

MegaMUN 2026

World in transition

Security Council



Revising the UN peacekeeping
force and its potential
development as an active
protection force

Letter from the chairs

Dear Delegates,

We are honoured to welcome you to the Security Council of MegaMUN 2026!

We are both very excited to meet you and look forward to having interesting debates. This study guide will hopefully help you in preparing yourself to represent your respective delegations accurately in your position papers. We encourage you to research your country's position more precisely seeing as the study guide only serves as a general guideline and aid.

We hope you're as motivated as we are for this committee where we'll ensure fruitful committee sessions.

We encourage all delegates to take the confidence to speak up and we are available for any questions you may have, be it before or during the conference, so don't hesitate to ask!

We'd also like to address the topic of AI: it is allowed as a tool to research but should under no circumstance be your only source or last resort. We expect of you to start your preparations in advance, so that we all can have interesting and educating debates on the topic!

Thank you and see you soon!!

Sincerely,
Your chairs,

Tara Mac Neill
Millie Boudot



Introduction to the committee

The Security Council is one of the six main organs of the UN established in 1946 by the United Nations Charter. A noticeable characteristic of the Council are the P5 Members, five permanent members that do not circulate every 2 years like the other 10 members of the committee. More concretely, the P5 nations are the US, the UK, France, China and Russia, the winners of the 2nd World War, and they have the right to veto any clause or resolution with justification.

Its main responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. It also concerns itself with developing friendly relations between UN member states, solving international issues, promoting human rights. The SC stands as a symbolic centre to harmonise the actions of the UN.

Different to the other committees belonging to the UN, all 193 Member States are obliged to implement the decisions made by the Security Council. By consequence, the SC has a lot of power and influence, making it all the more important for the committee members to take well-thought out decisions.

When a threat to peace arises, the usual procedure of the SC is to firstly recommend finding peaceful means to solve the issue through the help and support of the Security Council. In case the situation intensifies, the Council will through different means to prevent further escalation and reinstate a calmer situation, by issuing ceasefires, sanctions or even military action.

Introduction

When tensions and violence rise in a conflict and peaceful means don't seem to take effect, the Security Council has the power to establish so-called peace-keeping operations. While every mission is adapted to its different goals and situations, peacekeeping in general aims to help the countries involved transition from conflict to peace times, provide security and stabilise the parties to an extent that peace talks can happen.

Independently from their mission, the UN Peacekeepers follow three core principles: Consent of the parties, Impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defense or in defense of a civilian.

Yet even though around two thirds of their operations have been successful, criticism has persisted vehemently. Scandals of sexual abuse and corruption by peacekeepers have overshadowed the symbol of hope the blue helmets carry around the world. One big debating point is the passivity of the army as it only intervenes when the all parties involved have given their consent. Furthermore, Peacekeepers don't stop conflicts, they only help to wind them down and support the countries after the end of fighting in regaining stability to try and stop such conflicts from reoccurring.

The peacekeepers' effectiveness has also received backlash. In recent time, Peacekeeping hasn't been able to adapt to new war strategies and weapons, its mandates are too unrealistic and with the rising conflicts between militant groups (Hamas, ISIS, etc.) spread over several countries, it can simply not be used effectively as these conflicts do not directly concern national governments and the blue helmets are not really able to interfere.

Ideas of a UN active army have been present since the 90s. Especially in today's world, such an army would allow the UN to intervene quicker and more effectively in conflicts. Yet the establishment of such an army is followed by the creation of a lot of legal frameworks, decisions and agreements on what the army's legal restrictions are and difficulties will arise when coming to an agreement, especially with tensions rising between the world powers and global polarisation.



In 1948, the Security Council authorized the deployment of UN military observers into the Middle East to monitor the talks between Israel and its Arabic neighbours and with that the history of UN Peacekeeping began.

From its establishment throughout the Cold War until the late 80s, the UN Peacekeeping was based primarily around maintaining ceasefires and supporting peaceful means to cease conflicts. Unarmed military observers and lightly armed troops were usually sent out to monitor and report on the situation.

In 1988, the UN Peacekeepers were awarded the Nobel Peace Award for their efforts in creating trust within the UN and in helping to resolve conflicts in several areas around the world (Suez Crisis, Congo, Yemen, etc.).

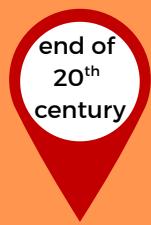
Historical context

After the Cold War, the concept behind the UN Peacekeeping changed dramatically.

The missions switched from “simple” observational operations to complex multidimensional enterprises to ensure the implementation of peace-agreements and lay the foundation for sustainable peace.

Furthermore, the number of peace-keeping operations rose significantly, as the world powers were able to come to agreements quicker than in the period of the Cold War.

Yet in the mid 90s, the notoriety of the UN-Peacekeeping suffered severely. Characterised by their successful past, the Blue Helmets struggled to keep the reputation alive as they were sent into missions (Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia) for which the mandates weren't robust enough and the necessary resources weren't available to the soldiers. These setbacks resulted in further hostilities and the rise of civilian casualties, creating extreme backlash towards the UN.



The idea of creating an active UN army arose for the first time in that decade. In 1993, a campaign to endorse a standing army controlled by the UN way underway. Joe Biden, then senator of Delaware, even introduced a resolution to allow American troops to be a part of such a force. However, the idea was quickly forgotten due to too many financial and legal issues involved in the establishment of an active UN force.

Having experienced the limits of the UN-Peacekeeping operations, the SC reduced the number of active operations and considered changes so that such failures would not reoccur.

By the end of the 20th century, the Security Council established further successful peace operations as the crises around the world continued to rise, which helped reestablish their reputation lost in the 90s.

Historical context

Arriving in the 21st century, the UN passed review on their past missions to further understand their limits and strengthen their capabilities. With this knowledge the UN was able to coordinate more complex missions all around the world, helping countries in crisis and creating peace.

Yet the Peacekeepers continued to face challenges in their various operations. They struggled in creating transitions to independency for countries that were stable enough but still depended on the UN and in preparing these countries for an unpredictable future .

The numbers of peacekeeping operations were on a constant rise until May 2010, when they begun to reduce slightly. Since then the numbers have been in a constant decline as no peace mission has been authorized since 2014.

Current situation

The current situation of UN peacekeeping is marked by a lack of resources, shifting geopolitical pressures, and ongoing debates about how the “Blue Helmets” should evolve in a world where modern conflicts are far more complex than those for which peacekeeping was originally designed.

Today, about 60,000 peacekeepers remain deployed across roughly a dozen missions, though this number has declined compared to a decade ago. Many missions, such as UNIFIL in Lebanon, continue to operate in extremely volatile environments and face uncertain futures, as host states and UN members question their effectiveness and mandate.

The financial strain is also a major issue: delayed or reduced payments from member states have forced cutbacks on patrols, logistics, and personnel, leaving several missions under-resourced.

At the same time, there are ongoing debates on whether peacekeeping should evolve into a more active protection or peace-enforcement model. Some argue that current methods are no longer suited to fragmented conflicts involving non-state armed groups, while others caution that more aggressive operations clash with the UN’s principles and institutional design. Proposals for a standing army, a UN rapid-reaction force that would be more offensive and army-like structure emerge periodically, but geopolitical divisions, especially within the UNSC, have prevented any move beyond discussion.

Overall, peacekeeping remains essential for millions of civilians but is constrained by political disagreement, funding shortages, and structural limitations, leaving the vision of a more proactive UN force still largely theoretical.

The Blue Helmets are currently being undermined by persistent conduct problems such as sexual abuse, resulting in mistrust from local communities and refusal to cooperate. Reforms aim to improve accountability and effectiveness. There has been no formal move to turn peacekeepers into a standing army, however, there have been ongoing discussions about strengthening enforcement capacity through faster deployment mechanisms, clearer mandates, and proposals of a UN rapid reaction force, but they did not go as far as creating an independent, permanent military.

Main Issues

Revising UN peacekeeping into a more active, protection-oriented force faces several interconnected obstacles that make meaningful reform extremely difficult.

The most fundamental problem is the UN Security Council veto, which allows any of the five permanent P5 members to block stronger mandates, new force structures, or more intervention-focused rules of engagement.

Due to disagreements between major powers on when and how force should be used, mandates often get watered down, delayed, or blocked entirely.

Even if stronger mandates are to be approved, a second key issue is funding: many member states resist increasing their financial contributions, and establishing a more capable, rapid-deployment force would require substantial investment in equipment, logistics, and permanent readiness.

Furthermore, states are reluctant to supply troops for dangerous missions. Wealthier countries with advanced militaries often prefer not to deploy personnel to high-risk zones, while the states that regularly contribute troops may lack the equipment or political backing necessary for more aggressive operations.

Moreover, beyond these political and material constraints, legal and political principles built into peacekeeping, such as host-state consent (respecting national sovereignty), impartiality, and limited use of force, pose structural limits on transforming peacekeepers into an active protection or enforcement force. Many governments fear that loosening these principles could legitimize interventions against states themselves.

Main Issues

Finally, even when missions are authorized, peacekeeping regularly is impaired due to operational effectiveness problems: slow deployment, bureaucratic command structures, and inconsistent rules of engagement all reduce the ability of forces to act decisively. Additionally, the contingents are fragmented and national, which means that peacekeeping troops come from many countries with different rules, abilities, and command structures, making unified action difficult.

Taken together, these five issues: veto power, funding resistance, troop contribution problems, legal constraints, and operational weaknesses form a tight web of political and institutional barriers that make transforming UN peacekeeping into a robust, active protection force extraordinarily challenging.

Actions of the UN

The UN has introduced stricter examination of peacekeepers, mandatory pre-deployment and in-mission training on conduct and sexual exploitation, greater transparency through public reporting, and pressure on troop-contributing countries to prosecute offenders at home. The UN is tightening accountability and making peacekeeping more robust and professional, but politically and legally it remains dependent on member states, which is why reforms strengthen coordination and discipline, but don't create a UN army.



The UN has launched reforms efforts like the following:

- **Zero-Tolerance Policy** (from 2003, but strengthened after 2015): Official UN policy against sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), allowing immediate repatriation of offenders and if necessary even of entire units.
- **Department of Peace Operations** (DPO): Oversees peacekeeping missions and implements discipline, training, and mandate reforms.
- **Conduct and Discipline Units** (CDUs): Mission-level bodies that receive complaints, investigate misconduct, and enforce standards.
- **Office of Internal Oversight Services** (OIOS): Independent UN body that investigates serious misconduct, including sexual abuse.
- **Trust Fund in Support of Victims of SEA**: Provides assistance to victims when perpetrators are unidentified or not prosecuted.
- **Human Rights Due Diligence Policy** (HRDDP): Prevents UN support to national forces credibly implicated in grave abuses.

- **Force Intervention Brigade** (MONUSCO, DRC): A rare example of a more "robust" mandate, showing stronger use of force (without creating an army)
- **Rapid Deployment & Readiness Initiatives** (e.g., Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System – PCRS): Improves speed and preparedness of troop contributions without permanent forces.
- **Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)**: an initiative aimed at strengthening mandates, improving training and coordination, and addressing chronic capability gaps.

Points to consider

Foreign Affairs

Your country's foreign affairs policy is very important for this topic.

- Some countries that are more prone to collective measures (EU, NATO, etc.) may be more in favor of a UN active army, while countries with very strict foreign affairs policies may not want international organisations meddling in their affairs.

Military Power

Countries with a smaller military force will in crisis situations benefit more from a UN active army than countries with a bigger military force who may be able to overcome the threat themselves.

Geographical Position

- Another important point is considering how much your country would benefit from such an army based on its borders, trade routes or if it's an island

Current conflict or peace situation

- Depending on whether your country is at war, it may feel more or less prone with accepting an UN active army, as it depends whether your government is looking for international help

Dictionary

to veto

a constitutional right to reject a decision or proposal made by a lawmaking body

Sanctions

a threatened penalty for disobeying a rule or a law

Militant groups

organizations characterized by aggressive, combative, and often violent tactics in pursuit of strong political or social goals, using force or the threat of it to bring about radical change, challenge authority, or advance an ideology, rather than relying solely on peaceful means.

They can involve both ideological movements and paramilitary factions and are mostly outside traditional political structures.

Standing Army (SA)

A permanent, full-time military force kept in readiness

Notority

the state of being famous or well known for some bad quality or deed

Peacekeepers

a person who tries to keep or maintain peace, especially a member of a force or organisation that actively works to stop or prevent conflict between nations or communities

Peacekeeping operations

an international deployment (often UN-led) of military, police and civilian personnel to conflict zones with the consent of warring parties, aiming to stabilize regions, support ceasefires/peace agreements, protect civilians, and build foundations for lasting peace, using impartiality and limited force primarily for self-defense or mandate protection

Ceasefire

a temporary suspension of fighting, a truce

fragmented

broken into separate pieces

Blue Helmets

another name for peacekeepers with the logo of the UN Peacekeeping being a blue helmet

Most involved countries



The P5 nations are crucial financial investors and are relevant as they have a lot of influence in political oversight and strategic direction.



Already offering a lot of peacekeepers (over 8000), Pakistan may also be heavily invested in offering soldiers for an UN active army.



With goals of raising their geopolitical status, Mexico may be tempted to participate in an UN active army as they would gain international prestige.

HELPFUL SOURCES



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<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/un-peacekeeping-70-years-of-service-sacrifice>



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