

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** The question of reform of the Security Council

**Specialist Chair:** Yasmin Akhmedova

### **Introduction:**

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal bodies of the UN. Its primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. It is the only UN body, which can impose economic sanctions and mobilise the UN peacekeepers.

The UNSC was formed in 1945. It consisted of 5 permanent<sup>1</sup> and 6 non-permanent<sup>2</sup> members. The allocation of seats reflected the situation in the world after the WW2.

In 1963 the UN Charter has been amended, resulting in an increase in the number of non-permanent members to 10 by 1965. Until today, this has been the only successful reform of the UNSC.

Since that time the world's geopolitical, economic, technological and cultural situation has changed a lot. And today the UNSC does not fully reflect the international situation.

Since late 1990s attempts to reform the UNSC took place, however not successfully so far.

Essentially, the reform of the UNSC encompasses the following five key issues:

1. Veto<sup>3</sup> privilege of the permanent members;
2. UNSC membership (the number of both permanent and non-permanent members);
3. Regional representation;
4. Working methods;
5. General Assembly - Security Council relationship.

It is a very complicated political issue, and it will take long time to reform the UNSC, even if a decision to do so is taken.

### **Definition of Key Terms:**

- I. **UNSC permanent members** (Permanent Five, Big Five, P5) are the five states (France, Russia, USA, China, UK), which were granted a permanent seat on the UN Security Council by the UN Charter of 1945.
- II. **SC non-permanent members** - are ten members, that are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms starting on 1 January, with five members replaced each year.
- III. **Veto right** – a veto from any of the permanent members of the SC can stop any possible action the Security Council wants to take.

### **Major Countries and Organisations Involved**

#### *UN*

- The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says: "We have structural issues with the SC. It shows the world as it was after the WW2. It does not reflect the current world. The veto privilege became a tool, which is used too often".
- It is important to reform the SC, so as not to allow such situations as in Afghanistan in 1980s, Hungary in 1956 and in Myanmar in 2017, when the SC did not manage to come to a consensus and take appropriate action.

### *USA*

- United States is open to all types of reform to the Council, which will ensure counterterrorism measures are in place.
- USA has urged the UN to consider India's and Japan's contribution to UN funding and peacekeeping missions and has shown support for their establishment as permanent SC members

### *UK and France*

Both countries believe that it is important to include G4 countries as permanent members of the SC, so as to improve the SC's working methods.

### *Russia*

- Russia supports plans that are aimed at promoting reform on the basis of "efficiency" of the SC.
- Former President of Russia Dmitriy Medvedev in 2009 said: "The UN must rationally adapt itself to new world realities. It should also strengthen its influence and preserve its multinational nature and integrity of the UN Charter provisions. The reform of the UN Security Council is an essential component of its revitalization. The time has come to speed up the search for a compromise formula of its expansion and increased efficiency of its work."

### *China*

China calls for increased representation of developing countries, which account for more than two-thirds of the UN members. Countries, small and medium-sized ones in particular, should be given more opportunities to enter the council on a rotating basis.

### *The Group of 4 (G4)*

G4 (Brazil, Japan, India and Germany) proposes an increase in the number of SC members to 25, with 6 new permanent members (G4 members and 2 African States)

### *The Group "Uniting for Consensus" (UFC)*

UFC lead by Italy, Argentina, Pakistan and Mexico supports an extended SC of 25 members, with the addition at the level of non-permanent members and/or the introduction of a new semi-permanent members category.

### *African Union ("Ezulwini Consensus")*

African Union supports an extension of the SC to 26 members. Africa should receive 2 permanent seats (with the veto right) and 2 non-permanent seats

### *ACT*

ACT represents a Trans-Regional group of 21 states, which promotes the need for a review of the working methods of the Council, in order to increase its members' responsibility in front of the entire UN membership and the transparency of its work.

### **Timeline of Events:**

24 October 1945	The UN officially established by the five permanent members of the SC
26 June 1945	The UN Charter signed

17 January 1946	First meeting of the SC held in London
31 August 1965	Amendment to UN Charter entered into force, leading to an expansion of the UN Security Council from 11 to 15 members, with the supermajority required for action being increased from 7 to 9 votes
1992	First ever SC Summit held in New York leading to the Secretary General's report, An Agenda For Peace.
2005	"In Larger Freedom" report by Kofi Annan, which presented 2 plans of SC reform

### Relevant UN Treaties and Events:

- UN Charter (Chapter V: The Security Council), 16 June 1945
- Kofi Annan's Report on UN Reform: In Larger Freedom, March 21, 2005

### Previous Attempts to solve the Issue:

Kofi Annan's Report on UN Reform "In Larger Freedom" suggested to create more permanent-members seats, which were more likely to go to G4 members.

As UFC members are regional rivals or economic competitors of the G4 members (Italy opposing Germany, South Korea opposing Japan, Pakistan opposing India), this proposal was negatively met by the UFC Group. Hence, this has led to the UFC members' proposal of the expansion of the number of the temporary seats.

Though, this has constantly been undermined by the permanent members of the SC who feel if any structural rectifications were to be made, they should major and have a certain degree of imposition on the council.

As reviewed earlier, temporary members of the SC do not have sufficient power to exert on any sort of conflict or resolution, even if they all worked together.

### Possible Solutions:

- Reforms to the veto system – veto privilege prevents an entire SC from acting even when a whole agreement has been made by all members except one. However, any sort of reform to this system has a very high possibility of being vetoed by the 5 permanent members itself. Hence, possible solutions should be structured in such a way, that it would remain the P5 members with their current power.
- Expansion of the SC: possibly creating a new membership category, increasing the number of permanent/non-permanent members. An alternative would be to follow 2005 Annan plans A or B.
- Review and/or amend the UN Charter, as it has been created after the WW2, and since that time the world's economic, political, cultural, social and technological development has dramatically changed.
- Changes to the working methods of the SC – changes to the ways in which the SC acts in order to ensure peace and security could potentially help ameliorate the disparities that currently exist in the United Nations, and increase the effectiveness of the Council as a whole. E.g. Limit the use of the veto to vital national security issues

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