



**MUNNY**  
MODEL UNITED NATIONS OF NYBORG

- Forum:** 6th Committee (Legal)
- Issue:** Evaluating the relevance of the current Permanent 5 nations and the P5 structure as a whole.
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## Description of Issue

This research report will be evaluating the relevance of the Permanent 5 (P5) nations and the P5 structure as a whole. The Security Council (SC) is the branch of the UN responsible for international security and maintaining world peace. Out of 15 members, it consists of 5 permanent members: The United Kingdom, France, The United States, The People's Republic of China, and The Russian Federation, as well as 10 non-permanent members that rotate every 2 years on January 1st. The issue at hand with the P5 nations is that they have a certain right that the other countries do not, the right to veto. For a resolution to pass in the SC, 9 out of the 15 members must vote in favor, however one vote against from a P5 strikes the resolution as a whole. This veto power has been abused by countries due to their own national interests, and there have been some major failures such as the genocides in Rwanda in 1994, Bosnia in 1995 and Sudan in the early 2000s, as well as the Syrian Civil War, the conflict between Ukraine and Crimea, the war in Somalia, and the Israel and Palestine conflict. The role of the SC is to investigate threats to international peace, to recommend a resolution process, to impose and lift sanctions and enforce military intervention, however by P5 members putting national interest first, genocides, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing occur. There are many countries such as the G4 group which consists of India, Japan, Germany, and Brazil, who are interested in expanding the SC to have more permanent members. The African Union has also stated that there is a large underrepresentation of African nations in the UNSC and would also like a permanent seat.



## Background Information

The Security Council was created at the same time as the UN, October 24th, 1945, post World War 2, and the overall structure has not really changed since, 76 years later. The reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is an issue that has been debated since the 1990s, at the end of the Cold War, and further discussed in the General Assembly (GA) since 2009, however, there are yet to be any results. This issue was further reminded of in 2020, on the 75th anniversary of the UN, however, no actions were taken. The P5 members and the veto power seem to be the root cause of the issue with the UN. The veto power is being abused as a tremendous amount of resolutions have been struck due to certain countries' national interests. Russia formerly the USSR has used its veto power the most totaling 116 times, right behind is the US using it 81 times, the UK 29 times, and both France and China a total of 16 times. Although the countries claim to be doing in the interest of peace and security, many would argue that they abuse their veto rights in national interest, in an undemocratic way.

Russia has used its veto power more than any of the other nations, using it the most back when it was still the USSR, and then again in the 21st century. The most recent use of Russia's veto power was in 2011, upon the resolutions regarding the Civil War in Syria, using it a total of 12 times. This means that drafts that would have enforced chemical weapon investigations, imposed sanctions, and referred Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC), could have potentially saved the lives of 400,000 people who have died since 2011. Russia also used its veto power in national interests regarding the situation in Ukraine and Crimea.

Since 1970 the US has become the most frequent user of the veto power, mainly using it on resolutions that criticize Israel. The US struck dozens of resolutions, such as those that would



have condemned Israeli settlements as illegal, called on Israel to completely withdraw from Palestinian Territories, and request investigations in the mass killing of Palestinian protestors along the Gaza border. The US also vetoed a resolution asking for it to withdraw its embassy in Jerusalem, with 14 votes in favor.

China uses its veto power minimally, preferring to abstain, however, it has blocked multiple resolutions regarding the independence of Taiwan.

The UK and France do not abuse the veto power to the same extent as others and are the only two countries that are willing to expand the SC and make reforms. Nonetheless, the UK has used its veto to block resolutions on Rhodesia, while France used it on the independence of Comoros.

### **Previous attempts to resolve this issue**

P5 members UK and France are supporting the concept of voluntary restraint, which means that the P5 members have the responsibility not to use their veto power where mass atrocities are being committed. Major Human Rights organizations are asking the SC to enforce this, however, there are counter-arguments of the necessity of the P5 to make the best decisions to maintain peace, as well as the unclarity of what can be defined as a “mass atrocity”. So the overall elimination of the P5 nations in the SC has been successful, as unless all 5 countries agree to give up their power that is unlikely to happen any time soon. Another argument was the expansion of the permanent seats in the SC such as by including the G4 (India, Japan, Germany, Brazil) states to include some further regional representation. All P5 members have supported India’s bid for the permanent seat, however, China implied that it will only allow India to join if India will no longer associate with Japan. Japan’s bid has been highly opposed by China, Russia, North Korea, and South Korea, who argue the necessity for Japan to make amends for the war crimes committed in WW2. Germany’s permanent seat is rejected by



European countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands. The complexity of the interrelationships between all the nations, as well as the unwillingness of the US, China, and Russia to give up their power, has made it very difficult to implement change in the Security Council.

## Potential solutions

The expansion of the SC to 20 or 21 members, including permanent seats for countries to represent Africa, the Middle East, and South America. Moving towards making the P5 members elected every certain amount of years such as every 5 to 10 years, and limiting veto power to a certain amount of times per year, incorporating the voluntary restraint. The time for the non-permanent members may also be extended to 3 years. Assessing the committee and its achievement every 30 years. The further strengthening of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

## Relevant Resolutions and Treaties

- United Nations Charter, Chapter V: The Security Council
  - Article 1
  - Article 2
  - Article 27
  - Article 108
  - Article 109
- UNGA resolution 377

## Key Terms

- ICC - International Criminal Court



- Security Council - One of the principal organs of the UN, the Security Council has primary responsibility under the UN Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.
  
- R2P - The Responsibility to Protect is a global political commitment that was endorsed by all member states of the United Nations at the 2005 World Summit in order to address its four key concerns to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

### Major Actors

- The P5 Members of SC: the US, the UK, China, France, Russia
- Non-Permanent Members of SC:
  - Estonia (2021)
  - India (2022)
  - Ireland (2022)
  - Kenya (2022)
  - Mexico (2022)
  - Niger (2021)
  - Norway (2022)
  - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2021)
  - Tunisia (2021)
  - Viet Nam (2021)
- The G4 Members: India, Japan, Brazil, Germany
- Amnesty International

### Useful Sources

- Security Council Structure

- <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council>
- Current Members of Security Council
  - <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/current-members>
- Veto Power
  - <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/the-veto.php>
- Power and Diplomacy in the United Nations Security Council: The Influence of Elected Members
  - <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03932729.2021.1966192>
- Proposal for reform
  - <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/confront-the-p5-why-the-un-security-council-must-change>
- DEFENCEUNSC REFORMS: ARE G4 COUNTRIES CHASING A MIRAGE?
  - [https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/2396692/279888edff0353d32b9ef1c01c8841ff/200923-g4-ministererklaerung-data.p](https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/2396692/279888edff0353d32b9ef1c01c8841ff/200923-g4-ministererklaerung-data.pdf)

## Delegate Preparation

Delegate should consider the following questions while researching:

- What is your country's stance on the reform of the UNSC regarding the P5 nations?
- Is your country interested/had tried to obtain a permanent seat at the SC?
- Has your country been affected by any of the vetoed resolutions?