



MODEL UNITED NATIONS KARACHI II

United Nations Security Council

Study Guide

AGENDA

Open Agenda

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Letter from the Secretary General

Esteemed Delegates,

On behalf of the entire MUNKR II team, it is my privilege to welcome you to this year's conference. Over the course of the next few days, you will be asked to do far more than defend a position. You will be asked to question assumptions, engage with perspectives different from your own and work towards solutions to some of the most pressing issues of our time.

MUNKR II has been designed to place you at the centre of meaningful discussion. Across every committee, you will encounter issues that rarely have simple answers. Whether you are addressing questions of international security, economic development, human rights, environmental policy or domestic governance, the challenge will not simply be to identify what is wrong, but to understand why it persists and determine what can realistically be done about it.

We have not created MUNKR II simply to recreate the debates that take place beyond these walls. We want you to challenge existing approaches, engage with opposing perspectives and explore the political, economic, social and legal realities that shape every decision. The strongest solutions will not necessarily be the most ambitious ones, but those that demonstrate a genuine understanding of the circumstances in which they must operate.

Throughout the conference, I encourage you to approach every discussion with curiosity, confidence and an open mind. Research thoroughly, debate respectfully and never hesitate to challenge an idea simply because it is conventional. Most importantly, remember that MUN is not only about representing a country or defending a position. It is about learning how to listen, negotiate, collaborate and lead.

I hope MUNKR II gives you an experience that extends far beyond the committee room. I hope you leave with new perspectives, meaningful friendships and a greater confidence in your ability to contribute to the world around you.

I look forward to seeing the ideas you challenge, the solutions you develop and the memories you create throughout the conference.

With warm regards,

Zekiel Gulab

Secretary General

MUNKR II

Introduction to United Nation Security Council

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, and it holds the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Under Chapter V of the Charter referring to article 24, 25 & 26. Member states of the UN have given the authority to the security council to act on their behalf in events of global threats and acts of aggression ensuring a faster and direct response than a 193 member General assembly could. What makes the Security Council truly unique is that its decisions are legally binding under article 25 of the UN charter as every member has agreed to accept and carry them out, Hence the Security Council is not just a “recommmendation”; its international law.



Chamber of the United Nations Security Council; UN Headquarters, New York, USA

Every action that the council takes serves the four core UN purposes:

- 1- Maintaining peace through collective action.
- 2- Building friendly relations amongst nations based on equality and self determination.
- 3- Achieving cooperation on the global economic and humanitarian problems.
- 4- Acting as a center that aligns the actions of all the member states towards these goals.

Article 24 (The Mandate): Confers primary responsibility on the UNSC for maintaining international peace and security, authorizing it to act on behalf of all 193 UN Member States.

Article 25 (The Binding Force): Establishes that all UN Member States are legally obligated to accept and execute the decisions of the Security Council.

Article 26 (Armament Regulation): Tasks the Council with formulating plans to establish a system for regulating global armaments and military capacity.

Mandate of the Security Council

The Security Council consists of 15 members: five Permanent Members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) known as the P5 and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms. This composition has changed over time; the Council originally held only 11 members in 1945, before being expanded to 15 in 1965 as UN membership grew.

The Council's core mandate is the maintenance of international peace and security, a responsibility given to it directly by the UN Charter under Article 24. In accepting this mandate, Member States have agreed that the Council acts on their behalf, allowing it to respond to crises with a speed and unity that the wider UN membership cannot achieve on its own. Unlike other UN bodies, such as the General Assembly, which can only issue recommendations, the Security Council has the power to make decisions that are legally binding on all UN member states. This binding authority is established under Article 25 of the Charter, meaning that once the Council adopts a resolution, every member of the UN is obligated to accept and carry it out, making the Council the only UN body whose decisions carry the full weight of international law.

To fulfil this mandate, the Council relies on two constitutional tools, set out in separate chapters of the Charter. Chapter VI (Articles 33–38) governs peaceful methods of resolution, such as mediation, negotiation, fact-finding missions, and referral to the International Court of Justice. These tools are generally used at an earlier stage, when a dispute has not yet turned violent and there remains room for diplomatic resolution. Chapter VII (Articles 39–51), by contrast, applies once peace has already been breached or a threat has become imminent.

Under Article 39, the Council must first formally determine that such a threat exists; only once this determination is made can it proceed to impose Article 41 non-military sanctions such as economic embargoes, travel bans, and asset freezes or, in more severe cases, authorize Article 42 military force to restore peace.

Article Table

Article 39 (Threat Determination): Formally identifies a threat to peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression a mandatory legal prerequisite before the Council can authorize any enforcement measures.
Article 41 (Non-Military Sanctions): Authorizes non-armed enforcement actions, including economic sanctions, trade embargoes, asset freezes, travel bans, and the severance of diplomatic relations.

Article 42 (Military Authorization): Permits the deployment of air, sea, or land forces to restore international peace if non-military measures under Article 41 prove insufficient.

Article 51 (Inherent Self-Defense): Preserves a state's right to individual or collective self-defense against an armed attack until the Security Council takes active steps to restore peace.

Voting in the Security Council

Voting is the main way through which the Security Council makes its decision, whilst every member has one vote in the chamber, Article 27 of the UN Charter gives certain votes more power to specific countries. To pass any decision, at least 9 out of the standing 15 member of the security council must vote in favor of the resolution, However, the the permanent five member of the Security Council United States of America, People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, French Republic and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland hold a special power known as VETO. A veto happens when any of the five Permanent Member votes "NO" on a major decision i.e: Resolution, which instantly stops the proposal from passing, no matter how many other countries voted in favor of it.

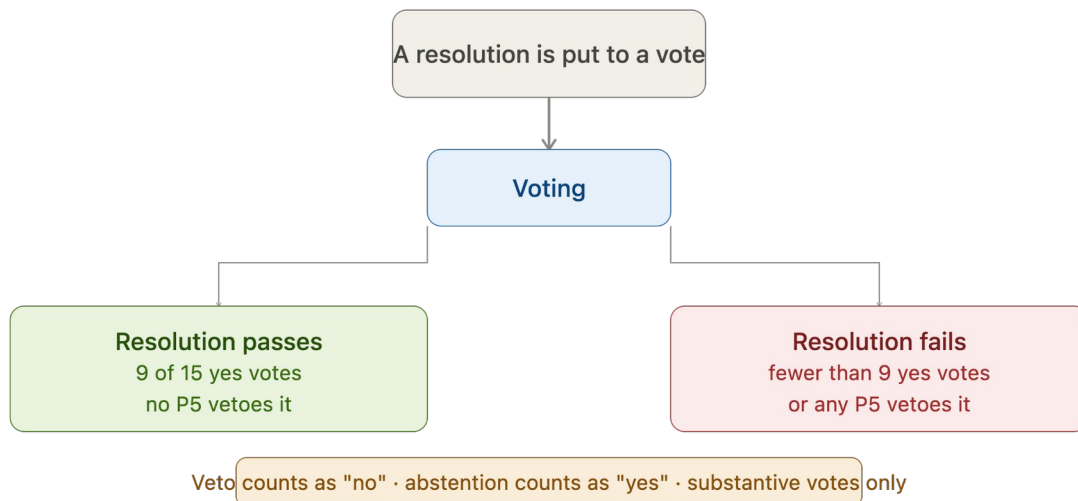
The Council separates its votes into two categories: procedural and substantive. Procedural matters cover how the meeting runs, such as setting the agenda, changing speaking times, or inviting guest speakers. On procedural votes, the veto does not apply, meaning a "No" vote from a P5 nation is treated like a regular vote and the motion passes as long as any nine members vote "Yes." Substantive matters cover major policies and actions, such as passing resolutions, adding amendments, imposing sanctions, or authorizing military force. On substantive votes, the veto does apply, and a single "No" from any P5 country immediately blocks the entire resolution from passing into international law.

When it is time to vote on a substantive resolution, countries must use one of three options:

YES: A vote showing full support for the draft resolution, requiring at least nine total positive votes across the room to pass.

NO: A vote showing opposition to the resolution, which acts as a standard vote against when cast by a non-permanent member, but acts as a fatal veto when cast by a P5 member.

ABSTAIN: A vote showing neutrality or reservation, which allows a member state to refrain from voting without blocking the resolution, as a P5 abstention does not count as a veto.



Voting outcome under substantive Security Council decisions

What does Open Agenda refer to ?

An open Agenda in the Security Council means that the committee is not fully locked into any singular topic; rather the delegates have free flow and flexibility over the committee to raise and debate upon the current situation at hand and respond to multiple global threats as they occur in real time. Having an open agenda allows the delegate to act quickly and prioritize emergency situations as they arise and address the interconnected security crises without being held by any strict agenda limits.

So in order for one to tackle an open agenda successfully, the delegates must have a very flexible and well prepared strategy rather than trying to discuss every single global issue at once. For this the best approach would be to research your country's stance thoroughly across all key global hotspots both current and prior, to have good diplomatic influence upon other member states and prioritising upon discussion with regards to the most urgent threat. Whilst in order to have the committee on a precedent the current geopolitical crisis around the globe are expected to be discussed in the Security Council with the current main global geo-political conflict occurring in.

Ultimately, navigation through an open agenda requires that the delegates must treat the committee as a living, real time diplomatic summit rather than a static debate bound to a static topic. The selected Core geopolitical crisis and acute regional crisis are present to reflect the most processing realities of modern international relations, meaning that any and all forms of verified news, diplomatic development and on ground updates occurring to the date of the conference are fully valid and expected to be discussed upon during debate and the drafting of the resolution.

Core Geopolitical conflicts



Iran–USA conflict

1. The Iran – USA Conflict



Iran–USA conflict

The current ongoing conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America remains one of the most volatile drivers of instability in the middle east and affecting supply routes across the globe. At the center of these disputes lies Iran's accelerating nuclear enrichment program and the severe international economic sanction imposed by the Global West upon Iran.



Iran–USA conflict

The recent failure of diplomatic negotiation in Islamabad, Pakistan and the renewal of strikes upon Iran since February of 2026 posing immense loss of human life and severe economic



Iran–USA conflict

strains across the globe. Iran utilization of its “Axis of Resistance” network of proxies have expanded the conflict into Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon whereas the entirety of the Middle East has been affected by the crisis due to the military presence of the USA and utilization of the bases present there for the strikes upon Iran.

For the UN Security Council, managing the Iran–U.S conflict presents an exceptional challenge to global non-proliferation frameworks and collective security mechanisms. The Council must continuously balance state sovereignty and regional stability against the risk of rapid military escalation that could trigger wider regional warfare. Diplomatic efforts within the committee are further complicated by differing P5 priorities, as major powers disagree on sanctions enforcement, nuclear verification protocols, and the legitimacy of proxy deterrence strategies.

To address this conflict effectively under an Open Agenda, delegates must construct flexible resolution clauses that focus on de-escalation, safeguarding freedom of navigation, upholding non-proliferation standards, and establishing regional security dialogues.

2. The Russia – Ukraine Conflict

The war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine represents the largest military conflict in Europe since World War II, it has fundamentally altered global geopolitical relations and has strained international law. The center of the dispute are the core tenets of the UN Charter, most notably Article 2(4) which strictly prohibits the threat or usage of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of a sovereign state.



Russian–Ukrainian conflict

The ongoing conflict is responsible for tens of thousands of civilian deaths, millions of displaced refugees and has caused severe damage to critical energy infrastructure, whilst causing havoc upon global supply chain and agricultural markets.

*Russian–Ukrainian conflict*

Within the Security Council, reaching a binding diplomatic resolution is structurally stalled by Russia's status as a veto-wielding Permanent Member, preventing direct enforcement measures under Chapter VII.

Beyond direct military engagement, the conflict has generated complex geopolitical ripple effects that spill into global economics and international alliances. Western-led economic sanctions against the Russian Federation have reshaped global trade and energy dynamics, forcing non-aligned nations to balance their trade dependencies against international diplomatic pressure. At the same time, regional security alliances across Eastern Europe have expanded, increasing militarization along NATO's eastern flank and escalating fears of direct escalation between major nuclear-armed powers.

This institutional deadlock places significant pressure on the General Assembly and international diplomatic bodies to explore alternative avenues for peace, humanitarian corridors, and accountability. In committee, delegates navigating this issue must look beyond standard voting blocks to target viable diplomatic inroads. Strategic debate often focuses on securing nuclear site safety, facilitating prisoner exchanges, guaranteeing maritime grain transport in the Black Sea, and creating neutral monitoring frameworks that can preserve human life while laying groundwork for future ceasefire negotiations.

Acute Regional Conflicts

1. The Sudanese Civil War

Sudan is facing one of the world's most severe humanitarian and displacement emergencies due to the violent power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The conflict has devastated critical infrastructure, triggered widespread famine, and led to severe human rights violations, particularly across the Darfur and Kordofan regions. The Security Council's focus remains on establishing immediate ceasefires, ensuring unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid, and preventing arms flows into the country to stop regional spillover.

2. The Venezuelan Crisis

Venezuela continues to struggle with severe internal political instability and economic breakdown, which has driven millions of citizens to migrate across Latin America. The crisis involves disputed election legitimacy, international economic sanctions, and restricted access to basic food, medical supplies, and human rights protections. The Security Council debate revolves around balancing state sovereignty and non-intervention principles against the need for international humanitarian assistance and regional migration management.

3. The Pakistan – Afghanistan Border Conflict

Tensions along the Durand Line between Pakistan and Afghanistan have escalated into a critical South Asian security concern. Key points of friction include cross-border terrorist attacks, military skirmishes, border fencing disputes, and the management of displaced populations and refugees. For the Security Council, this conflict highlights the need for effective counter-terrorism cooperation, regional border stabilization, and diplomatic engagement to prevent broader conflict in the region.

Key Terms to Remember (KTR)

Following are some of the key terms which will help you out in navigating through the committee:

Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter:

Strictly prohibits UN Member States from using or threatening force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

Article 39 of the UN Charter:

Grants the Security Council the authority to formally declare a situation as a threat to peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression.

Article 41 of the UN Charter:

Permits the Security Council to enforce its decisions using non-military measures, such as economic sanctions and diplomatic cutoffs.

Article 42 of the UN Charter:

Authorizes the Security Council to deploy military force via air, sea, or land if non-military measures prove insufficient to restore peace.

Article 51 of the UN Charter:

Preserves a sovereign state's inherent right to individual or collective self-defense when targeted by an armed attack.

Anticipatory Self-Defence:

The controversial legal doctrine allows a state to strike first if an armed attack is imminent, clear, and unavoidable.

International Court of Justice (ICJ):

The principal judicial organ of the UN that settles legal disputes between sovereign states and issues advisory opinions.

International Criminal Court (ICC):

An independent international tribunal that prosecutes individuals for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression.

Sanctions:

Commercial, financial, or political penalties applied by states or the UN to force compliance with international law.

JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action):

The 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal designed to monitor and limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for economic sanctions relief.

Erga Omnes:

Legal obligations owed by a state toward the entire international community as a whole, allowing any nation to claim a violation.

Casus Belli:

An act, event, or provocation so severe that a state considers it a legal or political justification for declaring war.

Proportionality:

The rule under international law requires that any military response or act of self-defense must not exceed what is strictly necessary to neutralize the threat.

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter:

Framework authorizing regional organizations (e.g., African Union, Arab League) to resolve local disputes and execute Security Council enforcement.

Jus ad Bellum:

The branch of international law that governs the legitimate conditions and justifications under which states may resort to war or armed force.

Jus in Bello:

International humanitarian law regulating the legal conduct, tactics, and protection of civilians during an active armed conflict.

Sovereignty:

The supreme and independent political authority of a state to govern its own territory without external interference.

Territorial Integrity:

The principle under international law that forbids foreign states from forcibly altering or annexing another nation's borders.

Non-Proliferation:

International treaties and protocols aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons to non-weapon states.

IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency):

The global nuclear watchdog organization that monitors nuclear energy programs and ensures compliance with non-proliferation treaties.

Ceasefire vs. Armistice vs. Peace Treaty:

A ceasefire is a temporary pause in fighting; an armistice is a formal agreement to end hostilities; a peace treaty permanently resolves the conflict and restores full diplomatic relations.

De Facto vs. De Jure Recognition:

De facto recognizes a government's actual physical control over a territory, whereas de jure grants full legal and official recognition under international law.

Uti Possidetis:

The principle of international law that newly independent states retain the administrative borders they possessed prior to independence.

Caroline Test:

A customary international law standard established in 1837 requiring that anticipatory self-defense be justified only when the necessity is "instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation".

Right to Self-Determination:

The legal right of a distinct population or group to freely determine their political status and sovereignty without foreign pressure.

Veto (P5):

The power held by the five permanent members of the Security Council to block any substantive resolution by casting a single "No" vote.

Procedural vs. Substantive Resolutions:

Procedural votes cover administrative meeting operations where the veto cannot be used, while substantive votes cover major policy decisions where the P5 veto applies.

Chapter VI vs. Chapter VII:

Chapter VI focuses on non-binding, peaceful dispute settlements (negotiation, mediation), while Chapter VII involves legally binding enforcement actions (sanctions, military intervention).

Sunset Clause:

A specific provision in a treaty or resolution that dictates the exact date or condition under which the measure automatically expires.

Belligerent Occupation:

The temporary control established by an invading state's armed forces over foreign territory without acquiring legal sovereignty.

Proxy Conflict:

A war instigated or supported by major powers who use third parties to fight each other indirectly rather than engaging in direct military confrontation.

Annexation:

The forcible and illegal acquisition of another state's territory by a foreign power through military occupation or political proclamation.

Sphere of Influence:

A spatial region or nation over which a major foreign power claims dominant cultural, economic, or political authority without formal territorial control.

Iran - USA conflict

“An imminent threat 11,650km away”

Basic Overview

The conflict between Iran, Israel and the United States is less of a standard border dispute and more like a regional “Sword of Damocles” as a dangerous crisis hanging over global stability, where a singular misstep risks plunging the entire international order into chaos. Wrapped in decades of hospitality following the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution, its most delicate chapter collapsed upon nuclear diplomacy. Whilst in 2025, the United States set up a 60 day deadline for a new nuclear deal where talks in Oman and Rome stalled. Having the deadline expired in June of 2025, this triggered Israeli airstrikes upon Iranian Nuclear sites, this acted as the precursor for a far larger and interconnected conflict.

On the dawn of 28 February 2026, full scale warfare erupted in what many refer to as the Third Gulf War. Joint US-Israeli strikes targeted Iranian military command networks and political leadership, killing Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei even as underlying diplomatic channels remained open. Iran responded by unleashing hundreds of ballistic missiles and thousands of drones across the region. The violence left thousands dead across Iran and Lebanon, displaced over a million civilians, and reignited intense fighting along the Israel-Hezbollah front. Though an initial ceasefire was brokered in April 2026, the crisis quickly morphed into a naval standoff over the Strait of Hormuz, the vital choke-point for global energy supply.

In June 2026, diplomats drafted the Islamabad Memorandum to reopen maritime routes, but the truce shattered almost immediately. By July 2026, strikes resumed against commercial shipping, drawing near-nightly US retaliatory bombardments while Iranian forces launched strikes against neighboring Gulf states including Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan. With oil markets destabilized, global supply chains suffering, and no resolution to Iran’s nuclear file, this conflict sits directly under Article 24(1) of the UN Charter—challenging delegates to dismantle a dangling geopolitical threat before the thread snaps completely.

"The danger is not that a particular arm will be used, but that a state of mind exists in which any spark can ignite the powder keg. We are living under a modern Sword of Damocles, suspended by the thinnest thread of diplomacy."

- President John F. Kenedy 1961 UNGA

History of the conflict

The roots of this conflict trace back to the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, where the US backed Shah government was toppled and a new government rose to power that held itself in the complete opposition of the United States of America and by extension; Israel. The seizure of the US embassy in Tehran causing a 444 day hostage crisis that followed it, severed formal diplomatic relations between Washington and Tehran; relations which never have been fully restored. From this point onward, Iran positioned itself as a leading opponent of US influence in the Middle East and of Israel's existence, while the US and Israel came to view Iran's government as a central threat to regional stability.

Much of the modern conflict, centres specifically around the Iranian Nuclear programme. Iran's nuclear research had begun under the regime of Shah with Western support, but after the 1979 revolution it has become a source of deep international mistrust and scrutiny, partially due to the fact that Iran has

expanded its uranium enrichment capacity that could, in theory, be diverted towards weapons development.

Successive rounds of UN sanctions were imposed through the 2000s and early 2010s as international inspectors raised concerns that Iran was not being fully transparent about its programme. This pressure eventually produced the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in which Iran agreed to strict limits on enrichment in exchange for sanctions relief from the US, EU, and UN. The deal was widely seen as a rare diplomatic breakthrough — until the US unilaterally withdrew from it in 2018 and reimposed sanctions, a decision Iran called a violation of the agreement. In response, Iran gradually resumed higher-level enrichment, and the trust the JCPOA had built collapsed over the following years.

Alongside the nuclear dispute, Iran and Israel have developed a long running shadow conflict in the middle east which is largely fought through proxies rather than direct war. Iran has built and funded a network of allied armed groups across the region including Hezbollah in Lebanon, various militias in Iraq and Syria, and the Houthis in Yemen which Israel and the US view as extensions of Iranian power projection. In turn, Israel has for years conducted covert operations against Iran's nuclear and military infrastructure, including sabotage and the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists, while Iran has backed attacks on Israeli and US interests through these same proxy networks. This "shadow war" meant that although Iran and Israel never fought each other directly for decades, the region saw near-constant low-level violence connected to their rivalry.

This long build-up is what makes the events of 2025–2026 so significant. Diplomatic talks aimed at replacing the collapsed JCPOA broke down under a US-imposed deadline, and rather than returning to negotiations, Israel and then the United States moved from covert pressure to open war a shift from decades of indirect confrontation to a direct, large-scale military conflict that has since drawn in Lebanon, the Gulf states, and the security of one of the world's most important oil chokepoints. Understanding this history matters because nearly every actor's current position is Iran's insistence on retaining enrichment rights, Israel's demand for the complete dismantling of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, and the US's shifting role between escalation and mediation is a direct continuation of arguments that have been unresolved for over four decades.

Key Resolution for the topic

Resolution 1540 (2004)

Imposed binding global obligations on all states to establish legal controls preventing non-state actors from acquiring nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.

Resolution 1696 (2006)

Invoked Chapter VII to demand that Iran suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities within one month.

Resolution 1737 (2006)

Enacted mandatory non-military sanctions against Iran under Article 41, banning nuclear-related technology transfers and freezing key assets.

Resolution 1747 (2007)

Tightened economic sanctions against Tehran while introducing a mandatory global embargo on all Iranian conventional arms exports.

Resolution 1803 (2008)

Expanded travel bans and asset freezes on Iranian officials while authorizing state inspections of cargo ships suspected of carrying illicit items.

Resolution 1835 (2008)

Reaffirmed all previous resolutions on Iran's nuclear program and demanded full compliance with IAEA demands without introducing new sanctions.

Resolution 1929 (2010)

Imposed the harshest sanction package yet, banning Iranian ballistic missile tests, heavy weaponry acquisitions, and international banking linkages.

Resolution 1984 (2011)

Extended the mandate of the UN Panel of Experts assisting the 1737 Sanctions Committee in investigating sanction evasions and illicit transfers.

Resolution 2049 (2012)

Renewed the operational mandate of the Panel of Experts monitoring compliance with sanctions imposed on Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

Resolution 2105 (2013)

Further extended the monitoring mandate of the UN Panel of Experts to enforce international sanctions on Iranian state entities and individuals.

Resolution 2159 (2014)

Continued the mandate of the Panel of Experts oversight body tracking state compliance with UN Security Council resolutions concerning Iran.

Resolution 2231 (2015)

Endorsed the JCPOA nuclear deal, set structured dates to lift UN sanctions, and established a 10-year 'snapback mechanism' to reinstate embargoes.

Resolution 2817 (2026)

Condemned Iranian military strikes against Arab states and Jordan while demanding an immediate cessation of threats to international shipping routes in the Strait of Hormuz.

Key UN Charter Articles

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter

Strictly prohibits Member States from using or threatening force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. It forms the foundational legal protection against external military aggression under international law. In this conflict, it underpins Tehran's legal arguments against armed strikes on its sovereign soil.

Article 2(7) of the UN Charter

Prevents the United Nations from intervening in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any sovereign state. It ensures that national domestic affairs remain free from external international interference. Iranian diplomats frequently cite this principle to challenge foreign scrutiny over their internal security measures.

Article 24(1) of the UN Charter

Confers primary responsibility on the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of all UN members. It empowers the Council to act decisively as the central global authority during major military confrontations. It forms the legal basis for the Security Council to intervene in escalating regional wars.

Article 33 of the UN Charter

Mandates that parties to any dispute likely to endanger international peace must first seek a solution through peaceful diplomatic means. It lists negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and judicial settlement as required primary steps. It serves as the legal foundation for mandated negotiations prior to enforcing sanctions or military measures.

Article 39 of the UN Charter

Grants the Security Council exclusive authority to formally declare the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression. It acts as the legal gateway required before the Council can authorize non-military or military measures. Without an Article 39 determination, Chapter VII enforcement mechanisms cannot be legally activated.

Article 40 of the UN Charter

Empowers the Security Council to call upon conflicting parties to comply with provisional measures to prevent a situation from aggravating. It allows the Council to mandate temporary ceasefires, troop pullbacks, or humanitarian buffer zones without prejudicing state rights. It serves as the primary tool for halting active combat before negotiating formal treaties.

Article 41 of the UN Charter

Empowers the Security Council to enforce decisions through non-military measures, including trade embargoes, economic sanctions, and severance of diplomatic ties. It provides the legal basis for international economic pressure used to force state compliance. It served as the operational foundation for Resolutions 1737 through 1929 against Iran.

Article 42 of the UN Charter

Authorizes the Security Council to deploy international air, sea, or land forces if non-military measures under Article 41 prove inadequate. It represents the ultimate military enforcement tool available to the UN to restore international peace and security. It is the core legal mechanism delegates must evaluate when debating military authorization models.

Article 51 of the UN Charter

Preserves the inherent right of sovereign states to individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a UN Member. It allows states to take immediate defensive military actions until the Security Council takes necessary measures. It serves as the primary legal justification cited during preemptive, counter-strike, or alliance-based military operations.

Article 103 of the UN Charter

Establishes that obligations under the UN Charter take precedence over any other conflicting international agreement or treaty. It guarantees that Security Council enforcement decisions under Chapter VII legally override bilateral defense pacts or trade treaties. It ensures global legal authority remains centralized within the United Nations system.

Primary Justification by USA and Co.

The primary justification put forward by the pro-Western coalition, spearheaded by the United States and Israel, relies heavily on the legal doctrine of anticipatory collective self-defense, anchored directly under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Pro-Western states argue that the absolute prohibition on the use of force outlined in Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter is temporarily superseded because Iran's state-sponsored proxy networks, ongoing ballistic missile development, and nuclear enrichment program pose an immediate, existential threat to international peace and security. Rather than viewing the joint military action as an illegal act of unprovoked aggression, Western legal advisors frame the strikes as a necessary, defensive reaction to a continuous and multi-front armed attack that has effectively already begun via irregular warfare, regional maritime disruption, and state-backed unconventional warfare.

To establish the legal validity of this preemptive intervention under customary international law, the pro-Western legal argument invokes the historic Caroline test criteria, which require military actions to meet the strict standards of necessity, proportionality, and immediacy. The coalition asserts that diplomatic containment and economic sanctions have been utterly exhausted, creating an absolute necessity to use military force to dismantle the threat. Furthermore, they argue that the immediacy requirement is fully satisfied because waiting for an overt, full-scale conventional missile launch from Iranian soil would result in catastrophic, irreversible damage to civilian populations and critical regional infrastructure. By targeting specific military assets, command and control hubs, and proxy logistics corridors, the Western allies argue their actions are strictly proportionate and tailored exclusively toward neutralizing Iran's offensive capabilities rather than attempting an illegal regime change or permanent territorial occupation.

Finally, the pro-Western legal framework utilizes the unwilling or unable doctrine to justify striking targets within a sovereign state's borders without its prior consent. This specific legal rationale posits that because the sovereign government in Tehran is actively unwilling to curb the hostile actions of its external paramilitary forces, and is instead directly financing, arming, and directing them, allies have a legal right under international jurisprudence to project force into that territory to protect their own national security under the broader umbrella of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. By

synthesizing Article 51 of the United Nations Charter with modern evolutions in the laws of state responsibility, the pro-Western bloc maintains that the military operation represents a lawful exercise of defensive enforcement designed to restore regional stability and uphold the core security guarantees of the international rules-based order.

Primary International Law used as Justification by USA and Co:

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter

"Right of Individual or Collective Self-Defense"

The United States and Israel utilize Article 51 as their core legal justification for joint military operations against Iran. They argue that this article inherently permits sovereign nations to use force to protect their territory and citizens without prior Security Council authorization when facing an active threat. The coalition legally triggers this right by framing the ongoing, coordinated operations of Iran's regional proxy networks as a continuous, multi-front armed attack against their forces and allies.

Customary International Law: The Caroline Doctrine

"Anticipatory Self-Defense (Necessity, Proportionality, and Immediacy)"

The Western coalition uses this customary international law principle to justify preemptive strikes before a conventional launch occurs on Iranian soil. Invoking the historic Caroline standard, they argue that the threat from Iran's ballistic missile infrastructure and nuclear enrichment facilities is immediate and overwhelming. They assert that waiting for an overt strike would cause irreversible civilian casualties, making the intervention an absolute necessity that is strictly proportional to the threat.

The Doctrine of State Responsibility

"The 'Unwilling or Unable' Framework"

The United States and Israel deploy this legal doctrine to justify striking targets inside Iranian territory without the host state's consent. This framework posits that if a sovereign government is actively unwilling or unable to stop irregular paramilitary forces on its soil from attacking foreign nations, it loses its absolute protection against cross-border intervention. The coalition argues that because Tehran directly finances and arms these networks, allies have the legal right to neutralize the threats at their source.

Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter

"Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace and Acts of Aggression"

The United States incorporates Chapter VII to frame its intervention as a systemic enforcement action designed to restore regional stability. The pro-Western bloc argues that because Iran has consistently violated past binding Security Council resolutions regarding arms proliferation and nuclear development, the joint strikes align with the enforcement spirit of Chapter VII, stepping in to uphold collective security while the Council itself remains politically deadlocked.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231

"The Snapback Mechanism and Nuclear Non-Proliferation"

The United States and its European allies leverage the framework of Resolution 2231 to target Iran's nuclear infrastructure. They argue that Tehran committed material breaches of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by accelerating its uranium enrichment and blocking inspectors. The coalition uses these systemic violations to assert that the legal restrictions under older, terminated Security Council resolutions were legitimately reinstated via the non-vetoable "snapback" mechanism. This process underpins their argument that striking nuclear facilities is a lawful act of enforcing global non-proliferation mandates.

Customary International Law: The Doctrine of Continuous Armed Attack

"The Global War on Terror / Accumulation of Events Theory"

The United States and Israel use the "accumulation of events" doctrine to shift the legal timeline of the conflict. Instead of viewing the joint operation as an isolated, first-strike intervention, they argue it is part of an ongoing international armed conflict initiated by Iran's decades of hostile actions. Under this international law principle, a series of smaller, sporadic proxy strikes such as drone swarms, maritime hijackings, and rocket barrages are legally aggregated into a single, continuous "armed attack," which grants the coalition the legal right to strike back at the source.

Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter

"The Principle of Purposeful Interpretation"

While Article 2(4) generally bars the use of force, the pro-Western alliance employs a specific text-based defense to justify their targeted campaign. They argue that their operations do not violate this rule because the strikes are not aimed at altering Iran's "territorial integrity" or permanently ending its "political independence." Because the intervention is explicitly restricted to destroying offensive missile factories and illicit military infrastructure before being followed by a negotiated ceasefire, the coalition claims the force used is entirely consistent with the primary purposes of the United Nations.

The Customary International Law Principle of State Imputation

"The Law of State Responsibility for Non-State Actors"

The United States and Israel deploy the principle of state imputation to legally tie the actions of regional militias directly to the sovereign government in Tehran. Drawing on international jurisprudence, they argue that because Iran exercises "effective control" over these groups providing them with precision-guided munitions, satellite intelligence, and direct financial backing the armed attacks launched by these groups are legally attributable to the state of Iran itself. This imputation allows the coalition to bypass non-state actor legal ambiguities and treat Iran as a direct combatant.

The Customary International Law of the Sea: The Right of Transit Passage

"Enforcement of Non-Suspendable Navigation Rights in International Straits"

The United States and Israel use the law of the sea framework to justify kinetic strikes against coastal military installations and command centers. They argue that under customary international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Strait of Hormuz is a strait used for international navigation where the right of transit passage cannot be impeded, suspended, or selectively blocked, even during active hostilities. The coalition claims that Iran's unlawful actions including commercial vessel seizures, harassment of shipping, and naval mine placement constitute a

severe functional violation of these global transit laws, granting maritime powers the right to use military force to neutralize the infrastructure directly threatening international commerce.

Customary International Law regarding Hostile Cyber Operations

"The Kinetic Equivalence Threshold for Armed Attacks"

The Western coalition integrates cyber jurisprudence into its defensive framework to justify conventional military responses against physical facilities on Iranian soil. They argue under customary international law that state-sponsored cyber operations targeting a nation's critical infrastructure, financial institutions, or defense systems can reach a threshold of gravity and scale that makes them the functional equivalent of a kinetic "armed attack" under Article 51 of the UN Charter. The United States and Israel assert that because Iran has launched destructive cyber-warfare campaigns designed to disrupt their domestic electrical grids, water treatment plants, and military communications, the coalition possesses a legal right to respond through traditional, physical military means to neutralize the instigating command hubs.

The Customary International Law Doctrine of Belligerent Reprisals

"Lawful Recourse to Counter-Force to Compel Legal Compliance"

The United States and Israel invoke the restrictive doctrine of belligerent reprisals to defend actions that would otherwise be considered a violation of territorial sovereignty. Under this customary international law principle, an otherwise unlawful use of force is recognized as legally permissible if it is executed as a measure of last resort in response to prior, persistent violations of the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC) committed by an adversary. The coalition maintains that because Iran has consistently violated international humanitarian law by directing indiscriminate proxy rocket attacks against civilian centers, the joint strikes serve as a lawful, proportionate enforcement mechanism designed solely to compel Tehran to cease its illegal methods of warfare and return to compliance with international norms.

Primary justification by Iran and Co.

The primary justification put forward by Iran and its strategic allies, including Russia, China, and regional partners, rests on a strict, literal interpretation of Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which establishes an absolute prohibition on the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. The pro Iranian legal defense positions the joint military intervention by the United States and Israel as a textbook act of unprovoked aggression and a flagrant violation of international law. Tehran rejects the Western narrative of anticipatory self defense, arguing that the UN Charter deliberately outlawed preemptive strikes to prevent powerful nations from invading sovereign states based on speculative or long term security anxieties. From the Iranian perspective, because the joint strikes lacked prior authorization from the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VII, the operation represents a unilateral breach of a peremptory norm from which no legal derogation is permitted.

To systematically dismantle the Western coalition's self defense claims, the pro Iranian legal argument relies on a rigorous textual reading of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Tehran emphasizes that Article 51 explicitly preserves the inherent right of individual or collective self defense only if an armed attack occurs against a member state. Iran argues that the Western accumulation of events theory and the unwilling or unable doctrine are uncodified, legally invalid frameworks invented by hegemonic powers to bypass state sovereignty. Because Iran had not launched a conventional, large scale armed attack

against the territory of the United States or Israel prior to the operation, the legal threshold to trigger Article 51 was never met by the West. Consequently, Iran asserts that the initial joint strikes were entirely unlawful, meaning that Iran and its allies now become the exclusive holders of the legal right to self defense to repel ongoing external aggression.

Finally, the pro Iranian coalition leverages International Humanitarian Law, specifically the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols, to classify the Western military operation as an unlawful campaign that violates the laws of war. Iran's legal counsel highlights that the targeting of critical civilian infrastructure, public institutions, and internationally safeguarded facilities fails the core IHL tests of distinction, proportionality, and military necessity. By documenting the catastrophic collateral damage and civilian casualties resulting from the strikes, the pro Iranian bloc argues that the operation went far beyond a localized tactical defense and instead manifested as an indiscriminate, punitive assault. By synthesizing the violation of Article 2(4) with the strict requirements of Article 51 and the protective mandates of humanitarian law, the pro Iranian defense maintains that the intervention is an illegal act of state terrorism that must be globally condemned to preserve the integrity of the international rules based order.

Primary International Law used as Justification by Iran and Co:

Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter

"The Absolute Prohibition on the Threat or Use of Force"

Iran utilizes Article 2(4) as its primary defensive legal anchor to condemn all Western military operations on its soil. Tehran argues that the unilateral strikes launched by the United States and Israel constitute an unprovoked violation of its state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence. By framing this article as a peremptory norm from which no legal exceptions can be made without explicit United Nations Security Council authorization, Iran positions the pro Western coalition as the lawbreaking aggressors under global jurisprudence.

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter

"The Actual Armed Attack Threshold for Self Defense"

Iran relies on a strict, literal interpretation of Article 51 to invalidate the Western legal defense of anticipatory or preemptive self defense. Tehran maintains that the text of Article 51 explicitly preserves the inherent right to use military force only if an armed attack occurs against a member state. Because Iran had not launched a conventional, large-scale military invasion against the territory of the West prior to their operation, Iran argues the legal trigger for Western self defense never existed, thereby rendering the coalition actions illegal and granting Iran the sole right to strike back.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

"The Regime of Innocent Passage vs Transit Passage in Territorial Straits"

Iran uses its unique treaty status under UNCLOS to justify its selective maritime enforcement operations in the Strait of Hormuz. Because Iran signed but never ratified the 1982 convention, it legally rejects the Western argument that the non suspendable right of transit passage applies to its waters as customary law. Instead, Iran invokes the older regime of innocent passage over its overlapping territorial waters, arguing that as a coastal state, it possesses the legal authority to monitor, regulate, and restrict the transit of hostile foreign warships that actively threaten its national security.

Customary International Law: The Principle of Sovereign Equality

"Absolute Rejection of the Unwilling or Unable Framework"

Iran leverages the customary international law principle of sovereign equality to challenge the Western legal justification for striking its regional proxy networks. Tehran argues that the unwilling or unable doctrine is an uncodified framework used by hegemonic powers to violate the borders of smaller nations without consent. Iran maintains that its political and military alliances with regional movements do not give external states a legal blank check to bypass its sovereignty, framing cross border strikes on its territory as a fundamental breach of international order.

Customary Law of Armed Conflict: The Principle of Distinction

"The Protection of Safeguarded Nuclear and Civilian Infrastructure"

Iran incorporates the law of distinction from customary international humanitarian law to classify Western attacks on its nuclear enrichment facilities and logistics hubs as war crimes. Under this principle, belligerents are legally required to distinguish at all times between civilian objects and military objectives. Tehran argues that its nuclear facilities are under active International Atomic Energy Agency supervision and serve domestic energy purposes, making any deliberate military strikes on these locations a violation of the laws of war.

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

"Meaning of Innocent Passage"

Iran utilizes Article 19 to legally justify its aggressive naval posturing, boardings, and containment operations against Western warships and commercial vessels in the Persian Gulf. Tehran argues that under this article, passage through a coastal state's territorial sea is only innocent if it is not prejudicial to the peace, good order, or security of that state. Iran asserts that the presence of US and Israeli naval carrier groups, coupled with their unprovoked intelligence gathering and military maneuvers, constitutes a direct threat of force under Article 19(2)(a), thereby stripping those vessels of their right to innocent passage and allowing Iran to legally intercept them.

Article 25 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

"Rights of Protection of the Coastal State"

Iran deploys Article 25 to establish its legal authority to take kinetic and non-kinetic preventive measures within its coastal waters. This article explicitly permits a coastal state to take the necessary steps within its territorial sea to prevent passage which is not innocent. Iran uses this text to counter Western accusations of maritime piracy and illegal harassment, arguing that its naval forces are exercising a codified right to police its maritime borders, protect its domestic safety, and neutralize hostile reconnaissance platforms.

Article 300 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

"Good Faith and Abuse of Rights"

Iran incorporates Article 300 to challenge the systemic legality of Western freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) conducted near its coastlines. This article mandates that state parties must fulfill their convention obligations in good faith and exercise their recognized maritime freedoms in a manner

that does not constitute an abuse of right. Iran argues that the United States and Israel weaponize global navigation freedoms as a geopolitical tool for intimidation and economic blockade, which violates the good faith mandate and turns standard transit into an illegal abuse of international maritime rights.

Article 2(7) of the United Nations Charter

"The Principle of Non-Intervention in Domestic Affairs"

Iran utilizes Article 2(7) as a foundational diplomatic shield to protect its sovereign governance, internal military infrastructure, and domestic missile programs from Western interference. This article strictly prohibits the United Nations and external states from intervening in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any sovereign nation. Tehran argues that its internal choice of governance, regional security alliances, and strategic defense technologies fall entirely within its sovereign domestic domain, making foreign military operations targeting these assets an illegal breach of the non-intervention principle.

Article 103 of the United Nations Charter

"The Supremacy of Charter Obligations Over Regional Security Pacts"

Iran deploys Article 103 to invalidate the mutual defense agreements and bilateral military treaties utilized by the United States and Israel to coordinate their coalition. Article 103 establishes that in the event of a conflict between the obligations of UN members under the Charter and their obligations under any other international agreement, their Charter obligations—specifically the duty to refrain from the unilateral use of force—shall prevail. Iran argues that no regional defense pact or strategic alliance can legally supersede the absolute prohibition on aggression codified in the UN Charter.

Customary International Law: The Principle of Non-Retroactivity of Treaties

"Rejection of Modified or Extracted Treaty Interpretations"

Iran relies on the customary international law principle of non-retroactivity and the strict interpretation of treaty text to combat Western efforts to modify the laws of armed conflict. Tehran argues that the United States and Israel attempt to retroactively apply custom frameworks like the "global war on terror" or "unwilling or unable" doctrines to redefine classic international law principles. Iran maintains that states cannot unilaterally invent or reshape customary rules to excuse modern acts of aggression, asserting that traditional international jurisprudence remains stable and unyielding against hegemonic rewriting.

Customary International Law: The Right of Proportionate Countermeasures

"Legitimacy of State-Backed Resistance and Regional Responses"

Iran leverages the customary international law framework governing state responsibility to defend its political and material relationships with regional movements. Under the law of countermeasures, a state experiencing persistent, unlawful coercion and economic warfare via illegal Western sanctions is permitted to take proportionate, non-kinetic or defensive countermeasures to compel compliance with international law. Tehran argues that its regional alliances and defense coordination serve as a lawful, proportionate counterweight against decades of illegal Western economic blockades and military encirclement.

Perspective of the Global South:

The non-interventionist Global South fold positions itself as the strict constitutional defender of the international legal order, rejecting the political agendas of both the Western coalition and Iran. This legal viewpoint argues that international law must remain stable, predictable, and anchored strictly within the original text of the 1945 United Nations Charter rather than adapting to modern, uncodified doctrines. By placing the preservation of global systemic architecture above the immediate security anxieties or survival tactics of individual combatants, this bloc acts as a conservative legal referee, warning that allowing states to unilaterally invent custom exceptions to the laws of war will inevitably destabilize the entire international rules based order.

The core of this perspective rests on an unyielding application of Article 2(1) and Article 42 of the United Nations Charter, which together mandate the absolute sovereign equality of all member states and vest the authority for military enforcement exclusively within the United Nations Security Council. Legal scholars within this fold systematically reject the Western coalition's reliance on the unwilling or unable framework and anticipatory self defense, classifying them as self legitimized concepts designed to bypass state borders without multilateral consent. Simultaneously, this position refuses to endorse Iran's proxy methods, maintaining under Chapter VIII that neither Western regional pacts nor Iranian revolutionary alliances can execute cross border military campaigns without explicit, prior authorization from the Security Council.

On the high seas, this legal lens utilizes Article 87 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to insulate global commerce from the fallout of bilateral hostilities. The non interventionist fold argues that the freedom of the high seas guarantees uninterrupted navigation for neutral merchant shipping, making both the Western naval blockades and Iran's selective interdictions in adjacent strategic straits fundamentally unlawful. By focusing heavily on the catastrophic precedent that unilateral militarism and maritime disruptions create for smaller developing nations, the Global South fold elevates the argument from a localized geopolitical dispute into an existential defense of multilateralism and global economic survival.

Pre-2020 Timeline

1979:

The Islamic Revolution overthrows the Shah; the 444-day U.S. Embassy hostage crisis in Tehran leads to a formal severance of diplomatic relations.

1980–1988:

U.S. provides intelligence and indirect support to Iraq during the Iran–Iraq War; U.S. Navy engages Iranian forces in Operation Praying Mantis (1988).

2002:

Disclosure of undeclared nuclear enrichment facilities in Natanz triggers global non-proliferation concerns and early UN Security Council oversight.

2006–2010:

The UN Security Council passes a series of binding Chapter VII resolutions (1696, 1737, 1929) imposing global sanctions and requiring Iran to halt enrichment.

2015:

Iran, the P5+1, and the EU sign the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), trading nuclear enrichment limits for sanctions relief; endorsed by UNSC Resolution 2231.

2018:

The United States unilaterally withdraws from the JCPOA under a "Maximum Pressure" strategy, reimposing unilateral economic sanctions.

2019:

Iran officially begins exceeding JCPOA enrichment limits; heightened maritime attacks and tanker seizures occur across the Gulf of Oman.

Post-2020 Timeline

January 2020:

U.S. drone strike in Baghdad assassinates Quds Force Commander Qasem Soleimani; Iran retaliates with ballistic missile strikes on U.S. bases in Iraq.

2021–2024:

Multiple rounds of indirect U.S.–Iran nuclear talks stall; IAEA reports Iran has enriched uranium up to 60% purity, near weapons-grade threshold.

Late 2023–2024:

Regional escalation erupts across the Middle East; Iranian-backed groups (Hezbollah, Houthis, Iraqi militias) engage in direct exchanges with Israeli and Western forces.

Mid-2025:

Oman and Rome host emergency bilateral nuclear talks following a U.S. ultimatum; the deadline expires, prompting localized Israeli strikes during the "Twelve-Day War."

February 28, 2026:

Surprise U.S.–Israeli airstrikes target Iranian government command structures, initiating full-scale state-on-state warfare (termed the "Third Gulf War").

April 2026:

A temporary 5-week ceasefire pauses initial missile bombardments, but military operations quickly shift to a blockade standoff in the Strait of Hormuz.

Current Situation

The temporary truce established in mid June 2026 under the Islamabad Memorandum collapsed rapidly in July after dispute arose over transit protocols along the Strait of Hormuz, plunging the region back into active conflict. When Iranian naval forces intercepted and struck commercial vessels attempting to bypass designated maritime routes, diplomatic channels fractured, restarting direct military exchanges between United States forces and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The failure of the interim memorandum demonstrated that temporary ceasefires cannot hold without resolving the underlying disputes surrounding nuclear enrichment and maritime transit rights.

Hostilities have since expanded into a conflict across multiple theaters in the Persian Gulf and Levant. The United States has maintained near nightly precision strikes targeting Iranian military command posts, air defense networks, and naval assets. In response, Iranian forces and regional proxies have launched retaliatory ballistic missile and drone salvos toward neighboring Gulf nations including Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan. Commercial shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has plummeted, sparking global energy market volatility, severe supply chain delays across Asia and Europe, and soaring fuel inflation worldwide.

At the United Nations, the crisis presents an urgent challenge to international security mechanisms. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors have reported a critical "lost continuity of knowledge" across Iran's nuclear infrastructure due to ongoing military operations, heightening global proliferation risks. Operating under Article 24(1) of the UN Charter and referencing measures like Resolution 2817 (2026), the Security Council remains deadlocked over long term enforcement. Delegates in committee must now navigate this active geopolitical emergency to craft binding frameworks for maritime security, nuclear transparency, and sustainable deescalation.

Russian- Ukrainian Conflict

“The eastern winds sores again”

Basic Overview

The geopolitical crisis between the Russian Federation and Ukraine is less of a localized border dispute and more like a regional "Sword of Damocles," a dangerous crisis hanging over European security and global stability, where a singular misstep risks plunging the international order into broader escalation. Wrapped in decades of complex post Soviet alignment following the 1991 dissolution of the USSR, its fragile diplomatic balance collapsed over structural security guarantees and sovereign alliances. In early 2022, months of intense military build up and failed bilateral security negotiations culminated in direct military invasion, serving as the precursor to the largest land war in Europe since the Second World War.

On 24 February 2022, full scale hostilities erupted as armed forces crossed multiple fronts into Ukrainian territory. Sovereign military command centers, urban infrastructure, and territorial hubs faced immediate bombardment while international diplomatic channels strained to prevent total continental destabilization. Ukraine responded with nationwide mobilization and widespread defense networks across eastern and southern fronts. The ongoing conflict has resulted in thousands of casualties, displaced millions of civilians across borders, and reignited intense strategic friction along NATO's eastern flank. Though early direct talks in 2022 and localized humanitarian corridors offered fleeting diplomatic openings, the crisis quickly morphed into a prolonged military attrition battle over sovereign territorial boundaries and Black Sea maritime routes.

Through subsequent diplomatic frameworks, including trilateral grain initiatives and third party prisoner exchange protocols, temporary operational measures were established, yet comprehensive ceasefires shattered or stalled amidst escalating strategic offensives. Striking disruptions to global energy markets, widespread agricultural supply chain shocks, and disputed territorial declarations continue to destabilize international economic networks. With regional stability undermined and peaceful resolution unresolved, this conflict sits directly under Article 24(1) of the UN Charter, challenging delegates to dismantle a dangling geopolitical threat before the threat snaps completely.

“Peace is not merely the absence of war, but the presence of justice, of law, of order — in short, of government.”

Albert Einstein (Addressing global security and disarmament, 1946)

History of the Conflict

The roots of this conflict trace back to the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, where Ukraine voted overwhelmingly for independence and emerged as a sovereign nation with the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world. The signing of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum served as a foundational turning point; Ukraine agreed to surrender its nuclear stockpile in direct exchange for explicit security assurances from the Russian Federation, the United States, and the United Kingdom respecting its sovereignty and existing borders. For two decades, relations between Kyiv and Moscow navigated a delicate balance between Ukraine's historical cultural ties to Russia and its growing desire for political and economic integration with Western Europe.

Much of the modern conflict centers specifically around Ukraine's geopolitical alignment and security choices. While Russia viewed Ukraine as a core component of its traditional sphere of influence and a vital security buffer against Western alliance systems, Ukraine sought to define its own foreign policy. At the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit, allied leaders declared that Ukraine would eventually join the alliance, a prospective expansion that Moscow labeled a direct threat to its national security interests. Domestic tensions within Ukraine reached a boiling point during the late 2013 Euromaidan protests, triggered when President Viktor Yanukovich suspended a long negotiated European Union Association Agreement in favor of closer financial ties with Moscow, ultimately leading to his removal from office in early 2014.

The political shift in Kyiv rapidly converted diplomatic friction into open territorial conflict. In spring 2014, Russian forces moved to occupy the Crimean Peninsula, organizing a disputed referendum that resulted in Crimea's formal annexation by Moscow, a move declared illegal by UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262. Concurrently, armed pro Russian separatists seized government buildings across the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine, declaring break away republics in Donetsk and Luhansk. This sparked an eight year localized war between Ukrainian forces and separatist militias backed by Moscow. International mediation produced the Minsk I and Minsk II protocols to establish ceasefires and political frameworks, but continuous violations and unresolved disputes over border control left the peace process stalled.

Alongside the localized military dispute in the Donbas, Russia and Ukraine engaged in a long running geopolitical standoff spanning energy supplies, trade restrictions, and information networks. Ukraine sought to sever its structural dependencies on Russian energy transit, while Moscow used gas pricing and pipeline controls to exert political leverage. Simultaneously, NATO expanded its assistance and joint exercises with Ukrainian defense forces, which Moscow interpreted as the incremental militarization of its immediate border. This prolonged buildup meant that although full scale continental warfare had not yet erupted, eastern Europe experienced continuous low level conflict and strategic instability for nearly a decade.

This long buildup is what makes the events of 2022 to 2026 so significant. Diplomatic efforts to implement the Minsk agreements and negotiate new European security architecture broke down completely, and on 24 February 2022, Russia moved from localized support in the Donbas to a full scale military invasion across multiple Ukrainian borders. This marked a profound shift from eight years of low intensity trench warfare to a direct, continental military conflict that has since drawn in massive Western military assistance, global economic sanctions, and structural shifts across international security networks. Understanding this history matters because nearly every actor's current position, including Ukraine's insistence on restoring its 1991 sovereign borders, Russia's demand for recognized territorial gains and permanent Ukrainian neutrality, and the United States and NATO's commitment to strategic deterrence, is a direct continuation of arguments that have been unresolved for over three decades.

Key Resolutions for the Topic

UNSC Resolution 2166 (2014)

Condemned the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine and demanded full international access to the crash site for an independent investigation.

UNSC Resolution 2202 (2015)

Endorsed the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, calling on all parties to strictly adhere to the ceasefire protocols.

UNSC Resolution 2623 (2022)

Invoked the Uniting for Peace mechanism to refer the Ukrainian crisis to an Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly due to Security Council deadlock.

UNSC Resolution 2774 (2025)

Mourned the ongoing loss of life, implored a swift end to the conflict, and urged a lasting peace between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

UNGA Resolution 68/262 (2014)

Affirmed the General Assembly commitment to Ukraine sovereignty and territorial integrity while declaring the Crimean referendum legally invalid.

UNGA Resolution ES 11/1 (2022)

Deplored the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and demanded the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all foreign military forces.

UNGA Resolution ES 11/2 (2022)

Demanded full protection for civilians, humanitarian personnel, and critical civilian infrastructure while urging safe passage for fleeing refugees.

UNGA Resolution ES 11/3 (2022)

Suspended the Russian Federation from its seat on the UN Human Rights Council following reports of severe human rights violations in occupied zones.

UNGA Resolution ES 11/4 (2022)

Declared the staged referendums and attempted annexation of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions illegal and invalid under international law.

UNGA Resolution ES 11/5 (2022)

Recommended the creation of an international register of damage to document and establish a mechanism for war reparations owed to Ukraine.

UNGA Resolution ES 11/6 (2023)

Underscored the necessity of reaching a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter.

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 49/1 (2022)

Established an independent International Commission of Inquiry under the Human Rights Council to investigate alleged war crimes and violations during the conflict.

UNSC Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/12

Expressed grave concern over the worsening security situation in eastern Ukraine and condemned continuous violations of the ceasefire.

UNSC Presidential Statement S/PRST/2022/3

Conveyed strong support for the Secretary General efforts in the search for a peaceful solution to the war in Ukraine.

IAEA Board Resolution GOV/2022/71 (2022)

Called on military forces to immediately cease all activities at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant to ensure nuclear safety and security.

Key UN Charter Articles

Article 2(4)

Strictly prohibits Member States from using or threatening force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. It forms the foundational legal protection against external military aggression under international law and underpins Ukraine's legal arguments against foreign invasion.

Article 2(7)

Prevents the United Nations from intervening in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any sovereign state. It ensures that national domestic affairs remain free from external international interference, a principle invoked during debates over regional political alignments.

Article 24(1)

Confers primary responsibility on the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of all UN members. It empowers the Council to act decisively as the central global authority during major military confrontations and border breaches.

Article 33

Mandates that parties to any dispute likely to endanger international peace must first seek a solution through peaceful diplomatic means. It lists negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and judicial settlement as required primary steps before escalating matters.

Article 39

Grants the Security Council exclusive authority to formally declare the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression. It acts as the legal gateway required before the Council can authorize non-military or military measures.

Article 40

Empowers the Security Council to call upon conflicting parties to comply with provisional measures to prevent a situation from aggravating further. It allows the Council to mandate temporary steps without prejudicing the rights or claims of the states involved.

Primary Justification by the Russian Federation

The primary justification put forward by the Russian Federation rests on an appeal to its core national security interests and a defense against what it characterizes as the aggressive eastward expansion of the

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Moscow argues that successive waves of alliance enlargement up to its borders created an intolerable strategic threat, violating foundational post Cold War understandings regarding European security architecture. From the Russian perspective, diplomatic warnings and proposals for legally binding security guarantees presented in late 2021 were systematically ignored by Western powers, leaving military action as the sole remaining mechanism to defend its sovereign security perimeter against encroachment by hostile military blocs.

To further substantiate its legal and operational stance, Moscow invokes the protection of ethnically Russian and Russian speaking populations, particularly within the Donbas region. The Russian legal framework argues that years of political suppression, legislative restrictions on minority languages, and military clashes following the 2014 political shift in Kyiv necessitated direct intervention to prevent severe human rights violations. Citing principles analogous to humanitarian intervention and the protection of citizens abroad, Russia maintains that its armed forces stepped in to halt sustained hostilities and ensure the physical survival of local populations who rejected the authority of the post 2014 central government in Kyiv.

Finally, the Russian Federation frames its military objectives around the broader concepts of demilitarization and the restoration of strategic balance. Moscow asserts that Ukraine was progressively being converted into an advanced anti-Russian military platform equipped with foreign offensive weaponry, posing a direct and existential danger to the Russian mainland. By demanding a permanently neutral and non aligned status for Ukraine, alongside the elimination of radical nationalist factions within its military structures, Russia presents its operation as a preventive enforcement measure designed to secure long term stability and prevent the consolidation of a hostile geopolitical bridgehead directly on its shared border.

Primary International Law Used as Justification by the Russian Federation:

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter

"Collective Self-Defense and Assistance to Sovereign Allies"

Moscow relies on Article 51 to justify its military intervention, framing its actions as an exercise of collective self-defense in response to formal requests from the authorities of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Russia argues that under international law, sovereign entities have the inherent right to invite external military assistance to repel perceived threats and protect their populations from ongoing internal armed conflict.

Article 2(4) and the Right to Self-Determination

"Prevention of Genocide and Protection of Minority Populations"

The Russian Federation invokes international human rights principles and the right to self-determination to justify its operational footprint in eastern Ukraine. Moscow argues that systematic discrimination, legislative restrictions on minority languages, and prolonged hostilities against Russian-speaking communities constituted a humanitarian crisis that necessitated immediate defensive intervention to prevent widespread suffering.

Chapter VII and Security Council Implementation Failures

"Enforcement of Regional Peace Protocols"

Russia argues that the systematic and continuous failure of Kyiv to implement the Minsk Agreements rendered peaceful diplomatic mechanisms ineffective. Moscow utilizes this diplomatic breakdown to argue that international security guarantees collapsed due to Western inaction, leaving enforcement actions as the only remaining alternative to secure its borders.

The Doctrine of Anticipatory Security and Strategic Balance

"Prevention of Hostile Military Encroachment"

Moscow utilizes the legal concept of preemptive regional defense to contest the expansion of hostile military infrastructure near its borders. Russia asserts that the prospective integration of Ukraine into Western alliance systems posed an existential danger to its national security, justifying preventative measures to maintain strategic parity and a secure buffer zone.

Customary International Law on State Security

"Protection of Sovereign Core Interests"

The Russian legal framework appeals to broad principles of customary international law regarding vital state security. Moscow maintains that when a neighboring territory is converted into an advanced strategic bridgehead by rival global powers, a sovereign state possesses an inherent right to take necessary defensive measures to neutralize immediate threats to its national survival.

Primary Justification by Ukraine

The primary justification put forward by Ukraine rests on an unyielding adherence to the principle of sovereign equality and the absolute prohibition against the use of force enshrined in Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter. Kyiv maintains that as an independent and internationally recognized nation, its borders established in 1991 are inviolable under international law. Ukraine rejects foreign attempts to dictate its internal governance, foreign policy orientations, or security partnerships, asserting that external armed aggression and territorial annexation constitute illegal acts of conquest designed to dismantle its political independence and erase its sovereign identity.

To anchor its legal defense, Ukraine relies on the explicit provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which preserves the inherent right of individual or collective self defense in the face of an armed attack. Kyiv argues that the full scale invasion launched by the Russian Federation represents a textbook violation of international peace, completely invalidating Moscow's pretexts regarding regional security anxieties or minority protection. Because Ukraine posed no military threat to the Russian mainland, its mobilization of national defense forces and requests for military assistance from international allies are framed as entirely lawful exercises of the inherent right to repel foreign aggression and restore territorial integrity.

Finally, Ukraine invokes International Humanitarian Law and universal human rights standards to condemn the conduct of the invading forces, highlighting widespread attacks against civilian population centers, critical energy infrastructure, and residential zones. Kyiv documents systemic violations of the Geneva Conventions, arguing that the deliberate targeting of non combatants and civilian infrastructure fails every established test of distinction, proportionality, and military necessity. By coupling its legitimate defense under Article 51 with extensive documentation of war crimes and infrastructural devastation, Ukraine demands complete international accountability, the return of all occupied territories, and legally binding reparations for the damage inflicted upon its state and people.

Primary International Law Used as Justification by Ukraine

Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter

"The Absolute Prohibition on the Threat or Use of Force"

Ukraine utilizes Article 2(4) as its primary defensive legal anchor to condemn all foreign military operations on its sovereign soil. Kyiv argues that the invasion launched by the Russian Federation constitutes a textbook violation of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence, rejecting any pretexts regarding regional security or minority protection as legally invalid.

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter

"The Inherent Right of Individual and Collective Self-Defense"

Ukraine relies on a strict interpretation of Article 51 to legitimize its nationwide military mobilization and the receipt of international military assistance. Kyiv maintains that because an unprovoked armed attack occurred against its internationally recognized 1991 borders, it holds the absolute legal right to repel foreign aggression and utilize collective defense mechanisms alongside global allies.

UN General Assembly Resolution 3329 (XXIX)

"Definition of Aggression"

Ukraine incorporates the internationally accepted definition of aggression to legally classify the actions of the Russian Federation. Kyiv demonstrates that the deployment of armed forces across recognized borders, the bombardment of population centers, and the attempted annexation of sovereign territory fulfill every statutory criterion of unlawful state aggression under global jurisprudence.

International Humanitarian Law and the Geneva Conventions

"Protection of Civilians and Civilian Infrastructure"

Kyiv heavily leverages the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols to prosecute its legal case against the conduct of occupying forces. Ukraine documents systemic violations of the core principles of distinction, proportionality, and military necessity, utilizing international criminal law to demand accountability for attacks on non-combatants and public utilities.

The 1994 Budapest Memorandum

"Respect for Independence, Sovereignty, and Existing Borders"

Ukraine invokes the legal commitments enshrined in the Budapest Memorandum, under which global powers explicitly assured the respect of its independence and sovereignty in exchange for the surrender of its nuclear arsenal. Kyiv argues that the military invasion represents a severe breach of these binding security assurances, invalidating any unilateral claims made by the invading state regarding territorial adjustments.

Perspective of the Global South

The non-interventionist Global South fold positions itself as a strict constitutional defender of the international legal order, rejecting the political agendas of both the Western coalition and Moscow. This legal viewpoint argues that international law must remain stable, predictable, and anchored strictly

within the original text of the 1945 United Nations Charter rather than adapting to modern, uncoded doctrines. By placing the preservation of global systemic architecture above the immediate security anxieties or survival tactics of individual combatants, this bloc acts as a conservative legal referee, warning that allowing states to unilaterally invent custom exceptions to the laws of war will inevitably destabilize the entire international rules based order.

The core of this perspective rests on an unyielding application of Article 2(4) and Article 42 of the United Nations Charter, which together mandate the absolute sovereign equality of all member states and vest the authority for military enforcement exclusively within the United Nations Security Council. Legal scholars within this fold systematically reject external attempts to bypass multilateral consent, classifying self legitimized military interventions as dangerous precedents that undermine global stability. Simultaneously, this position refuses to endorse unilateral enforcement mechanisms or secondary coercive measures, maintaining that neither regional security blocs nor individual powers can execute cross border military campaigns without explicit, prior authorization from the Security Council.

On the global economic and humanitarian stage, this legal lens emphasizes the necessity of insulating international trade, food security, and energy supply chains from the fallout of European hostilities. The non-interventionist fold argues that the freedom of commerce and navigation guarantees uninterrupted supply lines for developing nations, making both sweeping economic sanctions and the disruption of agricultural exports fundamentally damaging to neutral third party states. By focusing heavily on the catastrophic fallout that unilateral militarism and economic blockades create for smaller developing countries, the Global South fold elevates the argument from a localized geopolitical dispute into an existential defense of multilateralism and global survival.

Pre-2014 Timeline

December 1991:

Ukraine votes overwhelmingly for independence in a national referendum, and the Soviet Union formally dissolves shortly thereafter, marking the emergence of a sovereign Ukrainian state.

December 1994:

Ukraine signs the Budapest Memorandum, surrendering the world's third largest nuclear stockpile in exchange for security assurances respecting its independence and existing borders from Russia, the US, and the UK.

May 1997:

Russia and Ukraine sign the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership, affirming mutual border integrity and granting Russia lease rights to station its Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol.

November 2004 – January 2005:

The Orange Revolution erupts in Ukraine following disputed presidential elections, leading to a court ordered revote and the democratic election of pro Western President Viktor Yushchenko.

April 2008:

At the Bucharest NATO Summit, allied leaders declare that Ukraine and Georgia will eventually become members of the alliance, though no formal Membership Action Plan is granted due to intense European and Russian friction.

November 2013:

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich abruptly halts a long negotiated European Union Association Agreement, sparking massive pro European "Euromaidan" street protests in Kyiv.

Post-2014 Timeline

February 2014:

Civil unrest in Kyiv reaches its peak; President Yanukovich flees to Russia, and an interim government takes power while unmarked Russian military forces seize strategic assets in Crimea.

March 2014:

A disputed referendum is staged in Crimea, followed by Russia's formal annexation of the peninsula; UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262 officially declares the annexation illegal.

April 2014:

Armed pro Russian separatists seize government buildings across Donetsk and Luhansk, prompting Ukraine to launch an anti terrorist operation and initiating eight years of static trench warfare in the Donbas.

September 2014 – February 2015:

Intensive diplomatic mediation produces the Minsk I and Minsk II protocols to establish ceasefires and heavy weapon drawdowns, but continuous violations leave the peace process permanently stalled.

February 24, 2022:

Russia launches a full scale military invasion of Ukraine across multiple axes from Belarus and Russian territory, targeting Kyiv and key military hubs in the largest European war since 1945.

September 2022:

Following rapid Ukrainian counteroffensives, Moscow announces the formal annexation of four partially occupied regions: Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson.

February 2025:

The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 2774, marking its first non procedural resolution urging a swift end to the conflict and a lasting peace between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

Current situation

The operational status of the conflict is defined by an intense war of attrition across an extended, heavily fortified front line cutting through eastern and southern Ukraine. Military engagements feature heavy artillery exchanges, dense defensive minefields, and dynamic electronic warfare tactics, alongside sustained long range missile and drone campaigns targeting critical electrical grid infrastructure. Ground movements have largely slowed into grinding positional combat, with concentrated fighting anchored around strategic regional transportation and industrial hubs in the Donbas region.

Both sides continue to adapt technologically, with Ukrainian forces leveraging tactical drone overmatch and long range strikes against domestic Russian logistics and fuel facilities, while Moscow heavily relies on massed glide bombs and high volume ballistic missile barrages. Despite severe casualty rates

and intensive offensive surges to capture remaining territory in Donetsk, territorial shifts remain incremental as neither military has been able to achieve a decisive operational breakthrough on the ground.

At the international level, the United Nations Security Council remains structurally deadlocked over long term peace terms, shifting diplomatic focus toward General Assembly resolutions, humanitarian funding, and ongoing International Atomic Energy Agency monitoring at nuclear power facilities. International delegates face the compounding challenge of stabilizing global energy and food supply networks while reconciling the inviolable principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity with realistic diplomatic pathways for sustainable de escalation.

The Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Conflict: Security and Stability

“The land of the pure and Afghans”

Basic Overview

The security landscape along the Durand Line, the 2,670-kilometer border separating Pakistan and Afghanistan, represents one of the most volatile and enduring challenges in South Asian geopolitics. What began as a historical administrative demarcation has evolved into a multifaceted crisis characterized by cross-border insurgent activity, military skirmishes, disputes over infrastructure development, and the humanitarian burden of millions of displaced persons. This conflict is not merely a regional border dispute; it is a precarious "Sword of Damocles" hanging over the security of Central and South Asia, where the lack of a formal, mutually accepted demarcation creates a persistent vacuum for instability.

Historical Context and Structural Tensions

The roots of the friction trace back to the 1893 Durand Line agreement, which has been a point of contention between Kabul and Islamabad for over a century. Successive Afghan governments have historically contested the legitimacy of the line, while Pakistan maintains that the border is an internationally recognized boundary. This foundational disagreement serves as a catalyst for deeper security dilemmas. The terrain, characterized by rugged mountainous geography, complicates traditional border control, facilitating the movement of non-state actors, militants, and illicit trade networks that exacerbate the grievances of both states.

Key Drivers of the Conflict

Cross-Border Terrorism:

Both nations frequently trade accusations regarding the presence of militant safe havens. Islamabad consistently expresses concern over attacks staged from Afghan soil, while Kabul has raised objections regarding the impact of border security measures on local populations.

Infrastructure and Demarcation Disputes:

Pakistan's initiative to fence the border to regulate migration and curb militancy has led to frequent military standoffs, as these actions are often viewed as a unilateral attempt to finalize a contested border.

Humanitarian and Refugee Pressures:

The presence of millions of Afghan refugees within Pakistan, coupled with the seasonal migration of border communities, creates immense socio-economic and security pressure, often straining bilateral diplomatic channels.

UN Security Council Resolutions and Regional Frameworks

Resolution/Framework	Significance
UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001)	Mandates that all Member States prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts and deny safe haven to those who finance, plan, or support such acts.
UNSC Resolution 1988 (2011)	Focuses on the threat to peace and security in Afghanistan caused by the Taliban and associated individuals and entities.
UNSC Resolution 2615 (2021)	Ensures that humanitarian aid can reach the Afghan population, exempting specific activities from asset freeze measures under the 1988 sanctions regime.

Legal Justifications and Perspectives

Pakistan's Position

Pakistan asserts that the Durand Line is a permanent international border, and the construction of border fencing is a sovereign right intended to secure the nation against non-state actors. Islamabad argues that stability along the border is prerequisite for regional prosperity and that the primary obligation for preventing cross-border militancy rests with the governing authorities in Kabul.

Afghanistan's Position

Conversely, various Afghan perspectives—spanning decades of political shifts—have questioned the legal status of the border. Kabul often emphasizes the impact of border enforcement on the livelihoods of Pashtun tribes residing on both sides, advocating for humanitarian consideration and bilateral dialogue over unilateral security measures.

Conclusion and Challenges for the Security Council

The Pakistan-Afghanistan border conflict persists as a complex, unresolved geopolitical threat. For the international community and the Security Council, the challenge lies in encouraging bilateral, non-military mechanisms for conflict resolution. Addressing this crisis requires a delicate balance: robust counter-terrorism cooperation, respect for sovereign security measures, and the humanitarian imperative to support displaced populations. As the "thin thread of diplomacy" remains the only barrier to further regional escalation, proactive engagement is vital to prevent this frontier from becoming a flashpoint that draws in broader regional powers.

The Sudanese Civil War

Introduction

The armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) represents one of the most catastrophic humanitarian and security crises in modern African history. Rooted in competing military structures, a stalled transition to civilian rule, and deep-seated political fragmentation following the 2019 overthrow of Omar al-Bashir, the friction collapsed into full-scale civil war in April 2023. What began as a violent power struggle in Khartoum rapidly transformed into a nationwide conflict characterized by mass displacement, severe infrastructure destruction, and widespread ethnic violence, challenging global peace and security frameworks directly under Article 24(1) of the UN Charter.

History of the Conflict

The roots of this conflict trace back to decades of centralized marginalization, proxy warfare, and structural militarization under the regime of Omar al-Bashir, during which paramilitary groups like the Rapid Support Forces evolved out of the Janjaweed militias in Darfur. The 2019 popular revolution successfully overthrew Bashir, creating a fragile power-sharing arrangement between military and civilian leaders that was abruptly short-circuited by a joint military coup in October 2021. This coup dismantled the transition process and left SAF General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF Commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo ("Hemedti") as joint rulers of the state.

Much of the modern conflict centers specifically around the disputed integration of the RSF into the regular armed forces. While the SAF demanded a rapid integration timeline under military command to consolidate a unified national army, the RSF insisted on a prolonged timeline tied to a civilian-led political framework that would preserve its autonomous leadership and vast economic assets. This structural disagreement over military hierarchy and command control turned into a bitter rivalry for supreme authority over Sudan's political future and state resources.

The political friction rapidly converted into open military conflict on 15 April 2023, when coordinated fighting erupted across Khartoum, catching the international community off guard. RSF units seized key government buildings, international airports, and communication hubs, while SAF air assets responded with heavy bombardments. This sparked an intense urban war that quickly spread beyond the capital into the Darfur and Kordofan regions, reviving horrific patterns of ethnically targeted violence, mass atrocities, and systematic displacement reminiscent of the early 2000s Darfur crisis.

Alongside the domestic military gridlock, Sudan became a theater for competing regional and international interests. External actors funneled financial, logistical, and military support to rival factions to secure geopolitical influence, Red Sea access, and lucrative mining resources. This external interference prolonged the fighting, preventing decisive military victory for either side and locking the country into a devastating stalemate that destabilized neighboring nations across the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

This long buildup is what makes the events of 2023 to 2026 so significant. Diplomatic efforts to negotiate lasting ceasefires broke down repeatedly, and the conflict transitioned from a localized capital power struggle into a nationwide collapse of state authority. Understanding this history matters because nearly every actor's current position including the SAF's demand for unconditional RSF dissolution, the

RSF's push for a decentralized federal restructuring, and international mediation efforts is a direct continuation of unresolved structural contradictions that have plagued Sudan for decades.

Key Resolutions for the Topic

UNSC Resolution 2421 (2018)

Established the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) to support the country's political transition to democratic governance.

UNSC Resolution 2524 (2020)

Extended UNITAMS mandate to assist the Sudanese government in implementing peace agreements, protecting human rights, and mobilizing economic assistance.

UNSC Resolution 2715 (2023)

Formally terminated the mandate of UNITAMS at the request of the Sudanese transitional government amid deteriorating cooperation following the outbreak of war.

UNGA Resolution 77/304 (2023)

Condemned the violence in Sudan, urged immediate cessation of hostilities, and underscored the imperative of protecting civilians and humanitarian personnel.

UN Human Rights Council Resolution S-36/1 (2023)

Established an independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan to investigate all alleged human rights violations and abuses committed during the conflict.

UNSC Presidential Statement S/PRST/2023/3

Expressed deep concern over the outbreak of violence, calling for an immediate ceasefire, dialogue, and unhindered humanitarian access across the country.

Key UN Charter Articles

Article 2(4)

Strictly prohibits Member States from using or threatening force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, forming the bedrock legal standard against external meddling in internal sovereign conflicts.

Article 2(7)

Prevents the United Nations from intervening in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any sovereign state, presenting complex legal debates regarding the threshold for international intervention during internal civil wars.

Article 24(1)

Confers primary responsibility on the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, empowering the Council to act as the central global authority during major humanitarian catastrophes.

Article 33

Mandates that parties to any dispute likely to endanger international peace must first seek solutions through negotiation, inquiry, mediation, or other peaceful diplomatic means.

Article 39

Grants the Security Council exclusive authority to formally declare the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, acting as a gateway for international enforcement action.

Article 40

Empowers the Security Council to call upon conflicting parties to comply with provisional measures to prevent a situation from aggravating further, such as mandating humanitarian pauses.

Perspective of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) position themselves as the sole legitimate constitutional authority of the state, framing the Rapid Support Forces as an illegal rebellious militia seeking to overthrow a recognized government through unprovoked armed force. This narrative underpins their core stance that any challenge to the central military leadership constitutes an existential threat to the unity and stability of the nation, thereby justifying a full-scale military response to defend the established state apparatus.

The military leadership invokes foundational principles of sovereign statehood, asserting an inherent right and duty to suppress armed insurrection, protect national borders, and re-establish state control over all domestic territory. By emphasizing their constitutional mandate, the SAF argues that maintaining a unified national command structure is non-negotiable for preserving public order and preventing the total fragmentation of the country into warring regional fiefdoms.

Furthermore, the military strongly condemns external logistical and material supply lines directed toward paramilitary units as severe violations of international law and state sovereignty. The SAF argues that foreign interference and proxy support prolong the national crisis, severely undermining domestic peace efforts and complicating the military's objective of restoring absolute state authority across all regions.

Perspective of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) justify their armed resistance as a necessary democratic struggle against a marginalized military elite in Khartoum, arguing that decades of systemic exclusion necessitate structural political reform and decentralized power. They contend that the traditional military hierarchy has long monopolized state resources and political influence, leaving peripheral populations economically and socially disadvantaged.

The paramilitary leadership invokes the right of self-defense against what it characterizes as indiscriminate aerial bombing campaigns and ethnically motivated crackdowns conducted by the regular armed forces against marginalized communities. From this viewpoint, their military operations are portrayed as a protective shield necessary to counter aggressive state actions and secure physical survival for populations historically targeted by central authorities.

Finally, the RSF leverages international human rights rhetoric to challenge the institutional dominance of the traditional military hierarchy, advocating for equitable representation and comprehensive reform within restructured security forces. They maintain that any sustainable political transition must

dismantle the old military regime's grip on power and establish a truly inclusive government reflecting the diverse fabric of Sudan's population.

Perspective of the Global South

The non-interventionist Global South fold positions itself as a strict constitutional defender of the international legal order, rejecting both external military meddling and unilateral coercive measures by foreign powers in Sudan's internal affairs. This legal viewpoint argues that resolving internal civil strife requires respecting state sovereignty and keeping external actors from fueling proxy wars.

This perspective emphasizes that mediation frameworks must be anchored within regional institutions, specifically the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), ensuring that African-led solutions take precedence over external diplomatic imposition. It warns that bypassing regional multilateral bodies undermines long-term institutional capacity.

The Global South fold strongly emphasizes the absolute necessity of safeguarding humanitarian supply lines, protecting displaced refugees, and preventing regional destabilization caused by massive cross-border population flows. It calls for unhindered aid access while shielding developing economies from the fallout of protracted conflict and food insecurity.

Pre-2019 Timeline

January 1956:

Sudan gains independence from Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule, immediately setting off decades of structural friction between the central government in Khartoum and peripheral regions.

March 1972:

The Addis Ababa Agreement temporarily ends the First Sudanese Civil War, granting regional autonomy to southern Sudan, though underlying tensions remain unresolved.

July 1989:

Brigadier Omar al-Bashir seizes power in a military coup backed by Islamist factions, initiating a long period of authoritarian governance and intensified internal conflicts.

February 2003:

The Darfur conflict erupts as marginalized rebel groups take up arms against Khartoum, prompting the government to mobilize the Janjaweed militia.

July 2011:

South Sudan formally secedes and gains independence following a self-determination referendum, depriving Khartoum of vital oil revenues and intensifying economic strain.

December 2018 – April 2019:

Nationwide protests erupt over soaring bread prices and economic collapse, culminating in the military overthrow and arrest of President Omar al-Bashir after three decades in power.

Post-2019 Timeline

August 2019:

A Constitutional Declaration establishes a fragile civilian-military transitional power-sharing arrangement, paving the way for eventual democratic elections.

October 2021:

General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo execute a military coup, dissolving the transitional government and plunging the country into political isolation.

April 2023:

Full-scale civil war erupts in Khartoum and across Sudan as clashes break out between the SAF and RSF over security sector reform and integration timelines.

May 2023:

The Jeddah talks, co-facilitated by Saudi Arabia and the United States, commence to negotiate humanitarian ceasefires, though agreements repeatedly collapse on the ground.

December 2023:

Rapid RSF advances into Wad Madani and central Gezira state displace hundreds of thousands of previously safe civilians, marking a major territorial turning point.

February 2026:

The security situation remains deadlocked in a brutal war of attrition, with ongoing international diplomatic initiatives striving to broker a sustainable cessation of hostilities.

Current Situation

The operational status of the conflict is characterized by a brutal, fragmented war of attrition spanning multiple urban centers and regional fronts across Sudan. Military engagements feature heavy artillery duels, urban guerrilla combat, widespread structural devastation, and intense aerial bombardment by SAF warplanes targeting RSF-held civilian and administrative zones. Ground movements remain fluid yet grinding, with the RSF maintaining control over large swathes of Darfur, Kordofan, and parts of Khartoum, while the SAF consolidates its presence in the north, east, and central administrative hubs.

Both factions continue to suffer from severe logistical strain and supply chain bottlenecks, relying heavily on external patrons and illicit smuggling networks to sustain their war efforts. The humanitarian crisis has reached catastrophic proportions, with millions facing acute famine, disease outbreaks, and mass displacement across international borders into Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan. The localized devastation has decimated health, educational, and financial infrastructure, leaving generations of civilians vulnerable to severe protection crises.

At the international level, the United Nations Security Council remains heavily constrained by geopolitical divisions, shifting its primary focus toward humanitarian funding appeals, fact-finding missions, and regional diplomatic pressure. International delegates face the immense challenge of bridging the gap between absolute military victory goals held by the warring generals and the urgent necessity of establishing humanitarian corridors. Reconciling state sovereignty principles with robust international intervention frameworks remains essential to preventing the total dissolution of the Sudanese state.

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