



SRMUN Charlotte 2025
March 20-22, 2025
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Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Charlotte 2025 and the United Nations Security Council (SC). My name is Jacob Holt, and I will be serving as your Director for the SC. This will be my third SRMUN as a staffer and seventh all together. I previously served as Assistant Director of The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at Virtual SRMUN 2022, and Director of the Peacebuilding Commission at SRMUN Charlotte 2024. I am currently a senior working towards my Bachelor's of Business Administration in Accounting. After graduation I plan to sit for the Certified Public Accountant exam and work in public accounting. The committee's Assistant Director is Eden Chaffee. This will be Eden's second time as a SRMUN staff member after previously serving as Assistant Director for General Assembly Plenary at SRMUN Charlotte 2024. Eden is currently pursuing bachelors degrees in both International Affairs and Psychology. After graduation Eden plans to pursue her Juris Doctorate and become a practicing attorney.

The goal of the United Nations SC is to keep and enforce international security. To serve this goal the SC acts as the UN's primary enforcement body. The SC is composed of 15 Member States including the permanent 5 or P5 Member States of France, the United Kingdom, China, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America. Additionally, there are ten other rotating Member States who are selected for two-year terms. One of the aspects that makes the SC different from other bodies is the ability of the P5 Member States to veto SC resolutions. If any member of the P5 votes no on a substantive vote, then that vote will not pass. The SC will also operate on an open agenda. This means that the members of the committee must motion for and vote on their own agenda topics. I find that an open agenda challenges delegates to research and develop compelling topics that represent their Member State's priorities. Therefore, I hope that all delegates will take this opportunity to prepare appropriately compelling topics so that we may have a lively and informative debate.

Given that there is an open agenda, the background guide will serve as an introduction to the SC and its processes. As SRMUN Charlotte 2025 approaches Eden and I will release updates on highly volatile situations developing around the world. These updates are not only to inform your selection of topics but to serve as a jumping off point for further research. Do your best to stay informed of these issues as they will prove important to the development of our committee. Eden and I look forward to seeing each delegate's choice of topic in your Position Papers and are ecstatic to facilitate this committee!

As a reminder, Position Papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics of your choosing. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write Position Papers, delegates can visit srmun.org. **All Position Papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, February 28, 2025, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website to be eligible for Outstanding Position Paper Awards. (additional information regarding Position Papers can be found on the SRMUN website)**

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History of the United Nations Security Council

The United Nations Security Council (SC) was established as one of the six principal organs of the UN through the signing of the UN Charter on June 26, 1945.¹ Within the UN, the SC is the body that primarily deals with issues surrounding peacekeeping and security, but as mandated in the UN Charter, the SC also has the power to determine what constitutes a threat to peace and security as well as an act of aggression in international and interstate contexts.² It also deals with General Assembly membership, as well as changes to the UN Charter itself.³

The SC first gathered on January 17, 1946, where it was composed of 11 Member States, including the victors of WWII and six temporary seats that would rotate following geographical considerations.⁴ It has since expanded to include 15 Member States, each of whom may cast one vote.⁵ Ten of the seats on the SC rotate on two year terms and are allocated according to the following geographic regions: five for the African and Asian regions, one for the Eastern European region, two for the Latin American and Caribbean regions, and two for the Western European region.⁶ The other five SC seats are filled by permanent members as defined by Article 23 of the Charter of the UN.⁷ Colloquially referred to as the P5- China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America are unique because they possess the power of veto. As detailed in Article 27 of the UN Charter, all substantive matters shall pass the SC by “an affirmative vote of nine members,” provided that all five permanent members vote affirmatively or abstain from the vote.⁸ Unlike the other bodies of the UN, a simple majority is not enough to pass a resolution in the SC, even one P5 power voting against the resolution is enough to table the resolution.⁹ However, the power of veto is not applicable on non-substantive or procedural matters.¹⁰

The outcome of each meeting is recorded with the resolutions discussed, and the vetoes if the resolution failed.¹¹ All votes, resolutions, and other measures taken by the body within a single year are required to be submitted in a report to the General Assembly.¹² This report includes actions taken on procedural matters, regional, country, or subject-specific topics, and key issues related to peacekeeping resolutions.¹³ The SC operates on a rotating presidency system, where each member state, excluding the P5, assumes the presidency for a one-month term.¹⁴ This rotation influences the focus and priorities of the SC during that period.¹⁵

¹ “What Is the Security Council? | Security Council.” United Nations. Accessed July 23, 2024. <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/what-security-council>.

² “UN Charter.” United Nations. Accessed July 28, 2024. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>.

³ “Functions and Powers | Security Council.” United Nations. Accessed July 16, 2024. <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/functions-and-powers>.

⁴ “The UN Security Council.” Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed July 18, 2024. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council>.

⁵ “UN Charter.” United Nations. Accessed July 28, 2024. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>.

⁶ “UN Security Council Working Methods.” Security Council Report. Accessed July 28, 2024. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/>.

⁷ “The UN Security Council.” Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed July 18, 2024. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council>.

⁸ “UN Charter.” United Nations.

⁹ “The UN Security Council.” Council on Foreign Relations.

¹⁰ “UN Security Council Working Methods.” Security Council Report.

¹¹ “Functions and Powers | Security Council.” United Nations.

¹² “The UN Security Council Handbook.” Security Council Report. Accessed July 7, 2024. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/the-un-security-council-handbook-by-scr-1.pdf>.

¹³ “The UN Security Council Handbook.” Security Council Report.

¹⁴ United Nations Security Council, “Membership and Elections,” FAQ, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/faq>.

¹⁵ United Nations Security Council, “Membership and Elections,”

Per its mandate, the SC is responsible for the implementation of Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and XII of the UN Charter.¹⁶ Chapter VI of the UN Charter outlines the SC's primary duty, peaceful settlement of disputes.¹⁷ Articles 39-43 of Chapter VI of the Charter call on parties in dispute to peacefully resolve their disagreements, but allow for the SC to step in on the behalf of the international community if peaceful settlement fails.¹⁸ After deeming the existence of an act of aggression or a breach to peace and security, the SC can respond by imposing sanctions or calling for military action under Articles 40-42.¹⁹ The SC has historically applied sanctions towards several Member States in response to disruptions of peace, such as S/RES/1718 (2006) against the Democratic Republic of Korea's proliferation of nuclear weapons.²⁰ These sanctions fall under Article 41 of the UN Charter, which states that "the SC may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures."²¹ Further, the SC may apply sanction measures such as "complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations" when needed.²² Additionally, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the SC can deploy military action to settle disputes that cannot be resolved through less aggressive sanctions or peaceful negotiations.²³ When invoking Chapter VII, Articles 42-48 dictate the progression of the measures to be taken prior to and during the planning of military action. One of these measures found in the powers of Articles 42-48 is that which allows the SC to authorize peace operations for the stability of Member States.²⁴

Funding for the SC is derived from the regular budget of the United Nations.²⁵ This budget is upheld and maintained through both mandatory and voluntary contributions from all 193 Member States. As stated in Article 17, Clause 2, of the UN Charter, "the expenses of the Organization shall be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly." While other organs of the UN make recommendations to Member States, the SC alone has the power to make decisions which Member States are obligated to implement and abide by.²⁶ The SC may mandate the use of funds from other organs of the UN in the effort to maintain peace and security within the international community.²⁷

¹⁶ The UN Security Council Handbook. Accessed July 7, 2024.

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/the-un-security-council-handbook-by-scr-1.pdf>.

¹⁷ "UN Charter." United Nations. Accessed July 28, 2024. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>.

¹⁸ United Nations, "Chapter VI: Pacific Settlement of Disputes," in *Charter of the United Nations*, October 24, 1945,

¹⁹ "UN Charter." United Nations.

²⁰ "S/RES/1718 (2006) | Security Council." United Nations. Accessed June 29, 2024.

<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/1718-%282006%29>.

²¹ "UN Charter." United Nations.

²² "UN Charter." United Nations.

²³ "UN Charter." United Nations.

²⁴ The UN Security Council Handbook. Accessed July 7, 2024.

²⁵ Council on Foreign Relations, "Funding the United Nations: What Impact Do U.S. Contributions Have on UN Agencies and Programs?" June 8, 2020, https://www.cfr.org/article/funding-united-nations-what-impact-do-us-contributions-have-un-agencies-and-programs?utm_medium=social_share&utm_source=tw.

²⁶ Council on Foreign Relations, "Funding the United Nations: What Impact Do U.S. Contributions Have on UN Agencies and Programs?"

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Security Council Addendum (rev. Aug. 2020)



I. Overview of Agenda

Adoption of Agenda

The United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC, or the Council) annual agenda can be generated from the following five sources: the previous year's agenda, the President of the SC, any UN Member State, the UN Secretary-General, and/or other UN bodies. Regarding the previous year's agenda, the SC may decide to keep certain items on its agenda if more discussion is deemed necessary by the body. For example, a universal yet timeless topic that re-appears on the agenda nearly every year is Women, Peace, and Security.

Additionally, the Office of the SC President plays a crucial role in determining the agenda, as it has the ability to place items on the agenda. For example, in January 2000, the United States of America, which held the Office of the Presidency at the time, placed AIDS as a threat to international security on the agenda.

Furthermore, Article 35 of the UN Charter grants UN Member States the right to refer disputes to the SC. In 1948, India used this mechanism to refer the situation in Kashmir to the SC. Likewise, under Article 99, the UN Secretary-General may bring items to the attention of the SC, as seen when Former Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cueller asked the Council to investigate violations of the Geneva Convention in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

Finally, other UN bodies may refer items to the SC. The General Assembly, for instance, is afforded this right under Article 11 of the UN Charter. General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948, for example, requested the SC discuss the demilitarization of Jerusalem.

In preparation of the formal agenda for the year, the President of the SC and the Secretary-General prepare a provisional agenda based on all sources of potential items. The provisional agenda is provided to the members of the SC, who then discuss and adopt the agenda. The SC may choose to discuss or not to discuss any agenda item referred to it by another body or Member State.

How the SRMUN Security Council Will Set the Agenda

SRMUN's SC will operate differently than other committees held at SRMUN conferences. As opposed to providing delegates with pre-selected topics to consider, the SC, in line with how the real committee operates at the UN, will have an open agenda. The Council is charged with setting the agenda based on current issues of importance to the SC by means of a majority vote. Each delegate will be responsible for presenting two potential topics within their position papers that they will later defend before the SC to be considered as agenda items. These two topics should reflect the most important issues or crisis affecting your Member State. Additionally, these topics do not need to reflect the topics presented to the delegates in the three updates that you will be provided as the conference approaches. The three updates provided prior to conference are simply tools to inspire delegates to think about current events from an international lens.

The SC will operate independently of the other organs at SRMUN due to the possibility of a crisis scenario. Therefore, other UN organs represented at SRMUN will not refer items to the SC. The Secretary-General and the President of the SC are staff members and will not impact substantive debate, except when necessary. This leaves the agenda in the hands of the SC delegates and therefore should be prepared for a range of likely topics.

At the first committee session and after roll call, the President of the SC will open discussion of the agenda. Delegates may make formal speeches and utilize caucuses to discuss potential topics and negotiate how to proceed. After some discussion and negotiation, delegates may make motions to set the agenda. An example of such a motion is:

"The Delegate from Jordan moves for a discussion of the Situation in the Middle East."

Note that the naming of the topic will affect the breadth of the topic. For instance, the issue of “Israeli practices concerning the human rights of the Palestinian people” is much narrower and more focused than “the situation in the Middle East.”

There can be multiple motions for different agenda items, but each motion can only name one potential agenda item. Motions for agenda items will be voted on in the order in which they are received. The first motion to receive nine or more affirmative votes will become the agenda item. At the conclusion of discussion of that agenda item (either through voting or adjournment of the agenda item), the SC will again move back into a discussion of setting the agenda, and the process will proceed until the next agenda item passes by nine or more votes. Delegates may choose to negotiate more than one agenda item at a time, but they can only vote on one item at a time. For example, delegates may decide amongst themselves to discuss “The Situation Regarding Iran’s Atomic Energy Program” and then “Children in Armed Conflict.” However, only one agenda item may be adopted at a time. Thus, delegates would move to set the agenda as the first topic. Once the topic regarding Iran has been discussed and resolutions have been voted on or discussion on the topic has been adjourned, then the SC will move to discuss the agenda again, and delegates would have to move to discuss “Children in Armed Conflict.”

II. Voting

The SC will adhere to the voting rules set forward in the UN Charter. All votes (both procedural and substantive) in the Security Council require a minimum of nine affirmative votes to pass, as outlined in the UN Charter. For instance, a vote of eight in favor, with zero opposed and seven abstentions would fail. Substantive votes (draft resolutions, amendments, and the second vote on division of question) additionally require the “concurring votes” of the Permanent 5 (P5) members of the SC (China, France, Russia, UK, and US). The UN interprets that an abstention by a member of the P5 does not represent a veto. Therefore, for a resolution to pass, all members of the P5 must either vote yes or abstain, and the resolution must receive a minimum of nine affirmative votes. In both 2018 and 2019, the veto was utilized on three occasions, while 2010 and 2013 saw zero veto votes. and 2000, no vetoes were cast.^{28,29}

III. Position Papers

Due to the open agenda of the SC, delegates will be asked to write position papers that are different from all other SRMUN committees. In the place of two topics in the Background Guide, delegates will be presented with three relevant topic updates in the weeks leading up to conference. These topic updates are intended to help prepare delegates with awareness of real-world events that may impact debate in committee. Please note that topics chosen by delegates do not need to reflect those topics presented in the Committee updates.

For their position papers, delegates should identify two issues related to international peace and security that best reflect the interests of their Member State. Position papers should present the significance of the two issues in the order in which their Member State wishes to see them addressed. For instance, the delegate for Chad may propose the following two topics in order: 1) UN Efforts to Remove Landmines; and 2) Eliminating the Small Arms trade in Africa, whereas the delegate for the United Kingdom may propose: 1) UN Participation in the Rebuilding of Iraq; and 2) Terrorism.

IV. Crisis Background

The UN Charter states that the SC should be able to function continuously, and that the SC is the primary UN organ for dealing with crises that could impact international peace and security. Delegates to the SC must be prepared to handle an international crisis at any time.

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²⁸ "Security Council - Quick Links: Veto List," United Nations Security Council, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick>

²⁹ “Changing Patterns in the Use of the Veto in the Security Council.” Global Policy Forum. <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/data/vetotab.htm>

Addressing a crisis situation is often a piece of the work of the SC. If a crisis situation arises, the Secretariat will provide delegates with pertinent briefing materials and periodic updates. The Secretariat will also forward communications from the governments of SC Member States to their representatives, likely in the form of reports and communiqués. Other committees at SRMUN may or may not become involved; however, if such a situation arises, the SC will be notified. If other SRMUN committees are not involved, then SC delegates **SHOULD NOT** interfere with the work of delegates in other committees. It is up to SC delegates to decide a course of action to attempt to resolve a crisis. The primary tools for delegates to resolve a crisis are diplomacy and negotiation. Delegates should be prepared to represent the interests of their Member State in any potential crisis.

V. Outside Parties

Background

The UN Charter gives the SC the option to invite non-Member States of the SC to participate, without vote, in discussions that affect the non-Member States.

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The resources of SRMUN are limited, so logistically, it may not be possible to honor all requests. If a potential crisis requires it, SRMUN may seek ways to accommodate such a request. To invite a non-Member State, delegates must first advise the committee Director and Assistant Director of the request. If it is cleared, a delegate should make a motion such as: “Under Article 32, the delegate from Argentina moves for the invitation of representatives from Cameroon to participate in a discussion of the agenda item under discussion.” The motion requires a vote of nine in favor to pass.

VI. The Double Veto

Background

When the UN was created, the ultimate decisions on whether a vote in the SC was procedural or substantive was left up to the SC itself. On rare occasions, P5 members are able to question whether an item is procedural or substantive. This motion which requires nine affirmative votes and a yay or abstention from each of the P5 members. For instance, a P5 member may challenge the SC President’s ruling that an issue is procedural. The SC then has a substantive vote on whether the issue is procedural or not. The P5 member can veto this vote, making the issue substantive, then veto the original motion. This is known as the double veto. The double veto is rarely used.

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The SRMUN SC has limited meeting time, and the desire of the committee is to maximize the available time. The SC Director has the right to limit the use of the double veto on procedural issues that have minor impacts on debate such as suspension of the meeting and setting the speaker’s time. However, procedural motions such as agenda setting or inviting a party to a dispute could be subject to a potential double veto. To call for the double veto, a member of the P5 should raise their placard after a motion has been made, but before a vote has been taken and make the following motion:

“The delegate from the United Kingdom moves to declare this motion a procedural motion.”

For Example:

“The Delegate from Romania moves for a discussion of the Use of Pre-Emptive Force.”

The Delegate from the United Kingdom raises their placard in their left hand and is recognized:

“The Delegate from the United Kingdom moves to declare this motion a procedural motion.”

Once the President accepts this motion, the SC moves to a substantive vote on whether or not the motion to set the agenda is procedural. A "yes" vote means that it is procedural; a "no" vote means that it is substantive. If the UK votes no, then the motion to set the agenda is considered substantive. At this point, the SC votes substantively on the motion to set the agenda. A no vote from any member of the P5 will veto the motion.

If you have any questions about these issues or any other SC related question, please do not hesitate to consult your Director, Assistant Director, the Director-General or Deputy Director-General.

The Double Veto

