

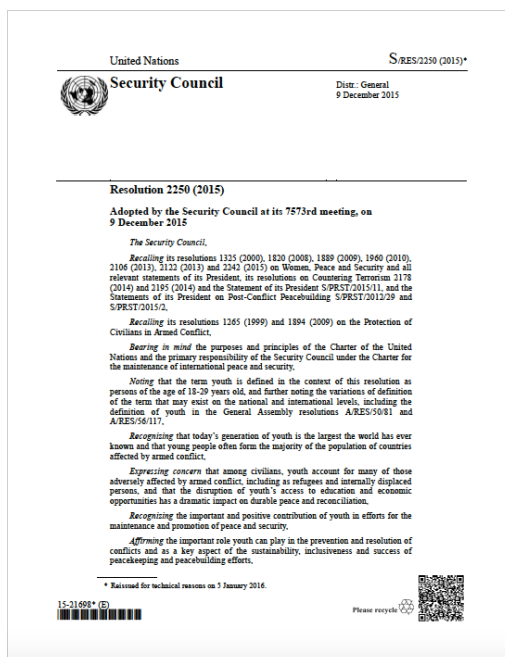


# United Nations Security Council Resolutions



*The Security Council resolutions are formal expressions of the opinion or will of UN organs. It is an official document accepted by fifteen members of the Security Council and is adopted by a vote of the Council members. The resolution is adopted if nine or more of the fifteen Council members vote for the resolution, and if it is not vetoed by any of the five permanent members (P5) (China, France, Russia, Great Britain and USA). UNSC resolutions may concern current UN activities (e.g., elections to the International Court of Justice), but are more often adopted as part of the UNSC's work to ensure the peaceful settlement of international disputes and eliminate threats to international peace and security. Security Council resolutions may impose sanctions aimed at maintaining peace and security. In particular, the resolution may resolve military measures against the offending state, establish international tribunals, approve mandates of peacekeeping forces, impose restrictive measures (asset freeze, travel ban) on individuals. Under the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions.*

## Background and Main Principles



Founders of the United Nations pledged to make the world a safer place. To avoid bloodshed such as the World War II, they established a structure and tools to prevent threats to international security. This is most evident in the very fact that the UN Security Council has

received almost unlimited power in cases of peace violations. **Its resolutions are binding on all Member States.** The UN Military Staff Committee was established to plan military operations and has at its disposal air forces ready for immediate deployment. Founders hoped that the world would never again silently witness aggressors violating international borders and agreements.

In theory, the Security Council has no limits on its powers. It has broad prerogatives; its resolutions are binding on all UN members. In short, if the UN Security Council has decided anything – to impose sanctions on a country or force a ceasefire in a conflict zone – the order must be carried out. No one can ignore the collective will of the P5, which actually determines the decisions of the UN Security Council. However, it is often difficult to come to such a collective will. The issue of the national sovereignty has always been the most important one, and this is particularly true for the "more equal" countries – the P5. And since they have veto power over decisions, they will cast a negative vote if the proposed resolution goes against their national interest.

By 28 July 2020, the UN Security Council adopted 2,537 resolutions.



The term “resolution” does not appear in the text of the United Nations Charter. It contains numerous formulations, such as “decision” or “recommendation,” which implies the adoption of resolutions that do not specify the method to be used.

Resolutions by the Security Council are legally binding. If the council cannot reach consensus or a passing vote on a resolution, they may choose to produce a non-binding *presidential statement* instead of a resolution. The *statements* are adopted by consensus. They are meant to apply political pressure – a warning that the Council is paying attention and further action may follow.

Press statements typically accompany both resolutions and presidential statements, carrying the text of the document adopted by the body and also some explanatory text. They may also be released independently, after a significant meeting.

**Resolutions** of the Security Council are first published as individual documents consecutively numbered since 1946.

- symbol pattern: S/RES/-- (year)
- example: S/RES/1325 (2000)

All Security Council resolutions are included in the **annual compilations** of Resolutions and Decisions. Adopted resolutions are usually **voted on** in open formal meetings of the Security Council. The vote is recorded in the meeting record.

An exception is the resolution recommending a candidate for Secretary-General to the General Assembly, which is adopted in a closed meeting with no recorded vote, in accordance with General Assembly resolution A/RES/11 (I) of 1946.