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United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

1. Introduction

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six main organs of the United Nations (UN). It is primarily responsible for maintaining **international peace and security**. It is considered the most powerful body within the UN system because it has the authority to make decisions that member states are legally obligated to follow.

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2. Composition of the Security Council

The UNSC has **15 members**:

Permanent Members (P5)

These five countries hold permanent seats and **veto power**:

1. **United States**
2. **United Kingdom**
3. **France**
4. **Russia**
5. **China**

A veto from any of these countries can block any substantive resolution.

Non-Permanent Members

- **10 members**, elected for **2-year terms**.
- Elected by the UN General Assembly.
- Seats are distributed by geographic regions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe).

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3. Main Functions of the Security Council

1. Maintaining International Peace and Security

- Investigates threats or breaches of peace.
- Calls for **ceasefires**, peace talks, and negotiations.

2. Peacekeeping Operations

- Authorizes UN peacekeeping missions.
- Deploys military observers and peacekeeping forces from member states.

3. Sanctions

Can impose sanctions on countries or groups to maintain or restore peace, such as:

- Economic sanctions
- Arms embargoes
- Travel bans

4. Authorization of Military Action

When necessary, the Council can authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace.

5. Admission of New UN Members

Recommends new members to the General Assembly.

6. Selection of the UN Secretary-General

Recommends candidates for Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

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4. How the Security Council Makes Decisions

- A resolution requires **9 out of 15 votes**.
- For *substantive* matters, **no permanent member may veto**.
- For *procedural* matters, the veto does not apply.

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5. Criticisms of the Security Council

1. **Veto power** often blocks decisions.
2. **Representation imbalance**—P5 reflects World War II powers, not current global realities.
3. Calls for reform to include countries like India, Japan, Germany, Brazil, or African nations.

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6. Importance of the UNSC

- Helps prevent global conflicts.
- Manages peacekeeping missions in conflict zones.
- Protects human rights during crises.
- Plays a crucial role in global security and diplomacy.