

**Committee: Security Council****Topic: The question of reform of the Security Council****Chair: Nikita Sood****School: Royal Russell**

## Summary

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was established in 1945 and consisted of 11 members in total, five being permanent members, and six being non-permanent members. The permanent members were WWII victors; the Republic of China [Taiwan], France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States and they all had veto power, whereas non-permanent members did not. This body has the responsibility to maintain international peace and security by mobilising UN peacekeepers and it is the only body that can impose sanctions or authorise the use of force to maintain the peace and security globally.

Since 1945, there has been much debate over the UNSC members as it does not reflect the current international situation due to the changes since 1945 that exist economically, technologically, and geopolitically. In 1963, the UN Charter was amended so that there would be 10 non-permanent members rather than six but aside from this change, there has not been further successful reform.

The five key issues that surround Security Council reform are as follows:

1. Membership – this includes the number of permanent and non-permanent members (expansion of the Security Council) as well as international representation being displayed on the UNSC.
2. Veto privileges – this refers to whether the five permanent members should be the only Security Council members with the right to use veto powers. It also includes the potential idea that veto powers should be eliminated.
3. Regional representation – this issue entails organisations or blocs such as the EU being a UNSC member.
4. Working methods – the procedures and conduction of UNSC work and,
5. Security Council-General Assembly relationship.

For reform of the UNSC to be implemented, at least two-thirds of UN member states would have to agree by voting and ratifying the changes and all permanent members of the UNSC would need to agree.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Permanent members** – also known as Permanent Five (P5) or Big Five. These are France, Russia, USA, UK, and China. The UN Charter of 1945 grants these five members a permanent seat and veto powers on the UNSC.

**Non-permanent members** – these are the remaining 10 members of the Security Council who are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.

**Veto powers –** P5 are the only UNSC members with veto powers. This is the power to stop any action that the Security Council wishes to take.

## Background Information [EJ1]

The Security Council had their first meeting in January 1946 in London and today it takes up residence at the UN Headquarters in New York City. In total, there are 15 members but a resolution from 1963 stated that the rotating members of the UNSC must meet four geographic requirements: five states from Africa and Asia, one state from Eastern Europe, two states from Latin America and two states from Western Europe. This body allows non-member states to attend committee discussion if their states' interests are justified, however voting rights are not permitted.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

UN – wants there to be reform as the UNSC does not accurately reflect the current world.

USA – supports India and Japan in becoming permanent members.

UK and France – both support G4 in its members becoming permanent members of the UNSC, they also want permanent representation of Africa.

Russia – support India and other G4 countries and wants reform, particularly to increase efficiency of UNSC work.

China – wants there to be reform so that there is more representation of developing countries. They also support India.

G4 – a group of four countries that support each other's wish for a permanent seat on the UNSC. These are Brazil, Germany, India and Japan.

Coffee Club/Uniting for Consensus (UFC) – the group opposed to G4 becoming permanent members, mainly led by Italy and Pakistan but also includes Argentina, Columbia, Canada and others. UFC have proposed for there to be an expansion of non-permanent seats or the introduction of semi-permanent seats. They also favour regional representation.

African Group – wishes for there to be 26 seats on the UNSC. They want Africa to have two permanent seats and two non-permanent seats; the permanent seats would rotate between African countries chosen by the group.

ACT – an initiative created by 22 countries to encourage reform of working methods of the UNSC in hopes to allow non-members to benefit more from the Security Council.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Event
October 1945	UN is established with 51 states ratifying the Charter of the UN. There are 5

	permanent and 6 non-permanent UNSC members.
January 1946	First UNSC meeting held in London.
December 1963	UNSC non-permanent membership increases to 10.
October 1971	China replaces Taiwan as a permanent member.
December 1992	General Assembly asks member state to submit UNSC reform proposals about representation and membership.
April 1996	US State Department says that Germany and Japan should become permanent members.
May 1996	UK Ambassador defends need for veto.
July 1997	US Ambassador agrees in principle to grant permanent membership to developing countries.
November 1998	General Assembly say two-thirds majority is needed to pass resolutions to expand UNSC.
June 1999	Russia supports UNSC expansion while defending veto needs.
June 2002	UNSC report developments of working methods.
March 2005	African Union adopt Ezulwini Consensus, demand two permanent seats and the right to veto.
March 2005	Secretary General, Kofi Annan, releases "In Larger Freedom" calling for an expansion of the UNSC to 24 members.
June 2005	China advocates for the representation of developing countries in the UNSC
June 2005	G4 resolution to expand UNSC to 25 members by adding 6 permanent members and 4 non-permanent members. They agree to forego their right to veto.
July 2005	African Union wants membership to increase to 26.
July 2005	UFC want non-permanent members to increase to 20 from 10.
March 2008	UK and France support G4.
August 2015	France and Mexico launch Political Declaration on Suspension of Veto Powers in Cases of Mass Atrocity.

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

UN Charter – articles 108 and 109 grant the P5 veto over any Charter amendments.

In Larger Freedom – a plan by the Secretary General in 2005 that had two plans for reform that are as follows:

- Plan A: create six new permanent members and three new non-permanent members

- Plan B: create eight new seats, each of which would serve for four years, plus one non-permanent seat.

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Annan's "In Larger Freedom" mentioned above suggested for there to be more permanent members in the UNSC, likely to be G4 members. However, the regional rivals (UFC) were adamant to accept this proposal which led to their proposal in July 2005 to expand the number of temporary seats.

There has been no consensus regarding expansion and regional representation however meaning that the situation of UNSC reform is still unclear.

## Possible Solutions

Expansion – either following Annan's Plan A or Plan B or increasing the permanent membership based on factors such as economic size, commitment to foreign aid, peacekeeping contribution or status as a key regional power.

UN Charter and veto reform – review or amendment of Article 108 and 108 as political, economic, social, cultural and technological changes have occurred and P5 are they only members with veto regardless of times changing. As well as this, P5 have the ability to veto reform to vetoing so solutions must be structured in a way that P5 do not lose their credibility.

Working methods – find solutions to increase effectiveness of UNSC for example limiting the use of veto to vital security issues.

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