

Strengthening United Nations Peace Operations through the Establishment of a Global Peace Executive Council

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Abstract

The United Nations Security Council's veto power often leads to paralysis during humanitarian crises. This brief article diagnoses these structural limitations of UN peace operations. It proposes the creation of a Global Peace Executive Council (GPEC) within the UN system, featuring a qualified majority voting mechanism and independent financing to enable rapid, decisive action. The conclusion argues that this institutional innovation would enhance the UN's operational effectiveness while preserving its multilateral legitimacy, bridging the gap between mandate and capability in 21st-century conflict response.

Keywords: United Nations, Security Council Reform, Peacekeeping, Global Governance, Veto Power, Humanitarian Intervention

1. The Structural Limitations of UN Peace Operations

The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 to maintain international peace and security, assigning the Security Council the responsibility of adopting decisions that can be binding on all member states (United Nations, n.d.). However, in practice, the UN's ability to respond quickly and effectively to armed crises has been the subject of debate. The consensus-based structure of the Security Council, particularly the veto power of the five permanent members, has on several occasions led to decision-making paralysis, preventing effective action even in the face of

severe humanitarian crises or massive human rights violations (Fassbender, 2000; Khalil & Lavaud, 2024).

UN peacekeeping operations have proven to be a valuable tool for stabilizing regions after armed conflicts or during political transitions. These missions have evolved from simple observers to complex multidimensional operations, with mandates that include the protection of civilians, political support, and facilitation of peace processes (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2024). In many cases, blue helmets have helped stop hostilities, provide logistical support, and back disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes. The history of peacekeeping includes deployments that have significantly contributed to reducing violence and advancing long-term political agreements (Fortna, 2008; United Nations Department of Peace Operations, n.d.).

Nevertheless, the operational record also reveals structural and operational limitations. In situations such as Rwanda, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia, peace forces faced unclear mandates, insufficient resources, or limited political support, which reduced their effectiveness during critical phases of the conflict (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Weiss, 2009). Contemporary missions, even with greater capabilities, continue to face challenges such as ambiguous mandates, complex coordination with local actors, and difficulties in anticipating outbreaks of violence, which can result in delayed or partial responses to emerging crises. These factors indicate that the current UN model, while valuable, does not always manage to respond with the speed demanded by modern conflicts, especially when Security Council paralysis prevents timely executive decisions (Boutellis, 2010; Khalil & Lavaud, 2024).

In addition to operational challenges, there is broad consensus in the specialized literature that the very structure of the Security Council limits its adaptive capacity. The veto power, originally conceived to ensure the cooperation of major powers after World War II, has become a tool that can block decisions not aligned with the

particular interests of permanent members, even when there is broad consensus among the majority of other member states (Fassbender, 2000; Weiss, 2009). This dynamic has led to situations of political stalemate in the face of global humanitarian crises or protracted conflicts, where the absence of a unified decision has prevented the collective action expected under the mandate of the UN Charter (United Nations General Assembly, 1950).

2. Proposal for establishing the Global Peace Executive Council (GPEC)

Faced with these limitations, and in light of emerging proposals for alternative structures with greater executive capacity, it is necessary to explore hybrid models that preserve the legitimacy of the multilateral system while incorporating more agile decision-making and action mechanisms. A viable proposal put forward by the author consists of creating a Global Peace Executive Council (GPEC), an entity situated within the UN institutional framework but endowed with procedures that reduce the typical impediments of traditional consensus and enable more effective interventions in contexts of humanitarian crisis or threats to peace (Khalil & Lavaud, 2024; Weiss, 2009).

The GPEC would have a clear and automatic mandate to act in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, state governance collapse, or massive humanitarian crisis. To avoid paralysis caused by the veto, this body would adopt decisions by a reinforced qualified majority (for example, 70–75% of its members' votes) and would only allow a veto if at least two permanent members concurred in opposition. This mechanism offers a balance between operational effectiveness and political checks, reducing the possibility of unilateral blockages without completely eliminating balancing mechanisms among major powers (Fassbender, 2000).

Operationally, the GPEC would have the authority to deploy multinational forces under a clear framework of International Humanitarian Law, temporarily administer territories during stabilization processes, and implement civil protection and reconstruction programs. In addition, each intervention would be subject to defined

deadlines and mandatory strategies for transferring authority to legitimate governments or local democratic structures, avoiding the indefinite prolongation of executive operations in sovereign territories (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Fortna, 2008).

The financing of this council would be independent of the regular UN budget, supported by contributions proportional to the GDP of member states and supplemented by an emergency fund that enables immediate response to unforeseen crises. This financial structure would ensure sustainability and sufficient resources, which are key to rapid and sustained action capacity (Boutellis, 2010).

3. A More Effective and Legitimate Peace System

By combining multilateral legitimacy with operational flexibility, the GPEC could provide a more effective tool for stopping conflicts, protecting civilians, and stabilizing regions in crises that demand urgent responses. This proposal does not seek to replace the UN but to strengthen it, adapting its institutional architecture to the challenges of the 21st century. Reforms of this type would make it possible to overcome the current limits of collective action, reducing the gap between political mandates and operational capabilities, and building a more dynamic, accountable, and effective international peace system (Fortna, 2008; Khalil & Lavaud, 2024; United Nations Security Council, 2000; Weiss, 2009).

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