RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Reality of International UN Bodies in Maintaining Global Peace and Security

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Abstract

International bodies operating under the United Nations (UN) bear immense responsibilities, chief among them the maintenance of international peace and security—an objective central to their foundational mission. This role is not only a fundamental aspiration of the global community but also an essential prerequisite for development, prosperity, and human rights protection. However, in practical terms, these bodies frequently encounter significant challenges that impede their effectiveness. Political deadlock, conflicting national interests, and structural limitations often prevent them from fulfilling their mandates, thereby undermining their credibility and hindering the achievement of desired outcomes. This paper critically examines the structural and political constraints facing international UN bodies and questions their capacity to influence global peace in a meaningful and impartial manner.

Actuality. The maintenance of international peace and security remains one of the most pressing and complex challenges of the contemporary global order. Despite the establishment of the United Nations and its specialized bodies with the explicit mandate to prevent conflicts and foster peace, the reality on the ground often reveals a significant gap between their stated objectives and actual outcomes. Recent international crises, including ongoing conflicts and humanitarian emergencies, highlight the limitations of UN bodies in enforcing resolutions and mitigating violence effectively. These challenges are compounded by geopolitical rivalries, the politicization of key UN organs, and the persistent use of veto powers that stall decisive actions. The growing complexity of international security threats—including asymmetric warfare, terrorism, and cyber threats—further tests the adaptability and responsiveness of these institutions. This study addresses this critical gap by examining the current operational realities of UN bodies, evaluating their structural and political constraints, and exploring pathways to enhance their legitimacy and effectiveness in safeguarding global peace.

Methodology. This research employs a qualitative, doctrinal approach to analyze the role and effectiveness of international UN bodies in maintaining peace and security. The study draws on a comprehensive review of primary sources, including the UN Charter, Security Council resolutions, and official UN reports, alongside secondary sources such as scholarly articles, legal commentaries, and policy analyses. A critical legal analysis framework is applied to assess institutional mandates, decision-making processes, and enforcement mechanisms. Additionally, the study integrates case studies of recent conflicts to illustrate practical challenges and political dynamics influencing UN operations. Data triangulation is used to corroborate findings across legal documents, academic literature, and expert opinions. This methodology facilitates a nuanced understanding of the interplay between legal frameworks and political realities, allowing for evidence-based recommendations aimed at institutional reform and enhanced global governance.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary geopolitical landscape, armed conflicts, civil wars, and regional tensions have proliferated, posing critical threats to global peace and security. Against this backdrop, the role of international institutions—particularly those affiliated with the United Nations—has gained prominence. Established in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II, the United Nations was conceived as a mechanism to ensure collective security and to foster peaceful dispute resolution through legal and diplomatic means. Article 1 of the UN Charter clearly articulates the organization's primary purpose: "to maintain international peace and security."

To this end, the UN has developed a comprehensive institutional framework that includes bodies such as the Security Council, the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice, and various specialized agencies. These institutions are tasked with conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations, political mediation, and humanitarian intervention. Despite their legal mandates and extensive authority, however, the efficacy of these bodies has been repeatedly challenged.

Critics point to double standards, inconsistent application of international law, and the disproportionate influence of powerful member states—particularly the permanent members of the Security Council (P5)—as major impediments to achieving the UN's stated objectives. Consequently, the legitimacy and effectiveness of UN bodies are increasingly called into question, especially in conflict zones where they have failed to ensure protection or enforce resolutions.

This study aims to explore the following central research question: **Why are international UN bodies often unable to play an effective role in maintaining global peace and security?**

To address this core inquiry, the study examines several sub-questions:

- Why have UN institutions struggled to uphold justice in certain protracted conflicts, such as the Palestinian issue?
- What institutional reforms or strategic approaches could enhance the effectiveness of UN bodies in fulfilling their mandates?

2. Challenges Facing International UN Bodies in Achieving Peace and Security

Despite their broad legal authority and institutional reach, UN bodies—especially the Security Council—are frequently constrained by geopolitical realities that limit their operational capacity. A fundamental challenge is the absence of unified political will among key member states. This is most evident among the P5, who wield veto power and often use it to safeguard national interests rather than promote global justice or peace.

The structure of the post-WWII international order, as embedded in the UN Charter, has thus entrenched an asymmetrical distribution of power. The veto mechanism, while intended as a safeguard against unilateral dominance, has often paralyzed decision-making processes. Situations in Syria, Yemen, and Palestine exemplify how entrenched divisions among the P5 have obstructed meaningful resolutions, prolonged humanitarian crises, and allowed violence to escalate.

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Moreover, influential states frequently bypass the UN framework altogether by forming military coalitions or engaging in unilateral interventions. These actions diminish the authority and relevance of the UN, weakening its ability to function as an impartial arbiter of international peace. As a result, the organization struggles to maintain legitimacy among nations and peoples who increasingly perceive it as beholden to the interests of a few powerful actors rather than a representative body of the international community.

1.1 Obstacles Facing the Decisions of International UN Bodies

1.1.1 The Complexity of Modern Conflicts

Contemporary armed conflicts present multifaceted challenges that significantly hinder the operational effectiveness of United Nations (UN) bodies. Unlike the inter-state wars of the early 20th century, present-day conflicts often involve internal civil wars, ethnically and sectarian-driven hostilities, insurgencies, transnational terrorist networks, and proxy militias supported by external actors. Non-state actors, including transnational criminal organizations and mercenary groups, have emerged as formidable destabilizing forces, complicating traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms.

This evolving nature of conflict demands not merely ceasefires or force separation but necessitates comprehensive approaches grounded in socio-political, economic, and cultural understanding. Such complexity frequently exceeds the existing institutional capacities and operational frameworks of UN bodies, particularly the Security Council (al-Rashidi, 1996, p. 66). Moreover, overlapping interests among powerful states often politicize Security Council deliberations, impeding the formulation of unified responses and delaying effective intervention.

Conflicts involving rapidly shifting alliances, evolving actors, and external interventions render peace negotiations particularly volatile. The multiplicity of stakeholders, including clandestine financiers and sponsors, complicates diplomatic resolution efforts and imposes pressure on decision-makers, often diluting the efficacy and neutrality of negotiated outcomes.

1.1.2 Resource Constraints

A critical barrier to the implementation of UN mandates is the persistent shortage of financial, logistical, and human resources. While UN agencies are vested with considerable legal authority under the Charter, their real-world impact is contingent on the adequacy of available resources. Many peacekeeping missions operate under severe logistical constraints, including outdated equipment, insufficient personnel, and delayed supply chains, which diminish their ability to function in volatile and insecure environments.

Humanitarian agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also face chronic funding gaps due to reliance on voluntary state contributions. These gaps often delay or curtail critical humanitarian operations. In addition, donor states may exert political influence over UN agencies by attaching conditionalities to their contributions, thus compromising institutional impartiality (al-Wahshat, 2021, p. 18).

1.1.3 Security and Operational Challenges

The post–Cold War era has introduced multidimensional security threats that challenge the deployment and efficacy of UN peacekeeping forces. Irregular armed groups, terrorist organizations, and criminal networks operate outside traditional state structures, employing asymmetric tactics such as improvised explosive devices, targeted assassinations, and mass abductions. These tactics heighten risks for peacekeeping personnel and obstruct mission objectives.

In fragile and conflict-ridden states, where rule of law is weak and corruption rampant, the operational environment for UN intervention becomes increasingly hostile. Restricted access, lack of cooperation from local authorities, and vague or politically contested mandates further hinder mission performance. Moreover, external military interventions, refugee influxes, and cross-border insecurity exacerbate existing instability and impede the restoration of peace.

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To overcome these challenges, UN bodies must enhance security protocols, increase interagency coordination, integrate advanced technologies for surveillance and early warning, and revise peacekeeping mandates to reflect the dynamic nature of modern conflict (Talal, 2010, p. 45).

1.1.4 Structural and Political Impediments to Sanctions

Sanctions constitute one of the principal enforcement tools available to the UN Security Council. Yet, their application is frequently obstructed by structural limitations within the international system. The veto power held by the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council enables them to block punitive measures against strategic allies, thereby entrenching selective justice and eroding the legitimacy of UN mechanisms.

Furthermore, sanctions—especially broad economic measures—can have devastating humanitarian impacts, disrupting basic services, inflating prices, and exacerbating poverty and unemployment. Such unintended consequences raise ethical and legal concerns regarding their compatibility with international humanitarian law.

The globalized nature of trade and finance also facilitates sanction evasion through front companies and transactions in jurisdictions not bound by UN resolutions. Effective sanction enforcement demands multi-level cooperation among states, regulatory bodies, financial institutions, and law enforcement agencies—coordination that is often absent or inconsistent.

Sanctioned states may also exploit the situation rhetorically, framing the measures as unjust or politically motivated, thus undermining global support and weakening compliance. In some instances, prolonged sanctions without clear exit strategies have deepened the suffering of civilian populations while failing to produce tangible political change, as seen in the cases of North Korea and Iran (GC, /, p. 99).

1.2 The Weakness of the International Legal System

Despite normative advancements since the inception of the League of Nations and the establishment of the United Nations, the international legal system remains structurally deficient. Unlike domestic legal frameworks, it lacks a centralized authority capable of enforcing compliance with binding rulings or legal standards. Sovereign equality and voluntarism remain foundational principles, rendering adherence to international law largely dependent on states' willingness rather than coercive enforcement.

This limitation is evident in widespread non-compliance with rulings from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), as well as in the selective invocation of international law by major powers to suit strategic interests. The veto mechanism further entrenches political influence, often obstructing resolutions related to humanitarian intervention or accountability for human rights violations.

The limited universality of core legal instruments, such as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), also hampers enforcement. Several influential states have refused to ratify or have withdrawn from the ICC, undermining its jurisdiction and diminishing the reach of international criminal justice.

Additional challenges include the protracted nature of international legal proceedings, the lack of enforceable remedies, and weak integration of international legal standards into national legislation. Many states resist harmonizing domestic legal systems with international obligations, thereby impeding the implementation of treaties and judgments within their territories.

2. The Inability of International Bodies to Deliver Justice in Just Causes

The inability of UN bodies to fulfill their fundamental mandate—to safeguard international peace and justice—has prompted global disillusionment with the institutional framework. This shortcoming is most visible in their failure to intervene effectively in prolonged and politicized conflicts, raising existential questions about the continued legitimacy of these institutions.

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2.1 The Failure to Sanction the Zionist Entity in the Gaza Conflict

The Gaza Strip has endured successive military assaults by the Zionist entity, resulting in widespread civilian casualties, destruction of infrastructure, and long-term humanitarian crises. Despite repeated violations of international law, the UN Security Council has failed to impose effective sanctions or take decisive action due to the vetoes exercised by powerful allies, notably the United States and certain European states.

This institutional paralysis illustrates the limitations of the UN system in addressing situations involving powerful geopolitical actors. It reveals the disparity between normative commitments and political reality, particularly when decisions are filtered through strategic alliances and diplomatic calculations (Bakr, 2008, p. 33).

Such inaction undermines the credibility of UN bodies and their capacity to compel compliance with international norms. The impunity enjoyed by the Zionist entity in the face of repeated condemnations highlights the structural and political deficiencies that continue to obstruct the realization of justice through international institutions.

2.1 The Inability of the UN to Sanction the Zionist Entity during the Gaza Conflict

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) remains the sole international body authorised to impose binding international sanctions. However, its current structure—particularly the veto power held by the five permanent members—has repeatedly enabled states to block resolutions that conflict with their strategic interests. In the case of the Zionist entity, the United States, acting as a strategic ally, routinely exercises its veto to prevent the adoption of resolutions that would condemn or sanction its military operations in the Gaza Strip. This recurring obstructionism has paralysed the Council's ability to enforce sanctions and granted the Zionist entity broad operational latitude, free from international deterrence (Ghazlan & Toumi, 2024, p. 198).

Even when other UN bodies such as the General Assembly or the Human Rights Council issue condemnatory resolutions, these instruments lack binding authority and mechanisms for enforcement. Their decisions do not compel violating states to comply, and implementation often depends on voluntary state cooperation. Simultaneously, the UNSC regularly fails to follow through on these resolutions due to political considerations and internal deadlock. The lack of effective coordination between UN bodies and international judicial institutions further impedes both the imposition of sanctions and the pursuit of legal accountability.

International humanitarian law unequivocally prohibits attacks on civilians, the use of starvation as a method of warfare, forced displacement, the targeting of hospitals and critical infrastructure, and other acts constituting war crimes or crimes against humanity. Nevertheless, the application of these legal norms to the Palestinian–Zionist conflict encounters several structural challenges. These include the Zionist entity's ambiguous legal status, claims to exceptional security rights, and divergent interpretations of international law among global actors. Such factors enable legal loopholes and provide justification for continued violations without consequences.

Moreover, the manipulation of international public opinion and media narratives has allowed the Zionist entity to sustain its aggressive policies with minimal global backlash. The challenge lies not in the absence of legal frameworks, but in the enforcement of these frameworks. A structural deficit in coercive mechanisms prevents the UN from compelling compliance and from ensuring justice for affected populations.

The fragmentation of international support for Palestine, and the inconsistent positions of member states—ranging from vocal support for Palestinian rights to unconditional political backing for the Zionist entity—undermine efforts to form unified responses. These divisions reflect a deep rift within the international community, limiting the consensus needed for effective sanctions (al-Yousuf, 2025, p. 32).

Compounding these challenges is the Zionist entity's refusal to recognise the jurisdiction of international judicial bodies such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), as well as the significant political pressure exerted on these institutions. Despite condemnations by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the issuance of arrest warrants targeting Israeli officials and military leaders, these legal instruments remain largely symbolic. Enforcement is stalled by states' reluctance to act—largely due to political calculations and deference to U.S. geopolitical interests.

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Thus, the inability of the UN to sanction the Zionist entity during its war on the Gaza Strip stems not from procedural shortcomings, but from entrenched political and legal constraints linked to the structure of international power, the limitations of UN mandates, and the weakness of global enforcement mechanisms. Addressing this deficiency requires a fundamental reconsideration of international decision-making, the independence of judicial bodies, and a more assertive role for civil society in exerting pressure on both state and non-state actors. Most urgently, reform is needed to mitigate the dominance of major powers within the Security Council—particularly regarding the veto—which remains a fundamental obstacle to achieving international justice and safeguarding global peace and security (*The American Veto: Israel's Proxy in the Security Council*, 2024).

2.2 The Feeble Arab Position on the Gaza Conflict

The weak Arab response to the war in the Gaza Strip represents both a legal and political dilemma, with serious implications for the credibility of joint Arab action and the collective ability of Arab states to defend Palestinian rights and promote regional peace. Despite religious, historical, and geographical proximity to the conflict, the Arab world has exhibited a hesitant and fragmented stance—failing to provide meaningful support for Palestinian self-determination or to respond robustly to acts of aggression by the Zionist entity.

A primary manifestation of this feebleness is the lack of cohesion and strategic coordination among Arab states. The Arab League and regional cooperation frameworks remain paralysed by internal divisions and competing national interests, preventing the formulation of unified responses. This disunity not only weakens the official Arab position in international forums but also strips it of its bargaining power and moral authority. Arab silence in the face of systematic war crimes—such as starvation, the bombing of hospitals, and the targeting of civilians, including women and journalists—highlights a profound political failure to uphold even basic humanitarian principles.

This weakness is further compounded by the absence of political will among certain Arab regimes, which prioritise bilateral economic and political relationships with the Zionist entity under the guise of normalisation. Such policies are often justified through appeals to domestic stability or global diplomatic pragmatism. However, these arguments reflect a failure to utilise political and legal leverage to support Palestinian rights, thereby eroding the legitimacy of Arab diplomacy in the eyes of regional populations (Hamshi, 2023).

Legally, the Arab world has failed to mount coordinated efforts to activate international legal instruments that support Palestinian claims or to assist in bringing cases before international courts. This inaction diminishes the efficacy of legal pathways to accountability and allows violations to persist with impunity.

Nevertheless, there have been isolated initiatives, including Algeria's repeated proposals at the Security Council to secure ceasefire agreements—efforts consistently thwarted by American vetoes. Qatar and Egypt have played limited mediating roles, and the Arab League has issued statements condemning Israeli aggression. However, such actions remain largely rhetorical and fail to translate into concrete political or legal consequences.

The Arab world's weakness is exacerbated by regional power rivalries and international pressure, which have entrenched political stagnation and prevented the emergence of a cohesive regional response. These dynamics further limit the effectiveness of Arab engagement with international institutions, including the UN, diminishing the impact of any resolutions adopted against the Zionist entity.

Ultimately, the feeble Arab position represents a significant obstacle to the realisation of international justice and the protection of Palestinian rights. Rectifying this trajectory necessitates increased political will, regional unity, and the strategic activation of legal and diplomatic tools. It also demands the transcending of narrow national interests in favour of a common Arab position that aligns with international law and reflects the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people (Ismail, 2023).

3. Means of Enhancing the Effectiveness of UN Bodies

The recent failures of United Nations bodies to address global crises, enforce sanctions, or uphold their mandates have underlined the urgency of institutional reform. To restore credibility and ensure effectiveness, a multifaceted strategy is required, incorporating both structural and operational measures.

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Reform of the Security Council must take precedence. Limiting the scope of the veto—especially in matters relating to peace and security—would prevent decision-making paralysis and allow for timely international responses to crises. Expanding the Council's permanent membership to reflect current geopolitical realities would enhance both representativeness and legitimacy.

To strengthen compliance, **robust monitoring mechanisms** should be institutionalised. These include improved follow-up systems to track the implementation of resolutions, enhanced coordination with international and regional bodies, and the integration of enforcement capabilities into peacekeeping mandates.

Financial and logistical independence is also vital. Peacekeeping missions require increased funding, better equipment, and trained personnel capable of operating in complex conflict environments. Reducing reliance on donor states would shield UN bodies from political influence and enhance institutional impartiality (Safou, 2021, p. 76).

Reinforcing the **independence of international judicial institutions**, such as the ICC and ICJ, is central to accountability. These bodies must be insulated from political pressure and granted the authority and resources necessary to execute their mandates. Member states must also be compelled to accept their jurisdiction and cooperate with investigations and prosecutions. Efforts should be made to harmonise domestic legal systems with international norms to facilitate the implementation of international judgments (Safou, 2021).

Moreover, a **holistic approach to conflict** must be adopted, encompassing prevention, resolution, reconstruction, development, and the promotion of human rights. Civil society actors and local communities should be engaged in peace processes, contributing to early warning systems, sustainable development, and post-conflict reconciliation.

UN strategies must also be updated to address **non-traditional security threats** such as cyberwarfare, terrorism, and transnational crime. This requires the development of international cooperation mechanisms, specialised institutions, and the adoption of advanced technologies for threat detection and response.

Finally, the establishment of a **UN-affiliated intelligence agency** could enhance early warning capabilities and support rapid deployment. Such a body would be instrumental in preventing escalation, monitoring compliance, and coordinating preventive diplomacy.

Together, these measures form a comprehensive framework for modernising UN institutions, ensuring their responsiveness to contemporary challenges, and reinforcing their foundational role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Transparency and Accountability as Core Pillars

Transparency and accountability are fundamental pillars that underpin the effectiveness of United Nations (UN) bodies. International trust in their decisions and actions cannot be attained without ensuring clarity in operational mechanisms and disclosure of information related to procedures and outcomes. Enhancing transparency in decision-making entails enabling member states and the global community to observe proceedings and comprehend the legal and political foundations of these decisions, thereby minimizing uncertainty and reinforcing institutional legitimacy.

Accountability, both a legal and ethical imperative, demands that UN bodies commit to holding individuals responsible for misconduct, mismanagement, or abuse of authority. This includes addressing institutional corruption, which can otherwise compromise the integrity of decisions. Establishing independent oversight mechanisms is necessary, alongside empowering member states and civil society organisations (CSOs) to monitor and assess institutional performance through periodic reporting and appeals against decisions that may contravene international law or human rights norms.

Reinforcing these principles enhances operational efficiency, bolsters institutional credibility, prevents power abuses, and supports the UN's capacity to fulfil its mandate of maintaining international peace and security within a robust legal and ethical framework (Al-Sharif, 2018, p. 72).

Technology and Innovation in UN Operations

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Technological development is increasingly essential for enhancing the effectiveness of UN bodies in responding to contemporary, rapidly evolving challenges. Advanced technology facilitates data collection, surveillance, and analysis, thereby enabling timely and evidence-based decisions that respond effectively to complex crises. Technological tools also enhance the efficiency of peacekeeping operations, employing encrypted communication systems, drones, and intelligent surveillance to reduce personnel risks and improve civilian protection in conflict zones.

Moreover, digital platforms improve coordination between UN agencies and regional or international partners, streamlining information sharing and consolidating responses. Investment in innovation also enhances the UN's ability to address emerging threats such as cybercrime and cyberterrorism, thereby reinforcing its role in safeguarding global peace and security. Consequently, the strategic adoption of technological advancements represents a necessary investment in modernising UN operations and aligning them with the demands of an evolving international landscape.

The Centrality of International Law

The effective functioning of UN bodies is inherently tied to the strength of international law. Upholding international legal norms, as outlined in the United Nations Charter, is fundamental to protecting state sovereignty and human rights. Strengthening this legal framework requires universal compliance with international treaties and the establishment of binding enforcement mechanisms to mitigate the limitations of voluntary adherence.

Support for judicial institutions such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) must be enhanced through guarantees of independence, expanded jurisdiction, and improved state cooperation in enforcement. Furthermore, harmonising domestic legal systems with international law facilitates local implementation and enhances the UN's effectiveness. Promoting legal education among decision-makers and the public also contributes to a culture of respect for international law, fostering global stability and improving the operational success of UN bodies (Mohamed, 2017, p. 173).

Participation and Dialogue in Peace Processes

Community participation and open dialogue are critical in enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of UN decisions in peace and security matters. The inclusion of local and international stakeholders ensures that resolutions are contextually relevant and responsive to the needs of affected populations.

Civil society organisations, media outlets, and conflict-affected groups provide essential ground-level insights, enabling the development of more tailored and effective policy responses. Dialogue among governments, local communities, and conflicting parties promotes mutual understanding, reduces tension, and creates pathways for sustainable conflict resolution. Thus, fostering inclusive strategies based on participatory engagement is central to a just and responsive international system.

3.1 Strengthening the Binding Nature of UN Resolutions

Security Council Reform

Reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), including its composition and voting structure, is essential to modernising the UN system and enhancing its legitimacy. Persistent criticisms focus on the disproportionate influence of the five permanent members (P5), which undermines the principle of sovereign equality and limits equitable decision-making in international conflicts. The Council's post-World War II structure no longer reflects contemporary geopolitical realities, prompting calls from emerging regional powers for permanent representation.

Reform is not only a legal necessity but also a moral imperative aimed at restoring public confidence in the fairness and efficacy of the UN. Without genuine reform, the Security Council risks continued paralysis and disconnection from global justice efforts (Forteau, 2005, p. 232).

An Independent International Enforcement Force

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The establishment of an independent international enforcement force under UN auspices would address the organisation's current inability to enforce its resolutions in cases of aggression or serious humanitarian violations. Reliance on political or judicial measures alone, without enforcement capacity, renders international law ineffective.

Such a force should possess administrative and financial autonomy, along with a clear mandate to intervene in cases of non-compliance with UN resolutions or court orders. Oversight by an independent council comprising legal, military, and regional experts, alongside continuous UN monitoring, would ensure neutrality and adherence to international standards.

Implementing this initiative would likely require amending the UN Charter or revising specific provisions that currently tie enforcement to Security Council approval, particularly the veto power. The viability of such reform depends on the political will of major powers and consensus on the scope and criteria for enforcement deployment.

International Cooperation and Institutional Coordination

Effective international cooperation is indispensable for enabling UN bodies to respond to global challenges across peace, human rights, and humanitarian domains. Fragmented or symbolic cooperation undermines the credibility of the UN system, fostering legal ambiguity and privileging power over justice.

Enhanced cooperation demands moving beyond narrow national interests towards a collective commitment to shared principles. Institutional coordination must be strengthened not only within the UN system but also with regional bodies such as the Arab League, African Union, and European Union. Engagement with non-state actors—including CSOs, academic institutions, and independent media—enriches decision-making and promotes transparency (Fatiha, 2005, p. 3).

Empowering the UN General Assembly

Strengthening the role of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) is vital to balancing the concentration of authority within the Security Council. As the only organ where all member states are equally represented, the UNGA embodies sovereign equality and collective will. However, its influence is hindered by the non-binding nature of its resolutions and lack of enforcement mechanisms.

To enhance its role, the legal and moral weight of UNGA resolutions—particularly on human rights and humanitarian crises—should be increased. Mechanisms such as "Uniting for Peace" allow the UNGA to take collective action when the Security Council is deadlocked. Furthermore, the UNGA should establish fact-finding missions, monitoring committees, and reporting frameworks to improve compliance and accountability (Al-Arbaa, 2025). Expanding its collaboration with CSOs and regional observers can further transform the UNGA into a dynamic and participatory forum.

The Role of Civil Society and Popular Movements

Civil society and grassroots movements play a critical role in enhancing the accountability and reach of UN bodies, especially in contexts of repression and conflict. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), unions, and independent media provide essential oversight and amplify the voices of victims.

UN institutions must adopt inclusive policies to protect civil society actors, ensure sustainable funding, and facilitate their participation in relevant bodies such as the Human Rights Council. Civil society can contribute to state compliance monitoring and to the preparation of UN reports. Additionally, popular movements should be recognised as legitimate expressions of collective will, particularly when governments fail to meet their obligations.

Rather than being dismissed as internal disturbances, such movements should be seen as integral to the international peace and justice architecture (Fischer, 2006, p. 17).

Cooperation with National Judicial Institutions

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National judicial systems are vital in upholding international law and can serve as effective extensions of international justice mechanisms. This cooperation must be institutionalised through partnerships with UN bodies such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the ICC.

According to the principle of complementarity under Article 17 of the Rome Statute, international courts intervene only when domestic systems are unwilling or unable to act. Therefore, capacity-building efforts—such as judicial training, technical support, and legal harmonisation—are essential for empowering national systems and ensuring consistent application of international norms.

Oversight of Security Council Legitimacy

Despite the UN Charter's silence on mechanisms for reviewing Security Council decisions, oversight is neither explicitly prohibited nor practically implemented. The prevailing assumption that such review would impede the Council's function has led to a de facto immunity of its Chapter VII actions.

Nevertheless, given the increasing complexity of global conflicts and the moral and legal stakes involved, oversight mechanisms must be considered. The ICJ, as the UN's principal judicial organ, is well positioned to evaluate the legality of Security Council actions when fundamental principles are at risk (Saleh, 2020, p. 20).

Conclusion

The current international system, despite its normative framework, faces existential challenges stemming from selective enforcement, limited UN authority, and the dominance of great power interests. The unresolved Palestinian issue exemplifies the systemic failure to implement binding resolutions, thereby undermining the legitimacy of the UN and the credibility of international justice.

However, acknowledging these shortcomings should catalyse, rather than discourage, institutional reform. A comprehensive overhaul must begin with Security Council reform and the empowerment of the General Assembly, include the creation of independent enforcement mechanisms, and extend to deeper engagement with national courts and civil society.

International law, peace, and human rights are not abstract ideals but legal and ethical imperatives requiring genuine commitment and structural transformation. Justice is not measured by rhetoric but by the realisation of rights, redress for victims, and the universality of enforcement.

Achieving a more just and effective international order necessitates a transition from crisis management to foundational reform—reasserting the rule of law and restoring the UN's role as a guardian of peace, equity, and human dignity.

Conflict of Interest

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