Proceeding of ICGPSH 2025 Symposium: International Relations and Global Governance
DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

Veto Power Abuse: Reforming UNSC Decision-Making Without Charter Amendment

Le He

School of Global Governance, Beijing Institute of Technology, Beijing, China
hele@bit.edu.cn

Abstract: This paper investigates the impact of veto power abuse on the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) ability to achieve the objectives outlined in the UN Charter, particularly the maintenance of international peace and security. It argues that the Council's persistent dysfunction stems less from its membership structure than from the strategic misuse of veto power by its five permanent members (P5). Through legal interpretation, institutional analysis, and comparative case studies, the paper demonstrates that the veto has evolved from a collective safeguard into a political instrument that obstructs accountability and impedes humanitarian responses. Drawing on Articles 27(3), 31, 34, and 35 of the UN Charter, the study clarifies common misconceptions about membership inclusivity and shows that procedural participation is already available without structural expansion. It critically evaluates the limitations of expanding permanent membership and instead proposes institutional reforms that do not require Charter amendments. These include strengthening General Assembly oversight under Resolution 76/262, establishing a "Veto Accountability Index," and restricting veto use in mass atrocity contexts. This paper ultimately contends that targeted, non-Charter-based reforms are not only more politically feasible but also essential to restoring the UNSC's credibility and effectiveness in a rapidly evolving global order.

Keywords: Veto Powe, UN Security Council Reform, International Peace and Security, Permanent Members

1. Introduction

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) recently voted on a draft resolution regarding the situation in Ukraine, which was submitted by the United States (U.S.) and Albania. In spite of receiving far-reaching support with 11 votes in favor, the resolution failed after Russia, as a permanent member, utilized its veto power to vote against the case [1]. This incident compellingly illustrates the grave consequences and limitations that take place from the exercise and frequent misdeployment of the veto power in the UNSC.

The UNSC possesses a singular function and sizeable power in the international community's push for peace and security. Still, its effectiveness has been at the mercy of substantial scrutiny, with numerous observers describing its overall performance as inconsistent with the norm. One of the essential factors contributing to this state. The erratic record is the outcome of the repeated misuse of veto power by the five permanent members (P5).

Contemporary dynamics within the Council indicate a pattern whereby certain member states exploit their privileged status to promote their own political and economic agendas. The P5, vested

© 2026 The Authors. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

with the authority to veto substantive decisions, frequently exercise this power to protect national interests, often at the cost of broader international welfare. This tendency becomes especially pronounced during deliberations on armed conflicts, where permanent members have blocked resolutions aimed at facilitating humanitarian aid, implementing ceasefires, or advancing other measures essential for restoring peace [2].

Statistical data from the Council on Foreign Relations reveals that the P5 members of the UNSC have collectively exercised their veto authority on 321 documented occasions. The Soviet Union and its successor state, Russia, account for the predominant share of veto usage, with 158 instances recorded—120 during the Cold War era (pre-1991) and 38 in the post-Cold War period. The United States ranks second, having cast 92 vetoes: 69 prior to 1991 and 23 thereafter. China has employed the veto 21 times, with only three applications before 1991 and the remaining 18 occurring after that year. In contrast, the United Kingdom and France have vetoed resolutions 32 and 18 times respectively, with all instances concentrated prior to 1991; neither nation has invoked this prerogative in the subsequent three decades [3].

Historically, the veto emerged under particular circumstances following World War II: In light of the lessons of the Second World War, and to establish an effective international peace and security system under the control of major powers, the 1944 Tehran Conference and the 1945 Yalta Conference reached a consensus that the post-war international order would be maintained by five 'international policemen'. This established the principle of unanimity among permanent members, specifically granting them veto power along with the authority to use force to stop acts of aggression that undermine international peace and security. This status of never being condemned or sanctioned by Security Council resolutions effectively grants P5 permanent immunity [4].

Against this backdrop, the core argument of this paper emerges clearly: the primary barrier preventing the UNSC from fully realizing the objectives outlined in the UN Charter is not fundamentally related to its membership structure, but rather stems from the persistent strategic misuse of veto power by its permanent members. This paper offers a critical examination of existing literature alongside an analysis of case studies that highlight the negative consequences of veto power abuse. It also presents specific and practical reform proposals designed to limit such misuse. The overarching goal is to strengthen the UNSC’s ability to carry out its mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

2. Literature review

2.1. History and mechanisms of the UNSC

The UN Charter functions as the basic reference document for understanding the UNSC's reform. It characterizes the Council as a crucial decision-making entity composed of the P5 and ten non-permanent members. This structure was created post - WWII to mirror the global power structure balance, conferring special privileges upon the P5 members. Article 27 of the Charter details the aspects of voting rules to distinguish between procedural and non - procedural issues, with the P5 maintaining Veto power for balancing judgments at the international level. Chapters VI and VII address the matter of peaceful dispute resolution along with the employment of force for peace-keeping. These provisions build the basis for Scrutinizing the UNSC's response strategies in conflict situations and for pinpointing its Operational hurdles and possible reform schemes. Niyanta Trivedi and CFR.org Editors provide insight into the historical context and legal foundations of the veto, particularly the Yalta formula and Article 27, which are crucial for understanding the legitimacy and rationale behind the veto.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

2.2. Current status and issues: the urgency for reform

Scholars including Oona A. Hathaway, Stewart Patrick, and Vlad Mirel have furnished compelling case - based evidence demonstrating the Security Council's repeated incapacity to address international crises, particularly those entailing grave human rights violations and threats to global peace and security.

Their analyses bring to light the detrimental outcomes of veto power misuse and point out that the increasingly antiquated institutional framework of the Security Council serves as a basic barrier to effective collective action. They highlight that the often-used vetoes by P5 members, propelled by their national interests, obstruct the Council from executing its mandate. The Russia - Ukraine and Syrian crises, where the discord among P5 members impeded effective solutions, point out the need for reform. The instance of the Rohingya genocide makes evident how veto threats can prevent urgent issues from reaching the Council's agenda, weakening its function in human rights protection. These case studies clearly manifest the Council's malfunctioning, emphasizing the pressing need to carry out reform. These case studies explicitly demonstrate the Council's inefficiency, highlighting the need for reform.

2.3. Proposals for reform: theoretical and practical pathways

Oona A. Hathaway puts forward a collection of reform options, with non-amendment reforms like the "Veto Initiative" and automatic consequence mechanisms as part of it. The analysis of the feasibility of these non-amendment reforms, in particular, provides essential insights for deliberating on how reforms can progress without amending the UN Charter. These non - amendment reforms, more specifically the investigation of their viability, present crucial insights for talking about how reforms can develop without altering the UN Charter. Additionally, The UNSC's Veto Power: Analysis and Reform Proposals suggests specific reforms, such as expanding decision-making participation and limiting veto misuse, which are highly practical and could provide the foundation for policy recommendations in the paper.

3. Hypothesis 1: the veto power of the P5 does not require reform

The hypothesis that "the UNSC does not need reform" is clearly untenable. The fundamental purpose of the UNSC is to uphold international peace and security. However, this responsibility has been repeatedly weakened by the continued misuse of veto power.

A clear example of this dysfunction is the United States' consistent use of the veto to protect Israel. Historically, the U.S. has consistently used its veto power in the UNSC to protect Israel from resolutions perceived as unfavorable. Since 1972, about one-third of all U.S. vetoes have been directed against draft resolutions that criticized Israel [3]. This longstanding pattern reflects a strategic alliance that often overrides broader international consensus, raising concerns about the impartiality and effectiveness of the Council's decision-making process.

As Vlad Mirel observes, the veto power vested in the UN Security Council's five permanent members has persistently drawn scrutiny for contravening the Council's mandate to safeguard global peace and security. The UN Charter, through Article 27 (3), enables individual P5 with dissenting votes, members unilaterally nullify substantive draft resolutions. The constitutional prerogative confers upon a single state the power to block multilateral initiatives—even those addressing blatant human rights violations—thereby critically Undermining the Security Council's effectiveness in handling humanitarian crises operationally [5]. The impact of this structural weakness was clearly manifested in the U.S.' broad-scale use of vetoes concerning Israel.

Such vetoes not only guard states from international scrutiny but also sharply limit accountability mechanisms, radically impairing the UNSC's ability to act decisively and fairly. Due to these concrete

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

facts, scholars argue the existence of the veto has adapted to become more of a political safeguard than an arrangement for collective security. As Ian Hurd Sees that, in some aspects, the veto power has transformed into a way for major powers to shield their strategic interests.

While these states continue to benefit from exceptional privileges within the UN framework, they have often failed to fulfill the corresponding responsibilities that such privileges entail. This imbalance has led to growing skepticism within the international community about the Security Council's legitimacy and effectiveness. In response, there have been ongoing calls for reform—particularly of the veto's structure and use—aimed at bringing the Council in line with the realities of today's global political landscape [6]. While permanent members continue to enjoy special privileges under the current system, they do not necessarily assume corresponding responsibilities, creating significant legitimacy and effectiveness gaps.

Moreover, the veto power exacerbates institutional inertia, creating conditions where the Council is unable or unwilling to address its own deficiencies. Given that any of the P5 of the UNSC has the power to veto its resolutions, the Council is rendered both reluctant to take initial action and unable to adopt corrective resolutions when existing ones are criticized as flawed or inadequate [7].

4. Hypothesis 2: the UNSC is unable to advance the objectives of the UN Charter because of abuse of the veto power, rather than because of problems with the Council's membership

The United Nations Charter establishes specific participatory mechanisms for member states not serving on the Security Council through Articles 31, 34, and 35. Under Article 31, non-Council members may engage in Security Council deliberations—albeit without voting rights—when their national interests are materially implicated in the agenda item under discussion. Article 34 empowers the Council to investigate any dispute or situation that may escalate into international friction, thereby determining whether its continuance jeopardizes global peace and security. Furthermore, Article 35 confers upon all UN member states the prerogative to bring such disputes or situations, as defined under Article 34, to the attention of either the Security Council or the General Assembly for formal consideration [8].

Accordingly, any UN member state is permitted to refer disputes or situations described in Article 34 to the UNSC or General Assembly. Statistical research by scholars shows that, as of 2002, nearly one-third of Security Council meetings involved invitations to non-member states to participate [9]. Similarly, the UNSC meetings related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict invited Ukraine—a non-Council member—to join the discussions. To some extent, this indicates that the expansion of Security Council membership may not be an extremely urgent issue.

Some countries advocate representing broader international interests by expanding the UNSC's size and increasing the number of veto powers. For instance, the G4 nations—Japan, Germany, India, and Brazil—whose international influence should indeed not be underestimated, seek to break the fixed structure dominated by the current P5 in pursuit of greater benefits, thereby demanding permanent seats with veto power. Conversely, several states have opposed this reform proposal, particularly those affiliated with the "Uniting for Consensus" group, which includes Italy, Pakistan, South Korea, and Mexico. These countries argue that expanding the number of permanent members with veto power would further weaken the efficiency of the Security Council. They believe that adding more veto-wielding states would increase disagreements driven by national interests, making it harder to reach consensus and obstructing effective cooperation. In addition, they caution that such a change could create a new center of power within the Council, deepening existing geopolitical divisions [10].

Presently, the UNSC is composed of 15 members: five permanent members (P5), who are vested with veto authority, and ten non-permanent members, who are elected by the General Assembly to

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

serve staggered two-year terms [11]. In response to growing calls for reform, several member states have proposed increasing the number of non-permanent seats on the Security Council. Although not vested with veto power, these elected members play an essential role in decision-making, as the adoption of any resolution requires not only the absence of a veto from the permanent members but also the support of at least four of them. Expanding their number could strengthen their collective influence by raising the threshold of affirmative votes needed to pass resolutions. This shift could give them a form of indirect veto power, increasing their leverage in shaping Council outcomes.

In my view, the Charter already ensures that the UNSC's decision-making process fully accounts for the interests of significant stakeholders, thus guaranteeing that its final resolutions remain representative without compromising decision-making efficiency. The veto power acts as a safeguard for the participation of major powers and is the cornerstone of the UN's collective security framework. Under the existing mechanism, the UNSC can only function effectively when major powers act unanimously. UNSC voting, in essence, is a strategic game among major powers. Every UN member state signed the Charter, implicitly accepting the inherent inequality embedded within the UNSC's design. The establishment of the veto is thus a means to ensure the participation of all major powers. As U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull once remarked, "The U.S. would not stay in the UN even for a day without the veto power."

The adoption of resolutions within the UNSC is governed by distinct voting protocols for substantive and procedural matters. For substantive resolutions, passage requires a minimum of nine affirmative votes from the fifteen Council members, with the unanimous consent or abstention of all P5 constituting a mandatory condition. In contrast, procedural matters likewise necessitate nine affirmative votes but exempt permanent members from exercising veto authority. Crucially, the invocation of a veto by any P5 member on substantive resolutions results in immediate nullification of the proposal, irrespective of attainment of the requisite numerical majority [12].

Moreover, expanding the UNSC's membership would drastically reduce efficiency, exacerbating the already limited effectiveness of the Council. Decision-making efficiency within the UNSC is already severely challenged, adding more seats would only further complicate achieving consensus. Member states such as Chile have also acknowledged that an "excessive expansion" is highly likely to undermine the principal aim of UNSC's reform—that is, enhancing its operational capacity and responsiveness [13].

5. Case study analysis: veto power abuse and the failure of the UN security Council

The U.S.–Israel and Russia–Ukraine cases reveal a common pattern: when the political interests of a P5 member are at stake, the veto is used to block international accountability. These failures demonstrate that the UNSC's inability to fulfil the objectives of the UN Charter stems not from a lack of inclusivity or outdated membership—but from the persistent and strategic abuse of the veto.

The US has invoked its veto authority on 49 occasions to block UN Security Council resolutions pertaining to Israel. Notable instances include the rejection of a draft resolution proposing "humanitarian pauses" during Israeli military operations in Gaza around October 18, alongside resolutions addressing Tel Aviv's incursions into southern Lebanon and the unlawful annexation of Syria's Golan Heights. During the year following the Great March of Return protests, members of the Security Council introduced a resolution condemning "the use of excessive, disproportionate, and indiscriminate force by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians." However, the United States opposed the measure and blocked its adoption [14]. The UNSC, an internationally mandated institution tasked with maintaining global peace and conflict prevention, faces persistent operational challenges rooted in its structural composition. While constitutionally empowered to address threats to international security, the Council's efficacy is routinely compromised by the structural vulnerability inherent in P5 discord. The execution of its core mandate has been repeatedly hindered

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

as a result of persistent disagreements among the permanent members. Empirical analysis demonstrates that P5 states systematically privilege geopolitical calculus—whether strategic alliances, economic interests, or ideological imperatives—over the collective security obligations enshrined in the UN Charter [15].

A second example is Russia's use of its veto power in the context of its 2022 invasion of Ukraine. "The UNSC recently voted on a draft resolution regarding the situation in Ukraine, which was submitted by the U.S. and Albania. Despite receiving broad support with 11 votes in favour, the resolution failed after Russia, exercising its veto power as a permanent member, voted against it."[1] Although Ukraine was not a Council member, it was actively included in discussions due to the seriousness of the situation, yet it had no effect on the Council's ability to act. This case shows that even when participation is broadened, action is still ultimately subject to P5 discretion.

The drive toward reform is comprehensible given current geopolitical realities. Established nearly eight decades ago, the Security Council has maintained its original composition of P5, despite profound transformations in the international order since 1945. Notably, states such as India and Brazil have emerged as influential global actors, while former Axis powers, specifically Japan and Germany, have reestablished themselves as pivotal contributors to international governance. Concurrently, membership in the UN has grown from 51 to 193 states, a change driven primarily by the wave of decolonization and the breakup of multiethnic or composite states. Nevertheless, the UNSC's institutional framework has remained largely static. In 1965, the only major reform took place, increasing the number of non-permanent seats from six to ten and raising the total number of Council members from 11 to 15 [16].

However, structural reform of this kind does not resolve the issue at hand. In fact, under current rules, the UN Charter already provides meaningful procedural rights for non-member states. Statistical research shows that by 2002, nearly one-third of UNSC meetings included non-member participation [9]. These legal provisions confirm that the existing framework already allows inclusivity, even without structural expansion.

Expanding permanent membership with veto rights could further fragment decision-making and multiply points of paralysis, turning selective dysfunction into total gridlock. With more states holding veto rights, the chances of conflict and deadlock would rise. More permanent members means more national interests at play—and more ways to block action.

Moreover, any resolution to increase the number of seats on the UNSC still requires unanimous approval from the five permanent members, who are unlikely to easily agree to share power on an equal footing with other countries.

More critically, expanding the veto to additional regional powers could institutionalize what may be termed a transactional veto culture. Furthermore, geopolitical rivalries would give rise to a system of "transactional vetoes," where regional powers exchange vetoes to protect allied interests. This would turn UNSC decision-making into a bargaining arena for political deals.

As Chile has rightly observed: "Given that the UNSC's decision-making efficiency is already under significant strain, expanding its membership would only make reaching consensus more difficult. Member states such as Chile have acknowledged that 'excessive expansion' is highly likely to hinder the primary objective of UNSC reform—namely, strengthening its capacity for action and the timeliness of its responses." [13]

6. Discussion

Building on the preceding analysis, this paper contends that the trajectory of UNSC reform should not be oriented toward proposals that entail amending the UN Charter, given the substantial political obstacles such efforts would face. Rather, it is more pragmatic to pursue feasible mechanisms within the existing institutional framework aimed at constraining the strategic misuse of the veto power.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

Opponents of eliminating the UNSC's veto power and the privileged status of its P5 frequently reference the historical precedent of the League of Nations. Analysts posit that the League's collapse was precipitated by the absence of engagement from major powers, particularly the U.S. Proponents of this view contend that curtailing the veto mechanism could similarly destabilize the UN, risking the alienation of influential states and inadvertently harming smaller nations reliant on a balanced multilateral framework. Conversely, maintaining the current structure perpetuates a systemic imbalance, wherein powerful states dominate global decision-making processes - a dynamic likened to a judicial system where dominant actors simultaneously prosecute and adjudicate disputes [17]. Therefore, this paper argues that reform should not seek the outright abolition of the veto, but rather its necessary limitation and oversight through appropriate institutional mechanisms.

6.1. General assembly in response to when the veto is (Mis) used

Leland M. Goodrich was one of the earliest scholars to study the United Nations. In his analysis, Leland M. Goodrich stressed that the drafters of the United Nations Charter were deeply influenced by the failures of the League of Nations. One of the League's most critical weaknesses was its inability to engage the world's major military powers in a sustained and cooperative manner. Learning from this shortcoming, the Charter's framers concluded that the success of any future peacekeeping body would require the active participation of those powers. As a result, they created the Security Council as the central executive organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security. The Charter also makes clear that while the Security Council is actively addressing a situation, the General Assembly is not permitted to intervene in those matters [18].

However, with the evolution of the international order and the emergence of new global challenges, the veto power has increasingly been subject to abuse. In light of the General Assembly's institutional significance within the UN framework, it should play a more active role in exercising democratic oversight and establishing checks and balances on the use of the veto, so as to uphold the principles of accountability, equity, and collective responsibility in global governance.

In March 2020, Christian Wenaweser, a diplomat from Liechtenstein, introduced a reform initiative that built upon earlier efforts by the "Small Five" group. This group has long called for increased transparency by urging permanent members of the Security Council to provide justifications for their invocation of the veto to the General Assembly [19]. Wenaweser spearheaded the development of the "Veto Accountability Initiative," which ultimately led to the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 76/262. This resolution marked a significant step toward improving transparency and strengthening accountability. Under its provisions, the Security Council must submit a special report to the General Assembly, in accordance with Article 24 (3) of the United Nations Charter, detailing the circumstances surrounding any vetoed resolution. This report must be submitted no later than 72 hours before the Assembly convenes to discuss the matter. Additionally, the resolution requires the President of the General Assembly to hold a plenary session for debate within ten working days of any veto being cast. This forum facilitates multilateral scrutiny of the vetoed issue, except when an emergency special session addressing the same matter is already scheduled [20].

Previously, when a permanent member exercised its veto, it was only required to provide an explanation and clarification within the UNSC. Under the new framework, however, permanent members must also justify their use of the veto before the General Assembly, where they are subject to questions and scrutiny from a broader range of member states. This development significantly increases the moral and political pressure associated with the exercise of the veto [21].

Although the original intention of this resolution was commendable, its practical effectiveness in curbing the use of the veto has been relatively constrained. The General Assembly plenary meetings convened under Resolution 76/262 have largely remained at the level of criticism, without imposing

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

any substantive restrictions. As Barber, R. points out, compared to the special sessions convened under the “Uniting for Peace” procedure, the meetings held pursuant to Resolution 76/262 function more as platforms for “criticizing the veto” rather than mechanisms aimed at addressing real-world problems [22].

In light of these limitations, the next step in strengthening General Assembly oversight under Resolution 76/262 should focus on establishing procedural and political consequences for unjustified or recurrent use of the veto in atrocity-related contexts. While the General Assembly cannot override a veto under the Charter, it can institutionalize a follow-up mechanism within its own deliberative process. This mechanism could include the publication of a "Veto Accountability Index", whereby P5's justifications are reviewed and assessed by an independent panel of legal and humanitarian experts, and their findings publicly presented to the Assembly. The Assembly can as well tie these debates to concrete political ramifications and the allocation of foreign aid. Suppose permanent members are compelled to justify their veto actions and their behavior incurs reputational or financial consequences, it may stimulate more responsible application of their special powers. Should permanent members be made to provide a justification for their vetoes and their conduct result in reputational or financial setbacks, it can encourage a more prudent use of their special capabilities.

6.2. Veto power should not be exercised in situations involving mass atrocity crimes

The P5 possess not just a privileged position but also a corresponding ethical duty and legal liability. In cases related to mass atrocity crimes like genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, they are expected to abstain from using their veto power. A collective duty incumbent upon all states under international law is the prevention, cessation, and prosecution of such flagrant violations. This obligation is enshrined in foundational legal frameworks, including the 1948 Genocide Convention, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and reinforced by jus cogens norms of customary international law that prohibit such crimes universally [23].

When the veto power is used to block UNSC resolutions aimed at addressing or preventing atrocity crimes, such use of the veto constitutes an abuse of authority, exceeding the legitimate scope of power granted to the permanent members.

This legal framework is grounded in three fundamental principles that no system of global governance can ignore. First, the moral boundaries set by the Charter. The drafters of the United Nations Charter never intended for the veto to serve as a shield for violations of jus cogens—those peremptory norms of international law, like the prohibition of genocide, that lie at the heart of civilized order. No amount of legal maneuvering can justify using the Security Council to mask crimes against humanity. When a permanent member uses the veto to protect perpetrators of mass atrocities, it is not exercising a legitimate right—it is betraying the Charter itself.

Second, the principle of complicity. The 2001 Articles on State Responsibility make it clear that aiding or facilitating crimes against humanity constitutes a breach of international law. Blocking action to prevent genocide through the strategic use of veto power is not an act of neutrality; it amounts to tacit approval. In the judgment of history, silence in the face of atrocity is not impartiality—it is complicity.

6.3. The duty to prevent

Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions does not call for passive observation. It imposes an active obligation on states to ensure respect for humanitarian law. Today, there is broad legal consensus that this duty applies with particular force to members of the Security Council. Those entrusted with the power to act must use it to stop emerging crises before they escalate into mass violence—not to watch from the sidelines and express regret after the fact [24].

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

This position reflects not only moral clarity, but also legal coherence. It is fully aligned with the purposes set out in Articles 1 and 24 of the United Nations Charter, which emphasize the responsibility to maintain international peace and security. It also builds on the wider body of international humanitarian and human rights law, both of which demand timely and collective action in the face of atrocity.

7. Conclusion

The United Nations Security Council was originally designed to uphold collective security through the consensus of major powers. However, as this paper has shown, the unchecked exercise of the veto power by permanent members has become a central obstacle to the Council's effectiveness. Far from ensuring peace and stability, the veto has frequently been used to shield allies, obstruct humanitarian intervention, and undermine the very objectives enshrined in the UN Charter. Rather than addressing structural representation alone, this paper argues that reform efforts must concentrate on the misuse of veto power as the root cause of dysfunction.Importantly, this research contributes to the reform debate by identifying realistic, non-Charter-amending pathways. These include enhancing General Assembly oversight, increasing public justification requirements for vetoes, and codifying restrictions on their use in cases of mass atrocity. By grounding its proposals in international law and political feasibility, the paper offers a nuanced response to one of the most pressing challenges facing global governance.

Looking ahead, further research should focus on exploring practical pathways for advancing meaningful reform of the veto power. Such efforts are essential to building a more peaceful, sustainable, and fair world.

References

[1] *United Nations. "Security Council Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution on Ending Ukraine Crisis, as Russian Federati on Wields Veto." United Nations Meeting Coverage and Press Releases, February 25, 2022. https://press.un.org/e n/2022/sc14808.doc.htm. Accessed April 2, 2025.*

[2] *Anika Cajigal, Dahlia dos Santos, Daania Iqbal, Zoe James, and Alisha Junaid, "The United Nations Security Council in the 21st Century: Evaluating Its Design and Structure," OxJournal, December 22, 2023, https://www.oxjournal.org/the-united-nations-security-council-in-the-21st-century-evaluating-its-design-and-structure/.*

[3] *CFR.org Editors, "The UN Security Council," Council on Foreign Relations, September 9, 2024, https://www.cfr. org/backgrounder/un-security-council.*

[4] *He Li, International Law and the Balance of Power: Balance of Power and Imperial Ideals (Shanghai: Lixin Accounting Publishing House, 2013), 3–4.*

[5] *Vlad Mirel. "Examining the UN Security Council's Veto Powers in the Context of Human Rights Violations", 2023.*

[6] *Ian Hurd, "Myths of Membership: The Politics of Legitimation in UN Security Council Reform," Global Governance 14, no. 2 (2008): 199–217.*

[7] *Jean Galbraith, "Ending Security Council Resolutions," American Journal of International Law 109, no. 4 (2015): 15–32.*

[8] *United Nations. Charter of the United Nations. October 24, 1945. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text.*

[9] *Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy, Power, and the Symbolic Life of the UN Security Council," Global Governance 8, no. 1 (2002): 35–51.*

[10] *Fakiha Mahmood, "Power Versus the Sovereign Equality of States: The Veto, the P - 5 and United Nations Security Council Reforms," Journal of International Affairs 18, no. 4 (2013): 117–138.*

[11] *Niyanta Trivedi, "Consequences of Veto Powers in UNSC: Need for Reforms," Supremo Amicus 27, no. 12 (December 2021): 4.*

[12] *Brian Cox, "United Nations Security Council Reform: Collected Proposals and Possible Consequences," South Carolina Journal of International Law and Business 6, no. 1 (2009): 89–116.*

[13] *Hassler, Sabrine, Reforming the UN Security Council Membership: The Illusion of Representativeness, New York: Routledge, 2013.*

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.BO23200

[14] *TRTWorld, "History of Veto Power: How UNSC Member States Utilised It", 2024 https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/history-of-veto-power-how-unsc-member-states-utilised-it-17877022.*

[15] *Carswell, J. (2013). The United Nations Security Council: A Critical History. Routledge.*

[16] *Stewart Patrick, ed., UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023.*

[17] *Dickson, E. E., & Gabriel, T. A. (2024). Russia Invasion of Ukraine, Veto Power and the Position of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in Conflict Prevention and Maintenance of International Peace and Security. Journal of Public Administration, Policy and Governance Research, 2(1), 161–175. Retrieved from https://jpapgr.com/index.php/research/article/view/75*

[18] *Leland M. Goodrich, "The maintenance of international peace and security," International Organization, Vol.19, No.3, 1965, pp.429-443.*

[19] *Friedrich - Ebert - Stiftung, "This is not about Russia; this is about Multilateralism," 2022, https://ny.fes.de/article/this-is-not-about-russia-this-is-about-multilateralism.html.*

[20] *United Nations General Assembly. "General Assembly Resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993: Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council." December 3, 1993. https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789210558488c002/read. Accessed April 2, 2025.*

[21] *Zhou, Fangyin, and Yuanshan Liang. "Examining the Veto Power Issue in the UN Security Council Reform from the Perspective of General Assembly Resolutions: Taking General Assembly Resolution 76/262 as an Example." Peace and Development, no. 1 (2023): 113 - 132, 156 - 157.*

[22] *Barber, R, 2023, "The U.N. General Assembly's Veto Initiative Turns One. Is it Working? Just Security," https://www.justsecurity.org/86140/the-u-n-general-assemblys-veto-initiative-turns-one-is-it-working.*

[23] *Basic Facts on Universal Jurisdiction," Human Rights Watch, October 19, 2009, https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/10/19/basic-facts-universaljurisdiction# [https://perma.cc/R6J7-V8X4]. Richard A. C. Butler, "Reform of the United Nations Security Council," 2012, Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs 1, no. 1.*

[24] *Oona A. Hathaway and Stewart Patrick, "Can the UN Security Council Still Help Keep the Peace? Reassessing Its Role, Relevance, and Potential for Reform," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 2, 2024, https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2024/07/can-un-security-council-still-help-keep-the-peace?lang=en.*