



**PRESIDIUM *for* CHANGE**

FOR A BETTER WORLD

PRESIDIUM MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE 2024

# UNSC

## BACKGROUND GUIDE



**UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY COUNCIL**



**AGENDA:**

Discussing The Impact of Proxy Wars in the Middle East and developing a Comprehensive Security Framework.

## PRESIDIUM SCHOOL MUN 2024

### **LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Greetings!

We would like to tell you that it gives us immense pleasure to serve as your Executive Board for the simulation of the UNSC at Presidium MUN 2024!

We have made a background guide to help you kick-start your research. The background guide has been written with the thought that it will serve as a map for you to navigate through the mass of information that you may cross in your preparation for the conference. It will guide you in understanding the different angles to the forthcoming discussion, a sort of reflection of what is in store for you. Thus, as the name “map” may be hinting, it will not provide you with all the information or analysis on the agenda at hand but a path for you to carry out your research. To that, your research has to be comprehensive and non-exhaustive. More importantly, you have to understand your research and be able to use it. In other words, your research documents are not your arguments. You use your research to form your opinion; your research cannot be your only argument. That is where analysis steps in.

You need to listen to everything other delegates talk about in the committee, so don't keep yourself too occupied writing your speeches. Instead, truly listen to what other delegates say in the committee. It will help you give direction to the debate happening in the committee and also some point to elaborate on or rebuttal.

With regards to that, try not to read from documents without really understanding what they mean, and try forming your arguments based on what you read in those documents. The trick here is to make sure you make notes of the documents that you have read and formulate arguments from the same.

To start, you can briefly read about the agenda and break down the agenda into various subtopics that exist within that agenda, now these topics that you have written are also the topics that will be discussed in the committee as the moderated caucus topics. All that you have to do now is to research the subtopics of the agenda that we have written.

Now when you research on particular subtopics, you don't just jot down information that you have collected through various articles, but rather try to make an argument for that subtopic while researching or simply provide your country's viewpoint on the given sub-topic. Logic and foreign policy combined with in-depth research and knowledge are necessary to be a successful delegate. As delegates, you are expected to promote the interests of your nation and as delegates representing different nations, you are required to know your foreign policy on the agenda and the issues related to the same. Try to highlight the same during the three days of the conference. Having said that, if you have any questions or doubts about any matters concerning this committee, please feel free to contact us. We shall be happy to help!

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Regards,  
Executive Board  
9th Edition of Presidium MUN  
Presidium School, Gurgaon

### About United Nations

The United Nations was established on October 24, 1945. The United Nations (UN) was the second multipurpose international organization established in the 20th century that was worldwide in scope and membership. Its predecessor, the League of Nations, was created by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 and disbanded in 1946. Headquartered in New York City, the UN also has regional offices in Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi. Its official languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. For a list of UN member countries and secretaries-general. In addition to maintaining peace and security, other important objectives include developing friendly relations among countries based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples; achieving worldwide cooperation to solve international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems; respecting and promoting human rights; and serving as a center where countries can coordinate their actions and activities toward these various ends.

Changes in international relations resulted in modifications in the responsibilities of the UN and its decision-making apparatus. Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union deeply affected the UN's security functions during its first 45 years. Extensive post-World War II decolonization in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East increased the volume and nature of political, economic, and social issues that confronted the organization. The Cold War's end in 1991 brought renewed attention and appeals to the UN. Amid an increasingly volatile geopolitical climate, there were new challenges to established practices and functions, especially in the areas of conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance. At the beginning of the 21st century, the UN and its programs and affiliated agencies struggled to address humanitarian crises and civil wars.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

**Official Website:** <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en>

The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, responsible for maintaining international peace and security. Established in 1945, the UNSC holds a unique and critical position in the global political system as it has the authority to make binding decisions on behalf of all member states, making it the most powerful body within

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the UN framework. Its primary function is to prevent and resolve conflicts, address threats to peace, and develop frameworks for international stability.

### **Composition of the UNSC**

The UNSC consists of 15 member states:

- **5 Permanent Members (P5):** China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These countries hold veto power, allowing them to block any substantive resolution.
- **10 Non-Permanent Members:** These members are elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly, based on geographic representation. Non-permanent members do not hold veto power but play a crucial role in shaping discussions and decisions.

The current ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly (with end of term year):

- Algeria (2025)
- Ecuador (2024)
- Guyana (2025)
- Japan (2024)
- Malta (2024)
- Mozambique (2024)
- Republic of Korea (2025)
- Sierra Leone (2025)
- Slovenia (2025)
- Switzerland (2024)

### **Functions and Powers of the UNSC**

The UNSC's responsibilities include:

- **Maintaining International Peace and Security:** The UNSC has the authority to investigate situations that may lead to conflict and to recommend solutions. It can also impose sanctions, authorize the use of force, and establish peacekeeping missions.
- **Conflict Prevention and Mediation:** The UNSC plays a key role in mediating disputes and conflicts before they escalate into violence. It often works closely with the UN Secretary-General and regional organizations in conflict prevention efforts.
- **Enforcement of International Law:** The UNSC can enforce international law through its binding resolutions, which all UN member states are obliged to follow. This includes the imposition of sanctions, arms embargoes, and other measures to compel compliance with international norms.
- **Peacekeeping Operations:** The UNSC authorizes and oversees peacekeeping operations in conflict zones, deploying military and civilian personnel to maintain peace and protect civilians.

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### Decision-Making and Veto Power

The decision-making process in the UNSC is structured around two types of votes:

- **Procedural Votes:** These require at least nine affirmative votes out of 15 members, with no vetoes from the P5.
- **Substantive Votes:** These require nine votes as well, but any of the five permanent members can exercise their veto power, which will prevent the resolution from passing, regardless of the number of votes in favor.

The veto power gives the P5 significant influence over UNSC decisions, often reflecting the geopolitical realities and tensions among global powers.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

***Agenda:** Discussing the impact of proxy wars in the middle East and developing a comprehensive security framework*

### Proxy Wars

A proxy war is a military conflict in which one or more third parties directly or indirectly support one or more state or non-state combatants to influence the conflict's outcome and thereby advance their strategic interests or undermine those of their opponents. Third parties in a proxy war do not participate in the actual fighting to any significant extent, if at all. Proxy wars enable major powers to avoid confrontation with each other as they compete for influence and resources. Direct means of support by third parties consist of military aid and training, economic assistance, and sometimes limited military operations with surrogate forces. Indirect means of support have included blockades, sanctions, trade embargoes, and other strategies designed to thwart a rival's ambitions.

### History of Proxy Wars

Proxy wars have a long history in world affairs. Nations and empires have used them as both military and foreign policy strategies to influence or even subdue neighboring states. The Byzantine Empire (330–1453), for example, instigated proxy wars by deliberately stoking hostilities between different groups within rival nations. It then backed the strongest side when civil war broke out. During World War I, Britain and France used a similar strategy by supporting the Arab Revolt (1916–18) against the Ottoman Empire. Likewise, the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) was a proxy conflict between Republican forces, supported by the Soviet Union, and Nationalist forces, supported by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Notably, Germany used the civil war to test new weapons technologies on the Spanish population.

As the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union grew during the 1950s and '60s, the intense competition between the two countries raised the specter that direct conflict would lead to global annihilation. Proxy wars became a more acceptable way for the two

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superpowers to compete for world influence. During the Cold War, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China engaged in several proxy wars, including the Angolan civil war (1975–2002). The Vietnam War (1954–75) was a major proxy war for the Soviet-Chinese coalition that supported North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. The eventual withdrawal of U.S. forces and the defeat of South Vietnam achieved the coalition’s goals of limiting American influence in the region and increasing its own.

During the 1980s, after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to install a new Afghan communist government, the United States acted as a third party in a proxy war that pitted Afghan and Soviet troops against Islamic guerrillas, who were supplied with weapons and other military equipment by the U.S. government. The cost of the Afghan War of 1978–92 crippled the Soviet Union and contributed to its eventual downfall.

Proxy wars have continued into the 21st century. Notable examples include a civil war in Yemen, begun in 2014, involving a major clash between the militant Houthi movement, supported by Iran, and Yemeni government forces, supported by Saudi Arabia and its allies. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the United States and its NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies acted as third-party supporters of Ukraine, supplying that country with significant military assistance and imposing economic sanctions on Russia, while China and Iran acted as third-party supporters of Russia.

### Understanding Proxy Wars in the Middle East

Proxy wars have been a hallmark of conflicts in the Middle East since the Cold War era when global powers vied for influence in strategic regions. However, the nature and dynamics of these proxy wars have evolved, and today they are driven by a combination of global, regional, and sectarian interests. The main elements that contribute to these wars include:

**External Influence:** Countries like the United States, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others support different sides in conflicts for their geopolitical interests.

**Sectarian Divisions:** Sunni-Shia tensions, particularly between Iran (Shia) and Saudi Arabia (Sunni), often manifest in local conflicts.

**Non-State Actors:** Armed groups, militias, and terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, ISIS, and the Houthis are often key players, with external backers supporting them for leverage in regional politics.

### Proxy Wars in the Middle East

**1) The Syrian Civil War (2011–present):** The Syrian conflict is one of the most prominent examples of a modern proxy war. It began as a civil uprising but quickly became a battleground for multiple external and regional powers.

- Russia and Iran have been key supporters of the Assad regime, providing military and financial support.
- The United States, along with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, supported various rebel groups, including Kurdish forces.

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- The war has also drawn in non-state actors like ISIS and Hezbollah, further complicating the conflict.
- This proxy war is part of a broader geopolitical struggle, with Russia and Iran seeking to maintain a foothold in the region, while the U.S. and its allies aim to limit Iranian influence.

**2) Yemen Conflict (2015–present):** Yemen’s war is largely viewed as a **Saudi-Iranian proxy war**. The conflict began when the **Houthi rebels**, a Shia-affiliated group backed by Iran, seized control of large parts of the country, including the capital, Sanaa.

- Saudi Arabia, leading a coalition of Arab states, intervened in support of the internationally recognized government.
- The conflict has led to a severe humanitarian crisis, with millions facing famine and disease. Despite numerous attempts at peace talks, the involvement of external actors continues to prolong the conflict.

**3) Iraq (Post-2003):** After the U.S.-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein, Iraq became the site of intense sectarian conflict, which attracted outside powers.

- **Iran** has heavily influenced Iraq’s Shia militias, which now play a major role in Iraqi politics and security.
- The U.S. continues to have a military presence, supporting the Iraqi government and counterterrorism efforts, especially against ISIS.
- Iraq’s strategic importance, as well as its majority Shia population, has made it a key arena for Iranian influence, but also a place of U.S.-Iranian competition.

### Proposals for a Comprehensive Security Framework

A successful security framework in the Middle East requires a multifaceted approach that addresses not only the military aspects of the conflicts but also their underlying causes. The following proposals could be considered by the UNSC:

1. **Diplomatic Engagement and Mediation:** Promote dialogue between regional powers (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey) and global actors (U.S., Russia, China) to reduce external interference in local conflicts.
2. **Arms Control and Non-Intervention Agreements:** Work towards agreements that limit the supply of arms to proxy forces and commit regional powers to non-intervention in internal conflicts.
3. **Strengthening Governance and Institutions:** Support initiatives that promote political inclusivity and state-building in conflict-affected countries to reduce the influence of non-state actors.

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4. **Humanitarian Support and Reconstruction:** Prioritize humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of war-torn countries to address the root causes of instability, such as poverty and displacement.
5. **Counterterrorism Cooperation:** Enhance global and regional cooperation to combat terrorist organizations that thrive in the chaos of proxy wars.
6. **Inclusive Security Architecture:** Develop a regional security architecture that includes both state and non-state actors in dialogue, with international backing to ensure compliance.

### Conclusion

Addressing the impact of proxy wars in the Middle East requires a concerted and sustained effort by the international community, particularly the UNSC. Developing a comprehensive security framework that addresses both the symptoms and root causes of these conflicts is essential for long-term stability in the region. A balanced approach that includes diplomatic, military, and humanitarian measures will be critical in ensuring peace and security in the Middle East.

### Sources for Research

- 1) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/proxy-war>
- 2) <https://ecfr.eu/publication/proxy-battles-iraq-iran-and-the-turmoil-in-the-middle-east/>
- 3) <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-engage-in-proxy-war-a-states-perspective/>
- 4) <https://securityanddefence.pl/Changing-the-character-of-proxy-warfare-and-its-consequences-f-or-geopolitical-relationships.130902.0.2.html>

**NOTE:** Kindly note that this Background Guide is not exhaustive and is merely a vessel to guide your research procedures by hinting a few of many key focus areas and the degree of technicality and analysis that is expected out of every one of you. Research should not be limited to the background guide and the links provided here, delegates are encouraged to go beyond and research about all the relevant topics.

With this, we wish you all the best and anticipate two days of exemplary academic deliberations.