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United Nations Security Council
(UNSC)
Background guide

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Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) primarily aims to uphold peace and security globally. It was established in 1945 and held its first session in January 1946. It is one of the six main bodies of the UN.

The UNSC consists of 15 members, 5 of whom are permanent members; these are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. These states have a veto power in the UNSC that allows them to prevent a given resolution from being passed. The other 10 members are elected on a regional basis for two-year terms, and the presidency rotates on a monthly basis between the 15 members.

The Security Council's specific powers include admitting new members to the UN, authorizing military actions, establishing international sanctions, and deploying peacekeeper troops.

Following its establishment after WWII, the UNSC authorized interventions in conflicts like the Korean War and the Suez Crisis, and it launched peacekeeping missions in countries from Bosnia and Sudan to Rwanda and Kuwait. Since the end of the Cold War, it has also overseen free and fair elections in post-civil war Cambodia and post-apartheid South Africa.

The UNSC has been subject to different kinds of criticism over the years. The five permanent members' veto powers, some argue, no longer adequately reflect global power relations, while some claim the veto system should be abandoned altogether. Others highlight that the world is changing but the UNSC structurally represents a global peace and security governance architecture from the first half of the previous century. One example of this includes the UN's inherent design to prevent inter-state conflict (post-WW2) in a contemporary world fashioned by domestic intra-state threats. Moreover, despite UNSC efforts, conflicts in Kosovo, Sri Lanka and Syria were not

averted. Discussion about how to make the UNSC as effective and fair as possible continues to this day.

Topic A: The Somali Civil War

Statement of the Problem

After WWII, a process of decolonisation began in several parts of the world. What had been British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland united in 1960 to form the independent Somali Republic. In less than a decade, however, Mohammed Siad Barre and his Supreme Revolutionary Council seized power, which they held on to from 1969 to 1991¹. In the last few years of Barre's dictatorship, his health deteriorated rapidly, which gave rise to insurgency by various factions all over the country. This, in turn, led to the Barre government becoming increasingly autocratic, which only served to fuel the insurgents.²

In 1990-1991, the United Somali Congress (USC) captured much of the country, eventually taking the capital Mogadishu as well.³ However, various movements opposed the USC and refused to cooperate with it. Instead, many constituencies, particularly in the south of the country, came to disregard any central command and various groups moved to fill the power vacuum that had emerged following the fall of Barre's government. 1990-1992 saw much fighting all over the country, eventually culminating in an uneasy and unstable ceasefire between two main rivals. The United Nations Security Council moved to intervene to provide humanitarian relief and to restore a central government in the failed state of Somalia in December 1992. In 1993, the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) began, which was to be a two-year intervention and saw the deployment of many peacekeepers.⁴ The initiative was, in many ways, a success: much humanitarian aid was delivered, and peace agreements between various smaller factions were negotiated with the UN's help. Still, deadly conflicts like the October 1993 Battle of Mogadishu led

¹ BBC News, 'Somalia country profile', 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14094503>

² AMISOM, 'Brief history', <http://amisom-au.org/about-somalia/brief-history/>

³ Helen Chapin Metz, ed. 'Somalia: A Country Study', Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992.

⁴ United Nations Mission in Somalia II <http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unosom2b.htm>

to many casualties for both US and UN troops, and when they withdrew in 1995, a central government had yet to be established.

The period 1995-2000 saw less violence, but the problem of state failure was not resolved. Some regions of the country, such as Jubaland, declared themselves as autonomous regions, though these were not recognized by the international community. However, a move to reconciliation began with the turn of the century: in 2000, the Transitional National Government was established in Djibouti, though this was succeeded by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004. Many regional leaders reached ceasefire agreements during which Kenya served as an intermediary, and in October 2004, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed was elected president. This decline in hostilities was not to last, however, as in 2005 the TFG split due to internal conflict

As the 2000s progressed, Islamic military organisations began to emerge, the most prominent of which was the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). However, in December 2006, Ethiopian troops entered Somalia and joined the remnants of the TFG in fighting the ICU. Despite the ICU's early victories, the joint forces subdued a significant part of the militia by early 2007. After much debate, the African Union deployed troops to Somalia in the form of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).⁵ Though they did not directly engage in belligerence, AMISOM began to establish protected zones in the country and they negotiated with various small-scale leaders. UN action also favoured a fall in hostilities: while previously, the UN Somalia Sanctions Committee had implemented a country-wide arms embargo, in February 2007 they decided to allow countries to supply the TFG with arms. As violence seemed to subside in 2007, the TFG was able to become Somalia's internationally recognized government.

However, at that point the civil war was sadly still far from over. One of the ICU's former associates, the al-Shabaab wing, continued fighting against TFG-Ethiopian forces, and they managed to exert control over significant parts of southern Somalia by 2008.⁶ Towards the end of that same year, they captured not only the regionally significant Baidoa but also much land in the south. The US launched its first airstrikes since the start of the conflict on 1 May 2008 on

⁵ AMISOM, 'Brief history', <http://amisom-au.org/about-somalia/brief-history/>

⁶ Global Security, 'Somali Civil War', <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia.htm>

Dhusamareb, but such efforts were to no avail. President Yusuf of the TFG attempted to rally forces from neutral areas in Somalia to join the war effort, as well as appealing to the international community for support, but with Ethiopian troops being forced to retreat and the African Union peacekeeping force being understaffed, there was little to be done. President Yusuf announced his resignation on 29 December 2008, claiming that he had failed to end the civil war his government had been tasked with, but also blaming the international community for their inaction.

History of the Problem

Al-Shabaab's rise and decline

In 2009, Al-Shabaab became increasingly prominent on Somalia's political scene. Having captured Baidoa and a significant part of the south of Somalia, it also succeeded in taking the key southern port town of Kismayo from a rival militaristic faction. This placed it at a geopolitically and economically advantageous position.

The new TFG President, Sharif Ahmed, arrived at Mogadishu in February 2009 and claimed he was willing to impose Sharia Law on the country, which had been one of Al-Shabaab's main demands. Still, hostilities did not cease, with a spokesperson for Al-Shabaab vowing war against Sharif Ahmed's government in mid-February 2009. Late in February, the Battle of Mogadishu began with a double suicide bomb killing 11 AU soldiers at their base in the capital. Fighting would continue in the city for much of 2009, and despite the Somali government's repeated appeals to the international community for help, these pleas were refused.

At the same time, Al-Shabaab was weakened by infighting with the rival Hizbul Islam group. Though the groups agreed to merge by late 2010, their infighting meant that hostilities in the capital subsided.⁷ A renewed AMISOM and TFG joint offensive, following months of fighting, succeeded in recapturing Mogadishu by late 2011, with Al-Shabaab calling their abandonment of the capital a "tactical retreat". Nonetheless, the city continued to suffer from suicide bomb attacks and other hit-and-run tactics.

⁷ New World Encyclopedia, 'Somali Civil War', http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Somali_Civil_War

While this was taking place, the northern Somaliland and Puntland, being further away from the hostilities, set up regional autonomous governments, with Somaliland even asserting their independence. Though these two were the largest regionally governed entities, more than 20 groups had, to varying extents, broken away from the central government.⁸ These entities, as well as the entire territory of Somalia, was plagued by pirate attacks all along the coast of the Horn of Africa.

2011 and 2012 saw a rise in foreign involvement in the conflict, with both Kenyan troops joining, and Ethiopian troops rejoining the conflict.⁹ Although there was an increasing amount of discontent on the part of countries contributing to the AU, particularly Burundi, due to high fatality rates, these joint forces nonetheless recaptured Baidoa and Kismayo by the end of 2012.

A new beginning?

In August 2012, Somalia's first formal parliament in 20 years was sworn in, and a month later, the first presidential election since 1967 took place. In early 2013, the US recognized the government and various international donors promised to implement a "New Deal" reconstruction aid package. The complete fragmentation of Somalia seemed to be coming to an end, and development slowly began, such as with Somalia's first postal service in over 20 years being launched in 2014. Pirate activity along the coast also subsided after decades of ship seizing and pillaging.

Still, Al-Shabaab had not been eliminated. In September 2013, they killed 60 people in a Kenyan shopping centre in what they claimed was retaliation for the country's involvement in Somali affairs. They continued bombing and attacking various parts of Kenya despite the death of their former leader in September 2014 during a US drone strike. Nonetheless, throughout 2014 and 2015, the joint forces were able to recapture more and more of the country.

The insurgent northern regions of Somalia, meanwhile, were threatened by the UNSC lifting their ban on the sale of arms to Somalia in March 2013. Puntland, Somaliland, Jubaland and all the other autonomous or semi-autonomous regions worried that this possibility for an influx of

⁸ Global Security, 'Somali Civil War', <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia.htm>

⁹ AMISOM, 'AMISOM Background', <http://amisom-au.org/amisom-background/>

weapons would rob them of their independence. Amnesty International called the resolution “premature”.

The resurgence of hostilities

In late 2015 and 2016, Al-Shabaab began launching even more attacks against not just military personnel but also NGO employees as well as UN staff. Still, it was only when they attacked an AMISOM base in January 2016 that hostilities skyrocketed once more, as did fatalities, with over 60 soldiers dying in what was only the first of many such attacks. The US launched airstrikes in March 2016 against Al-Shabaab training camps, and American special operations troops were on Somali soil as well. These soldiers served as military advisers, but they also assisted in ground operations.

US involvement in Somalia rose as 2016 progressed: for example, in September, the Somali government demanded an explanation for the deaths of 22 civilians who had been killed instead of Al-Shabaab fighters.¹⁰ The US claimed it was a self-defence strike and they carried out more such attacks in September as well. These, for the most part, succeeded in destroying their intended targets. In March 2017, President Trump authorized a greater amount of involvement in Somalia that mainly manifested in a rise in airstrikes, but also in the deployment of dozens of troops. Even greater US presence appears to be on the horizon. For example, in a 2018 speech outlining the US' Africa policy, President Trump's National Security Adviser John Bolton said "terrorists operating in Africa have... repeatedly targeted US citizens and interests". Many spectators claimed he gave the impression that there would be no 'let up' in the struggle against militant Islamist groups like al-Shabab.¹¹

In February 2017, new president, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, was elected. Stability seems to be returning to some regions of the country, although March 2017 saw pirates begin to seize large ships and tankers off the coast for the first time since 2012. Airstrikes and bomb attacks continued, and some, like the 14 October 2017 truck bombing in Mogadishu, had a death toll in the 300s. In

¹⁰ New World Encyclopedia, 'Somali Civil War', http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Somali_Civil_War

¹¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-46612542>

2018, US airstrikes continue killing al-Shabaab militants, while al-Shabaab continues attacking military bases and civilian.

Current Situation

Al-Shabaab fighters

One of the most important obstacles to order and stability is the activity of Al-Shabaab fighters and other, smaller militant groups. They continue exerting control over a section of southern Somalia (though, admittedly, that territory is smaller than it was in around 2009-2012), and they attack military bases and civilians throughout Somalia. This has led to a high death rate during the civil war, as well as to general instability in the country.¹²

Al-Shabaab fighters appear to have been suppressed in recent years compared to the situation a few years ago, yet nonetheless, they are able to obtain the weaponry required to kill hundreds at a time. Their activities extend beyond the Somali border, as they target Kenyans as well.

The military organization was opposed mainly by the central government's forces, AMISOM troops, as well as Kenyan and Ethiopian fighters. Recently, the US has taken an increasingly large role in suppressing al-Shabaab as well, and these combined forces have killed members of the organization well into the hundreds. Still, after decades of existence, the fall of the organization does not appear to be imminent.

Regional Insurgency

Somalia is one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in Africa, with 85% of the population identifying as ethnically Somali. Nonetheless, following the fall of Barre's authoritarian government, several regions, like Somaliland and Puntland, have either declared independence or operated de facto independently of the central government. These regions' geographic distance from key al-Shabaab strongholds spared them from much direct fighting, though the economic disruption led to several nationwide famines during the civil war.

Somaliland declared its independence as far back as in 1991, and uses a separate currency to Somalia (though both entities rely on the American dollar extensively in day-to-day life).¹³

Somaliland has political contacts with several countries in the region and worldwide, and in the

¹² BBC News, 'Somalia country profile', 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14094503>

¹³ The Guardian, 'When is a nation not a nation?',

2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jul/20/when-is-a-nation-not-a-nation-somalilands-dream-of-independence>

past decade, the European Union and African Union have sent emissaries to discuss cooperation to the region. In 2010, the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs claimed that while the US would support the Somali transitional government, it would also seek further engagement with Somaliland and Puntland. The UK also took steps to increase their level of cooperation with Somaliland. For example, the Head of DFID Somalia, Phil Evans, visited Somaliland in February 2016 to attend a High Level Delegation meeting to discuss and review development support to Somaliland. ¹⁴

Puntland declared itself an autonomous state, and like Somaliland, they hold separate elections and have a separate flag to Somalia. Though it has less foreign political ties than Somaliland, it nonetheless cooperates with Chinese and other foreign companies extensively.¹⁵ This is due, in part to its oil resources.

Restoring order

Somalia has a long pre-colonial history, yet following the reunification of the country in 1960, an autocratic leader rose to power quickly. Following Barre's death, the civil war has been raging approximately since 1991. The fact that conflict, or authoritarian regimes and conflict, are all that are recalled by Somalis poses a challenge to building a strong state in the country.

Economic problems pose an obstacle to stability in the country. Agriculture is the largest economic sector of the country both in terms of its contribution to GDP and the percentage of the workforce it employs.¹⁶ However, the civil war, unrest and violence limit the sector's productive capacities, leading to fluctuations in output that not only weaken the economy but contribute to nationwide famines. Somalia did not have a robust infrastructure system even before the start of the civil war, and the hostilities of the past two decades have destroyed significant portions of what had existed. Since 2012, increased efforts have been made to strengthen infrastructure and make the country more suited for trade and economic activity, but the ongoing hostilities make foreigners and locals

¹⁴

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/development-support-to-somaliland>

¹⁵ Global Security, 'Somalia Civil War', <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia.htm>

¹⁶ Helen Chapin Metz, ed. Somalia: A Country Study. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992.

alike reluctant to invest significantly in the Somali economy¹⁷. Finally, economic activity is also hindered by pirate activity along the coast of the Horn of Africa, which seemingly subsided after 2010 but has recently re-emerged as a problem to be grappled with.¹⁸

Socially, aside from the northern insurgent and in many ways de facto independent states, Somalia is plagued by other issues that prevent order being restored in the country. A significant part of the population was internally displaced during the conflict, which hindered access to healthcare and education.¹⁹ Recently, Somalia has made much progress in both of those areas, but inequalities persist in terms of region and gender.

Bloc Positions

All countries should strive to bring about a reduction in hostilities to end the high number of civilian casualties in particular. The way in which they will strive to bring about that end, however, may differ among members of the Security Council.

As discussed above, the United States is significantly involved in military matters in Somalia by providing both intelligence and troops as well as delivering airstrikes. In 2015, US Secretary of State John Kerry was the first Secretary of State to visit Somalia and the recent election of Somali-American Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed as President is expected to improve the countries' ties too. In January 2017, Somalia was one of the countries whose citizens President Trump temporarily banned from entering the United States. This ban includes Somali refugees as well. The United States is one of the most prominent Western countries in terms of military airstrikes against Al-Shabaab. This has had its fair share of successes, but it has also damaged infrastructure and led to civilian casualties.

Members of the African Union (AU) created and continue to support AMISOM, whose principal aim as a peacekeeping mission is to support transitional government structures and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. AMISOM also supports the Somali government's battle against Al-Shabaab. Of the current Security Council members, only Ethiopia contributes troops to the

¹⁷ New World Encyclopedia, 'Somali Civil War', <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Somalia>

¹⁸ BBC News, 'Somalia profile: Timeline', 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14094632>

¹⁹ Global Security, 'Somalia Civil War', <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia.htm>

effort, while other AU members provide logistical and financial support to AMISOM and other AU operations. AU's observers, such as Kazakhstan, have also contributed financially to supporting its efforts in relation to Somalia.

Somalia has historically had close ties with Arab countries, and it has been a member of the Arab League since 1974, when it became the first non-Arab country to join the organization. Somalia depends on economic aid from oil-exporting states like Kuwait.

South American countries, with the exception of Mexico and Brazil, are not accredited to Somalia. Like all other countries, it would be good if they considered which of the five permanent members they would ally themselves with the most.

The UK has maintained close ties with Somalia, partly due to their colonial history. Recently they have been keen to strengthen their relationship with Somalia, but they have also engaged in discussions with Somaliland and Puntland to reach a peace solution with a broad appeal.

The EU has supported an organization that contributed to funding AMISOM for over a decade, and it also provides humanitarian aid, as during the 2017 drought-induced famine. EU countries also contribute to fighting piracy in the Horn of Africa, and they also invest in governance, the social sector, education and economic development. It is also worth remembering that a country's position towards the Somali civil war will be influenced by their relations with other Security Council members.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

Resolutions should aim to find a way to end the Somali Civil War in a way that will allow peace and stability to be brought about. To attain this, resolutions should tackle a few key questions.

Resolutions should discuss how Al-Shabaab is to be dealt with. Currently, airstrikes and intelligence operations have enjoyed some success in combatting the group. However, these activities can have adverse effects on infrastructure and general stability, so it might hinder

investment in Somalia and subsequently sustained development. The human cost of these operations should also be reflected on, as well as the question of who or what groups should contribute to eliminating opponents to the central government, and in what ways. It is important that Somalia is stable in the long run, so resolutions should provide a sustainable framework for addressing the threat posed by Al-Shabaab.

Resolutions should, secondly, address the question of insurgent regions that have been either directly proclaiming their independence or governing themselves in a de facto independent manner. Possible solutions, from a federal Somali state to new independent nations recognized by the international community, should all be considered. It is important, once again, that the solution proposed by the resolution is sustainable.

Finally, resolutions should consider how order can be restored to Somalia in a broader sense. The role the international community should have in economic development and social progress should be considered. From an economic perspective, resolutions should address the role the national government or international organisations play in bringing about conditions of stability, from tackling piracy to establishing good governance practices. The nature of humanitarian or other forms of aid offered to Somalia should also be evaluated, as should the future of displaced communities domestically and globally.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further reading is recommended on countries' approaches to the Somali Civil War, as well as to each other. The following materials are recommended to learn more about the Somali Civil War:

- Al Jazeera's documentary: 'Somalia: The Forgotten Story'
<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeraworld/2016/10/somalia-forgotten-story-161027115655140.html>
- Mary Harper: "Getting Somalia Wrong? Faith, War, and Hope in a Shattered State" (2012, Zed Books)

- Amanda Sperber: “Somalia is a Country Without an Army”

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/07/somalia-is-a-country-without-an-army-al-shabab-terrorism-horn-africa-amisom/>

Topic B: Preventing an Arms Race in the Arctic Circle

Introduction to the Topic

The topic of an arms race in the Arctic Circle illustrates how politics and economics are intertwined with those of ecology. Because of global warming, the Arctic Ocean is melting. This opens a sea of new perspectives for bordering countries, i.e. Russia, Canada, Norway, Denmark, and the US. New maritime trade routes can be established, and new deposits of natural resources explored. The US Geological Survey says the region contains 30% of the world's undiscovered natural gas and 15% of oil²⁰. The main task of the UNSC committee is to provide a framework for peaceful and sustainable exploration of this region. The UN believe that the Arctic region should be the common heritage of all people and should not be reduced to an area of military flexing.

This study guide begins by explaining the current legal status of the discussed region. We briefly traverse the history of territorial claims advanced by different countries, to then focus on recent military developments. Finally, we will discuss interest of countries whose actions will be most directly relevant to the topic. At the end of the guide, delegates will find directions for some further reading – these positions will allow the delegates to make the most of their MUN experience by bringing extra merit to the discussion. Above all, however, reading of this guide should *not* be the only preparation undertaken by delegates; independent research into the topic from the perspective of the represented country is crucial.

Statement of the Problem

Legal framework: UNCLOS and the Arctic Council

Traditionally, it has been said that the world's seas and oceans belong to all but can be owned by none. During the 20th century, countries bordering the Arctic circle, most notably Canada and the USSR, claimed to have extended their maritime borders into the Arctic Ocean. These claims,

²⁰ Canada to Claim North Pole as its Own", theguardian.com, 10 December 2013.

however, were not firmly grounded in any international law or conventions and remained largely unrecognised by other agents.

In 1973-82, the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea took place in New York, in order to create a set of legal rules by which all governments would abide; this would reduce the uncertainty over territorial claims and the accompanying tensions. This task has been fulfilled, and the resulting document was the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Its rules distinguish two important areas in each country's maritime jurisdiction: exclusive economic zones, and the continental shelf²¹.

Exclusive economic zones (EEZs) extend 200 nautical miles from the baseline (which is usually the shore). Within this area, the government has exclusive right to explore and establish control over the resources in the seabed (such as oil) and in the waters (such as fish). The continental shelf, on the other hand, is taken to be the natural prolongation of the country's land territory as far as to the continent's edge, but not farther than 350 nautical miles from the baseline. Coastal states have exclusive right to all resources "attached to" the seabed on their continental shelf, but not to those present in the water above. By default, the continental shelf is taken to end at 200 nautical miles (together with the EEZ); if a country wants to have it legally extended, the government must provide relevant geological evidence to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

It should be noted that the Commission has no jurisdiction to define and adjust international borders; its experts merely assess the relevance of geological evidence, and then it is up to countries with overlapping claims to arrive at a settlement.

The arrangement of EEZs and continental shelves in the Arctic region is complicated. The map reproduced below helpfully depicts different spheres of influence in the Arctic Ocean as in July 2008.

²¹ The full text of the Convention can be found at http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf.

Since the ratification of UNCLOS, countries with access to the Arctic Ocean have filed or announced numerous territorial claims. A selection of those most important is provided below.

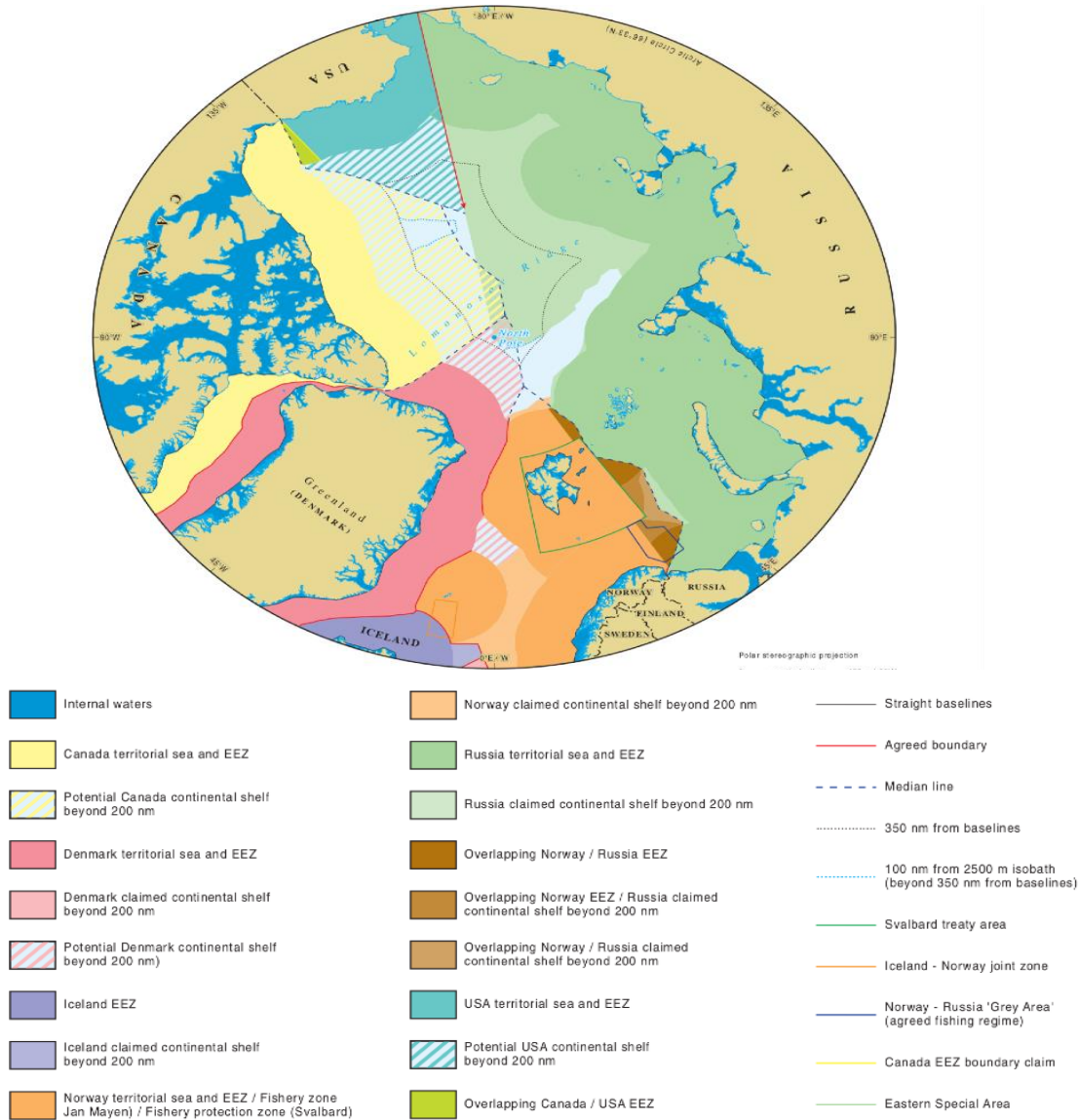


Figure 1: Territorial claims in the Arctic Ocean.²²

²² ²⁵ Sources: “Canada to Claim North Pole as its Own”; “Denmark challenges Russia and Canada over North Pole”, bbc.com, 15 December 2014; “Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) Outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines: Submissions to the Commission: Submission by the Kingdom of Norway” (https://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_nor.htm); “Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) Outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines: Submissions to the Commission: Submission by the Russian Federation” (https://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_rus.htm).

| Country | Date of ratification of UNCLOS | Territorial claims |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Canada | 7 November 2003 | Canada has announced that she would file a claim for an extension of her continental shelf that would include the North Pole. |
| Denmark | 16 November 2004 | In 2014, Denmark filed for extension of her continental shelf past the North Pole to the borders of Russian EEZ. |
| Norway | 24 June 1996 | In 2006, Norway filed for extension of her continental shelf into three areas: the Barents Sea, the Western Nansen Basin in the Arctic Ocean, and the Norwegian Sea. |
| Russia | 12 March 1997 | In 2001, Russia filed for extension of her continental shelf to the North Pole, but not beyond it (renewed in 2015 and 2016, with provision of new geological data). |
| United States | [did not ratify] | [The American government cannot make claims under the UNCLOS until its ratification.] |

A quick analysis of claims listed in this chart reveals that countries compete for access to specific regions of the Arctic Ocean²³. The specific borders are agreed through mostly bilateral treaties between the competing states; in some cases, no agreement can be reached.

Subsection C of the UNCLOS, reproduced below, will be of special interest to this committee, as it lays out rules applicable to passage of warships through foreign maritime territory.

“Subsection C. Rules Applicable to Warships and Other Government Ships Operated for Non-Commercial Purposes.

Article 29 – Definition of warships

For the purposes of this Convention, *warship* means a ship belonging to the armed forces of a State bearing the external marks distinguishing such ships of its nationality, under the command of an officer duly commissioned by the government of the State and whose name appears in the

²³ See, e.g., Canadian, Danish, and Russian claims for the North Pole.

appropriate service list or its equivalent and manned by a crew which is under regular armed forces discipline.

Article 30 – Non-compliance by warships with the laws and regulations of the coastal State

If any warship does not comply with the laws and regulations of the coastal State concerning passage through the territorial sea and disregards any request for compliance therewith which is made to it, the coastal State may require it to leave the territorial sea immediately.

Article 31 – Responsibility of the flag State for damage caused by a warship or other government ship operated for non-commercial purposes

The flag State shall bear international responsibility for any loss or damage to the coastal State resulting from the non-compliance by a warship or other government ship operated for non-commercial purposes with the laws and regulations of the coastal State concerning passage through the territorial sea or with the provisions of this Convention or other rules of international law.

Article 32 – Immunities of warships and other government ships operated for non-commercial purposes.

With such exceptions as are contained in subsection A and in articles 30 and 31, nothing in this Convention affects the immunities of warships and other government ships operated for non-commercial purposes.”

The delegates should be familiar with the full scope of the Convention, which governs other aspects important for this committee, such as right to innocent passage and carriage of nuclear weapons. For practical reasons, longer excerpts of the Convention cannot be cited here. Delegates need not read the text of the Convention in full, but they must be familiar with the topics it covers and the content of articles relevant for the debate.

An important forum for debate and diplomatic resolution is the Arctic Council. The body was founded in 1996 and has among its members all Arctic states: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. Other governments may apply for the status of an observer state. Among non-governmental bodies, the UN Development Programme and the UN Environment Programme have the status of observers. The Council convenes every six months to

debate issues which mostly concern environmental sustainability, but it can also discuss and resolve security problems, including military ones.

Figure 3: Comparison of military deployment in the Arctic in 2015, adapted from an infographic compiled by worldpolicy.org. Source: https://worldpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Summer15_16-17_MapRoom.pdf.

Note, that the numbers may be inaccurate. E.g., various sources assess the fleet of Russian icebreakers in the Arctic before and in 2015 at around 30, and this number seems more realistic.

| Country | Number of troops deployed in the Arctic region | Number of warships | Number of submarines | Number of icebreakers |
|----------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Canada | 5,000 | 21 | 4 | 18 |
| Denmark | 1,125 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Finland | 13,500 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Iceland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Norway | 20,000 | 11 | 6 | 0 |
| Russia | 10,000 | 19 | 34 | 0 |
| Sweden | 500 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| United States | 20,000 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Bloc Positions

The main issue under debate: militarisation of Arctic

Militarisation of the Arctic takes two main forms: first, the deployment of troops and weapons in the region, and second (and following from the former), embarking upon military activities by Arctic states. In 2015, all Arctic states except Iceland had troops and/or vessels deployed in the Arctic.

Canada

For Canada, exerting influence in the Arctic has long been among the country's policy priorities. In 2009, the government released its first Northern Strategy, and the Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy followed in 2010. The Northern Strategy identified four pillars for Canada's domestic regional priorities: "exercising our Arctic sovereignty; promoting social and economic development; protecting the North's environmental heritage; and improving and devolving northern governance."²⁴ Canadian lawmakers are now working on yet another document – the Arctic Policy Framework. The new Framework, the final version of which has not been published yet, appears to take a slightly more lenient stand on Canada's sovereignty claims in the Arctic and the ensuing need for strong military presence. Nonetheless, Canada's ability to "ensure the safety and security of the Canadian and circumpolar Arctic" through the "Canadian Armed Forces' and Canadian Coast Guard's presence and ability to operate in Canada's Arctic" is identified.

This non-aggressive approach, a major shift from Canada's traditional hard line on Arctic issues, is also reflected in the 2017 governmental review of the defence policy. The change in narrative, however, does not signal easy demilitarisation – according to the policy document, new patrol ships will be built to expand the armed forces' capabilities in the northern waters²⁵.

²⁴ Analysis adapted from K. Everett, "Canada's Arctic Policy Framework: a New Approach to Northern Governance", polarconnection.org, 18 May 2018

²⁵ A. Lajeunesse, "What Canada's New Defense Policy Means for the Arctic", newsdeeply.com, 16 June 2017.

China

In January 2018, China issued, for the first time, a white paper on its Arctic Policy, announcing its prospective “active participation” in Arctic affairs as a “near-Arctic state”²⁶. Four main aspects emerge from this policy statement²⁷. The first focus is put on international maritime trade routes through the Arctic (in face of its melting ice caps). China hopes to establish the “Arctic Silk Road”. Second, China plans to cooperate with the Arctic states to access the resources, both traditional, such as oil and gas, and nontraditional, used to produce clean energy, such as geothermal and wind. Third, China wants to use the Arctic for fishing. Finally, the paper mentions tourism as an emerging industry in the Arctic. If that is the case, environmental considerations will have to be crucial for the Chinese government.

Denmark

The Danish government is not oblivious of the quickly changing climate. As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes, “huge and sweeping changes are taking place today in the Arctic. Due to climate change and technological developments, vast economic potential is becoming more accessible.”²⁸ According to the official Arctic strategy for 2011 – 2020²⁹, peace and security in the Arctic are vital for the sustainable development of the region. The Danish government vows to undertake a proactive approach, which includes “advancing concrete international legal regulation of the Arctic in areas where needed” and “continued work on the Continental Shelf Project in order to promote its claim pursuant to the UN’s Convention on the Law of the Sea”. In order to prevent any unwanted military escalations in the region, Denmark “will work to introduce binding global rules and standards for navigation in the Arctic,” including an official recognition of new trade routes through the Arctic Ocean.

²⁶ The document can be accessed at http://english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.htm.

²⁷ Analysis adapted from C. Gao, “China Issues Its Arctic Policy”, thediplomat.com, 26 January 2018.

²⁸ Source: <http://um.dk/en/foreign-policy/the-arctic/>.

²⁹ The document can be accessed at <http://um.dk/~media/UM/English-site/Documents/Politics-and-diplomacy/Greenland-and-The-Faroe-Islands/Arctic%20strategy.pdf?la=en>.

Such strategy echoes the events following the planting of Russian flag in the seabed of the Arctic Ocean in 2007 (see below). Denmark's Foreign Minister of that time took the initiative to bring together representatives from the five littoral states – Canada, USA, Norway, Russia and the Kingdom of Denmark – with the aim of finding a peaceful solution to territorial conflicts³⁰, and in 2008 the Ilulissat Declaration was signed, which states that scientific and geological data, and international law shall form the basis for the future distribution of territory. Its importance is expressly emphasised in the 2011 strategy.

Finland

Finland, although directly experiencing neighbouring Russia's military presence, never joined NATO. Throughout the Cold War, Finnish governments have entered into close trade relations with both the Eastern and Western Blocks; a member of the EU, Finland has to obey the economic sanctions imposed onto their big neighbour as a response to security crises. Not least for these reasons, Finland can be perceived by many as the mediator in the Arctic debate between Russia and the West. After all, it was Finland that proposed an environmental protection strategy during the late Cold War. More recently, the Finnish president proposed convening a summit of the heads of state of Arctic countries in Helsinki to discuss ways to find common ground on a wide range of issues pertaining to the region and beyond, which Russian president Vladimir Putin welcomed³¹.

Iceland

Although the country has long placed itself outside the main political tensions, Iceland's narrowing economic cooperation with China may put an end to this period of relative isolationism. In the face of Iceland's difficult relationship with the EU, the two countries signed a treaty of cooperation in 2012, and a free trade agreement one year later. Apart from the direct benefit of investing in

³⁰ The document can be accessed at <http://um.dk/~media/UM/English-site/Documents/Politics-and-diplomacy/Greenland-and-The-Faroe-Islands/Arctic%20strategy.pdf?la=en>.

³³ M. Jacobsen, "Denmark's strategic interests in the Arctic: It's the Greenlandic connection, stupid!", thearticinstitute.org, 4 May 2016.

³¹ K. Yalowitz, S. Closson, "Finland Seeks Continued U.S.-Russian Cooperation in the Arctic", nationalinterest.org, 26 April 2017

Iceland's fishing and energy industries, China may perceive influence – even purely economic – over Iceland, as a way into the Arctic. Iceland can help China get access to Arctic's mineral resources and to establish maritime trade routes through the Arctic³². Any steps serving to marginalise China on this scene would likely result in a cut in investment and an economic disadvantage for Iceland.

Norway

The key priorities emphasised in Norway's 2017 Arctic Strategy are “continuation of a well-functioning international cooperation with our Arctic neighbours, securing a sustainable business development, a knowledge-based development of the Arctic, an infrastructure in tune with growth and the green transition and ensuring a responsible approach when it comes to environmental protection, safety, emergency preparedness and response.”³³ Norway's government minister commented that “one of the main messages from [the] Arctic Strategy is that the future development in the North must build on a strong and systematic dialogue between the national and regional level.”³⁴

Norway's political strategy concerning the Arctic is often seen as drastically different from that of Canada. While Canadian government has traditionally been using tensions surrounding the Arctic to feed nationalist sentiments of the country's citizens, at the same time denying any greater role to be played by NATO structures, Norway has remained calm, publicly downplaying Russian military threats, in the meantime working to ensure her military readiness³⁵. In March 2018, Norway conducted a 5,000-soldiers military drill in the North, in which forces of the US and the

³² A. Guschin, “China, Iceland and the Arctic”, thediplomat.com, 20 May 2015.

³³Source: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/arctic-strategy/id2550081/>.

³⁴Source: <https://www.norway.no/en/missions/eu/about-the-mission/news-events-statements/news2/taking-norways-arctic-strategy-to-the-eu/>.

³⁵ A. M. Humpert, “Norway's Border with Russia Shapes Its Arctic Policy New Study Concludes”, highnorthnews.com, 14 August 2018.

Netherlands also participated³⁶. On the other hand, Norway has engaged in cooperation with Russia, which resulted, among others, in the settling of a four-decade-old maritime border dispute in the Barents Sea. Limiting Russia's military activities in the Arctic is strongly in Norway's interest; however, this cannot come at the cost of a balance requiring the country to abandon the foundations of her security from the Russian threat.

Russia

The beginning of the contemporary "scramble for the Arctic" can be placed in 2007, when a Russian submarine planted the country's flag on the bottom of Lomonosov ridge, which Moscow claims to be directly connected to her continental shelf³⁷. Today Russia remains the biggest investor in the region, since 20% of her GDP is generated within Russian territories in the Arctic³⁸.

A more recent important gesture was the expedition of a Russian tanker through the Arctic Circle, completing the journey from Norway to South Korea in 19 days. For the first time a ship has traversed this region without any assistance from an icebreaker³⁹.

In 2013, the Development Strategy of the Russian Arctic and the Provision of National Security for the Period Until 2020 was approved by Putin⁴⁰. The document laid down the official Russian strategy for the region, describing her objectives, priorities, and means of implementation. An important priority is the establishment of an integrated security system for the protection of territory, population, and critical facilities. National security in the Arctic requires an advanced naval, air force and army presence in the Arctic. Further aims include developing the Russian

³⁶ A. Staalesen, "5,000 troops train winter war in Arctic Norway", thebarentsobserver.com, 7 March 2018.

³⁷ T. Parfitt, "Russia plants flag on North Pole seabed", theguardian.com, 2 August 2007

³⁸ P. Devyatkin, "Russia's Arctic Strategy: Aimed at Conflict or Cooperation? (Part I)", thearcticinstitute.org, 6 February 2018.

³⁹ J. Cohen, "US Falls Behind in the Arctic Arms Race", fairobserver.com, 31 July 2018.

⁴⁰ The document can be accessed at government.ru/info/18360/.

icebreaker fleet, modernising the air service and airport network, and establishing modern information and telecommunication infrastructure⁴¹.

There are two prevailing discourses which assess Russian strategy in the Arctic⁴². One approach is to characterise Russia's actions as jingoistic, driven by nationalism and Russia's dissatisfaction with her position on the international scene. According to this stance, Russia is trying to reassert her dominance over the West by expanding her influence into the Arctic. On the other hand, the second approach explains Russian actions and policies in economic terms – the Arctic is simply an economically useful region for Russia, and Russian incentives are driven by pragmatism. Depending on which narrative one prefers, the Arctic emerges either as a potential front for conflict, or as one for cooperation.

Sweden

Sweden, much like Finland, has never joined NATO, and has had to face the constant threat of Russia's infringement of her sovereignty. For Sweden, the Arctic region is a desired scene for military cooperation with the US. Defence Ministers from the US, Sweden, and Finland, have lately discussed closer military cooperation and information exchange⁴³. This is in line with recent declarations from Sweden, announcing her plans to drastically expand the military; this would include the raise of today's staff of 50,000 to 120,000, as well as other increases, such as adding two more submarines, doubling the Air Force and more than tripling the number of ships in the Navy⁴⁴. Similar to Finland, Sweden will not support measures that would alienate her from the US and leave alone to face her big neighbour.

⁴¹ P. Devyatkin, "Russia's Arctic Strategy: Military and Security (Part II)", thearticinstitute.org, 13 February 2018.

⁴² Analysis adapted from P. Devyatkin

⁴³ "Finland, Sweden and US Building Three-Way Defence Ties", rcinet.ca, 8 May 2018

⁴⁴ "Swedish military wants to double in size", rcinet.ca, 26 February 2018.

United States

The United States became an Arctic state with the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. While the US are willing to foster “preserving Arctic’s natural environment” and “strengthening institutions for cooperation among the eight Arctic nations,”⁴⁵ matters of national security remain the main focus. Importantly, many commentators agree that the US are lagging behind Russia when it comes to military influence in the Arctic. A few months ago, military commanders for the U.S. Pacific Command and the U.S. European Command warned about Russia’s growing influence in the Arctic, its military build-up, and the United States’ inability to counter Russia’s activities⁴⁶. In June 2018, the US Defence Secretary, Jim Mattis, said that “the United States needs to up its game in the Arctic and deal with an increasingly important and developing part of the world”⁴⁷. Investing in its fleet of icebreakers could radically increase the American presence in the region. The US will not likely support demilitarisation steps that would prevent them from minimising the gap between them and Russia.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

This topic, as the delegates will have noted from the discussion above, is highly complex, with many crossing interests of Arctic and near-Arctic states. Simply stating that a demilitarisation of the Arctic is in the common interest of all people is one thing; measuring this goal against the practical political reality is quite another. Nonetheless, we believe that the debates will bring us closer to this ideal. The delegates will need to collectively answer the following questions:

Are the mechanisms currently present, such as the UNCLOS, the resolutions of the Arctic Council, etc., obeyed by member states? If not, what can be done to make them more effective?

Are these mechanisms sufficient in substance? If not, what other mechanisms can be implemented to promote the demilitarisation of the Arctic?

⁴⁵ Source: the US Department of State, at <https://www.state.gov/e/oes/ocns/opa/arc/>.

⁴⁶ M. Humpert, “U.S. military warns against Russian Arctic expansion”, arctictoday.com, 23 March 2018.

⁴⁷ P. Steward, “America’s got to up its game in the Arctic: Mattis”, reuters.com, 25 June 2018.

Further Reading

In addition to reading this study guide, which sums up some most burning issues on the topic, it is essential that all delegates familiarise themselves with their countries' specific policies and strategies concerning the Arctic. Most such documents can be found, with English translation, on state official's websites. In addition, delegates must be familiar with the scope of the UNCLOS and the content of its relevant articles.

On the topic of the arms race directly, we encourage the delegates to read an interesting analysis from the Journal of Military and Strategic Studies, "Is There an Arms Race in the Arctic?" by F. Lasserre, J. Le Roy, and R. Garon. This document has been helpful in putting together this study guide and can offer useful insight.

The article can be accessed at: <https://jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/download/496/49>.

The delegates should note that the text is from 2012, and that they should refer to newer writing to update their knowledge.

Closing Remarks

We hope this background guide has provided some insights into the pressing issues being discussed at the UNSC this year. It is important for delegates to pay particular attention to their foreign policies and alliances, especially in situations such as the ones being debated. The absence of a country within a particular region doesn't mean that this country won't have deep and crucial interests in the area – e.g. economic partnerships, historical alliances and overall global dynamics are as crucial as geographical proximity. In particular, we would like to encourage delegates to explore their country assignments to understand how their countries relate both to the situation in Somalia and the current disputes in the Arctic.

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