

**NSDA Public Forum Debate (March 2024)**

Topic: Abolishing UNSC Permanent Member Status (ver. 3.0)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**United Nations should abolish permanent membership on its Security Council ..... 2**

**PRO SIDE ..... 2**

PRO: Veto Causes Frustration and Paralysis (Prioritizing Self-Interest) ..... 2

According to... Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 28, 2023 ..... 2

PRO: Veto Prolongs Suffering for Millions ..... 2

According to... Faster Capital, December 22, 2023 ..... 2

PRO: Veto Perpetuates an Undemocratic/Unfair System..... 2

According to... Faster Capital, December 22, 2023 ..... 2

**CON SIDE ..... 3**

CON: Council Reform is Daunting ..... 3

According to... Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 28, 2023 ..... 3

CON: Veto Ensures UN Integrity (w/o Veto = P5 Operating Outside the UN) ..... 3

According to... Faster Capital, December 22, 2023 ..... 3

CON: Veto Leads to Negotiation/Compromise ..... 3

According to... Faster Capital, December 22, 2023 ..... 3

**References ..... 4**

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# United Nations should abolish permanent membership on its Security Council

## PRO SIDE

### **PRO: Veto Causes Frustration and Paralysis (Prioritizing Self-Interest)**

According to... *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 28, 2023*

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

It states...

Compounding these frustrations about membership, each of the P5 countries retains a veto permitting it to unilaterally block Security Council resolutions inimical to its national interests (as Russia has done with respect to Ukraine). The result is frequent council paralysis, exacerbated by deepening geopolitical rivalry between Western democracies and authoritarian China and Russia. To a growing proportion of the world's governments and citizens, the council today is both feckless and unjust, dominated by irresponsible and unrepresentative powers inclined to abuse their position rather than safeguard the peace. Restoring the council's effectiveness and legitimacy, critics contend, requires updating its anachronistic composition and unfair decision-making rules to better reflect ongoing shifts in global power and emerging centers of moral authority. Unfortunately, UN members are divided over the shape of any reform, not least whether it should focus on enhancing the council's capability or its representativeness. Thanks to this diplomatic deadlock, the Security Council is trapped in amber.

### **PRO: Veto Prolongs Suffering for Millions**

According to... *Faster Capital, December 22, 2023*

<https://fastercapital.com/content/Veto-power--A-Check-and-Balance-Mechanism.html#The-United-Nations-Security-Council>

It states...

While the veto power can be used to prevent actions that could harm the interests of the permanent members, it can also be used to block actions that are in the interest of the international community. For example, China and Russia have used their veto power to block resolutions on Syria, which has led to the continuation of the conflict and the suffering of millions of people. This has raised questions about the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council and the UN system as a whole.

### **PRO: Veto Perpetuates an Undemocratic/Unfair System**

According to... *Faster Capital, December 22, 2023*

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It states...

The veto power has also been criticized for perpetuating the power dynamics that existed at the time of the establishment of the UN. The five permanent members were the victorious powers of world war II, and their power was enshrined in the UN Charter. This has led to accusations of an undemocratic and unfair system, as other countries do not have the same level of influence and power in the Security Council.

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## CON SIDE

### **CON: Council Reform is Daunting**

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It states...

The obstacles to council reform are daunting. They include the high procedural hurdles to amending the UN Charter; divergent member state positions on the acceptable size and terms of any enlargement; disagreement over current veto provisions and their potential extension to any new permanent members; and gnawing uncertainties over whether any plausible enlargement—even if it made the council more representative—would improve its functioning. Any change to the council's composition or voting rules would require the approval of two-thirds of UN members—including each of the P5—accompanied by relevant domestic legislation. Given intensifying geopolitical rivalry and deepening political polarization in many countries, prospects for updating the council appear slim.

### **CON: Veto Ensures UN Integrity (w/o Veto = P5 Operating Outside the UN)**

According to... *Faster Capital, December 22, 2023*

<https://fastercapital.com/content/Veto-power--A-Check-and-Balance-Mechanism.html#The-United-Nations-Security-Council>

It states...

Some argue that the veto power is a necessary component of the UN system, as it ensures that the permanent members have a stake in maintaining international peace and security. Without the veto power, these countries may be less likely to engage with the UN system and may pursue their own interests outside of it. Moreover, the veto power can be a tool for negotiations and compromise, as it forces countries to find common ground and consensus.

### **CON: Veto Leads to Negotiation/Compromise**

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