

Global Governance Case Study: United Nations



UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations was the first post-war IGO to be established, with the **overall aim to maintain international peace and security**. It has a major role in global governance and peacekeeping, with 193 global members.

The UN acts as a form of global governance through its several **organisations**. These organisations govern different issues on a global scale. Some examples include:

General Assembly

All 193 members are part of the general assembly, making it an organisation of **universal representation**. The aim of the general assembly is to discuss and debate issues of peace and security.

Security Council

The Security Council consists of 15 members, 5 permanent. This organisation solves threats to peace by having each member vote. The security council can deliver economic sanctions and other means to resolve issues.

International Court of Justice

The court settles **legal disputes** and **international law breaks** that are submitted by **member states**. The aim of the court is to **maintain peace** between states, and to offer legal advice.

UNESCO: Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

The aim of this organisation is to **maintain peace through education, science, and culture**. UNESCO's main aim is to stand up for the freedom expression.

Peacekeeping

UN peacekeeping aims to bring peace to places of disruption and post-conflict. UN's **peacekeeping forces** are sent into areas of instability, with the aim to restore stability and order.

The purpose of the UN is **to promote growth and stability**, however it is criticised for also **exacerbating inequalities and injustices**.

Promoting Growth and Stability

UN **sanctions** have allowed **inequalities and injustices** to be resolved. The UN **punishes countries** that do not abide by international laws. For example, the UN has imposed several sanctions against Iran, some of the toughest sanctions against the world, in order to deter Iran's use of nuclear enrichment and reprocessing.

Exacerbating Inequalities and Injustices

The UN Peacekeeping Forces have come under **major criticism** for **crimes against vulnerable citizens**. Peacekeeping forces have been accused of **sexual assault, human trafficking, child prostitution, and murder** during multiple dispatches. The UN's Kosovo Mission allegedly had many crimes involving peacekeeping forces, including 800 counts of sexual abuse, 70 of murder, and 100 of extortion/theft. These crimes disastrously exacerbate inequalities of the already vulnerable citizens.



The UN promotes **economic, social and environmental growth** through the creation of international treaties and goals. The UN's **Millennium Development Goals** and **Sustainable Development Goals** are prime examples of UN declarations that promote stability and growth. These nation-backed goals aim to globally improve quality of life, targeting literacy rates, poverty, famine, and other global issues.

Millennium Development Goals:



(Source: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>)

The UN, on several occasions, has been accused of being **inactive** in many cases where aid or intervention is desperately needed. Some say the UN have an **inability to prevent conflicts**, which creates further **injustice**.

- The UN have been criticised for not preventing the **1971 Bangladesh Genocide**.
- The UN was criticised for the peacekeeping forces being inactive in the DR of Congo (2014). Peacekeepers allegedly failed to provide assistance in Mavivi after attacks. **Peacekeepers** are accused of failing to respond to repeated calls for help during an attack which killed 30 people. The peacekeepers were only 9 km away but arrived two days later.
- In 2013, **Saudi Arabia** was elected as a member of the **UN Human Rights Council**, a body that elects states who **uphold the highest standards of human rights**. It was later found that the UK had influence on this decision through **secret voting trade deals**, which eventually allowed Saudi Arabia (a country generally known for its **poor human rights**) to be elected. This highlights the UN's lack of power, having potentially dangerous consequences to those affected by **inequality or injustice**.
- Organisations such as **UN Watch** have been created to **monitor the effectiveness of the UN** (this organisation contributed towards discovering the secret voting trade deal in 2013 between the UK and Saudi Arabia).



The UN creates **policies and legislation** to protect **social rights**. For example, the Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly, and it now protects billions of people living in countries in which the declaration is ratified in. **The International Court of Justice** also protects social rights by punishing those who commit crimes against humanity.

The UN has also been accused of creating **inequalities** through bias of countries, especially those in conflict. The largest criticism comes from the UN being allegedly biased **against Israel** in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Between 2006 and 2016, the Human Rights Council adopted 135 resolutions criticising countries. **68 out of 135 of those resolutions targeted Israel**. Between 2012 and 2015, the General Assembly adopted 97 resolutions. 83 out of 97 resolutions targeted Israel.

The **amount** of criticism that Israel face is said to be **too severe** in relation to Israel's crimes, and that not enough attention is given to Palestine.

