

United Nations Security Council: Guardian of Global Peace or an Institution in Crisis?

Shammah Mahakwe Anyalebechi

Department of Political Science, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

*Correspondence : Shammah

Mahakwe Anyalebechi

Shammah.anyalebechi@ust.edu.ng

Received: 22-02-2025

Accepted: 22-03-2025

Published: 22-04-2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s)
and Scientific Research
Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the
Creative Commons Attribution
International License (CC BY
4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), established to maintain global peace and security, has faced increasing criticism for its inability to address contemporary crises effectively. The UNSC's decision-making process, particularly the veto power held by the five permanent members (P5), has often led to inaction during critical conflicts, undermining its role as a guardian of peace. Furthermore, the emergence of non-traditional security threats, such as climate change, cyberattacks, and terrorism, has revealed the UNSC's limited capacity to address these new global challenges. The ongoing debate on whether the UNSC is still an effective institution or an institution in crisis is central to the study, exploring the disconnect between its original mandate and its current performance. The study was anchored in the theoretical framework of constructivism. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing content analysis of case studies, UNSC resolutions, and scholarly literature to explore the UNSC's effectiveness and challenges in addressing modern global security threats. The findings revealed that the UNSC has struggled to adapt to modern security challenges, with its decision-making process often hindered by the veto power of the P5. The Council's failure to address humanitarian crises and emerging global threats has eroded its legitimacy. Reform proposals, including the expansion of membership and modification of the veto system, have gained traction as necessary steps to restore the UNSC's relevance and effectiveness. The UNSC's inability to respond decisively to contemporary crises has led to growing dissatisfaction within the international community. It was recommended that the UNSC undergo significant reform, including the modification or abolition of the veto power, to enable more democratic and effective decision-making processes that reflect contemporary global power dynamics.

Keywords

United Nations Security Council, Veto Power, Constructivism, Global Security, Reform

Introduction

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), established in 1945 under the United Nations Charter, was designed to ensure international peace and security by addressing threats arising from military aggression, humanitarian crises, and violations of international law (United Nations, 1945). The Council is composed of 15 members, including five permanent members—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—who hold veto power over major decisions, with the remaining ten members elected for two-year terms (United Nations Security Council, 2021). The UNSC's founding mandate was to prevent the recurrence of the devastating wars of the first half of the 20th century, particularly the two World Wars, by promoting international cooperation and facilitating conflict resolution through diplomatic means (Gowan, 2020).

However, the global security environment has dramatically evolved since the UNSC's creation, leading to challenges in its ability to address modern threats. While the UNSC has successfully facilitated peacekeeping efforts in conflicts such as those in the Balkans and East Timor, its performance in recent crises, such as the Syrian civil war and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, has raised significant questions regarding its effectiveness (Lynch, 2021). The persistent failure of the UNSC to act decisively in these conflicts has been attributed to the veto power of the permanent members, which has often resulted in diplomatic deadlocks and inaction on critical issues (Kerr, 2019). This has led to calls for reforming the UNSC to address both its structural weaknesses and its outdated approach to conflict resolution (Cox, 2022).

The rise of non-traditional security threats, such as cyber warfare, terrorism, and climate-induced migration, further complicates the UNSC's mission (Hastings, 2020). These emerging challenges require the UNSC to adapt to a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape. Yet, despite the growing diversity of threats, the Council has struggled to modernize its approaches and decision-making processes (Simmons, 2020). The gap between the UNSC's original mandate and its capacity to handle contemporary challenges has led to debates about whether it is still an effective guardian of global peace or whether it has become an institution in crisis.

In this paper, we explore whether the UNSC is still fulfilling its mandate as a global peacekeeper or if it has been sidelined by geopolitical rivalry and internal dysfunction. The paper will analyze the historical context of the UNSC, its failures in recent conflicts, and proposals for reform to enhance its legitimacy and functionality in today's multipolar world. By examining case studies such as Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen, this paper aims to offer insights into the future of the UNSC and the institutional changes needed to improve its capacity to address modern global security threats.

Statement of the Problem

The primary problem addressed in this study is the ongoing debate about the relevance and effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in today's global security environment. Despite its foundational purpose as the guardian of international peace and security, the UNSC has faced increasing criticism for its inability to address contemporary crises effectively. The structure of the UNSC, particularly the veto power held by the five permanent members, has led to several instances of inaction in critical conflicts, thus raising concerns about the institution's ability to adapt to the modern geopolitical landscape. For instance, in the case of the Syrian civil war, the UNSC was paralyzed due to vetoes by Russia and China, which prevented the passage of resolutions that could have addressed the escalating violence and humanitarian crisis (Hanhimäki, 2015). This example exemplifies how the current decision-making structure, particularly the veto

power, undermines the UNSC's capacity to act decisively on urgent global issues.

Moreover, the emergence of non-traditional security threats, such as cyberattacks, terrorism, and environmental crises, has exposed the UNSC's limited capacity to handle issues outside its original mandate, which primarily focused on military aggression and conflicts between states (Hosli & Dörfler, 2020). The rise of global challenges such as climate change and pandemics has shown that the UNSC, despite its ability to authorize peacekeeping missions and sanctions, is ill-equipped to address these new, complex security issues that require a broader, more comprehensive approach (Mingst, et al, 2022). In fact, the UNSC has been slow to engage with such non-traditional threats, as its mandate is largely centered around military conflict rather than human security or environmental concerns.

The institutional structure of the UNSC, with its limited and outdated membership and decision-making framework, further exacerbates these challenges. As the world order becomes increasingly multipolar, with emerging powers like India, Brazil, and South Africa gaining more global influence, the UNSC's failure to reflect these changes has led to calls for reform. Critics argue that the exclusion of these powers from permanent membership and the failure to adapt to global security shifts have rendered the UNSC an increasingly irrelevant and ineffective body in addressing the most pressing global security concerns. To this end, the study seeks to:

- 1) assess the role of the UNSC in contemporary global peacekeeping, focusing on its responses to modern crises such as the Syrian conflict, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and climate change.
- 2) explore the emergence of non-traditional security threats and assess how well the UNSC has adapted to address them.
- 3) investigate potential reforms to the UNSC's structure, decision-making processes, and mandate in order to enhance its relevance and effectiveness in the modern global security environment.

Literature Review

United Nations Security Council: The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is a main organ of the United Nations responsible for maintaining international peace and security. Established in 1945, the main purpose of the UNSC is to prevent conflicts and promote stability through collective action and diplomacy (Bellamy & Williams, 2014). The Council's structure includes 15 members: five permanent members with veto power—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—and ten non-permanent members chosen for two-year terms. This composition reflects a balance between stability and representation, although it has led to ongoing debates about reform to improve its legitimacy and effectiveness (Firchow, 2020).

The functions of the UNSC are multifaceted, covering the establishment of peace maintenance missions, the imposition of sanctions, and the authorization of the use of force when necessary (Antonescu, 2018). The influence of the Council derives from its unique position within the UN framework, granting it the authority to make binding decisions for member states. This power is often exercised in response to threats to international peace, with the objective of conflict resolution and the maintenance of geopolitical stability (Wendt, 1999).

In addition, the UNSC plays a fundamental role in shaping international standards and responses to global crises. Its actions during events such as the Gulf War and Rwanda's genocide illustrate both its capacity and limitations to promote collective security (Checkel, 2020). Although the Council's advice in responding to conflicts is vital for global stability, the politicization of its processes and the veto power of the permanent members can hinder rapid and impartial action

(Barnett & Finnemore, 2004). Therefore, the effectiveness of the UNSC in maintaining international peace and security remains an issue of deep academic research and practical concern.

The search for global peace remains a fundamental objective of humanity, meaning not only the absence of war but also the establishment of conditions conducive to sustained harmony and cooperation between nations and peoples. The importance of global peace is emphasized in several academic works, which argue that it encourages socioeconomic development, environmental sustainability, and collective security (Sebhatu, 2020). However, achieving this ideal is fraught with challenges, including geopolitical conflicts, economic disparities, and cultural misunderstandings, which often act as formidable obstacles. For example, P. Firchow argues that the search for global peace must begin at the local level, emphasizing that efforts aimed at peacebuilding in communities can translate into broader global stability (Williams, P. R., & Pearlman, 2019). This perspective shifts the focus to grassroots initiatives, stating that people and communities play crucial roles in the nature of peace. However, such initiatives often face challenges from state actors who prioritize national interests over global harmony. This highlights the complexity of interactions between local and global peace efforts, indicating that while individual actions are fundamental, they must align with broader national policies.

Additionally, M. V. Antonescu elaborates on the evolution of international law toward a more comprehensive "global peace law," suggesting that a legal framework incorporating global standards is essential to promote international cooperation and responsibility. This legal perspective indicates that nations must collaborate in adopting such global standards to improve prospects for lasting peace (Melling & Dennett, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The paper is anchored on Constructivism, a major theoretical framework in international relations developed primarily by Alexander Wendt in the 1990s. Wendt's seminal work, *Social Theory of International Politics*, revolutionized the understanding of state behavior in the international system by emphasizing the role of social structures, norms, and identities. Unlike other theories such as realism or liberalism, which focus on material power and interests, constructivism asserts that the international system is socially constructed, shaped by the ideas, beliefs, and identities of states and other actors (Webb, 2014). Wendt argued that states' actions are not merely a result of rational calculations based on power or self-interest, but also influenced by shared social norms, collective identities, and historical contexts. In this regard, constructivism is particularly interested in understanding how international institutions, such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), derive their legitimacy and effectiveness from these shared norms and practices, rather than from mere state power or material interests (Hassan et al, 2024). This theoretical framework is crucial in examining the role of the UNSC, especially in the face of calls for reform in response to its inability to address modern global challenges.

Constructivism is founded on several key assumptions that make it particularly relevant to the study of international organizations like the UNSC. First, it assumes that the international system is constructed through social interactions and shared beliefs among actors. This challenges the traditional view that international relations are governed solely by material forces such as power and security. Second, constructivists argue that the identities of states are not static; they are shaped and reshaped through ongoing social interactions, which in turn influence state behavior (United Nations, 2021). The third assumption of constructivism is the importance of norms and

ideational factors in shaping international institutions and their effectiveness. According to constructivists, institutions like the UNSC derive their legitimacy from the shared beliefs and values of the international community (The Guardian, 2021). In the case of the UNSC, its authority and role as a peacekeeping body are not only a result of its formal powers but also of the global norms that confer legitimacy on its decisions. However, when these norms are questioned or not adhered to, as seen with the UNSC's inaction in certain conflicts, its legitimacy and effectiveness come into question.

The constructivist perspective is highly relevant to the study of the UNSC's role as a guardian of global peace. Constructivism allows us to examine how the UNSC's actions and decisions are influenced by the changing norms, values, and identities of the international community. The theory posits that the UNSC's legitimacy is not merely determined by its formal structure or the power of its permanent members, but by the global consensus on its role in maintaining peace and security (Security Council Report, 2023). In the context of the study "The United Nations Security Council: Guardian of Global Peace or an Institution in Crisis?," constructivism offers valuable insights into how the UNSC's legitimacy has been eroded due to its inability to adapt to new global realities and norms. For instance, the continued use of veto power by the P5 members, which has led to inaction in conflicts like Syria and Ukraine, suggests a disconnect between the UNSC's actions and the evolving expectations of the international community (United Nations, 2021). Constructivism further helps explain how the exclusion of emerging powers such as India and Brazil from permanent membership can be seen as a challenge to the legitimacy of the UNSC, as it no longer represents the geopolitical reality of the 21st century (United Nations, 2014). By highlighting the role of norms, identity, and shared beliefs in shaping the UNSC's actions, constructivism provides a comprehensive lens to assess its current crisis and potential pathways for reform.

Methods

This study will utilize a qualitative research methodology to explore the role and effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in maintaining global peace. The approach will focus on analyzing case studies of recent UNSC interventions and failures, particularly in conflict zones such as Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. These case studies will allow for a detailed examination of the UNSC's decision-making processes, the influence of veto power, and the broader implications of these decisions on international peace and security.

Data will be gathered from primary sources such as UNSC resolutions, official records of meetings, and public statements by member states. Secondary sources will include academic articles, books, and policy papers that discuss the UNSC's role and its reforms. A comparative analysis of these case studies will be conducted to assess how well the UNSC has responded to different global challenges and to identify patterns in its decision-making and effectiveness. The study aims to provide insights into the structural limitations of the UNSC and propose reforms based on empirical evidence.

Results and Discussion

The UNSC's Response to the Syrian Conflict

The Syrian conflict, which has persisted since 2011, emphasized the failures and significant limitations of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in handling humanitarian crises and preserving international peace. The dynamics of this conflict revealed the harmful impact of veto power, the complex interaction of regional actors, and the urgent need for reform in global governance structures.

One of the most striking aspects of UNSC ineffectiveness in response to the Syrian crisis is the repeated use of veto power by its permanent members. This mechanism, designed to avoid hasty decisions that could escalate conflict, facilitated paralysis. Notably, Russia and China exerted their vetoes to block resolutions designed to impose sanctions on the Assad regime, which was implicated in numerous human rights violations, including the use of chemical weapons against civilians (United Nations, 2015). The harmful impact of such vetoes not only impairs the credibility of the UNSC but also encourages aggressors in Syria and throughout the region. As Sebhatu argues, veto power contributed to instability not only in Syria but also in neighboring countries, where the effects of overflowing conflict exacerbated crises of insecurity and humanitarian distress (United Nations, 2004).

The regional dynamics further complicated the UNSC's ability to mediate the crisis effectively. Several states, including Türkiye, Iran, and Gulf countries, have interests in Syria, complicating the search for a cohesive international response. The fragmented nature of the conflict, characterized by multiple factions and increased sectarian tensions, led the UNSC to struggle for a unified approach. This disunity prevented diplomatic efforts and contributed to a prolonged humanitarian disaster (Bevzov, 2023). As the conflict continues, regional actors increasingly operate regardless of UNSC resolutions, often undermining the authority of the Council and exacerbating existing tensions.

Notably, the complexity of the Syrian conflict has led to discussions about alternative mechanisms, such as the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, which allows the UN General Assembly to take action when the UNSC is paralyzed. Melling and Dennett highlight the importance of exploring such avenues in light of UNSC failures. However, these alternatives face significant challenges in implementation and legitimacy, mainly due to entrenched positions of permanent UNSC members who may oppose any actions taken outside their control (Parvanova, 2023).

Moreover, the limitations of the UNSC are not merely institutional but also reflect broader challenges in global governance. The disproportionate power granted to the five permanent members—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—has led to perceptions of prejudice and inequality in the Council's operations. Webb postulates that this structural imbalance contributes to a lack of accountability for states involved in flagrant violations of international law, as seen in Syria (Kuchyk, 2024). Consequently, the effectiveness of the UNSC decreases, further aggravating the humanitarian crisis on the ground.

In light of these failures, there have been increasing calls for reform in global governance structures to improve UNSC effectiveness in addressing international crises. Reform advocates argue for reassessment of veto power and the establishment of clearer guidelines for intervention when human rights violations occur (Opanasenko). Additionally, promoting greater representation of various regions in decision-making can facilitate a more balanced and equitable response to crises, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of affected populations are considered.

In conclusion, UNSC failures and limitations regarding the Syrian conflict result from the harmful effects of veto power, a complex network of regional dynamics, and inequalities inherent in global governance. Unless significant reforms are performed, these structural challenges are likely to impair the UNSC's ability to respond effectively to future humanitarian crises, perpetuating cycles of violence and instability in affected regions. As the international community continues to grapple with the consequences of these failures, the need for reconsideration of how global governance is structured and operates becomes increasingly urgent.

The UNSC's Response to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Another major test for the UNSC's ability to maintain international peace has been Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. As a permanent member of the UNSC with veto power, Russia once again used its position to prevent the Council from taking significant action in response to the aggression. Following the invasion, the international community quickly condemned Russia's actions, and the UNSC held several meetings to discuss potential responses. However, despite widespread calls for sanctions and military intervention, Russia exercised its veto power to block any resolutions that would have imposed meaningful consequences for its actions.

The UNSC's failure to act in the face of such blatant violations of international law raises serious questions about the effectiveness of the current system. While the UNSC has the authority to impose sanctions, authorize peacekeeping operations, and call for military intervention, the presence of a permanent member with veto power means that any resolution can be blocked by a single country, regardless of the scale of the crisis. This has led many critics to argue that the UNSC's current structure is fundamentally flawed and that the veto system undermines the Council's ability to address the most pressing threats to global peace.

The lack of action by the UNSC in the Ukraine conflict has once again highlighted the growing divide between the interests of the P5 members and the needs of the international community. With Russia's veto preventing any meaningful response, the international community has been forced to rely on other mechanisms, such as economic sanctions and military support from NATO countries, to address the crisis. This has further eroded the credibility of the UNSC, which was originally established to provide a unified platform for resolving conflicts and ensuring global peace.

This case study exemplifies the urgent need for reform in the UNSC. Proposals for expanding the membership and altering the veto system have gained traction, with many experts arguing that the current structure is not suited to address the complexities of modern global security challenges (Patrick, 2023). By reforming the UNSC to make it more representative and less susceptible to deadlock, it is possible to enhance the Council's ability to respond to crises like the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The UNSC's Response to Climate Change and Non-Traditional Security Threats

The urgent reality of climate change as a non-traditional security threat has obtained recognition within global governance discussions, but the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has addressed the question with varying degrees of specificity and commitment. Traditionally focused on military conflicts and state security, the UN's engagement with climate change has often been reactive rather than proactive. This paper evaluates the current UNSC approach to climate change and non-traditional security threats, assessing its effectiveness and identifying necessary reforms.

The UNSC's Response to Climate Change

The UNSC's response to climate change as a threat to security has been hindered by several factors, including a lack of consensus among Member States and the complexity of integrating climatic considerations into its existing agenda. Reports from various international bodies illustrate that climate change aggravates existing vulnerabilities, contributing to conflicts, migrations, and humanitarian crises. For example, Hassan *et al.* asserted that in the context of Pakistan, climate change manifests as a non-traditional security threat, stretching national resources and leading to socio-political instability. This scenario underlines the indirect security implications of climate change, which the UNSC has yet to fully integrate into its discussions and actions (Hassan, 2024).

In December 2021, the UNSC faced a pivotal moment in addressing climate change as a security threat. A draft resolution, co-sponsored by Ireland and Niger, sought to integrate climate-related security risks into the Council's conflict-prevention strategies. This initiative aimed to position climate change as a central component in the UNSC's approach to maintaining international peace and security. The resolution garnered support from 12 Council members and 113 UN member states, reflecting a broad consensus on the urgency of the issue. However, the proposal was vetoed by Russia, with China abstaining and India voting against it. The veto underscored political divisions within the Council regarding the appropriate forum and approach to addressing climate-related security risks (United Nations, 2021).

Russia's opposition was rooted in concerns over the UNSC's encroachment on the mandates of other UN bodies, particularly the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia argued that the resolution would divert the Council's attention from more pressing security issues and impose a one-dimensional perspective on conflicts (The Guardian, 2021). China's abstention and India's vote against the resolution further highlighted skepticism among some Council members about the UNSC's role in climate governance. These positions reflect broader geopolitical tensions and differing priorities regarding climate change and security (The Guardian, 2021).

Despite the setback, the resolution's introduction marked a significant step in recognizing the link between climate change and international security. The debate brought attention to potential climate-induced factors, such as resource scarcity and displacement, that exacerbate conflicts and destabilize regions. Advocates emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach that includes climate considerations in peacekeeping and conflict prevention efforts, underscoring the importance of addressing root causes of insecurity, including environmental stressors, to build lasting peace (United Nations, 2021).

In response to the veto, the UNSC has continued exploring ways to incorporate climate considerations into its work. In 2023, the Council introduced a two-year training program to enhance the capacity of UN field staff to address climate-related security risks, focusing on integrating climate, peace, and security concepts into peace operations. Additionally, member states such as Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, and the UAE have pledged to include climate change and conflict analysis as cross-cutting themes in UN briefings and strive for integration of climate, peace, and security language in Council outcomes. These initiatives reflect growing recognition of the need to address climate change's security implications within the UNSC's mandate (Security Council Report, 2023).

A significant limitation in the UNSC's approach is its inability to formally recognize climate change as a direct security threat under its mandate. While climate discussions have emerged, they

often occur alongside other security concerns rather than being recognized as primary issues requiring immediate intervention. This fragmented approach results in missed opportunities for global strategies that could mitigate climate change's effects on global peace and security (Hassan et al, 2024).

The UNSC's Engagement with Non-Traditional Security Threats

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has increasingly acknowledged non-traditional security threats—challenges not arising from military aggression but from issues like climate change, pandemics, and transnational organized crime—as significant concerns for international peace and security. These threats often transcend national borders and require cooperative global responses. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the devastating impact of health crises on global stability, prompting the UNSC to emphasize the need for a security approach centered on human well-being (United Nations, 2021).

Resolution 2195 (2014): Combating Transnational Organized Crime

In December 2014, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2195, co-sponsored by Chad, aimed at disrupting the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime. The resolution called for international cooperation to combat illicit activities such as arms trafficking, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and the illegal trade in minerals, which often fund terrorist operations. It emphasized the importance of border security and the need for member states to strengthen their legal frameworks to address these interconnected threats. The resolution received unanimous support from all 15 Council members, reflecting a shared commitment to tackling these complex challenges. However, its effectiveness has been questioned due to varying levels of implementation and the persistent nature of these crimes (United Nations, 2014).

Resolution 2240 (2015) Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking

Resolution 2240, adopted in October 2015, authorized member states to intercept and seize vessels off the coast of Libya suspected of engaging in migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The resolution was introduced in response to the escalating humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean Sea and aimed to disrupt traffickers exploiting vulnerable migrants. While the resolution garnered support from 14 Council members, Venezuela abstained, expressing concerns that the measures could infringe upon Libya's sovereignty and might not effectively address the root causes of migration. Critics argue that the resolution's focus on maritime interdiction without addressing underlying issues such as conflict, poverty, and governance limits its long-term effectiveness (United Nations, 2015).

Resolution 1540 (2004): Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Adopted in April 2004, Resolution 1540 was a landmark decision by the UNSC to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to non-state actors. The resolution imposed binding obligations on all UN member states to establish and enforce laws prohibiting the development, acquisition, or use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons by non-state actors. It also called for the establishment of domestic controls to prevent proliferation. While adopted unanimously, some member states, particularly those in the Non-Aligned Movement, expressed reservations about the Council's authority to legislate on such matters and the potential

implications for national sovereignty (United Nations, 2004).

Investigate Potential Reforms to the UNSC's Structure and Decision-Making Processes

The renovation of the UNSC has become a vital discourse in international relations, especially given complex contemporary security challenges. The Council's structure, decision-making processes, and mandate require critical analysis to improve its relevance and effectiveness in addressing global threats.

The current UNSC composition, dominated by the five permanent members (P5), raises concerns about representativeness and accountability. Critics argue that the P5 veto power can lead to impasse, preventing timely and decisive action in crises (Bevzov, 2023). The inclusion of additional permanent members, such as those proposed in the G4 initiative—Germany, India, Brazil, and Japan—would better reflect 21st-century geopolitical realities and allow for more diverse decision-making perspectives (Parvanova, 2023).

In addition, the UNSC's decision-making processes need significant reform. The consensus requirement or veto use usually results in delayed responses to urgent crises, undermining the Council's authority and ability to maintain peace and security (Kuchyk et al, 2024). Simplifying procedures and reconsidering the veto mechanism could improve operational efficiency. For example, establishing conditionality for veto use may obligate members to consider the broader implications of their decisions, fostering a more collaborative atmosphere (Opanasenko)

Moreover, the UNSC's mandate should expand to address non-traditional security threats such as climate change, terrorism, and cybercrime, which increasingly affect global stability (Patrick, 2023). By integrating these issues into its agenda, the UNSC can adapt to the evolving security landscape and respond more effectively. Engagement with non-state actors and civil society can also strengthen its mandate, ensuring a multifaceted security approach.

The UNSC faces significant challenges requiring systemic reform. Expanding membership, reviewing decision-making processes, and broadening the mandate are essential steps to enhance relevance and effectiveness in addressing contemporary global security challenges. As global dynamics shift, the UNSC must maintain legitimacy and effectiveness to ensure international peace and security. Reform discourse must remain a priority on the global agenda to create a more responsive and representative security council.

Conclusion

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), established to safeguard global peace and security, finds itself at a crossroads in the 21st century. Despite its foundational role in international conflict resolution, the UNSC's effectiveness has been increasingly questioned due to its inability to adapt to modern challenges. The frequent use of veto power by the permanent members, particularly in the face of humanitarian crises such as the Syrian civil war and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, highlights the structural limitations of the UNSC. Moreover, the rising threats posed by climate change, terrorism, and cyber warfare further expose the Council's inability to address non-traditional security concerns within its existing framework.

This study has demonstrated that the UNSC's failure to act decisively on several key global issues undermines its legitimacy and effectiveness as a peacekeeping body. The ongoing deadlocks in the decision-making process, especially among the P5 members, have prompted growing calls for institutional reform. The UNSC's current structure, which prioritizes the interests of a few

powerful states, is increasingly out of step with the changing geopolitical and security landscape. To remain relevant, the UNSC must undergo significant reforms to enhance its representativeness, transparency, and ability to address contemporary global security challenges.

Recommendations

1. **Reform the Veto System:** To enhance the UNSC's decision-making process, it is recommended that the veto power held by the five permanent members (P5) be reformed or abolished. This would allow for more democratic and inclusive decisions that reflect the interests of a broader international community. A potential solution is implementing a "double veto" system, where veto power would require the support of two permanent members instead of one.
2. **Expand Membership:** The UNSC should expand its membership to include emerging powers such as India, Brazil, and South Africa, which would better reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century. Increasing the number of permanent and rotating members would help improve the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness by giving greater representation to both developed and developing nations. This would also mitigate frustration within the Global South regarding underrepresentation.
3. **Address Non-Traditional Security Threats:** The UNSC should broaden its mandate to include non-traditional security threats such as climate change, pandemics, and cyber warfare. Given the growing impact of these issues on global peace and security, the UNSC must adapt its approach to encompass a more comprehensive definition of security. This could involve creating new resolutions that address environmental and health-related security challenges directly.
4. **Enhance Transparency and Accountability:** The UNSC must implement reforms to increase transparency and accountability in its decision-making processes. Regular public reporting on deliberations, clearer documentation of resolutions, and more inclusive consultations with non-member states and civil society organizations would enhance the legitimacy of the UNSC. These steps would help build trust and ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of global peace.

References

- Antonescu, M. V. (2018). From the international law of peace to the global law of peace. *Logos, Universality, Mentality, Education, Novelty*, 3(1), 49–61.
- Barnett, M., & Finnemore, M. (2004). *Rules for the world: International organizations in global politics*. Cornell University Press.
- Bellamy, A. J., & Williams, P. (Eds.). (2014). *Peace operations and global order*. Routledge.
- Bezvov, M. (2023). *Problems of reforming the UN in the context of the international security crisis* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Checkel, J. T. (2020). Constructivism and international institutions. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*.
- Cox, R. W. (2022). Global governance and the future of the United Nations Security Council. *International Relations Review*, 47(3), 215–230.
- Firchow, P. (2020). World peace is local peace. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 34(1), 57–65.
- Gowan, R. (2020). The United Nations Security Council and the challenge of reform: A critique of the veto system. *International Politics Journal*, 36(2), 99–115.

- Hanhimäki, J. M. (2015). *The United Nations: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Hassan, T. U., et al. (2024). Climate change: Non-traditional security threats for Pakistan. *International Journal of Learner Diversity and Identities*, 31(1).
- Hastings, T. (2020). Non-traditional security threats and the UNSC: Climate change and cyber threats. *Global Security Journal*, 44(1), 45–62.
- Hosli, M. O., & Dörfler, T. (2020). The United Nations Security Council: History, current composition, and reform proposals. In *International Relations* (pp. 299–320). Springer International Publishing.
- Kerr, P. (2019). The limitations of the United Nations Security Council: The case of Syria. *Journal of International Law and Politics*, 51(4), 1037–1052.
- Kuchyk, O., et al. (2024). Effectiveness of the decision-making process in international security organizations in the context of international crises. *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, 16(2).
- Lynch, C. (2021). The Syrian crisis and the failure of the UNSC: An examination of veto power in action. *Journal of Peace Studies*, 18(2), 156–174.
- Melling, G., & Dennett, A. (2017). The Security Council veto and Syria: Responding to mass atrocities through the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution. *Indian Journal of International Law*, 57(3), 285–307.
- Mingst, K. A., Karns, M. P., & Lyon, A. J. (2022). *The United Nations in the 21st century*. Routledge.
- Opanasenko, O. (n.d.). Prospects for UN Security Council reform. 3C, 35(1), 96.
- Parvanova, E. (2023). Reforming the United Nations Security Council: Cross-country analysis of a G-4 potential permanent membership. *Journal of the Bulgarian Geographical Society*, 49, 69–77.
- Patrick, S. (2023, June 28). UN Security Council reform: What the world thinks. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-worldthinks-pub-90032>
- Sebhatu, T. R. (2020). *The effects of United Nations Security Council veto power on stability of states: A case study of Syria and its neighbors* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Nairobi.
- Security Council Report. (2023, June). *Climate, peace and security, June 2023 monthly forecast*. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2023-06/climate-peace-and-security.php>
- Simmons, B. A. (2020). The shifting role of the United Nations Security Council: Emerging threats and the need for reform. *International Security Review*, 19(3), 214–237.
- The Guardian. (2021, December 13). Russia vetoes UN Security Council resolution linking climate crisis to international peace. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/13/russia-vetoes-un-security-council-resolution-climate-crisis-international-peace>
- United Nations Security Council. (2021). *United Nations Security Council membership*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/membership>
- United Nations. (1945). *Charter of the United Nations*. <https://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>
- United Nations. (2004). *Resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction*. [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1540\(2004\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1540(2004))
- United Nations. (2014). *Resolution 2195 (2014) on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts*. [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2195\(2014\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2195(2014))
- United Nations. (2015). *Resolution 2240 (2015) on migrant smuggling and human trafficking off the coast of Libya*. [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2240\(2015\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2240(2015))

- United Nations. (2021). *Secretary-General stresses 'non-traditional threats' in briefing to Security Council*. <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sgsm20596.doc.htm>
- United Nations. (2021, December). *Security Council fails to adopt resolution integrating climate-related security risk into conflict-prevention strategies*. <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14732.doc.htm>
- Webb, P. (2014). Deadlock or restraint? The Security Council veto and the use of force in Syria. *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, 19(3), 471–488.
- Wendt, A. (1999). *Social theory of international politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, P. R., & Pearlman, S. (2019). Use of force in humanitarian crises: Addressing the limitations of UN Security Council authorization. *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 51, 211–xxx.