

# United Nations Security Council

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CHMUN XIX

*Crisis*

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## **Committee Background:**

The UNSC has five permanent members and numerous other elected members, who represent different regions of the World. According to the UN Charter, the four objectives of this council are, “to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights, and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations.” It is important to note that the council’s primary reaction to every threat to peace is to reach a settlement to avoid any warfare. The council can catalyze this process through numerous means such as outlining agreements, investigating the situation, or sending the conflict to the Secretary-General’s office. However, sometimes the conflicts lead to violence. In this case, the council needs to be effective in order to subdue the conflict quickly before it escalates further. According to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the UNSC has special jurisdiction to refer cases to the Court. This special privilege is rarely exercised, but is a very important part of the UNSC’s arsenal. As stated before, the UNSC has five permanent members: China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States. These five members have veto power, which is a power unique to this committee only. Essentially, these five members can down vote any resolution they feel is harmful even if the council as a whole feels the resolution in question is beneficial, however circumstances of a country vetoing a resolution are very rare. In the past, this council has been admonished for its ineffectiveness and inability to prevent crimes. It is up to this committee to change that view by diffusing some of the world’s most dangerous situations.



## **Topic A: Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict Over Nagorno-Karabakh**

For decades, Nagorno-Karabakh, a landlocked region ensconced within the Karabakh mountain ranges of the South Caucasus, has been a hotbed of controversy, conflict, and ever-changing ownership. This captivating name, "Nagorno-Karabakh," intricately combines three linguistic origins: the Russian "nagorny," the Turkic "kara," and the Persian "bakh." This linguistic fusion serves as a metaphor for the intricate tapestry of culture and history woven into this region. The ongoing conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is a multifaceted conundrum, driven by a plethora of factors ranging from religious differences to historical claims. Armenia contends that the majority Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh's highlands speaks volumes, while Azerbaijan maintains its historical right to the territory. Over the past century, this conflict has manifested in various forms, from violent border wars in 1988 and 2020 to diplomatic efforts like the 1921 Treaty of Kars.

Despite its relatively modest size, with a population of 145,000 and an area of 4,400 square kilometers, Nagorno-Karabakh holds paramount importance not only for Armenia and Azerbaijan but also for neighboring nations like Turkey. In stark contrast to several late 20th-century Eurasian ethnic conflicts, the Nagorno-Karabakh issue stubbornly persists into the 21st century. Nagorno-Karabakh's internationally recognized status as part of Azerbaijan sharply contradicts its demographic reality—over 95% of its population is Armenian. The religious divergence between Armenians, who are predominantly Christian, and Azeris, who are primarily Sunni Muslims, generates profound mistrust between these communities. Moreover, the leaders of both Armenia and Azerbaijan see control over Nagorno-Karabakh as a means to assert their commitment to the region's inhabitants and showcase their military prowess. The involvement of major regional powers has intensified the conflict. Russia, backing Armenia with arms and peacekeeping forces, seeks to secure its influence. Meanwhile, Turkey, sharing a Turkic lineage with Azerbaijan, has thrown its weight behind Azerbaijan's cause. Nagorno-Karabakh's strategic location and abundant natural energy resources amplify its significance. This region serves as a gateway to the Caucasus, renowned for its oil and natural gas reserves. As European countries seek to diversify their energy sources, the path through the Caucasus assumes



critical importance. Should conflict erupt in or around Nagorno-Karabakh, the security of vital oil pipelines, including the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline transporting one billion barrels of oil daily, would be imperiled. This, in turn, would jeopardize prospects for constructing new transport pipelines. While neither Azerbaijan nor Armenia has officially disclosed the catalyst behind the 2020 conflict, several implied factors come into play. Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, propelled into power after a brief 2018 revolution, stirred anti-Azerbaijan



sentiments. This change in leadership strained relations between the two countries. Furthermore, Azerbaijan, grappling with plummeting oil prices due to the COVID-19 pandemic, saw an opportune moment to launch an offensive, hoping for military and economic support from its long-standing ally, Turkey. The outbreak of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in September 2020 caught Armenia off-guard. By October, Azerbaijani troops had recaptured significant territory around Nagorno-Karabakh held by Armenia for 26 years. After more than 7,000 casualties on both sides, a ceasefire agreement was signed in November. However, the conflict had larger geopolitical implications. Armenia suffered significant losses, while Azerbaijan regained lost territory and took control of vital infrastructure, including hydroelectric plants and the opportunity to modernize with "smart villages." Foreign powers played a pivotal role in the conflict's outcome. Russia, by deploying peacekeepers in the Lachin Corridor, secured military control and expanded its influence in the region. Turkey reaped political, economic, and military rewards from supporting Azerbaijan. Iran entered the fray by investing in Azerbaijan's conflict zone, potentially gaining leverage over its neighbor. In essence, the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict showcased how foreign powers can exert their influence through military presence, resource acquisition, geopolitical maneuvering, and domestic signaling.



Both Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed to engage in peace talks to sign a long-lasting treaty, however as tensions continue to rise and no final deal is reached, it will not be long before further conflict and violence ensue. The Security Council must continue to pass resolutions and find concrete solutions to mitigate violence and end all suffering due to this conflict.

In September of 2020, Azerbaijan assumed control of the Nagorno-Karabakh territory after

### Questions to Consider

1. In your country, how might support for Armenia or Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict impact domestic issues like separatist movements, religious/ethnic minorities, or other territorial disputes?
2. Is it possible to redraw borders along ethnic lines in Nagorno-Karabakh? If so, what considerations would need to be made?
3. When major powers become entangled in regional conflicts like Nagorno-Karabakh, it can escalate the situation globally. What are some potential benefits and drawbacks of broader international involvement in this dispute?

### Helpful Links

1. Council on Foreign Relations - Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict
  - a. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/nagorno-karabakh-conflict>
2. International Crisis Group - Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Visual Explainer
  - a. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/nagorno-karabakh-conflict-visual-explainer>
3. BBC - Nagorno-Karabakh Profile
  - a. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18270325>



## Topic B: Rising Tensions in Kashmir

India and Pakistan gained independence in 1947, leading to the partition of British India. The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was free to accede to either country. This sparked a revolt in 1947 backed by Pakistan, prompting the first Indo-Pakistani War over Kashmir. A UN-brokered ceasefire established the Line of Control dividing the territory. In August, the Indian government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi executed a momentous change when it revoked Article 370 of the constitution, which had granted special autonomous status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir for decades. This allowed India to split Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories under New Delhi's control – the territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the region of Ladakh. Pakistan objected fiercely to this move, stating it violated previous UN resolutions and bilateral agreements between the countries that required Kashmir's status to be decided by a plebiscite. But India insisted these were internal constitutional matters. The dissolution of Jammu and Kashmir's special status gave India greater authority over governance, law-making, and security in the disputed region. It also led India to impose tight security clampdowns, curfews, communication blackouts, arrests of political leaders, and other measures to stifle dissent in Kashmir. Local militant groups opposed the end of autonomy and protested India's tighter grip, giving them a rallying cause. While insurgent violence has since fluctuated, the dissolution solidified India's control on the ground but also reinforced Kashmiri resentment and demands for self-determination in the long run. Pakistan continues to condemn the moves as illegal annexation.



Sporadic clashes along the Line of Control have continued, with spikes in 2021-2022. India and Pakistan also engaged in aerial combat over Kashmir in 2019. Diplomatic tensions remain high, as Pakistan calls for international mediation but India insists Kashmir is an internal affair. China also has claims in the Aksai Chin area of Kashmir and has backed Pakistan's criticisms of India's policy shifts.



Within Indian-administered Kashmir, an insurgency by separatist militant groups has been ongoing for decades. The region remains heavily militarized, with hundreds of thousands of Indian security forces stationed there. The revocation of autonomy in 2019 led to protests, lockdowns, and allegations of human rights abuses. Militant violence declined during COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020 but then resumed, though at lower levels than pre-pandemic. The pandemic also exacerbated economic hardship and diverted international attention away from Kashmir. India's own COVID-19 crisis starting in 2021 reduced focus on resolving the dispute. While insurgent activity and cross-border clashes have fluctuated, the geopolitical stalemate persists. The long-running Kashmir dispute remains a potential nuclear flashpoint. In 2023, tensions continue despite some pandemic-era de-escalation. The Security Council faces upholding human rights and preventing escalation amid the impasse.

The UN Security Council continues to monitor the situation but has not passed any new resolutions since the 1990s. The long-running Kashmir dispute remains a flashpoint that could escalate into war between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan. Mediation efforts have made little progress due to uncompromising stances on both sides regarding the territory's final status.

In 2023, tensions remain high after recent border clashes. Backchannel talks have occurred but not resulted in a diplomatic breakthrough. The Security Council faces the challenge of defusing tensions and protecting human rights amid the stalemate. Preventing catastrophic escalation remains a priority.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. What can the Security Council do to broker peace while keeping in mind the national sovereignty of all parties involved?
2. How can better information about violent groups be attained?
3. How should the international community approach another insurgency in Kashmir?

### **Helpful Links**

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1. Council on Foreign Relations - Conflict in Kashmir
  - a. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-between-india-and-pakistan>
2. BBC - Kashmir: Why India and Pakistan fight over it
  - a. <https://www.bbc.com/news/10537286>
3. Violence in Kashmir: Why a Spike in Killings Signals an Ominous New Trend
  - a. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/india-pakistan-kashmir/violence-kashmir-why-spike-killings-signals-ominous-new-trend>





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