



Security Council

Max Hock

1 What is the Security Council?

The UNSC is one of the six main bodies of the United Nations and is tasked with maintaining and achieving international peace and security. It does this through a variety of 'methods' discussed later in this study guide. It is generally considered to be the most important and prestigious of the UN councils and maintains a significant amount of authority through its ability to assign UN peacekeeping troops, impose sanctions, authorize military action and more. The Security Council is also importantly the only body of the United Nations with the ability to issue binding resolutions on all member states, giving it a significant degree of authority over nationally sovereign states.

2 Who is in the Security Council?

The UNSC has 15 members of which 5 are permanent and 10 non-permanent. The five permanent members of the council have veto powers (meaning the ability to block the adoption of a substantive resolution). Currently, the five permanent members are China (the PRC), France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The ten non-permanent members of the council are elected to be representative of their geographic regions and are exchanged on a bi-yearly basis by the General Assembly. The current non-permanent members are Estonia, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Vietnam. Of the 15 member states, one is selected to be the president, an office that rotates monthly. This role would consist mainly of the duties of the chair and is therefore not truly relevant to our simulation.

3 What can the Security Council do?

The UNSC has a variety of methods it can employ through the passing of resolutions to further its goals. Any substantive resolution must be passed by 3/5 of its members (9 nations). If a dispute might cause international friction the UNSC can:

- Call for an investigation of a dispute
- Set forth principles to find a peaceful agreement to the dispute
- Dispatch a mission
- Appoint special envoys

If a dispute leads to violence the UNSC can:

- Issue ceasefire directives
- Dispatch military observers or a peacekeeping force
- Enforce sanctions such as economic sanctions, arms embargoes, financial penalties and restrictions, and travel bans
- Sever diplomatic relations
- Blockade
- Authorize collective military action

Sanctions and embargoes are the UNSC's most common method of maintaining peace. It will often attempt to put financial pressure on a country by issuing crude or specific embargoes to compel the country to break off its aggression, long before the UNSC would



Fig. 1: Security Council

even consider military action. Similarly, the achieving of a cease-fire and subsequent detachment of peacekeeping forces are much more common methods than military intervention.