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## Security Council Background Guide 2021

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



# NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS



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Dear Delegates,

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

The topics under discussion for the Security Council are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

## Conference A

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

## Conference B

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



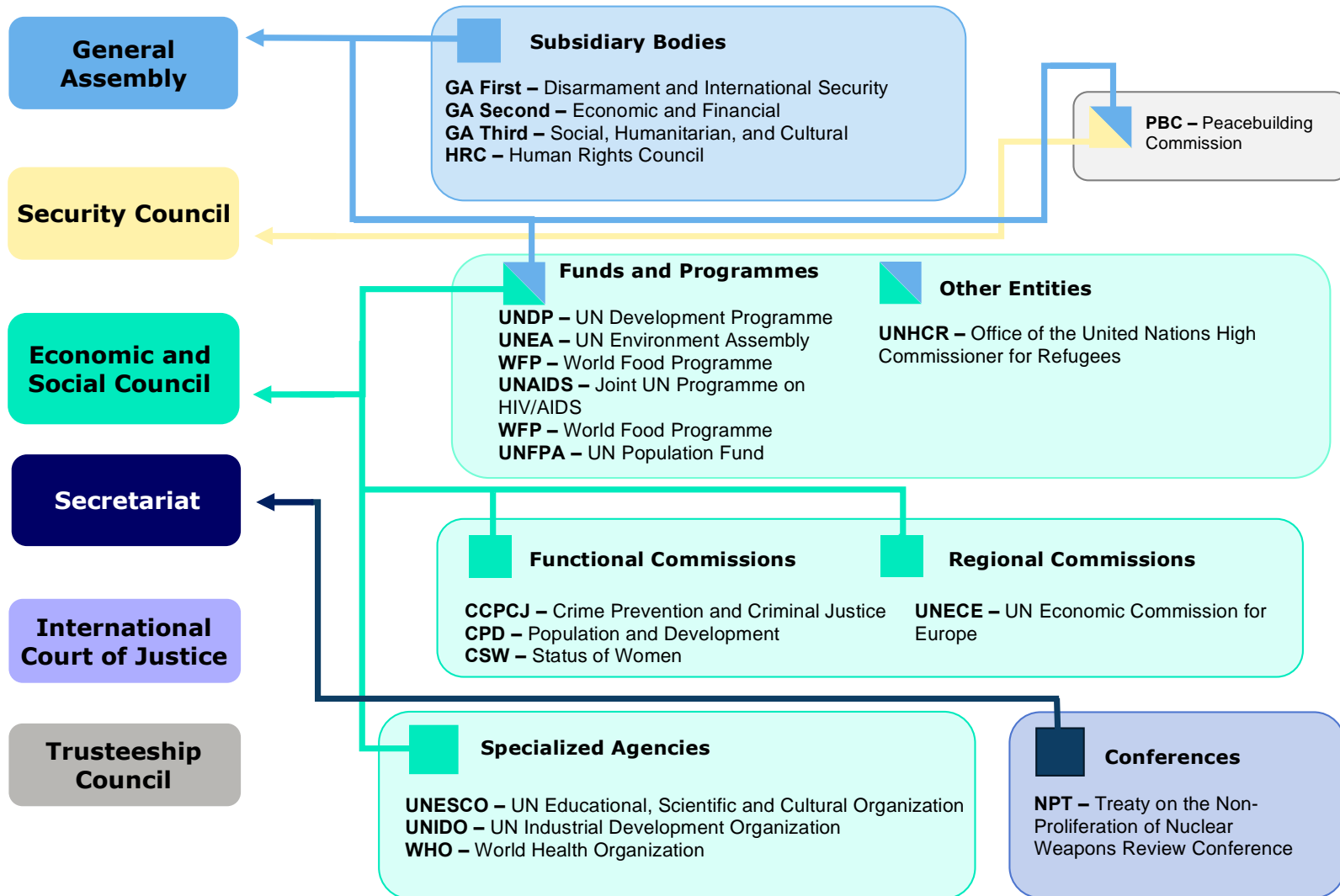
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## United Nations System at NMUN•NY

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



## Committee Overview

### Introduction

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

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

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

### Governance, Structure, and Membership

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

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<sup>1</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> UN Security Council, *What is the Security Council?*, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> UN Security Council, *Voting System*, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Global Policy Forum, *Background on Security Council Reform*, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, *The UN Security Council*, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; Encyclopaedia Britannica, *United Nations Security Council*, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UN DPA, *Politically Speaking, Sustaining Peace, Conflict Prevention, Human Rights and Sustainable Development High on Agenda for New Security Council Members*, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> UN DPPA, *Politically Speaking, Sustaining Peace, Conflict Prevention, Human Rights and Sustainable Development High on Agenda for New Security Council Members*, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> UN Security Council, *What is the Security Council?*, 2019; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

<sup>13</sup> UN Security Council, *Functions and Powers*, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, *Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the United Nations Security Council: Report of the NGOWG Monthly Action Points, 2009-2010*, 2010, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

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

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

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

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

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> UN DGC, *Ahead of Security Council Elections, General Assembly President Explains how a Country can get a Non-permanent Seat*, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Global Policy Forum, *Background on Security Council Reform*, 2020.

<sup>20</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

<sup>21</sup> UN Security Council, *Highlights of Security Council Practice*, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> UN Security Council, *Current Members*, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> UN General Assembly, *Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly (A/RES/68/307)*, 2014, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> UN DGC, *Ahead of Security Council Elections, General Assembly President Explains how a Country can get a Non-permanent Seat*, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> UN General Assembly, *Rules of Procedure*, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> UN Security Council, *Voting System*, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Security Council Report, *In Hindsight: The Veto*, 2013; Security Council Report, *The Permanent Members and the Use of the Veto: An Abridged History*, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Security Council Report, *The Permanent Members and the Use of the Veto: An Abridged History*, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Security Council Report, *In Hindsight: Consensus in the Security Council*, 2014; Security Council Report, *In Hindsight: The Veto*, 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Global Policy Forum, *Background on Security Council Reform*, 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Nastranis, *UN Security Council Reform Back on the Table Again*, 2019.

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

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

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

### **Mandate, Functions, and Powers**

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

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<sup>36</sup> UN Security Council, *Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council (S/96/Rev.7)*, 1982.

<sup>37</sup> UN Security Council, *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, 2019.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Lynch, *U.N. Agencies Struggle to Carry on Remotely*, 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

<sup>43</sup> UN Security Council, *Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council (S/96/Rev.7)*, 1982.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> UN Security Council, *Committees, Working Groups and Ad Hoc Bodies*, 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> UN Security Council, *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, 2019.

<sup>49</sup> UN Security Council, *Committees, Working Groups and Ad Hoc Bodies*, 2019; UN Security Council, *Resolution 2118 (2013) (S/RES/2349) (2013)*, 2013.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> UN Security Council, *What is the Security Council?*, 2019.

<sup>52</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

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

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

### **Recent Sessions and Current Priorities**

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

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

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> UN Security Council, *Functions and Powers*, 2020.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

<sup>64</sup> UN Peacekeeping, *Forming a New Operation*.

<sup>65</sup> UN Peacekeeping, *Role of the Security Council*.

<sup>66</sup> UN Security Council, *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, 2019.

<sup>67</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolutions Adopted by the Security Council in 2020*, 2020.

<sup>68</sup> UN DPA, *Security Council Reporting and Mandate Cycles*, 2018; Security Council Report, *Thematic and General Issues*, 2018.

<sup>69</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolutions Adopted by the Security Council in 2020*, 2020.

<sup>70</sup> UN DGC, *Syria*, 2020.



access for humanitarian convoys to the regions defined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014).<sup>71</sup>

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

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

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

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<sup>71</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2504 (S/RES/2504 (2020))*, 2020.

<sup>72</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolutions Adopted by the Security Council in 2020*, 2020.

<sup>73</sup> UN DGC, *Mali*, 2020.

<sup>74</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2531 (S/RES/2531 (2020))*, 2020.

<sup>75</sup> Security Council Report, *Women, Peace and Security: The Agenda at 20*, 2020.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> UN, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Statement of SRSG-SVC Pramila Patten Security Council Open Debate on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence “Turning Commitments into Compliance” Friday, 17 July 2020*, 2020.

<sup>78</sup> UN News, *Wartime Sexual Violence a “Psychological Weapon”, Sets Back Cause of Peace*, 2020.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2250 (2015) (S/Res/2250 (2015))*, 2015.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2419 (2018) (S/RES/2419 (2018))*, 2018.

<sup>83</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2250 (2015) (S/Res/2250 (2015))*, 2015.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> UN, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, *Security Council Underlines Vital Role of Youth in Building Peace, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2535 (2020)*, 2020.

<sup>86</sup> UN Security Council, *Highlights of Security Council Practice*, 2019.

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

### **Conclusion**

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

### **Annotated Bibliography**

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

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

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<sup>87</sup> UN Security Council, *Threats to International Peace and Security (S/RES/2482 (2019))*, 2019.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> UN Security Council, *Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts: Preventing and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (S/RES/2462 (2019))*, 2019.

<sup>90</sup> UN Security Council, *Tenth Report of the Secretary-General on the Threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to International Peace and Security and the Range of United Nations Efforts in Support of Member States in Countering the Threat (S/2020/95)*, 2020.

<sup>91</sup> UN Security Council, *What is the Security Council?*, 2019.

<sup>92</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> UN DPA Politically Speaking, *Sustaining Peace, Conflict Prevention, Human Rights and Sustainable Development High on Agenda for New Security Council Members*, 2018.

<sup>95</sup> Mead, *UN Security Council Addresses Climate Change as a Security Risk*, 2019.

<sup>96</sup> UN DGC, *Fragile Countries Risk Being 'Stuck in a Cycle of Conflict and Climate Disaster,' Security Council Told*, 2018.

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

United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. (2018). *Security Council Reporting and Mandate Cycles*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: [https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/general/reportingandmandatecycles\\_122018.pdf](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/general/reportingandmandatecycles_122018.pdf)

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

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

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### III. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

*“Civilians continue to account for the vast majority of casualties and are targeted and victims of indiscriminate attacks and other violations and harm by parties to conflict. Twenty years on, the protection agenda is as relevant and pressing as ever.”*<sup>291</sup>

#### **Introduction**

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

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

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<sup>291</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2019/373)*, 2019.

<sup>292</sup> Security Council Report, *Thematic and General Issues*, 2019.

<sup>293</sup> UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts (S/RES/1265 (1999))*, 1999.

<sup>294</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/1999/957)*, 1999.

<sup>295</sup> *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War (2nd part)*, 1949.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>297</sup> Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts, *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol 1)*, 1977, Art. 50; ICRC, *Customary IHL: Rule 5. Definition of Civilians*.

<sup>298</sup> Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts, *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol 1)*, 1977, Art. 50.

<sup>299</sup> *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War (2nd part)*, 1949.

<sup>300</sup> Action on Armed Violence, *Explosive Violence Monitor 2019, 2020*.

<sup>301</sup> UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict – Report of the Secretary General (S/2020/366)*, 2020.

<sup>302</sup> UN DGC, *Speakers Urge Strict Compliance with Global Legal Protections, as Security Council Discusses Plight of Civilians Caught Up in Proxy Wars, Other Conflict Zones (SC/13348)*, 2018.

<sup>303</sup> Security Council Report, *UN Documents for Protection of Civilians: Security Council Resolutions*, 2019.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*



## ***International and Regional Framework***

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

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

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

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<sup>305</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians (S/1674)*, 2006,

<sup>306</sup> Charter of the United Nations, 1945.

<sup>307</sup> *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War (2nd part)*, 1949.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>310</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians (S/25274)*, 1993,

<sup>311</sup> ICRC, *How is the Term “Armed Conflict” Defined in International Humanitarian Law?*, 2008, p. 1.

<sup>312</sup> Chelimo, *Defining Armed Conflict in International Humanitarian Law*, 2011; ICRC, *How is the Term “Armed Conflict” Defined in International Humanitarian Law?*, 2008.

<sup>313</sup> Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, *International Armed Conflict*, 2017; ICRC, *How is the Term “Armed Conflict” Defined in International Humanitarian Law?*, 2008; ICRC, *How is the Term “Armed Conflict” Defined in International Humanitarian Law?*, 2008.

<sup>314</sup> *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians*, 1949.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>316</sup> *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War (2nd part)*, 1949.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

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

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

### **Role of the International System**

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

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<sup>318</sup> UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (A/RES/3318 (XXIX))*, 1974.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>320</sup> UN General Assembly, *2005 World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1)*, 2005; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians (S/RES/1674 (2006))*, 2006.

<sup>321</sup> International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*, 2001; UN General Assembly, *2005 World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1)*, 2005.

<sup>322</sup> International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*, 2001.

<sup>323</sup> African Union, *Draft Guidelines for the Protection of Civilians in African Union Peace Support Operations*, 2010.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>326</sup> UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1296 (2000))*, 2000; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1674 (2006))*, 2006; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2175 (2014))*, 2014; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2286 (2016))*, 2016; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2417 (2018))*, 2018; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Missing Persons in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2474 (2019))*, 2019.

<sup>327</sup> UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1265 (1999))*, 1999; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1296 (2000))*, 2000; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1674 (2006))*, 2006.

<sup>328</sup> UN OCHA, *Five Ways the UN Security Council is Protecting Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2019.

<sup>329</sup> UNAMID, *About UNAMID*, 2020.

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

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

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<sup>330</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2019/373)*, 2019.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>332</sup> UN Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict (S/RES/1612 (2005))*, 2005; UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2019/373)*, 2019.

<sup>333</sup> UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (A/RES/3318 (XXIX))*, 1974; UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2019/373)*, 2019.

<sup>334</sup> UN Security Council, *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325 (2000))*, 2000.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>336</sup> UN Security Council, *Youth, Peace, and Security (S/RES/2535 (2020))*, 2020.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1738 (2006))*, 2006; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2222 (2015))*, 2015; UN Security Council, *Protection of United Nations Personnel, Associated Personnel and Humanitarian Personnel in Conflict Zones (S/RES/1502 (2003))*, 2003.

<sup>339</sup> UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/1738 (2006))*, 2006; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2222 (2015))*, 2015.

<sup>340</sup> UN OCHA, *Building a Culture of Protection: 20 Years of Security Council Engagement on the Protection of Civilians*, 2019.

<sup>341</sup> UN OCHA, *Protection of Civilians Week*, 2020.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*: UN OCHA, *Protection of Civilians Week 2020 Calendar*, 2020

<sup>343</sup> UN OCHA, *Building a Culture of Protection: 20 Years of Security Council Engagement on the Protection of Civilians*, 2019.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*

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

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

### ***Protection of Vulnerable Groups in Armed Conflict***

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

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<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> High-level International Conference on the Protection of Civilians, *The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians*, 2015.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> UN OHCHR, *International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict*, 2011.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> UN OHCHR, *International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict*, 2011.

<sup>351</sup> NATO, *Factsheet: Protection of Civilians*, 2018.

<sup>352</sup> Center for Civilians in Conflict, *POC20: Twenty Years of the Protection of Civilians – Challenges, Progress and Priorities*, 2019.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid..

<sup>354</sup> International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*, 2001.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Security Council Report, *UN Documents for Protection of Civilians: Security Council Resolutions*, 2019.

<sup>357</sup> Office on the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, *#YouthStats: Armed Conflict*, 2015.

<sup>358</sup> OHCHR, *Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019*, 2019, p. 21.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., p. 27.



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

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

#### *Protection of healthcare workers in armed conflict*

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

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

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<sup>360</sup> UN Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict (S/RES/1612 (2005))*, 2005.

<sup>361</sup> Freedson et al., *Children in Armed Conflict Accountability Framework*, 2015.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Office on the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, *#YouthStats: Armed Conflict*, 2015.

<sup>364</sup> Ormhaug et al., *Armed Conflict Deaths Disaggregated by Gender*, 2009.

<sup>365</sup> Humanitarian Outcomes, *Aid Worker Security Report 2020*, 2020.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

<sup>368</sup> UN OCHA, *World Humanitarian Day 2018*, 2018.

<sup>369</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2020/366)*, 2020.

<sup>370</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, *A sixteen-country study: Health care in danger*, 2011, pp. 2-4.

<sup>371</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, 2020; WHO, *Attacks on health care in the context of COVID-19*, 2020.

<sup>372</sup> WHO, *Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care (SSA)*, 2018, pp. 3-5.

<sup>373</sup> UN Security Council, *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/2286 (2016))*, 2016.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

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

### ***Peacekeeping Missions on the Protection of Civilians***

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

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

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

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

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<sup>375</sup> WHO, *Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care (SSA)*, 2018, pp. 3-5.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> UN Peacekeeping, *What is Peacekeeping?*.

<sup>378</sup> UN Peacekeeping, *Protecting Civilians*.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid.

<sup>380</sup> High-level International Conference on the Protection of Civilians, *The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians*, 2015.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

<sup>384</sup> Lilly, *Peacekeeping and the Protection of Civilians: an Issue for Humanitarians?*, *Humanitarian Practice Network*, 2010.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Holt et al., *Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations: Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges*, 2009.

<sup>387</sup> Nichols, *United States to Trim its Peacekeeping Bill After Trump's Call to Slash*, *Reuters*, 2017.

<sup>388</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Independent Inquiry on the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda (S/1999/1257)*, 1999.

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

### **Conclusion**

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

### **Further Research**

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

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<sup>390</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Côte d'Ivoire: UN Peacekeeping Mission Ends*, 2017.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Holt et al., *Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations: Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges*, 2009.

<sup>393</sup> Tracci, #POC20 Series: Trends in the Protection of Civilians through UN Peacekeeping Operations, *Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)*, 2019; UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict – Report of the Secretary General (S/2020/366)*, 2020.

<sup>394</sup> Center for Civilians in Conflict, *POC20: Twenty Years of the Protection of Civilians – Challenges, Progress and Priorities*, 2019.

<sup>395</sup> Security Council Report, *UN Documents for Protection of Civilians: Security Council Resolutions*, 2019.

<sup>396</sup> UN OCHA, *Security Council Norms and Practice on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Analysis of Normative Developments in Security Council Resolutions 2009-2013*, 2014.

<sup>397</sup> UN OCHA, *Building a Culture of Protection: 20 Years of Security Council Engagement on the Protection of Civilians*, 2019.