



India: Permanent Seat In UNSC

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This article is based on **“By any calculus, India qualifies for UNSC permanent seat”** which was published in The Hindu on 29/04/2020. It talks about India's claim for permanent membership in the United Nations permanent council.

India is due for election to the temporary membership of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** later this year, for the 2021-22 period. Moreover, India for long has been of the view that the UNSC sought to be reformed by expansion in the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and non – permanent categories.

India, by any objective criteria, such as population, territorial size, GDP, economic potential, civilizational legacy, cultural diversity, political system, is eminently qualified for permanent membership.

Thus, the Indian tryst for permanent membership of Security Council flows broadly from a mix of, three streams, viz., India's historic association with the UN system, India's intrinsic value and place in contemporary international politics and its role as the leader of developing countries.

Need for UNSC Reforms

UNSC has been in existence for more than 75 years. However, it does not represent the geopolitical and economic realities of the 21st century.

- **Undemocratic UNSC:** Barring two regions (North America and Europe), other regions are either underrepresented (like Asia) or not represented at all (Africa, Latin America and the Small Island developing states).
- **Lack of Global Governance:** There are no regulatory mechanisms for **global commons like the Internet, Space, High Seas** (beyond your EEZ-exclusive economic zone) and no unanimity on how to deal with **global issues like terrorism, climate change, cybersecurity and public health** (as seen in the current pandemic).
- **Misuse of Veto Power:** The veto power is used by permanent five countries to serve the strategic interest of themselves and their allies.
Since 1990, the United States has cast a veto on Council resolutions 16 times, concerning Israeli-Palestinian relations. Russia has done so 17 times, including eight times over Syria.
- Due to all these factors, the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that the Security Council must either reform or risk becoming increasingly irrelevant.

Case for Permanent Membership of India in UNSC

India's Historic Association with the UN System

- India is the founding member of the UN. Also, since its independence and even before that, India has been an active participant in all initiatives undertaken by the UN like **Millennium Development Goals**, **Sustainable development goals** and various UN summits, including on climate change.
- In the past, India's was offered to join the UNSC by both the superpowers, the US and the then Soviet Union in 1950 and in 1955 respectively, However, India denied the offer due to Cold war politics in that era.
- India, till now has been elected for seven terms for a two-year non-permanent member seat, the last being 2011-12.
- Today, most significantly, India has almost twice the number of peacekeepers deployed on the ground as much as by P5 countries.

India's Intrinsic Value

- India being the largest democracy and second-most populous country (soon to become most populous) in the world, are the primary reasons for India to be granted permanent membership in UNSC.
- Also, India is now the 5th largest economy and one of the fastest-growing economies of the world.
- India's acquired status of a **Nuclear Weapons State (NWS)** in May 1998 also makes India a natural claimant as a permanent member similar to the existing permanent members who are all Nuclear Weapon States.
- India's international profile and capabilities rise due to its ever-expanding global footprint in diverse areas like politics, sustainable development, economics, and culture and science and technology.
 - This can be seen in proactive initiative pertaining to maritime and space diplomacy.
 - Also, India has been inducted in various **export control regimes** like MTCR, Wassenaar arrangement, etc.
- Based on these credentials, India's claim for permanent membership is supported by **G4 countries**, majority of the permanent members of UNSC and the majority of countries in the United nation General Assembly.

Representing the developing World

- India is the undisputed leader of the Third world countries, as reflected by its leadership role in Non-Aligned Movement and G-77 grouping.
- Therefore, India's inclusion in UNSC will strengthen India's stature as a 'moralistic force' for the developing states and help in making UNSC more democratic.

Intended Benefit

- Permanent seat in the UNSC, would provide India with the much-needed leverage to expand its geo-political and geo-economic clout globally.
- Inclusion of India into UNSC will help in transforming its status from being a responsible stakeholder' (following international norms) along with becoming a global rule-maker.

- Indian presence at the Security Council would ensure Indian interests are not sacrificed at the altar of great power politics.
 - It would serve as an equalizer to China, its rival and an emerging hegemony in Asia and an ever-increasing strategic and security concern in its immediate neighborhood and beyond.
 - Most importantly, it will stall any possible intervention by China, a permanent member at the behest of its ally Pakistan.

RoadBlocks in India's Path

- It is argued by critics that India has still not signed the **NPT** and also refused to sign the CTBT in 1996.
- China, which has veto power in the UNSC being one of its five permanent members, has been stonewalling India's efforts to become a permanent member.
- Though India is a bright spot in the global economy and its macroeconomic fundamentals are stable, yet it shows poor performance in many socio-economic indicators like the Human Development Index.
- India is competing with other countries of G4 grouping (Japan, Brazil and Germany) for a spot for permanent membership in UNSC.
- India's capacity to project its military power beyond the Indian Ocean region is still to be tested. Further, India heavily relies on weaponry imports from US and Russia for its military requirements.

Conclusion

India has been acknowledged as a rising power by most of the states. Also, there is a pressing need to democratize multilateral fora, starting from the United Nation system itself. In this context, India is making a legitimate claim for its rightful place in the changing architecture of global governance, including the UN Security Council.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL STRUCTURE LOCKS INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

UN Security Council's five permanent members' use of their veto power for their national interests leads to questioning of the legitimacy of the UNSC

UNSC STRUCTURE

- Use of force **at UN** is decided **by UNSC**
- **Five permanent** members have the right to veto a draft resolution
- To adopt a draft resolution, none of the permanent members should veto it and **9 countries** should vote in favor



China and Russia have vetoed **four** draft resolutions **on Syria** since 2011

The U.S. has used its veto right **42** times **for Israel** since 1972

Palestine has not become a UN member, as full membership requires **UNSC approval**

China **blocks Taiwan's UN membership**, not recognizing Taiwan as a sovereign country

CRITICISM OF UN STRUCTURE

- Permanent membership system
- Five permanent members' veto right and weak equal representation due to a small number of members

PERMANENT MEMBERS



REFORM PROPOSALS

- Increasing the number of non-permanent members
- Restricting veto right

Drishti Mains Question

India is the natural claimant for becoming the permanent member in the United Nations Security Council. Analyse.



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This is editorial is based on **“Religion and Freedom”** which was published in The Hindu on May 1st, 2020. Now watch this on our Youtube channel.