

UDC: 327.7:341.1
DOI: 10.59214/ua.fa/1.2025.96

Oleg Opanasenko*

Postgraduate Student

Mykola Gogol Nizhyn State University

16600, 2 Graftska Str., Nizhyn, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2925-335X>

Prospects for UN Security Council reform

Abstract. The study aimed to comprehensively examine the prospects for reforming the United Nations Security Council, considering its response and role in key military conflicts from 2011 to 2024. A detailed analysis of the Security Council's response to conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, Libya, South Sudan, Mali, and Myanmar revealed various systemic issues in its functioning. In particular, it was found that the veto power of permanent members frequently leads to decision making paralysis, especially when a conflict affects their geopolitical interests. The main reform proposals for the Security Council were examined, including expanding its membership, reforming the veto power, increasing transparency, and adapting its mandate to new security challenges. An assessment of the potential effectiveness of these proposals indicated that the most radical changes, such as expanding permanent membership or abolishing the veto power, face significant geopolitical and institutional obstacles. The analysis of key factors influencing the prospects for implementing the proposed reforms revealed that the geopolitical interests of major states remain the primary obstacle to large-scale structural changes. An assessment of the feasibility of these reforms in the current geopolitical context indicated that gradual changes aimed at enhancing transparency, inclusivity, and the effectiveness of the Security Council's work are the most likely. Meanwhile, extensive structural reforms have a low probability of being implemented in the short term. The study expanded the understanding of the complex nature of the United Nations Security Council reform process and highlighted the need to seek compromise solutions that accommodate the interests of different groups of states while maintaining the effectiveness of this key global security body

Keywords: global governance; diplomacy; geopolitics; veto; permanent membership; sanctions

Introduction

In today's globalised world, the role of international organisations in maintaining peace and security is becoming increasingly important. Among them, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC, the Council) holds a special place as the key body responsible for maintaining international peace and security. However, the military conflicts and crisis situations of the last decade (2011-2024) have revealed significant shortcomings in the work of this body, which has led to increased discussions about the need for its reform.

The research problem lies in the discrepancy between the growing challenges to global security and the limited effectiveness of the UNSC in addressing them. In particular, the reaction and role of the UNSC in several major military conflicts from 2011 to 2024 has drawn criticism from the international community due to insufficient operational efficiency, lack of consensus among permanent members and the inability to prevent the escalation of violence in various regions of the world. Among these conflicts, it is worth noting the civil war in

Syria (from 2011), the crisis in Ukraine (from 2014, which turned into a full-scale Russian Federation invasion in 2022), the civil war in Yemen (from 2014), the conflict in Libya (from 2011), the civil conflict in South Sudan (from 2013), the crisis in Mali (from 2012) and the military coup in Myanmar (2021). The ineffectiveness of the UNSC's actions in these situations has cast doubt on the ability of this body to effectively fulfil its mandate in the context of modern geopolitical realities.

A study of decision-making processes within the UN Security Council reveals the complex dynamics of interactions between its members. Research by J. Gifkins (2021) highlights the importance of understanding roles that go beyond the veto power in shaping Council decisions. The author argues that informal practices and diplomatic manoeuvres often have no less influence on the outcomes of votes than formal mechanisms. This observation underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to reform that would take into account not only the structural but also the procedural aspects of the

Received: 19.11.2024, Revised: 28.01.2025, Accepted: 20.02.2025

Suggested Citation:

Opanasenko, O. (2025). Prospects for UN Security Council reform. *Foreign Affairs*, 35(1), 96-110. doi: 10.59214/ua.fa/1.2025.96.

*Corresponding author



Council's work. In the context of UN peacekeeping operations, which are one of the key instruments of the Security Council, A. Day (2020) draws attention to the problems that arise during the transition periods of missions. The author emphasises the importance of improving the Security Council's practices in managing these critical phases, which directly affect the effectiveness of peacekeeping efforts and the stability of post-conflict regions.

Considering the broader context of UN reform, J. Müller (2021) characterises the process of change as a "quiet revolution". The researcher argues that despite apparent inertia, the organisation is gradually adapting to new realities through a series of less visible but significant transformations. This observation is important for understanding the potential and limitations of Security Council reform within the overall evolution of the UN. A deeper understanding of the dynamics of decisionmaking in the Security Council is offered by S.H. Allen & A. Yuen (2022). Their research reveals the complex processes of bargaining and negotiation that define the global agenda. The authors demonstrate how informal mechanisms of influence and strategic interactions between Council members shape its decisions, which is critical for developing effective reform proposals.

An important aspect of the Security Council's functioning is highlighted by A.M. Ekengren *et al.* (2020), analysing the motivations of states to obtain a non-permanent seat in this body. Their findings point to a complex system of incentives and expectations that influence the behaviour of countries in the Council, which must be taken into account when developing models for its reform. In the context of UN peacekeeping operations, P.D. Williams (2020) outlines the Council's "trilemma", which consists of balancing between effectiveness, legitimacy and resources. This study emphasises the complexity of the tasks facing the Council and the need for a comprehensive approach to solving them within the framework of any reform initiatives.

An interesting perspective on the role of smaller states in the Security Council is offered by K.M. Haugevik *et al.* (2021), comparing the approaches of Estonia and Norway. Their research demonstrates how smaller countries can influence processes in the Council, which is an important aspect to consider in the context of the potential expansion of this body's membership. N. Bernaz (2020) examines the issue of reforming human rights protection mechanisms at the UN, in particular the creation of the Universal Periodic Review. Although this study does not directly concern the Security Council, it provides a valuable example of successful institutional reform within the UN, which can be useful for understanding the possibilities and limitations of reforming the Council.

Considering the dynamics of interactions between members of the UN Security Council, it is important to pay attention to the role of elected non-permanent members in shaping the decisions of this body. In this context, the research of J. Farrall *et al.* (2020) offers a valuable analysis of the influence of non-permanent members on processes in the Security Council. The authors reveal the complex nuances of interactions between permanent and non-permanent members, demonstrating how the latter can influence decision-making, despite the absence of veto power.

This research is critical to understanding the real dynamics of power in the Council and outlining potential directions for its reform, which could optimise the participation and influence of elected members.

In the broader context of the UN system, the effectiveness of the organisation in protecting human rights deserves special attention, as it directly affects the legitimacy and authority of the Security Council. F. Mégret & P. Alston (2020) offer a thorough critical review of the UN's role in this area. Although their research is not limited to the activities of the Security Council, it provides an important context for understanding the systemic challenges facing the organisation as a whole. The authors analyse the effectiveness of various UN mechanisms in promoting and protecting human rights, identifying both achievements and shortcomings. These observations are critical to assessing the overall effectiveness of the UN and its key bodies, including the Security Council, in responding to global humanitarian crises and conflicts.

The analysis of these studies reveals several key trends and gaps in the study of the prospects for UN Security Council reform. Most authors agree on the need for change but propose different approaches to their implementation. Much attention is paid to internal processes and dynamics within the Council, but fewer studies focus on external factors that may contribute to or hinder reforms. While many studies analyse historical aspects and current problems, less attention is paid to the development of specific, practically implemented reform models that take into account modern geopolitical realities.

This study aimed to comprehensively examine the prospects for UN Security Council reform, considering its reaction and role in the military conflicts of 2011-2024, as well as an analysis of the Council's problems and an assessment of the prospects for the proposed reforms. To achieve this aim, the following research objectives were formulated:

- 1) to analyse the reaction and role of the UNSC in the key military conflicts of 2011-2024 and identify the main problems in its work;
- 2) to investigate existing proposals for reforming the UNSC and assess their potential effectiveness in solving the identified problems;
- 3) to identify the key factors influencing the prospects for the implementation of the proposed reforms and assess their feasibility in modern geopolitical conditions.

Materials and Methods

The study of the prospects for reforming the UN Security Council was conducted based on a comprehensive analysis of a wide range of sources and using several scientific methods, which allowed for a comprehensive consideration of the problem and the achievement of the set objectives. The source base of the study consisted of official UN documents, in particular resolutions of the Security Council and the UN General Assembly, reports of the UN Secretary-General, as well as documents of working groups on UNSC reform. Special attention was paid to the analysis of the UN Charter (United Nations, 1945) as a fundamental document that defines the structure and powers of the Security Council.

To assess the various approaches to reforming the Security Council, the key proposals of the UN member

states were analysed. Particular attention was paid to the Draft Resolution of UN General Assembly No. A/59/L.64 (2005), presented by the Group of Four (G4), which includes Brazil, Germany, India and Japan. This document provided for the expansion of the Security Council to 25 members, including six new permanent seats without veto power. An alternative approach was considered based on the Draft Resolution of UN General Assembly No. A/59/L.68 (2005), proposed by the “Uniting for Consensus” (UfC) group. This proposal provided for an increase in the number of non-permanent members to 20, without creating new permanent seats.

To assess the effectiveness of the Security Council, a detailed analysis of its response to the key military conflicts of the last decade (2011-2024) was conducted. In particular, Resolution No. 2254 (2015) on Syria, which called for a ceasefire and a political settlement of the conflict, was studied. Regarding Ukraine, Resolution No. 2202 (2015), which approved the “Package of measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements”, was considered. Regarding the conflict in Yemen, Resolution No. 2216 (2015), which imposed an arms embargo on the Houthis, was analysed. Resolution No. 1973 (2011) on Libya was studied as an example of sanctioning military intervention to protect the civilian population. To assess the UNSC’s reaction to the conflict in South Sudan, Resolution No. 1996 (2011), which created the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and Resolution No. 2155 (2014), which expanded the mission’s mandate, were analysed. Resolution No. 2100 (2013) on Mali was considered in the context of the creation of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

An important source of statistical data was reports from international organisations, including the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) (Jamaat *et al.*, 2024), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights, 2024), and the UN Development Programme (Taylor *et al.*, 2023). These data were used to assess the scale of the conflicts and their humanitarian consequences. To understand the legal aspects of the functioning of the UNSC, key international treaties were analysed, including the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (1993), the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions (1949), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

The study involved comparing different models of UNSC reform, including the G4 and UfC proposals, as well as the “semi-permanent” membership model. This comparison revealed their potential impact on the effectiveness, legitimacy, representativeness, and adaptability of the Security Council. To assess the feasibility of the proposed reforms, a set of criteria was developed, encompassing the level of support, legal, and geopolitical obstacles. The level of support was evaluated based on an analysis of the official positions of states and the voting outcomes in the UN General Assembly. Legal obstacles were assessed based on the requirements of the UN Charter and other relevant international treaties. Geopolitical obstacles were determined through analysis of the official positions of key states and geopolitical trends.

Results

The analysis of the UNSC’s response and role in key military conflicts of the past decade. The period from 2010 to 2024 was marked by a series of complex and protracted military conflicts that posed serious challenges to the international community and the Security Council. These conflicts were characterised by a high level of violence, the involvement of diverse armed actors, and a significant impact on regional and global security. The civil war in Syria, which began in 2011, has escalated into a complex multilateral conflict involving regional and global powers. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), by February 2024, the death toll from the conflict had surpassed 600,000 people (Jamaat *et al.*, 2024). In addition, the conflict has caused an unprecedented refugee crisis, the scale of which has not been seen since the Second World War. A particularly alarming aspect of this conflict has been the systematic violations of international humanitarian law, including the use of chemical weapons. These actions are a direct violation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (1993), which underscores a blatant disregard for international norms and agreements.

Alongside the Syrian conflict, a crisis began in Ukraine in 2014, which later escalated into a full-scale interstate conflict. It began with the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the subsequent escalation in eastern Ukraine. The situation sharply deteriorated in 2022, when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which led to the largest armed conflict on the European continent since the Second World War. According to UN estimates, as of 2023, the conflict has resulted in the deaths of over 10,000 civilians (Janowski, 2023) and caused massive displacement of the population, which is estimated at millions (Ukraine emergency, 2024). The international community has classified the actions of the Russian Federation as an act of aggression, which corresponds to the definition given in Resolution of the UN General Assembly No. 3314 (XXIX) (1974). This qualification underscores the seriousness of violations of international law and the principles of territorial integrity, which underlie the modern world order. Both of these conflicts have not only led to significant human casualties and humanitarian crises but also cast doubt on the effectiveness of existing international mechanisms for preventing and resolving conflicts, in particular the role of the UN Security Council in maintaining global peace and security.

The civil war in Yemen (since 2014) has escalated into a complex multi-sided conflict, leading to one of the world’s largest humanitarian crises. According to the UN Development Programme, by the end of 2023, the conflict had caused the deaths of over 370,000 people, 60% of whom died from the indirect consequences of the war, such as lack of food, health care and infrastructure (Taylor *et al.*, 2023). The conflict has been characterised by systematic violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks on civilian objects, which are prohibited by Article 52 of the 1st Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions (1949).

The conflict in Libya (since 2011), which began with the overthrow of the Muammar Gaddafi regime, has led to prolonged instability and fragmentation of the country.

As of 2011 (the latest UN estimates), the conflict had caused the deaths of over 15,000 people and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people (Up to 15,000 killed..., 2011). The situation in Libya has been characterised by gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including extrajudicial executions, torture and arbitrary detentions, which violate Articles 6, 7 and 9 of The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

The civil conflict in South Sudan, which erupted in December 2013, became a tragic turning point for the world's youngest nation, which had gained independence only two years earlier. This conflict quickly escalated into a protracted crisis that had catastrophic consequences for the country's population. According to a study Center for Preventive Action (2024), the scale of human losses was colossal: during the first five years of the conflict, the number of deaths reached approximately 400,000 people. In addition, nearly 4 million people were forced to leave their homes, becoming either internally displaced persons or refugees in neighbouring countries. These figures reflect not only the scale of violence but also the depth of the humanitarian crisis that engulfed the country.

A particularly alarming aspect of the conflict was the systematic and gross violations of human rights. The violence often had an ethnic character, which led to mass killings and displacements of entire communities. In addition, sexual violence, which was used as a weapon of war, became widespread. Another horrific aspect of the conflict was the active recruitment of children into armed groups, which is a direct violation of international law, in particular the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000). The protracted conflict in South Sudan has had a devastating impact on the country's economy and food security. As of 2023, the situation has reached a critical point: over 7.7 million people, representing approximately two-thirds of the population of South Sudan, are on the brink of starvation. This unprecedented food crisis has become the worst in the country's history, highlighting the urgent need for international humanitarian assistance and stabilisation of the situation. The conflict in South Sudan has become a clear example of how internal political instability can quickly escalate into a full-scale humanitarian disaster that threatens the very existence of a young state. It has also cast doubt on the effectiveness of international mechanisms for conflict prevention and peace support, especially in the context of post-conflict state-building.

The conflict in Mali (since 2012) began with a Tuareg rebellion in the north of the country and quickly escalated into a complex security crisis that engulfed the entire Sahel region. As of 2023, according to ACLED estimates (2023), the conflict has led to the deaths of thousands of people and the displacement of hundreds of thousands. The situation in Mali has been characterised by the spread of terrorism and transnational organised crime, which violates several international conventions, including the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999).

The February 2021 coup in Myanmar was a turning point in the country's history, drastically changing its political landscape and causing a serious humanitarian

crisis. The military's seizure of power not only interrupted the fragile process of democratisation but also triggered a large-scale conflict that quickly spread to various regions of the country. According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the consequences of the coup have been catastrophic for the civilian population. By 2024, the number of civilian deaths exceeded 5,000, and hundreds of thousands of citizens were forced to leave their homes, fleeing violence and repression (UN Human Rights, 2024). These figures, however, may be underestimated due to limited access to information and the difficulty of monitoring the situation under military rule.

The actions of the military junta of Myanmar have been widely condemned by the international community. Numerous reports from human rights organisations and UN bodies document systematic and massive violations of fundamental human rights. These violations include not only extrajudicial executions and arbitrary detentions but also restrictions on freedom of speech, assembly and association. Such actions directly contradict the fundamental principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), in particular its articles 3, 9 and 20, which guarantee the right to life, liberty and personal security.

The use of excessive force by the military against peaceful protesters, as well as targeted attacks on ethnic minorities, particularly in the states of Kachin, Shan and Rakhine, are of particular concern. These actions not only violate international humanitarian law but also threaten the longterm stability and unity of the country. The situation in Myanmar has become a serious challenge for the international community, casting doubt on the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for conflict prevention and human rights protection. It has also highlighted the complexity of balancing the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states and the need to protect fundamental human rights in the context of authoritarian rule.

The UN Security Council's response to the aforementioned conflicts has been uneven and often limited due to disagreements between the permanent members of the UNSC. An analysis of the adopted resolutions and their effectiveness demonstrates both successes and significant limitations in the work of the UNSC. In the case of Syria, the UNSC adopted several resolutions, including Resolution No. 2254 (2015), which called for a ceasefire and a political settlement of the conflict. However, as noted by S.H. Allen & A. Yuen (2022), the effectiveness of these resolutions was limited due to disagreements between the permanent members of the Council, particularly between the USA and Russia. This led to the blocking of several important resolutions through the use of the veto power. For example, Russia and China used their veto power on a Draft Resolution No. S/2012/538 (Security Council Fails..., 2012), which aimed to impose sanctions against the Assad regime by Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter (1945). This situation illustrates the limitations imposed on the UNSC by Article 27 of the Charter, which grants veto power to permanent members.

The UNSC's response to the conflict in Ukraine demonstrates similar limitations. Russia, as a permanent member of the Council, has repeatedly blocked resolutions aimed at condemning its actions and resolving the conflict. For example, on 25 February 2022, Russia

vetoed the Draft Resolution of Security Council of the UN No. S/2022/155 (2022), which condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This highlights the problem that J. Gifkins (2021) identifies as “going beyond the veto” in the UNSC’s decision-making processes. At the same time, the UNSC managed to adopt Resolution No. 2202 (2015), which approved the “Package of measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements”, although its effectiveness remained limited.

In the case of Yemen, the UNSC adopted several resolutions, including Resolution No. 2216 (2015), which called for a cessation of hostilities and the resumption of the political process. The resolution imposed an arms embargo on the Houthis by Article 41 of the United Nations Charter (1945). However, as noted by P.D. Williams (2020), the effectiveness of these resolutions was limited due to the complexity of the conflict and the inability to ensure their implementation on the ground. As of 2024, the conflict in Yemen continues, demonstrating the limited ability of the UNSC to effectively resolve protracted conflicts.

The UNSC played an active role in responding to the conflict in Libya, adopting Resolution No. 1973 (2011), which authorised military intervention to protect the civilian population following the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) principle. This resolution was the first time the UNSC authorised the use of force against a sitting government of a UN member state to protect civilians. However, as J. Müller (2021) argues, the consequences of this intervention and the subsequent instability in the country have drawn criticism regarding the long-term effectiveness of the Council’s actions. As of 2024, the situation in Libya remains unstable, indicating the limited ability of the UNSC to ensure a sustainable peaceful settlement.

In response to the conflict in South Sudan, the UNSC adopted Resolution No. 1996 (2011), which created UNMISS. The mission’s mandate was expanded by Resolution No. 2155 (2014) to protect civilians, monitor human rights and support humanitarian assistance. However, as R.A. Blair *et al.* (2022) note, the effectiveness of UNMISS was limited due to insufficient resources and the complexity of the conflict. As of 2024, UNMISS continues its operations, but the situation in the country remains unstable.

In the case of Mali, the UNSC adopted Resolution No. 2100 (2013), which created the United Nations Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The mission had a mandate to stabilise key population centres, support the restoration of state authority and facilitate the political process. However, as J. Bernal Fabra (2022) notes, the effectiveness of MINUSMA was limited due to the complex security situation and limited resources. As of 2024, despite the efforts of MINUSMA, the situation in Mali and the Sahel region remains unstable.

The UNSC’s response to the military coup in Myanmar was limited due to disagreements between members of the Council. The UNSC adopted the Statement of the President of the Security Council No. S/PRST/2021/5 (2021), which condemned the violence against peaceful protesters, but failed to adopt stronger measures due to the threat of a veto from China and Russia. This situation demonstrates the limitations of the UNSC in responding to internal crises, especially when they concern the geopolitical interests of permanent members.

The analysis of the UN Security Council’s (UNSC) reaction to the key conflicts of the last decade reveals several interconnected systemic problems that significantly limit the effectiveness of this body in maintaining international peace and security. The central problem remains the veto power of the permanent members of the UNSC. This right often leads to paralysis in decisionmaking, especially when a conflict affects the geopolitical interests of the permanent members. For example, Russia’s use of its veto power on resolutions on Syria and Ukraine demonstrates how this problem can hinder effective responses to crises. This directly contradicts the spirit of Article 24 of the UN Charter, which places primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security on the UNSC (United Nations Charter, 1945).

The problem of the veto is closely linked to the geopolitical polarization between the permanent members of the UNSC. M. Berdal (2023) notes that growing tensions, particularly between the USA, Russia and China, make it difficult to reach consensus on even the most pressing issues of international security. This polarization not only undermines the principle of collective security enshrined in the UN Charter but also leads to insufficient operational efficiency of the UNSC in responding to conflicts.

A. Day (2020) emphasises the importance of improving the Council’s practices in managing the critical phases of conflicts. The slow response of the UNSC to the escalation of the conflict in Syria in 2011–2012 is a clear example of how a delay in response can lead to a deterioration of the situation to the level of a full-scale war. This indicates the need for reforming the UNSC’s procedures to ensure a faster and more effective response to crises, following the requirements of Article 39 of the United Nations Charter (1945).

Even when the UNSC manages to adopt resolutions, their implementation often remains problematic. P.D. Williams (2020) identifies this as part of the Security Council’s “trilemma”, where effectiveness, legitimacy, and resources often conflict. For example, Resolution No. 2254 (2015) on Syria did not lead to lasting peace due to the lack of effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms. This underscores the need to develop more effective mechanisms to ensure the implementation of resolutions by Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter (1945). J. Müller (2021) argues for the need for a “quiet revolution” in UN practices to adapt to new realities. The lack of flexibility of the UNSC is manifested in the difficulties of adapting the mandates of peacekeeping missions to changing situations in conflict zones. For example, the UNMISS mandate required several modifications, which indicates the need for more flexible crisis response mechanisms.

The problem of the UNSC’s representativeness also undermines its legitimacy. A.M. Ekengren *et al.* (2020) emphasise the importance of understanding the motivations of states to participate in the Council. The absence of permanent representation from Africa and Latin America, despite the significant number of conflicts in these regions, calls into question the ability of the UNSC to effectively address global security issues. UN peacekeeping operations often face difficulties in fulfilling their mandates, especially in active conflict zones. This is due to limited resources and complex mandates. For example, MINUSMA

in Mali faced serious challenges in ensuring security and stabilising the situation in the country. H.M. Smidt (2020) emphasises the importance of local peacekeeping initiatives and dialogue to prevent conflicts. However, despite the emphasis on the importance of preventive diplomacy in the United Nations Charter (1945) (Chapter VI), the UNSC often responds to conflicts after the fact, rather than preventing their escalation.

The UNSC also faces difficulties in addressing non-traditional security threats, such as cyberattacks, climate change and pandemics. Attempts to consider climate change as a security threat have met with resistance from some members, which indicates the need to adapt the Council's mandate to the new realities of global security. The lack of transparency in the UNSC's decision-making process, especially regarding informal consultations between permanent members, undermines trust in this body and contradicts the principle of transparency, which is key to the legitimacy of international institutions. These interconnected problems create a complex system of

challenges that require a comprehensive approach to reforming the UNSC to increase its effectiveness in resolving modern conflicts and crisis situations.

For a clearer comparison of the UN Security Council's response to the various conflicts of the last decade and an assessment of the effectiveness of its actions, are the key resolutions, main measures and problems faced by the UNSC in each of the cases considered. This information is summarised in Table 1 below, which allows for drawing parallels between different conflicts and identifying common trends in the work of the UNSC, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of its actions in various geopolitical contexts. This table shows that although the UNSC responded to all major conflicts, the effectiveness of its actions was often limited by various factors, including geopolitical differences, the complexity of conflicts and limitations in the implementation of resolutions. This underscores the need for a comprehensive reform of the UNSC to enhance its ability to effectively address modern challenges to international security.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of the UN Security Council's response to key conflicts 2011-2024

Conflict	Key UNSC Resolutions	Main measures	Effectiveness	Main problems
Syria (from 2011)	No. 2254 (2015)	Call for ceasefire and political settlement	Low	Veto of Russia and China blocked stronger measures
Ukraine (from 2014)	No. 2202 (2015)	Approval of the Minsk agreements	Limited	Russia's veto blocked resolutions on the 2022 invasion
Yemen (from 2014)	No. 2216 (2015)	Arms embargo on the Houthis	Limited	Complexity of the conflict, limited implementation
Libya (from 2011)	No. 1973 (2011)	Sanctioning military intervention	Mixed	Long-term instability after intervention
South Sudan (from 2013)	No. 1996 (2011), No. 2155 (2014)	Creation of UNMISS, expansion of the mandate	Limited	Insufficient resources, the complexity of the conflict
Mali (from 2012)	No. 2100 (2013)	Creation of MINUSMA	Limited	Complex security situation, limited resources
Myanmar (2021)	No. S/PRST/2021/5 (2021)	Condemnation of violence	low	Lack of strong measures due to the threat of veto

Source: created by the author

Consideration of existing proposals for UNSC reform.

Over the past two decades (2000-2024), the international community has actively discussed several key areas of UN Security Council reform. These proposals arose in response to a growing awareness of the need to adapt the UNSC to modern geopolitical realities and global security challenges. The main goal of the proposed reforms is to address fundamental problems in the functioning of the Council, in particular issues of its representativeness, effectiveness and legitimacy. Expanding the membership of the UN Security Council is one of the most controversial and at the same time key aspects of its reform. This issue arose in response to the growing awareness of the discrepancy between the current structure of the Council and modern geopolitical realities and the need to increase its legitimacy and effectiveness.

Since its inception after the Second World War, the structure of the UN Security Council has remained almost unchanged, with the only significant expansion in 1965, when the number of nonpermanent members was increased from six to ten. This expansion was a response to the growing number of UN members as a result of decolonisation. However, in recent decades, the global political and economic landscape has undergone dramatic

changes, which has raised the question of the adequacy of the current structure of the UNSC on the agenda of the international community.

The growing economic and political weight of developing countries, the emergence of new regional leaders, and the shift of centres of influence towards Asia and the Global South have created an imbalance between the actual distribution of power in the world and representation in the key UN body on international security issues. This has led to the formation of different approaches to reforming the UNSC, among which the position of the so-called "Group of Four" (G4) stands out in particular. The G4, which includes Brazil, Germany, India and Japan, advocates the most radical option for reform – expanding the number of permanent members of the Security Council. This group of countries argues that the inclusion of new permanent members from among the influential states of today would not only increase the legitimacy of the UNSC but also make it more effective in solving global security problems. The specific proposal of the G4 was formalised in the form of a Draft Resolution of UN General Assembly No. A/59/L.64 (2005), submitted to the UN General Assembly on 6 July 2005. This document provided for the creation of six new permanent seats in the Security Council:

four for G4 countries and two for representatives of the African continent (Pinheiro, 2024). This proposal reflected the desire of the G4 not only to ensure their own interests but also to take into account the need for more equitable geographical representation in the UNSC.

It is important to note that the G4 proposal has elicited a mixed reaction from the international community. On the one hand, many countries agree on the need to reform the UNSC to reflect modern realities. On the other hand, specific proposals for expanding permanent membership face resistance from both current permanent members and regional rivals of the G4 countries. M. Binder & M. Heupel (2020) note that the G4 justified its position mainly with arguments about increasing the productivity of the Council, emphasising how their economic and political weight, as well as material contribution, will improve the Council's ability to address international security threats. This approach reflects the desire for new centres of power to gain greater influence over global decision-making processes.

The second approach, supported by the "Uniting for Consensus" (UfC) group, proposes an alternative path – increasing the number of non-permanent members without expanding permanent membership. This group, which includes countries such as Italy, Pakistan, Mexico and others, presented its proposal in the Draft Resolution of UN General Assembly No. A/59/L.68 (2005). Their plan envisaged expanding the Council to 25 members, of which 20 would be non-permanent. The UfC argues that this approach will increase the representativeness of the Council without creating new privileged positions. M. Binder & M. Heupel (2020) note that the UfC justified its proposal primarily with procedural arguments, arguing that it would make the Council more accountable, transparent and representative. This position reflects the concerns of many countries about the potential strengthening of inequality in the international system through the expansion of permanent membership.

The third approach, which can be seen as an attempt to find a compromise between the previous two, involves the creation of a new category of "semi-permanent" members. This idea arose in response to the need to balance the desire for greater representativeness and the need to maintain the effectiveness of the Council. The proposal is to create a category of members with a longer term of office but without veto power. This approach could potentially satisfy the aspirations of some countries for greater influence while avoiding the creation of new permanent privileged positions.

Each of these approaches has its advantages and disadvantages, reflecting the complexity of finding consensus on the issue of UNSC reform. They demonstrate different visions of the future structure of global governance and the distribution of power in the international system. Debates around these proposals continue, reflecting the ongoing evolution of the global order and the desire of different states to secure their interests within the key UN body on international security issues.

Reforming the veto power of the permanent members of the UN Security Council is one of the most controversial and at the same time critical aspects of the overall reform of this body. The veto power, enshrined in the UN Charter, has been an instrument since the creation of the

organisation that ensured a balance of power between the great powers, but over time it has become a source of significant contradictions and an obstacle to the effective functioning of the UNSC.

Historically, the veto power was introduced as a mechanism to prevent conflicts between major powers, allowing them to block decisions they consider threatening to their national interests. However, it has become apparent that this mechanism is often used to block important decisions on international security issues, even when a majority of the international community supports these decisions. In response to these problems, J. Müller (2021) highlights several key proposals for reforming the veto mechanism. The first and perhaps most ambitious of these is limiting the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities against humanity. This initiative, known as the "Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes", was put forward by France and Mexico in 2015 (Wenaweser *et al.*, 2020). It is a response to criticism that the veto power often prevents the UNSC from effectively responding to the most serious violations of international law and threats to peace. This proposal calls on permanent members to voluntarily refrain from using the veto in cases of mass atrocities. It is important to note that as of 2024, 105 UN member states have supported this initiative, which indicates widespread recognition of the need to limit the veto power in critical situations. However, the voluntary nature of this commitment leaves open the question of its effectiveness in real crisis situations. The second proposal, which arose in response to criticism of the lack of transparency in the UNSC's decision-making process, calls for a requirement to justify the use of the veto. This idea is based on the assumption that the need to publicly explain the reasons for using the veto can make permanent members more accountable for their actions and increase the legitimacy of their decisions in the eyes of the international community. In addition, this could contribute to a better understanding of the positions of permanent members by other states and potentially open the way for compromises. The third proposal, which is the most radical, envisages the possibility of overriding the veto by a qualified majority of votes in the UN General Assembly. This idea arose as an attempt to find a balance between preserving the special status of permanent members and the need to ensure the possibility of making important decisions even in the presence of objections from one or more permanent members. Such a mechanism could significantly change the dynamics of decisionmaking in the UNSC, giving a greater voice to the wider international community.

Each of these proposals has its advantages and disadvantages, and their implementation would face significant political and legal challenges. In particular, any change to the veto mechanism would require amendments to the UN Charter, which itself is subject to the veto power of permanent members. This creates a paradoxical situation where those who have the most to lose from reform have the greatest influence on its adoption. Despite these difficulties, the debates surrounding the reform of the veto power continue, reflecting the widespread recognition of the need to adapt the UNSC to the modern realities of international relations. These proposals demonstrate the

desire of the international community for a more effective, transparent and representative mechanism for making decisions on global security issues.

The process of reforming the UN Security Council is not limited to issues of its composition and veto mechanism. The growing complexity of global security challenges and criticism of the effectiveness and legitimacy of the UNSC have led to the formation of several additional proposals aimed at improving its work. J. Müller (2021) notes the growing attention to issues of transparency and inclusivity in the work of the UNSC. This trend reflects a broader desire for the democratisation of international institutions and the strengthening of their accountability. In this context, three key proposals have emerged. The first is the expansion of the practice of open meetings of the UNSC. This idea arose in response to criticism of the lack of transparency in the Council's decision-making process. Open meetings would allow a greater number of UN member states and representatives of civil society to be present at discussions, which could potentially increase the legitimacy of the Council's decisions and contribute to a better understanding of its work. The second proposal concerns strengthening interaction with countries that are not members of the Council. This is a response to the criticism that the UNSC often makes decisions that affect countries not represented in the Council. Expanding opportunities for non-members of the Council to participate in its work, for example, through regular consultations or feedback mechanisms, could make the Council's decisions more inclusive and acceptable to the wider international community. The third proposal involves improving consultation mechanisms with civil society. This idea arose from the recognition of the important role that non-governmental organisations and experts can play in providing information and expertise on issues considered by the UNSC. Creating more structured channels for such interaction could enrich discussions in the Council and improve the quality of its decisions.

M. Binder & M. Heupel (2020) draw attention to another important aspect of reform – improving the mechanisms for implementing UNSC decisions. This need arose from the recognition that even the best decisions of the Council have limited impact if they are not implemented effectively. The first proposal in this direction is to strengthen the powers of the UNSC to monitor the implementation of resolutions. The creation of special committees or working groups to systematically track the implementation of resolutions could increase the responsibility of states for their implementation and allow the Council to better assess the effectiveness of its decisions. The second proposal concerns the creation of more effective sanctions mechanisms. This idea arose from the recognition that existing sanctions often have a limited impact on the targeted regimes, but can cause significant harm to the civilian population. Improving targeted sanctions could increase their effectiveness without negatively impacting innocent people. The third proposal is to expand opportunities for preventive diplomacy. This idea is based on the understanding that preventing conflicts is more effective and less costly than responding to conflicts that have already begun. Strengthening the role of the UNSC in early intervention

and mediation could significantly increase its effectiveness in maintaining international peace and security.

There is a need to adapt the UNSC's mandate to new global challenges. This need arose from the recognition that the nature of threats to international security has changed significantly since the creation of the UN (Müller, 2021). The first proposal in this direction is to expand the powers of the UNSC on climate security issues. This idea reflects the growing recognition of climate change as a factor affecting international security. The second proposal concerns strengthening the role of the UNSC in countering terrorism and cyber threats. This idea arose in response to the growth of transnational threats, which often go beyond the traditional understanding of interstate conflicts. The third proposal envisages improving mechanisms for responding to pandemics and other global health crises. This idea has become particularly relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which demonstrated the global impact of health crises on international security.

All these proposals reflect the desire to adapt the UNSC to modern realities and challenges and to increase its effectiveness and legitimacy. However, their implementation will require significant political efforts and compromises between UN member states. Analysing the potential effectiveness of the proposed UN Security Council reforms requires a comprehensive consideration of their possible impact on the key aspects of the functioning of this body. Each reform proposal carries both potential benefits and possible drawbacks, reflecting the complexity of the task of adapting the UNSC to modern geopolitical realities.

Expanding the composition of the Council is one of the most discussed proposals. Such an expansion can increase the representativeness and legitimacy of the UNSC, especially if new permanent members from under-represented regions, such as Africa and Latin America, are included. This could lead to greater support for the Council's decisions at the global level. However, this same proposal carries the risk of complicating the decision-making process and reducing the Council's efficiency. As M. Binder & M. Heupel (2020) note, the USA has expressed concern that expansion could make the Council "less effective than it is today".

Reforming the veto power is another critical aspect. J. Müller (2021) points out that limiting the use of the veto can reduce the number of cases of blocking important decisions and increase the effectiveness of responding to crisis situations. This could potentially change the dynamics of decision-making in the Council. However, M. Binder & M. Heupel (2020) emphasise the difficulty of reaching an agreement among permanent members on such changes, as well as the risk of reducing their interest in the work of the Council.

Increasing the transparency and inclusivity of the UNSC's work, as argued by J. Müller (2021), can enhance the legitimacy of the Council's decisions and improve the understanding of its work by the global community. However, this can also lead to delays in the decision-making process and complicate diplomatic negotiations. Improving implementation mechanisms can increase the effectiveness of UNSC resolutions and strengthen its influence on conflict resolution. However, the implementation of these proposals requires significant resources for monitoring

and ensuring the implementation of decisions. Adapting the UNSC's mandate to new global challenges, according to J. Müller (2021), can enhance the Council's relevance and expand its capabilities in preventive diplomacy. However, there is a risk of blurring the focus of the UNSC and potential conflicts of competence with other UN bodies.

For a more visual and systematic comparison of the different models for reforming the UN Security Council, it is advisable to consider their impact on the key aspects

of the functioning of this body. Below is a comparative table that summarises the potential consequences of implementing each of the main proposed reform models – G4, UfC and “semi-permanent” membership – in terms of their impact on the effectiveness, legitimacy, representativeness and adaptability of the UNSC (Table 2). This table allows for an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each model, as well as identifying potential compromises between different reform goals.

Table 2. Comparative assessment of UNSC reform models

Evaluation criterion	G4 model	UfC model	“Semi-permanent” membership model
Effectiveness	Potential increase through the inclusion of influential states, but the risk of complicating the decision-making process	Maintaining the existing decision-making structure, but possible complications due to the increase in the number of members	Potential balance between stability and flexibility
Legitimacy	Increase through the inclusion of new permanent members, but the risk of creating new privileged positions	Emphasis on procedural legitimacy through increased accountability and transparency	Potential increase through broader representation without creating new permanent privileges
Representativeness	Improvement of geographical representativeness, but limited representation of small and medium-sized states	Significant improvement through the expansion of non-permanent membership	Improvement through the possibility of longer membership for a larger number of states
Adaptability	Potential expansion of regional expertise, but the risk of complicating adaptation due to new vetoes	Increase through regular rotation, but the risk of losing institutional memory	Potential balance between consistency and adaptability

Source: created by the author

Comparative evaluation of different models of UNSC reform shows that each model has its strengths and weaknesses. The G4 model, which provides for the expansion of permanent membership, can increase the effectiveness of the Council through the inclusion of influential states, but risks complicating the decision-making process. M. Binder & M. Heupel (2020) note that opponents of this model have focused mostly on procedural legitimacy, arguing that it will create new privileged positions. Each of these models has a different impact on the effectiveness, legitimacy, representativeness and adaptability of the UNSC, which underscores the complexity of the task of reforming this key UN body and the need to find a compromise between different goals and interests of member states.

Analysis of key factors affecting the prospects for the implementation of UNSC reforms. The implementation of UN Security Council reforms largely depends on geopolitical factors and the interests of key states, especially the permanent members of the UNSC. This dependence is due to the structure of the organisation itself, where, according to Article 108 of the United Nations Charter (1945), any changes to the Charter require the consent of all permanent members of the Security Council.

The positions of the permanent members of the UN Security Council on its reform demonstrate significant differences and reflect their geopolitical interests. The United States of America, as the world's leading power, takes a moderate stance on this issue. According to an official statement by a US delegation representative in 2020, Washington is ready to support a “modest expansion” of both permanent and non-permanent membership of the UNSC (Security Council Must..., 2020). However, this

support is conditional on maintaining the current structure of the veto power, which effectively means refusing to grant this right to new permanent members. The USA argues its position by the need to maintain the Council's efficiency and effectiveness in decision-making.

At the same time, the other two influential permanent members of the UNSC – the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China – demonstrate an even more conservative approach to the issue of reform. Research by M. Binder & M. Heupel (2020) indicates that these countries view veto power as a key instrument for protecting their national interests in the international arena. The statistics on the use of the veto power are indicative: from 2011 to 2023, Russia used it 17 times, and China – 10 times. These figures not only reflect the active use of the veto mechanism but also indicate the unwillingness of these states to change the existing balance of power in the Security Council.

This position of Russia and China can be explained by their desire to maintain their privileged status in the global governance system. Expanding the permanent membership of the UNSC or changing the veto mechanism could potentially weaken their influence on the decision-making process on key issues of international security. In addition, both countries often view proposals to reform the UNSC as attempts by Western states to strengthen their influence in this body.

It is worth noting that the frequency of the use of the veto power by Russia and China also indicates the growing polarization of international relations and the deepening differences between the permanent members of the UNSC on key issues of global security. This, in turn, calls into question the effectiveness of the Security Council in its current

format and underscores the need to find new mechanisms for reaching consensus on critical international issues.

France and the United Kingdom, as permanent members of the UNSC from the European region, take a more open position on reforms. France supports the expansion of permanent membership to include Germany, Japan, India and representatives of Africa (Sharma, 2023). The G4 group (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) is actively lobbying for the idea of expanding the permanent membership of the UNSC. Their proposal, outlined in Draft Resolution of UN General Assembly No. A/59/L.64 (2005), provides for the addition of six new permanent seats. However, this initiative has been resisted by the “Uniting for Consensus” (UfC) group, which advocates for the expansion of only non-permanent membership. The African Union, representing 54 countries of the continent, insists on allocating two permanent seats for African states with veto power. This position is set out in The Ezulwini Consensus (2005) and confirmed in subsequent declarations of the African Union.

The analysis of geopolitical factors demonstrates the difficulty of reaching a consensus on UNSC reforms. Differences in the interests of key states create significant obstacles to the implementation of large-scale changes in the structure and functioning of this body. The institutional and procedural aspects of UNSC reform are no less important than geopolitical factors. They define the legal and practical mechanisms through which any changes in the structure and functioning of the Council can be implemented.

The legal basis for reforming the UN Security Council is laid down in the fundamental document of the organisation – the UN Charter. The key provision governing the process of amending the structure and functioning of UN bodies, including the Security Council, is Article 108 of the United Nations Charter (1945). This article establishes a complex and multi-stage mechanism for the adoption of amendments, which requires broad consensus among the members of the organisation. According to Article 108 of the United Nations Charter (1945), several conditions must be met for any amendments to come into force. The proposed changes must be approved by two-thirds of the members of the UN General Assembly. This in itself is a difficult task, given the diversity of interests and positions of the 193 member states of the organisation. After approval by the General Assembly, the amendments must be ratified by two-thirds of all UN members per their constitutional procedures. However, the most significant obstacle to reform is the requirement for mandatory ratification of amendments by all permanent members of the Security Council. This provision effectively gives each of the five permanent members (P5) a veto power over any changes to the United Nations Charter (1945), including reforms of the Security Council itself. Thus, even if the vast majority

of UN members support a particular reform, it cannot be implemented without the consent of all permanent members of the SC. This procedure was designed to ensure stability and consistency in the work of the UN, as well as to protect the interests of the states that bear the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. However, modern conditions, create significant difficulties for adapting the organisation to new geopolitical realities and global security challenges.

The high threshold for adopting changes, established by Article 108, is one of the key factors explaining the absence of significant UNSC reforms for decades. This provision ensures the preservation of the status quo, which is in the interests of the current permanent members, but at the same time causes growing dissatisfaction among other UN members who seek more equitable and representative representation in the Security Council. J. Müller (2021) notes that the complexity of the procedure for amending the UN Charter is one of the key factors hindering the reform of the UNSC. The author argues that this complexity was deliberately embedded in the creation of the UN to ensure the stability of the organisation, but in modern conditions, it becomes an obstacle to the necessary changes.

An important institutional mechanism created to discuss UNSC reform issues is the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN). This forum was launched by Resolution of the UN General Assembly No. 62/557 (2008) in 2008. However, as M. Binder & M. Heupel (2020) note, the IGN has limited effectiveness due to the lack of consensus between member states on key aspects of the reform. Procedural aspects of reform also include the issue of decision-making methods in an expanded Security Council. In particular, the question of the veto power for new permanent members remains debatable. According to a study by S. Von Einsiedel *et al.* (2015), expanding the veto power can lead to further paralysis in the Council’s work, but limiting it can be resisted by current permanent members.

The institutional and procedural aspects of UNSC reform create a complex system of rules and mechanisms that must be taken into account when developing and implementing any reforms. This complexity, on the one hand, ensures the stability of the organisation, and on the other hand, creates significant obstacles to the implementation of necessary changes. Assessing the realism of the proposed reforms (Table 3) UNSC requires a comprehensive analysis of geopolitical, institutional and procedural factors in the context of modern (2020-2024) international relations. Expanding the membership of the UNSC remains one of the most discussed proposals. However, reaching a consensus on specific candidates for new permanent seats is unlikely in the short term. This is due to the competing interests of different regional groups and resistance from some current permanent members.

Table 3. Assessment of the realism of key aspects of UNSC reform (2020-2024)

Reform aspect	Support level	Legal obstacles	Geopolitical obstacles	Realism rating
Expansion of permanent membership	High among developing countries; low among current permanent members	Requires amendments to the UN Charter	Competition between applicants; resistance from current permanent members	Low
Veto reform	High among most UN members; low among permanent members	Requires amendments to the UN Charter	Strong resistance from permanent members	Very low

Table 3. Continued

Reform aspect	Support level	Legal obstacles	Geopolitical obstacles	Realism rating
Increasing transparency and inclusivity	High among most UN members	Does not require amendments to the UN Charter	Relatively low	Medium
Improving implementation mechanisms	Medium	May require amendments to the UN Charter	Relatively low	Medium
Adapting the mandate to new security challenges	High among most UN members	May require amendments to the UN Charter	Disagreements on the priority of new threats	Low

Source: created by the author

The reform of the veto power, which is a key element of many proposals, faces serious obstacles. Statistics on the use of the veto power by the permanent members of the UNSC show that from 2011 to 2023 it was used 39 times, with more than half of the cases attributed to Russia. This demonstrates the unwillingness of permanent members to give up this privilege (Kleczkowska, 2023). Adapting the UNSC's mandate to new security challenges, such as climate change and cybersecurity, faces procedural and legal obstacles. In particular, expanding the UNSC's mandate to these areas requires amendments to the United Nations Charter (1945), which is a complex process. In general, an analysis of the realism of the proposed UNSC reforms in modern conditions (2020-2024) shows that large-scale structural changes, such as expanding permanent membership or reforming the veto power, have low chances of being implemented in the short term. Gradual changes towards increasing the transparency, inclusivity and efficiency of the Council's work seem more realistic. The most realistic aspects of UNSC reform in modern conditions are increasing the transparency and inclusivity of the Council's work, as well as improving the mechanisms for implementing its decisions.

Discussion

The analysis of the prospects for UN Security Council reform has revealed several key aspects that affect the possibility and effectiveness of potential changes in the structure and functioning of this body. In particular, it was found that expanding the Security Council, especially permanent membership, remains one of the most contentious issues, which faces significant geopolitical obstacles. Reforming the veto power also proved unlikely in the short term due to the resistance of permanent members. At the same time, increasing the transparency and inclusiveness of the Council's work, as well as improving the mechanisms for implementing its decisions, seem to be more realistic directions for reform.

Considering the aspect of expanding the UN Security Council, it is worth referring to the study by M.O. Hosli & T. Dörfler (2019). The authors analyse the reasons for the slow progress in reforming the Security Council, which correlates with the conclusions regarding the difficulty of reaching a consensus on this issue. However, in contrast to the position outlined in the current analysis, which emphasises geopolitical obstacles as the main constraining factor, M.O. Hosli & T. Dörfler focus on institutional aspects, in particular on the complexity of the procedure for amending the UN Charter. The authors' arguments regarding the importance of institutional factors are convincing,

however, it should be emphasised that geopolitical interests often play a decisive role in the willingness of states to initiate and support institutional changes.

In the context of adapting the Security Council's mandate to new security challenges, particularly climate change and cybersecurity, it is interesting to consider the research of C.J. Fung (2019). The author explores China's position on Security Council interventions, which partially correlates with the analysis of geopolitical factors presented in this study. However, C.J. Fung (2019) focuses on the specific role of China, while the analysis provides a broader view of the positions of all permanent members. It can be argued that focusing on a single country, while providing a deeper understanding of its position, can limit a comprehensive vision of the problem. At the same time, the detailed analysis of China's position, conducted by C.J. Fung (2019), complements the overall picture of geopolitical factors.

In analysing the legal aspects of the Security Council's functioning, it is necessary to refer to the work of M. Wood & E. Stoecker (2022). The authors examine in detail the relationship between the Security Council and international law, which complements the analysis of institutional and procedural aspects of reform presented in this study. However, unlike the focus on the prospects for reform, M. Wood & E. Stoecker concentrate on the current legal practice of the Security Council. The authors rightly emphasise the importance of understanding current legal practice to assess the possibilities of reform. However, it should be added that a comprehensive analysis of reform prospects should also take into account potential changes in international law. Such a comprehensive assessment allows for a more accurate prediction of future challenges and opportunities in the reform process.

S. Autesserre (2019) examines the crisis of UN peacekeeping, which partially overlaps with the analysis of the effectiveness of the Security Council in resolving conflicts, presented in this study. However, while the analysis focuses on the structural aspects of reforming the Security Council, S. Autesserre (2019) focuses on the practical aspects of peacekeeping operations. It can be argued that both approaches are important for a comprehensive understanding of the problem. The practical aspects of peacekeeping operations, which S. Autesserre (2019) draws attention to, can be an important factor when assessing the need and directions for reforming the Security Council.

In the context of expanding the permanent membership of the Security Council, M. Jabeen (2020) analyses India's aspirations to obtain a permanent seat and the position of the USA on this issue. This partially correlates with the analysis of geopolitical factors presented in this

study. However, while the analysis considers the general prospects for expanding the composition of the Council, M. Jabeen (2020) focuses on the specific case of India. The author's approach, which focuses on specific cases, undoubtedly contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexity of the expansion process. However, it is worth noting that excessive concentration on a single country can lead to a limited perception of the overall picture of the problem. Balancing between a detailed analysis of specific cases and maintaining a broad context is key to a comprehensive understanding of the issue of expanding the UN Security Council.

The results of the study revealed a significant impact of geopolitical factors on the prospects for UN Security Council reform. In particular, it was established that the positions of key states, especially the permanent members of the UNSC, often determine the possibility and directions of potential changes. The analysis showed that differences in the interests and positions of large states create significant obstacles to the implementation of large-scale reforms.

In this context, it is important to consider the study of P. Taylor & K. Smith (2019), who analyse the role of the UN in maintaining peace, in particular considering the role of Russia in Eurasia. This research partially overlaps with the analysis of geopolitical factors presented in this research. However, while the analysis considers the general prospects for reforming the Security Council, P. Taylor & K. Smith (2019) focus on a specific regional aspect. It can be argued that such a regional focus allows for a deeper understanding of the specifics of geopolitical challenges in a certain region. At the same time, a comprehensive analysis of the prospects for reforming the Security Council requires taking into account the global context. The regional approach of P. Taylor & K. Smith complements the global perspective presented in this study, allowing for a more detailed understanding of how global geopolitical trends manifest themselves at the regional level.

K. Mingst & M.P. Karns (2019) explore the role of the UN in the post-bipolar era, which partially correlates with the analysis of modern challenges facing the Security Council, presented in this study. However, while the analysis focuses on the prospects of reforming the Security Council, K. Mingst & M.P. Karns (2019) offer a broader view of the transformation of the UN's role as a whole. The authors emphasise the need to consider the reform of the Security Council in the context of general changes in the system of international relations. This approach allows for taking into account broader geopolitical trends and their impact on the functioning of international institutions. However, it is important to emphasise that the unique role of the Security Council as a key UN body requires a separate, more focused analysis. The specifics of powers, structure and decision-making processes in the Security Council create a special context that cannot be fully covered by a general analysis of the international system. Thus, the optimal approach seems to be a combination of a broad contextual analysis with a detailed study of the specific aspects of the functioning and reform of the Security Council.

In analysing the prospects for reforming the UN Security Council in the context of its interaction with other international organisations, it is important to refer to

the article of C. Monteleone (2019). The author explores the relationship between the UN and the European Union, which partially overlaps with the analysis of institutional aspects of reform presented in this study. However, while the analysis focuses on the internal mechanisms of UN Security Council reform, C. Monteleone (2019) focuses on external interactions. It can be argued that both approaches are important for a comprehensive understanding of the reform process. External interactions, which C. Monteleone (2019) draws attention to, can be an important factor influencing the UN Security Council reform process.

A. Sarjoon & M.A. Yusoff (2019) analyse the challenges faced by UN peacekeeping operations. This partially correlates with the analysis of the effectiveness of the Security Council in resolving conflicts, presented in this study. However, while the analysis considers the structural aspects of UN Security Council reform, A. Sarjoon & M.A. Yusoff (2019) focus on the practical aspects of peacekeeping activities. The analysis of the practical aspects of peacekeeping operations, proposed by the authors, is indeed critical to assessing the effectiveness of the Security Council. This approach allows for the identification of specific problems and challenges faced by peacekeeping missions on the ground. This approach allows for the identification of specific problems and challenges faced by peacekeeping missions on the ground. Structural changes in the Security Council can significantly affect decision-making processes, resource allocation and coordination of actions, which will directly affect the effectiveness of peacekeeping efforts. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the Security Council should include both an assessment of the practical aspects of peacekeeping operations and a consideration of the potential consequences of structural reforms for these operations.

Overall, there is a general consensus on the need to reform the UN Security Council, however, there are differences in the assessment of the priority and realism of various aspects of the reform. This study, unlike many others, offers a more pessimistic view of the prospects for large-scale structural changes in the short term, focusing on geopolitical obstacles. At the same time, it reveals greater optimism regarding the possibility of gradual changes towards increasing the transparency and efficiency of the Council's work.

Conclusions

The study of the prospects for UN Security Council reform has revealed a complex set of interconnected problems in the functioning of this key UN body and assessed the realism of the proposed reforms. The analysis of the UNSC's response to key military conflicts of the last decade has demonstrated the limited effectiveness of the Council in resolving crisis situations, which is due to several structural and procedural factors. In particular, the veto power of the permanent members often leads to paralysis in decision-making, especially when the conflict affects the geopolitical interests of these states. This, in turn, undermines the ability of the UNSC to respond promptly and effectively to threats to international peace and security.

The study of existing proposals for UNSC reform has revealed a wide range of ideas aimed at addressing the identified problems. The key areas of reform are the

expansion of the Council's membership, the reform of the veto power, increasing the transparency and inclusiveness of the UNSC's work, improving decision implementation mechanisms and adapting the mandate to new security challenges. These proposals reflect the desire of the international community to adapt the UNSC to modern geopolitical realities and increase its effectiveness in solving global security problems. In particular, expanding the Council's membership could increase its representativeness and legitimacy, especially given the growing role of developing countries. The veto power reform is aimed at overcoming the problem of blocking important decisions by individual permanent members. Increasing transparency and inclusiveness is intended to make the decision-making process more open and democratic. Improving decision implementation mechanisms aims to strengthen the practical impact of UNSC resolutions. The adaptation of the mandate to new security challenges reflects the need to respond to problems such as climate change, cybersecurity and pandemics. However, an assessment of the potential effectiveness of these proposals has shown that the most radical changes, such as expanding permanent membership or abolishing the veto power, face significant geopolitical and institutional obstacles. This is because such reforms require amendments to the UN Charter, which requires the consent of all permanent members of the UNSC

An analysis of the key factors influencing the prospects for the implementation of the proposed reforms has revealed that the geopolitical interests of key states, especially the permanent members of the UNSC, remain the main obstacle to large-scale structural changes. An assessment of the realism of the proposed reforms in modern geopolitical conditions has shown that gradual changes towards increasing the transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency of the Council's work are most likely. At the same time, large-scale structural reforms, such as expanding permanent membership or changing the veto mechanism, have low chances of being implemented in the short term.

This study has certain limitations, in particular, it is based on the analysis of publicly available information and does not take into account possible closed diplomatic negotiations on the reform of the UNSC. Prospects for further research include a more detailed analysis of the positions of individual states on UNSC reform, the study of potential compromise models of reform and the study of the impact of new global challenges on the functioning of the UN Security Council.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

References

- [1] ACLED. (2023). *Fact sheet: Attacks on civilians spike in Mali as security deteriorates across the Sahel*. Retrieved from <https://acleddata.com/2023/09/21/fact-sheet-attacks-on-civilians-spike-in-mali-as-security-deteriorates-across-the-sahel/>.
- [2] Allen, S.H., & Yuen, A. (2022). *Bargaining in the UN Security Council: Setting the global agenda*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [3] Autesserre, S. (2019). *The crisis of peacekeeping: Why the UN can't end wars*. *Foreign Affairs*, 98, 101-116.
- [4] Berdal, M. (2023). *Whither UN peacekeeping?* In The International Institute for Strategic Studies (Ed.), *Armed conflict survey 2017* (pp. 13-24). New York: Routledge.
- [5] Bernal Fabra, J. (2022). *Analysis of the United Nations peace operation in Mali: counterterrorism and counterinsurgency in MINUSMA*. *Revista Análisis Jurídico-Político*, 4(8), 17-50.
- [6] Bernaz, N. (2020). *Reforming the UN human rights protection procedures: A legal perspective on the establishment of the universal periodic review mechanism*. In K. Boyle (Ed.), *New institutions for human rights protection* (pp. 75-92). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [7] Binder, M., & Heupel, M. (2020). Rising powers, UN Security Council reform, and the failure of rhetorical coercion. *Global Policy*, 11, 93-103. doi: 10.1111/1758-5899.12857.
- [8] Blair, R.A., Di Salvatore, J., & Smidt, H.M. (2022). When do UN peacekeeping operations implement their mandates? *American Journal of Political Science*, 66(3), 664-680. doi: 10.1111/ajps.12650.
- [9] Center for Preventive Action. (2024). *Instability in South Sudan*. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan>.
- [10] Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. (1993, January). Retrieved from <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/cwc-1993>.
- [11] Day, A. (2020). *UN transitions: Improving Security Council practice in mission settings*. Retrieved from http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7593/UNU_UN_Transitions_FINAL_WEB.pdf.
- [12] Draft Resolution of Security Council of the UN No. S/2022/155. (2022, February). Retrieved from <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-2022-155.php>.
- [13] Draft Resolution of Security Council of the UN No. S/RES/1973. (2011, March). Retrieved from <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/1973-%282011%29>.
- [14] Draft Resolution of the UN General Assembly No. A/59/L.64 "Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters". (2005, July). Retrieved from <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/a-59-l-64.php>.
- [15] Draft Resolution of UN General Assembly No. A/59/L.68 "Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters". (2005, July). Retrieved from <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/a-59-l-68.php>.

- [16] Ekengren, A.M., Hjorthen, F.D., & Möller, U. (2020). A nonpermanent seat in the United Nations Security Council: Why bother? *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 26(1), 21-45. doi: 10.1163/19426720-02601007.
- [17] Farrall, J., Loisselle, M.E., Michaelsen, C., Prantl, J., & Whalan, J. (2020). Elected member influence in the United Nations Security Council. *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 33(1), 101-115. doi: 10.1017/S0922156519000657.
- [18] Fung, C.J. (2019). *China and intervention at the UN Security Council: Reconciling status*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [19] Gifkins, J. (2021). Beyond the veto: Roles in UN Security Council decision-making. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 27(1), 1-24. doi: 10.1163/19426720-02701003.
- [20] Haugevik, K.M., Kuusik, P., Raik, K., & Schia, N.N. (2021). *Small states, different approaches Estonia and Norway on the UN Security Council*. International Centre for Defence and Security, Estonian Foreign Policy Institute: Narva and Tallin.
- [21] Hosli, M.O., & Dörfler, T. (2019). Why is change so slow? Assessing prospects for United Nations Security Council reform. *Journal of Economic Policy Reform*, 22(1), 35-50. doi: 10.1080/17487870.2017.1305903.
- [22] International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. (1999, December). Retrieved from <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/Special/1999%20International%20Convention%20for%20the%20Suppression%20of%20the%20Financing%20of%20Terrorism.pdf>.
- [23] Jabeen, M. (2020). *Indian aspiration of permanent membership in the UN Security Council and American stance*. *South Asian Studies*, 25(2).
- [24] Jamaat, M.A., Sati, A.A., & Okba, M. (2024). *The Syrian war: A conflict without end, intensified and eclipsed by the war in Gaza*. Retrieved from <https://www.equaltimes.org/the-syrian-war-a-conflict-without?lang=en>.
- [25] Janowski, K. (2023). *Civilian deaths in Ukraine War top 10,000, UN says*. Retrieved from <https://ukraine.un.org/en/253322-civilian-deaths-ukraine-war-top-10000-un-says>.
- [26] Kleczkowska, A. (2023). *Judging its own case – the abuse of the veto power by Russia*. *Czech Yearbook of Public & Private International Law*, 14.
- [27] Mégret, F., & Alston, P. (Eds.). (2020). *The United Nations and human rights: A critical appraisal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [28] Mingst, K., & Karns, M.P. (2019). *The United Nations in the post-cold war era*. New York: Routledge.
- [29] Mingst, K.A., Karns, M.P., & Lyon, A.J. (2022). *The United Nations in the 21st century*. New York: Routledge.
- [30] Monteleone, C. (2019). The United Nations and the European Union. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1091.
- [31] Müller, J. (2021). *Reforming the United Nations: The quiet revolution (Vol. 4)*. London, Boston: Kluwer Law International.
- [32] Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. (2000, May). Retrieved from <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/crc-opac-2000>.
- [33] Pinheiro, I.T. (2024). *The reform of the Security Council of the United Nations – the maintenance of international peace and security through regional representation*. Coimbra: Elmeccois Almedina.
- [34] Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions. (1949, August). Retrieved from <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/article-52>.
- [35] Resolution of Security Council of the UN No. 1996. (2011, July). Retrieved from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/706698?v=pdf>.
- [36] Resolution of Security Council of the UN No. 2100. (2013, April). Retrieved from <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n13/314/17/pdf/n1331417.pdf?token=2rh02NUdimBljx3Mae&fe=true>.
- [37] Resolution of Security Council of the UN No. 2155. (2014, May). Retrieved from <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n14/411/27/pdf/n1441127.pdf?token=IRbBLNKDNNdzHApqH2&fe=true>.
- [38] Resolution of Security Council of the UN No. 2202. (2015, February). Retrieved from https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCE9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2202.pdf.
- [39] Resolution of Security Council of the UN No. 2216. (2015, April). Retrieved from <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2216>.
- [40] Resolution of Security Council of the UN No. 2254. (2015, December). Retrieved from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/814715/?v=pdf>.
- [41] Resolution of the UN General Assembly No. 3314 (XXIX) “Definition of Aggression”. (1974, April). Retrieved from <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instree/GAres3314.html>.
- [42] Resolution of the UN General Assembly No. 62/557. (2008, September). Retrieved from https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCE9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Decision%2062_557.pdf.
- [43] Sarjoon, A., & Yusoff, M.A. (2019). *The United Nations peacekeeping operations and challenges*. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 8(3), 202-211.
- [44] Security council fails to adopt Draft Resolution on Syria that would have threatened sanctions, due to negative votes of China, Russian Federation. (2012). Retrieved from <https://press.un.org/en/2012/sc10714.doc.htm>.
- [45] Security council must reflect twenty-first century realities, delegates tell General Assembly, with many calling for urgent expansion of permanent seats. (2020). Retrieved from <https://press.un.org/en/2020/ga12288.doc.htm>.
- [46] Sharma, M. (2023). *France assures support to India, three others for permanent seat at UN Security Council*. Retrieved from <https://surl.li/krdzoe>.
- [47] Smidt, H.M. (2020). United Nations peacekeeping locally: Enabling conflict resolution, reducing communal violence. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(2-3), 344-372. doi: 10.1177/0022002719859631.

- [48] Statement of the President of the Security Council No. S/PRST/2021/5. (2021, March). Retrieved from <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n21/063/38/pdf/n2106338.pdf>.
- [49] Taylor, H., Bohl, D.K., & Moyer, J.D. (2023). *Assessing the impact of war in Yemen: Pathways for recovery*. Sana'a: United Nations Development Programme.
- [50] Taylor, P., & Smith, K. (2019). *The United Nations (UN)*. In *Peacekeeping and the role of Russia in Eurasia* (pp. 189-212). New York: Routledge.
- [51] The Ezulwini Consensus. (2005, March). Retrieved from <https://old.centerforunreform.org/sites/default/files/Ezulwini%20Consensus.pdf>.
- [52] The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (1966, December). Retrieved from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/the-international-covenant-on-civil-and-political-rights>.
- [53] Ukraine emergency. (2024). Retrieved from <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/ukraine/>.
- [54] UN Human Rights. (2024). *High Commissioner for Human Rights says Myanmar is being suffocated by an illegitimate military regime, speaks of stories of horrific war tactics and brutal atrocity crimes*. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2024/06/high-commissioner-human-rights-says-myanmar-being-suffocated-illegitimate-military>.
- [55] United Nations Charter. (1945, October). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>.
- [56] Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (1948, December). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.
- [57] Up to 15,000 killed in Libya war: U.N. rights expert. (2011). Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-un-deaths-idUSTRE7584UY20110609/>.
- [58] Von Einsiedel, S., Malone, D.M., & Ugarte, B.S. (Eds.). (2015). *The UN Security Council in the 21st century*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- [59] Wenaweser, C., & Alavi, S. (2020). *Innovating to restrain the use of the veto in the United Nations Security Council*. *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 52, 65-72.
- [60] Williams, P.D. (2020). The Security Council's peacekeeping trilemma. *International Affairs*, 96(2), 479-499. doi: 10.1093/ia/iiz199.
- [61] Wood, M., & Sthoeger, E. (2022). *The UN Security Council and international law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.