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Human Rights as a Means to Peace: Why the UN Security Council Should Lead on Human Rights

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Human Rights as a Means to Peace:
Why the UN Security Council Should Lead on Human Rights

by

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Undergraduate honors thesis under the direction of

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the Upper Division Honors Program.

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1. Introduction

The creation of the United Nations was the result of a craving for peace among nations after two devastating world wars. There was a widespread desire to create an international organization that would maintain peace and prevent war of such scale from ever happening again. The Charter of the United Nations formally allocated the role of the maintenance of international peace and security to the Security Council, or the UNSC, which is one of six principal organs of the UN. While the world has not seen another world war since the creation of the UN, the international organization receives criticism year after year for its ineffectiveness in handling global situations and issues. Many assign blame for this ineffectiveness to the UNSC and the veto power of the permanent five members on the Council, known as the P-5, which include the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Russia. Criticism of the UN is not unwarranted, and it is undeniable that change is needed. However, it is much more difficult for nations to agree on what realistic changes will lead to greater effectiveness at the UN. This thesis argues that the informal or formal inclusion of the protection of human rights in the UNSC mandate will allow the UN to become more effective in maintaining international peace and security.

Chapter Two of this thesis explains why the UNSC should concern itself with the promotion of human rights over other bodies within the UN. It describes the roles of all six principal organs of the UN and discusses how the current body tasked with protecting human rights, the UN Human Rights Council, is incapable of performing this duty. Furthermore, this chapter explores the connection and relationship between peace and the protection of human rights, particularly civil and political rights, through prior scholarship, indices, and examples from real world conflicts. Chapter Three describes current operations and practices within the UNSC. It highlights instances in which its lack of regard for human rights inhibited the Council's ability to

maintain international peace and security. The chapter offers an explanation for this disregard, attributed primarily to poor human rights standards among certain P-5 states and the refusal among P-5 members to subordinate or forgo national interests that do not align with or support international peace. It further explores instances in which the UNSC succeeded in maintaining peace when it showed concern for human rights and subordinated narrowly defined national interests. Chapter Four explores the different pathways UN member states can take to achieve placement of the protection of political and civil rights within the UNSC mandate, formally or informally. It also offers policy suggestions to the United States, along with those who support this nation, regarding steps they can take to place pressure on the UNSC to prioritize human rights and to reclaim leadership in the realm of human rights. The final chapter reaffirms the need to formally or informally include the protection of human rights in the UNSC mandate, and it reiterates how this can realistically be done.

Critical to the argument of this thesis is the quality and accessibility of human rights in each nation. Freedom House, a non-governmental organization that releases an annual global report analyzing citizen access to political rights and civil liberties in each country, is referenced frequently throughout this thesis as a way to compare human rights among nations. This NGO established an elaborate scoring system that considers various aspects of political and civil liberties, including the electoral process, individual rights, freedom of expression, and association rights. Each country or territory is scored on a scale from zero to 100, with a score of 100 being the freest nation on earth. Each country can receive a maximum of forty points in the category of political rights and sixty points in the category of civil liberties for a combined maximum total of 100 points. In addition to the score, the organization labels each nation as either *free*, *partly free*, or *not free*.

Freedom House was chosen over other human rights indices because it solely considers civil and political rights in its scoring system. This is important because violations of civil and political rights are more clearly identifiable as direct conflict triggers than violations of social and economic rights (Thoms & Ron, 2007). As the role of the UNSC is to maintain international peace and security, this thesis argues the UNSC must concern itself with violations of human rights that trigger violent conflict, namely violations of civil and political rights. Not only do violations of these rights more closely relate to violence and insecurity, but nations are also socially and economically diverse in their cultural and economic systems, which means social and economic rights may vary by nation. If all citizens had access to civil and political rights, however, they would have the power to vote for and define their own social and economic rights in their respective nations. Furthermore, another principal organ of the UN, the Economic and Social Council, or ECOSOC, already handles issues related to economic and social rights. It is for these reasons this thesis argues the UNSC should focus on the protection of civil and political rights specifically in its effort to maintain international peace and security.

2. Why the Security Council?

The United Nations was created to carry out four main purposes which are listed at the beginning of its charter. Its purposes include maintaining peace and security, protecting human rights, upholding respect for international law, and promoting social progress and higher standards of life. There are six principal organs of the UN which were created to carry out these functions: the General Assembly (UNGA), Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the Secretariat. In displaying the need for the UNSC to include human rights in its mandate, the roles, purposes, and powers of each principal organ must be understood. The following section details those roles and powers as described on

each organ's webpage and in *The United Nations: A Very Short Introduction* by Jussi Hanhimäki. Furthermore, it defines human rights, explains why the UN Human Rights Council is incapable of protecting human rights, and proves the complementary nature of human rights violations and insecurity through existing scholarship and modern-day examples. This link is vital, as it supports the argument to include the protection of human rights in the mandate of the UNSC, which is tasked with maintaining international peace and security.

2.1 Roles of the Principal Organs

The General Assembly of the United Nations is the organ in which all member states are represented equally. There are currently 193 sovereign member states in the UN. This is the policy-making organ and a forum for all members to discuss international issues. It has several responsibilities, including making decisions on budgetary matters, electing the ten non-permanent members to the UNSC, and making recommendations on a variety of subjects through resolutions. UN resolutions are formal expressions of opinion or will, and any principal organ can issue one. The UNGA has various subsidiary organs including the UN Human Rights Council. There are forty-seven seats in the UNHRC and the UNGA elects member states for three-year terms. The purpose of the UNHRC is to promote and protect human rights by investigating, addressing, and exposing human rights violations and making recommendations to fix such issues.

The Secretariat is led by the Secretary-General, who serves as the public face of the UN and can be described as the chief administrative officer of the UN. The UNGA appoints the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the UNSC, and terms last five years. The role of the Secretary-General includes bringing issues to the attention of the UNSC, proposing issues for discussion in the UNGA, and aiding in disputes between member states. To perform this final function, it is expected that the Secretary-General is impartial in political matters and widely

supported by member states, especially the P-5. Functions of the Secretariat include preparing background information on issues for government delegates, organizing international conferences, translating speeches, carrying out decisions made by UN bodies, and relaying information about the UN's efforts to the public. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is a department of the Secretariat. Also known as the UN Human Rights Office, it assists governments in upholding human rights through legal expertise and practical training for government officials, judiciary members, police officers, and more. The OHCHR is distinct from the UNHRC, but it does provide information to the Council and carries out tasks assigned by the Council (Blanchfield & Weber, 2020b).

The Economic and Social Council was created to maintain economic security and coordinate UN social work globally by finding solutions for international economic, social, and health problems. It is responsible for promoting higher standards of living, full employment, economic progress, and social progress, along with encouraging nations to respect fundamental freedoms. There are fifty-four seats in the ECOSOC and the UNGA elects member states for three-year terms. Before it was disbanded and replaced by the UNHRC in 2006, the UN Commission on Human Rights was a subsidiary organ of the ECOSOC. The UNGA voted to dissolve it after receiving intense criticism for allowing systematic abusers of human rights to serve as commission members, who in turn used their membership as a protective shield against calls to improve human rights standards in their own nations (Blanchfield & Weber, 2020a).

The ECOSOC has powerful specialized agencies including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the World Health Organization, which report to the principal organ despite being autonomous organizations of the UN system (Hanhimäki, 2008). One particularly important specialized agency is the UN Educational,

Scientific, and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO. This agency works within five fields: education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, communication and information, and culture. The organization's main functions are to promote scientific research, increase and disperse knowledge, establish mutual understanding of different peoples and cultural acceptance through mass communication, apply science to further human development, ensure access to quality education for all, and protect cultures. It aids the ECOSOC in protecting and promoting social and economic rights, which are the freedoms and privileges required to live a dignified life, including the right to a quality education, to live in a healthy and clean environment, and to have access to information.

The International Court of Justice is the organ of the UN that settles legal disputes that member states submit in accordance with international law. It also gives advisory opinions to other UN bodies on legal questions. There are fifteen judges who make up the ICJ, and they are elected for nine-year terms by the UNGA and the UNSC. Located in the Netherlands, it is the only principal organ that does not sit in New York, and it does not have any subsidiary bodies. The Trusteeship Council is obsolete, as it suspended its operations in 1994. This organ was tasked with ensuring that the UN trust territories were administered in the best interests of their inhabitants and of international peace after WWII. The last remaining UN trust territory, Palau, became independent in October of 1994 fulfilling the purpose of the Trusteeship Council. The Council still meets occasionally upon the request of the UNGA, the UNSC, the President of the Council, or the members of the Council.

This leaves the Security Council. The UNSC is the most powerful body in the UN. It has been tasked with maintaining international peace and security. Its functions include investigating any situation that may lead to international conflict or tension, determining the existence of a threat

to peace, recommending actions that should be taken to eliminate threats, and recommending state membership to the UN. It has the power to take military action against aggressors, authorize economic sanctions, and establish peacekeeping operations. The P-5 has the power to veto any resolution decision. The UNGA also elects ten non-permanent members for two-year terms. At least nine of the fifteen members must give affirmative votes for a resolution to pass, but a veto from any P-5 nation prevents passage regardless of how many affirmative votes it received. Abstention from voting by a P-5 state is not considered a veto. The UNSC has been subject to criticism, as an overwhelming amount of power rests in the hands of the P-5.

2.2 Failures of the UN Human Rights Council

The UN Human Rights Council was created in 2006 to replace the widely criticized UN Commission on Human Rights. During the reformation, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan suggested a slightly smaller body of forty-seven members rather than fifty-three members, the number that sat on the Commission. Each geographical region receives an allotted number of seats. Responsibilities of the UNHRC include promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, investigating and addressing human rights violations, making recommendations based on findings of violations, and mainstreaming human rights within all bodies of the UN (Blanchfield & Weber, 2020a). Despite the reduction in six members, the UNHRC receives the same criticism that led to the disbandment of the Commission on Human Rights. Well-known abusers of human rights continue to serve on the Council which contributes to the ineffectiveness of the Council in addressing violations, as abusers seek membership to enjoy impunity from condemnation of their own human rights record.

One would think there must be membership criteria to sit on the UNHRC; there are, on paper. Like all members of the United Nations, members of the UNHRC must undergo a Universal

Periodic Review, or UPR, which examines each state's human rights records and commitments. The President of the Human Rights Council leads the UNHRC in conducting these reviews. After the first review, the UPR working group makes recommendations and the second review examines the implementation of those recommendations. However, the governments of these states are responsible for presenting their own human rights records to the UPR working group. Critics, and common sense, say that statements from governments about their own human rights standards should not be taken at face value. The UNGA can suspend Council membership for gross violations of human rights with a two-thirds affirmative vote. This has only happened one time in 2011 with the suspension of Libya's membership. Since then, member states including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, and Somalia have served on the Council (Blanchfield & Weber, 2020a).

There are no basic human rights standards to serve as the president of the UNHRC either. Since its creation in 2006, the Council has seen fifteen presidents. Of these fifteen presidents, eight of them came from *free* states, six from *partly free* states, and one from a state rated *not free* according to Freedom House. The lack of human rights requirements for the president of the intergovernmental body in charge of promoting human rights may explain most clearly why the UNHRC receives intense criticism for its standards and performance. In the contest for the 2021 presidency, Fiji, a state Freedom House considers *partly free*, was the only candidate for months leading up to the end of 2020. The position rotates by region and in 2021, it is Asia-Pacific's turn at the head of the Council. However, in the days leading up to the application deadline, Bahrain, a state rated as *not free* with a score of eleven from Freedom House, decided to run as well with support from nations including Syria and Russia (Cumming-Bruce, 2020). While Fiji ultimately

won the presidency, it is unthinkable that Bahrain was allowed to run as a legitimate contender for the president of the UNHRC given its poor human rights standards.

This tolerance for systematic abusers of human rights is one major factor that led President Trump to withdraw the United States from the Council in June of 2018. He noted the UNHRC is ineffective largely due to accepting human rights abusers to serve on the Council. The UNGA elected fifteen new members to the UNHRC in October of 2020 who started their three-year terms at the beginning of 2021. New members include human rights abusers like China, Cuba, Russia, and Uzbekistan. Of the fifteen new members, Freedom House only rated two of the states as *free*, labeling the other thirteen as either *partly free* or *not free*. These are just the new members. Current members include abusers such as Eritrea, Libya, Venezuela, and Sudan. The 2021 Council consists of twelve states Freedom House rated as *not free*, sixteen rated as *partly free*, and nineteen rated as *free*. The average Freedom House score for the 2021 Council is 57.49, which the organization would rate as *partly free*. The member states of the Council tasked with protecting and promoting human rights within the largest intergovernmental organization in the world are, on average, partly free in terms of citizen access to political and civil rights.

Another major factor that led President Trump to withdraw the U.S. from the UNHRC is its anti-Israeli bias. He noted the fixation the Council has with condemning Israel whenever possible while ignoring human rights abuses in places like Venezuela, China, and Cuba, which all had seats on the Council at the time of withdrawal. The UNHRC passed more resolutions in 2018 that condemned Israel than ones that condemned Syria, North Korea, and Iran combined (UN Watch, 2018). Former U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, who served from January 2017 to December 2018, wrote extensively about the anti-Israeli bias in the UN. In her memoir about her time as Ambassador, she said: “Citizens of Israel—including its numerous Arab citizens—

have the right to speak freely, worship freely, and live openly as gay or lesbian. In Iran, all of these things are forbidden; some are even punishable by execution. And yet, since its creation, the HRC has condemned Israel ten times more often than it has criticized Iran” (Haley, 2019). Freedom House gave Iran a score of seventeen in its Freedom in the World 2020 index. Syria and North Korea received scores of zero and three, respectively, while Israel earned a score of seventy-six out of 100 (Repucci, 2020).

Recognizing the existence of this anti-Israeli bias is not a matter of subjectivity. The UNHRC commonly issues resolutions that condemn specific countries for their human rights abuses. Between the creation of the UNHRC in 2006 and December 2020, Israel has been the subject of ninety resolutions. Syria comes the closest to Israel’s ninety resolutions with thirty-five. North Korea has been the subject of thirteen, while Iran and Eritrea have been the subject of ten. Venezuela has only been condemned twice (UN Watch Database, 2020). Again, the Council’s bias against Israel is not imagined or supposed; it is factual. Beyond this bias, however, the Council fails to condemn well-known abusers of human rights. As of 2020, nations including Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Cuba, and Sudan have not been the subject of a single resolution that condemns human rights records. Freedom House gave these countries scores of seven, ten, twenty, fourteen, and twelve, respectively, in its 2020 index. These are some of the lowest scoring states in the world in terms of citizen access to political rights and civil liberties. The Council is unwilling to simply express through a resolution that it does not support the human rights abuses in these nations.

If the UNHRC cannot even utter that it does not support blatant abusers of human rights, it is incapable of promoting and protecting these fundamental freedoms. Far too many abusive governments are protected by a council that was created to hold them accountable, as membership on the Council continues to act as a shield from criticism. Even if it did uphold basic human rights

standards and did condemn oppressive governments regardless of what nation they represent, the Council does not have sufficient power or leverage to achieve real change in the world. At best, it makes recommendations and brings public attention to abuses of human rights. At worst, it allows representatives from oppressive nations to serve as the president of the UNHRC. British Ambassador Julian Braithwaite said of the Council, “It is true that the Human Rights Council has no executive powers. It cannot impose sanctions or provide a mandate to intervene. It is not the Security Council” (Braithwaite, 2017). The UNHRC does not have the power to coerce governments into changing their behavior.

This begs the question: why was a relatively powerless, subsidiary body tasked with defending human rights globally? The four main purposes of the UN are to maintain peace and security, uphold respect for international law, promote social progress and higher standards of life, and protect human rights. The Security Council’s main responsibility and focus is maintaining peace and security. The ICJ upholds respect for international law by settling international disputes in accordance with it. The ECOSOC is responsible for promoting social progress and higher standards of life. Which principal organ of the UN was created with the primary responsibility of protecting human rights? The answer is none of them. It was left to subsidiary bodies with little to no power. Perhaps this is because certain P-5 members would have objected to tasking a powerful and effective body with the protection of human rights. As Ambassador Braithwaite noted, the UNHRC does not have executive powers to enforce real change that could protect citizens globally. The UNSC does have such power, however.

It is for these reasons that the United Nations should abolish the UN Human Rights Council. It does more harm than good by protecting human rights abusers and showing them that membership on the Council means immunity from condemnation, and it does not have enough

power to effectively influence human rights globally. The Council's ineffectiveness in protecting human rights means resources, energy, and time are going to waste when they could go to other UN agencies that positively impact the world. This is not to say that the UN should disregard human rights; the protection of human rights is one of its four main purposes and is imperative for the maintenance of international peace. Rather, the UN should give the task to protect human rights to a body that has the power to stop abuse at the hands of an oppressive government or authority. The UNSC is the only body that has such power and influence.

2.3 Human Rights Abuses & Conflict

Addressing issues related to human rights abuses seamlessly fits with the main purpose of the UNSC, which is to maintain international peace and security. Existing research proves that violations of human rights contribute to conflict. More specifically, violations of civil and political rights are more clearly identifiable as direct conflict triggers than violations of social and economic rights (Thoms & Ron, 2007). Furthermore, human rights abuses are nearly inevitable in armed conflict settings. Though abuses may not start every conflict, they are certainly present within the conflict. Serious violations of human rights including torture, human trafficking, sexual violence, and the murder of civilians are common characteristics of modern-day warfare (United Nations, 2011), from the civil war in Syria to the drug war in Mexico. Human rights abuses can cause or come as a result of conflict, making it a prominent topic in any body or agency concerned with preserving international peace. In dealings with conflicts that threaten peace, the UNSC inevitably faces problems related to human rights abuses, as it did after the 1991 Haitian military coup. Additionally, because violations of civil and political rights can trigger conflict, the UNSC should be concerned about such abuses if it seeks to prevent conflicts before they happen.

Civil and political rights are a class of rights that protect individuals' freedom to participate in civil and political life without discrimination or repression; these are the rights that Freedom House considers in its scoring process. Social and economic rights, on the other hand, are the freedoms and privileges required to live a dignified life, such as access to an adequate food supply, education, work, health services, and adequate housing. As the central mandate of the Economic and Social Council is the promotion of social and economic rights, along with the fact that violations of civil and political rights are more clearly identifiable conflict triggers, the protection of civil and political rights exclusively complements the existing UNSC mandate. While there are disputes about what is considered a fundamental human right, civil and political rights are typically agreed upon across national constitutions. As of December 2020, 185 national constitutions in force guarantee freedom of expression, 183 guarantee freedom of assembly, 167 guarantee freedom of opinion, 154 guarantee freedom of the press, and 137 guarantee universal suffrage.¹ Although many governments do not guarantee these rights in practice, the consistency across constitutions proves there is an international consensus about these basic rights. The UNSC should concern itself with violations of these rights specifically, because there is a clear consensus that these are inalienable rights and because they are greater triggers of conflict.

The UN is not oblivious to this link between human rights violations and violence. The website of the OHCHR explicitly states, "The maintenance of international peace and security is one of the purposes of the United Nations Charter. Violence and conflict undermine sustainable development. Human rights violations are at the root causes of conflict and insecurity which, in turn, invariably result in further violations of human rights."² Given that the protection of human

¹ A comprehensive list of all national constitutions can be found at https://www.constituteproject.org/search?lang=en&key=edfree&status=in_force.

² This statement from the OHCHR webpage can be found at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/ManagementPlan/Pages/preventing-violations.aspx>.

rights fits with the agenda of the UNSC to maintain peace and security, along with the fact that the UNSC has the power to take action and use force to intervene, human rights issues are an obvious matter for the Security Council to handle. Certain members within the UNSC apparently do not see the connection between the two and subsequently do not see human rights issues as worthy of its consideration. Former Ambassador Nikki Haley did see this link, and she pushed for the inclusion of human rights issues in the UNSC agenda. As to why this did not happen during her time at the UN, Haley stated, “Russia, along with China, opposed our push to have the Security Council include the violation of human rights in its mandate to protect peace and security” (Haley, 2019).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the original document that defined what the United Nations considers fundamental human rights. The first line in the preamble acknowledges the connection between human rights and international security. It states that recognizing the inherent dignity of all human beings is the “foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in our world.” In an effort to further specify the fundamental rights of mankind, the UNGA adopted two more human rights documents: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These two documents along with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are jointly known as the International Bill of Human Rights. The UNGA accepted the original declaration in 1948 and the two additional covenants in 1966. For the purpose of this thesis, the freedoms outlined in the International Bill of Human Rights will serve as the definition of human rights.³ This document lists a multitude of fundamental rights including freedom of expression, freedom from

³ The International Bill of Rights in its entirety can be found on the OHCHR website at <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/compilation1.en.pdf>.

discrimination of any kind, freedom of movement, freedom from slavery and other inhumane treatment, and the right to a fair and free election. To sum up all that human rights includes, Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the UN, said that all humans shall live in freedom from fear (Hanhimäki, 2008).

As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates in its preamble, peace is largely contingent on respect for human rights. However, it is not necessary to read the preamble or examine existing research to see the inherent connection between the two. The world is full of states that abuse individuals within them. Freedom House identified only eighty-four out of 210 countries and territories as *free* in its 2020 report. Even those countries are not perfect. It is not a coincidence, however, that states with seemingly perpetual violence are the same ones with inarguably poor human rights. Denying human rights can breed violence, and violence leads to violations of human rights. The World Bank releases a list of fragile and conflict-affected situations each fiscal year, and it includes a category for countries affected by violent conflict. This list is meant to help the organization prioritize situations and adapt its approaches, though it does not list all countries affected by violent conflict. In its fiscal year 2021 report, it listed seventeen countries experiencing high-intensity or medium-intensity conflict. Freedom House rated twelve of these countries as *not free* and five as *partly free* with an average score of 24.29 out of 100 for human rights. It is no coincidence that the states experiencing violent conflict also have low human rights standards. There are endless instances and examples of this link, including situations in Sudan, Central Africa, and Iraq.

2.3.1 Sudan

Former President Omar al-Bashir came into power in Sudan in 1989 in a coup d'état and he held power until 2019 when he was overthrown by the military in a coup d'état. Citizens of

Sudan began protesting in December 2018 against al-Bashir and the austerity measures he imposed in an attempt to uphold the economy. The measures included cuts in bread and fuel subsidies, declining overall living standards in much of the country. These protests and displays of civil disobedience continued through April 2019, when protestors stood in front of the national military's headquarters demanding the army to remove al-Bashir from power. Five days later, on April 11, the military announced that it had overthrown the president. The protests continued, however, because many Sudanese citizens wanted free and democratic elections, an internationally recognized freedom and right, and they wanted a civilian-led interim body in charge rather than the Transitional Military Council until those elections took place. The military did not want to give up power, which led to brutal crackdowns on protests. In June 2019, military forces opened fire on a pro-democracy sit-in in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. The attack resulted in the deaths of 127 protestors; there were also reports of rape by security forces. The Transitional Military Council decided to work towards an agreement with the Forces of Freedom and Change, the coalition which represented those citizens who wanted democracy, after receiving international criticism for the attacks; Secretary-General António Guterres and High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet were among the critics (UN News, 2019). The UNSC unanimously voted to extend the mandate of the peacekeeping mission in Sudan, the African Union-United Nations Mission Hybrid Operation in Darfur, following the attack as well.

The two sides reached an agreement in August 2019 with the signing of a constitutional declaration that outlined the plan for the transition to a civilian democracy. They agreed on a thirty-nine-month transition period led by a sovereign council and cabinet of both generals and civilians. The military chose the ministers of defense and interior, while members of the pro-democracy movement nominated all other positions, including prime minister. Pro-democracy civilians were

satisfied with holding off elections for thirty-nine months, as they believe it will take some time to dismantle the political network that inhibited the nation from having fair and free elections in the past (“Sudan crisis,” 2019). The transitional government also made progress in ending the war in Darfur, a western region of Sudan. There has been a major armed conflict and humanitarian crisis in the region since 2003, when fighting broke out between rebel groups and the Sudanese government. These rebel groups accused the government of discriminating against and oppressing the non-Arab population in Darfur. Rebel attacks led to the beginning of the Darfur genocide, known as the first genocide of the twenty-first century, in which the government began a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the non-Arab population in the region. The Sudanese government’s policy of marginalization was a driving factor in South Sudan’s eventual split from Sudan in 2011. Even after the removal of al-Bashir from power, Arab militiamen continued to carry out violence and massacres as late as July 2020. The transitional government of Sudan signed a peace agreement with Darfurian rebel groups in August of 2020 to work towards ending conflict in the region (Dahir, 2020).

Similar peace agreements did not end the killing in the past two decades, but many are hopeful the region might finally see peace now that al-Bashir is gone. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for al-Bashir in 2009 for orchestrating a campaign of mass killing and rape in Darfur, specifically against the non-Arab population, which the government saw as a threat after rebel groups formed to fight the government. The transitional government in Sudan agreed in February 2020 to hand al-Bashir over to the ICC to face trial on charges of genocide and war crimes (Magdy, 2020). This was a promising step for the Sudanese people. Violence continues in Sudan, especially in the Darfur region, which is still considered to be in an ongoing war. Based on the state of the country in 2019, Freedom House gave the nation a score of twelve out of 100

for its political and civil rights. If the transition continues smoothly, it is likely their score will increase in the following years. In fact, their score has already increased by five points in the newly released 2021 Freedom House index.

The recent violence in the capital, in the Darfur region, and across the state came as a result of decades of abuse at the hands of an oppressive government. Discrimination against ethnic groups, an unjust judiciary, limited political rights, limited freedom of expression, and government violence against the people led the Sudanese people to demand change. The situation in Sudan is an example of widespread human rights violations triggering conflict, which led to further human rights abuses as a result of the conflict. If the government under the dictatorship of al-Bashir upheld internationally recognized human rights since coming to power 1989, it is possible the state of Sudan would look much different. Perhaps South Sudan would not even exist as a separate country today.

2.3.2 Uganda & the Lord's Resistance Army

Uganda has had a history of violence since gaining independence in 1962. A new wave of violence began in the 1980s, however, when the National Resistance Army overthrew ethnic Acholi President Tito Okello. After his overthrow in 1986, the Acholi people suffered serious atrocities and oppression at the hands of the new government under Yoweri Museveni. As a result, the infamous Lord's Resistance Army, a Ugandan rebel group, formed within ethnic Acholi communities in northern Uganda in 1987. The proclaimed goals of the LRA, led by Joseph Kony, were to remove President Museveni from power and establish a theocracy based on Kony's interpretation of the biblical Ten Commandments. The group, at first popular in northern Uganda, lost much of its regional support in the early 1990s when it became increasingly violent. To fill his army, Kony began abducting and recruiting children. The stories from former LRA fighters and

survivors that have since come to light show the utter disregard for human life among LRA leaders. Brutal murders, torture, mutilation, sexual slavery, and use of children in armed conflict are typical of the LRA. The group forced children to murder their parents with an ax after abducting them, tortured and killed children who tried to escape, and raped countless young girls, many under the age of thirteen (Raffaele, 2005). By 2003, the LRA had abducted over 20,000 children and killed over 100,000 people (Neiman, 2020).

In 2005, various military campaigns pushed the LRA out of northern Uganda and into neighboring countries including South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and eventually the Central African Republic. While the group is no longer based in Uganda, it continues to commit violent acts against the citizens of these neighboring countries. LRA violence created 1.6 million internally displaced Ugandans whom authorities ordered to settle in government camps plagued with malnutrition, disease, and violence. Death was so common in these camps that Doctors Without Borders described the problem as “beyond an acute emergency” (Raffaele, 2005). People living near the border in neighboring countries were also forced to flee for their lives. The UNSC hardly addressed the issue until December 2008, when it voiced its support for a joint military operation of neighboring armies against the LRA, condemned recent LRA attacks in the DRC and South Sudan, and demanded that it sign a peace accord. It has adopted several other resolutions relating to the LRA since 2008, mostly condemning their actions and demanding an end to the attacks.

The African Union (AU) proposed an initiative and strategy to combat the LRA threat in early 2011 and the UNSC expressed its approval of the initiative. Later that year, the AU Peace and Security Council authorized the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the elimination of the LRA, or the RCI-LRA. The AU council acknowledged the support of the international community

in the creation of the RCI-LRA (Peace and Security Department, 2015). Uganda withdrew its troops from the AU mission in 2016, noting its diminishing power and inadequate support from the DRC, South Sudan, and Central African Republic (Hattem, 2016). Although the violent attacks are declining, there were at least fifty-five LRA attacks and 163 abductions between August 2019 and August 2020 in the three countries where the group still operates (Neiman, 2020).

This violent conflict began because a government, the Ugandan government under President Museveni, oppressed and denied basic human rights to a group of people, the ethnic Acholi. These people, in turn, resorted to violence, perpetrating further gross violations of human rights and threatening regional stability, which forced the UNSC to address the situation. However, had the UNSC been concerned with the oppression of the Acholi people when President Museveni took power in 1986, it may have been able to limit the escalation of violence in the state. This is yet another example of human rights abuses triggering conflict and conflict triggering human rights abuses.

2.3.3 Iraq

Iraq has faced what many would describe as perpetual violence in recent history from the 1958 coup d'état to the Iran-Iraq War to the U.S. military invasion in 2003 to violent insurgency groups. Freedom House rated Iraq as *not free* and gave it a score of thirty-one in its 2020 index. Protests broke out across central and southern Iraq in October 2019 over several issues including government corruption and abuse at the hands of government security forces. The government responded with violent crackdowns on the protests which left at least 544 dead and over 24,000 wounded between October 2019 and March 2020. The Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, established in 2005, allows for free elections and grants citizens the freedom to assemble, but places limits on freedom of expression to preserve order (Repucci, 2020). Journalists were targeted

for reporting on the protests, and the government shut down dozens of television and radio stations (Wille, 2020). Protesters began demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, and this demand was granted in December 2019. More protest demands were granted when Parliament approved a slate of electoral reforms that are expected to reduce the corruption and power of political parties.

The protests are ongoing. Thousands of anti-government protesters took to the streets in October 2020 to mark one year since the protests began, which was met with tear gas and resistance from government security forces. Parliament approved the new prime minister, Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, in May 2020, who was careful to avoid allowing security forces to use mass deadly violence against the protesters on the anniversary (Abdul-Zahra, 2020). Protests continue to turn violent and deadly, however, as people continue to take to the streets to remind the government that their demands have not been met. Economic reform to increase unemployment is still desperately needed, and corruption still runs rampant. The judicial system is also corrupt, and the government continues to allow prosecutors to bring criminal charges against people who hold opinions they disagree with. This has intimidated journalists into silence, reducing free speech in the nation. There have been reports of kidnappings and disappearances of anti-government activists; arbitrary arrests are also common (Wille, 2020).

Beyond the issues driving the protests, the government of Iraq denies its citizens many civil liberties. Minority ethnic and religious groups face discrimination and violence at the hands of the government. Academic freedom does not exist, as educators cannot teach about topics the state may find disagreeable without fear of violence. Due process does not prevail, and death sentences are utilized liberally. Women have far fewer rights than men; they need the consent of a male guardian to obtain a passport as well as the domestic identification documents necessary to get a

job and receive an education. Forced marriages are common, and rapists can avoid prosecution if they marry their victims. Human trafficking and sex slavery are also common (Repucci, 2020). Citizens have grown increasingly comfortable fighting for rights and against corruption, but it is not without cost, as many have died in the fight due to violence from government forces. Had the Iraqi government willingly granted protest demands for greater protection of human rights, it is likely the state would be more peaceful than it is at present.

2.4 Respect for Human Rights & Peace

If human rights abuses lead to conflict, respect for human rights should lead to peace and security. The Global Peace Index is a report that ranks nations and territories based on level of peacefulness. The Institute for Economics & Peace, a global think tank, releases this report annually. When comparing the top thirty freest countries, based on Freedom House's 2020 index, to the top thirty most peaceful countries, based on the 2020 Global Peace Index, eighteen countries appear on both lists. Furthermore, Freedom House rated twenty-five of the top thirty most peaceful countries, according to the Institute for Economics & Peace, as *free* in 2020. On the other hand, Freedom House rated twenty of the thirty least peaceful nations in the world as *not free*. Although respect for human rights does not guarantee peace with complete certainty, the connection between upholding internationally recognized human rights and peace is clear. When people are content, and there are clear avenues they can take if they become discontent, such as voting, lobbying, and peacefully protesting, there are far less reasons for conflict.

This is not to say democratic nations that Freedom House rates as *free* never experience conflict. The United States recently experienced a surge of protests and riots due to discrimination towards Black people in the nation; many turned violent. While the United States has clear avenues that people can take when they are discontent, the Black community felt that no one listened to

their grievances and they needed a way to garner more attention. The 2020 general election in the United States saw a higher voter turnout than any U.S. election in over a century. The protests and riots undoubtedly contributed to this heightened civil engagement, as protesters encouraged like-minded citizens to express their anger and frustration at the voting polls. Fatalities were minimal compared to protests in nations like Iraq and Sudan, and it is likely these protests did not grow deadlier because citizens knew they had an avenue to achieve change in the form of the November election.

It is important to address national poverty levels in the discussion of the link between human rights abuses and violence. One could argue that Japan, Sweden, Canada, and Switzerland, for example, are peaceful because they are relatively wealthy countries. These nations are not only in the top thirty freest countries in the world; they are also among the thirty nations with the highest nominal GDP per capita, according to the World Bank's 2019 statistics. Statistical models show that low GDP per capita is associated with conflict emergence, but this correlation does not prove causation. There is little evidence or research to suggest that poverty leads people to collective violence. One study, which averaged GDP per capita from 1990 to 2003, found that half of the ninety-two poorest countries had not experienced conflict during those thirteen years (Thoms & Ron, 2007). This same research also came to the conclusion that violations of civil and political rights are more clearly identifiable as direct conflict triggers than violations of social and economic rights. In a more recent context, thirteen of the thirty safest nations in the world are not among the thirty wealthiest countries, in terms of GDP per capita, and seven of the thirty safest nations are not even among the fifty wealthiest countries in the world.

2.5 UNSC Mandate

The main purpose of the UNSC is to maintain international peace and security; the link between human rights abuses and insecurity is undeniable. Violations of human rights can lead to conflict, and violent conflict leads to further abuses of human rights. Beyond the fact that the protection of human rights fits within its mandate to maintain security, the UNSC is the only organ that is powerful enough to protect human rights effectively. Unlike any other principal organ of the UN, it has the power to take military action against aggressors, authorize economic sanctions, and establish peacekeeping operations. If executed correctly, these actions could save millions of lives. Furthermore, with the protection of human rights as a listed purpose in its charter, human rights abuses should be an issue that a principal body of the UN is concerned with, rather than a subsidiary body. It is not necessary to create a seventh principal body of the UN to concern itself with the topic when the UNSC already has the power and tools it needs to effectively protect human rights if it chose, or were coerced, to do so.

This is not to say that the UNSC is the only body that should work to protect human rights; each organ has a unique function in the fight to protect them. The UNGA elects the ten non-permanent members to the UNSC. This decision carries weight, and the General Assembly should consider membership carefully to ensure that non-permanent members will uphold human rights. The Secretary-General, the head of the Secretariat, brings issues to the attention of the UNSC; this could include human rights issues. The OHCHR also answers to the Secretariat, and it assists governments in upholding human rights through legal expertise and practical training for government officials. The ECOSOC works to promote economic and social rights for all; these rights complement civil and political rights. With each body working together in some capacity to aid the UNSC in protecting human rights, the world could become a much safer place. The

informal or formal inclusion of the protection of human rights in the UNSC mandate is vital if the world wishes to see greater effectiveness of the UN in maintaining peace.

3. Current UNSC Operations

The power of the UN Security Council does not compare to any other organ or agency within the UN. Members are presented each day with the opportunity and the necessary tools to assist in maintaining international peace and security. What they do with those tools and opportunities, however, depends on how willing they are to cooperate and work together for the greater good regardless of national interests. This section highlights how the lack of concern for human rights standards within the UNSC inhibits its ability to maintain international peace, along with an explanation for its lack of concern. It further describes instances in which the Security Council carried out its intended functions when it displayed concern for human rights and humanitarian crises.

3.1 Peacekeeping Operations

The UNSC uses peacekeeping missions as a tool to carry out its mandate. The Department of Peace Operations, or the DPO, falls under the Secretariat, but it works closely with the UNSC. As the Security Council is tasked with maintaining international peace and security, part of its job is to establish peacekeeping operations through the adoption of resolutions, meaning it dictates when and where to deploy missions. The DPO then plans and carries out the missions, which are intended to stabilize states and regions in conflict through non-violent measures upon the consent of the parties involved. The tasks of peacekeepers vary from mission to mission, but general tasks include containing or preventing the escalation of conflict, stabilizing regions in conflict after ceasefire, guiding governments through democratic reform, and assisting in the peace process

overall. One of their responsibilities is to protect human rights in these regions in conflict.⁴ However, peacekeeping operations are notorious for their failure to keep peace.

Although the UN Peacekeeping Forces won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988, these operations have increasingly become the subject of international criticism in recent decades. Differing political interests among P-5 states influence where missions are and, more importantly, are not sent. During the Cold War, in which the Security Council was particularly ineffective, the Council only established eighteen peacekeeping operations in its first forty-five years. To put that in perspective, the UNSC established over fifty peacekeeping operations between 1990 and 2016 (Schaefer, 2016). This does not mean politics have not influenced peacekeeping operations since the fall of the Soviet Union, however. The UN's failure to prevent the Rwandan genocide in 1994 demonstrates the way politics plays into missions. Peacekeepers were pulled out of Rwanda before the genocide gained momentum and were placed back in the country after most of the damage was already done. The P-5 did not identify any national interests in the country of Rwanda and did not regard protection of human rights to be their responsibility; therefore, they ignored the genocide to avoid expending resources in the region, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. On the other hand, the DPO considers its 1999-2005 peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone a success. The goal of the mission was to help implement a peace agreement after the country's civil war, and peacekeepers were dedicated to staying in the country until it was stable. The United Kingdom's colonial relationship and history very likely contributed to this dedication.

Operations often fail because the UNSC cannot come to an agreement on the root of the problem in these conflicts. When the root of the problem is not properly identified, the mandate for the peacekeepers will not offer adequate directions and strategies that will fix the problem to

⁴ All basic information about the DPO and peacekeeping operation can be found on the UN peacekeeping website, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en>.

establish long-lasting peace (Bardalai, 2018). This results in failed missions. Furthermore, there have been numerous allegations of peacekeepers contributing to civilian suffering through sexual exploitation and abuse in Cambodia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Haiti, and East Timor among other places (Hernandez, 2020). The UN has continued to receive these reports of abuse for decades, garnering international attention and criticism. As the UN peacekeeping budget for the July 2020- July 2021 period is \$6.58 billion, member states expect peacekeepers, at the very least, not to worsen the conflict with this type of behavior. It is important to note that the UNSC cannot be blamed for all that happens during peacekeeping missions, as their sole job is to establish operations for the DPO to carry out. However, the success and failures of peacekeeping operations are a reflection of UNSC successes and failures whether it is warranted or not. It is possible these missions could be much more successful if UNSC members subordinated their national interests for the greater good and prioritized the protection of human rights.

3.2 Protection of Abusers

It is not enough to say that the UNSC does not prioritize or value human rights. There are blatant instances of UNSC members protecting and perpetuating the abuse of human rights. Certain members argue that oppressive governments and human rights violations are not threats to international peace. The following subsections describe how support among certain UNSC members for internationally known human rights abusers including the Kim family, Bashar al-Assad, and Nicolás Maduro have not only perpetuated violations of human rights, but also international insecurity.

3.2.1 North Korea

The North Korean government is known as one of the most brutal and repressive regimes in modern history. Political and civil rights are a foreign concept in the hermit kingdom, earning itself a score of three out of 100 from Freedom House. The government is a dynastic totalitarian dictatorship, and it is a one-party state. Political dissent or opposition to the supreme leader is illegal and the penalties are harsh. This extends to elitists within the ruling Korean Workers' Party (KWP) as well, who will suffer extreme consequences for any perceived disloyalty. The state runs all media outlets and citizens may face the death penalty for consuming foreign radio broadcasts, movies, or music (Repucci, 2020). The state uses education to indoctrinate the children of North Korea at a young age; all curriculum requires approval from the state. This ideological indoctrination includes speaking about the supreme leaders, past and present, as though they were gods. North Korean defector Hyeonseo Lee described the death of Kim Il-sung as puzzling because it never occurred to her that such an almighty being could die. She, along with many other citizens, believed he never slept, never used the restroom, and had the power to control the weather. Indoctrination also includes placing blame on the United States for much of the misfortune in the Korean Peninsula. Lee wrote about this anti-American sentiment while describing her early education experience in North Korea:

Many of the songs we sang in class were about unifying Korea. This was a matter close to my heart because, we were told, South Korean children were dressed in rags. They scavenged for food on garbage heaps and suffered the sadistic cruelty of American soldiers, who used them for target practice, ran them over in jeeps, and made them polish boots. Our teacher showed us cartoon drawings of children begging barefoot in winter (Lee & John, 2018).

In reality, of course, South Korea is among the top fifteen wealthiest countries in the world in terms of GDP, according to the World Bank's 2019 report, and it has a Freedom House score of eighty-three.

There is no due process in North Korea and arbitrary detentions are common. Punishments for crimes, especially political crimes, include public execution, torture, and imprisonment in labor camps. It is mandatory from elementary school to attend public executions; classes are often canceled, and factories release their workers to ensure a crowd. Families of the so-called criminals are commonly forced to watch the execution (Lee & John, 2018). The government suppresses religious groups and denies the existence of homosexuals in the nation. While rights are minimal among all citizens, the state especially discriminates against disabled people. Defectors report that authorities are known to quarantine, exile, sterilize, experiment on, and sometimes execute disabled people. Beyond disabled people, discrimination is mostly based upon perceived disloyalty to the party. Freedom of movement does not exist in North Korea; forced internal resettlement is common and emigration is illegal (Repucci, 2020). Suicide is a form of defection, as it is considered a form of protest, and the state punishes the families of defectors to disincentivize the action (Lee & John, 2018).

This information is not a secret. Despite government efforts to censor outflowing information, the conditions that citizens face in North Korea are known internationally. More specifically, the Chinese government is aware of it, yet they continue to provide assistance that keeps the regime alive. China is North Korea's greatest trade partner; the North Korean government is dependent on China for economic support. After North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006, the international community was surprised to hear China openly condemn the test. China did not abstain from voting in the first UNSC sanctions resolution that targeted North Korea's

nuclear program, which was adopted unanimously with no abstentions. The shock wore off, however, when China took minimal steps to enforce this resolution over the following decade and continued to allow trade of prohibited items under the resolutions, including specialized heavy-duty trucks that North Korea utilized as transport and launch vehicles for long-range missiles. China's continued trade and economic support mitigated the impact of the sanctions, thus disincentivizing North Korea's removal of its nuclear program and allowing the regime to continue business as usual. Chinese authorities continue to encourage firms to do business in North Korea (Wertz, 2019).

Beyond economic support, China stringently enforces North Korea's free movement restrictions. North Korea shares borders with three nations: South Korea, Russia, and China. The border between North Korea and China runs about 880 miles long, and it is the most common border North Koreans cross to defect. Defectors are not safe when they make it to China, however. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees' 1951 Refugee Convention defines the term "refugee" and asserts that refugees shall not be repatriated if they will face serious threats to their life or freedom. Despite international law experts maintaining that North Korean defectors fit the definition of "refugee" as stated in the convention, the Chinese government evades their commitment to the agreement by labeling North Korean defectors as illegal economic migrants rather than refugees. They use this label to justify deportation despite knowing defectors will face harsh punishments after repatriation (Wertz, 2019). Beyond police raids and crackdowns, China incentivizes its citizens to turn in North Korean defectors. In a 2016 interview with *The New York Times*, Hyenseo Lee stated, "Chinese policy is: If you report a North Korean defector, you'll get paid." When asked what she would like to say to the Chinese government, she said, "At least let them safely cross this land. They want to go to their motherland [South Korea], they don't want to

stay in China. Of course I wish China would give them refugee status. Maybe I'm asking too much, because they don't care about their own citizens' rights" (Lee, 2016). China has also used their own resources to strengthen infrastructure and security along the border to keep North Koreans trapped in horrendous conditions.

China has clear interests in preserving the North Korean state under the Kim dynasty. First, North Korea serves as a buffer between China and a strong United States ally. If the Korean Peninsula reunified as a free and democratic nation, U.S. armed forces currently stationed in South Korea would suddenly have access to the Chinese border. Second, if the North Korean regime collapsed, it would cause a massive refugee crisis with potentially hundreds of thousands of refugees pouring into China. The Chinese government currently classifies defectors as illegal economic migrants instead of refugees to deter North Koreans from coming into the country and to maintain relations with North Korea. With no risk of being sent back to a brutal regime, however, it is likely that there would be a massive influx of refugees in China seeking immediate relief before resettlement in South Korea or elsewhere. Third, North Korea's relationship with and dependence on China gives the Chinese government leverage in negotiations, especially with the United States (Wertz, 2019). For example, the Chinese have promised to place more pressure on North Korea to denuclearize on the condition that the United States reduce its military presence in South Korea. It is primarily for these three reasons that China prefers the continuation of the current North Korean regime.

Many governments consider North Korea a threat to international peace and security due to the development of its missile and nuclear program. Since its first nuclear test in 2006, the UNSC has adopted twenty resolutions concerning North Korea, all of which relate to non-proliferation in some capacity. While human rights abuses were not the subject of any UNSC

resolution concerning North Korea, members of the UNSC used the topic to pressure China into supporting sanctions. North Korea launched its first intercontinental ballistic missile in November 2017, which was a clear threat to international peace and security. The United States and supporters pushed to hold a Security Council session to highlight human rights abuses in North Korea to put pressure on China to vote affirmatively to a new set of sanctions in response to the missile launch. The UNSC votes on procedural matters, which must receive nine affirmative votes to pass, and the P-5 do not have veto power in these matters. In this case, a procedural vote was held to decide whether the Council would hear a briefing on the humanitarian situation in North Korea. Three states objected to the briefing: China, Russia, and Bolivia. Each claimed that human rights issues did not fit in the UNSC's mandate to maintain peace and security, and China specifically said that human rights issues should not be "politicized." However, with more than nine affirmative votes, the briefing commenced ("Security Council Adopts," 2017).

The session especially highlighted what happens to North Korean defectors that China sends back. Two North Korean women who had been forcibly repatriated by China, but eventually made it out of North Korea again, spoke at the briefing and shared their stories. The briefing served its purpose, as the toughest sanctions to date against North Korea passed in late December of 2017 (Haley, 2019). The United States was able to garner support for the briefing by maintaining that there is no separation between peace and human rights. If the UNSC prioritized the protection of human rights and P-5 members ended all support for the North Korean regime, it would simultaneously reduce a massive threat to international peace by restricting and limiting a government that continues to pursue the expansion of its nuclear program despite international condemnation. This is a clear example of how the UNSC could make the world a safer place if it

prioritized human rights, and a clear example that proves human rights abusers, such as the Chinese and North Korean governments, hinder international peace.

3.2.2 Syria

Syria has been in a state of civil war since 2011 when government forces violently cracked down on anti-government protests. The peaceful demonstrations in Syria, which were part of the Arab Spring, initially demanded democratic reform and eventually led to a call for the removal of President Bashar al-Assad. The crackdown escalated into an armed conflict between the Syrian government, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, and other anti-government rebel groups, all of which are fighting for control. According to the United States Institute of Peace, the civil war is responsible for over half a million deaths, over 6.2 million internally displaced Syrians, and around 5.6 million Syrians who have fled to seek refuge in other nations (USIP, 2020). Foreign involvement has been prominent in this conflict, most notably with Russia and Iran backing Assad, and the United States, Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and others backing several anti-government rebel groups.

Human rights are nonexistent in Syria; Freedom House gave the nation a score of zero. Even with its exceptionally poor human rights record, governments and citizens worldwide were shocked in 2013 when news broke suggesting Assad was using chemical weapons against his own people. Syria publicly announced in July 2012 that it possesses chemical weapons. Syrian Foreign Ministry spokesman Jihad Makdissi assured the world the weapons would only be used against external aggression, not the Syrian people. This stockpile included nerve agents and mustard gas (Kimball & Davenport, 2020). In August 2013, however, a chemical weapons attack killed over 1,400 Syrians in Ghouta, an area where Syrian forces had been fighting to overcome rebel forces. Almost 500 of the victims were children (Haley, 2019). Anti-government groups claimed the

Syrian government conducted the attack, while Assad denied the accusations and pointed fingers in other directions. While the perpetrator is disputed, several governments and organizations that investigated the attacks, including the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, found the Syrian government responsible. While the UNHRC did not explicitly place blame, it stated in its *Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic* published in February of 2014:

In Al-Ghouta, significant quantities of sarin were used in a well-planned indiscriminate attack targeting civilian-inhabited areas, causing mass casualties. The evidence available concerning the nature, quality and quantity of the agents used on 21 August indicated that the perpetrators likely had access to the chemical weapons stockpile of the Syrian military, as well as the expertise and equipment necessary to manipulate safely large amount of chemical agents (UN Human Rights Council, 2014).

Despite promises to destroy all chemical weapons in Syria by June 2014, the attacks continued. The Global Public Policy Institute, a think tank based in Berlin, issued a report in February 2019 confirming at least 336 chemical weapons attacks in Syria since the start of the civil war. Their research found the Assad regime responsible for ninety-eight percent of the attacks and ISIS responsible for 2 percent of those attacks (Schneider & Lütkefend, 2019). Despite numerous investigations from different agencies and organizations coming to the conclusion time and time again that Assad was almost undoubtedly responsible for the chemical weapons attacks throughout the civil war, Russia continues to defend Syria. The Soviet Union and Syria became especially strong allies during the Cold War, as both opposed Western powers. Syria despised Israel, claiming its existence is inherently antithetical to Arab interests, and the United States

supported the existence of the Jewish state. When the Soviet Union collapsed in the 1990s, its influence in Syria declined, but that changed when President Vladimir Putin came to power in Russia. He worked to expand Russia's military and to regain international power and influence, which included strengthening relations with Syria. When Libyans overthrew their leader and Russian ally Muammar Gaddafi during the Arab Spring, Russia saw its influence eroding in the Arab world and quickly amped up support for Assad, especially militarily. Putin seized the opportunity to test out and show the world Russia's newly enhanced military capabilities by backing Assad's Syrian army. Simultaneously, it allowed potential new arms customers to see what Russian military equipment can do. Russia's relationship with Syria is also a source of leverage in negotiations (Rahman-Jones, 2017).

Russia's desire to gain more influence in the international arena, to test out its updated military, and to increase arms sales contributes to its loyalty to Syria. These desires also contribute to its willingness to protect vile human rights abusers guilty of crimes against humanity. Its veto power in the UNSC gives it the means to protect them. In August 2015, UNSC Resolution 2235 established a Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), which was a partnership between the Organization for the Prohibition for Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN, or the OPCW-UN JIM. This panel was created to identify and hold accountable any group or government who used chemical weapons. The UNSC created it in response to chemical weapons usage in the Syrian Civil War and Russia supported the resolution, as it did not single out Assad but condemned any usage of chemical weapons in general. Nearly two years later, in April 2017, Syrian warplanes conducted a chemical weapons attack on the rebel-controlled village of Khan Sheikhoun. In the following days, Russia vetoed a UNSC resolution that condemned the attack and demanded that Syria grant investigators access to the necessary areas to determine who was responsible. By June

2017, the OPCW-UN JIM confirmed the deadly nerve agent sarin was used in the attacks, which was the same chemical used in Ghouta in 2013. Its next job was to determine the perpetrator. Evidence continued to point towards the Assad regime as the guilty party in the panel's investigation and, two days before it released its report finding Assad responsible, Russia vetoed a UNSC resolution to extend the panel's mandate before its expiration in November 2017 (Kimball & Davenport, 2020). This means Russia ignored blatant evidence that Bashar al-Assad was using chemical weapons against his own people and actively worked to prevent the regime from being held accountable. It destroyed an impartial panel that presented evidence of Assad's guilt to protect a systematic abuser of human rights.

The situation in Syria is a threat to international peace and security that the UNSC could not ignore. If Assad is willing to use deadly chemical weapons against his own people, there is no reason to believe he would not use them on citizens of other nations. In fact, the regime originally claimed the purpose of developing chemical weapons was for usage against external aggression. UNSC refusal to condemn Assad, in the form of vetoes from Russia and sometimes China, signals to Assad and other systematic abusers that the UN tolerates those actions, and they will not face consequences. Former U.S. Ambassador Haley attempted to use human rights to pressure Russia to condemn Syria at the emergency UNSC meeting after the April 2017 attack. She brought pictures of some of the victims, twelve of whom were children, to show UNSC members the barbaric nature of the attack. She challenged Russia to use their supposed influence over Syria to stop Assad from committing these violent massacres, but not even pictures of children still in diapers foaming at the mouth from sarin would change the Kremlin's mind (Haley, 2019). This is an example in which the refusal to uphold human rights hindered the UNSC's ability to maintain international peace and security, its principal mandate. If the UNSC prioritized and valued the

protection of human rights, the Council would not have a problem stopping Bashar al-Assad, a systematic abuser of human rights and a threat to international peace. However, Russia's support of human rights abusers stands in the way of eliminating a threat to international peace and making the world a safer place for all.

3.3.3 Venezuela

Venezuela has captured international attention in recent years due to an intense power struggle in the nation. President Nicolás Maduro came to power in 2013 after the death of his predecessor Hugo Chávez. Less than a year after taking office, anti-government protests began over many things including high crime rates, high inflation, and food shortages. The economy was collapsing due to mismanagement and corruption. Deadly government forces squashed the initial protest, spurring further demonstrations across the country. The government's suppression efforts ended in the deaths of forty-three protestors between February and April of 2014. The inflation rate passed sixty-three percent by December 2014 due to falling oil prices, leading to cuts in public spending that made conditions worse for Venezuelan citizens. The next presidential election occurred in May 2018. In the years leading up to the election, Maduro took undemocratic measures to ensure the continuation of his power. When the opposition party gained a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly in 2015, Maduro packed the Supreme Court with loyal followers who went on to block elected opposition members from joining the assembly in an effort to reduce the majority. The Supreme Court also banned an opposition leader from running in an April 2017 election, which led to more demonstrations and the deaths of sixty-six more protesters. Maduro created the Constituent Assembly in August 2017, with members chosen through corrupt and illegitimate elections, and granted it the power to rewrite the constitution and dissolve the opposition-led National Assembly (Nasa, 2019). Maduro was subsequently reelected in a corrupt

election in May 2018 that many nations have deemed illegitimate. The National Assembly did not recognize the election results as legitimate, argued the presidency was vacant, and declared Juan Guaidó as interim president, as the nation's constitution states the leader of the National Assembly shall step in as president in such a circumstance ("Venezuela Crisis," 2020).

A violent struggle for power has ensued since Guaidó claimed the presidency in January 2019. From deadly crackdowns on protests to mass arbitrary detentions to increasing crime rates, citizens of Venezuela are experiencing gross violations of basic human rights. Opposition party leaders and supporters of Guaidó may face imprisonment, accusations of terrorism, torture, and even death. Maduro continues to rely on military forces, paramilitary forces, and foreign assistance to retain power and instill fear in citizens. Most of the nation's independent newspapers were forced to shut down and journalists risk arrest and torture for "hate speech" against the government, as the Constituent Assembly passed a law allowing for the imprisonment of anyone who posts "intolerant" views or opinions online. China guided the Maduro regime in creating an advanced monitoring system linked to citizens' state identification cards that allows them to flag and withhold food aid from citizens who support Guaidó. The police and military commonly commit extrajudicial murders as well (Repucci, 2020). Countless Venezuelans are desperately trying to escape the brutal conditions in the state. Several UN agencies confirmed that over 4.5 million people fled the country between 2014 and 2019; it is the largest exodus in Latin America in recent history (Kennedy, 2019).

Despite these overt violations of human rights in Venezuela, especially since 2014, Venezuela sat on the UN Human Rights Council from 2013 to 2018, and it was accepted back on the Council in 2020 to serve until 2022. The UNHRC did not adopt any resolution explicitly condemning the Venezuelan government for its blatant violations of human rights between 2013

and 2018. In those six years, during which Maduro came to power, stripped away political and civil freedoms from his people, and held multiple illegitimate elections, the UNHRC refused to denounce the Venezuelan government's behavior one single time (UN Watch Database, 2020). When former Ambassador Nikki Haley requested to speak to the UNHRC in 2017 to highlight the situation in the South American country leading up to the Venezuelan presidential election, as the UNHRC had yet to condemn Maduro, her request was denied (Haley, 2019). Venezuela's membership protected it from condemnation. Since the end of its term in 2018, the UNHRC has explicitly condemned the Maduro regime just twice: once in September 2019 and once in October 2020.

UN protection of Maduro did not stop in the UNHRC, however; Russia and China have worked to protect the Venezuelan government in UNSC matters as well. They work to keep Venezuela off the Security Council agenda and use their veto power when that fails. In January 2019, the United States requested a UNSC meeting on the situation in Venezuela. As permanent members do not have veto power in procedural matters, the Russian representative requested to speak before the vote to urge UNSC members not to adopt the provisional agenda. The representative maintained that the situation in Venezuela posed no external threat, despite the mass exodus of homeless Venezuelans into neighboring countries driven by violence and hunger. He claimed Venezuela posed no threat to international peace and security, and that the United States was attempting to undermine a legitimate, democratic election in which the people chose Maduro. China and Russia, along with two other nations, voted against the UNSC discussion of the situation in Venezuela, but it received enough affirmative votes, and the provisional agenda was adopted.⁵

⁵ The official transcript of this meeting can be found at https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_pv_8452.pdf.

The following month, the UNSC voted on two resolutions relating to Venezuela. One resolution, submitted by the United States, recognized the democratically elected National Assembly in Venezuela as the constitutional authority in the nation and acknowledged that the May 2018 presidential election was not free nor fair. Russia and China vetoed it. A Peruvian representative expressed his disappointment in the UNSC's failure to adopt the resolution.

Peru voted in favour of the draft resolution on the situation in Venezuela (S/2019/186) in order to enable the Security Council, in exercise of the mandate bestowed upon it by the Charter of the United Nations, to adopt a decision that contributes to regional peace and security, as desired by the international community. We deeply regret the lack of unity within the Council to help address the situation in Venezuela — which represents an unprecedented threat to the peace, security, freedom and prosperity of the entire region — and to prevent a further escalation of violence and address the terrible humanitarian crisis causing the country to suffer (UN Security Council, 2019). -Gustavo Meza-Cuadra

The second resolution voted on was the Russian version of the first resolution. While the first supported a free and fair election in line with the Venezuelan Constitution and guided by international electoral observation, the second supported sending help to “normalize” the situation in Venezuela. Russian representative Vasily Nebenzya's exact words were, “That is why we have prepared an alternative draft resolution (S/2019/190), designed not to encourage political intrigue and regime change but to provide Venezuelans with real help in their efforts to normalize the situation in their country.” The United States, France, and the United Kingdom vetoed this draft resolution. China, and especially Russia, have no real interest in helping the citizens of Venezuela, as they continue to support a regime that actively and violently silences any opposition to it. Russia's alliance with Venezuela is strategic and valuable, as it gives the Kremlin a foothold in

the Western hemisphere that is not only anti-American, but also rich in oil. Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in the world, and Russian oil companies have heavily invested in Venezuelan oil. The nation is Russia's most important trading and military ally in South America, as the Chavez and Maduro regimes have spent billions of dollars buying arms from Russia (Kurmanaev, 2019). Anti-American sentiment also encouraged a relationship between China and Venezuela while Chavez was in power, and the two nations came to consider each other important trade partners for oil and technology. China's allegiance to Venezuela is not as strong as Russia's, however, as China is Venezuela's biggest creditor, meaning that it is carrying the burden of the economic collapse under Maduro. The Chinese government has been quietly communicating with Guaidó's government, as they are realizing the current situation is unsustainable (Guevara, 2020).

To keep Venezuela off the UNSC agenda, Russian representatives continue to argue that the situation in the Latin American country poses no threat to international peace or security. Despite statements from other Latin American governments expressing concern for regional stability and the mass exodus of Venezuelans into neighboring countries, Russia and China continue to assert that the situation is not appropriate for the UNSC to handle. Much like in the cases of Syria and North Korea, this is another instance in which prioritizing human rights would strengthen the original mandate of the UNSC, which is to maintain international peace and security. If there was agreement that the powerful UNSC should address the situation in Venezuela and act, it could eliminate a threat to regional peace and security, as well as strengthen human rights standards in the state and region. This is yet another example of the complementary nature of human rights and peace, and another example of UNSC protection of human rights abusers. Their disregard for human rights is impeding the UNSC's ability to combat threats to international peace and security.

3.3 Explaining the Disregard for Human Rights

Disregard for human rights in the UNSC begins with the fact that two of the five permanent members have extremely poor human rights records and align themselves with other oppressive regimes that will not hold them accountable. Freedom House gave China a score of ten and Russia a score of twenty in its 2020 index, rating both states as *not free*. The Chinese government is an authoritarian regime in which citizens are not allowed to vote, to express opposition to the president, to practice certain religions, to assemble without permission, or to choose how many children they want in their families. Arrests, arbitrary detentions, and torture to the point of death are common for those who express any opposition to the government or a desire democratic reform, including teachers, journalists, and students (Repucci, 2020). In recent years, the Chinese government built “re-education” camps for certain Muslim ethnic minority groups, namely the Uyghurs. The U.S. State Department and human rights groups estimate China has forced over one million Muslims into these camps to undergo political and religious indoctrination. China insists these camps are necessary for the prevention of terrorism and Islamist extremism, and that attendance is voluntary, but former detainees say otherwise. Torture, sexual violence, forced labor, sleep deprivation, forced injections, and death are the norm at these camps (Gan et al., 2019). Chinese documents leaked to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists in 2019 indicated the Chinese government is actively tracking Uyghurs abroad with foreign citizenship as well (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019).

Russia, another authoritarian regime, does not grant its citizens freedom of speech, despite its constitution’s guarantee to protect that civil right. The government controls all national television networks, the most popular source of news for Russians. Independent journalists may be attacked by police or detained. The state tolerates few religious groups and pastors may be

arrested for illegal missionary work. Putin's regime passed a law in 2019 which imposes fines on individuals who insult government officials or state symbols online. Excessive use of police force and barbaric abuses like electric shock and suffocation are common. As expected in an authoritarian regime, Russia holds rigged elections and there is no real opportunity for opposition parties to come to power (Repucci, 2020). The world watched in 2014 as Russia illegally invaded and annexed Crimea, a peninsula and territory belonging to Ukraine. After pro-Russian separatists and Russian military forces secured the peninsula, Crimean citizens voted in a referendum in which staying part of Ukraine was not an option. The Republic of Crimea became part of the Russian Federation following the referendum, which was proven to be rigged with fabricated results (Pifer, 2020). Russia's annexation of Crimea clearly breaches international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as it overtly violated Ukraine's sovereignty. Nevertheless, the UNSC was powerless in helping the people of Ukraine and Crimea due to Russia's veto power (Haley, 2019).

Although their veto power is oftentimes enough to deflect accountability away from human rights abusers in the UNSC, including themselves, China and Russia do not enjoy this privilege when voting on procedural matters. With nine affirmative votes, UNSC members can, at the very least, address and discuss such issues. Like the P-5, however, non-permanent members do not need strong human rights records to sit on the Council. Since 2016, nations including Equatorial Guinea, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Ethiopia have enjoyed seats on the UNSC. Freedom House gave these nations scores of six, sixteen, twenty, and twenty-four, respectively. This lack of regard for human rights standards among non-permanent members, and those who elect them, aids China and Russia in protecting abusers when their veto cannot. The other three permanent members of the UNSC, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, received scores of eighty-six, ninety, and ninety-four from Freedom House. These nations tend to push to hold severe violators accountable

and vote similarly, but one veto from Russia or China overrides three affirmative votes from the U.S., the U.K., and France.

Conflicts of interest beyond human rights issues also lead the UNSC to turn a blind eye to abuses. Strategic alliances do not always imply a strong and friendly relationship between nations; it only implies the alliance is mutually beneficial. Trade or other economic opportunities, natural resources, leverage in international negotiations, common political interests, geographic proximity to enemies, and military assistance are common factors that form the basis of strategic alliances. These types of relationships often force countries to overlook things they would usually condemn. Russia's relationship with Syria and China's relationship with North Korea display this type of partnership. Russia condemns the use of chemical weapons but wanted to overlook or ignore the fact that Assad used them on his own people. China would prefer that North Korea denuclearize, but it also wants to keep Kim Jong Un in power and maintain strong relations with the state.

Even nations with strong human rights records struggle with conflicts of interest. Saudi Arabia is a strategic ally to the United States. The two nations share common enemies, namely Iran, which makes Saudi Arabia a strategic ally in terms of its location and proximity to enemies in the Middle East. The U.S. also sells billions in weapons to Saudi Arabia, which exports oil in return. Consequently, in 2018, President Donald Trump was cautious about his words when international news broke that the Saudi government ordered the brutal assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside a Saudi Arabian consulate in Turkey. As a contributor to *The Washington Post*, Khashoggi was critical of the Saudi government in his published work. Trump wanted to condemn the murder and simultaneously avoid blaming the Saudi government, as he established a strong relationship with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during his presidency. He described the assassination as a "horrible crime" and "one that our country does not condone" in

a November 2018 statement.⁶ In the same speech, he described the beneficial relationship the United States has with Saudi Arabia and reminded listeners that the King and Crown Prince denied knowledge of the murders, despite the CIA's conclusion that the Crown Prince ordered the murder.

The U.S. did not veto any resolution within the UNSC regarding the assassination, as no member proposed such a resolution. However, a UN-led criminal investigation into the assassination would require a UNSC resolution⁷ and, despite calls on the UNSC to pass a resolution to initiate the probe, members remained silent. Former U.S. diplomat Matthew Bryza expressed his belief that the United States would veto any resolution related to the launch of an investigation if one were proposed (Rasheed, 2019). It is important to note, however, that the United Kingdom, China, and France may also be considered "strategic allies" of Saudi Arabia.

3.4 UNSC Successes & Potential

When the UNSC prioritizes international peace over narrowly defined national interests that do not align with international peace, and when it displays some type of regard for human rights, it can positively impact the world and make it a safer place, as it was intended to do. The UNSC's role in liberating Kuwait from Iraq in 1991 is an example of the subordination of national interests for the maintenance of international peace. Iraqi forces under Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Hussein claimed Kuwait naturally belonged to Iraq, but it was clear the invasion was largely driven by his desire to claim control of the oil reserves in the small nation. The UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 660 that same day, which condemned the invasion and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The Council adopted eleven more resolutions relating to the situation before the end of the year as a result of Iraq's

⁶ A full transcript of the speech can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-donald-j-trump-standing-saudi-arabia/>.

⁷ The UNSC has the power to establish commissions and investigative bodies. Prior and present commissions can be found at <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/commissions-and-investigative-bodies>.

noncompliance. This series of resolutions implemented sanctions on Iraq, authorized a naval blockade to enforce the embargo, declared the annexation illegal, denounced the use of foreigners as human shields, and further condemned the invasion among other things.

The most important and effective resolution, however, was adopted on November 29, 1990. Noting that Iraq refused to comply with all prior resolutions related to the situation, Resolution 678 authorized all necessary means to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait if it did not fully withdraw by January 15, 1991; this included the authorization to use force.⁸ Despite France's strong relationship with Iraq, it chose to vote in favor of the resolution even though it had the option to veto or abstain from voting. On January 16, UN-authorized and U.S.-led coalition forces began a military intervention and assault on Iraqi forces, and Kuwait was officially liberated from Iraq by the end of February 1991. Concern for human rights, subordination of national interests, and cooperation among UNSC members allowed the people of Kuwait to reclaim their sovereignty and independence. This is the intended purpose of the UNSC. The Council could have chosen to ignore the humanitarian crisis that the Iraqi invasion caused, as Iraqis were murdering Kuwaiti citizens and foreigners, and thousands were forced to flee their country ("Iraq and Occupied Kuwait," 1992). However, this was one reason the UNSC ultimately decided to authorize the use of military force. France could have easily ignored the crisis and vetoed these resolutions. After all, the UNSC could not do anything about the 2014 Russian invasion of Crimea because of the P-5 veto power. France chose instead to subordinate its national interests for the betterment of international peace and security.

The UNSC authorization of the use of force in 1994 also allowed Haitian citizens to reclaim democracy in their country, and it is an example of a time in which the UNSC prioritized human

⁸ All resolutions relating to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait can be found at <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/660/>.

rights to establish greater peace in the world. Haitians eagerly voted in the first democratic presidential election in their nation's history in 1990 and overwhelmingly chose Jean-Bertrand Aristide. After promising to enact change through minimizing the power of the elite, the elite organized a military coup and forced Aristide into exile. The military regime was brutal, with reports of torture, rape, and savage executions (Bunyan, 2019). The UNSC adopted several resolutions in 1993 and 1994 leading up to the authorization of the use of force. These resolutions implemented international sanctions, established a peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), and imposed a naval blockade among other things. Realizing the situation in Haiti was only worsening, the UNSC adopted Resolution 940 on July 31, 1994, which authorized the use of multinational force to "facilitate the departure from Haiti of the military leadership."⁹ China abstained from voting but did not use its veto power, allowing for the adoption of the resolution. Operation Uphold Democracy commenced on September 19 as U.S.-led military forces arrived in Haiti. The military regime quickly surrendered which led to the restoration of democracy and President Aristide in Haiti in October 1994 (Bunyan, 2019). While the Haitian coup d'état in 2004, which was sparked in part by mass allegations of election fraud, proved the reestablished stability and democracy was not long-lasting, the UNSC relieved Haitians from a horrific humanitarian crisis in which human rights were severely violated. The humanitarian situation was one reason the UNSC adopted Resolution 940, stating within it that it was "gravely concerned by the significant further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Haiti, in particular the continuing escalation by the illegal de facto regime of systematic violations of civil liberties." Human Rights Watch issued an article in 1995 praising the improvement of human rights standards after President Aristide regained power:

⁹ The resolution can be found in its entirety at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/191651?ln=en/>.

In the year since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide returned to Haiti, there has been marked, concrete improvement in respect for human rights and the government has launched institutional reforms that should bring lasting change. The reign of terror perpetuated by Haitian soldiers and their paramilitary counterparts was brought to a close with the September 19, 1994 multinational intervention led by the United States and authorized by the United Nations Security Council (DeCosse et al., 1995).

Additionally, in Freedom House's 1992-1993 report, it named Haiti among the world's top twelve worst countries in terms of human rights, giving it a status of *not free*. By the 1996-1997 report, however, Haiti earned itself a status of *partly free*. Although it is unlikely the coup in Haiti would have amounted to international armed conflict, the UNSC utilized its power to help Haitians restore democracy. The power displayed by the UNSC in its decisions to authorize force in Kuwait and Haiti demonstrates its ability to assist in maintaining international peace when it actively shows concern for human rights and subordinates other national interests. These instances show both the UNSC's potential and its need for reform. It has the tools it needs to maintain international peace; it is simply unwilling to use them. This is why many, including the United Nations itself, have acknowledged that reform is necessary.

4. Policy Recommendations

Each nation is sovereign. No state or coalition can force P-5 nations to overlook conflicts of interest and cooperate in the name of humanity, no matter how necessary or dire the situation. The UNSC, therefore, needs formal reformation or informal change to carry out its intended functions. Formal change to the UNSC through an amendment would require three things. First, the amendment must receive an affirmative vote from at least two-thirds of the General Assembly.

Second, two-thirds of the member states must ratify the amendment. Third, the amendment cannot receive a veto from any P-5 nation and all permanent members must be among the two-thirds of member states to ratify the amendment for it to go into force. To formally add “protection of human rights” to the UNSC mandate, the General Assembly would have to agree to amend Article 24 of the Charter, which lays out UNSC mandate.

The ultimate recommendation of this thesis is to add the protection of civil and political rights to the UNSC mandate. However, China and Russia have already expressed their opposition to this push. Informal changes that do not require affirmative votes from China and Russia are, therefore, much more likely to bring us closer to the goal of placing the protection of human rights at the center of the UNSC. This section explores the possible avenues member states, specifically the United States, can take to make the Security Council more effective in its efforts to maintain international peace and security. It discusses potential structural and veto reforms and addresses the likelihood of these changes. Furthermore, it offers policy suggestions to the United States in its pursuit to place pressure on the UNSC to maintain international peace through the protection of human rights and to restore its leadership in the realm of human rights.

4.1 Structural Reform

Many acknowledge the need for structural reform of the UNSC; many more acknowledge the improbability of passing anything substantial. Despite the massive increase in member states at the UN and the dramatic changes in the distribution of international power since its conception, the UNSC has endured little change since its creation in 1945. It underwent genuine reform only one time in the 1960s with the addition of four non-permanent seats. Over the decades, member states have formed several blocs within the UN that are pursuing different types of Security Council reform, some contradicting others. These pushes for reform have gone nowhere, however,

as consensus is hard to come by in the United Nations, and change requires consensus. As structural reform seems like the obvious fix to the problem, and because so many member states are pursuing it, it is important to address and understand why it is not probable.

4.1.1 History of Change in the UNSC

The outcome of WWII is responsible for the structure of the UNSC. As allies and victors of WWII, P-5 states gave themselves the most power and structured the UN in their favor. France was not originally intended to hold such power on the Security Council or within the UN. At the Tehran Conference in 1943, the “four policemen” that would dominate the UN only included the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and the Republic of China. The “four policemen” group was the precursor to the UN Security Council. However, at the Yalta Conference in 1945, Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the U.K. insisted that France have a role in post-war Europe, leading France to become a permanent member as well. It was the hope of the P-5 that each member would be able to maintain peace and order in their respective corners of the world, and that the veto would ensure peace among the great powers.

There were only eleven members of the UNSC, consisting of the P-5 and six non-permanent members, until 1965 when a 1963 General Assembly resolution entered into force. This resolution added four non-permanent members to the UNSC, amending Article 23 of the Charter and bringing the total number of non-permanent members to ten. It also amended Article 27 of the Charter, increasing the number of required affirmative votes from seven to nine. It also outlined how the UN would allocate non-permanent seats, giving five to African and Asian states, one to an Eastern European state, two to Latin American states, and two to Western European and other states.¹⁰ This increase in membership came as a result of the increasing number of member states

¹⁰ This resolution and an outline of the changes it enacted can be found in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at <https://ask.un.org/faq/14518>.

in the UN as a whole. This was the only major reform the Council has ever undergone in its existence. Governmental and political shifts in China and Russia in the 1970s and 1990s¹¹, respectively, which received international recognition and acknowledgement for their changes in status, may have affected the nature of dealings within the UNSC, but the structure of the Council itself did not change.

4.1.2 Proposed and Desired Reform

Various nations and representatives have fought for UNSC reform for decades. Security Council reform is an extremely divisive topic, as members recognize it is the most powerful organ in the UN and feel entitled to such power. Member states have banded together in several groups over the years according to their stance on reform within the UNSC. The G4, officially formed in 2005, is a group of four nations which includes Japan, Germany, Brazil, and India. Since the end of WWII, these nations have become particularly powerful in their regions of the world for various reasons including economic strength, population growth, and size of territory. The goal of the G4 is for each state in the alliance to receive a permanent seat on the UNSC; they have changed stances on their willingness to accept a permanent seat without veto power. Beyond permanent seats for themselves, the G4 advocates for permanent seats for two African states and the addition of three more non-permanent seats on the Council (Nadin, 2014). The group continues to face challenges, as different P-5 states support permanent membership for certain G4 members, but not all.

The Uniting for Consensus group, which made a proposal in 2005, does not seek to add any permanent members; instead, it advocates for the addition of ten new non-permanent seats.

¹¹ In 1971, the communist People's Republic of China took over the Taiwanese Republic of China's seat on the UNSC. In 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics collapsed, and Russian Federation took over its UNSC seat. Prior to the fall, Soviet satellite states and constituent republics including Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Byelorussia served as non-permanent members on the UNSC at least once.

Their greatest rival and opponent is the G4, as they oppose the G4 nations' bids for permanent membership. Italy leads the group and key supporters include Canada, Colombia, Pakistan, Argentina, Spain, and South Korea. Of the twenty non-permanent seats, six would go to African states, five to Asian states, four to Latin American and Caribbean states, two to Eastern Europe States, and three to Western European and other states. Rather than set two-year terms, each regional group would choose their representatives and their subsequent term lengths (United for Consensus, 2005).

The African Union drafted and proposed the Ezulwini Consensus, which would give two permanent seats to African states and another five non-permanent seats to states within the continent. The L.69 group, which consists of developing countries across the globe, wants six new permanent seats and six new non-permanent seats allocated by region to balance regional representation. Both the Ezulwini Consensus and L.69 groups support the abolition of the veto on the UNSC but believe all new permanent members should have this power if P-5 nations continue to possess it. Arab League nations demand a permanent Arab seat and abolition of the veto. The final major group is the Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency Group, also known as the ACT Group. Led by Switzerland, this group does not explicitly advocate for membership changes, but for the Security Council to be more transparent so that it may effectively carry out its mandate to maintain peace and security (Lättilä, 2019). This would include an increase in public meetings, along with a subsequent decrease in closed meetings.

Many of these groups began fighting for their causes decades ago. UN membership has grown dramatically since its creation and the international stage certainly does not look the same as it did directly after the conclusion of WWII. Demand for reform within the organization's most powerful body, therefore, was inevitable, especially among nations that have experienced drastic

economic growth and a spike in political power, such as Germany. Despite these demands and efforts, UNSC membership, power, and capabilities have remained the same since undergoing its last reform in 1965. This is because reform requires a level of consensus that member states find difficult to achieve.

4.1.3 Improbability of Effective Structural Reform

As previously mentioned, it would be extremely difficult to formally reform the UNSC in a way that would make it more effective, as a two-thirds affirmative vote in the General Assembly along with genuine support from all five P-5 states is necessary. Beyond the stringent requirements necessary to reform the UNSC, it is unlikely that any structural reform would fix or significantly change the central issue at hand: disregard for human rights on the Council. The addition of non-permanent members is certainly plausible, but it will not take away China or Russia's veto when the UNSC wants to condemn their allies or their own poor human rights standards. The removal of any UNSC member state deemed anything other than *free* would be a massive victory for human rights, but it would be impossible to achieve, as China and Russia would never allow it. Adding more permanent members with veto power would only make the Council more ineffective, as it would give more nations the opportunity to stop a resolution from passing. It seems that all issues surrounding reform come down to the veto power.

4.2 Veto Reform

The veto is a controversial aspect of the UNSC that remains at the center of the debate on reform. Numerous UN member states have agreed that veto usage needs reform, and many advocate for the abolition of the veto altogether, but it is an integral part of the UNSC. It serves as a safeguard to stave off war between the world's great powers, and its abolition would prevent the

Council from performing its basic functions. Reform to veto usage, however, has real potential to enhance the effectiveness of the principal organ.

4.2.1 Improbability of the Abolition of the Veto

In the search to find a solution for the ineffectiveness of the UNSC, many UN delegates have loudly expressed their support to abolish the veto. The P-5, of course, would never allow this to happen; each P-5 state would have to vote affirmatively to give up its veto power. Even if the UN were able to find a loophole in its charter and abolish the veto without the consent of the P-5, abolishing the veto would make the organization less powerful and less effective. P-5 states are among the largest financial contributors to the UN system. With the exception of Russia, all P-5 nations ranked in the top six largest contributors to the UN regular budget for the 2019-2021 period. The contributions of these four nations make up forty-three percent of the total budget. The United States and China alone are responsible for thirty-four percent of the total budget, with the United States holding up the heavier end at twenty-two percent (“UN Funding,” 2021). The UN risks losing a significant amount of funding if it takes away the veto from the P-5, which would reduce their power and influence. It is unlikely these nations would be willing to maintain these large contributions if their power to control the direction of the organization is overtly taken from them. The power these countries hold on the Security Council is a massive incentive to pump money into the organization, which the organization needs to operate effectively.

Not only would it be nearly impossible to pass a resolution abolishing the veto, but the Council will likely become even more ineffective. The UNSC has the unique power to take military action against aggressors, as it is authorized to use force to intervene in situations it deems necessary. The UN does not have its own independent military, which means it must rely on national militaries and military coalitions to get the job done when the UNSC authorizes force. All

P-5 countries consistently rank in the top ten most powerful militaries in the world. While sources vary on their military power indices, the P-5 states are always among the top ten strongest militaries with the United States, Russia, and China in the top three.¹² Members of the UNSC must be willing to employ their own militaries when they authorize the use of force, and those militaries must be powerful enough to fix or alleviate the problem. Now let us imagine, for example, that the veto did not exist, and non-permanent members were pushing for military intervention in a small country in turmoil. Let us further imagine the permanent members agreed that military intervention was premature, but the non-permanent members overwhelmed the vote and passed a resolution to use force. The non-permanent members cannot force the permanent members to use their own militaries for a cause they do not support and may actively oppose, even militarily. If they cannot coordinate a coalition that is powerful and advanced enough to settle the issue, their resolution is useless, and nations will view the UNSC as weak and incapable. It is for this reason that the abolition of the veto cannot and will not lead to a more effective Security Council.

4.2.2 Veto Limitations

While the abolition of the veto is not a feasible solution, voluntary veto limitations could significantly reduce the problem. In fact, over half of UN member states agree that veto usage should have limitations. In 2013, French President François Hollande encouraged other P-5 states to embrace a voluntary restraint of the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocity, which explicitly includes crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, and ethnic cleansing. The encouragement came as a result of Russia and China's veto usage on resolutions regarding Syria. Since October

¹² Global Firepower's 2021 Military Power Index placed the P-5 states among the top eight most powerful militaries in the world. The index is statistics-based, and their methodology is public on their website. While the publisher of this source is unknown, several notable sources endorse the index including Business Insider and NATO. These endorsements can be found at <https://www.businessinsider.com/these-are-the-worlds-20-strongest-militaries-ranked-2015-9> and <https://natolibguides.info/library/find/databases>.

2011, Russia has used its veto power thirteen times, and China used it seven of those times, to stop resolutions that addressed the Syrian's government atrocious treatment of its people ("UN Security Council," 2021). In 2015, the ACT Group formally proposed to the General Assembly a "Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes." Signatories of the code of conduct pledge to not vote against any UNSC resolution aimed at ending mass atrocities during their time on the Council and to support timely action of the UNSC in ending such atrocities.¹³ The code of conduct calls upon both non-permanent and permanent members to refrain from blocking resolutions that aim to prevent or stop mass atrocities, meaning that P-5 states should not utilize their veto power. Among the P-5 members, France and the United Kingdom are the only two states that have made the pledge and signed the code of conduct thus far.

This code of conduct has serious potential. It is not a resolution, which means P-5 states cannot veto it, but a pledge that member states have the option to commit to and sign. P-5 states, therefore, can voluntarily sign it. This does not sound promising at first; however, as of November 2020, the code of conduct has 105 signatories ("Security Council Must," 2020). International pressure is powerful. If states continue to pledge support for timely action of the UNSC in ending such atrocities, which indirectly calls for voluntary veto limitations, the spotlight on P-5 states that use their veto power to prevent the Council from addressing mass atrocities will grow brighter and hotter. It has the potential to continue to gain supporters until P-5 states give in to the pressure. This code of conduct will not fix all the humanitarian issues that plague the UNSC. Even if all P-5 countries signed the proposal, the permanent members would still debate about the nature of the situations in question. China, for example, would continue to claim that it is not carrying out a

¹³ The code of conduct can be found in its entirety at <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/70/621>.

campaign of ethnic cleansing against its Uyghur population in its “voluntary reeducation camps.” The code of conduct is, however, a big step in the right direction. It may not save oppressed populations everywhere, but it certainly can save oppressed populations somewhere.

4.2.3 Two-Veto Requirement

Another potential solution, which has not yet been proposed at the UN, is a two-veto requirement. If a resolution addressing human rights atrocities required two vetoes from permanent members for termination, the UNSC could become much more effective in maintaining international peace and security. P-5 politics is balanced in such a way that a second veto would not be impossible for any member to obtain. For example, China and Russia share a particular aversion to Western society and especially America. They share some allies, and their politics are more similar to each other than to any other member of the P-5. They agree on many things, but they do not agree on everything. Regarding Syria, for instance, Russia has used its veto power thirteen times since October 2011 to stop resolutions that addressed the Assad regime’s use of chemical weapons on the Syrian people; China joined them in vetoing only seven of the thirteen resolutions (“UN Security Council,” 2021). If there were a two-veto requirement, the Security Council could have potentially passed six resolutions addressing Assad’s gross human rights violations without the support of Russia.

All members of the P-5 have strong militaries, which means they are powerful enough to effectively use force, if necessary, without the support of one of its five members. It is, of course, unlikely that four of the five members would pass a resolution to use force against the fifth P-5 member. If the two-veto requirement were in effect in 2014, for example, one could say with near certainty that UNSC members would not have voted to intervene militarily following the Russian invasion of Crimea; they are not looking to start another world war. Like any suggested reform,

this requirement would not solve all issues on the Council relating to its lack of regard for human rights. However, China and Russia can be persuaded. The United States was able to convince China, and then Russia, to pass a stringent set of sanctions against North Korea in August 2017 (Haley, 2019). Regarding human rights atrocities in Venezuela, the United States, along with France and the United Kingdom, could likely persuade China to pass resolutions addressing the humanitarian situation there if the Chinese were convinced it was in their best interest economically. While it is not a perfect solution, it could significantly reduce the problem. Much like the code of conduct, it may not save oppressed populations everywhere, but it certainly can save oppressed populations somewhere.

4.3 U.S. Policy

There are very few things the United States has complete control over at the UN, but it can choose its own policies. No nation can force us to vote a certain way or stop us from proposing resolutions that promote human rights globally. As effective structural and veto reforms are unlikely in the near future, it is up to the United States to change the tune in the UNSC regarding human rights. This thesis suggests that China and Russia are the root causes for the Security Council's failure to protect human rights globally and thus its failure to maintain international peace and security. This is not to say that the United States, the United Kingdom, or France have never failed in upholding human rights since the creation of the UN. The United States has undoubtedly failed; the U.S. Supreme Court did not declare that racially segregated public schools were unconstitutional until 1954. However, this nation has made great strides since then to lead the world by example.

To point fingers at the United States and say this nation cannot criticize the human rights standards of other nations when we have problems of our own is both absurd and harmful. It is a

deflection that gross human rights violators use to shield themselves from criticism and to discredit any strides the United States takes to protect human rights. During the United States' Universal Periodic Review in November 2020, China and Russia, along with nations like Iran, Syria, and Venezuela, criticized America's human rights record in the wake of a mass movement in the U.S. which exposed the police forces for harmful and deadly biases against people of color (Keaten, 2020). While such a matter deserves criticism if proven true, it does not mean the United States has poor overall human rights standards, and it certainly does not warrant criticism from countries where honor killings are legal, where citizens are tortured and killed for speaking negatively online about their leader, where civilians are denied food aid based on their chosen political affiliation, and where the government is actively using chemical weapons against its own people.

The United States has room for growth, and our country speaks openly about our shortcomings in the realm of human rights. This country is dedicated to improving human rights standards both domestically and globally. Our country is not perfect, but it is generations ahead of the vast majority of the world in terms of human rights. It is our responsibility as a global leader to place pressure on other governments to give their citizens basic civil and political rights. While the U.S. and allies cannot force any nation to undergo change, they can use funding and their presidency on the UNSC to push for the protection of human rights and, thus, for international peace. Additionally, if the United States wants to reclaim its leadership in the realm of human rights, not only inside but outside of the United Nations, it can reconsider its position on the International Criminal Court.

4.3.1 Funding

The United States contributes more money to the UN than any other country in the world by a long shot. It contributed roughly \$10 billion to the UN system as a whole in 2018 between

mandatory and voluntary contributions, with U.S. contributions making up twenty-two percent of the UN regular budget. U.S. taxpayers provided over thirty-six percent of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees budget, over thirty-four percent of the World Food Program budget, and over twenty-six percent of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations budget in 2018 (Shendruk et al., 2020). U.S. funding is an important part of UN operations. Pulling funding in an effort to persuade nations, particularly P-5 nations, to vote a certain way will not achieve anything more than international criticism. However, pulling funding in certain areas in order to allocate financial resources to other organizations and agencies that perform their functions effectively, such as the International Criminal Court, could make the world a better and safer place for all. It may also encourage agencies within the UN to utilize their resources more effectively or seek reform.

Why should the United States continue to contribute nearly \$2 billion to UN peacekeeping operations each fiscal year when peacekeepers are not only failing to protect civilians, but are contributing to their exploitation and abuse? Why should the United States receive intense international criticism for refusing to fund the Human Rights Council, a body that actively protects human rights abusers, until it implements reform (Blanchfield, 2018)? No one should expect change at the UN if no one is standing up to place substantial pressure on these agencies and bodies to do better. The United States can, and should, employ that pressure. If the organization as a whole begins to uplift the protection of human rights in all of its agencies, and the majority of member states come to an agreement about basic human rights standards and expectations in the General Assembly, there will be greater pressure on China and Russia to do what is right and to refrain from using their veto power to protect human rights abusers who encourage and incite international conflict and insecurity.

4.3.2 UNSC Presidency

The presidency of the UNSC rotates each month to a different member on the Council; both permanent and non-permanent members can serve as president for the month. The president leads UNSC meetings, addresses member state concerns, and has the ability to introduce thematic issues into the monthly agenda among other things.¹⁴ This means that, when the United States holds the presidency, it can put human rights at the center of the monthly agenda if it so desires. The U.S. ambassador could likely convince France and the United Kingdom to do the same, slowly pushing to add human rights to the UNSC mandate informally and indirectly. If this were the consistent policy of the three *free* nations of the P-5, and other non-permanent members that chose to join along, the Council would have the potential to increase its effectiveness in maintaining international peace and security through the protection of human rights. During cooperating nations' presidencies, they could explicitly highlight the humanitarian aspect of conflicts across the world in places like Venezuela, North Korea, Syria, and Iran to place pressure on non-cooperating countries. It is one thing to ignore or deny the existence of a humanitarian crisis created by an oppressive government; it is another thing to see pictures of the North Korean people starving to death because Kim Jong-un rejected \$11 million worth of food aid from South Korea (Shim, 2020). Intense exposure to the conditions these people face and speeches from survivors are powerful persuaders that the President of the UNSC can utilize to increase pressure.

U.S. ambassadors to the UN can and should take it upon themselves to place human rights at the center of the agenda during their presidency in the UNSC, and they should spearhead a movement for others to do the same. If structural change is impossible, the United States can work to change the dynamic and direction of the Security Council. This pledge to utilize the presidency

¹⁴ A full description of the functions of the UNSC President can be found at <https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/security-council>.

as an opportunity to elevate human rights and humanitarian crises must be one that transfers from ambassador to ambassador, from administration to administration, regardless of political party. Change within the UNSC, formal or informal, will only be possible if there is a constant push for it. It is not enough for every third ambassador or every other ambassador to support this movement; it must pass from one to the next without fail. Human rights have a natural place in the discussion of international peace and security. It is the job of the U.S. to show this to the Council time and time again and inspire others to take the same approach. The U.S. can establish a tradition among its own ambassadors and within the Council regarding the approach to the presidency. It can establish a precedent that lasts generations. That is completely under the control of the United States.

4.3.3 International Criminal Court

While the United States under former President Clinton took part in the negotiation process that resulted in the creation of the ICC, the nation never formally joined the intergovernmental organization. Clinton signed the Rome Statute, which established the Court, in 2000, but he had many concerns about the organization that he wanted addressed before ratification. During negotiations, Clinton asked that the UNSC have the power to choose which cases the ICC would pursue. This would give the P-5 power to veto cases that would investigate nationals of the P-5 states or allies. Other countries did not agree, and this wish never became a reality when the ICC was established (Synovitz, 2018). As this thesis argues against the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocity, the current ICC policy is in the best interest of the protection of human rights. The U.S. also had concerns about political bias among judges and a lack of U.S. constitutional protections for accused Americans. Officials worried, for instance, that American soldiers would face war crime charges for using force in a legitimate manner. If soldiers feared facing the ICC, they may

not carry out their duties properly and the military would weaken because of this fear. As a result of these concerns, Clinton did not submit the treaty to the Senate for ratification and he recommended that his successor, former President George W. Bush, abstain from doing so until American concerns regarding the ICC were addressed. The United States never ratified the Rome Statute and only has an observer status at the Court. Of the P-5 members, France and the United Kingdom are the only State Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC.

The purpose of the ICC is to investigate and try individuals charged with atrocious crimes including genocide, war crimes, crimes of aggression, and crimes against humanity. Its intent is not to violate national sovereignty, but to step in when states are unwilling or unable to impartially investigate alleged atrocities. When a nation learns about an investigation or allegation against one of its citizens, it can request the ICC to stand down for at least six months to give it time to investigate the crimes domestically. If the country does conduct an investigation, ICC judges can only resume their investigation if they determine the nation was deliberately obstructing justice. The Court also has extensive due process guarantees, many of which came as a result of American negotiators according to Human Rights Watch. While there are always risks in joining such an organization, the United States should reconsider its position on the ICC in an effort to restore its leadership on human rights outside of the United Nations. Joining the Court may give the United States more credibility and respect regarding its leadership in the realm of political and civil rights. It would also show that the U.S. is serious about placing human rights at the center of its foreign policy and that it is willing to face accountability for its own actions.

5. Conclusion

The United Nations receives well-deserved criticism time and time again for its ineffectiveness in handling situations that threaten global peace. This does not mean that the UN

is incapable of handling such situations, or that the UN should cease to exist. The UN has genuine potential to positively impact this world, but it must be willing to make the necessary changes. Political and civil rights have a natural place in the discussion on international peace and security. Violations of these rights often lead to conflict, and conflict inevitably leads to violations of these rights, which means the UN Security Council should carefully and meticulously pay attention to violations of these rights. This is why the informal or formal inclusion of the protection of human rights in the UNSC mandate is essential in the effort to maintain international peace and security. This principal organ of the UN is unlike any other international body, as it has the necessary tools and authorization to perpetuate a safer world for all. If certain members of the P-5 refuse to utilize these tools to protect human rights and peace, cooperating members must utilize formal and informal methods and pathways to achieve this protection. The United States, along with its allies, has an opportunity to spearhead this effort.

The United States and allies must commit to a long-term plan to garner favor for human rights in UNSC and UNGA discussions if they hope to see real change in the organization. Domestic politics cannot obstruct this mission. As former Senator Arthur Vandenberg once said, partisan politics stops at the water's edge. While Republicans and Democrats do not agree on many things, there is genuine American unity surrounding the idea that political and civil rights are sacred. Leadership in this realm may look different to each party, but if all agree to pursue the mission to protect and defend political and civil rights globally, this would be a step in the right direction for the United States in its attempt to reclaim leadership in the realm of human rights and for citizens all over the world. Whether it is a push for voluntary veto limitations, a proposal for a two-veto requirement, an effort to place human rights at the center of the UNSC agenda during cooperating nations' presidencies, or a threat to reallocate funding as means to place pressure, the

United States and all other countries that honor civil and political rights can make it a reality to prioritize human rights within the UNSC. Perhaps the mandate and the Charter will formally remain the same for the foreseeable future. If this is the case, the UN Security Council mandate can and must undergo informal change to address human rights and increase effectiveness of the organization as a whole. Actions and pressure from the United States and allies can make the difference. Let us get to work.

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