

Relationship of the Security Council to the General Assembly

Briefing for delegates on the 75th session of the General Assembly

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Key differences

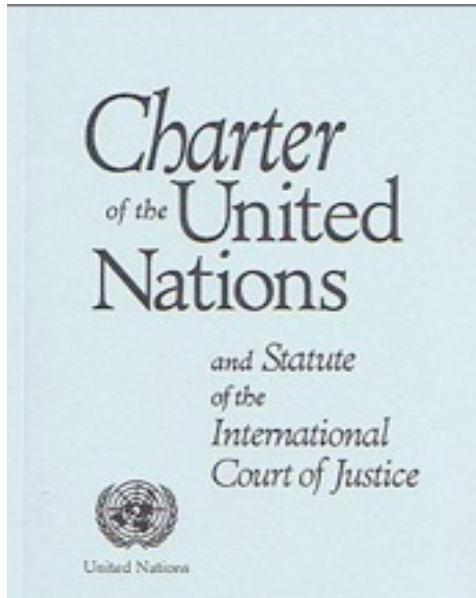
General Assembly

- Composition: 193 members (all with equal status)
- Scope: any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter of the United Nations
- Decision-making: two-thirds majority for 'important questions'
- On the maintenance of international peace and security: recommendations

Security Council

- Composition: 15 members (5 permanent and 10 non-permanent)
- Scope: primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security
- Decision-making: nine votes absent veto for substantive questions
- On the maintenance of international peace and security: decisions

Key provisions of the UN Charter



Article 10

“The General Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter, and, except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters.”

Key provisions of the UN Charter

Article 11

- “1. The General Assembly may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both.
2. The General Assembly may discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security brought before it by any Member of the United Nations, or by the Security Council, or by a state which is not a Member of the United Nations in accordance with Article 35, paragraph 2, and, except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations with regard to any such questions to the state or states concerned or to the Security Council or to both. Any such question on which action is necessary shall be referred to the Security Council by the General Assembly either before or after discussion.
3. The General Assembly may call the attention of the Security Council to situations which are likely to endanger international peace and security.
4. The powers of the General Assembly set forth in this Article shall not limit the general scope of Article 10.”

Key provisions of the UN Charter

Article 12

“1. While the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it in the present Charter, the General Assembly shall not make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation unless the Security Council so requests.

2. The Secretary-General, with the consent of the Security Council, shall notify the General Assembly at each session of any matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security which are being dealt with by the Security Council and shall similarly notify the General Assembly, or the Members of the United Nations if the General Assembly is not in session, immediately the Security Council ceases to deal with such matters.”

Key provisions of the UN Charter

Article 14

“Subject to the provisions of Article 12, the General Assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations, including situations resulting from a violation of the provisions of the present Charter setting forth the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.”

Key provisions of the UN Charter

Article 24

“1. In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.

2. In discharging these duties the Security Council shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations. The specific powers granted to the Security Council for the discharge of these duties are laid down in Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and XII.

3. The Security Council shall submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration.”

Main areas of collaboration

- **On the maintenance of international peace and security**
 - ✓ Early practice
 - ✓ [Uniting for Peace](#) and its aftermath
 - ✓ Contemporary practice
- **On elections and appointments**
 - ✓ Appointment of the Secretary-General
 - ✓ Appointment of judges to the ICJ and international tribunals
 - ✓ Admission, suspension, expulsion of members
 - ✓ Election of non-permanent members

Main areas of collaboration

Article 23 of the UN Charter

“...The General Assembly shall elect ten other Members of the United Nations to be non-permanent members of the Security Council, due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution..”

GA resolution 1991 (XVIII)

stitutional processes, by 1 September 1963,

3. *Further decides* that the ten non-permanent members of the Security Council shall be elected according to the following pattern :

- (a) Five from African and Asian States;
- (b) One from Eastern European States;
- (c) Two from Latin American States;
- (d) Two from Western European and other States.

*1285th plenary meeting,
17 December 1963.*

Main areas of collaboration

- **Last election: 2021-2022 term**
- One seat for the African Group (currently held by South Africa) → **Kenya**
- One seat for the Group of Asia and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (the Asia-Pacific Group, currently held by Indonesia) → **India**
- One seat for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC, currently held by the Dominican Republic) → **Mexico**
- Two seats for the Western European Group (currently held by Belgium and Germany) → **Ireland and Norway**

Main areas of collaboration

- **On working methods**

- ✓ Monthly coordination [meetings](#) between the Presidents of the GA and the Security Council
- ✓ Briefing on the Security Council's [programme of work](#) and wrap up sessions
- ✓ Annual open debate on working methods (last one was held on [15 May](#))
- ✓ Note by the President of the Security Council on working methods ([S/2017/507](#)) and additional notes of 27 December 2019 ([S/2019/990](#) to [S/2019/997](#))

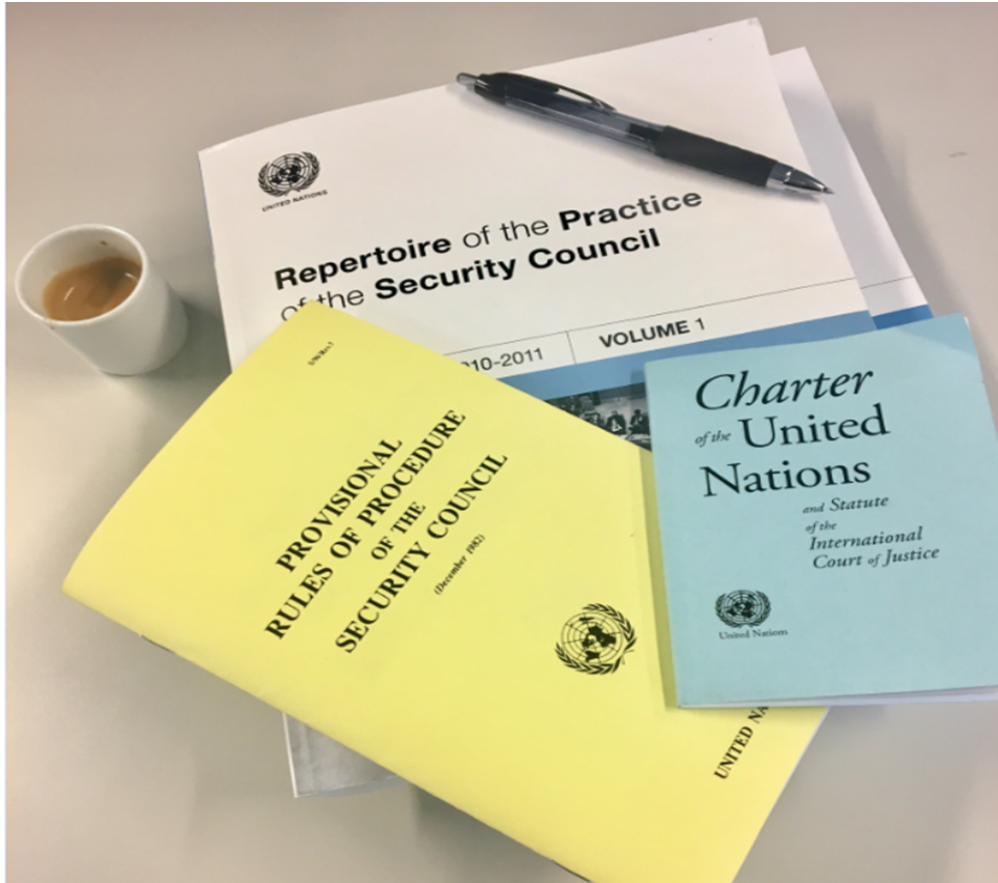
- **Annual notification, annual and special reports**

- ✓ Annual [notification](#) to the GA (A/SESSION/300)
- ✓ Summary [statement](#) ("seizure list", S/YEAR/10)
- ✓ Weekly [addenda](#) to the summary statement (S/YEAR/10.Add.#)
- ✓ [Annual report](#) and special reports

Main areas of collaboration

- **Recommendations by the GA to the Security Council**
 - ✓ On general principles such as terrorism, peacekeeping, cooperation with regional organisations as well as others
 - ✓ On specific situations such as the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- **Relations with subsidiary organs established by the GA**
 - ✓ Committee on the Exercise of Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
 - ✓ Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
 - ✓ Human Rights Council
 - ✓ Peacebuilding Commission

Resources



- [Charter of the United Nations](#)
- [Rules of procedure of the General Assembly](#)
- [Provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council](#)
- [Statute of the International Court of Justice](#)
- [Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council](#)
- [Index to proceedings](#)