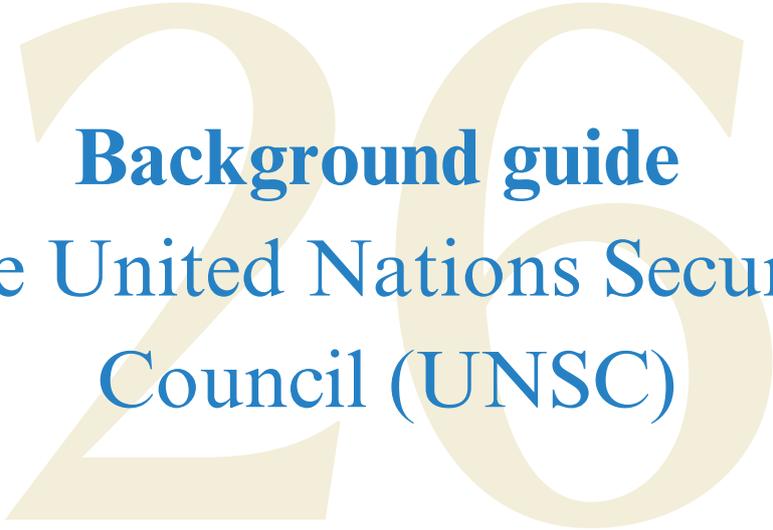




**UoBDMUN**

PER AD ARDUA ALTA

**20**  
**26**



**Background guide**  
The United Nations Security  
Council (UNSC)

# **Table of Contents**

Welcome Letter .....	1
Committee Introduction .....	2
Introduction .....	3
History .....	4
Analysis .....	6
Questions for the Resolution .....	7
Starter resources .....	8
Bibliography .....	9

# Welcome Letter

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is with great anticipation and pleasure that we, your chairs, Mehdi Ibn Moussa and Zainah Elsherbiny, welcome you to the United Nations Security Council at UoBDMUN 2026. As you prepare to step into one of, if not the most, intensely demanding committees in the UN system, we would like to assure you that our top priorities as chairs are to create an engaging, unforgettable, and rewardingly challenging environment for all of you.

The Security Council is not merely another committee; it is a committee where every word carries its weight and every decision bears its consequences. It is the primary organ in the global realm entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. As delegates in this council, you will carry the voices of national representatives and embody their roles as diplomats. Over the course of three frenetic days, you will navigate crises, defend your national interests, negotiate under pressure, and put the strength of research and reasoning under the pace of real-time diplomacy.

As your chairs, we expect a standard of performance that aligns with the caliber of real UN Security Council representatives. We expect well-rounded and reliable research. We expect structured and captivating speeches that keep us alert, in anticipation of your next line. We expect respect for procedure and formality at all times in formal sessions. And above all, we expect exceptional participation from every one of you.

We are truly looking forward to your hyper challenges, your extensive POIs, and your presence as a whole! Do not shy away from participating and questioning anything that compels your mind; we are always present as your supportive backbone. And whether this is familiar ground or you're stepping into your very first Council, know that you belong in this room; and we are eager to meet every single one of you, without a doubt in the success of what this committee will become with you in it! That said, prepare well, and don't fret; you cannot lose when the experience itself is a reward. Good luck!

Until session begins,

Your Chairs, Mehdi Ibn Moussa and Zainah Elsherbin

# Committee Introduction

The United Nations Security Council serves as the world's most vital international authority for maintaining global peace and security. It has proven indispensable since its configuration in 1945 following World War II, seeing that it is the only international organ empowered to issue legally binding resolutions obliging all UN member states (United Nations, 1945). The Council holds exclusive authority to impose sanctions, approve peacekeeping operations, and authorize the use of force.

The authority of the UNSC structure is strongly shaped by geopolitics, consisting of 15 members: ten elected by the GA for a two-year duration, and the five permanent members— the United States, the United Kingdom, the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, and the French Republic. Designated as the P5 for their post-war influence, these states hold veto power that can block any substantive resolution regardless of global consensus. This structure undermines UN legitimacy by letting P5 political interests dominate global security, as witnessed in the Sudan conflict, where proxy group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) continue their terrorism while PMs like Russia exploit veto to block ceasefire resolutions, shielding their concern of retaining gold-smuggling through the RSF (Boadu, 2025). Conversely, when the Council acts righteously, it achieves stabilization, as successfully proven through the UN intervention in Cambodia (UNTAC), where the Council successfully extinguishes the decades-long proxy war between the CGDK and Cambodia, restoring permanent and sovereign authority to the Cambodian State.

These contrasting cases demonstrate that while the Council possesses the means to maintain order, its effectiveness depends on whether the weight of legal will outweighs political interests. Ultimately, the UNSC's existence prevents the world from falling into unregulated unilateralism, even if its effectiveness is uneven and often constrained by veto paralysis.

# Topic Introduction

---

## The Threat of Private Military Companies (PMCs) and Proxy Groups to International Peace and Sovereignty

The 21st century has seen a significant shift in the world's security paradigm, moving away from the conventional state-to-state warfare to a "hybrid warfare" paradigm that relies heavily on the services of Private Military Companies (PMCs) and proxy groups. The former comprises corporate armies that offer services such as logistics, training, and actual warfare, as opposed to the conventional armies of states that comprise citizens of that state. The latter, proxy groups, comprise non-state actors such as local militia groups and insurgents that operate on behalf of a state to fulfil geopolitical objectives.

The primary reason behind the emergence of such groups has been the need to be cost-effective, as well as the ability of the state to exercise notions under plausible deniability (UN Working Group on Mercenaries 2021). However, these groups, owing to the legal ambiguities that often characterize their operations, pose a significant threat to international peace, human rights, and the sovereignty of the countries in which they operate (ICRC 2008).

# Topic History

---

The monopoly on legitimate violence is the essence of state sovereignty. The trajectory from 20th-century mercenaries to modern Private Military Companies (PMCs) and proxy groups has corrupted this foundation, commoditizing warfare and shielding aggressors behind a veil of "plausible deniability."

PMCs are defined as corporate entities that provide military or security services to governments or organizations for profit, such as the Wagner Group operating on behalf of the Russian Federation (Human Rights Watch, 2023). The end of the Cold War left thousands of elite veterans unemployed, as many states rapidly downsized their national forces. This reduction, paired with the expansion of global security operations, created demand for private contractors. Firms like Executive Outcomes (EO) rebranded as professional consultants, expanding towards corporatized military services. Although it may seem like a momentous point in warfare history, seeing that companies are profiting and countries are no longer risking the lives of their own citizens, it comes with its disadvantages. When a state survives only because it hired a foreign corporation, its domestic legitimacy is hollowed out, and its sovereignty is essentially leased.

By the early 2000s, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan accelerated this trend. The US-led "War on Terror" transformed PMCs into a multibillion-dollar industry. But the question inevitably poses itself: are PMCs legally accountable under international law? Following the 9/11 attacks, the US relied on the PMC, Blackwater, in Afghanistan, embedding them from combat to intelligence support. PMCs operated on foreign soil, carried arms, interacted with civilians, and directly contributed to military outcomes, yet they did not fit under any labels recognized by international law. They were not state soldiers, they were not civilians, and they were not mercenaries. So how can international communities hold them accountable for misdemeanors without being able to legally classify them? Blackwater can participate in hostilities without falling under the same accountability mechanisms that bind the US military. When armed actors operate within a state's borders without legal accountability, the state loses its monopoly over the use of force and its ability to regulate violence within its own territory, gradually deteriorating its sovereignty.

These consequences were the most apparent in Iraq. During the 2007 Nisour Square massacre where contractors from Blackwater killed 17 Iraqi civilians. Immune from Iraqi law, immune from US military courts, they could simply use lethal force without any guarantee of accountability (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

Proxy groups became another central warfare tool in regional conflicts. They can be defined as non-state armed actors (rebels) supported by external states to fight on their behalf under plausible deniability. States acting through proxy groups rather than deploying national troops allow them to pursue their objectives while distancing themselves from responsibility for the violence. Unlike a private company that signs a contract and eventually leaves, a proxy group is often an ideological surrogate, like Hezbollah in Lebanon or the Houthis in Yemen, that functions as a "state within a state" (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024). By arming a local militia rather than sending a national army, the patron state enjoys all the benefits of victory without the political "body bag" count or the suffering of international sanctions. And when the aggressor is more of a suspicion than a conviction, there is no one to hold accountable at the UN.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, proxies are used to liquidate natural resources for neighboring states, effectively turning borders into a suggestion rather than a legal boundary (United Nations Security Council, 2023). In Lebanon, Hezbollah possesses a missile arsenal larger than the national army's and is pursuing an Iranian-backed agenda outside Lebanese government control (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018). In Gaza, Hamas embeds its military infrastructure deep within civilian areas, forcing opponents to decide whether to tolerate its existence or risk residing civilian lives. These cases demonstrate how proxy warfare allows external powers to shape conflicts from within another state's borders, steadily eroding the authority and sovereignty of the states in which these groups operate.

Today, the rise of PMCs and proxy groups continues to contradict international law, particularly state sovereignty and state responsibility. When violence is carried out through private contractors or externally backed militias, who is then responsible for violations of international humanitarian law (International Commission of Jurists, 2019)? As these challenges grow, the question facing the international community is no longer whether these actors exist, but how the Security Council can respond to their expanding role in contemporary warfare.

# Topic Analysis

---

The critical issue of PMCs (Private Military Companies) is that they lack accountability and legal recourse, therefore operating outside the jurisdiction of international conventions and national military laws, which creates a legal vacuum that may leave them without punishment from their unlawful actions (UN Working Group on Mercenaries 2021). In 2007, the Montreux Document was drafted to clarify state parties' responsibilities relating to PMCs; however, the document remains only a voluntary agreement, allowing PMCs to continue to operate without fear of punishment (ICRC 2008).

With no form of accountability for their actions, there has been near-total impunity during several high-profile scandals involving PMCs. The lack of oversight and accountability displayed by PMCs also plays a contributing factor in the destabilization of the sovereignty of fragile states and countries in or near a state of war (DCAF 2015). For example, in many instances, PMCs that are funded by foreign countries will act to undermine the legitimacy of local governments by taking control of local natural resources (such as mines or oil fields) to pay for their services (UN Working Group on Mercenaries 2021). Additionally, the rise of new "proxy military companies" like Wagner Group represents a new movement toward the use of unacknowledged war-fighting organizations, which provide strong nations with means of engaging in military operations while avoiding a formal declaration of war.

In essence, when proxies are employed as a method of reaching military objectives, they eliminate the cost-bearer for engaging in conflict, thus lowering the "barrier to entry" to conflict. Therefore, states are less likely to pursue diplomacy versus a military solution, thus increasing the length and degree of global instability.

# Questions for the Resolution

---

- How can the world move from voluntary agreements like the Montreux Document to a UN Convention that makes PMCs and the countries that support them legally responsible?
- Should there be a central UN registry or licensing body to keep track of PMCs' contracts, funding, and operations around the world?
- What steps can be taken towards stopping PMCs from exploiting host countries' natural resources or throwing constitutional governments into chaos?
- How can the UN make sure that countries are held accountable for the human rights abuses that the proxy groups or PMCs they pay for or use do?
- Who should be held responsible when PMCs or proxy groups violate international humanitarian law; the actors themselves or the states that support them?

# Starter Sources

---

- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2018) Mercenarism and private military and security companies. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/mercenarism-and-private-military-and-security-companies-2018>
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) (2008) The Montreux Document: on pertinent international legal obligations and good practices for states related to operations of private military and security companies during armed conflict. Available at: <https://www.montreuxdocument.org/>
- UNICEF Innocenti (2026) Private military companies and child rights. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/private-military-companies-and-child-rights>
- European External Action Service (EEAS) (2026) The European Union's External Action. Available at: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/en>
- Security Council Report (2026) Monthly Forecast February 2026: Yemen. Available at: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-02/yemen-87.php>
- All Eyes on Wagner (2026) Investigating the Wagner Group's global footprint. Available at: <https://alleyesonwagner.org/>

# Bibliography

---

- United Nations (1945). Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>
- Boadu, N. (2025). Russia's Motivations for Vetoing UN Security Council Resolution for the Sudan Crisis. Syracuse Journal of International Law and Commerce (JILC). Available at: <https://jilc.syr.edu/2025/01/14/russias-motivations-for-vetoing-un-security-council-resolution-for-the-sudan-crisis/>
- Human Rights Watch (2023). Russia: Wagner Group's Atrocities in Ukraine and Africa. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org>
- U.S. Department of Justice (2014). Former Blackwater Contractor Convicted of First-Degree Murder. Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/former-blackwater-contractor-convicted-first-degree-murder>
- Council on Foreign Relations (2024). Iran's Network of Proxies. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/article/irans-network-proxies>
- United Nations Security Council (2023). Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. S/2023/430 <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>
- Center for Strategic and International Studies (2018). Missiles and Rockets of Hezbollah. Available at: <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/hezbollah/>
- The Montreux Document (n.d.) The Document. Available at: <https://www.montreuxdocument.org/about/document-content.html>
- OHCHR (n.d.) Mandate of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-mercenaries/mandate>
- UK Parliament (2023) Guns for gold: the Wagner network exposed. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/78/foreign-affairs-committee/news/196695/guns-for-gold-the-wagner-network-exposed/>



**UoBDMUN**

PER AD ARDUA ALTA

**20**  
**26**