

UN Peacekeeping: A Legacy of Hope and Missed Opportunities

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Context

- The **United Nations (UN)** was established in **1945** to maintain **global peace and security**.
 - While it has played a key role in **peacekeeping and conflict resolution**, its effectiveness has been questioned due to **political constraints and operational failures**.
 - The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** often fails to act decisively due to the **veto power of the Permanent Five (P5) members**.
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Legal Framework for Conflict Resolution

The **UN Charter** provides three key mechanisms:

1. **Chapter VI - Peaceful Settlement of Disputes:** Encourages **negotiation and mediation**.
 2. **Chapter VII - Use of Force:** Authorizes **military action** if peace is breached.
 3. **Chapter VIII - Regional Peace Enforcement:** Supports **regional organizations** in peacekeeping efforts.
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Success Stories

The UN has successfully **stabilized** many conflict zones:

- **Cambodia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, and Liberia** - Helped in **post-war reconstruction and democratic transitions**.
 - **Kosovo** - Small but effective **peacekeeping mission** prevented humanitarian disasters.
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Major Failures

Despite its **mandate**, the UN has often **failed to prevent atrocities**:

- **Rwanda Genocide (1994): 1 million killed;** UN peacekeepers were **powerless**.

- **Bosnia (1995):** 8,000 Bosniaks massacred in a UN-declared “safe zone”.
 - **Ukraine War (2022-present):** No UN peacekeeping forces deployed due to Russia’s veto.
 - **Israel-Gaza Conflict:** UN’s inaction despite an escalating humanitarian crisis.
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Challenges in the UNSC

1. Veto Power Problem:

- **Russia, U.S., China, U.K., and France** can block UN action.
- Example: Russia vetoed action on Ukraine, U.S. vetoed resolutions on Israel.

2. Lack of Global Representation:

- **India and South Africa** contribute heavily to UN peacekeeping but lack permanent UNSC seats.
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Needed Reforms

- **Expand UNSC membership** to include India and South Africa.
 - **Limit veto power** in humanitarian crises.
 - **Deploy peacekeeping forces proactively**, not after conflicts escalate.
 - **Increase funding** for better-equipped missions.
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Conclusion

The **UN must reform** its **Security Council structure, peacekeeping mandates, and funding** to remain effective. Without urgent changes, it risks **becoming obsolete** in modern conflict resolution.

