



United Nations Security Council

YUNMUN XXXI

Zahava Fertig

Democratic Backsliding and Failed Nation-States

Formed in San Francisco, CA, on October 24, 1945, “the United Nations<sup>1</sup> (UN) is an intergovernmental organization that aims to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international cooperation, and be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.<sup>2</sup>

The Security Council (SC) is one of the original and primary organs of the United Nations. According to the United Nations Charter, the main goal of the Security Council is to maintain the peace and security of the international community.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the Security Council has the power and authority to obligate upon Member nations specific courses of action under their jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup>

A failed nation-state is exactly what it sounds like; a nation-state that can no longer perform the duties and functions required to govern themselves. In many failed states, the government is too weak or is controlled by an external force, such as a terrorist organization that prevents the government from functioning properly. As a result, this creates a major humanitarian crisis that threatens the lives of its citizens on a daily basis. For example, while the official government of Afghanistan is referred to as the Islamic State of Afghanistan, a terrorist organization known as the Taliban still holds substantial power despite the United Nations Security Council’s “creation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/about-un/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations)

<sup>3</sup>

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/role-of-security-council#:~:text=The%20Security%20Council%20has%20primary,peace%20operation%20should%20be%20deployed.>

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

help provide basic security for the population of Afghanistan”<sup>5</sup> and major attempts made by NATO countries who have continuously sent troops in order to help train and maintain an army and a police force as a way to maintain control of the country.<sup>6</sup> This is an example of dozens of countries struggling to maintain stable control over their citizens while failing to protect their right to govern themselves.

Afghanistan is just one example of dozens of failed nation-states. This is not a new topic for the Security Council. Like Resolution 2540 discussing many issues, including combatting Jihadi terrorist, Al-Shabaab and ISIL in Somalia, or civil unrest and armed conflict in Syria.

Simultaneously, “Democractic backsliding” is a phenomenon when a democratic nation reverts back to an authoritarian leadership. In such a country, such as Venezuela, the government becomes too powerful and begins to infringe on the individual rights of every citizen. In order to create and maintain peace and stability within individual governments who have previously failed to do so themselves, it is our prerogative to create problem solving solutions while protecting the individual rights of every person.

As you learn more about the topic, consider the following questions:

1. There are two major categories that must be faced: the internal and external instability of a state.
  - a. Internal instability of a state: In which ways can the Security Council aid in the stabilization and maintenance of a weak or “backsliding” government and what must be done in order to ensure the protection of civilians in regions of armed conflict?<sup>7</sup>
  - b. External instability of a state: How should the Security Council work toward preventing terrorists from entering a state and limiting the power of terrorists that are already present in the state?
2. What prevents a nation from effectively protecting its citizens from terror?
3. Looking at previous SC Special Political Missions<sup>8</sup>, why has there been little success for the international community in aiding, stabilizing and strengthening these nations?

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<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics\\_of\\_Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Afghanistan)

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan\\_National\\_Police](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_National_Police)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/research-tools/protection-civilians-armed-conflict>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/political-missions-and-offices>

Examine what the Security Council has done in the past and determine which decisions led to the success and which led to the continued failure of that nation-state.

4. How do we approach terrorist organizations? What should or shouldn't be done when working with terrorist and rebel organizations?
5. How can the Security Council improve its methods of strengthening the government of a failing nation and prevent "backsliding" without infringing on the sovereignty of the people?<sup>9</sup>
6. Is creating a democratic governance the ultimate end goal for every nation or should it be up to the individual country to determine what governmental system they want to become?
7. What does success look like?

Feel free to reach out with any questions, comments or concerns via email: [sfertig@mail.yu.edu](mailto:sfertig@mail.yu.edu).

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Wishing you the best of luck with your research and I look forward to personally reading your position paper.

Sincerely,

Zahava Fertig

Security Council Chair YUNMUN XXXI

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html>