



THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL'S POWERLESSNESS TO HALT THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT BETWEEN 2022 - 2024

Aryo Wicaksono ¹, Ratnawati ²

^{1,2}Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, UPN "Veteran" Yogyakarta

Author's email: aaaryyooo@gmail.com¹ & ratnawatiraharjo@gmail.com²

Abstract

This Study is to answer why the United Nations Security Council can not reduce the escalation of Russia-Ukraine conflict from 2022 until 2024. This conflict still exists and the Security Council looks like did not stop or reduce the conflict at least into a ceasefire agreement, while the Security Council has the authority and ability to stop or reduce this conflict. Any research about the United Nations and Security Council role focuses on comparative normative studies based on legal review or law approach. This study offers a new exploration and finds another perspective about the root problem: the United Nations Security Council can not reduce the Russia-Ukraine conflict. With Hegemonic Stability theoretical approach by Robert Gilpin on Pease (2009) and International Organization Role as an Instrument concept by Clive Archer (2001). This Research deeply explores why the UN Security Council can not use its authority to reduce Russia-Ukraine Conflict. Using qualitative methodology based on depth literature review study and explanatory analysis. The finding reveal that the reform of the League of Nations into the United Nations and the decision-making system of the United Nations and Security Council its closely related to the World War II winner's interest to maintain their power to influence by occupying strategic positions as Permanent Member of the Security Council that have privilege to use absolute negative vote (Veto rights). Russia, as the main actor in this conflict, uses the weakness of the UN Security Council's decision-making system with Russia's strategic positions as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council.

Keyword: UN Security Council, Russia, Ukraine, Hegemonic Stability, Veto rights.





Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti penyebab Dewan Keamanan Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa tidak mampu meredam konflik Rusia-Ukraina dari Tahun 2022-2024. Konflik ini terus berlarut-larut tanpa ada keputusan yang jelas dari Dewan Keamanan PBB, seharusnya Dewan Keamanan PBB memiliki hak dan kemampuan untuk meredam konflik ini. Sementara penelitian yang ada tentang peran PBB dan atau Dewan Keamanan PBB sering berfokus pada tinjauan hukum dan pendekatan studi komparatif normatif, studi ini menawarkan eksplorasi baru untuk melihat akar permasalahan penghambat resolusi Dewan Keamanan PBB tidak dapat diambil. Dengan menggunakan Teori Stabilitas Hegemoni Robert Gilpin dalam Pease (2009) dan Konsep Organisasi Internasional sebagai sebuah Instrumen Clive Archer (2001). Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi mengapa Dewan Keamanan PBB tidak mampu menggunakan otoritasnya untuk meredam konflik Rusia-Ukraina. Menggunakan metodologi kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka yang di analisis secara eksplanatif dan mendalam. Temuan yang diperoleh mengungkapkan bahwa reformasi Liga Bangsa-Bangsa menjadi Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa dan sistem pengambilan keputusan yang ada di dalamnya erat hubungannya dengan kepentingan dari para pemenang perang dunia ke-2 untuk mempertahankan pengaruhnya dengan menduduki posisi strategis dengan hak “istimewa” sebagai Anggota Tetap Dewan Keamanan PBB. Rusia sebagai aktor utama dalam konflik ini memanfaatkan lemahnya sistem pengambilan keputusan Dewan Keamanan PBB dengan posisi strategisnya sebagai Anggota Tetap Dewan Keamanan PBB.

Kata kunci: Dewan Keamanan PBB, Rusia, Ukraina, Stabilitas Hegemoni, hak Veto





Introduction

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine representing a significant international dispute between the Government of the Russian Federation, led by President Vladimir Putin, and the Government of Ukraine, led by Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This conflict is rooted in a protracted historical relationship between Russia and Ukraine, predating their independence from the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, both Ukraine and Russia (then part of the Soviet Union) were members of the Warsaw Pact. This alliance comprised the Soviet Union and six satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe, positioning itself in opposition to North Atlantic Treaty (NATO), which safeguarded Western Europe and North America (Oktorino, N. 2022).

This conflict escalated when the Ukrainian government, under President Zelenskyy, pursued policies aimed at closer integration with Western European Nations rather than Russia, specifically seeking membership in NATO and the European Union. Under Zelenskyy's leadership, Ukraine sought to completely eradicate Russian influence by joining NATO, anticipating that this would deter further Russian interference in Ukraine's stability and internal affairs. However, these efforts culminated in the official declaration of war by Russian President Vladimir Putin on January 24, 2022, followed by the mobilization of Russian forces into Ukrainian territory in February 2022.

Geopolitically, Ukraine holds significant strategic nation interest for Russia and European Union member states. It serves as a crucial route for gas and energy supplies from Russia to the European Union (Offshore Technology, 2022). On September 30, 2022, in Russia aggression claimed and proclaimed the annexation of approximately 15% of Ukrainian territory, specifically the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhya regions (Danie & Lengkong, 2023, 4).



Source : france 24

Figure 1. Russia proclaimed the annexation of the Donbas region

Upon the initial escalation of the conflict and the outbreak of war, the United Nations promptly pursued peace building efforts, convening an emergency meeting of the Security Council. However, the proposed resolution faced a negative vote from the Russian Federation. Subsequently, the issue was brought before the General Assembly, which successfully formulated Resolution on March 2, 2022. This resolution unequivocally demanded that the Russian Federation





immediately cease its unlawful use of force in Ukraine's sovereign territory and withdraw all its forces from within Ukrainian borders (A/RES/ES-11/1, 2022).

The resolution garnered substantial international support, with 141 nations voting in favor compared to five dissenting votes (Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Russian Federation, and Syria), and 35 abstentions. Despite this clear directive from the General Assembly, Russia has, in practice, disregarded the resolution. As of early 2024, the Russian Federation continues to maintain its military presence within Ukrainian territory.

The primary authority to de-escalate the Russia-Ukraine conflict rests in the United Nations is the Security Council, not the General Assembly. The active involvement of Security Council members is crucial for diplomatic efforts and mediation between the warring parties, aiming to achieve a ceasefire agreement.

The Security Council is vested with the authority to enforce compliance and impose sanctions through peaceful means, as stipulated in Article 41 of the UN Charter (United Nations, 1973). This includes the power to call upon UN member states to implement economic embargoes, partially or completely sever communications, and even break off diplomatic relations with the country that had sanction from the Security Council.

The Security Council can impose sanctions if it determines there is a potential threat to peace, a breach of peace, or an act of military aggression. The primary objective of implementing sanctions is solely to maintain or restore international peace and security, not to undermine any particular state.

The Security Council generally employs two main categories of sanctions: economic and financial sanctions, and non-economic sanctions. Economic sanctions are designed to restrict or halt the flow of commodities and industrial products to and from the targeted state. These measures aim to weaken the economic strength of the country that got the sanction from the Security Council (Sitompul, 2012, p. 43).

The Security Council can also implement specific sanctions, including those related to conventional weaponry, weapons of mass destruction, and chemical materials. Financial sanctions, on the other hand, typically seek to disrupt financial flows and are often implemented by institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Hufbauer, 2007, pp. 44-45). They also commonly involve the freezing or securing of a sanctioned nation's overseas assets.

To make some decisions within the Security Council are through a voting process involving its members. For a resolution to be adopted, it must receive at least nine affirmative votes out of the fifteen Security Council members. Crucially, these nine votes must include the unanimous consent of all permanent members (United Nations, 1973). Should any permanent member cast a negative vote, it constitutes a veto, thereby preventing the adoption of the resolution.

The veto power held by the permanent members of the Security Council is established under Article 27, Paragraph 3, of the UN Charter. For any non-procedural matter, a resolution requires the unanimous affirmative vote of all permanent members to pass. Consequently, the exercise of a veto by any permanent member can nullify a draft resolution, even if all other Security Council members approve it. A resolution can only be adopted if it garners the minimum required votes and receives no negative vote from any of the permanent members.





The perspectives and positions of the permanent members of the Security Council are therefore central to the de-escalation process of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. If even one of the five permanent members refuses to adopt a resolution, that resolution cannot be passed.

The United States' concrete role in de-escalating Russia-Ukraine conflict has not yet impacted the conflict. Its actions have largely been confined to providing aid to Ukraine, without engaging in direct discussions with Russia. A more significant role for the United States is anticipated in these peace efforts. Meanwhile, China's stance has been relatively neutral. Despite President Xi Jinping's close relationship with President Putin, China has endeavored to project itself as a global peacemaker. This approach is influenced by China's need to maintain strong ties with European nations, given Europe's continued importance as a trading partner (Al Jazeera English, 2023)

European nations, particularly France and the United Kingdom, possess clear geopolitical interests in the ongoing conflict, as Ukraine serves as a crucial buffer against Russia. Consequently, Ukraine needs to get substantial material, humanitarian, and specifically security guarantees to take a ceasefire agreement (The White House, 2025). However, achieving a negotiated settlement with Russia remains challenging, partly due to President Zelenskyy's compromised stance against signing a ceasefire.

With the big authority the impact of United Nations Security Council Permanent Members' involvement in resolving the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which the conflict still continues to rage, presents a compelling area for further research.

Literature Review and Research Gap

According to Aisyah (2021), in the study "*Tinjauan Normatif Peran Dewan Keamanan Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa (PBB) dalam Menjaga Perdamaian Dunia (Studi kasus Konflik antara Rusia dan Ukraina)*," posits that the Russian Federation's attack is a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. In exercising its duties as mandated by the Charter, the Security Council sought to manage the conflict by introducing a resolution aimed at preserving international peace and security.

This effort was rendered ineffective, as the resolution failed to produce any tangible outcome due to Russia's exercise of its veto power. The paper's primary focus is thus on the normative framework that should guide the UN's conduct, contrasting the ideal role prescribed by international law and its Charter with the practical realities of the conflict.

According to Willems and Yustitiningtyas (2023) in their article, "*Peran Dewan Keamanan Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa Dalam Penyelesaian Invasi Rusia Atas Ukraina Tahun 2022*," the authors employ a statutory approach with international law as the primary legal framework. The authors frequently assert that pursuant to Article 1 of the UN Charter, the UN Security Council bears the primary responsibility as the principal organ of the United Nations.

They explain that restrictions on the use of weapons in warfare are derived from international treaties guided by International Humanitarian Law and the Hague Convention IV of 1907. Furthermore, the authors extensively discuss several key instruments, including the Rome Statute, the Hague Conventions, the Geneva Conventions, the Statute of the International Court of Justice,





and the UN Charter. The article also provides a detailed examination of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and elaborates on the war crimes allegedly committed by Russia.

In Tim Murthi (2022) article, "The Failure of the United Nations Security Council in Creating the Framework Conditions for Mediation in the Russia-Ukraine Crisis," Tim Murthi (2022) posits that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) fundamentally failed to establish the framework conditions required for mediation during the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. He contends that this is not an isolated event but a systemic failure, one intrinsically rooted in the veto power of its five permanent members (P5). The author asserts that the contemporary structure of the UNSC is anachronistic, irrelevant, and has paradoxically evolved into a source of global insecurity. Consequently, the requisite solution is not superficial reform but a radical transformation toward a new global democratic architecture. To build this argument, Murthi utilizes a Normative and Critical approach.

Based on the research issue that has been raised previously, more research is focusing on comparative normative study based on international convention or legal approach, and this study used a normative comparative legal methodology. Given the dearth of research specifically addressing the concrete reasons for the **Security Council's inability to resolve international conflicts, particularly the Russia-Ukraine conflict**, this study will focus on identifying the root causes preventing the Security Council from achieving a resolution that could de-escalate the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Research Question

Based on this background, the problem that was found is : Why has the **United Nations Security Council** been unable to de-escalate the **Russia-Ukraine conflict** from 2022 to 2024?

Goal Research

This research seeks to serve as a valuable reference and source of information for readers regarding the ongoing state of the Russia-Ukraine war and the reasons behind the consistent failure of peace-building efforts undertaken by the Security Council between 2022 and 2024. The findings of this study are expected to be particularly beneficial for International Relations studies, and the broader public, offering insights into why the Security Council has been unable to de-escalate the Russia-Ukraine conflict during this period.

Theoretical Frameworks

To address the research question, this study will use Robert Gilpin's theory of hegemonic stability on Pease and Clive Archer's concept of organizations as tools or instruments approach. These theoretical frameworks will be elaborated upon to provide a comprehensive answer.

1. Hegemonic Stability Theory

According to Robert Gilpin, the international system emerges from the interactions of international actors striving to advance their economic, security, and other interests. Given that these interests frequently conflict, the priorities that prevail ultimately reflect the relative power of state actors.





Consequently, international organizations and laws represent social arrangements among states where the interests of more powerful actors are institutionalized. In essence, stronger nations exert control over smaller states within the international system (Pease, 2009, pp. 49-50).

According to Pease book, *International Organizations: Perspectives on Governance in the Twenty-first Century* (2009), Pease posits that international organizations (IOs) often act as an extension of a hegemonic power, or actor alternative, play a marginal role, existing on the periphery of global politics. According to Pease, IOs tend to engage with issues where states share common interests. Conversely, these organizations rarely intervene or constrain sovereign states on complex, contentious issues or interstate conflicts.

The United Nations is tasked with maintaining international peace and security. This responsibility is primarily delegated to the UN Security Council, a pivotal organ within the international organization that wields significant authority. This authority includes the power to formulate legally binding decisions, which are accompanied by punitive measures if not adhered to.

However, the Security Council's regime is governed and shaped by its permanent members, comprising the victors of World War II: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union (now the Russian Federation), and China. These nations are widely categorized as major global powers.

The permanent members of the Security Council are granted significant privileges, most notably the absolute right of veto. In the context of the current conflict, Russia has exploited this inherent weakness within the Security Council's framework by exercising its absolute veto power on peace initiatives deemed detrimental to its interests. The United Nations system itself was established as a successor to the League of Nations, primarily initiated by the victors of World War II. The big authority of permanent members of the Security Council makes them have the ability to influence the international framework to take advantage for their own national interest.

Same like the Russian Federation that used the authority to try to achieve back Soviet power to influence in Europe Geopolitically. Permanent member is in a race to keep influence on the international common and will use all the power and change to achieve more power to influence.

2. Concept of International Organization as an Instrument

In Clive Archer's book, *International Organization Third Edition* (2001), Archer defines International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) as formal structures established through the mutual consent of sovereign states. Importantly, these organizations do not constitute a global government over sovereign nations. This aligns with the understanding that the current international system remains anarchic, meaning there is no overarching world government (Archer, 2001, p. 67).

This lack of global authority stems from the fact that international organizations do not possess the same level of sovereignty as states. Consequently, achieving the full compliance of all member states on complex international issues proves challenging.

According to Archer, international organizations, particularly International Governmental Organizations (IGOs), primarily function as instruments or tools for individual states or groups of states. This "instrumental" perspective suggests that international organizations serve as aids to





nations rather than acting as independent actors within the international system. Composed of sovereign states, these organizations are inherently limited by their member states' ability to restrict independent organizational actions.

Consequently, Archer posits that member states can utilize international organizations to achieve specific foreign policy objectives or advance their national interests (Archer, 2001, p. 68). Should a state perceive that the benefits gained by other members might come at its own expense, it will insist on strict constitutional control over the international organization, employing its veto power to block any actions unfavorable to its needs or interests. This concept underscores that sovereign states will consistently employ international organizations as a means to achieve their national interests, rather than as entities to be strictly obeyed or adhered to.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the Russian Federation possesses an absolute veto right, enabling it to either entirely nullify or fully endorse any draft resolution concerning peace and security. However, the Russian Federation also has its own national interests. In the context of this case study, Russia is a principal actor in the ongoing conflict, and it is evident that Russia will obstruct any efforts perceived as threatening its domestic interests related to Ukraine.

Russia has consistently exercised its veto power in various Security Council discussions concerning territorial principles. This presents a clear conflict of interest: while Russia, as a permanent member, is expected to leverage its authority to halt the conflict, it has instead prioritized its national interests and continued the war. Russia views the UN Security Council as an instrument to legitimize its invasion of Ukraine and to achieve its national objectives on the international stage.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, an approach utilized to explore and understand the meaning attributed to experiences by various individuals or groups stemming from social or human issues (Creswell, 2014, p. 77). This method is particularly suited for comprehending and interpreting the role of the United Nations Security Council in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The choice of qualitative research allows for a more in-depth exploration and detailed description of the research topic, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the various peace-building efforts undertaken by the Security Council to de-escalate the Russia-Ukraine conflict between 2022 and 2024.

This research employs a library research (literature review) technique for data collection. This method focuses on gathering data and information from various documents, which are then synthesized to address the research question. The credibility of the research findings is enhanced when supported by visual evidence or existing research (Sugiyono, 2017, p. 16).

The data collected in this study are secondary or verbal data, sourced from previous research, academic texts, news reports, websites, and official press releases or conferences issued by relevant institutions. The data collection will use to understand the way the Security Council system works, also to find the reason the Security Council was established back then.





These data pertain to the research variables and will be structured to answer the research problem. The independent variable in this study is the Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council, while the dependent variable is the UN Security Council's decision-making system concerning the Russia-Ukraine conflict

The acquired data will be analyzed explanatorily to establish cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. The systematically arranged data will then be interpreted using Hegemonic Stability Theory and the concept of IGOs as instruments of member states to address the research question. The relationship between the data and the theoretical frameworks will be analyzed in two stages: data description and the identification of implicative patterns.

Data description will aim to find the same pattern in different cases. It will find a similar pattern that indicates the root problem of Security council limitations as a peace keeper and make the Security Council unable to adopt resolutions to de-escalate international conflict and war. These patterns will ultimately serve as the answer to the research question and provide evidence for the research core arguments.

Results and Discussion

The 1919 Paris Peace Conference specifically addressed the development of an effective international system. The League of Nations was subsequently founded with ambitious goals for transforming interstate relations. However, its efficacy was significantly hampered by the United States' non-participation. Consequently, many entities with close ties to the United States were unwilling to risk their relationships by fully committing to the League of Nations.

Despite its ambitious aspirations, the League of Nations was supported by an organizational structure designed to facilitate its functions. The primary organs of this international organization included the Assembly, the Council, and the Secretariat (Sitompul, 2012, p. 32). However, this structure lacked sufficient authority, particularly its own military capability, to effectively halt wars or compel states to adhere to the League's decisions.

This low level of compliance led member states to prioritize their individual national interests. Furthermore, the absence of the United States from the League significantly undermined its stability and authority.

The League of Nations did attempt to impose sanctions to curb Italian imperialism against Ethiopia and prevent international military conflict. In 1935, it levied an embargo on Italian coal and oil exports (Sitompul, 2012, p. 33). Nevertheless, member states remained largely apathetic, continuing to trade oil with Italy, which ultimately led to the League's failure to bring Italy into compliance. The outbreak of World War II marked the definitive end of the League of Nations, a consequence of its inability to prevent the global conflict. The dissolution of the League subsequently paved the way for the establishment of a new international organization: the United Nations.

Formatting and Function United Nations Security Council

The United Nations formally came into existence through the San Francisco Conference, which laid the foundational documents: The United Nations Charter and the Statute of the International Court of Justice, between April 25 and June 26, 1945 (United Nations, 1945). However,





preliminary discussions regarding the dissolution of the League of Nations and the grand design for its successor had already commenced in 1944 at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference. This conference was spearheaded by four nations destined to play central roles in the UN's structure: The United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and China (Fassbender, 2007). The Dumbarton Oaks Conference ultimately produced proposals outlining the fundamental principles for the establishment of the United Nations.

The objectives of the United Nations are articulated in Chapter I, Article 1 of the UN Charter, encompassing four key tenets (United Nations, 1973):

- To maintain international peace and security.
- To foster friendly relations among nations.
- To achieve international cooperation in resolving global issues.
- To serve as a focal point for harmonizing nations' efforts toward common goals.

The United Nations Security Council holds a significant and central purpose within the international system. It marks the first instance in history where a small group of nations has been entrusted with the responsibility of upholding global peace and security (Cajigal et al., 2023). The Security Council's vision is to maintain international peace and security. This mission is assigned to its five permanent members and ten non-permanent members, who rotate every two years.

Given its substantial responsibilities, the Security Council operates with considerable power. It possesses the authority to demand action from UN member states and to authorize sanctions. This also includes the use of force to conduct military operations through peacekeeping forces, deployed under the Security Council's directive (Chen et al., 2022, p. 1). Such pressure is intended to bring members back into compliance, thereby promoting international peace and security.

The Security Council generally employs two main categories of sanctions: economic and financial sanctions, and non-economic sanctions. Economic sanctions aim to restrict or even cease the flow of commodities and industrial products to and from the sanctioned state. These measures are imposed to weaken the economic strength of the targeted nation (Sitompul, 2012, p. 43). The Security Council can also impose specific sanctions, which include those on armaments, weapons of mass destruction, and chemical materials. Financial sanctions, conversely, are typically enacted to halt financial flows, often implemented by institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Hufbauer, 2007, pp. 44-45), and involve the freezing or securing of the sanctioned state's overseas assets.

In its efforts to maintain order, the Security Council is authorized to pursue and determine sanctions through peaceful methods, as outlined in Article 41 of the UN Charter (United Nations, 1973). This includes calling upon United Nations member states to impose economic embargoes, sever communications partially or entirely, and even break diplomatic relations. The Security Council may impose sanctions if it has determined that there is a potential threat to peace, a breach of peace, or an act of military aggression. The application of sanctions is solely intended to preserve or restore international peace and security, not to undermine a particular state. UN Security Council has been successfully to reduce conflict in Sierra Leone

The Security Council had effectively de-escalated the civil conflict in Sierra Leone, a West African nation that endured a brutal civil war from 1991 to 2002. This conflict pitted the government against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group notorious for its





atrocities, including the mutilation of civilians and the use of child soldiers (Briggs, 2003). The conflict, often referred to as the "Blood Diamond" conflict, stemmed from a struggle for control over brilliant mineral resources between the legitimate government and the RUF. In mid-1999, the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front convened, leading to the Lomé Agreement, a peace accord reached in Lomé, Togo (Sierra Leone, 1999).

Initially, following the signing of the Lomé Agreement, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), mandated to implement the terms of the accord (S/RES/1270, 1999). However, after the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces, the conflict intensified, with the RUF capturing UN personnel in 2000. The Security Council swiftly responded by adopting Resolution 1289 (2000), which expanded UNAMSIL's mandate to include securing government buildings and critical locations, disarmament sites, and assisting in law enforcement (Canada National Security and Defence, 2018).

The Security Council also demonstrated a commitment to sustained peacebuilding. In early 2001, it passed Resolution 1346, extending UNAMSIL's mandate for six months, starting March 31, 2001. This resolution also authorized an increase in UNAMSIL's military personnel to 17,500 due to the expansion of its functions. UNAMSIL's core mandates included: continuing and accelerating the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program for ex-combatants—a crucial element for ending violence and building peace; assisting the Government of Sierra Leone in extending state authority, including the development and training of new police and armed forces; and supporting humanitarian operations and enabling safe access for humanitarian personnel (S/RES/1346, 2001). UNAMSIL was further tasked with providing security support for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, whose establishment was backed by the Security Council.

Beyond the Security Council's concrete actions, the successful resolution of this conflict also involved collaboration with external powers, notably the United Kingdom's military intervention in May 2000. Given Sierra Leone's status as a former British colony, the UK deployed 1,300 troops to protect UN forces (Pickering, 2009, p. 27). In this conflict, the Security Council's focus was not solely on military aspects but also encompassed Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), transitional justice, institutional building, and security sector reform—all vital for lasting peace in post-conflict regions.

The key role to resolve this conflict is in United Kingdom intervention. The United Kingdom takes big efforts to de-escalate this conflict, not only in a political way in the Security Council, but also on the grass root of this conflict. They support the resolutions from the Security Council and all programs of the United Nations in Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, the other members of the Security Council know if the United Kingdom is the leader to resolve this conflict and they trust The United Kingdom can fix the conflict (Nadin, 2013, 156). The United Kingdom takes the lesson to learn to fix the problem with the next resolutions.

International Conflicts Not Resolved by Security Council

A. Civilian Conflict Sudan

Sudan, a nation richly endowed with natural resources, notably gold—making it one of Africa's top four gold producers in 2024 (Trade Panel International Ltd., 2024). Sudan is plagued by a complex and enduring conflict, hindering its social, political, and economic





stability. This intricate situation is rooted in the territorial legacy of British colonialism, which created stark ethnic, religious, and cultural distinctions between northern and southern Sudan. The conflict commenced almost immediately after Sudan gained independence. This stems from the British administration's decision to govern northern and southern Sudan separately during the colonial era, only to unify them into a single nation upon granting independence in 1956. This disregard for fundamental differences became a significant catalyst for tension.

Sudan has since experienced a turbulent history marked by coup attempts, separatist movements, and national fragmentation. In 2021, the country faced a military coup led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (Ochieng et al., 2025). Following the coup, General Burhan became Sudan's interim leader, promising to hold elections in 2022. However, the transitional government process stalled due to the inability of Sudan's main political factions—the military, opposition, and civil society—to reach an agreement (Prayuda et al., 2024, p. 214). This coup was initially orchestrated by the Sudan Armed Force (SAF) under General al-Burhan and the Rapid Support Force (RSF) led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti).

In April 2023, Sudan was plunged back into civil conflict, this time between the very forces that orchestrated the 2021 coup: the SAF, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the RSF, led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti). The conflict originated from disagreements over the integration of the RSF into the regular military. The RSF sought confirmation of its status as an integrated part of the Sudanese state military, rather than remaining a private entity outside government control. General Burhan, however, did not accede to this demand, and the initial dispute escalated into a broader power struggle following the 2021 coup.

The Security Council has undertaken efforts to preserve political and economic stability in Sudan. These endeavors predated the armed conflict between the SAF and RSF, acknowledging Sudan's dynamic and conflict-prone regional landscape. Despite its significant mandate to uphold international peace and security, the Security Council has yet to become a central actor in this particular conflict. Following the military coup, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2524 (2020), establishing the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) to support Sudan's political transition, peacebuilding, and human rights protection. (S/RES/2524, 2020)

The Security Council has also called for ceasefires among the actors in Sudan. For instance, on June 13, 2024, it issued a call for an end to the siege of El Fasher (S/RES/2736, 2024), a strategic area housing numerous displaced people and serving as a humanitarian aid distribution hub. However, despite advocating for a ceasefire and civilian protection, this resolution lacked concrete enforcement mechanisms, such as broader new sanctions or stricter monitoring.

During the Security Council's voting process on the Sudan issue, Russia chose to abstain (UN Press, 2024). Russia's abstention highlighted the persistent divisions within the Security Council regarding Sudan, even though the resolution passed due to the absence of a veto. Russia had previously opposed more stringent measures against the warring factions.





The Security Council's non-substantive decision-making to address the root causes of the conflict in Sudan reflects a compromise effort to secure sufficient votes within the Council.

The diverging views and interests among Security Council members regarding the Sudan conflict became even more apparent during the discussion of a draft resolution on November 18, 2024. This draft addressed severe human rights violations perpetrated by the RSF against civilians in Darfur, Al Jazira, Sennar, and other parts of Sudan, including violence against children and women. The draft, proposed by Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland, and the United Kingdom, took a firm stance, condemning the RSF's attacks in El Fasher and demanding an immediate cessation of all its assaults in Sudan (S/2024/826, 2024). Furthermore, these draft proposed tactical steps to ensure compliance with the resolution by requesting the UN Secretary-General to develop a mechanism proposal for creating compliance, facilitating the implementation of the Jeddah Declaration commitments, and seeking a written update on practical measures to support mediation efforts.

This draft resolution, championed by the United Kingdom, Sierra Leone, and Northern Ireland, explicitly stated that the RSF had committed human rights abuses in Sudan and outlined clear steps for peacebuilding in the country. However, due to the divergent interests and views among the permanent members of the Security Council, this resolution failed to be adopted, as Russia exercised its veto power. During the discussion, Russia argued against external accountability, asserting it was solely the right of the Sudanese government (UN Press, 2024), referring to the UN and its associated bodies as external accountability mechanisms. This divergence of views among Security Council members further complicates the prospects of the Council resolving the conflict.

B. Israel - Palestine Conflict

It is widely acknowledged that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been institutionally and organizationally unable to resolve the longstanding conflict in West Asia. Throughout the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the United States has consistently provided extensive support to Israel. Where Israel is the United States' closets align (Dombrowski & Reich, 2017, 1028). The alignment of United State with Israel is above United State strategic align Baltic nations, Poland, Turkey, and Ukraine

This assistance has not been limited to material aid but has also encompassed diplomatic backing, even within international efforts to de-escalate the conflict. The US has expended an estimated \$310 billion in foreign aid to Israel since its establishment in 1948 up to 2024 (Masters & Merrow, 2024). This aid is bifurcated into economic and military assistance. Cumulatively, the total US assistance to Israel significantly surpasses that provided to other recipient countries, with Egypt, for instance, ranking second at \$168 billion (Masters & Merrow, 2024). This undeniably reflects the significant geopolitical interests the United States holds in Israel's position.

Within the context of conflict resolution at the Security Council level, the United States' consistent support for Israel is also evident. In 2011, Palestine formally applied for United Nations membership but failed to achieve full membership. Palestine subsequently gained non-member observer state status at the United Nations in November 2012, granted





through a General Assembly vote with 138 members in favor, 41 abstentions, and 9 nations, including the United States, against (UN News, 2012). It is crucial to note that full UN membership requires prior approval by the Security Council before being submitted to the General Assembly for a vote.

In April 2024, the Security Council revisited the issue of Palestine's UN membership. A proposal put forth by Algeria was ultimately vetoed by the United States during the Security Council's voting process. The United States justified its stance by arguing that the proposal was premature, asserting that the recognition of Palestinian membership would not guarantee statehood for the Palestinian people, which, according to the US, must be achieved through negotiations between the parties, in this context, Israel (UN Press, 2024). Despite the majority of Security Council members supporting Algeria's proposal, advocating nations like France and South Korea viewed full Palestinian membership as a crucial initial step toward peace, justice, and achieving international equality.

The United States has also consistently acted to shield Israel within the Security Council forum. It has vetoed UN Security Council resolutions calling for an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, even when 14 other Council members supported the proposal put forth by Algeria. This proposal also demanded the lifting of restrictions on humanitarian aid delivery to Gaza and characterized the Gaza conflict as an international catastrophe (Roth, 2025). Conversely, the United States argued that Hamas and Gaza were responsible for attacking Israel and affirmed its continued rejection of all draft resolutions stating otherwise.

The intricate national interests of the Security Council's permanent members in preserving their international influence contribute significantly to the Council's profound difficulty in resolving various international humanitarian conflicts. Consequently, the Security Council often appears to function as a tool for its permanent members to maintain their global sway.

Russia's Veto Power and the Impasse in the UN Security Council Regarding Ukraine

The Russian Federation has consistently leveraged its authority as a permanent member of the Security Council to justify its aggressive actions against Ukraine. In response, the Security Council immediately sought to halt this aggression, convening a meeting on February 25, 2022. During this session, the Security Council discussed a draft resolution proposed by the United States and 81 other nations. Russia, however, cast a negative vote on the draft resolution. From Russia's perspective, Ukraine was merely an object, not a sovereign state, with the Russian Ambassador to the United Nations articulating that Ukraine was a pawn in a geopolitical game orchestrated by the West. Russia further contended that the resolution under discussion was an "inhumane" geopolitical maneuver in Eastern Europe designed to undermine Russia (Garten, 2022).

In that meeting, Russia openly expressed its government's views to Western nations, stating that the United States was unfit to lecture on morality, given its own history of aggression against other countries. Despite this, Western nations, such as the representative from the United Kingdom, asserted that President Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine to overthrow its government constituted blatant aggression that must be condemned. The United States





representative also conveyed to the Russian representative that "Russia can veto this resolution, but you cannot veto our voices; you cannot veto the truth; you cannot veto our principles; you cannot veto the people of Ukraine; you cannot veto the UN Charter...and you will not veto accountability" (Garten, 2022). The Russian Federation remained unyielding, casting its veto on the draft resolution condemning its political actions.

On February 27, 2022, the Security Council reconvened to discuss a draft resolution on peace and security in Ukraine, proposed by the United States and Albania. This draft aimed to convene an emergency session of the General Assembly. Russia again provided a negative vote. However, a negative vote does not constitute a veto if it pertains to a procedural decision. The Russian representative articulated in the meeting that every permanent member possesses the right to exercise its veto for specific reasons, such as achieving global stability. Any attempt to circumvent the Russian Federation's rights in this regard would only undermine the United Nations Charter (United Nations, 2022). This narrative served as Russia's defensive justification for its use of the veto in the previous meeting. The "global balance" referred to by Russia is its perception of the military alliance with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), where Russia feels threatened by NATO's expansion and increased membership. This sentiment was reflected in the Russian representative's statement that some Western members had "blocked out" Russia's concerns about the perceived threat from NATO (United Nations, 2022).

Many other Security Council member states condemned Russia's use of the veto in that meeting. The French delegation, for instance, stated that France could not accept this action, as Russia's veto prevented the Security Council from fulfilling its responsibility to uphold international peace and security. The United Kingdom's representative also asserted that Russia stood virtually alone in the vote against its aggression toward Ukraine. The United States echoed this sentiment, stating that while the previous resolution might have been vetoed, Moscow would not be able to veto the people of Ukraine or the United Nations Charter (United Nations, 2022).

On March 23, 2022, the Security Council convened again to discuss a draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation, alongside Belarus, North Korea, and Saudi Arabia. Russia put forward this draft after an earlier draft, introduced by France and Mexico, concerning humanitarian issues in Ukraine, was blocked by Western powers, namely the United States and the United Kingdom. This earlier draft was rejected because it did not specifically condemn the Russian Federation's actions. According to Russia, instead of addressing the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, Security Council members engaged in political discussions and mutual accusations. Russia maintained that a de-politicized Security Council resolution would significantly aid humanitarian efforts on the ground, as conveyed by the Russian Ambassador to the United Nations: "Should we continue to build cynical speculations around the issue of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine or adopt a draft resolution in the Security Council that will be an important practical step and an important framework for the efforts of humanitarian workers" (Security Council, 2022).

However, the draft proposed by the Russian Federation failed to be adopted due to insufficient supporting votes, with only Russia and China voting in favor. Western nations perceived that Russia was unwilling to acknowledge its culpability, as articulated by the United States Ambassador to the United Nations: "Russia is the aggressor, the attacker, the invader, the sole party in Ukraine, engaged in a campaign of brutality against the people of Ukraine and it





wants us to adopt a resolution that does not acknowledge its culpability" (Security Council, 2022). The French representative also expressed similar sentiments, viewing the draft resolution as a Russian attempt to use the Security Council as a tool to legitimize its invasion of Ukraine. The United Kingdom's representative further stated that their country would not support any draft resolution that did not assign blame to Russia, deeming it the only path to ending the war (Security Council, 2022).

The Security Council did not cease its efforts to de-escalate the Russia-Ukraine conflict. On September 30, 2022, the Security Council again convened to discuss a draft resolution proposed by the United States and Albania. This draft aimed to reject Russia's referendums in the Donbas region and demanded Russia's immediate withdrawal from Ukraine. The United States and the United Kingdom asserted that the referendums and subsequent annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson by the Russian Federation constituted illegal acts that defiled the spirit of the United Nations Charter and international law (Security Council, 2022). The Security Council's obligation is to maintain peace and security, which includes the right to safety and protection from annexation.

The representative of the Russian Federation in that meeting then questioned the content of the draft and the statements from Western countries, asking whether Russia could agree to a draft resolution that explicitly condemned its nation. According to Russia, this draft was nothing more than a provocation designed to compel Russia to exercise its veto right, thus allowing accusations of abusive use of its privilege (Security Council, 2022). Russia contended that all processes for incorporating Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson had adhered to referendum mechanisms consistent with international law. Consequently, the Russian Federation cast a negative vote, or veto, on the draft resolution proposed by the United States and Albania, arguing that the West desired not peace for Ukraine but the downfall of Russia.

This authority held by Russia is consistently used to block resolutions that contradict its views, interests, and national needs, even when humanitarian considerations are at stake. The veto right is intrinsically linked to the concept of power and being a dominant force in the international system. The primary function of the veto power, within the hegemonic stability approach, is to safeguard the national interests and power of the states that possess it.

States with veto power can utilize this right to invalidate the adoption process of resolutions that conflict with their interests or needs, protect allies or their adopted foreign policies, or maintain a status quo that benefits them (Gultom et al., 2024, p. 83). This reality significantly complicates the Security Council's ability to resolve the conflict. The very regime of the Security Council creates an environment where it cannot adopt resolutions that contradict the interests and needs of its permanent members.

The Pattern Unsolved Conflict by Security Council

The decision-making system of the UN Security Council (UNSC) is inherently flawed, primarily due to its domination by the self-interests of its permanent members (P5). This structure is unrepresentative of the current international community and tends to create an absolute, unaccountable power for its permanent members. The national and geopolitical interests of the P5 frequently override efforts to enforce peace and humanitarian law.





Conditional Success vs Systemic Failure. The Security Council does indeed have a track record of success in de-escalating conflicts, as seen in cases like in Sierra Leone that were driven before. The Timor-Leste Conflict Security Council has done to de-escalate this conflict into peace agreement and peace building. Where at that time Indonesia launched its invasion of East Timor, subsequently known as Operation Seroja. This conflict evolved into a protracted armed struggle between Indonesia and East Timor's independence forces, lasting for over two decades (Heizier, 2022). In response, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1236 (1999), which encouraged and established the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to conduct a referendum in Timor-Leste. To safeguard the referendum's outcome, the Security Council also took a tactical step by issuing Resolution 1264 (1999). This resolution authorized the formation of the International Force East Timor (INTERFET), led by Australia, to restore peace in the Timor-Leste region.

Beyond merely ordering a ceasefire, the Security Council also played a crucial role in assisting Timor-Leste in building and establishing a stable constitution and governmental institutions. The Council facilitated efforts to end the conflict through mechanisms for a plebiscite, deployed a robust peacekeeping force by establishing INTERFET, and even temporarily assumed civil administration through the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) (S/RES/1272, 1999).

However, these successes only occur when the interests of the permanent members are aligned or, at the very least, not fundamentally conflicting. Conversely, in conflicts where the interests of the permanent members are deeply divided—such as in Syria, Sudan, and Israel-Palestine—the Security Council has proven to be paralyzed and ineffective. Like in Sudan where Russia and China have repeatedly vetoed resolutions concerning Sudan to protect and oppose Western intervention in the Sudan conflict. In the Middle East the United States has consistently vetoed resolutions critical of Israel or demanding an unconditional ceasefire in Israel-Palestine conflict, to protect the United Nations key ally. Russia in this case has vetoed resolutions condemning its own aggression against Ukraine, rendering the UNSC powerless in the face of a conflict where one of its own members is the aggressor.

The UNSC's inability to act reflects the fundamental anarchic nature of the international system, where no central authority stands above states. In this condition, powerful states (hegemons) act on the principle of self-help to ensure their security and interests. Russia's actions in Ukraine, driven by a security dilemma related to NATO expansion, are a direct manifestation of this logic. The Security Council is plunged into decision-making paralysis whenever the perspectives, interests, and needs of the hegemonic powers—its permanent members—diverge.





Conclusion

This research reflects a pattern indicating how the Security Council's success in resolving a conflict hinges upon the aligning interests of its permanent members. When the permanent members of the Security Council do not have conflicting interests, the Council can effectively and objectively resolve conflicts, as demonstrated in the cases of Timor-Leste, and Sierra Leone. Conversely, the Security Council's inability to de-escalate the Russia-Ukraine conflict stems from divergent and/or conflicting interests and needs among its permanent members, rendering the Council ineffective in addressing this particular conflict. This pattern is evident in various other conflicts involving the interests of permanent members, such as those in Syria, Sudan, and Israel-Palestine, where the Security Council has proven incapable of effective and objective conflict resolution.

Furthermore, this research reaffirms that the Security Council's incapacitation is not fundamentally due to a lack of capability to resolve the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Instead, it is because the interests and needs of the hegemon, in this case Russia, would be jeopardized if the Security Council were to resolve this conflict objectively and effectively. This is rooted in the initial grand design of power distribution within the United Nations, which granted absolute power to the permanent members of the Security Council. Consequently, any challenge to the interests and needs of a permanent member, such as Russia in this instance, is rendered ineffective due to the strong hegemonic influence of that permanent member. That makes the Security Council unable to de-escalate or solve the Russia-Ukraine conflict.





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