

**UNITED NATIONS AND CIVIL WAR IN THE
POST-COLD WAR ERA: A STUDY OF RESPONSES,
LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES**

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BY
CHANDRIMA CHAKRABORTY

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
PROF. OMPRAKASH MISHRA
PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA

Synopsis

United Nations and Civil War in the Post-Cold War Era: A Study of Responses, Limitations and Possibilities

-Chandrima Chakraborty, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University

The prospect of civil war including internecine strife within the borders of sovereign nations poses a serious threat to the United Nations' responsibility to maintain worldwide peace and stability. The research examines the United Nations increased preoccupation with various hues and varieties of civil war in multiple regions of the world. The thesis proposes that the UN response system and process should be included as a central component of international agreement on how to effectively achieve the UN's fundamental goals of 'maintenance of international peace and security'. Despite the resurgence of international war in the shape of the continuing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the broad agreement is that civil war and armed conflict are now the most defining features of what constitutes a danger to the maintenance of international peace, security and order. As a result, resolving the UN system's limits in order to sharpen and strengthen its present reaction mechanism to growing occurrences of civil conflict, which are almost always accompanied by horrible repercussions for civilians, is a critical international priority. However, decision-making processes and procedures in the UN system, notably in the UN Security Council, have frequently shown significant and serious inadequacies in the present UN mechanism and response system for dealing with the world's newer set of dangers. It is in this environment that possibilities for the UN's more comprehensive and holistic approach to armed conflict, both international and intra-state civil war, become relevant. In this thesis, we will attempt to cover all three elements of the United Nations and Civil War: response, constraints, and opportunities.

Background

The fundamental objective of the United Nations is to preserve international peace and security. However, based on global history, international peace and security are not limited to maintaining peace among states or preventing inter-state violence. Rather, the nature of conflict in all aspects has fundamentally altered, and as a result, there are more conflicts within national borders than between them. The emergence of internal warfare has

fundamentally altered perceptions about how to effectively limit conflict inside domestic jurisdiction.

Paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the United Nations Charter says that the UN may not intrude in member nations' internal authority. However, this non-intervention does not limit the UN's ability to take enforcement action under Chapter VII of the Charter. Chapter VII of the Charter is titled 'Actions Regarding Threats to Peace, Breach of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression.' As a result, the Security Council's theoretical and legal measures under Chapter VII might include actions against member nations for their international wars, as well as conflicts and battles within their boundaries.

In this perspective, it is important to remember the requirements of Common Article 3 in the four Geneva Conventions on August 12, 1949. Article 3 of all four Geneva Conventions is applicable in the event of an armed conflict. Armed conflicts may occur between states, as well as inside them. As a result, the Geneva Conventions apply to both foreign and domestic conflicts. This demonstrates that worldwide concern or attention is required not only to avert war between nations, but also within the limits of the nation state. Previously, particularly due to the nature of the global Cold War, the United Nations was unable to fully focus on internal wars or armed conflicts within states. However, the UN's focus has extended, and armed conflicts involving civil wars, insurgency, guerrilla warfare, ethnic conflicts, and crimes against humanity are now subject to the UN system's enforcement mechanisms.

Significance of the Study

The end of the Cold War ushered in a new era of intra-state conflicts, thrusting the United Nations into a central role in addressing civil wars. Research on the UN's responses, limitations, and possibilities in this context holds significance for several reasons.

Firstly, it allows for a critical evaluation of the UN's evolving role. Initially designed for inter-state conflicts, the post-Cold War period compelled the UN to adapt its peacekeeping and peacebuilding mechanisms to the complexities of internal strife. Studying its responses – from traditional peacekeeping to more robust peace enforcement and multidimensional operations – helps understand the extent of this adaptation and its effectiveness in diverse conflict settings.

Secondly, research highlights the inherent limitations faced by the UN. Principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention often clash with the need to protect civilians within conflict zones. The dependence on member states for troops and funding, coupled with the political

dynamics within the Security Council, frequently constrains the UN's ability to act decisively and impartially. Examining these limitations is crucial for understanding the challenges in achieving sustainable peace.

Objectives of the Study

The central objective of research on “United Nations and Civil War in the Post-Cold War Era: A Study of Responses, Limitations and Possibilities” is to comprehensively analyse the United Nations’ engagement with intra-state conflicts during this transformative period. This involves a multi-faceted approach with several key objectives.

Firstly, the research aims to meticulously document and categorise the diverse *responses* of the UN to civil wars. This includes examining the deployment of peacekeeping operations, the nature and evolution of their mandates (from traditional monitoring to complex peacebuilding), the use of sanctions, diplomatic mediation efforts, and the provision of humanitarian assistance. Understanding the spectrum of UN actions is crucial for assessing its overall approach.

Secondly, a core objective is to critically evaluate the *limitations* faced by the UN in addressing civil wars. This involves investigating the constraints imposed by the principle of state sovereignty, the challenges of securing consensus within the Security Council, the difficulties in resource mobilisation (both financial and personnel), and the complexities of operating in active conflict zones with non-state actors. Identifying these limitations is essential for a realistic appraisal of the UN's capacity.

Thirdly, the research seeks to explore the *possibilities* and potential for the UN to more effectively prevent, manage, and resolve civil wars. This includes analysing innovative approaches to conflict resolution, the potential for enhanced early warning systems and preventive diplomacy, the strengthening of partnerships with regional organisations and civil society, and the adaptation of UN structures and mandates to better suit the specific dynamics of intra-state conflicts.

Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the UN's role in the post-Cold War landscape of civil wars. By systematically analysing its responses, limitations, and possibilities, the research seeks to inform policy debates and contribute to the development of more effective multilateral strategies for promoting peace and security in conflict-affected regions.

Research Questions

The present thesis attempts to raise some pertinent questions for investigation within the scope of the subject matter under study. Following are the 5 questions for the present research undertaking:

1. How best to understand the legal foundations for the enforcement authority of the Security Council in situations of a civil war involving ‘domestic jurisdiction’?
2. Whether the activities and functioning of the United Nations is based on the provisions of the Charter or these are influenced by the international political climate, particularly relationship amongst the major powers?
3. What influences and impacts the decision-making in the UN Security Council when an armed conflict involving mass atrocity crime is committed?
4. What changes are required to address the inadequacies in the power and authority of the United Nations with regard to Civil war situations?
5. Whether and to what extent the restructuring of the composition of the Security Council can mitigate its inadequacies and strengthen its authority for preventive and enforcement action in regard to intra-state armed conflict.

Research Methodology

The study is qualitative analytical research with an exploratory, comparative and critical approach. The literature draws on a variety of sources, both primary and secondary, found in books and reputable journals on the subject. The study of the concept of civil war and UN itself involved an extensive reading of primary and secondary literature on the subject. Official documents of the United Nations and other international organisations and agencies has served as the basis to trace inadequate mechanism to meet the emerging set of challenges posed by intra-state conflicts. The research relies heavily on original sources. I have accessed Security Council Official Records (SCOR), and Security Council Resolutions (S/RES/). Research has benefited from referencing relevant United Nations reports and documents. The nature of the theme also required the extensive usage of secondary data to understand the process of peacekeeping and other UN mechanism. Case studies related to significant sites of civil war involving action and or inaction by the UN has been undertaken to help build a comparative framework.

Chapter Contents

The thesis consists of an introduction, six main Chapters and a conclusion.

1. Comprehending Civil Wars: Evolution and Persistence of Intra-state Conflict

The principles of civil war, its ramifications, and how it has impacted different nations and the lives of civilians are covered in this chapter. With an emphasis on atrocity crimes, it also sheds insight on how conflict is evolving. The Geneva Conventions are discussed. With an emphasis on Common Article 3 of the Conventions, the four Conventions and three Additional Protocols are examined in greater detail. A thorough analysis of the Security Council's strategies for dealing with the civil war and armed conflicts during the last three decades shows how the Council's authority and influence have steadily but significantly grown since 1989 and how it has utilised the authority granted to it by the UN Charter to interfere in conflict situations within the borders of member states. This aspect of the functionality of the Security Council is inextricably linked to the effect of the end of the Cold War on United Nations. Given the interrelationship between the questions of the UN Security Council's effectiveness under a new international political climate consequent to the end of the Cold War and the interpretations of the Charter provisions by the member states, the discussion in the Chapter leads to a closer examination of the doctrine of non-interference in the domestic jurisdiction- a subject further developed in the Chapter 2.

2. The United Nations and Issues Related to Domestic Jurisdiction

The UN's evolving role in domestic conflicts to maintain global peace is discussed in the present Chapter. The content highlights the shift from inter-state wars to intra-state civil conflicts as the primary threat. It historically examines the UN's activities during the Cold War while focussing on the Covenant of the League of Nations briefly as historical reference. The paralysis of the Security Council due to Cold War rivalries, forcing power delegation to the General Assembly and its subsequent role in peacekeeping is also analysed. It then examines the period of continued Security Council immobility (1964-1989) despite detente, illustrating its inability to effectively address global issues. The Chapter emphasises the historical context of the UN's challenges in intervening in domestic jurisdictions to ensure international security.

3. Towards A Strengthened UN System: Case Studies of Namibia, Cambodia and Afghanistan

The Chapter examines three crises – Namibia, Cambodia, and Afghanistan – to assess the UN's effectiveness, particularly the role of the Security Council. The Namibian case, marked by anti-colonial sentiment and the eventual success of pro-independence movement, demonstrated the UN system's capacity to address challenges when political consensus exists. Both Namibia and Cambodia highlighted the intertwined nature of domestic and international contexts, underscoring the UN's responsibility to enforce peace, as seen in the successful peacekeeping mission extension in Cambodia despite its history of violence and foreign intervention. In contrast, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 reignited the Cold War, with the General Assembly condemning the invasion and the Soviet Union ultimately withdrawing under Gorbachev's leadership, leading to Mujahideen control. These three distinct situations reveal both the strengths and limitations of the UN's machinery and the Security Council's ability to respond effectively to diverse global crises.

4. United Nations, Enforcement Action and Humanitarian Intervention: A Study of Iraq, Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina

United Nations enforcement actions, mandated by the UN Charter and primarily executed by the Security Council, are measures to maintain or restore international peace and security in response to threats or breaches of international law. These actions range from non-military economic sanctions, used as an initial pressure tactic, to military interventions authorised by the Security Council when sanctions fail, exemplified by the Persian Gulf War. The effectiveness and legitimacy of these interventions are debated, considering sovereignty and Security Council dynamics. Beyond traditional peacekeeping, the UN's role expanded post-Cold War to encompass multifaceted peace operations. Case studies like the enforcement action in Iraq and humanitarian initiatives in Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina highlight the complexities and challenges of UN involvement in internal conflicts. The severity of humanitarian crises in the 1990s compelled the international community to address peace and security within state borders, raising questions about the nature, scope, and impact of Security Council actions and underscoring a global law and order deficit.

5. Non-Intervention of the United Nations: A Study of Myanmar and Syria

The Chapter underscores the critical importance of studying the civil wars in Myanmar and Syria, highlighting the UN Security Council's (UNSC) profound ineffectiveness in alleviating human suffering and upholding international peace in these contexts. These conflicts starkly revealed the limitations of the UNSC's structure, notably the misuse of the veto power held by the P5, which hinders timely and decisive action. The analysis delves into the UN's passive role in the Myanmar civil war, exposing significant deficiencies in global governance, human rights protection, and international diplomacy. Furthermore, it examines the UNSC's response to the Syrian conflict across its various stages, arguing that the Council's legitimacy and efficacy are increasingly questioned due to the P5's repeated use of veto power, which has, in effect, exacerbated crimes against humanity.

Discussion in this Chapter is analysed up to the end of 2024 and precedes more recent developments in both Syria and Myanmar. The case studies analysed here demonstrates how the unchecked exercise of veto power has impeded meaningful intervention and prolonged egregious human rights violations in these two countries.

6. Reform and Restructuring of the United Nations

The United Nations was established in 1945 with the goal of preventing wars, promoting peace, and fostering international collaboration. However, in today's interconnected world, the UN must adapt to new challenges such as climate change, cybersecurity, altering power dynamics, and changing humanitarian needs. In order to remain relevant in a changing world, the UN must continue to restructure its internal structures and encourage collaboration among an increasingly wide spectrum of global stakeholders. Maintaining the organisation's legitimacy and effectiveness will require ensuring that it reflects the reality of today's geopolitical scene, handles new global dangers, emphasises global collaboration, inclusion, and adaptability in order to fulfil its mandate of fostering peace, security, and sustainable development. The Chapter addresses different reforms for the better functioning of the United Nations such as organisational reform, financial reform and reforming the veto system. Question related to the possible increase in the numbers of permanent members of the Security Council is also undertaken. Moreover, the Chapter involves an analysis of necessary improvement in the efficacy and of the UN. After all, the advocacy for changes in the UN system has gained fresh impetus.

Research Findings

The research questions have been analysed in detail in the six chapters of this thesis. The research findings are summarised below.

1. How best to understand the legal foundations for the enforcement authority of the Security Council in situations of a civil war involving ‘domestic jurisdiction’?

The UNSC is primarily responsible for maintenance of international peace and security. Its power to undertake enforcement actions, especially in cases of civil war that resides within a country’s domestic issues, represents a complicated and often contentious area of international legislation. The primary justification for non-intervention lies in upholding state sovereignty. It recognises the inherent right of a state to govern its population, choose its political system, and formulate its own laws without external coercion. This fosters international stability by preventing powerful states from unilaterally imposing their will on weaker states, potentially escalating conflicts and undermining the very fabric of the international system. However, the absolute sanctity of the non-intervention principle had been progressively eroded by evolving international norms and the increasing recognition of universal human rights. The rise of humanitarian concerns, particularly in the face of mass atrocity crimes, challenged the notion that a state’s internal affairs are solely its own concern. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, while controversial in its implementation, reflects a growing consensus that the international community has a responsibility to intervene when a state fails to protect its own population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. This inherently necessitates a breach of the ‘traditional interpretation of non-intervention’.

Moreover, the distinction between ‘domestic affairs’ and ‘matters of international concern’ has become increasingly blurred in a globalised world. Internal conflicts can have significant cross-border consequences, such as refugee flows, regional instability, and the rise of transnational terrorism.

The important part in Article 2(7) – ‘but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII’ – establishes the legal foundation for the Security Council's ability to intervene in circumstances that might be deemed domestic.

The legal justification for the UN Security Council's enforcement authority in civil wars, particularly through the lens of Article 39 of the UN Charter, rests on a dynamic and often contested interpretation of the Charter's provisions. Although Article 2(7) generally prohibits intervention in issues ‘essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state,’ this rule is

clearly limited by the provision that it ‘shall not affect the implementation of enforcement actions under Chapter VII.’ Article 39 then serves as the crucial reference point, granting the Council the authority to ‘ascertain the existence of any threat to peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression’ and to subsequently authorise actions under Articles 41 and 42. A critical analysis reveals the strengths and weaknesses of this legal foundation, highlighting the inherent tensions and debates surrounding its application.

The primary strength of relying on Article 39 lies in its flexibility. The broad phrasing of ‘threats to the peace’ allows the Security Council to adapt to the evolving nature of conflict and recognise that severe internal strife can indeed have significant international repercussions. This interpretation acknowledges that civil wars are not always contained within state borders; they can trigger refugee crises, destabilise entire regions, create havens for terrorism and organised crime, and lead to widespread humanitarian catastrophes that demand international attention. By framing such situations as threats to international peace and security, the Council can legitimately invoke its Chapter VII powers, overriding the limitations of Article 2(7).

However, this broad interpretation of ‘threats to the peace’ is also a significant point of contention. The lack of a clear and universally agreed-upon definition of what constitutes a ‘threats to the peace’ in the context of civil wars allows powerful states within the Security Council to selectively apply this justification based on their own national interests and geopolitical agendas. For instance, interventions in some civil wars have been robust, while equally or more severe internal conflicts have been met with inaction, often due to the strategic interests or veto power of permanent members.

Thus, the legal justification for the Security Council's enforcement authority in civil wars, primarily rooted in the broad interpretation of ‘threats to the peace’ under Article 39, is a ‘double-edged sword’. Its flexibility allows the Council to address internal conflicts with significant international consequences, potentially preventing wider instability and humanitarian disasters. However, this flexibility also creates space for subjective application, political manipulation, and the potential infringement upon state sovereignty. The lack of a clear definition of ‘threats to the peace’ in this context, coupled with the political dynamics within the Security Council, particularly the veto power, raises significant questions about the consistency, legitimacy, and ultimately, the effectiveness of this legal justification. While Article 39 provides a legal avenue for intervention, its application remains a contentious terrain, constantly negotiated and reinterpreted in the face of evolving global challenges and the enduring principles of state sovereignty. A more consistent and principled application,

guided by clear criteria and a genuine commitment to preventing mass atrocities, is crucial to strengthening the legal and moral authority of the Security Council's actions in civil wars.

2. Whether the activities and functioning of the United Nations is based on the provisions of the Charter or these are influenced by the international political climate, particularly relationship amongst the major powers?

The United Nations established in 1945, serves as a vital platform for international cooperation, peacekeeping, and global governance. Central to its operation is the UN Charter, a foundational document that outlines its purposes, principles, and structure. However, the functioning and activities of the UN cannot be separated from the prevailing international political climate, notably the dynamics among major powers.

The principles of sovereign equality, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and collective security are fundamental to the UN's framework. These provisions guide much of the UN's work, including peacekeeping missions, humanitarian assistance, and the promotion of international law. However, the effectiveness and direction of the UN's activities often depend on the geopolitical interests of its member states, particularly the five permanent members of the Security Council: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China. These countries hold significant power within the UN, notably the ability to veto substantive resolutions, which has profound implications for the operation of the organisation.

The influence of major powers on the UN is evident in various scenarios. For instance, during the Cold War, the ideological divide between the Western bloc led by the United States and the Eastern bloc, primarily represented by the Soviet Union, created significant hurdles for UN operations. The Security Council often became a battleground for these Superpowers, leading to deadlock on critical issues. The regional conflicts during that period demonstrated how geopolitical considerations overshadowed the UN's ability to fulfil its Charter mandates for peace and security.

In contemporary times, the relationship among major powers continues to shape the functioning of the UN. The rise of new powers, shifting alliances and emerging global challenges has resulted in a more complex geopolitical environment. The inter-relationship between the United States, Russia and China, for example, has significant implications for UN operations.

A critical area where the influence of major powers is evident is in peacekeeping operations. The deployment of UN peacekeeping missions requires the agreement and support of the Security Council, where the major powers exert considerable influence. For example, the UN's involvement in crises such as the Syrian civil war has been complicated by the conflicting interests of Russia and the United States. Russia's support for the Syrian government and its subsequent use of vetoes limited the UN's ability to take decisive action, illustrating how international relations can constrain the implementation of the Charter's aims. Similarly, the UN's role in humanitarian crises often reflects the geopolitical interests of its member states. Donor countries typically prefer to support initiatives that align with their foreign policy objectives, which can lead to disparities in resource allocation and assistance. The UN's response to the refugee crisis in recent times, for example, underscores how political considerations can shape humanitarian efforts. Countries with major political stakes in the region often influence UN actions, determining where aid is directed and how resources are mobilised.

3. What influences and impacts the decision-making in the UN Security Council when an armed conflict involving mass atrocity crime is committed?

The decision-making processes of the UNSC are significantly impacted when armed conflicts arise involving mass atrocity crimes. These instances evoke profound moral, political, and legal considerations that complicate the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security. The multifaceted challenges posed by mass atrocities necessitate a nuanced exploration of the factors influencing the UNSC's decisions in such contexts.

The mass atrocity crimes raise urgent humanitarian concerns but at the same time places immense pressure on the UNSC to respond decisively. The Security Council is tasked with the responsibility to protect civilians and prevent atrocities; therefore, the occurrence of egregious human rights violations often compels the Council members to take action. The urgency is heightened by the international legal framework established by the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, which underscores the collective obligation of states to protect populations from mass atrocities.

Political considerations are pivotal in shaping the UNSC's response to mass atrocity crimes. It is well-known that the Council's decision-making is influenced by the disparate interests of its five permanent members who hold veto power. This power can lead to paralysis or inaction in the face of crises, particularly when the interests of any P5 member are perceived

to be threatened or when geopolitical alignments conflict with humanitarian imperatives. For instance, Russia has employed its veto in situations such as the Syrian civil war and China has consistently vetoed action on Myanmar. This interplay between national interests and the moral imperative to intervene complicates the Security Council's ability to act collectively and effectively.

Additionally, the representation of diverse perspectives within the UNSC can affect the speed and type of responses to situations involving mass atrocities. Non-permanent members, who rotate periodically, can introduce new viewpoints and priorities into discussions. While this diversity can foster a more representative approach to global crises, it may also lead to disagreements that delay decisive action. Furthermore, the influence of regional organisations and actors comes into play, often complicating the decision-making process. For instance, regional dynamics in Africa or the Middle East can significantly influence the Council's discussions on conflicts involving mass atrocities occurring in those areas.

The legal framework surrounding the UNSC also affects its decision-making processes in cases of mass atrocity crimes. The Council has the authority to refer situations to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or to impose sanctions, arms embargoes, or to authorise military intervention under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. However, these legal instruments come with significant considerations regarding state sovereignty, the principle of non-interference, and the potential consequences of military action. The spectre of unintended consequences, such as exacerbating violence or creating instability, can lead to hesitation among the Council members to take steps in situations of mass atrocities.

The nature of the atrocity itself also shapes the Security Council's response. For example, the international community's reaction to the Rwandan genocide in 1994 remains a powerful reminder of the failures of the UNSC to act swiftly. Decision-making in such cases can be hindered by the chaotic nature of conflict situations, and the absence of a unified narrative that captures the complexity of events occurring on the ground. The challenge of gathering accurate intelligence and assessing the scale of atrocities may lead to protracted debates within the Council, delaying any potential interventions and allowing atrocities to continue unabated.

4. What changes are required to address the inadequacies in the power and authority of the United Nations with regard to Civil war situations?

The United Nations plays a critical role in addressing civil war situations and promoting global peace. However, its power and authority are often constrained by structural inadequacies and political complexities. To enhance its effectiveness in managing civil wars, several key changes are required to address these shortcomings.

Firstly, clarifying and strengthening the legal basis for intervention is important. The principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs, enshrined in Article 2(7) of the UN Charter, often clashes with the imperative to protect populations at risk in civil wars. While Chapter VII provides a pathway for intervention when a situation constitutes a ‘threat to the peace,’ this interpretation remains contested. The Security Council needs to develop more explicit and objective criteria for determining when a civil war transcends the realm of domestic jurisdiction and poses a genuine threat to international peace and security.

Secondly, formalising the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Doctrine is also crucial to address the inadequacies. Endorsed by the General Assembly, the R2P doctrine needs stronger formalisation within the UN system, including clear guidelines for its operationalisation by the Security Council. This would involve establishing thresholds for intervention, outlining the types of measures that can be taken, and ensuring accountability for actions undertaken in the name of R2P. Moreover, the UN must also take a firmer stance on the R2P doctrine, asserting a stronger commitment to intervene in situations where states are manifestly failing to protect their populations from atrocities. This entails not only military intervention but also comprehensive diplomatic and economic measures to prevent escalating violence.

Thirdly, reforming the Security Council’s structure is the most pressing issue for the UN. Reforming the veto system could enhance the Council’s responsiveness. Exercising the veto in cases involving crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide is contrary to the ‘ACT Code of Conduct’ proposed by ‘the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group’. The Code offers a potential framework, encouraging P5 members to voluntarily pledge not to vote against credible draft resolutions aimed at preventing or ending mass atrocities.

Fourthly, expanding the Security Council and enhancing representation is also required to address the inadequacies as it does not adequately reflect the contemporary global landscape. The Council's credibility and viewpoints might be expanded by adding more permanent and non-permanent members from under-represented areas. Increased

representation could lead to a more nuanced understanding of civil war dynamics in different regions and potentially foster greater consensus.

Finally, the UN should strengthen its partnerships with regional organisations, such as the African Union (AU) or the European Union (EU). Many civil conflicts have regional implications, and regional organisations often have better local insights and relationships. By empowering these organisations and allowing them to play a more significant role in peacekeeping and conflict resolution, the UN could leverage local knowledge and resources, leading to more effective interventions. Establishing formal frameworks for collaboration and mutual support between the UN and regional bodies would ensure a more cohesive and coordinated response to civil wars.

Addressing civil wars requires the inclusion of diverse voices, including civil society organisations, local leaders, and marginalised groups. The UNSC should adopt a more participatory approach, where the experiences and insights of those affected by conflict are valued in the decision-making process. Facilitating dialogue between conflicting parties, local communities, and international actors can foster a more nationally owned approach to peacebuilding, leading to sustainable solutions.

5. Whether and to what extent the restructuring of the composition of the Security Council can mitigate its inadequacies and strengthen its authority for preventive and enforcement action in regard to intra-state armed conflict.

Intra-state armed conflicts have become increasingly prevalent, driven by factors such as ethnic tensions and political repression. Traditional state-centric approaches to conflict resolution and peacekeeping are often ill-suited to handle the complexities of such conflicts. Furthermore, the veto power held by the P5 often paralyses the UNSC when immediate action is necessary, leaving significant humanitarian consequences in its wake.

One of the principal arguments for restructuring the UNSC is the need for a more equitable representation of the global community. The P5 reflects a post-World War II balance of power that is no longer relevant in today's multipolar world. Introducing new permanent members, particularly from underrepresented regions such as Africa, Latin America, and Asia, could enhance legitimacy and make the UNSC more responsive to regional conflicts. An expanded Security Council may also promote a more consensus-driven approach to decision-making, encouraging dialogue and diplomatic efforts rather than confrontation. By increasing the number of members, the UNSC could create a broader coalition for action,

successfully navigating the competing interests of existing powers. A more collaborative environment could lead to shared responsibility for preventing conflicts and implementing peacekeeping measures.

Beyond composition and voting procedures, restructuring could also focus on improving the Council's working methods and its relationship with other UN organs. Enhancing transparency, could lead to more proactive and effective preventive action. A more integrated approach, involving closer collaboration with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and UN agencies, could ensure that responses to civil wars are comprehensive, addressing not only the security dimensions but also the underlying political, economic, and social causes of conflict.

The potential for restructuring to strengthen the Council's enforcement action is particularly relevant in the context of civil wars where state sovereignty is often invoked to shield perpetrators of violence. A reformed Council, with greater legitimacy and potentially a modified veto, might be more willing and able to authorise robust interventions, including peacekeeping operations with stronger mandates, targeted sanctions against warring parties, and even the use of force in exceptional circumstances to prevent mass atrocities or protect civilians. The development and codification of norms like the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), while controversial, could find greater traction and application within a more representative and less gridlocked Security Council.

For restructuring the UNSC, several challenges must be also addressed:

Reforming the UNSC is a major challenge due to resistance from P5 members unwilling to lose influence or veto power. Debates over which nations deserve permanent seats and how to ensure fair representation risk sparking geopolitical tensions. Expansion based on political alliances, rather than equity, could worsen regional disputes and hinder cooperation. Careful consideration of intra-regional dynamics is essential to avoid deepening divisions. UNSC reform offers a key chance to address current weaknesses and strengthen its role in preventing and managing intra-state conflicts. Greater representation, limiting veto power, and fostering consensus could improve its effectiveness. However, success depends on the scope of changes and member states' political will. While reform is important, it's no panacea—it must be paired with a renewed commitment to multilateralism and the UN Charter to truly enhance the Council's impact.

Taking into account the goal and scope of this endeavor, the present study project has been adequately comprehensive. By closely analysing case studies from different historical eras, it has proven possible to tackle all the research questions highlighted in the thesis. Simultaneously, it is evident that the dynamics of global politics and the evolution of international relations play a vital role in determining the effectiveness and functioning of the United Nations. Hence, to understand the patterns, response mechanisms, and possible solutions, a more concentrated examination of the causes and dynamics surrounding the civil war context is required. Investigating the roles of regional organizations and non-state actors in UN-led initiatives is essential as it can enhance the understanding of collaborative approaches to conflict resolution.