

Security Council | Issue 1

Internal Conflicts: Civil Wars and Beyond.

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BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE:

Since the end of the Cold War, the prevention and ceasing of civil wars has become a prominent part of the work of the United Nations. Today, a significant portion of the conflicts on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council are civil wars. There has been a civil war on every continent in the last 100 years and the UNSC has done great work in trying to end these civil wars and prevent new ones. The security council has hosted peace talks, sponsored military actions and supplied humanitarian aid to many countries that are dealing with Civil Wars. Civil war also led to other major problems such as starvation, the violation of human rights and destabilization of entire regions of the world. An example of this is Yemen, which only has half of its healthcare facilities are running and even the ones that are working are very low on supplies and in the Mexican Drug War police are reported to have tortured, captured and made people disappear. No matter what the war is, they tend to cause massive problems for entire regions of the world as you will see in the three situations below.

The United Nations Security Council is a very unique part of the United Nations. The UNSC is the only part of the UN that can make binding resolutions to Member States, these can be carried out by sanctions, military actions and establishing peacekeeping operations. Though it may sound like a lot of power, remember that Peacekeeping forces are sustained from Member States and therefore member states get the final say on what their Peacekeeping forces do. Remember that UNSC is only one organ of the entire UN and that many organizations both within and outside of the UN have helped in these wars. It is your main duty to help create and maintain peace, resolutions should be trying to help stop or mitigate war, preventing death and helping spread the core values of the United Nations.

CONFLICT 1: Yemeni Civil War

Yemen, a small country in the Asian Arabian Peninsula, is home to one of the most gruesome Civil Wars raging in the world right now. The fighting has been going on since 2014 has become the Iran-backed Houthi rebels who overthrew the Yemeni government are facing an internationally recognized coalition led by Saudi Arabia. The conflict has displaced well over one million people and has created a host of disease outbreaks including cholera and Covid-19. There are also major medical shortages all across the nation and are "hurtling towards the worst famine the world has seen in decades" says David Gressly, the United Nation Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen. Mr. Gressly has also called this "The worst humanitarian crisis in the world"

Yemen has struggled with religious and cultural differences within its borders since European Colonization, in 1990 North Yemen and South Yemen unified after being separated by the Cold War. However in 2014, the extremist group Houthi rebels took over the capital of Yemen, Sanaa. This has started what has now been a 7 year war. Saudi Arabia's role in this war has been a massive series of bombings, 20,000 in total and also housing the Yemen president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. The UNSC has passed little meaningful resolutions in the past, with exception to UNSC resolution 2451, which created a cease fire in a major port in Yemen. This resolution also set up prisoner exchanges and humanitarian aid supply lines. Since the passing of the resolution in 2018, little else has been done by the UNSC.

CONFLICT 2: Somali Civil War

The Somali civil war has been going on since the 1990's and was started between a whole host of different Islamic extremist groups and the internationally recognized Government of Somalia which currently only controls the capital and a few surrounding small regions. The war was started with the fall of President Said Barre in 1991, this fall created a power vacuum that was never filled causing the whole country to shatter into regions being controlled by warlords, Islamic nationalists and other territorial leaders. Al-Shabab, today's main oppositionist, goal is to create an Islamic state in Somalia. In the areas that Al-Shabab controls they enforce their own harsh and twisted version of Sharia law which prohibits various types of entertainment, smoking, shaving of beards and most importantly the prevention of humanitarian aid.

The UN has had success in Somalia, sponsoring and leading two military missions in the 1990's called United Nations Operations in Somalia I or UNOSOM I and UNOSOM II for short. UNOSOM I/II were designed to bring humanitarian help and stability to the region through military force. UNOSOM I was not incredibly successful as local warlords stopped most troops from leaving the airports, UNOSOM II was partially successful as it helped distribute humanitarian aid but did not succeed on its overall goal of stabilizing certain parts of Somalia. Walter Clarke, who was Deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S. Embassy in Somalia during UNOSOM II concluded that "The intervention in Somalia was not an abject failure; an estimated 100,000 lives were saved. But its mismanagement should be an object lesson for peacekeepers on other such missions." The overall failure of these missions is what led the UNSC to take less military actions and more peaceful routes when dealing with the Somali Civil War and Civil Wars in general. This new strategy of keeping peace has included a host of peace talks, incentives through resolution (usually dropping sanctions), and other less militant ways of creating and maintaining peace.

CONFLICT 3: Mexican Drug War

For the past 15 years the Mexican government has been waging a deadly war against the Mexican drug cartels within its borders. This war, which has taken hundreds of thousands of lives- including politicians, students and journalists. The United States of America has teamed up with Mexico by providing hundreds of millions of dollars in support and military personnel. The Mexican drug cartels, also called transnational criminal organizations control a majority of the import and export of cocaine, fentanyl, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine in the entire Western region of the world. One of the main reasons that the cartels prosper so well in Mexico is because they use portions of their vast profits to pay off judges, police and politicians.

The toll on human rights has been massive. Journalists and the general public have been criticizing the government for years, judging everyone from the military police to the corrupt government. The government and cartels alike have committed many human rights violations including torture, extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances. For a scale, over 66,000 people have disappeared both from the cartels and the government. The total number of deaths from the Mexican drug war will never be known but current estimates have the death count at over 120,000. The UNSC has not passed any resolutions about the Mexican Drug War.

QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN POSITION PAPERS (9)

1. What, in your country's eyes, is the most effective way to combat illicit drug trafficking trade while also not violating human rights?
2. How can the UNSC combat religious extremism?
3. What is your country's stance on Yemeni Civil War?
4. If your country has had a civil war in the past Century, how did it conclude?
5. Should the UNSC be more aggressive with its peacekeeping goals?
6. Should the UNSC be involved with the internal affairs of other countries, even if it does not have a global impact?
7. What should the UNSC do about countries who profit off of other countries' civil wars? (selling weapons, being paid to house important figures, ect.)
8. How can the UNSC prevent civil wars?
9. What, if any, effects have civil war caused to your country and/or region?

SOURCES (10):

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3. [UN humanitarian office puts Yemen war dead at 233,000, mostly from 'indirect causes'](#)
4. [The United Nations Security Council and Civil War: First ...](#)
5. <https://yemen.un.org/en/about/about-the-un>
6. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/yemen-crisis>
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