



Presidency of India at the UNSC

For Prelims: UNSC, UN Secretary-General, International Court of Justice, Covid-19 pandemic,

For Mains: Promote Common Security Through Dialogue and Cooperation, UNSC Meeting.

Why in News?

On 1st December, **India assumed the monthly rotating presidency of the [UN Security Council \(UNSC\)](#)** for the second time in its two-year tenure as an elected member of the Council in 2021-22.

- India had earlier assumed UNSC presidency in August 2021.

What are the Events ahead under India's Presidency?

- **Reformed Multilateralism:**
 - India will hold a “high-level open debate” on “**Maintenance of International Peace and Security: New Orientation for Reformed Multilateralism (NORMS)**” at the Security Council.
 - **The NORMS envisages reforms in the current multilateral architecture,** with the UN at its centre, to make it more representative and fit for purpose.
- **Counter-Terrorism:**
 - The other signature event planned is the high-level briefing on the **theme “Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts: Global Approach to Counter Terrorism — Challenges and Way Forward”**.
 - This briefing intends to underscore the necessity of collective and coordinated efforts to combat the menace of terrorism.

What is UNSC?

- **About:**
 - The **Security Council was established by the UN Charter in 1945**. It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations.
 - The other 5 organs of the United Nations are—the General Assembly (UNGA), the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat.
 - The UNSC, with a mandate to maintain international peace and security, is the centrepiece of global multilateralism.
 - The **[Secretary-General](#)** is appointed by the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the **Security Council**.
 - The UNSC and UNGA jointly elect judges to the **[International Court of Justice](#)**.
- **Composition:**
 - The UNSC is composed of **15 members:** 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent.
 - Five permanent members: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

- Ten non-permanent members: Elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly.
 - Five from African and Asian States,
 - One from Eastern European States,
 - Two from Latin American States,
 - Two from Western European and other States.
- **India's Membership:**
 - India has served seven times in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member and in January 2021, India entered the UNSC for the eighth time.
 - India has been [advocating a permanent seat in UNSC](#).
- **Voting Powers:**
 - Each member of the Security Council has one vote. Decisions of the Security Council on matters are made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members.
 - A "No" vote from one of the five permanent members blocks the passage of the resolution.
- **Responsibilities:**
 - The **UNSC brokers peace by helping parties reach an agreement** through mediation, appointing special envoys, dispatching a UN Mission or requesting the UN Secretary-General to settle the dispute.
 - It can also **vote to extend, amend or end mission mandates**.
 - The Security Council oversees the work of UN peace operations through periodic reports from the Secretary-General and council sessions. It alone can make decisions regarding these operations, which Member States are obligated to enforce.

What are the Issues with UNSC?

- **The Loss of Relevance:**
 - The council has been **criticised for losing relevance and credibility**.
 - According to India's External Affairs Minister, the UNSC has narrow leadership and a need for a new approach, hence a call to push for the "refresh button".
- **Lack of Multilateralism:**
 - The **council's lack of multilateralism** has also been criticised in the wake of the **Syrian war crisis** and the ongoing [Covid-19 pandemic](#).
- **Less Representative:**
 - It was argued by several speakers that the UN Security Council is less effective because it is less representative, the most pertinent [absence being that of Africa](#), a continent of 54 countries.
- **Misuse of Veto Power:**
 - Veto power has been **always criticised by many experts as well as by most States calling it a "self-chosen club of the privileged"** and non-democratic and not allowing the Council to make necessary decisions whenever it displeases any one of the P-5.
 - Taking the current world order as an example, the P5 members: United States, Russia, and China are three poles on the periphery of the globe having several geopolitical issues revolving around them ([Taiwan Issue and Russia-Ukraine War](#)).

Way Forward

- **UNSC should realise there are more pressing issues** to be tackled at the global level than merely preserving the prerogatives of P5 nations.
 - There needs to be **urgent correction of the power imbalance between the P5 and the rest of the world**.
- In order to protect faith in the principles of the United Nations, in its charter, and in reformed multilateralism as a key to achieving global goals, the core issues in UNSC must be critically examined and addressed with global cooperation.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. The Security Council of UN consists of 5 permanent members, and the remaining 10 members are elected by the General Assembly for a term of **(2009)**

- (a) 1 year
- (b) 2 years
- (c) 3 years
- (d) 5 years

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UN Security Council. (2015)

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