Arizona Model United Nations 64

Security Council
Background Guide

Chair Introduction

Welcome to the Security Council! My name is Cambrielle Sanders, I am a senior at the University of Arizona where I major in law and minor in psychology. This is my third year being a part of Model United Nations, but specifically my second year, participating with Arizona Model United Nations. I love MUN because of the opportunity to create innovative global solutions and understand more about how the international world works. There are so many pieces of the international regime and international organizations, such as the UN serve a fundamental role in shaping international law and customs. I hope this is a fruitful session where each delegate looks deeper into the social and political influences that impact a nation's decision in the Security Council.

Committee Introduction and Purview

The Security Council is the backbone of the United Nations. The UN Charter established six main organs which included the Security Council. The charter gives the Council the responsibility to maintain international peace and security through addressing threats to peace, breaches of peace, and acts of aggression. To restore order, the council authorizes peacekeeping missions, sanctions, whether economic diplomatic or arms embargoes, and the use of force when necessary. In addition, establishing investigations, recommending states for UN admission, and calling ceasefires or negotiations.

The Council is composed of 5 permanent members and 10 non-permanent members, with a term of two years. The permanent members (also known as the P5) are Russia, China, United States, the United Kingdom, and France. The current rotating members are Bahrain, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, and Liberia. The Council gives each country one vote for substantive matters where 9 votes, including all P5 member votes, for a resolution to pass. P5 members have the ability to veto substantive matters. The dynamic between permanent and non-permanent members creates a limitation where a singular veto can setback action even if the other 14 states were in agreement. The security council is powerful but there are political aspects to consider especially with the permanent members dynamics.

The President of the Council rotates each calendar month going in English alphabetical order. The President serves the Council in more of a procedural position rather than direct power over

topics. The President represents the Council in an official capacity, sets the agenda, presides over meetings, opens and adjourns sessions, recognizes speakers, and facilitates voting procedures. While the President facilitates the Council's meetings, the Security Council as a whole sets its own agenda, deciding which conflicts, crises, or issues to address in formal sessions and informal consultations.

Bibliography
- https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en
- https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/what-security-council
- https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/presidency

There are a few current events that the Council should consider for the agenda:

Topic I: **Countering Piracy and Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea**

Piracy and maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea have posed a challenge to international peace and security since the early 2000s. The region is strategically important due to its role in global trade and energy transportation. Unlike piracy in other regions, attacks in the Gulf of Guinea have largely occurred within territorial waters and have focused on kidnapping-for-ransom, oil theft, and armed robbery. These activities are driven by weak maritime governance, limited naval capacity, corruption, and economic marginalization in coastal communities.

Maritime insecurity in the region threatens international trade, energy security, and regional stability. Attacks on commercial vessels increase shipping and insurance costs and endanger seafarers. Because many incidents occur within national waters, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea raises complex questions of sovereignty, jurisdiction, and enforcement capacity. Persistent insecurity risks strengthening transnational criminal networks and undermining long-term development.

Efforts to address piracy have focused on regional cooperation and capacity-building. Coastal states have increased joint patrols, improved information-sharing, and adopted national maritime security strategies, often with international support. While reported incidents have declined in recent years, progress remains uneven due to limited resources and inconsistent implementation.

The United Nations Security Council has recognized piracy in the Gulf of Guinea as a threat to international peace and security and has encouraged international cooperation in support of regional initiatives. UN bodies such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime have assisted states in strengthening legal frameworks and maritime law enforcement capacity.

Member state positions vary. African states emphasize sovereignty, regional ownership, and addressing root causes. European and North American states prioritize freedom of navigation, protection of trade routes, and capacity-building. States from Asia and Latin America generally support multilateral cooperation to ensure global trade stability.

Overall, UN discussions encourage enhanced regional cooperation, legal harmonization, and long-term development efforts to improve maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Questions to Consider:

1. How can regional ownership of maritime security be strengthened without undermining state sovereignty?
2. What balance should be struck between naval responses and law enforcement solutions?
3. How can economic development initiatives reduce incentives for piracy?
4. What role should international organizations and private shipping companies play?
5. How can accountability and persecution for piracy be improved?

UN Documents

● UNSC Resolution 2039 (2012)
● UNSC Resolution 2634 (2022)

Bibliography

● https://centerformaritimestrategy.org/publications/piracy-in-the-gulf-of-guinea-progress-and-future-challenges/
● https://unowas.unmissions.org/en/unowa/maritime-security-gulf-guinea
● https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15331.doc.htm

Topic II: **Cybersecurity Threats to International Peace**

Cybersecurity has emerged as a major concern in international relations alongside the rapid expansion of digital technologies. States, non-state actors, and criminal organizations increasingly use cyberspace for espionage, sabotage, disinformation campaigns, and attacks on critical infrastructure. As societies become more dependent on digital systems, cyber operations now have the potential to cause disruptions comparable to traditional military actions.

Cybersecurity threats are significant because they directly affect international peace and stability. Cyberattacks can target elections, financial institutions, healthcare systems, energy grids, and military networks, often without clear attribution. The difficulty of identifying perpetrators complicates accountability and increases the risk of miscalculation or escalation between states. Disagreements over how existing international law applies in cyberspace further contribute to uncertainty and tension among member states.

Previous international responses have focused on norm-building, confidence-building measures, and voluntary frameworks rather than binding agreements. States have developed national cybersecurity strategies, engaged in bilateral and multilateral dialogues, and shared best practices. Despite these efforts, divisions remain over issues such as state sovereignty in cyberspace, freedom of information, and the potential militarization of digital domains.

The United Nations has played a central role in facilitating dialogue on cybersecurity through mechanisms such as the Groups of Governmental Experts and the Open-Ended Working Group. These bodies have worked to identify norms for responsible state behavior and clarify how international law may apply to cyber operations. While some consensus has been reached, progress has been gradual and contested.

Member state positions differ widely. The United States and many allied states support a rules-based international order, voluntary norms, and an open, secure internet. Russia and China emphasize state sovereignty and stronger governmental control over information space. European states prioritize data protection, collective cyber defense, and legal clarity. Many developing states focus on capacity-building and protection against cyber exploitation.

Overall, UN discussions emphasize continued dialogue, confidence-building, and technical assistance to reduce cyber risks. Delegates are encouraged to explore how cooperation can be expanded while respecting differing national priorities and interpretations of international law.

UN Documents

- UNSC Resolution 2341 (2017)
- UNSC Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/1

Questions to Consider

1. How should international law apply to cyber operations?
2. How can cyberattacks be attributed responsibility and transparently?
3. What confidence building measures can reduce escalation in cyberspace?
4. How can developing states improve cyber resilience?
5. Should cyberattacks ever be treated as armed attacks?

Bibliography

- https://www.stimson.org/2024/un-security-council-cyber-threats-to-international-security/
- https://un.mfa.ee/events/un-security-council-high-level-open-debate-on-cyber-security/
- https://www.ipinst.org/2024/03/cybersecurity-and-un-peace-operations-evolving-risks-and-opportunities

Topic III: **Regulating Private Military Contractors**

The use of private military contractors has expanded significantly since the 1990s, particularly in conflict zones. PMCs provide services ranging from logistics and training to armed security. While they can supplement state capacity, their growing role has raised legal, ethical, and accountability concerns.

PMCs often operate in legal gray areas, especially in fragile states. Allegations of human rights abuses, lack of transparency, and unclear chains of command have led to questions about

responsibility for their actions. Their presence can undermine state sovereignty, complicate peacekeeping operations, and blur distinctions between civilians and combatants.

Attempts to address these concerns have included national regulations and voluntary international frameworks such as the Montreux Document, which outlines existing legal obligations and best practices. However, enforcement mechanisms remain limited, and accountability gaps persist.

The United Nations has addressed PMCs primarily through human rights mechanisms, including the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries. The General Assembly has debated whether stronger international regulation is necessary, while the Security Council has encountered PMCs indirectly through peacekeeping and sanctions contexts.

Member state positions vary. Many Western states support regulation rather than prohibition. African states often express concerns about sovereignty and exploitation. Latin American states tend to favor stronger international oversight, while some states rely on PMCs for strategic security interests.

UN discussions broadly focus on improving transparency and accountability while balancing sovereignty and security needs.

Questions to Consider

1. Should PMCs be regulated internationally or domestically?
2. Who is legally responsible for PMC actions?
3. How do PMCs affect peacekeeping efforts?
4. Can international oversight be enforced?
5. How can human rights protections be strengthened?

UN Documents

● UNSC Resolution 2462 (2019)
● UNSC Resolution 2719 (2023)

Bibliography

● https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/57/53
● https://www.ejiltalk.org/regulating-private-military-and-security-companies-whats-in-it-for-states/
● https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-mercenaries