

# Organizations Promoting 'International Cooperation'

## Birth of the UN

The UN emerged from the **Atlantic Charter** of 1941, issued by US President Franklin Delano **Roosevelt** (FDR) and UK Prime Minister Winston **Churchill**. It was formally established at the **San Francisco Conference** in April 1945, held as World War 2 was ending. It took over the idea of International Cooperation from its predecessor organization, the League of Nations established after World War 1.

It drew up the UN Charter that laid out the structure of the Organization:

### You must learn...

...the names of the meetings, and the timing of the setting up of the UN. They are key to understanding the Post-World-War-II world!



### Examiner Tip

You will need to be able to show that you understand how the UN is organized, so the examiner sees that you have a good grasp of the topic!

## The Six Principal Organs

### → The General Assembly

The Governing Body composed of all 'Member States'. One state = one vote!

### → The Security Council

11 Members (**5 Permanent Members**: America, Russia, Britain, France, and China + **6 Non-Permanent Members**, selected on a rotating basis – Ireland was appointed a Non-Permanent Member for the 2021-22 term). Permanent Members have an effective VETO POWER over decisions to about war and peace made by the Security Council.

### → Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Promotes cultural activities. Of particular importance to historians is **UNESCO**, which recognizes 'World Heritage Sites', such as Skellig Michael and Newgrange. Other well-known agencies include the World Health Organization, **UNICEF** which has a special responsibility to children, and the **World Bank** which helps to fund 'Development.'

### → Trusteeship Council (now defunct)

Established to ensure trust territories (a non-self-governing territories) were administered in the best interests of their inhabitants.

### → The International Courts of Justice

Based in the Hague, it is designed to judge legal disputes between member states.

### → The Secretariat

Headed by the UN Secretary General, the Secretariat is the 'Civil Service', or main administrative body of the UN. The '**Secretary General**' is the main leader of the UN and is key in resolving disputes between states.

# International Cooperation through shared Human Rights

Prior to the end of WWII, FDR spoke about the '**Four Freedoms**' in his 'State of the Union' speech of 1941. It hoped to justify US involvement in WW2 and the principles that would apply after the war. This led to the modern ideas of Human Rights that the UN champions.

In 1948, under the Chairpersonship of Eleanor Roosevelt, the UN issued the 30 Articles of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which served as a roadmap for how Human Rights should be respected and implemented around the world. The **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights** (a role previously held by Mary Robinson, a former President of Ireland) oversees the **Human Rights Council** (the Human Rights Commission up to 2006) which is in charge of tracking and reporting on the Human Rights progress of every member state in a process called the Universal Periodic Review.

## → Universal

Applies to all 193 Member States

## → Periodic

Happens every 5 Years

## → Review

Involves Member States examining and reporting on each other's Human Rights progress and making recommendations for improvement.

The UN also has specific Conventions (agreements) such as **CERD** (Convention on the Eradication of Racial Discrimination), **CEDAW** (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women), and the **UNCRC** (Convention on the Rights of the Child). These are backed up by Committees that evaluate how well countries stick to their Human Rights commitments in these conventions.

### Examiner Tip

While “Human Rights” is seen as a ‘CSPE’ topic also, it’s also one of the ways in which the UN works, day-to-day, towards ‘International Cooperation’.

## UN Peacekeepers

Easily recognizable with their **‘Blue Berets’** or ‘Blue Helmets’, the UN Peacekeepers act as soldier, Police Officers, and Civilian Administrators in war-torn parts of the world.

### The 3 Core Principles of UN Peacekeeping are:

#### → Consent

Agreement of both sides in conflict about having peacekeepers in place

#### → Impartiality

Staying neutral in disputes

#### → No Violence

No use of force - except in self-defence and defence civilians and their mission

As an officially ‘Neutral’ country, Irish Peacekeepers are excellent candidates for peacekeepers. They currently serve in two main missions “UNIFIL” in the Lebanon and “UNDOF” in Syria.

## Case Study:

Between 1960 and 1964, the UN despatched 10,000 UN Peacekeepers to the **Congo** in Africa, which had recently gained its independence from **Belgium**. They had gone on the orders of then UN Secretary General Dag **Hammarskjöld**. In particular, they were involved in trying to re-unite the country after the state of **Katanga** 'seceded' (broke away from the main country). In 1961, Irish UN Peacekeepers were involved in the "Siege of **Jadotville**" in the Congo, which became famous again after the recent movie of the same name. In a separate engagement in November 1960, 9 Irish soldiers were killed by **Baluba** tribesmen in the Niamba area of the Congo.

## Evaluation (Strengths and Weaknesses)

### *Strengths:*

- The UN has helped to reduce the number of wars/conflicts around the world and Human Rights abuses have also reduced since the end of the Cold War.
- The UN is a Forum where countries can use 'Diplomacy' rather than 'War' to try and resolve their differences.
- By shifting its focus away from just 'economic' development and instead moving towards measuring Sustain Development (with the 'Millennium Development Goal' (MDGs) and 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs), the UN has brought great benefits to Less Developed Countries around the world.

### *Weaknesses:*

- Failures around acts of '**Genocide**' (**Key Definition:** the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group) in places like **Rwanda** in 1994 (almost a million deaths in the Tutsi people by the Rwandan 'Hutu' government) and **Bosnia** in 1995 ("Srebrenica Massacre" 7-8,000 Bosnian Muslims) have been seen as a major failure.

- The '**Veto**' power of the permanent members of the UN Security Council often makes it very difficult to get agreement on the best way to resolve conflict. This has been seen recently in **Syria** but was a major problem during the Cold War.
- The UN relies on '**diplomatic pressure**' and can't enforce the rulings of the International Courts of Justice, meaning that it is often seen as a 'Talking Shop', where a lot is discussed, but little is resolved

### Examiner Tip

Students should **EVALUATE** for themselves whether (based on these points) they think that the UN is an "effective body working towards International Cooperation". Be able to use the Historical Context to '**INFORM**' that judgment.

### Common Mistake

It's no use knowing everything about the structure of the UN if you don't have a specific 'Case Study' you can cite (use in the exam) which illustrates how the UN worked 'on the ground'. Always link the 'Abstract' to the 'Particular'

