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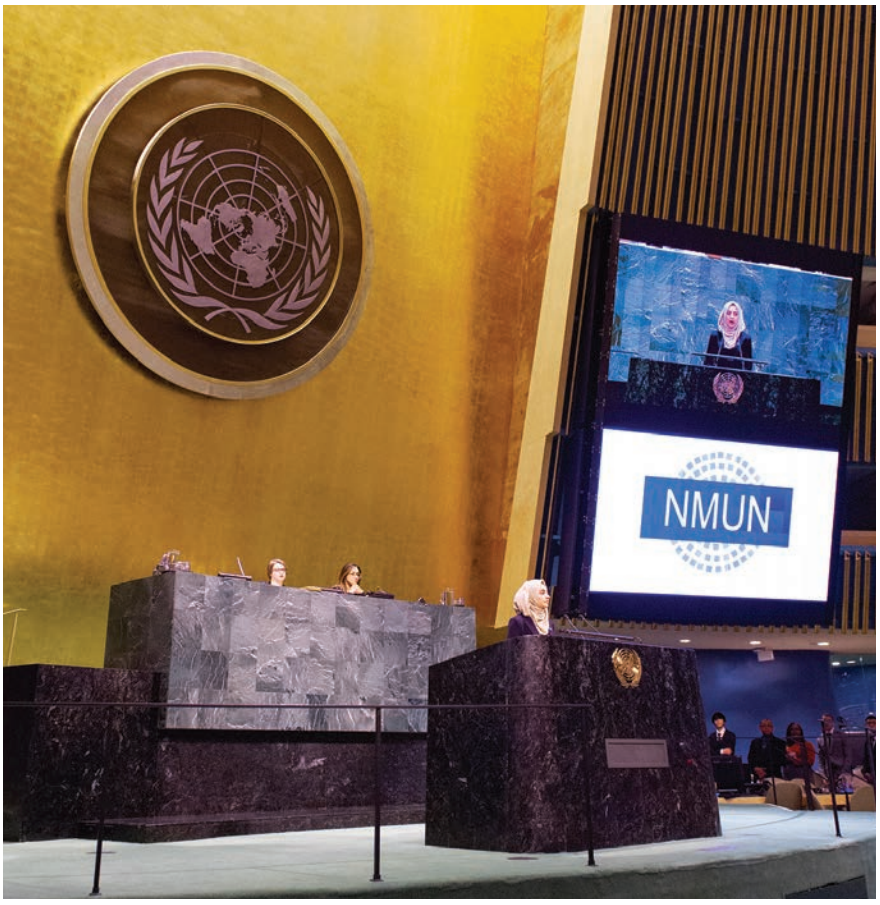
Security Council
Background Guide 2021

Written and updated by: Johanna Barton, Gamaliel Perez, Silvia Bedessi, and Ben Wrigley, Directors



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2021 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Security Council (SC). This year's staff is: Directors for SC Johanna Barton (Conference A) and Silvia Bedessi (Conference B), and Directors for SC-A Gamaliel Perez (Conference A) and Benjamin Wrigley (Conference B). Johanna holds a B.A. in European Studies from the University of Magdeburg and a M.Sc. in Public Sector Innovation and eGovernance of the University of Leuven. She currently works in the office of a German member of the European parliament. Silvia received her B.A. in Political Science and International Studies from the University of Florence. She currently works in the cultural field. Gamaliel completed his undergrad in Political Theory alongside International Relations. Gamaliel also hopes to publish a book in the future as a side project. Ben is studying for his master's degree in economic policy at the University of Siegen.

The topics under discussion for the Security Council are:

I. The Situation in Yemen
II. Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security
III. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

The Security Council is the international community's most powerful institution dedicated to maintaining peace and security. The Council may issue both binding and non-binding resolutions, release presidential statements, commission reports by the Secretary-General, and authorize peacekeeping or humanitarian missions, among other actions. The Council's unique legal authority and broad reach makes it the leader of the international community's efforts to maintain international peace and security.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2021 in accordance with the guidelines in the Position Paper Guide and the NMUN•NY Position Papers website.

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. NMUN Rules of Procedure - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory NMUN Conduct Expectations on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Peace and Security Department, Natalie Keller (Conference A) and Estefani Morales (Conference B), at usg.ps@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Sincerely,

Conference A
Johanna Barton, *Director, SC*
Gamaliel Perez, *Director, SC-A*

Conference B
Silvia Bedessi, *Director, SC*
Benjamin Wrigley, *Director, SC-A*

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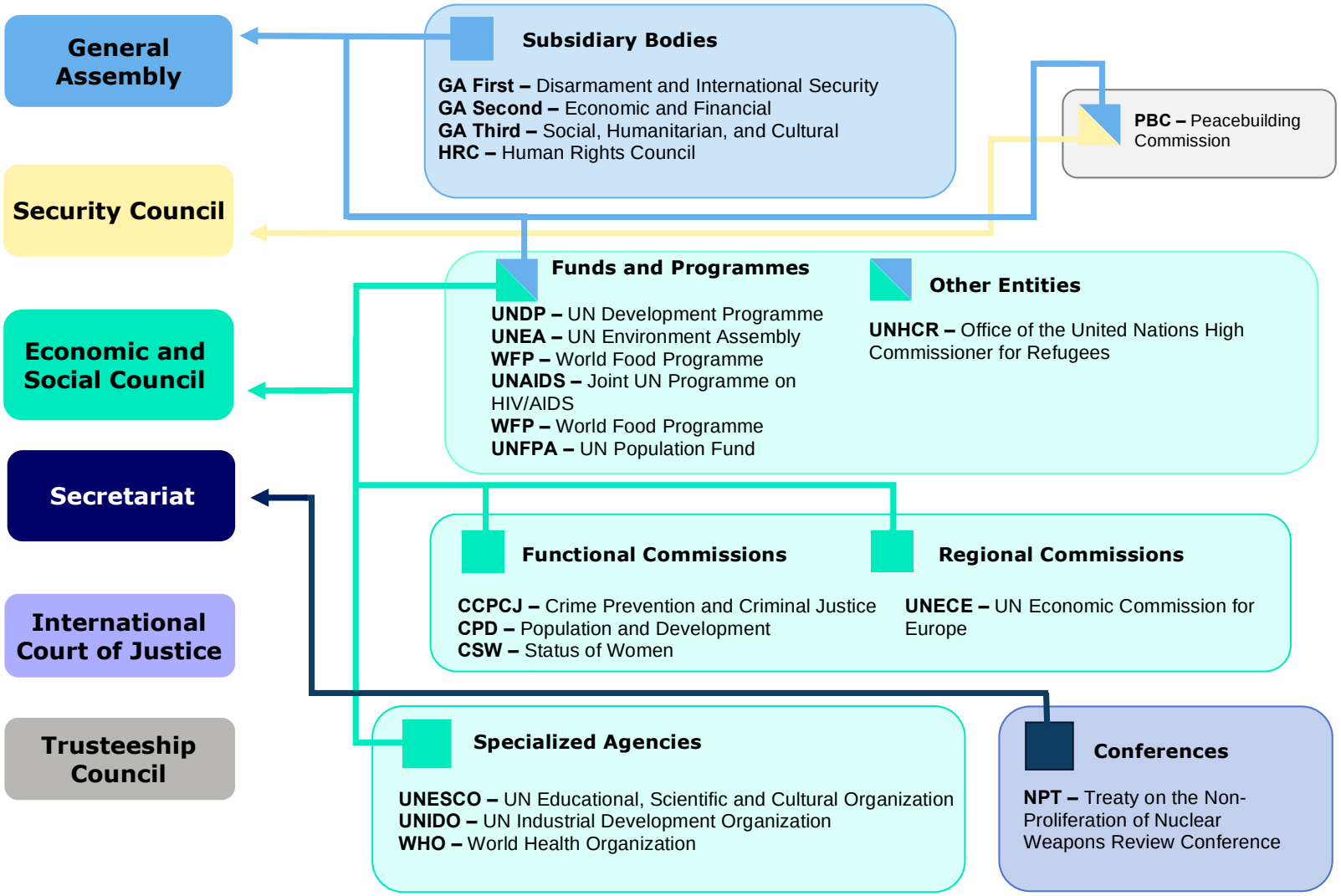
United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.



Committee Overview

Introduction

After the devastating effects of the two World Wars, the international community established the United Nations (UN) as an intergovernmental organization with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, creating the conditions conducive to economic and social development, and advancing universal respect for human rights.[1] The Security Council became one of the six principal organs of the UN and was given the primary responsibility of preserving international peace and security.[2]

The Security Council held its first session on 17 January 1946 at Church House in London.[3] After its first meeting, the Council relocated to its permanent residence at the UN Headquarters in New York City.[4] At that time, five permanent members and six non-permanent members were part of the Council.[5] In 1965, the number of non-permanent members increased to 10 and discussions regarding a change in configuration took place frequently.[6] As the body's structure has remained largely unchanged, debate has arisen over the Security Council's efficacy and authority as a mediator on issues of international security.[7] Matters such as the Syrian Civil War, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons program have posed particular challenges to the Security Council.[8]

Traditionally, the Security Council discusses issues related to peacekeeping missions, political processes, as well as the protection of human rights, disarmament, and humanitarian crises.[9] However, with the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* by the UN General Assembly in 2015, the Security Council has begun to increasingly focus on the intersection between sustainability, peace, and security.[10] Some important crosscutting issues the Council is currently addressing include human rights and the protection of civilians for conflict prevention and sustainable development; Women, Peace and Security; and the prevention of conflict and sustaining peace.[11]

Governance, Structure, and Membership

The Security Council is the only UN body that has the power to adopt legally binding resolutions, which place an obligation on Member States to accept and carry out the Council's decisions under Article 25 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).[12] The Security Council also has a variety of other tools to address issues on its agenda.[13] For example, the President of the Security Council may issue press statements or presidential statements to communicate the Council's position.[14] Although these are not legally binding, such statements are used to bring attention to important issues and to recommend solutions to ongoing conflicts.[15]

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[1] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.
[2] UN Security Council, *What is the Security Council?*, 2019.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] UN Security Council, *Voting System,* 2020.
[6] Global Policy Forum, *Background on Security Council Reform*, 2020.
[7] Council on Foreign Relations, *The UN Security Council*, 2018.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.; Encyclopaedia Britannica, *United Nations Security Council*, 2014.
[10] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (*A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UN DPA, Politically Speaking, *Sustaining Peace, Conflict Prevention, Human Rights and Sustainable Development High on Agenda for New Security Council Members*, 2018.
[11] UN DPPA, Politically Speaking, *Sustaining Peace, Conflict Prevention, Human Rights and Sustainable Development High on Agenda for New Security Council Members*, 2018.
[12] UN Security Council, *What is the Security Council?*, 2019; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.
[13] UN Security Council, *Functions and Powers*, 2020.
[14] NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, *Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the United Nations Security Council: Report of the NGOWG Monthly Action Points, 2009-2010*, 2010, p. 11.
[15] Ibid., p. 15.

The five permanent members of the Security Council are China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, often colloquially referred to as the "P5."[16] Every year, the General Assembly elects five of the 10 non-permanent members for a two-year term.[17] Elections for non-permanent seats on the Council can be competitive, with states expressing interest and campaigning years in advance.[18] States elected to serve on the Security Council are expected to represent the interests of their region; they usually have an influence at the international level and demonstrate leadership in specific areas of interest to their foreign policy.[19] Each member of the Security Council has the ability to be represented at all meetings.[20] In the Provisional Rules of Procedure, Rule 13 allows for Members to be represented by an "accredited representative," such as a Head of Government.[21]

Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, and Vietnam are the current non-permanent members for the 2020-2021 term.[22] Security Council elections are held six months before the term starts in June.[23] This change allows Member States sufficient time to prepare for their new role.[24] The 10 non-permanent members represent countries from five groups: Africa, the Asia-Pacific Group, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Eastern European Group, and Western European and Other.[25]

Every Member State of the Security Council has one vote.[26] Votes on all matters require a supermajority of nine Member States.[27] However, if one of the five permanent members of the Security Council votes "no" on a matter of substance, such as a draft resolution, it does not pass.[28] This is known as "veto power."[29] In the 1950s, Security Council Member States made frequent use of their veto power, but its usage declined in the 1960s—rising again in the 1970s and 1980s.[30] In the last decades, the use of the veto power has been comparatively rare.[31] In recent years, the Council has adopted many resolutions by consensus and has only been divided on a very limited number of issues.[32]

Since 1993, the General Assembly has discussed several models to reform the Security Council.[33] The key challenges in the reform of the Security Council are its membership, transparency and working methods, and the veto power of the permanent five Member States.[34] Most recently, in a debate in November 2018, delegates of the UN General Assembly called for expanding the number of permanent members and abolishing the permanent member's use of veto power.[35]

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] UN DGC, *Ahead of Security Council Elections, General Assembly President Explains how a Country can get a Non-permanent Seat*, 2016.
[19] Global Policy Forum, *Background on Security Council Reform*, 2020.
[20] *Charter of the United Nations,* 1945.
[21] UN Security Council, *Highlights of Security Council Practice*, 2019.
[22] UN Security Council, *Current Members*, 2020.
[23] UN General Assembly, *Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly (A/RES/68/307)*, 2014, p. 4.
[24] UN DGC, *Ahead of Security Council Elections, General Assembly President Explains how a Country can get a Non-permanent Seat*, 2016.
[25] UN General Assembly, *Rules of Procedure*, 2017.
[26] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.
[27] Ibid.
[28] UN Security Council, *Voting System,* 2020.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Security Council Report, *In Hindsight: The Veto*, 2013; Security Council Report, *The Permanent Members and the Use of the Veto: An Abridged History*, 2013.
[31] Security Council Report, *The Permanent Members and the Use of the Veto: An Abridged History*, 2013.
[32] Security Council Report, *In Hindsight: Consensus in the Security Council*, 2014; Security Council Report, *In Hindsight: The Veto*, 2013.
[33] Global Policy Forum, *Background on Security Council Reform*, 2020.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Nastranis, *UN Security Council Reform Back on the Table Again*, 2019.

Each member of the Security Council holds the presidency of the Council for one month, rotating according to alphabetical order.[36] Security Council meetings can be held at any time when convened by the President and by the request of any Member State.[37] Under Rule 3 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council, the President shall call a meeting if a dispute or situation requires the Council's attention.[38] Due to this, the Security Council meets regularly throughout the year in the UN Conference Building.[39] However, in 2020, due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the Security Council have resorted to meeting online through video conferences.[40] Any Member State may attend the Council's sessions if the body decides to extend an invitation.[41] Member States are invited if the Security Council is discussing an issue that directly concerns the interests of the Member State.[42] Invited Member States do not have the right to vote but are allowed to submit proposals and draft resolutions.[43] Furthermore, invited Member States can inform the Council about a current crisis in their region.[44] However, such proposals may only be put to a vote at the request of a member of the Council.[45]

The Security Council oversees many subsidiary bodies established under Article 29 of the Charter, including: the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, sanctions committees, and ad hoc committees.[46] The Security Council also works with the General Assembly to oversee the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).[47] Additionally, Security Council Member States participate in various working groups, which consist of some or all of the Security Council Member States and focus on regional issues, as well as improving the working methods of the Council itself.[48]

Cooperation between the Security Council and other entities, such as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is significant.[49] Partnerships with independent regional organizations, such as the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) are also of paramount importance for addressing a broad range of issues such as terrorism, disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and extreme violence from non-state actors.[50]

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The mandate of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security and to take action whenever peace and security are threatened.[51] The Council's authority is particularly relevant with respect to the UN's four primary purposes, as specified in the Charter: maintaining international peace and security; developing friendly relations among nations; cooperating in solving international problems; and promoting respect for human rights.[52] The capabilities of the Security Council are highlighted in Chapters V–VIII.[53] Chapter V establishes the structure, membership, functions, and powers of the

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[36] UN Security Council, *Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council (S/96/Rev.7)*, 1982.
[37] UN Security Council, *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, 2019.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Lynch, *U.N. Agencies Struggle to Carry on Remotely,* 2020.
[41] Ibid.
[42] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.
[43] UN Security Council, *Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council (S/96/Rev.7)*, 1982.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] UN Security Council, *Committees, Working Groups and Ad Hoc Bodies*, 2019.
[47] Ibid.
[48] UN Security Council, *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, 2019.
[49] UN Security Council, *Committees, Working Groups and Ad Hoc Bodies,* 2019; UN Security Council, *Resolution 2118 (2013) (S/RES/2349) (2013))*, 2013.
[50] Ibid.
[51] UN Security Council, *What is the Security Council?*, 2019.
[52] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.
[53] Ibid.

Security Council.[54] Chapters VI and VII of the Charter specifically concern the Security Council and the range of actions that can be taken when settling disputes.[55] Chapter VI of the Charter by itself aims to settle disputes through peaceful means, such as negotiation and judicial settlement.[56] Chapter VII explores further actions that can be taken in regard to threats to peace, branches of peace, and acts of aggression. [57] This chapter also authorizes the Security Council to implement provisional measures aimed to de-escalate the situation.[58] Chapter VIII of the Charter allows the Security Council to call upon other regional agencies or arrangements to enforce appropriate operations and intervene if necessary.[59]

Under Article 41 in the Charter, the Council can call on its members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or end violence.[60] Some of these measures include arms embargos, enforcing disarmament, or calling upon international criminal mechanisms to become active.[61] Regarding diplomatic tools, the Council is mandated to investigate any dispute or situation that might lead to aggression between states, with other non-state groups, or within states' territories.[62] The Council may also take military action against a state or other entity threatening international peace and security, and may further decide on the deployment of troops or observers.[63] The Council may also decide upon the deployment of new UN peacekeeping operations to be led by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO).[64] The Security Council creates a peacekeeping operation by adopting a resolution that outlines the mandate and size of a particular mission, and UN peacekeepers are assigned to appropriate regions to address conflicts.[65] The Council also cooperates with a number of international and regional organizations as well as non-governmental organizations to implement its decisions.[66]

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

By August 2020, the Security Council has covered a wide range of topics, issued 7 presidential statements, and adopted more than 32 resolutions[67] In general, the Security Council focuses efforts to consider country and region-specific situations in its agenda, as well as cross-cutting and thematic issues, such as threats to international peace and security, the financing of terrorism, and climate change, peace, and security.[68] In 2020, amongst others, the Council has drafted resolutions to address the humanitarian situation in Syria, peace and security in Africa, sexual violence in conflict, and threats to international peace and security caused by international terrorism and organized crime.[69]

The conflict in Syria has led to over 5.6 million refugees and 6.1 internally displaced people.[70] Security Council resolution 2504, adopted 10 January 2020, and Security Council resolution 2533 on the situation in the Middle East, adopted 11 July 2020, call upon all parties to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria. This shall mainly be achieved by all parties complying to international law, and allowing safe

[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] UN Security Council, *Functions and Powers*, 2020.
[62] Ibid.
[63] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.
[64] UN Peacekeeping, *Forming a New Operation.*
[65] UN Peacekeeping, *Role of the Security Council*.
[66] UN Security Council, *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, 2019.
[67] UN Security Council, *Resolutions Adopted by the Security Council in 2020*, 2020.
[68] UN DPA, *Security Council Reporting and Mandate Cycles*, 2018; Security Council Report, *Thematic and General Issues*, 2018.
[69] UN Security Council, *Resolutions Adopted by the Security Council in 2020*, 2020.
[70] UN DGC, *Syria,* 2020.

access for humanitarian convoys to the regions defined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014).[71]

With regard to peace and security in Africa, the Security Council has reacted to the situation in the Central African Republic, the situation in Somalia, the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the situation in Mali.[72] Mali, specifically, has been struggling with issues of safety of its citizens, ineffective governance, and economic and political instability, which has been exacerbated by nepotism and corruption in government.[73] In 2020, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2531, which renews the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2021. Furthermore, paragraph 28 provides a number of priority tasks that are to be realized within one year by the Mission and the Malian parties.[74]

Since the adoption of landmark resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security in 2000 the Security Council has continuously addressed this issue.[75] Therefore in 2020, the year of the resolutions' 20-year anniversary, the Security Council again addressed the issue.[76] On 17 July 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten, and Special Envoy to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Angelina Jolie addressed the Security Council in a debate on conflict-related sexual violence.[77] Special attention was brought to the lack of attention to "the plight of Yazidi women and children in Iraq, who were abducted, enslaved and tortured by the thousands by ISIL terrorists in 2014"[78], the problem of under-funding of efforts to fight sexual and gender-based violence, and the under-reporting on sexual violence against children in armed conflict.[79] The latter is closely linked to the general discussion of protecting children in armed conflicts.[80] In the past, the Security Council urged for a conflict prevention strategy to target the younger population and called upon other Member States to incorporate additional provisions in peace negotiations and agreements to protect the children.[81] Resolution 2419 (2018) outlines the role of youth in conflict prevention.[82] Security Council resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, adopted in 2015, highlights specific instances where youth participation and inclusion can occur, such as in civil and political engagement, humanitarian assistance, and civil society.[83] This will help integrate and enable young individuals in decision processes and promote international peace and security.[84] Most recently, through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2535 on 14 July 2020, the Security Council "underscored the role of youth in preventing and resolving conflict, as well as in building and maintaining peace, encouraging Member States to include young people in decision-making processes across these areas".[85]

In 2019, the Security Council adopted resolution 2482 (2019) on "threats to international peace and security caused by international terrorism and organized crime" and 2462 (2019) which outlined measures to suppress the financing of terrorism.[86] Resolution 2482 called upon Member States to

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[71] UN Security Council, *Resolution 2504* (S/RES/2504 (2020)), 2020.
[72] UN Security Council, *Resolutions Adopted by the Security Council in 2020*, 2020.
[73] UN DGC, *Mali,* 2020.
[74] UN Security Council, *Resolution 2531 (S/RES/2531 (2020))*, 2020.
[75] Security Council Report, *Women, Peace and Security: The Agenda at 20*, 2020.
[76] Ibid.
[77] UN, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Statement of SRSG-SVC Pramila Patten Security Council Open Debate on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence "Turning Commitments into Compliance" Friday, 17 July 2020*, 2020.
[78] UN News, *Wartime Sexual Violence a "Psychological Weapon", Sets Back Cause of Peace*, 2020.
[79] Ibid.
[80] UN Security Council, *Resolution 2250 (2015) (S/Res/2250 (2015)),* 2015.
[81] Ibid.
[82] UN Security Council, *Resolution 2419 (2018) (S/RES/2419 (2018)),* 2018.
[83] UN Security Council, *Resolution 2250 (2015) (S/Res/2250 (2015)),* 2015.
[84] Ibid.
[85] UN, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, *Security Council Underlines Vital Role of Youth in Building Peace, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2535 (2020)*, 2020.
[86] UN Security Council, *Highlights of Security Council Practice,* 2019.

enhance coordination towards a global response to international terrorism and organized crime.[87] The resolution also urges Member States to investigate and dismantle organized crime networks involved in trafficking, and to review and implement legislation on issues such as sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict by ensuring that domestic laws and regulations are in line with Member States' obligations under international law.[88] Resolution 2462 calls for the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to play a leading role in identifying ways to suppress terrorist financing through expanding its focus and working closely with the Financial Action Task Force, an inter-governmental body that sets standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.[89] The Secretary-General, in his tenth report (S/2020/95), provided updates about the threats posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or Da'esh) in February 2020 to urge Member States to assist in efforts to counter the threat to international security and peace.[90]

Conclusion

The Security Council is one of the main bodies of the UN that ensures international peace and security, overseeing the admission of new members to the UN General Assembly, and changes to the UN Charter.[91] The Council also has a unique and impactful mandate to set norms and govern state actions, as all Member States are required to comply with the Security Council's legally-binding decisions under Chapter VII of the Charter, the only UN body to have legally-binding decisions.[92] The Council is the only UN body that has the ability to create legally binding decisions.[93] Although the Security Council is first and foremost the primary UN entity responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda signaled the increasing need to also discuss the linkages between peace and security, and issues of human security and development.[94] The Council has begun looking at the intersection between the SDGs and international peace and security, namely through discussion and debates on climate change.[95] The Security Council also continues to address regional and country issues, as well as thematic issues, such as climate change, terrorism, and gender.[96]

Annotated Bibliography

Charter of the United Nations. (1945). Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html

> *The Charter of the United Nations provides a thorough explanation on the powers, and functions authorized to the Security Council. For instance, the Charter outlines where the use of force is acceptable and how the council is structured to combat threats to international peace and security. As the fundamental principles of the Security Council are written down in the Charter, this document should be the first resource for delegates to consider. Article 27-32 of the Charter outlines the voting procedures of the committee and structure of how the committee conducts its business. Article 23, which sets the membership structure, and articles 23–26, which discuss its basic functions and powers, are important for understanding both the structure and function of the Security Council. In*

[87] UN Security Council, *Threats to International Peace and Security (S/RES/2482 (2019))*, 2019.
[88] Ibid.
[89] UN Security Council, *Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts: Preventing and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (S/RES/2462 (2019))*, 2019.
[90] UN Security Council, *Tenth Report of the Secretary-General on the Threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to International Peace and Security and the Range of United Nations Efforts in Support of Member States in Countering the Threat* (S/2020/95), 2020.
[91] UN Security Council, *What is the Security Council?*, 2019.
[92] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.
[93] Ibid.
[94] UN DPA Politically Speaking, *Sustaining Peace, Conflict Prevention, Human Rights and Sustainable Development High on Agenda for New Security Council Members*, 2018.
[95] Mead, *UN Security Council Addresses Climate Change as a Security Risk*, 2019.
[96] UN DGC, *Fragile Countries Risk Being 'Stuck in a Cycle of Conflict and Climate Disaster,' Security Council Told*, 2018.

addition, articles 27–32 explain the Council's voting procedure and its overall structure. The Charter can also be particularly helpful for delegates in understanding the powers and limitations of the body. Delegates will find Chapters VI and VII most helpful when researching the mandate of the Security Council and proposing actions and solutions.

United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. (2018). *Security Council Reporting and Mandate Cycles*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/general/reportingandmandatecycles_122018.pdf

Published by the UN Department of Political Affairs, this document provides information on the work and decisions of the Security Council, including resolutions and presidential statements. The document primarily consists of tables on items that have been discussed by the Security Council, various requests by the Security Council, and mandates of different entities and operations that report to the Council. This report will help delegates by providing succinct and clear information on the recent actions taken by the Security Council on its various thematic issues. Additionally, delegates may find the tables providing the actual clauses of different Security Council resolutions particularly helpful to their research.

United Nations, Security Council. (2019). *Highlights of Security Council Practice.* Retrieved on 20 September 2020 from: https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/highlights-2019

This article reviews the activities and resolutions passed of the Security Council during the last year. This is a useful recap of all the issues that the Security Council has addressed or currently still needs to resolve. The Security Council highlights for the previous years are also available. For a more detailed report, the Security Council also reports monthly updates. There are many charts and graphics depicting the activity of the Council within 2019, even detailing number of meetings, regional focuses, and decisions by geographical regions.

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I. The Situation in Yemen

"Yemen is the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, with more than 24 million people – some 80 per cent of the population – in need of humanitarian assistance, including more than 12 million children." [97]

Introduction

Yemen, a small State on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, was one of the many Middle Eastern countries to be part of the Arab Spring, which began in 2011.[98] The Arab Spring is a political movement that began in Tunisia, where the citizens of various Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries cited poor economic conditions, lack of employment and professional opportunities and rampant government corruption, and demanded the ousting of many long standing leaders from their respective countries.[99] Yemen, which is amongst the poorest countries in the world, was no exception, and in January 2011, Yemenis marched in the Capital of Sana'a demanding that their leader of thirty years, Ali Abdullah Saleh, step down.[100]

After a year of unrest and violence, Saleh resigned due to the domestic and international pressure and was replaced by a transitional government led by his former vice president Abderabbu Mansour al-Hadi.[101] In 2014, the balance of power was fundamentally shifted when Houthi Rebels, a Shiite minority with strong opposition to the transitional government, violently took control of the capital.[102] This chain of events resulted in the creation, in 2015, of a military coalition of Arab States led by Saudi Arabia that intervened on behalf of the internationally recognized Yemeni government through the use of air strikes, blockades, ground troops and alliances with local groups — all of which dramatically increased the level of violence within the country.[103]

To this day, the country remains enveloped in a violent civil war with no immediate end in sight.[104] In addition to the ongoing conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic has torn through the country and placed an even greater threat to an already vulnerable population.[105] According to recent published data, 80% of the Yemeni population requires some form of assistance, 1.1 million people have gotten cholera and 15 million Yemenis are at risk of starvation.[106] All of this has amounted to what the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (OCHA) has called the worst humanitarian crisis (known as a series of events that pose a dire threat to the general well-being, safety and security of a large group of people within a specified area) in the world.[107]

International and Regional Framework

With the situation in Yemen nearing a decade since the initial unrest, the international and regional communities have come together numerous times with the intention of attempting to resolve the crisis.[108] The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a political and economic alliance and forum for the Gulf Arab States on the Arabian Peninsula, met in 2011 and pressured Saleh to step down as Yemen's leader.[109] Additionally, a road map called the *Agreement on the Implementation Mechanism for the Transition*

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[97] UNICEF, *Yemen Crisis,* 2020.
[98] Cornell University, *Arab Spring: A Research and Study Guide: Yemen*, 2019.
[99] Encyclopedia Britannica, *Arab Spring: Pro-Democracy Protests*, 2019.
[100] *Timeline: Yemen's Slide into Political Crisis and War*, Reuters, 2019.
[101] United Nations Foundation, *Yemen: A Brief Background*, 2019.
[102] *Houthi Rebels Take Near-Total Control of Sana'a*, Al Arabiya, 2014.
[103] *Yemen Profile- Timeline*, BBC, 2019.
[104] Fahim, *The Deadly War in Yemen Rages On. So Why does the Death Toll Stand Still?*, 2018.
[105] International Rescue Committee*, Civilians Under Siege*, 2020.
[106] USA for UNHCR, *Yemen Humanitarian Crisis*, 2019.
[107] UN GCD, *Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen Remains the Worst in the World, Warns UN*, 2019.
[108] UN, *United Nations in Yemen: What We Do*, 2019.
[109] *What is the GCC*, Al Jazeera, 2017.

Process in Yemen in Accordance with the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council, known as the GCC Initiative, was created to aid in the political transition of power in Yemen.[110] This initiative was a six-part framework that defined the transition period, staged the transition into two parts, and created a mechanism to resolve disputes.[111] The GCC Initiative would see Saleh resign as president and for Al-Hadi, the current Vice President to lead a transitional unity government until presidential elections could be organized. Following presidential elections, a new constitution would be drafted with the input of all the parties involved thereby ending the conflict and peacefully transitioning Yemen into a new form of governance.[112]

The GCC Initiative served as a good theoretical transition framework, however, many parties in Yemen remained skeptical that Saleh's vice president would deliver the change they demanded, causing the violence to continue.[113]. The focus on the international community therefore pivoted from nation building to resolving the armed conflict, an area that the Security Council has been playing a leading role in.[114] Due to the escalation in violence and the capture of the capital by rebels, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2140 (2014) under Chapter VII of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1948).[115] This landmark resolution has served as the basis of the international community's policy towards Yemen, calling upon the implementation of a political transition by all parties as laid out in the GCC Initiative, encouraging the continued political participation of women and youth groups and expressing concerns over the increased recruitment of children as soldiers while condemning terrorist actions in Yemen by groups such as Al Qaeda.[116] The resolution also instituted a travel ban and asset freeze of designated individuals determined by the Security Council Sanctions Committee (2014) who pose a threat to the stability and peace of Yemen.[117] Additionally, the Council requested the Secretary-General to establish a panel in consultation with the committee of up to four experts that would aid, analyze, report and support the sanctions committee in their efforts to implement the travel ban and asset freeze.[118] In recent meetings, the Security Council has adopted resolution 2511(2020) that renewed the travel ban and freezing of funds alongside an extension of the mandate of the panel of experts to 2021.[119]

Despite these efforts, the civil war in Yemen continues, with the warring parties having reached a stalemate.[120] Due to the precarious conditions faced by civilians within the country, the United Nations (UN) and the international community have urged the parties to negotiate a ceasefire agreement.[121] In 2018, discussions between the two groups were held in Sweden and the *Stockholm Agreement* was reached.[122] It aims for a ceasefire in key Yemeni ports and the creation of a humanitarian corridor so that the basic needs of the Yemeni civilians can be addressed. However, there have been issues implementing the *Stockholm Agreement* and new negotiations overseen by Saudi Arabia between the transitional government and the rebels have resulted in new efforts to implement a new ceasefire through the *Riyadh Agreement*[123]. The *Riyadh Agreement* serves as a new negotiation breakthrough that seeks to establish a joint coalition that shares the power between the government and the rebel forces.[124]

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[110] GCC, *Agreement on the Implementation Mechanism for the Transition Process in Yemen in Accordance With the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)*, 2011.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Yadav & Carapico. *The Breakdown of the GCC Initiative*, 2014.
[114] UN OSESGY, *Security Council Resolutions*, 2019.
[115] UN DGC, *Security Council Adopts Resolution 2140 (2014)*, *Welcoming Yemen's Peaceful Transition Towards New Constitution, General Elections*, 2014.
[116] UN Security Council, *The Situation in the Middle East (S/RES/2140 (2014))*, 2014.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] UN Security Council, *The Situation in the Middle East*, *(S/RES/2511 (2020)),* 2020.
[120] *Timeline: Yemen's Slide Into Political Crisis and War*, Reuters, 2019.
[121] UN OSESGY, *News: Full Text of Stockholm Agreement*, 2018.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Security Council Report, *July 2020 Monthly Forecast: Yemen*, 2020.
[124] Ibid.

Role of the International System

Since the start of the conflict, several entities of the UN and a number of other parties have remained engaged on issues related to the situation in Yemen including: security, the humanitarian crisis, human rights, and the plight of children.[125] The Security Council, which established the aforementioned sanctions committee, also adopted resolution 2216 (2015) on "The Situation in the Middle East" which created an arms embargo, limiting the sale and transfer of weapons to designated individuals and groups.[126] The Security Council has also extended the mandates related to the asset freeze and travel bans as well as the arms embargos through resolutions 2266 (2016), 2342 (2017), and 2402 (2018).[127] In 2018, when the two parties agreed upon the *Stockholm Agreement*, the Council adopted resolution 2452 (2019) on "The Situation in the Middle East" which created a special political mission that would oversee the implementation of the agreement.[128] In resolution 2481 (2019), the Council extended the mandate of the mission to further ensure that the ceasefire agreement is upheld.[129] In recent deliberations, the Security Council has adopted resolution 2534 (2020) that renewed the mandate of the United Nations Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) to July of 2021.[130] The UNMHA is the special mission created to support the implementation of the agreements on the city of Hodeidah and the pillars of the *Stockholm Agreement*.[131]

In response to resolution 2216, in 2015, the internationally recognized Al Hadi government requested the aid of the UN in verifying the contents of ships entering Yemeni ports that were not under its direct control.[132] Under the UN Office for Projects Services (UNOPS), the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM) was created which allows for the flow of goods for commercial vessels that have received a clearance of their cargos destined for Yemen.[133] Based in Djibouti, UNVIM reviews applications for clearance and periodically checks the cargos of suspicious vessels that applied for clearance.[134] The mechanism seeks to deter the flow of various sanctioned goods, arms and people as defined by the Council.[135]

Additionally, the office of the Secretary-General has made Yemen a priority, and has been supporting the political transition since 2012, when it created the Special Envoy to Yemen as requested by the Security Council in resolution 2014 (2011) on "The Middle East".[136] The Secretary-General also reports on the situation in Yemen and provides updates as requested by the Council.[137] Recent reports published have discussed children and armed conflict, the implementation of Security Council resolution 2451 (2018) on "The Situation in the Middle East", and the humanitarian crisis caused by the internal conflict.[138] In 2018, the Secretary-General appointed Martin Griffiths, the new Special Envoy to Yemen, to continue negotiation efforts with the various political groups to establish a lasting peace to the Yemeni crisis.[139] The Special Envoy delivers monthly briefings on the situation in Yemen including updates of various regions within the country, the humanitarian situation, significant events such as the releasing of

[125] United Nations, *United Nations in Yemen: About Us*, 2019.
[126] UN Security Council, *The Situation in the Middle East (S/RES/2216(2015))*, 2015.
[127] UN OSESGY, *Security Council Resolutions*, 2019.
[128] UN Security Council, *The Situation in the Middle East (S/RES/2452(2019))*, 2019.
[129] Ibid.
[130] UN Security Council, *The Situation in the Middle East (S/RES/2534 (2020))*, 2020.
[131] Ibid.
[132] UNVIM, *United Nations Verification & Inspection Mechanism for Yemen*, 2019.
[133] Ibid.
[134] UNVIM, *About UNVIM*, 2019.
[135] Ibid.
[136] UN DPPA, *Special Envoy Yemen*, 2019.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Security Council Report, *UN Documents for Yemen*, 2019.
[139] UN DPPA, *Special Envoy Yemen*, 2019.

detainees and involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.[140]

Additionally,the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has scaled up projects throughout the country to include more initiatives that promote maternal health and lower child and infant mortality.[141] UNICEF is working to improve access to nutritious food, clean safe drinking water, as well as ending the recruitment of child soldiers.[142] The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has been engaged in addressing ongoing human rights violations, and in 2017 adopted resolution 36/31 that established a group of international and regional experts on Yemen.[143] This panel monitors and reports human rights violations, reviews alleged violations, identifies perpetrators of violations and provides recommendations to access to justice, accountability, and reconciliation that would improve human rights within the country.[144]

New issues have also developed between the rebels and international actors as the FSO Safer, which is a floating oil storage and offloading vessel that is 45 years old, has not faced any maintenance since 2015.[145] The FSO Safer holds over 1 million barrels of crude oil and experts warn that a spillage into the Red Sea ecology would need over 30 years to recover.[146] The UN has made numerous efforts to be able to board the vessel and conduct an assessment of its status but as of July, the Houthis have not granted their requests.[147] The tanker is owned by the Yemeni state-run Safer Exploration and Production Operations Company (SEPOC) but due to the war, SEPOC has been unable to afford any maintenance costs and damages to the ship are now irreversible.[148] The UN has also warned of the dire consequences of an oil spillage that could be catastrophic to Yemen as it could endanger the livelihoods of 28 million people.[149] The latest proposals submitted by the Special Envoy to Yemen is currently the best course of action to prevent an environmental and humanitarian disaster.[150] The proposal consists of three stages that aim to assess and conduct necessary repairs, provide basic maintenance to facilitate oil extraction, and finally dispose of the tanker.[151] The actions proposed have been agreed to by the government and other stakeholders in the Yemen conflict but still need the approval of the Houthis to complete the project.[152]

The Humanitarian Crisis and Impact of COVID-19

As the civil war and political upheaval in Yemen continues to drag on, no other group has been more adversely affected than that of civilians.[153] The UN estimates that approximately 80% of the population is in need of some form of assistance, and that the number of those in need continues to grow.[154] It's estimated that 100,000 people in Yemen have been killed since early 2016.[155] There have been more than 1,100 conflict related civilian casualties in the last year alone and 3.3 million people have been

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[140] UN OSESGY, *Briefing of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen to the Open Session of the Security Council*, 2019.
[141] UNICEF, *Falling Through the Cracks: The Children of Yemen*, 2017.
[142] Ibid.
[143] UN HRC, *Human Rights, Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building in Yemen (A/HRC/RES/36/31)*, 2017.
[144] UN HRC, *Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen*, 2019.
[145] BBC, *Yemen: Decaying Oil Tanker in Red Sea Threatens Disaster*, 2020.
[146] Ibid..
[147] Human Rights Watch, *Yemen: Allow UN to Secure Oil Supertanker*, 2020.
[148] Ibid.
[149] UN Meetings Coverage Press Release, *Without Access to Stricken Oil Tanker off Yemen, Under-Secretary-General, Briefing Security Council, Warns of Environmental, Economic, Humanitarian Catastrophe*, 2020.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] UN OCHA, *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Yemen*, 2019, p. 3.
[154] Ibid.
[155] International Rescue Committee*, Civilians Under Siege*, 2020.

displaced as a result of this conflict.[156] Two thirds of the country's population, about 20 million people, is considered to be food insecure, and half are considered to be suffering from extreme hunger.[157] UNICEF estimates that 360,000 children are severely malnourished and the conditions children face are considered the most challenging in the world.[158]Infrastructure, which was limited before the conflict began, has been largely destroyed, thereby compounding the humanitarian crisis by making the delivery of basic human services even more challenging.[159] Due to this lack of infrastructure, as well as collapsing healthcare systems, the incidence of disease, especially cholera, has exploded.[160] The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that there have been over 650,000 cholera cases over the past year and a half with over a quarter of those affected being children.[161]

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has also exposed an already vulnerable population to more critical levels of humanitarian and medical needs.[162] Due to the conflict and rising cases it has been difficult to contain the outbreak and stop the aggressive spread, and the already weakened health system without many resources at their disposal has made life and medical aid even harder.[163]Approximately half of the health facilities are still functioning but most lack crucial resources to combat COVID-19 such as gloves, masks, and oxygen.[164] In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, in Yemen over 40,000 people have been displaced this year, and this is predicted to increase due to rising conflicts in northern Yemen as well as the increased number of refugees such as in Marib which now has over 750,000 displaced people, outpacing its original population and seeing crucial resources run out.[165] Children have been severely affected throughout the crisis as many are affected by cholera outbreaks and starvation alongside school closures due to the pandemic that have left 7.8 million children without access to education.[166] In response to the increasing health concerns due to COVID-19, UNICEF has also added providing aid and assistance to those in need by providing medical supplies and testing kits.[167] The armed conflict in Yemen has also made delivering and providing medical attention a difficult challenge as many medical personnel and civilians avoid going to hospitals due to the likelihood of an attack on medical facilities.[168] It remains imperative, as many projections indicate, that a cessation in violence, and the normalization of governance can quickly reverse the most severe humanitarian consequences the region has been facing.[169] Furthermore, continuing to deliver basic human services is key to both resolving the humanitarian crisis and creating peace.[170]

Upholding Peace Agreements

In late 2018, Yemen's main rival groups met in Sweden and agreed upon the *Stockholm Agreement*.[171] The agreement is comprised of three main components that include: a ceasefire and demilitarization of both parties from the city of Hodeidah and its related ports, a similar ceasefire on the city of Ta'iz, and the creation of a prisoner swap program.[172] The ceasefire in the city of Hodeidah and the use of its ports would allow for humanitarian assistance to reach Yemenis throughout the country.[173] The prisoner swap

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[156] International Rescue Committee*, Civilians Under Siege*, 2020.
[157] UN OCHA, *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Yemen*, 2019, p. 4.
[158] UNICEF, *Yemen Crisis,* 2020.
[159] World Bank, *Yemen's Economic Update-April 2019*, 2019.
[160] WHO, *Health Situation in Yemen and WHO Response*, 2019.
[161] WHO, *Outbreak Update- Cholera in Yemen, 12 May 2019*, 2019.
[162] UNICEF, *Yemen Crisis*, 2020.
[163] Nasser, Afrah, Human Rights Watch, *Covid 19 in Yemen A Perfect Storm*, 2020.
[164] UNICEF, *Yemen Crisis*, 2020.
[165] Human Rights Watch, *Yemen: Displaced at Heightened Covid-19 Risk*, 2020.
[166] UNICEF, *Yemen Crisis*, 2020.
[167] UNICEF, *UNICEF Airlifts COVID-19 Testing Kits to Yemen to Boost Response as Cases Soar*, 2020.
[168] Medecins Sans Frontieres, *As COVID-19 Spreads, Fear Drives People Away from Hospitals in Yemen*, 2020.
[169] World Bank, *Yemen's Economic Update-April 2019*, 2019.
[170] United Nations, *UN Strategic Framework for Yemen 2017-2019*, 2019.
[171] UN OSESGY, *News: Full Text of Stockholm Agreement*, 2018.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.

program seeks to address the 15,000 detained between the two groups, and its framework is planned to be decided upon in subsequent negotiations.[174] The parties further committed to reducing roadblocks to achieving peace, implementing the agreement, and continuing peaceful negotiations in a mutually acceptable location.[175]

The Security Council further reinforced their support of the *Stockholm Agreement* with the adoption of resolution 2451 (2018) on "The Situation in the Middle East", which endorsed the agreement and asked the Secretary-General to send a team of monitors to support its quick implementation.[176] In the year since the establishment of the UNMHA to uphold the *Stockholm Agreement*, there has been some progress, but there are still many challenges to overcome.[177] In its efforts in Hodeidah, UNMHA has contributed to a safer environment for civilians with an estimation that 150,000 people that had left the city have returned after the agreement was put in place with the ceasefire still largely holding.[178] The mission also monitors compliance between the parties, and works with Yemeni security forces to ensure that the security of the city and port of Hodeidah is adequate.[179] The UNMHA established five joint Observation Posts on the ground to monitor the situation and prevent further military escalation which resulted in a significant reduction in the overall level of violence.[180] In May 2019, the monitors verified the pullout and reported that cooperation between the various groups had been quite stable.[181] The Hadi government allowed fuel ships to enter the port of Hodeidah, which has further established the humanitarian corridor laid out in the *Stockholm Agreement*.[182]There has been a technical committee established to discuss prisoner exchanges including exchanging of lists, discussing logistical details and release of minors.[183] Unfortunately, Ta'iz represents a key area where further improvement is needed in the *Stockholm Agreement* to de-escalate hostilities and to open proper avenues for humanitarian assistance to those in need.[184] Only recently have there been new talks about creating another humanitarian corridor in Ta'iz, which was a key pillar of the *Stockholm Agreement*.[185]

In addition to the *Stockholm Agreement*, there have been other negotiations in pursuit of peace for Yemen based on the measures of Security Council resolution 2216 (2015) such as the *Riyadh Agreement* signed in November of 2019.[186] The *Riyadh Agreement* sought to join the recognized government with the Southern Transition Council (STC), which operates as the government entity of the separatists in southern Yemen, to form a unity government with representation from both sides.[187] The newly formed coalition under the treaty provisions would recruit all STC combatants under the Ministry of Defense and vacate armed forces from Aden.[188] The new coalition seeks to establish a new organized negotiation front against the Houthi rebels and dedicates security forces to the protection and investment of civilian infrastructure in Aden in attempts to revive state institutions in the affected area.[189] Although the agreement was signed in November, there has been trouble in being able to come to an official agreement between the two parties on the implementation of the treaty as well as continued conflicts

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[174] Dijkstal, *Yemen and the Stockholm Agreement: Background, Context, and the Significance of the Agreement*, 2019.
[175] UN OSESGY, *News: Full Text of Stockholm Agreement*, 2018.
[176] UN Security Council, *The Situation in the Middle East (S/RES/2451(2018))*, 2018.
[177] UN OSESGY, *A Year After the Stockholm Agreement: Where are we Now?,* 2020.
[178] Ibid.
[179] UN Security Council, *The Situation in the Middle East (S/RES/2452(2019))*, 2019.
[180] UN OSESGY, *A Year After the Stockholm Agreement: Where are we Now?,* 2020.
[181] UN DGC, *UN Monitoring Team in Yemen Verifies Pullout of Armed Forces From Crucial Port Zones*, 2019.
[182] UN OSESGY, *Briefing of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen to the Open Session of the Security Council*, 2019.
[183] UN OSESGY, *A Year After the Stockholm Agreement: Where are we Now?,* 2020.
[184] Ibid.
[185] UN OSESGY, *Briefing of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen to the Open Session of the Security Council*, 2019.
[186] Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, *The Riyadh Agreement,* 2019.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.

within the region.[190] After a few months of conflict, the government and the STC were able to establish a new ceasefire in June of 2020.[191] In July of 2020, new negotiations overlooked by Saudi Arabia resulted in an agreement between the government and the STC that saw the STC abandon its April declaration of self-rule and recommit to the implementation of the *Riyadh Agreement* with the new coalition government to be formed within 30 days with equal numbers of ministries between Northern and Southern Yemen.[192]

Conclusion

The situation in Yemen, entering its tenth year, has seen political advancements to improve the instability and armed conflicts throughout the country but still has much to address since the conflict escalated in 2015.[193] The humanitarian crisis that has resulted due to the political violence has made Yemen one of the most impoverished and unsafe places in the world for the country's citizens, especially for children.[194] The UN and its entities including the Security Council have been actively engaged and have been working on various facets of the situation ranging from the council's work on implementing sanctions and creating political missions to oversee a ceasefire.[195] There has been some headway in being able to establish a national ceasefire but efforts must still remain focused on ensuring the proper function of the Yemeni state and provide stability for the region.[196] A lasting solution will have to address the political differences and compromise between the three main factions engaged in Yemen.[197] While new negotiations have brought the parties to discuss solutions, the vision for Yemen will require assistance to address the critical humanitarian crisis and ensure lasting peace.[198]

Further Research

When researching this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: What policies can the Security Council create to continue to ensure that the *Stockholm Agreement* is upheld? How can the advancements of the Riyadh Agreement assist in future negotiations? How effective has the UNMHA been to achieving its mandate? What can be done to continue to reduce the humanitarian crisis that the civil war in Yemen has created? What human rights violations are occurring due to the conflict, and how can they be addressed? How can the UN maintain warring parties at the negotiating table to resolve the political crisis in Yemen? How can the GCC Initiative be improved and or implemented? How should regional and international groups remain engaged in the crisis? How effective have the sanctions been in curbing the violence? How can an already weakened state address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Annotated Bibliography

Council on Foreign Relations. (2020). *Yemen in Crisis.* Retrieved 24 August 2020 from: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/yemen-crisis

This resource will provide a summary and timeline of the events that have happened in Yemen to contribute to the current crisis. It also provides descriptions of the political divisions and regional conflicts that are ongoing in Yemen contributing to the armed conflicts. This source also covers the impact the conflict has had on the humanitarian

[190] Security Council Report, *August 2020 Monthly Forecast: Yemen*, 2020.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Council on Foreign Relations, *Yemen in* Crisis, 2020.
[194] UN OCHA, *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Yemen*, 2019, p. 3.
[195] Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Yemen, *Your Guide to the United Nations in Yemen*, 2016.
[196] Council on Foreign Relations, *Yemen in Crisis*, 2020.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.

crisis and some of the needs of the Yemeni people. Lastly it covers the potential solutions and plans for a future Yemeni state and the challenges that are still to come.

Dijkstal, H. (2019). Yemen and the Stockholm Agreement: Background, Context, and the Significance of the Agreement. American Society of International Law Insights, 23 (5). Retrieved 24 August 2020 from: https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/23/issue/5/yemen-and-stockholm-agreement-background-context-and-significance

This resource will provide delegates with an overview of the conflict and its origins as well as the initial pushes for the Stockholm Agreement and its purpose as an instrument to address the crisis and conflict in Yemen. The document also discusses the different strategies and phases of the agreement through its implementation methods and what the outcome objectives are for each phase of the transitional government. This will also cover the legal implications of the agreement and the protocols and precedent set by international agreements to resolve the conflict and establish a new government in Yemen.

Gulf Cooperation Council. (2011). Agreement on the Implementation Mechanism for the Transition Process in Yemen in Accordance with the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Retrieved 24 August 2020 from: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/YE_111205_Agreement%20on%20the%20implementation%20mechanism%20for%20the%20

The Gulf Initiative was the major political transition plan that the GCC created with the hope of resolving the political upheaval in Yemen at the start of the conflict. This document has continuously been cited by the UN, as well as the Security Council, Member States and different civil society groups. While the Initiative is on hold due to the focus being on de-escalation of violence, the plan still is the roadmap that the international community has endorsed in establishing a peaceful political solution. Delegates should familiarize themselves with the goals set forth in the Initiative, and should also review how the plan's shortcomings have led to the current situation in Yemen.

Medecins Sans Frontieres. (2020). *As COVID-19 Spreads, Fear Drives People Away from Hospitals in Yemen*. Retrieved 24 August 2020 from: https://www.msf.org/covid-19-spreads-fear-drives-people-away-hospitals-yemen

This document provides an explanation to the rising risks and spread of the COVID-19 virus in Yemen and the response by both civilians and medical personnel. Due to the conflicts in the country many citizens have been avoiding seeking medical treatment. This will be useful to delegates to understand the social impacts the current conflict can cause. Delegates will see that the lack of resources and need of aid are additional conditions that need to be addressed due to the complexities that are created by the conflict. This information will present new facets of how the violence can extend to social protection systems and place pressure on the citizens for assistance.

United Nations Office of the Special Envoy of The Secretary-General for Yemen. (2019). *Security Council Resolutions*. Retrieved 24 August 2020 from: https://osesgy.unmissions.org/security-council-resolutions

This website serves as a good synopsis for the major aspects of work that the Security Council has done thus far as it pertains to the situation in Yemen. The website lists almost all the resolutions that have been adopted by the Security Council about Yemen in the last 8 years and there is a brief summary of what each of the resolutions are regarding. All of the resolutions listed have links to the full text resolution, which makes research and review much easier. Delegates should utilize this source to familiarize themselves with what the Council has already done regarding the topic.

United Nations, Security Council, 7119th meeting. (2014). *The Situation in the Middle East (S/RES/2140 (2014))*. Retrieved 24 August 2020 from: https://undocs.org/S/RES/2140(2014)

Resolution 2140 was a significant resolution in regards to the situation in Yemen, as it formed the bulwark of Security Council policy as it retains to sanctions. The resolution defined the freezing of assets as well as the travel ban and called for the Secretary-General to create a group of experts that would aid in these objectives. The mandate has been subsequently extended in several resolutions following the initial passage of this resolution. Delegates should review this resolution and seek to understand how the Security Council utilizes the powers given to it under the Charter of the United Nations when it comes to sanctions and security.

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II. Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security

"It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives."[199]

Introduction

Global pandemics pose a threat to peace and security, exacerbating already existing conflict situations and challenges.[200] Pandemics are defined as "the worldwide spread of a new disease" for which "most people do not have immunity."[201] As a pandemic, COVID-19 is currently hindering United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, which promote the achievement of durable peace through collaborative activities carried out on the field together with international and local stakeholders.[202] The pandemic is also affecting peace in security in other ways. Due to the pandemic, elections have also been postponed in some countries.[203] Transparency and accountability during elections have been neglected as many governments focused on fighting the health emergency.[204] Threats to peace by armed militias and agitators rise as local authorities focus their efforts on combatting the pandemic.[205] Peace processes and humanitarian aid dispatch also underwent delays due to the many restrictions put in place to focus on the fight against COVID-19.[206]

In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) began investigating anomalous episodes of pneumonia in the Wuhan area in China.[207] It announced that the disease was a new type of Coronavirus, defined by WHO as part of a family of viruses responsible for respiratory infections in humans.[208] On 30 January, after a meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee, WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, declared that the newly discovered coronavirus, constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern after thousands of people became ill in China.[209] This new virus was named COVID-19.[210] COVID-19 spread to 18 other countries around the world.[211] On 11 March, COVID-19 was classified as a pandemic.

Pandemics have an impact not only on people's health and health care systems, but also on political and socio-economic stability, as well as on human rights.[212] These impacts affect the lives of everyone, but in particular, the lives of some of the most vulnerable people, including that of the youth and women within conflict zones.[213] The COVID-19 pandemic has hindered the ability of peacekeepers to continue their work in fragile areas due to movement restrictions; and a general increase in instability has made the already unpredictable situation of many countries in Africa, Asia, and South America even harder to tackle.[214] The UN is paying particular attention to the effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable and displaced people, as well as to a possible recrudescence of terrorist attacks.[215]

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[199] UN Secretary General, *Secretary-General's Appeal for Global Ceasefire*, 2020.
[200] ReliefWeb, *International Peace and Security, and Pandemics: Security Council Precedents and Options*, 2020.
[201] WHO, *What is a Pandemic?*, 2010; WHO, *Timeline of WHO's Response to COVID-19*, 2020.
[202] UN Peacekeeping, *Terminology*; UN Peacekeeping, *What We Do*.
[203] Rapucci & Slipowitz, *Democracy Under Lockdown*, 2020.
[204] Ibid.
[205] *COVID-19 'Profoundly Affecting Peace across the Globe', Says Secretary-General, in Address to Security Council*, UN Department of Global Communications, 2020.
[206] UNDGC, *COVID-19: Lift Sanctions 'Bringing Suffering and Death', Urge UN Rights Experts*, 2020.
[207] WHO, *Timeline of WHO's Response to COVID-19*, 2020.
[208] Ibid.; WHO, *Q&A on Coronaviruses (COVID-19)*, 2020.
[209] WHO, *Statement on the Second Meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee Regarding the Outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)*, 2020.
[210] Ibid.
[211]; WHO, *Timeline of WHO's Response to COVID-19*, 2020.
[212] Davis, *National Security and Pandemics*.
[213] UN Secretary-General, *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity*, 2020.
[214] UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020.
[215] UN Secretary-General, *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity*, 2020; UN Secretary-General, *COVID-19 and People on the Move*, 2020.

International and Regional Framework

According to Article 24 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), the Security Council is responsible for the "maintenance of international peace and security."[216] It identifies challenges to peace and acts of aggression, and undertakes measures to restore peace and security, such as the suspension of economic and/or diplomatic relations.[217] When these initiatives are not sufficient to restore international peace and security, the Security Council "may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary."[218] The Security Council takes these actions through the deployment of peacekeeping missions.[219]

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) further establishes the right of each human being to "a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family."[220] Similarly, the *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War* (1949) asks for the protection of health care services and facilities, with a focus on the prevention and treatment of epidemics.[221]

In line with these principles, on 1 July 2020 the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2532 (2020) on "The maintenance of international peace and security," calling for a stop to all hostilities for a minimum of three months, with an exception for operations against terrorist groups linked to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al Qaeda.[222] This is because terrorism continues to be a threat to international peace and security during the pandemic and could in some cases gain momentum because of the increased fragility shown by states, with police and military forces focused on addressing the COVID-19 emergency.[223] Terrorist groups could exploit this fact to increase their activity and carry out violent attacks.[224] Resolution 2532 (2020) was the result of long negotiations started at the beginning of April, and is the first resolution adopted by the Security Council to directly address the effects of COVID-19 on peace and security.[225] The resolution mentioned WHO only indirectly through a reference to General Assembly resolution 74/270 on "Global Solidarity to Fight the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)," adopted on 3 April 2020, which recognizes the fundamental role of WHO in the fight against COVID-19.[226] Security Council resolution 2532 (2020) also calls for a continued dialogue between the Security Council and the Secretary General to monitor the consequences of the pandemic on conflict-ridden areas and for the involvement of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and displaced people.[227]

On 14 July 2020, Security Council resolution 2535 (2020), on "The maintenance of international peace and security," called for an increased engagement of civil society, and young people in particular, in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.[228] Similarly, on 21 April 2020, the General Assembly adopted resolution 74/274 on "International Cooperation to Ensure Global Access to Medicines, Vaccines and Medical Equipment to Face COVID-19," highlighting the importance of cooperation among nations and other relevant stakeholders, of multilateralism, and the fundamental coordinating role of WHO.[229]

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[216] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 24.
[217] Ibid., Art. 39-41.
[218] Ibid., Art. 42-43.
[219] UN Peacekeeping, *What We Do*.
[220] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948, art. 25.
[221] *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (2nd part),* 1949, art. 56.
[222] UN Security Council, *Maintenance of International Peace and Security (S/RES/2532 (2020))*, 2020.
[223] UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020.
[224] Van Ostaeyen, *The Islamic State and Coronavirus, Time for a Comeback?*, 2020.
[225] UN Security Council, *Maintenance of International Peace and Security (S/RES/2532 (2020))*, 2020.
[226] Ibid.; UN General Assembly, *Global Solidarity to Fight the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (A/RES/74/270)*, 2020.
[227] UN Security Council, *Maintenance of International Peace and Security (S/RES/2532 (2020))*, 2020.
[228] Ibid.
[229] UN General Assembly, *International Cooperation to Ensure Global Access to Medicines, Vaccines and Medical Equipment to Face COVID-19 (A/RES/74/274)*, 2020.

Role of the International System

After the declaration of the pandemic, on 23 March 2020, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, called for a global cease-fire to help dispatch aid in a safe way, especially in those states already weakened by ongoing conflicts.[230] For more than three months, members of the UN Security Council did not agree on a resolution due to the differing positions of some permanent members on whether or not to refer to WHO in the resolution.[231] During this time, the Security Council had been operating through procedures different from usual: negotiations are taking place through videoconferences and voting procedures are done in writing.[232] After the final draft of a resolution is made available, Member States have 24 hours to submit their vote, and the results are announced 12 hours after the end of the voting procedure.[233]

While negotiations for a resolution on COVID-19 were ongoing, the Security Council issued various press statements to highlight its concerns of additional threats to peace and security posed by the pandemic in already fragile regions.[234] The Security Council also promoted the continued use of safe corridors to be established and observed for humanitarian operations in countries affected by conflict, issuing three separate press statements: one on the situation in Yemen on 10 April 2020, one on Afghanistan on 30 June 2020, and the last one on South Sudan on 13 July 2020.[235] The Security Council also adopted resolutions highlighting the effects of COVID-19 on conflict-ridden areas and on UN peacekeeping missions there, including: Security Council resolution 2534 (2020) on "The Situation in the Middle East"; Security Council resolution 2525 (2020) on "Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan"; and resolution 2520 (2020) on "The Situation in Somalia."[236] These resolutions request that Member States facilitate the work of UN peacekeeping missions and that they guarantee the movement and safety of their personnel, in spite of COVID-19 restrictions.[237]

In June, the Secretary-General issued the UN Comprehensive Response to COVID-19, identifying three fundamental aspects to be addressed by the UN system: healthcare, socioeconomic stability, and structural inequalities.[238] The Secretary-General further recommended the following actions to be taken to address these aspects: ensuring full and affordable access to medicines, vaccines, and treatment; providing humanitarian aid, especially in areas already affected by conflicts or other challenges; and ensuring social protection accessibility.[239]

WHO is responsible for coordinating efforts to combat COVID-19 within the UN system.[240] On 19 May 2020, WHO's resolution on COVID-19 Response (WHA73.1) invited Member States to undertake appropriate measures to fight COVID-19.[241] Among these measures, many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) agree on the importance of facilitating access to medicines for the population and ensuring safe corridors for humanitarian aid, considering that about two billion people live in fragile states and in conflict-ridden areas.[242]

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[230] UN Secretary-General, *Secretary-General's Appeal for Global Ceasefire*, 2020.
[231] Besheer, *UN Security Council Finally Endorses COVID-19 Cease-Fire Call*, 2020.
[232] UN Security Council, *Letter Dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council Addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/253)*, 2020.
[233] Ibid.
[234] UN Security Council, *Statements Made to the Press by the President of the Security Council in 2020*, 2020.
[235] Ibid.
[236] UN Security Council, *The Situation in the Middle East (S/RES/2534 (2020))*, 2020; UN Security Council, *Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan (S/RES/2525 (2020))*, 2020; UN Security Council, *The Situation in Somalia (S/RES/2520 (2020))*, 2020.
[237] UN Security Council, *The Situation in the Middle East (S/RES/2534 (2020))*, 2020.
[238] UN Secretary-General, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better*, 2020.
[239] Ibid.
[240] WHO, *COVID-19 Response (WHA73.1)*, 2020.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Oxfam, *Conflict in the Time of Coronavirus*, 2020.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), whose members include many UN bodies and agencies, is in charge of coordinating responses to humanitarian emergencies, working together with local stakeholders.[243] The IASC issued the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, valid from April to December 2020.[244] The Plan aims at harmonizing efforts by UN bodies and NGOs to fight the pandemic, while promoting social stability and protecting vulnerable people, especially migrants and refugees.[245]

Establishing an International Cease Fire

Calls for an International Ceasefire

When the Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire on 23 March 2020, the 26 Special Political Missions and 13 peacekeeping operations active around the world increased their efforts to put into practice the Secretary-General's call, which is fundamental to preventing an aggravation of conflicts and disruptions to humanitarian aid delivery in violence-ridden areas.[246] Recent and ongoing conflicts have resulted in a destruction of hospitals and other relevant facilities as part of a strategy to weaken the enemy, preventing the health infrastructure from functioning effectively to meet the needs of all of those needing care.[247] Peacekeepers found many difficulties in implementing a ceasefire, which, in some cases, has been brief or did not take place at all.[248] It is proving challenging to achieve concrete agreements in some conflict zones to stop hostilities because local tensions and the causes of conflict tend to prevail over international calls for a stop to the violence.[249] In some countries only one of the two conflicting parties, either governmental forces or rebel groups, have accepted to stop hostilities.[250] Violence has continued, for example, in Somalia, Libya, and Cameroon after an initial acceptance of the ceasefire by one of the secessionist forces was not adopted by the other militias, allowing conflict to cripple the country.[251]

Peacekeeping Operations and COVID-19

Peacekeeping operations aim at protecting the population of countries affected by conflict, supporting national authorities to strengthen their capacity to prevent further violence, and promoting durable peace.[252] The critical work of peacekeepers in establishing and maintaining peace and security has been hindered by the pandemic in a variety of ways, and COVID-19 cases have been reported among troops where active peacekeeping operations exist, resulting in the isolation of some of the troops in the field.[253] New schedules of troop rotations and repatriations have been prepared to make sure activities can continue without endangering the well-being of UN workers.[254] However, many of these schedules suffer delays and set-backs, leading to the extension of multiple peacekeeping missions.[255] For example, the peacekeeping mission in Darfur, Sudan, known as UNAMID, managed jointly by the African Union (AU) and the UN, was originally set to end on 31 October 2020.[256] It will now remain in place until the end of

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[243] IASC, *The Inter-Agency Standing Committee*, 2020; UN OCHA, *OCHA and COVID-19*, 2020; UNDP, *COVID-19 and the SDGs*, 2020; UNHCR, *Coronavirus Outbreak*, 2020.
[244] UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Response Plan – COVID -19*, 2020.
[245] Ibid.
[246] UN Secretary-General, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better*, 2020; *Possible Implications of COVID-19 on International Peace and Security*, What's in Blue, 2020.
[247] Oxfam, *Conflict in the Time of Coronavirus*, 2020; Koteiche, *Destroying Hospitals to Win the War*, 2020.
[248] UN Secretary-General, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better*, 2020.
[249] Gowan, *What's Happened to the UN Secretary-General's COVID-19 Ceasefire Call?*, 2020.
[250] Ibid.
[251] UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020; Chimtom, *Cameroon's Deadly Mix of War and Coronavirus*, 2020.
[252] UN Peacekeaping, *Terminology*; UN Peacekeaping, *What We Do*.
[253] Tih, *UN: 70 COVID-19 Cases Within Peacekeeping Force in Mali*, 2020.
[254] ReliefWeb, *International Peace and Security, and Pandemics: Security Council Precedents and Options*, 2020.
[255] UN Peacekeeping, *Impact of COVID-19 on Peacekeeping*, 2020; ReliefWeb, *International Peace and Security, and Pandemics: Security Council Precedents and Options*, 2020.
[256] UN DGC, *Challenges Presented by COVID-19 Will Delay Closure of Darfur Mission, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council*, 2020; Marsden, *Is the Juba Peace Agreement a Turning Point for Sudan?*, 2020.

the year, to counter the slowdown of its activities because of movement limitations to fight COVID-19, though a peace agreement had been achieved on 31 August 2020.[257]

Travel restrictions, as a preventative method against COVID-19, are impacting negotiations and peacebuilding efforts because most of these peace negotiation and peacebuilding activities normally take place at the local level.[258] They rely heavily on public gatherings, in-person meetings, and personal exchanges to involve local leaders and communities in peacebuilding processes.[259] Limitations placed on public gatherings and in-person exchanges alter the way in which UN personnel carry out their activities, making it more challenging to interact with local stakeholders.[260] Limited interactions can leave critical groups out of peacebuilding efforts and can result in a changed perception of the peacekeepers' role on the field.[261] For example, in Afghanistan, women have been long excluded from the political discourse, however the international community recognizes the importance of their inclusion in negotiations to set inclusive priorities for peacebuilding.[262] Reduced opportunities for interaction can also lead to a worsening of the already delicate relations between the UN and local actors, who sometimes see peacekeeping operations as enemy combatants.[263] In some African countries, national actors have exploited fear for COVID-19 to spread disinformation among the population by accusing UN personnel of being carriers of the virus.[264] This puts peacekeepers at high risk of being targeted and erodes their authority and trust by the population to effectively operate in these complex situations.[265] In many countries experiencing conflict such as Yemen, attacks against troops and humanitarian aid workers were already common before the pandemic and represent an even greater potential threat in the current situation, with interferences to humanitarian aid dispatch having escalated between 2019 and 2020.[266]

In 14 countries affected by conflict, the Security Council has established sanction regimes to promote peace and security through the use of economic measures, embargoes, and other restrictions.[267] After the COVID-19 outbreak, the International Red Cross asked to suspend unilateral sanctions, out of concern that humanitarian aid could not be delivered to the people in need.[268] In fact, the measures adopted in sanctioned regimes, especially travel limitations and embargoes, can potentially disrupt humanitarian aid.[269] Sectoral humanitarian exemptions are normally used to allow humanitarian organizations to still carry out their work in sanctioned regimes, but, in a pandemic, humanitarian exemptions may not be enough to ensure the protection of civilians.[270] Seeing that the request to lift sanctions has not been implemented yet, the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights highlighted the importance of guaranteeing exemptions quickly and "automatically upon request."[271]

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[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Oxfam, *Conflict in the Time of Coronavirus*, 2020; International Crisis Group, *COVID-19 and Conflict: Seven Trends to Watch*, 2020; UN Peacekeeping, *Impact of COVID-19 on UN Peacekeeping*, 2020.
[260] UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020.
[261] Ibid.
[262] UN Security Council, *Letter dated 7 August 2020 from the Representatives of Afghanistan, Germany, Indonesia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, 2020.
[263] UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020.
[264] De Coning, *Examining the Longer-Term Effects of COVID-19 on UN Peacekeeping Operations*, 2020.
[265] UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020.
[266] Ibid.; Oxfam, *Conflict in the Time of Coronavirus*, 2020; *Deadly Consequences*, Human Rights Watch, 2020.
[267] OHCHR, *UN Experts: Sanctions Proving Deadly During COVID Pandemic, Humanitarian Exemptions not Working*, 2020; UN Security Council, *Sanctions*, 2020.
[268] OHCHR, *UN Experts: Sanctions Proving Deadly During COVID Pandemic, Humanitarian Exemptions not Working*, 2020.
[269] King et al., *Understanding Humanitarian Exemptions: UN Security Council Sanctions and Principled Humanitarian Action*, 2016; UN Security Council, *Humanitarian Exemption Requests*, 2020.
[270] OHCHR, *UN Experts: Sanctions Proving Deadly During COVID Pandemic, Humanitarian Exemptions not Working*, 2020.
[271] UNDGC, *COVID-19: Lift Sanctions 'Bringing Suffering and Death', Urge UN Rights Experts*, 2020.

Multilateralism, Cooperation, and the Role of Young People and Women

While the pandemic poses many threats, it also presents a chance to promote multilateralism, which consists of coordinating and harmonizing efforts between different stakeholders to achieve a common goal.[272] It increases cooperation and inclusiveness in peacebuilding efforts, including creating opportunity to increase the involvement of young people and women in decision-making processes.[273] The UN Secretary General recently cited the partnership between the UN and the African Union as an example of successful cooperation between the UN system and other actors to promote peace and security.[274] The aim is to engage vulnerable groups so as not to replicate past failures, where agreements to end conflicts and support countries to achieve long-term peace were often based on inequalities and on a lack of involvement of local communities.[275] During a pandemic, it is important that the measures undertaken to address the emergency are "conflict-sensitive" so as not to cause a deterioration of relationships with local leaders.[276] A shared responsibility to continue efforts to ensure peace and security will be especially important in the long run, when the negative economic effects of COVID-19 may result in a tendency to reduce Member States' contributions to peacekeeping operations.[277]

Security Council resolution 2532 (2020) states that women and young people, especially in fragile areas, are highly affected by COVID-19.[278] Women are more often involved in occupations related to healthcare, working for example as nurses and cleaners, and are at higher risk of exposure to the virus.[279] Additionally, there has been an increase in domestic violence against women and girls since the beginning of the pandemic, due to shelter in place orders limiting the freedom of movement, exacerbating limited contact with people outside the household, and fostering highly stressful and challenging living conditions.[280] It is important that civil society is involved in combating the pandemic and in the promotion of peace and security, as it is happening in Cyprus where the UN and women organizations are collaborating to combat domestic violence.[281]

Vulnerable groups should be involved in COVID-19 responses and in decision making processes.[282] Some studies have shown that there are higher chances of success when a peace agreement is achieved with the involvement of civil society, women, and the youth in particular.[283] This process can be facilitated if women included in negotiations are able to access training opportunities and expert advice, and if women's civil society organizations are fully allowed to be part of the political discourse.[284] Promoting more widespread use of technologies, especially now that many meetings had to be moved online due to COVID-19, could help increase vulnerable groups' integration in the life of the different

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[272] Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, *Multilateralism: a Principle of Action for France*, 2020.
[273] UN Peacekeeping, *COVID-19 and Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security (WPS)*, 2020; UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020; United Nations, *The Virtues of Multilateralism and Diplomacy*; Moreland, *The Purpose of Multilateralism*, 2019.
[274] UNDGC, *Secretary-General Warns against Continued Ad Hoc Responses to Foreseeable Risks, in Security Council Briefing on Post-Pandemic Global Governance*, 2020.
[275] UN Peacekeeping, *COVID-19 and Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security (WPS)*, 2020; UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020.
[276] UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020; OHCHR, *Myanmar: "Possible war crimes and crimes against humanity ongoing in Rakhine and Chin States" – UN Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee*, 2020; Oxfam, *Conflict in the Time of Coronavirus*, 2020.
[277] De Coning, *Examining the Longer-Term Effects of COVID-19 on UN Peacekeeping Operations*, 2020.
[278] UN Security Council, *Maintenance of International Peace and Security (S/RES/2532 (2020))*, 2020.
[279] UN Secretary-General, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women*, 2020.
[280] UN Women, *Inter-Agency Statement on Violence Against Women and Girls in the Context of COVID-19*, 2020.
[281] Khare & Lacroix, *Covid-19 and Fragile Countries: UN Peacekeepers Must Stay the Course*, 2020.
[282] UN Security Council, *Maintenance of International Peace and Security (S/RES/2532 (2020))*, 2020.
[283] UN Women, *COVID-19 and Conflict: Advancing Women's Meaningful Participation in Ceasefires and Peace Processes*, 2020.
[284] UN Women, *COVID-19 and Conflict: Advancing Women's Meaningful Participation in Ceasefires and Peace Processes*, 2020.

countries, reducing tensions, and contributing to cancelling the divide between urban and rural areas as well.[285]

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has had many effects on the world, and on conflict-ridden countries in particular, exacerbating already existing instability.[286] The political and socio-economic instability that existed in conflict zones before COVID-19, has made the fight against the virus even more difficult.[287] It is of fundamental importance to understand how the international community can ensure peace and security even during an international emergency, such as a pandemic.[288] The UN has identified different paths to follow, but many challenges need to be overcome, such as the ineffectiveness of the global ceasefire and other threats posed to peacekeeping operations in case of conflict.[289] The international community recognizes multilateralism and the involvement of vulnerable groups in decision making as the key to find more durable solutions.[290]

Further Research

As delegates proceed with their research, they should ask themselves the following questions: in the face of COVID-19, how can a more effective ceasefire be implemented? What are the actors that need to be involved in order to promote cooperation in this field? How can the different challenges encountered by peacekeeping operations, made worse by COVID-19, be overcome? How can the international community foster youth and women involvement in humanitarian response and in peacebuilding?

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United Nations, Security Council. (2020). *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/RES/2532 (2020))*. Retrieved 14 July 2020 from: https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2532(2020)

This resolution, adopted by UN Security Council on 1 July 2020, is of the utmost importance because it was the result of a long process of negotiations, which lasted months after the UN Secretary-General issued his global call for a ceasefire. The Security Council encountered difficulties in finding an agreement on such a text, as there were differing positions among permanent Members. In the end, the Security Council agreed on calling for a ninety-day stop to hostilities, which stated that the ceasefire did not include operations against terrorist groups.

United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2020). *Global Humanitarian Response Plan – COVID -19*. Retrieved 15 July 2020 from: https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Global-Humanitarian-Response-Plan-COVID-19.pdf

The plan was issued by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which comprises many relevant UN bodies, in April and is valid until December 2020. It identifies core needs with regards to public health and the impact of the pandemic on society. The document outlines different measures to be undertaken to fight COVID-19 and deliver aid to people living in fragile areas. It highlights the preferred coordination mechanism to implement them. Delegates will find the annexes to the plan particularly useful as they address specific concerns, such as the situation of refugees and people affected by conflicts.

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[285] UN Peacekeeping, *COVID-19 and Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security (WPS)*, 2020; UN Secretary-General, *Impact of COVID-19 in Africa*, 2020.
[286] UN Secretary-General, *Secretary-General's Appeal for Global Ceasefire*, 2020.
[287] Ibid.
[288] ReliefWeb, *International Peace and Security, and Pandemics: Security Council Precedents and Options*, 2020.
[289] Gowan, *What's Happened to the UN Secretary-General's COVID-19 Ceasefire Call?*, 2020.
[290] UNDGC, *Secretary-General Warns against Continued Ad Hoc Responses to Foreseeable Risks, in Security Council Briefing on Post-Pandemic Global Governance*, 2020.

United Nations Peacekeeping. (2020). *Impact of COVID-19 on UN Peacekeeping*. Retrieved 11 July 2020 from: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/impact-of-covid-19-un-peacekeeping

This page is an important starting point for delegates' research, as it provides them with an overview of the main concerns regarding peacekeeping operations in contexts affected by COVID-19. It also lists some operational guidelines issued by the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, UN Police, and other institutions. These are relevant to understand what measures are being implemented on the field, not only to protect citizens, but also to protect UN personnel and ensure their safety and the possibility to safeguard UN presence in fragile countries. Delegates will find this document particularly useful to achieve a better understanding of the challenges posed to the work of peacekeeping operations by the pandemic.

United Nations, Secretary-General. (2020). *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women*. Retrieved 16 September 2020 from: https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406

This Policy Brief was published in April 2020 to assess the impact of the pandemic on women. It highlights some of the main challenges faced by women in times of COVID-19, ranging from economic consequences and risks of exposure to the disease to an alarming increase in domestic violence against women and girls. The document identifies some relevant strategies to mitigate these issues, carried out by the UN together with local stakeholders. The Policy Brief will be beneficial for delegates wishing to gain a deeper knowledge of the challenges faced by vulnerable groups and of how the international community is planning on including them in decision-making in the future.

United Nations, Secretary-General. (2020). *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better*. Retrieved 12 July 2020 from: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_comprehensive_response_covid19_13july.pdf

This document highlights the main points of the United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19, which is based on three pillars: a health response; measures to promote human rights and socioeconomic stability; a focus on the most vulnerable populations. It also provides relevant data and statistics on the work done by the UN system so far and on the pandemic itself. It includes a regional focus, which will help delegates gather information on how the emergency has impacted Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East differently.

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III. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

"Civilians continue to account for the vast majority of casualties and are targeted and victims of indiscriminate attacks and other violations and harm by parties to conflict. Twenty years on, the protection agenda is as relevant and pressing as ever."[291]

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Security Council often discusses thematic items that might not be specific to a conflict or a crisis situation.[292] Of these thematic issues, the Protection of Civilians (POC) was first brought into the limelight twenty years ago in 1999 when the Security Council adopted resolution 1265 on the "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict."[293] This resolution, together with the "Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict" (S/2019/373), set the groundwork for all subsequent resolutions that aimed at establishing parameters to protect civilians during armed conflict.[294] Such protection entails treating civilians humanely at all times and protecting them against violence, threats, and insults regardless of sex, race, religion, or political opinion.[295] It also includes maintaining respect for the people, their honor, their family rights, their religious convictions and practice, and their manners and customs.[296] Rule 5 of customary International Humanitarian Law (IHL) defines civilians as persons who are not members of the armed forces.[297] It follows that civilians also include journalists, medical staff, and UN and humanitarian personnel.[298] IHL also defines three types of armed conflict, during which civilians are entitled to protection: international armed conflict (IAC), internationalized armed conflict, and non-international armed conflict (NIAC).[299]

In 2019, the Action on Armed Violence recorded 29,485 deaths caused by explosives alone, 66% of which were civilians.[300] The following year the UN reported over 20,000 civilians dead or injured across 10 conflict zones.[301] These alarming numbers continue to show that it is crucial to provide protection for civilians during armed conflict.[302] To mitigate the growing numbers of civilian deaths each year, the Security Council adopted numerous POC resolutions focusing primarily on changing national policies or dispatching peacekeeping missions.[303] Recently there has been a growing focus on providing protections to specific targeted groups of civilians, such as women, children, journalists, health workers, and humanitarian personnel.[304]

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[291] UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2019/373)*, 2019.
[292] Security Council Report, *Thematic and General Issues*, 2019.
[293] UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts (S/RES/1265 (1999))*, 1999.
[294] UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/1999/957)*, 1999.
[295] *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War (2nd part)*, 1949.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts, *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol 1)*, 1977, Art. 50; ICRC, *Customary IHL: Rule 5. Definition of Civilians*.
[298] Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts, *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol 1)*, 1977, Art. 50.
[299] *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War (2nd part)*, 1949.
[300] Action on Armed Violence, *Explosive Violence Monitor 2019*, 2020.
[301] UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict – Report of the Secretary General (S/2020/366)*, 2020.
[302] UN DGC, *Speakers Urge Strict Compliance with Global Legal Protections, as Security Council Discusses Plight of Civilians Caught Up in Proxy Wars, Other Conflict Zones (SC/13348)*, 2018.
[303] Security Council Report, *UN Documents for Protection of Civilians: Security Council Resolutions*, 2019.
[304] Ibid.

International and Regional Framework

Although the Charter of the United Nations (1945) does not explicitly mention the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, Security Council resolution 1674 (2006) on "Protection of Civilians" notes that deliberate targeting of civilians and the violation of international humanitarian and human rights law in armed conflict constitutes a threat to international peace and security.[305] This, in turn, implies that the deliberate targeting of civilians directly defies Article 1 of the UN Charter, which states that the purpose of the UN is to "maintain peace and security."[306] In more explicit terms, the *Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* (1949) establishes that civilians, or "protected persons," are entitled to protection in all cases of conflict.[307] The convention's definition of protected persons encompasses everyone who is not participating in hostilities, including military personnel who have laid down their arms or have become incapacitated.[308] The convention furthermore states that these protected persons must be treated humanely and not subject to any form of discrimination.[309] Since the Geneva Convention has been passed into customary IHL in 1993 by the Security Council, all states, regardless of whether they are signatories to the Geneva Conventions, are bound by this provision during armed conflict.[310]

Although IHL does not define what armed conflict is, parties to the Geneva Convention have entrusted the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to spread knowledge and understanding of international humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts.[311] In this capacity, the ICRC developed a three-fold classification of armed conflicts.[312] International armed conflicts (IAC) are defined as conflicts between legal armed forces of at least two different states, internationalized armed conflicts that occur when two factions are in conflict internally (in one state) but are supported by different states, and non-international armed conflicts (NIAC), in which at least one of the parties to the conflict is a non-governmental entity.[313] In the context of IACs, Article 2 of the Fourth Geneva Convention declares itself applicable to "all cases of declared war or of any armed conflict that may arise between two or more high contracting parties, even if the state of war is not recognized."[314] This is used to highlight that the determination of the existence of armed conflict is not dependent on states recognizing the situation as a state of war.[315]

Although the exact definition of POC remains vague, it has been established by Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions that the treatment and protection of civilians entails abstaining from violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds; mutilation; cruel treatment and torture; taking of hostages; outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment; the passing of sentences; and the carrying out of summary executions.[316] Within the protection framework, special attention is granted to vulnerable groups of civilian populations.[317] The *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict* (1974) explicitly states that women and children

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[305] UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians (S/1674)*, 2006,
[306] Charter of the United Nations, 1945.
[307] *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War (2nd part)*, 1949.
[308] Ibid.
[309] Ibid.
[310] UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians (S/25274)*, 1993,
[311] ICRC, *How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law?*, 2008, p. 1.
[312] Chelimo, *Defining Armed Conflict in International Humanitarian Law*, 2011; ICRC, *How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law?*, 2008.
[313] Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, International Armed Conflict, 2017; ICRC, How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law?, 2008; ICRC, *How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law?*, 2008.
[314] *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians*, 1949.
[315] Ibid.
[316] *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War (2nd part)*, 1949.
[317] Ibid.

are the most vulnerable groups in armed conflict.[318] This declaration strongly condemns violence targeted against women or children in armed conflict and calls on states to abide by international law.[319]

Security Council Resolution 1674 of 2006 reaffirmed the *2005 World Summit Outcome Document* on the states' responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other war crimes and crimes against humanity.[320] As opposed to POC, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle, which was officially endorsed by the General Assembly in the 2005 outcome document, is not limited to situations of armed conflict but stresses that the responsibility to protect civilians from aforementioned crimes falls to Member States.[321] The 2005 endorsement and the introduction of R2P was a reaction to a series of serious human rights violations that were committed against the civilians in Rwanda and Srebrenica in the 1990s.[322] In case of Rwanda, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) took no action at that time, despite having an existing *African Charter on Human and People's Rights* (1981) at their disposal.[323] Since then, the African Union (AU), which succeeded the OAU, has adopted the Charter into the African Court of Justice and developed *Draft Guidelines for the Protection of Civilians in African Union Peace Support Operations* (2012), which provide a multi-tiered approach to protect civilians.[324] The guidelines recommend integrating POC into the political process to establish a protective, rights-based environment and taking four steps to physically protect civilians: prevent, pre-empt, respond, and consolidate activities relating to conflict.[325]

Role of the International System

The Security Council has passed a vast library of resolutions on POC, including, but not limited to, resolutions 1265 (1999) 2474 (2019), 2417 (2018), 2286 (2016), 2175 (2014), 1674 (2006), and 1296 (2000).[326] All resolutions adopted stress the importance of abiding by IHL and the Geneva Conventions and condemn targeting civilians and the humanitarian personnel that attempt to alleviate suffering of civilian populations and save people's lives in armed conflict.[327] Through these protection-focused resolutions, the Security Council has made progress by strengthening peacekeeping missions' mandate to protect civilians, imposing sanctions when protection failed, collecting evidence on transgressions in protection, and promoting states' accountability.[328] One example of a peacekeeping mission containing an explicit mandate to protect civilians is the United Nations African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which is comprised of a joint UN-AU peacekeeping mission deployed to Darfur, Sudan in response to the civil war which began in 2003.[329] The Secretary-General also reiterated the Security Council's mission to protect civilians in the annual open debate on POC in armed conflict in May 2019

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[318] UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (A/RES/3318 (XXIX))*, 1974.
[319] Ibid.
[320] UN General Assembly, *2005 World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1)*, 2005; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians (S/RES/1674 (2006))*, 2006.
[321] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*, 2001; UN General Assembly, *2005 World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1)*, 2005.
[322] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*, 2001.
[323] African Union, *Draft Guidelines for the Protection of Civilians in African Union Peace Support Operations*, 2010.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid.
[326] UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1296 (2000))*, 2000; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1674 (2006))*, 2006; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2175 (2014))*, 2014; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2286 (2016))*, 2016; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2417 (2018))*, 2018; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Missing Persons in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2474 (2019))*, 2019.
[327] UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1265 (1999))*, 1999; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1296 (2000))*, 2000; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1674 (2006))*, 2006.
[328] UN OCHA, *Five Ways the UN Security Council is Protecting Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2019.
[329] UNAMID, *About UNAMID*, 2020.

and called for three approaches that he additionally highlighted in his report on POC.[330] In concrete terms, he recommended adopting national policy frameworks on POC, enhancing compliance by non-state actors, and promoting compliance through advocacy and accountability of Member States.[331] The report also highlighted the importance of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), established in 2005 through Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) on "Children and Armed Conflict."[332] The CAAC provides recommendations to the Security Council on possible measures to protect children in armed conflict.[333] To highlight the role of women in maintaining peace and to promote greater participation by women in political decision-making, the Security Council passed resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security (2000).[334] This resolution calls for gender perspectives to be incorporated into the mandates of UN peacekeeping efforts, and further calls upon Member States to take special measures to protect women and girls against gender-based violence in conflict situations.[335] The role of youth in peace processes is also a priority for the Security Council, which has passed multiple resolutions on youth, peace, and security, most recently resolution 2535 (2020).[336] Resolution 2535 calls attention to the role of youth in conflict prevention and asks states to implement processes to ensure greater inclusion for youth in decision-making processes.[337]

Other resolutions that the Security Council adopted on the protection of vulnerable groups among civilian populations are resolutions 2222 (2015) and 1738 (2006) on "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict," which target journalists and associated media personnel in armed conflict, and 1502 (2003) on "Protection of United Nations Personnel, Associated Personnel and Humanitarian Personnel in Conflict Zones."[338] All three reiterate the importance of abiding by IHL and the principle of proportionality.[339] Although the Security Council is the leading organ on POC, other international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and humanitarian relief agencies are also involved on both policy and operational levels.[340] The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) observes POC week, which most recently took place from 27 May to 1 June 2020.[341] Each year features events raising awareness of different facets of POC, such as protecting those with disabilities and the environment.[342] In 2019 OCHA published an occasional policy paper titled *Building a Culture of Protection: 20 Years of Security Council Engagement on the Protection of Civilians* (2019) for the twentieth anniversary of Security Council's engagement on POC.[343] This policy paper, which was published in tandem with the Secretary-General's report on POC in 2019, maps out the history of Security Council's involvement with this thematic issue and gives recommendations on the way forward.[344] Among

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[330] UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2019/373)*, 2019.
[331] Ibid.
[332] UN Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict (S/RES/1612 (2005))*, 2005; UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2019/373)*, 2019.
[333] UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (A/RES/3318 (XXIX))*, 1974; UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2019/373)*, 2019.
[334] UN Security Council, *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325 (2000))*, 2000.
[335] Ibid.
[336] UN Security Council, *Youth, Peace, and Security (S/RES/2535 (2020))*, 2020.
[337] Ibid..
[338] UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1738 (2006))*, 2006; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2222 (2015))*, 2015; UN Security Council, *Protection of United Nations Personnel, Associated Personnel and Humanitarian Personnel in Conflict Zones (S/RES/1502 (2003))*, 2003.
[339] UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1738 (2006))*, 2006; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2222 (2015))*, 2015.
[340] UN OCHA, *Building a Culture of Protection: 20 Years of Security Council Engagement on the Protection of Civilians*, 2019.
[341] UN OCHA, *Protection of Civilians Week*, 2020.
[342] Ibid.: UN OCHA, *Protection of Civilians Week 2020 Calendar,* 2020
[343] UN OCHA, *Building a Culture of Protection: 20 Years of Security Council Engagement on the Protection of Civilians*, 2019.
[344] Ibid.

these recommendations are respecting IHL's principles, facilitating humanitarian access, protecting women and children, and prioritizing the setting of clear mandates for peacekeeping missions.[345] In order to share best practices with regards to peacekeeping missions, the International Conference on the Protection of Civilians published a set of eighteen non-binding pledges under the name of the *Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians* in 2015. [346] The key provisions relevant to POC lie in principles 3, 8, and 13, whereby peacekeepers pledge to be prepared to use force to protect civilians and to take disciplinary action against their own personnel, should they fail to carry out their mandate to protect civilians.[347]

Since most policy papers and reports identify a gap in the POC approaches with regard to the lack of respect armed groups have for IHL, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a paper in 2015 under the title *International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict*.[348] This research paper lists all the relevant IHL principles that pertain to the protection of human rights in armed conflict and explicitly mentions that IHL is primarily, but not exclusively, addressed to state actors in armed conflict.[349] Other entities that this paper also highlights are intergovernmental organizations such as the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).[350] Unlike other organizations with military power, NATO recently adopted a comprehensive *Policy for the Protection of Civilians* (2018), which explicitly defines POC as all efforts taken to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the negative effects on civilians arising from any NATO military operations.[351] The Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), an NGO that works with both state and non-state armed groups to prevent, mitigate, and respond to civilian harm, publishes annual reports on POC.[352] Their report from 2019, marking the 20 years the Security Council has spent tackling this issue, echoed OCHA's policy paper's recommendations, one of which is to protect civilians through peacekeeping missions.[353] The main responsibility for protecting civilians nevertheless rests with states and their national and local institutions.[354] Both police and military personnel are mandated to undertake preventive measures and respond to threats of physical and other forms of violence to protect civilians during armed conflicts.[355]

Protection of Vulnerable Groups in Armed Conflict

In recent years, the Security Council has shifted its focus to specific vulnerable groups of civilians in armed conflict, including women, children, journalists, medical staff, and humanitarian personnel.[356] Of these groups, data is relatively abundant on how children are affected by armed conflict.[357] In 2019 alone, 30% of civilian casualties in Afghanistan were children, with similar numbers echoing in other conflict-ridden areas.[358] Death is not the only way children become victims of armed conflict; they are often displaced, separated from their families, and experience hindrances with regard to their education.[359]

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[345] Ibid.
[346] High-level International Conference on the Protection of Civilians, *The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians,* 2015.
[347] Ibid.
[348] UN OHCHR, *International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict*, 2011.
[349] Ibid.
[350] UN OHCHR, *International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict*, 2011.
[351] NATO, *Factsheet: Protection of Civilians*, 2018.
[352] Center for Civilians in Conflict, *POC20: Twenty Years of the Protection of Civilians – Challenges, Progress and Priorities*, 2019.
[353] Ibid..
[354] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to* Protect, 2001.
[355] Ibid.
[356] Security Council Report, *UN Documents for Protection of Civilians: Security Council Resolutions*, 2019.
[357] Office on the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, *#YouthStats: Armed Conflict*, 2015.
[358] OHCHR, *Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019*, 2019, p. 21.
[359] Ibid., p. 27.

To alleviate the suffering of children affected by armed conflicts, the Security Council Working Group on CAAC sends letters with recommendations to parties to conflict, Member States, the UN system, donors, and other relevant actors and issues a public statement in the form of Security Council press release.[360] Conflict Dynamic International, an NGO that works to prevent and resolve violent conflict between and within states and to alleviate human suffering resulting from conflicts, also recently published a *Children in Armed Conflict Accountability Framework* (2015) that aims at holding conflict parties responsible for the protection of children and giving the right care to children in conflict.[361] This framework also attempts to encourage efforts aimed at preventing serious violations of international law committed against children in armed conflict.[362]

Unlike the relative abundance of data on children mortalities due to armed conflict, data on how youth is affected is vastly lacking.[363] Gender-disaggregated data is also relatively scarce, although a study by the International Peace Research Institute from 2009 found that, in general, male deaths are higher during wartime, while female mortality is higher post-conflict.[364] The numbers show that male aid workers also experience attacks 3-6 times more times than female aid workers.[365] Female aid workers, however, are more likely to experience sexual assaults and other types of physical violence.[366] Attacks on aid workers in general have been consistently high every year; in 2019, 483 aid workers became victims of attacks, 125 of which were killed.[367] In an effort to raise awareness for these incidents, a #NotATarget campaign was launched on World Humanitarian Day in 2017, which saw 2 million people on social media hold their leaders and governments accountable for the protection of civilians.[368]

Protection of healthcare workers in armed conflict

Attacks on healthcare workers based in conflict zones is widespread; in 2019 there were 1,006 security incidents affecting health care workers, resulting in 825 casualties across 11 states and territories.[369] The effects of this are particularly devastating given that civilians in areas of conflict are in particular need of medical care, not only from injuries sustained as a direct result of conflict, but also from an increased vulnerability to outbreaks of infectious diseases.[370] Given the increased vulnerability of civilians and detainees in conflict areas to infectious COVID-19, these trends are likely to be further exacerbated in 2020.[371]

Despite the frequency with which these attacks occur, there is a lack of reporting and data collection which makes it difficult for perpetrators to be held responsible for their actions.[372] Resolution 2286 (2016), adopted unanimously by the Security Council in 2016, demanded all conflict participants to allow for health workers to be allowed to operate unimpeded in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law.[373] It furthermore called for Member States to collect more data on activities which hinder the administration of medical care across conflict zones.[374] One resource used to monitor and publicize the scale of attacks on medical personnel is the World Health Organization's (WHO)

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[360] UN Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict (S/RES/1612 (2005))*, 2005.
[361] Freedson et al., *Children in Armed Conflict Accountability Framework*, 2015.
[362] Ibid.
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[374] Ibid.

Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care (SSA).[375] This online platform collects all reported attacks on medical facilities from around the world, and presents this information through an online database updated in real time.[376]

Peacekeeping Missions on the Protection of Civilians

The UN Peacekeepers provide security and political support to help countries transition from conflict to peace.[377] The Security Council deploys peacekeeping operations for various reasons, such as to facilitate the political processes; maintain peace and security; assist in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections; protect and promote human rights; and help restore the rule of law.[378] Nevertheless, the vast majority of peacekeeping missions are POC operations, with 95% of all current peacekeeping operations mandated to protect civilians.[379]

The Kigali Principles, which were adopted by several of the biggest troop- and financial- contributing countries to guide all peacekeeping efforts and ensure better protection of civilians on the ground, highlight the importance of pre-deployment trainings and overall preparedness of the peacekeeping staff.[380] More importantly, the signatories pledged to investigate and, where necessary, prosecute its personnel in instances when they fail to protect civilians in accordance with their mandate.[381] After past allegations of misconduct committed by UN personnel against civilians were brought to light, including human rights violations and sexual violence, the Security Council called for enhanced national and international accountability mechanisms and strived to improve proper investigation and prosecution of committed crimes.[382]

The Kigali Principles also attempt to make peacekeeping missions more effective.[383] A study and analysis of the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions was undertaken by OCHA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), now called the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), in 2010.[384] This study was published in the form of an independent report entitled *Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations: Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges*.[385] The recommendations contained within this study were divided into four themes to improve effectiveness of peacekeeping operations: linking the Security Council to the field, mission-wide strategy and crisis planning, improving the role of uniformed personnel, and political follow-up on achieving the mission's goals.[386]

Despite these efforts to make peacekeeping missions more transparent and effective, such missions still remain controversial, with the United States deciding to cut its funding towards peacekeeping by 40% in 2016.[387] Set up by Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, an independent inquiry into the role of the UN in Rwanda in 1993-1994 initiated in 1999.[388] Its subsequent report held the UN responsible for

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[375] WHO, *Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care (SSA)*, 2018, pp. 3-5.
[376] Ibid.
[377] UN Peacekeeping, *What is Peacekeeping?*.
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[381] Ibid.
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[385] Ibid.
[386] Holt et al., *Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations: Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges*, 2009.
[387] Nichols, United States to Trim its Peacekeeping Bill After Trump's Call to Slash, *Reuters*, 2017.
[388] UN Security Council, *Report of the Independent Inquiry on the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda (S/1999/1257)*, 1999.

withdrawing its peacekeeping mission from Rwanda before providing humanitarian assistance to almost one million Tutsis that subsequently became victims of genocide.[389] This experience stands in deep contrast to Côte d'Ivoire's success story with the peacekeeping mission deployed in 2004.[390] UN data highlights the peaceful elections of 2015-2016 as a direct benefit from the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and a benchmark for the improved level of security of civilians in Côte d'Ivoire.[391] POC remains a core responsibility of the UN peacekeeping and requires a concerted and coordinated action by the Security Council; the Secretariat, especially the DPO and DFS; other UN actors; regional organizations; and Member States, so that the international community can learn from past failures, build on past successes, and provide better protection to civilians in armed conflicts in the future.[392]

Conclusion

Despite POC being a long-term priority for the Security Council and the wider international community, the global civilian death toll remains consistently high.[393] Peacekeeping missions remain controversial, although recent reports and policy papers have been encouraging the deployment of peacekeeping missions to better protect civilians, with special attention given to vulnerable groups.[394] Recent developments in the Security Council's resolutions to shift the conversation towards vulnerable groups have also raised awareness about the importance of understanding the vulnerability and needs of the different segments of civilian population affected by armed conflict.[395] Numerous reports have also acknowledged that, despite IHL explicitly stating that civilian lives are valuable and need to be protected, especially through the principle of proportionality, the actual problem lies with states' and armed groups' lack of compliance with international law.[396] This goes hand in hand with the lack of concrete and reliable data, which often hinders the international community's ability to fully understand the severity of the occurring conflict situations and provide adequate protection to affected civilians.[397]

Further Research

As delegates explore the topic at hand, they should consider the following questions: Which groups are considered vulnerable, how are they affected, and is it worth giving them special attention amidst large numbers of threatened civilians? What motivates conflict participants to target medical personnel, and how can they be better protected in future? Which peacekeeping missions succeeded or created a positive impact and which, on the other hand, had negative repercussions on civilians and why? How can the international community learn from these experiences? What gaps exist in the system, and how can the Security Council address them? Are these gaps related to data collection, compliance with international law, or accountability? Should the Security Council take a new approach by focusing more on preventing or resolving conflicts instead of POC?

Annotated Bibliography

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[389] Ibid.
[390] Human Rights Watch, *Côte d'Ivoire: UN Peacekeeping Mission Ends*, 2017.
[391] Ibid.
[392] Holt et al., *Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations: Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges*, 2009.
[393] Tracci, #POC20 Series: Trends in the Protection of Civilians through UN Peacekeeping Operations, *Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)*, 2019; UN Security Council, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict – Report of the Secretary General (S/2020/366), 2020.
[394] Center for Civilians in Conflict, *POC20: Twenty Years of the Protection of Civilians – Challenges, Progress and Priorities*, 2019.
[395] Security Council Report, *UN Documents for Protection of Civilians: Security Council Resolutions*, 2019.
[396] UN OCHA, *Security Council Norms and Practice on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Analysis of Normative Developments in Security Council Resolutions 2009-2013*, 2014.
[397] UN OCHA, *Building a Culture of Protection: 20 Years of Security Council Engagement on the Protection of Civilians*, 2019.

Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (2nd part). (1949). Retrieved 18 September 2020 from: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtectionOfCivilianPersons.aspx

This is an excerpt from the original Geneva Conventions drafted in 1949 after the end of World War II, which still govern the rule of law on armed conflicts. This Fourth Geneva Convention is relevant to the protection of civilians in armed conflict and presents a very important read for delegates to understand the legality of committing war crimes against civilians. It also defines who is considered a protected person and what the different types of conflicts are, thereby defining when protection is applicable.

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2008). *How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law?* Retrieved 19 September 2020 from: https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/opinion-paper-armed-conflict.pdf

This opinion paper was published by ICRC in 2008 on defining armed conflict in IHL. It provides definitions for the two types of armed conflict that are classically recognized by IHL: international armed conflict (IAC) and non-international armed conflict (NIAC). Although internationalized armed conflict has recently been identified as a third type, its status within IHL is still a little vague. This opinion paper will prove very useful for delegates to understand how to define armed conflict and differentiate between the different types before proceeding with the remainder of their research.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2019). *Building a Culture of Protection: 20 Years of Security Council Engagement on the Protection of Civilians*. Retrieved 19 September 2020 from: https://www.refworld.org/docid/5d1472ae4.html

This policy paper, which OCHA published on the 20th anniversary of Security Council's involvement with POC, gives an overview on what has happened in those 20 years, charts which resolutions were passed, and how they affected the topic. The paper also gives recommendations on the next steps and how Member States should take measures to improve the protection of civilians. Delegates may find this a comprehensive read on the topic to understand what has already happened and decide on the way forward. The policy paper highlights the most important information on the topic and provides a great starting point for further research.

United Nations, Security Council. (2006). *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1674 (2006))*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: http://undocs.org/S/RES/1674(2006)

This is the most recent holistic resolution on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Although there have been multiple other resolutions by the Security Council that followed on the topic, they all more specifically addressed a specific sub-group of civilians. This was the first resolution to establish a set of criteria that govern when to send in humanitarian assistance in times of armed conflict. Delegates are recommended to read this most recent and comprehensive resolution on POC to understand where the Security Council stands today on the topic and which measures have already been adopted. By knowing its substance in greater detail, delegates will also be able to reference this resolution and reaffirm its provisions in their own resolutions.

United Nations, Security Council. (2019). *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary General (S/2019/373)*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: https://undocs.org/S/2019/373

This is the most recent version of the Secretary-General's annual report on POC in armed conflict. It gives an excellent overview of all that has transpired in the past 20 years in the Security Council on this issue. More importantly, it also provides recommendations for the way forward. Delegates may find these recommendations most useful as examples of concrete and realistic ideas they can use as an inspiration for drafting their own working papers and resolutions during the conference.

United Nations Security Council. (2020). *Protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2020/366)*. Retrieved 17 September 2020 from: https://undocs.org/S/2020/366

This is the most recent report of the Secretary General to the Security Council on the current status of POC around the world in 2020. This is the first report on POC by the secretary general to be published since the Security Council passed resolutions 2474 and 2475 in 2019, which call for missing persons and persons with disabilities to be included future annual reports by the secretary general on POC. This report is also the first of its kind to have been published on POC since the emergence of COVID19. It concludes that POC has become more difficult in light of the global COVID19 pandemic, as the spread of the virus has led to further increased demand for healthcare personnel in conflict areas. It also summarizes the progress of POC before the effects of COVID19 were felt. In 2019 the number of civilians killed in conflict areas was in the tens of thousands, and millions were displaced from their homes. Women and girls were particularly vulnerable to indiscriminate attacks from conflict combatants.

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