UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
STUDY GUIDE

Security Council
United Nations

SLRMUN '26

Sri Lanka Rotaract Model
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Committee Background

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is composed of 15 member states, including five permanent members: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States, who hold veto power, and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms. This composition reflects both continuity and rotation, ensuring that the Council balances long-standing perspectives with the voices of the wider membership.

The mandate of the UNSC is broad and encompasses a wide range of responsibilities. Its central objective is the **maintenance of international peace and security**, which it pursues throug:

- Identifying situations that may threaten peace and stability.
- Encouraging peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiation, mediation, and dialogue.
- Authorizing peacekeeping operations and, when necessary, enforcement measures.
- Imposing sanctions to encourage compliance with international law.
- Referring matters to international judicial bodies, such as the International Criminal Court, or establishing ad hoc tribunals when appropriate.

The Council operates under the framework of the UN Charter, particularly Chapters VI, VII, and VIII, which provide mechanisms for peaceful resolution, enforcement actions, and cooperation with regional organizations. Its resolutions are binding on all UN member states, underscoring its unique role in shaping collective responses to global challenges.

In the context of discussions on **United States military intervention in Venezuela**, the Security Council serves as the central forum for deliberation. The issue raises important questions about sovereignty, the principles of non-intervention, humanitarian protection, and the role of international law. It also highlights the need for careful consideration of regional stability and the perspectives of multiple stakeholders.

The Council's role is therefore not only to respond to immediate developments but also to safeguard the credibility of international institutions and ensure that actions taken reflect the values of diplomacy, legality, and collective responsibility. Its deliberations on Venezuela will test the ability of the international system to balance national interests with global norms, and to maintain peace and security in a complex and evolving environment.

Practice Debate Topic:

The responsibility to protect doctrine as a principle of international peace and security

The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty first proposed the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in 2001, and all UN members formally endorsed it at the 2005 World Summit. It emphasizes that states must defend their citizens against crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, redefining sovereignty as a duty rather than an unalienable right. The international community must take collective action, using diplomatic, humanitarian, and in extreme situations, military measures approved by the Security Council, if a state is unwilling or unable to carry out this obligation.

In reality, R2P is still controversial despite widespread support. Although its implementation in Libya in 2011 showed the possibility of collective action under the Security Council mandate, later discussions brought up issues with selectivity, unforeseen consequences, and the possibility of abuse as a pretext for regime change. R2P calls into question whether the crisis in Venezuela warrants intervention and whether unilateral action is consistent with the doctrine's emphasis on collective legitimacy. R2P continues to test the Security Council's ability to strike a balance between humanitarian protection, sovereignty, and the legitimacy of global peace and security frameworks.

Case Study #1: "Libya and the Responsibility to Protect"

Topic Breakdown

The first significant implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was during the Libyan crisis in 2011. State forces used violent crackdowns, including threats of mass murder in Benghazi, in response to widespread demonstrations against Muammar Gaddafi's regime. The world community was afraid of impending crimes against humanity.

Resolution 1973, which authorized "all necessary measures" to protect civilians, including the creation of a no-fly zone, was adopted by the UN Security Council. Under this mandate, NATO forces intervened, preventing immediate widespread violence. Nevertheless, the intervention went beyond protecting civilians and contributed to Libya's long-term instability and regime change.

This case demonstrates R2P's dual nature: its capacity to encourage quick international action to stop atrocities and its vulnerability to being seen as a tool for military or political objectives. Debates about whether R2P is effective in resolving humanitarian crises or whether its legitimacy is damaged by selective application and unforeseen consequences continue to center on Libya.

Further Reading

- https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksac051
- [The Responsibility to Protect in Darfur | From Forgotten Conflict to G](#)
- [Syria | The Oxford Handbook of the Responsibility to Protect | Oxford Academic](#)
- [Kenya - Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect](#)
- [The Responsibility to Protect: How the World Failed in Syria – WMO](#)
- [NATO and Libya: A Case-Study in Failing at the Responsibility to Protect? – NAOC](#)
- [R2P in Practice: Case Studies](#)

Talking Points

- Sovereignty and International Law
- Humanitarian Protection
- Security Council Dynamics
- Regional Organizations
- Case Study Applications
- Risks of Misuse
- Consistency and Selectivity
- Pathways for Reform

Conference Topic:

United States Military Intervention in Venezuela and Its Implications for International Peace and Security

Venezuela's prolonged political, economic, and humanitarian crisis has made it a major international concern in today's world. Instability both inside its borders and throughout Latin America has been amplified by hyperinflation, food and medicine shortages, contested elections, and institutional deterioration. Nicolás Maduro's government, which took over from Hugo Chávez in 2013, has found it difficult to remain legitimate in the face of charges of repression, politicization of the military, and limitations on opposition participation. External actors have perceived these developments as both a security challenge and a humanitarian emergency. Chávez's Bolivarian Revolution, which at first produced social benefits through oil profits but eventually weakened accountability, consolidated power, and left fragile institutions that collapsed, is the source of the crisis.

International relations with Venezuela have changed significantly as a result of the United States, moving from cautious diplomacy to isolation, sanctions, and ultimately direct military intervention. President Maduro was taken prisoner by a military operation carried out by Washington on January 3, 2026, which was justified as part of a security and counter-narcotics plan. Concerns regarding sovereignty, legality, and precedent under international law were raised by this action, which brought back historical U.S. hemispheric policy patterns, such as unilateral intervention and regime change. Legally speaking, the UN Charter's fundamental principles of sovereignty and collective security are challenged by the extraterritorial use of force by a sitting head of state without Security Council approval or self-defense justification. Such acts run the risk of undermining international institutions' credibility and weakening delicate norms.

The geopolitical and humanitarian consequences continue to be crucial. If Maduro is overthrown without a legitimate Venezuelan-led transition, there is a risk of prolonged instability, displacement, and interrupted aid flows. This is reminiscent of the lessons learned in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria, where the removal of regimes without the establishment of institutions led to fragmentation. Venezuela's recovery is particularly precarious due to its scattered opposition, shaky military allegiances, and institutional deterioration; inclusive political processes, security sector reform, impartial electoral oversight, and gradual sanctions relief are all necessary. Venezuela's relevance is still shaped by oil, and foreign interest in its reserves raises the possibility of instability and renewed reliance. Energy concerns have always affected US engagement, frequently putting supply stability ahead of democratic legitimacy, while resource security-focused intervention increases discontent and jeopardizes reconstruction.

Case Study #1: "U.S. Involvement in Panama (1989)"

Topic Breakdown

Operation Just Cause, a military intervention in Panama to remove General Manuel Noriega, was initiated by the United States in December 1989. Washington used the defense of democracy, the fight against drug trafficking, and the protection of American citizens as justifications for the action. Although Noriega was swiftly overthrown by the intervention, serious concerns regarding international law precedent, legality, and sovereignty were brought up.

The operation strengthened past patterns of intervention in the hemisphere and rekindled worries about U.S. unilateralism in Latin America. It spurred discussion around the world about whether the UN Charter's frameworks for collective security are compromised by unilateral military action.

CASE STUDY #2: "The U.S. Invasion of Iraq (2003)"

Topic Breakdown

Weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and connections to terrorism were used as justifications by the United States and a coalition to invade Iraq in March 2003. There are serious questions regarding the intervention's legality and precedent under international law because it was carried out without specific UN Security Council approval. Although Saddam Hussein's government was swiftly overthrown, the intervention's legitimacy was damaged by the lack of WMDs and the ensuing protracted instability.

The Iraq War serves as an example of how unilateral military action can undermine standards of collective security, destabilize an area, and erode confidence in international institutions. It continues to be one of the most contentious interventions in contemporary history, acting as a warning example for conversations about American military operations and their effects on other countries.

Treaties, Conventions & Resolutions

The United Nations Charter

The UN Charter is the foundational treaty of the United Nations and outlines the purposes, principles, and structure of the organization. It gives the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In the case of Venezuela, the Charter is central to discussions of legality and legitimacy:

- ★ **Chapter VI** emphasizes the peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiation, mediation, and arbitration.
- ★ **Chapter VII** provides the Council with authority to take enforcement measures in response to threats to peace, breaches of peace, or acts of aggression.
- ★ **Chapter VIII** allows for cooperation with regional organizations in maintaining peace and security.

Any military intervention without Security Council authorization raises questions about compliance with these laws, which prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

The Geneva Conventions

The Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols establish international legal standards for the conduct of armed conflict. They protect civilians and combatants, including in situations where external military forces are deployed. In the Venezuelan context, these conventions are relevant to ensuring that humanitarian law is respected during any intervention and that civilians are safeguarded from harm.

Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (1994)

This convention aims to protect UN personnel, including peacekeepers, in the performance of their duties. Should the Security Council authorize a mission in Venezuela, this framework would be essential to ensuring the safety of UN staff operating in potentially volatile conditions.

Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations

This convention provides legal protections and privileges to the United Nations and its personnel while on mission. In the event of a UN-mandated operation in Venezuela, it would ensure that peacekeepers and staff are able to carry out their responsibilities without interference.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The Responsibility to Protect doctrine, endorsed by the UN in 2005, asserts that the international community has a responsibility to intervene when a state fails to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, or crimes against humanity. While R2P has been invoked in past interventions, its application to Venezuela would be highly contested, as debates continue over whether the crisis constitutes grounds for collective action under this principle.

UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000)

This resolution highlights the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls and emphasizes their role in peacebuilding. In Venezuela, where humanitarian pressures have affected vulnerable populations, Resolution 1325 provides a framework for ensuring that women's voices are included in any transition or recovery process.

UNSC Resolution 1674 (2006)

This resolution strengthens the mandate of peacekeeping forces to protect civilians under threat of violence. In the Venezuelan case, it underscores the importance of safeguarding non-combatants during any intervention and ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law.

UNGA Resolution 377

This resolution allows the General Assembly to act when the Security Council is deadlocked due to vetoes. In the event that divisions among permanent members prevent consensus on Venezuela, Resolution 377 could provide an alternative mechanism for collective action, though its recommendations would not carry the same binding authority as Security Council resolutions.

Talking Points

- Sovereignty and International Law
- Humanitarian Concerns
- Regional Stability
- Geopolitical Rivalries
- Precedent and Legitimacy
- Energy and Resource Considerations
- Pathways to Resolution

Further reading

- https://www.brookings.edu/articles/making-sense-of-the-us-military-operation-in-venezuela/
- U.S. Confrontation With Venezuela | Global Conflict Tracker
- Security Council LIVE: 'The power of the law must prevail' amid Venezuela crisis, says Guterres | UN News
- Behind the Venezuela crisis, a US-China tussle over critical minerals | South China Morning Post
- What Is Happening Between the United States and Venezuela? | Boat Strikes, Oil Blockade, Donald Trump, Nicolás Maduro, Invasion, Map, & Military | Britannica
- Venezuela News | Today's Latest Stories | Reuters
- Case Study 7: Venezuela — Collapse of a Petrostate | by Ashutosh Rai | Medium
- IJCRT2411383.pdf
- (PDF) Venezuela's Crisis: A Multifaceted Examination of Economic, Political, and Humanitarian Challenges

<u>Chair Remarks</u>

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Security Council. We are truly excited to see each of you bring your passion, creativity and dedication to this committee. The UNSC is one of the most dynamic and challenging organs of the United Nations and for us to be able to share this floor with all of you is beyond exciting. It is here that you (the delegates) will get to put your diplomacy to the test and explore some solutions for the most pressing issues of our time.

We want to remind you that this committee isn't only about resolutions and procedures, it's about collaboration, respect and learning from one another. Every voice matters, converting someones thoughts and ideas, whether you are a seasoned delegate stepping into the ring again or a first timer geoing head first into a committee of this magnitude, your contributions will not go unrewarded.

As chairs, we hope that you approach each session with curiosity and a will to learn something new. Don't be afraid to challenge assumptions, ask questions and propose bold solutions. At the same time remember that diplomacy thrives on empathy and compromise. The most memorable debates are those where delegates tend to listen just as much as they are willing to speak.

We wish you the very best in your research and preparation. Bring your energy, ideas and enthusiasm. Together, let's make this committee a place for rigorous debate as well as growth.

With wit and diplomacy,
Lakindu Perera & Yasir Nasran