?

- Building upon existing mechanisms, what specific, Charter compliant actions, such as independent fact-finding missions, humanitarian coordination, or diplomatic mediation, should the General Assembly undertake when a lack of unanimity prevents the Security Council from acting?

- How can proposed reforms enhance transparency and accountability in the Security Council without alienating permanent members or undermining the universal participation necessary for effective collective security?

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Introductory Sources

Please note that these are recommended articles for a surface level understanding of the topic at hand. Do not rely solely on the following, and do not allow these readings to replace your deeper research.

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