

PASMUN 2026



Committee: General Assembly

Topic: Reforms of the United Nations

Letter of Introduction

Dear Delegates,

Welcome! My name is Jose Antonio Kalinowski, and I am honored to be your Chair for this committee. I want to thank you for joining me on this exciting journey of debate and diplomacy. This is my third time chairing and my 10th MUN. I hope you enjoy the experience as much as I have enjoyed preparing for it. A lot of work and thought have gone into making this conference engaging and rewarding, and I will do everything in my power to ensure a smooth and enriching experience for all of you. If you have any doubts or hesitations, please feel free to contact me through email.

Chair

Jose Antonio Kalinowski

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome! My name is Santiago Vendrell, and I am honored to be your Chair for this committee. This is my first time chairing a MUN, and I am very excited to share this experience with all of you. I hope you enjoy the debate and diplomacy as much as I have enjoyed preparing for this conference. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me through email.

Co-Chair

Santiago Vendrell

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History of the United Nations

Founding and the Structural Compromise (1945)

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, delegates from 51 nations convened in San Francisco to draft the United Nations Charter, establishing a global framework to maintain international peace and prevent future global conflicts. However, the institution was built upon a fundamental structural compromise: to guarantee the participation of the world's primary powers, the five permanent members of the Security Council (the P5: US, Russia/USSR, China, UK, and France) were granted absolute veto power over binding security decisions. While the General Assembly was designed as a democratic organ where each member state holds an equal vote, its resolutions were defined as non-binding recommendations, creating an inherent divide between broad moral authority and legal enforcement mechanisms.

Cold War Gridlock and the General Assembly (1950s–1980s)

As Cold War rivalries intensified, frequent P5 vetoes paralyzed the Security Council, leaving it unable to decisively address major global crises. In response, the General Assembly established a vital constitutional precedent in 1950 by adopting Resolution 377A ("Uniting for Peace"). This mechanism authorized the General Assembly to consider security matters directly and recommend collective action whenever P5 gridlock prevented the Security Council from fulfilling its mandate. Concurrently, a historical wave of decolonization expanded UN membership across Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, transforming the General Assembly into the primary platform for the Global South to champion state sovereignty, economic equity, and anti-colonialism.

Post-Cold War Multilateralism and Intervention Limits (1990s)

The dissolution of the Soviet Union initiated a brief period of Security Council alignment, exemplified by the collective mandate authorized during the 1990–1991 Gulf

War. However, this multilateral consensus quickly revealed severe operational limits. Devastating humanitarian failures in Rwanda (1994) and Srebrenica (1995) exposed the UN's inability to prevent mass atrocities when member states lacked the political will to authorize robust peacekeeping mandates. These tragedies catalyzed the formal development of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, asserting that national sovereignty entails a responsibility to protect populations, and that the international community must intervene when a state fails to do so.

The Era of Unilateralism and Open Disregard (2000s–Present)

The turn of the 21st century marked an escalating trend of powerful states bypassing multilateral authority. The 2003 invasion of Iraq by the US and Britain without Security Council authorization demonstrated that major powers were willing to pursue unilateral foreign policy objectives in direct defiance of UN frameworks. In recent years, institutional gridlock has deepened. Major international conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East consistently highlight how P5 vetoes block binding collective security measures. While the General Assembly repeatedly invokes Uniting for Peace to express global condemnation, its lack of direct enforcement mechanisms limits its capacity to restrain sovereign powers acting at their discretion.

The Current State of the United Nations:

Security Council Paralysis

Geopolitical fragmentation among P5 members frequently stalls binding action. The strategic use of the veto shields permanent members and their allies, leaving the Security Council incapable of mandating binding ceasefires or enforcement measures in active war zones.

The General Assembly's Enforcement Deficit

Although the General Assembly represents universal state membership and routinely passes resolutions with overwhelming global majorities, its decisions remain non-binding under international law. Consequently, powerful belligerents frequently ignore General Assembly mandates without legal or military consequences.

Rise of Minilateralism and Alternative Security Structures

Frustrated by multilateral paralysis, states increasingly rely on "minilateral" frameworks, ad hoc coalitions, and regional security blocs (e.g., NATO, BRICS, African Union) to project power and establish strategic guarantees, gradually sidelining the UN's central role in dispute resolution.

Institutional Reform Frameworks

Member states adopted the landmark UN Pact for the Future (Resolution A/RES/79/1) at the Summit of the Future, establishing high-level commitments to expand Security Council representation for under-represented regions like Africa and Latin America. However, executing these institutional reforms requires formal Charter amendments, which face significant geopolitical resistance.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: The War in Ukraine & Sovereign Limits

- **Context:** The invasion of Ukraine represents a primary violation of territorial integrity and state sovereignty under Chapter I of the UN Charter.
- **UN Action & Friction:** Security Council mandates were blocked by Russia's P5 veto. In response, the General Assembly convened under *Uniting for Peace* to adopt resolutions condemning territorial aggression and demanding a complete

withdrawal, though it lacked the binding enforcement mechanisms to compel compliance.

- **Key Takeaway:** Demonstrates how a P5 member can leverage its institutional position to neutralize Security Council enforcement, forcing the General Assembly to rely solely on diplomatic condemnation.

Case Study 2: Gaza & Structural Ceasefire Obstacles

- **Context:** Escalating hostilities and civilian displacement in Gaza have challenged the UN's capacity for diplomatic crisis management and humanitarian protection.
- **UN Action & Friction:** Multiple draft Security Council resolutions demanding immediate ceasefires were vetoed by the United States. Concurrently, operational bodies like UNRWA provided humanitarian relief under hazardous operational conditions, while the General Assembly repeatedly convened Emergency Special Sessions to call for sustained humanitarian pauses.
- **Key Takeaway:** Illustrates how strategic bilateral alliances among P5 members can block binding ceasefire resolutions, turning UN multilateral organs into relief managers rather than peace enforcers.

Case Study 3: Peacekeeping Challenges in Sudan and the DRC

- **Context:** Internal instability and proxy conflicts in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) reflect modern operational hurdles facing UN Peacekeeping Operations.
- **UN Action & Friction:** Blue Helmets are frequently deployed without adequate enforcement mandates or troop capabilities to confront non-state armed groups. Additionally, host governments have demanded the premature drawdown of missions (such as UNITAMS in Sudan and MONUSCO in the DRC), citing failures to restore regional stability.

- **Key Takeaway:** Shows that classical 20th-century peacekeeping mandates struggle against modern asymmetric warfare and non-state actors without robust military funding and host-state cooperation.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

Veto Accountability: What procedural mechanisms can the General Assembly establish to increase institutional oversight when a P5 veto paralyzes Security Council action during major security crises?

Norm Enforcement: How can the General Assembly leverage diplomatic, economic, or multilateral strategies to increase state compliance with non-binding resolutions?

Multilateral Relevance: How should the UN integrate or coordinate with regional security arrangements (e.g., NATO, African Union, BRICS) to ensure the UN remains the global forum for crisis management?

Peacekeeping Modernization: What structural modifications are required to provide UN peacekeeping operations with realistic mandates, sufficient logistics, and rules of engagement suitable for modern civil conflicts?

Suggestions for Further Research:

Analyze Resolution 76/262 (The Veto Initiative): Investigate this procedural rule requiring the General Assembly to convene a formal debate whenever a P5 member casts a veto in the Security Council.

Review the UN Pact for the Future: Research the specific commitments outlining Security Council reform, global governance modernization, and multilateral financial architecture.

Identify Your Country's Voting Bloc: Determine if your assigned nation aligns with key voting coalitions—such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the G4, the Uniting for Consensus group, or the African Union—to establish your official foreign policy position on UN reform.

Closing Remarks:

The essential debate facing this committee centers on the tension between national sovereignty and collective security. While the Security Council is often constrained by geopolitical gridlock, the General Assembly remains the sole organ providing universal state representation and moral authority. Delegates must look beyond rhetorical idealistic solutions and draft actionable, legally grounded resolutions. Your responsibility is to propose pragmatic procedural reforms that bridge the gap between UN authority and state power, ensuring the organization remains capable of preserving international peace.

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