

JoMUN XVII

Forum: Advisory Panel

Issue: Addressing the possibility of an abridged non-permanent member term within the Security Council

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Security Council is composed of 15 members: 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent. The 5 permanent members are the United States, China, Russia, France and the United Kingdom. The 10 non-permanent members are elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly. The selection is primarily based upon region: Africa has three seats, the Asia-Pacific region has two seats, the Caribbean and Latin America have two seats, Eastern Europe has one seat and Western Europe has two seats. With the current system, it can often occur that there multiple nations in the council dealing with an international conflict that does not at all affect them. Whereas some nations more involved in the conflict are not in the council and thus, their input is not heard. Because of this and lack of proper international representation, there is a call for shortening the terms served by non-permanent members. This is in the hopes that the most relevant countries in any given issue will have a voice as well as increasing the ability for smaller, lesser known nations to be represented the United Nations most powerful committee.

BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE

The Security Council is the United Nations most important council and by far the most powerful one. Latin America, Africa and the Middle East have no regional presence at all among the Permanent Members. Reformers insist that the Council should better "represent" the whole population of the globe. In terms of non-permanent members, Africa has three seats, the Asia-Pacific region has two seats, the Caribbean and Latin America have two seats, Eastern Europe has one seat and Western Europe has two seats. These seats are filled for two years at a time, thus making it impossible for all of the members within the United Nations to be able to serve in under 17 years. The simple math is that there are 193 members of the United Nations, only 5 of them have permanent seats in the Security Council. These leaves 188 countries which must be rotated for two-year terms. It would take approximately 37 years for all of the nations to be represented in the security council, not to mention the fact that many nations repeat their terms.

Additionally, many crises arise over a span of two years. Simply relying upon a preselected council often leads to poor representation for an issue. If the terms served were shorter, the non-permanent members of the council could be selected more regularly so that the council is truly in-tune with the current global demographic. And while in a situation of true emergency, an ambassador of the foremost involved country would be brought in, this is not the case of member nations involved in the conflict that aren't of the most precedence.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

The 5 Permanent Nations: The P5 nations are the nations with the ability to Veto any reform resolutions proposed. The P5 are not explicitly against reform in the Security Council. Actually, most are in favour, however the United States, China and Russia are not willing to pass any reform that involves an infringement on their veto powers. The P5 have not made any formal statements about their positions on shortening the terms served by the non-permanent members of the council, however, they should not be explicitly against so long as the solution passed does not take away from their power as the heads of the council.

India, Japan, Germany, Nigeria, South Africa and Brazil: are some of the Nations most frequent nations that are non-permanent members of the Security Council. They too haven't made any formal statements stating their position on term abridgement, however, they might have some problems with this reform as if it goes through it will shorten the time that they can spend in the council.

The other Member States of the United Nations:

The other member nations of the United Nations should most likely all be in favour of the solutions proposed below as they will increase the possibility for the smaller, lesser recognized nations to be able to serve on the Security Council. Some of the nations, however, will most likely not particularly support the shortening of the terms they are allowed to serve.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES, AND EVENTS

[Here is the list of countries represented in the 2018 Security Council](#)

[Resolution 47/62](#)

[Resolution 48/26](#)

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The Act Initiative - <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/10180.pdf> 2013

Council Reform Conference in 1994:

At a council reform conference in 1994, sponsored by Global Policy Forum and the International NGO Network on Global Governance, many including high ranking diplomats, NGO representatives and scholars all argued that "*The Council must become more democratic, consistent, accountable, and open, and that it must function less as a geopolitical instrument of a few major powers.*" They also discussed the council's ability to remain a legitimate source for international peace and law.

Council Reform Comments Collected by the General Assembly in 1992 and 1993:

On December 11, 1992, the General Assembly passed resolution 47/62 asking for the Secretary-General to collect member state's written comments on possibilities for Council reform. In the time following, eighty states gave submissions. The following year, when reform had still not been enacted, a second resolution was passed. Resolution 48/26 set up an Open-Ended Working Group to focus on the reformation of the council until 1994 when the new General Assembly President took over.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Shortening the terms served to 1 year:

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One of the possible solutions would be to shorten the terms served by non-permanent members to 1 year. This would help to keep some of the consistency within the security council and would allow for the member states chosen to be more in-tune with the global atmosphere.

Shortening the terms served to 6 months:

An additional solution would be shortening the terms served by non-permanent members to six months. The elections will have to be fairly frequent and it will add a little more of a burden on the General Assembly, however, these shortened terms will be the most realistic and fair representation of the international atmosphere and community. These shortened terms will allow for frequent changes of representation for respective areas of the globe as well as giving the optimal opportunity for complete representation in all of the Security Council debates.

WORKS CITED

Landgren, Karin. *Security Council Elections 2018*. Research report no. 2, United Nations, www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/unsc_elections_2018.pdf. Accessed 9 Jan. 2019.

Paul, James A. "Veto Analysis." *Global Policy Forum, 1995* www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/185/41128.html.

APPENDIX OR APPENDICES

[https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/unsc_elections_2018.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/unsc_elections_2018.pdf)

has a lot of information about the election process, seats, practices, history as well as the current serving members.

[https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/185/41128.html](http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/185/41128.html)

A very clear break down of all options for Security Council Reform.

[https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12091.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12091.doc.htm)

More information about previous reform actions taken.