



Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2021 West Texas A&M Model United Nations Conference!

The following pages are designed to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated in our committees for the 2021 session. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates, formal and informal caucuses, and the WTMUNC experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers. We encourage you to learn all you can about your two topics first and then study your country with regard to the selected topics. Please remember that all committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both the listed topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

WTMUNC Secretariat Team

[cmacaulay@wtamu.edu](mailto:cmacaulay@wtamu.edu)

## Topic Preparation Guide

### United Nations Security Council – India-Pakistan

#### **United Nations Security Council (Background Guide on UNSC)**

---

The United Nations held its first meeting in 1946. The UNSC is one of the most important bodies in the United Nations. The UNSC is given the role of maintaining peace and security through peacekeeping operations, international sanctions and military actions. Its five “permanent” or P-5 members are the USA, France, China, Russia, and United Kingdom, all of which are both permanently on the UNSC, while also possessing “veto” power to defeat any resolution. There are also ten non-permanent members that are elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly. Nine or more of the fifteen UNSC members need to vote affirmative on a resolution to pass without any veto from the P5 members.

#### **Topic Background**

---

The Nagorno-Karabakh dispute is based on competing ethnic claims, and began in earnest during the period of the Russian Revolution. The emergent governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan both laid claim to the Nagorno-Karabakh region – historically part of Azeri governance, but ethnically Armenian in character. Initially more heterogeneous, a brief war in 1920 saw both sides commit massacres and other human rights violations. Armenia was defeated in the war but maintained its claim, until both Armenia and Azerbaijan were conquered and integrated into the Soviet union in 1921.

During Soviet rule, the dispute was muted by the fact that this became an internal border, and Azeris and Armenians were free to travel between the disputed regions without hindrance. Administratively, the Soviets chose to maintain the region as part of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic, but as an autonomous region, reflecting its ethnically Armenian population.

As the Soviet Union began to collapse, Armenian and Azeri nationalists did not wait until independence to act. Conflict began in 1988 but escalated upon the collapse of the USSR in

1991, lasting until 1994. Armenia ultimately prevailed, setting up an autonomous “Artsakh Republic” in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, supporting this republic’s desire to be independent from Azerbaijan – and eventually join Armenia. Azerbaijan did not accept this reality and merely agreed to a ceasefire, continuing to contest its claim and refusing to recognize the independence of the Artsakh Republic and its Armenian majority. Armenia occupied not just the Artsakh Republic, but also parts of Azerbaijan that it previously had no claim to, including some areas with Azeri majorities.

Additional clashes have characterized the region, with violence breaking out again throughout the early 2010’s, most recently leading to the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War that has seen the worst fighting since 1994. A peace deal, brokered by Russia, saw Armenia lose some territory and make concessions, but the dispute remains ongoing. Azerbaijan has relied on the support of Turkey, Armenia’s longtime rival, while Armenia has enjoyed greater Western support, especially from the Armenian diaspora. Russia has traditionally supported both sides in the conflict, though recent efforts have primarily benefitted Armenia.

### **Past International Action**

---

The international community has been limited in its ability to intervene in the region, in part due to the strong influence of Russia, and Russia’s perception of the region as within its sphere of influence.

In 1993, the United Nations Security Council passed four resolutions: 822, 853, 874, and 884. All such resolutions called for a ceasefire and negotiations between the two warring states. The UNSC also called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to withdraw occupying forces from territory internationally recognized as belonging to both states – but has remained neutral on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh’s ownership itself.

The UNSC has endorsed and worked closely with the “OSCE Minsk Group,” which is comprised of the nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as Belarus, Germany, Finland, Italy, Sweden, Turkey, Russia, the USA, and France. This group has worked to further efforts at both a ceasefire and a lasting solution to the conflict.

## Possible Solutions

---

The United Nations Security Council stands poised to act to ensure a lasting peace, but any realistic solution would likely need to rely heavily on Russian support to avoid Russia's veto given its strong interests in the region.

In the short term, the UNSC is positioned to provide third party arbitration and military assistance to the warring parties. The use of aid, sanctions, or peacekeepers in some combination could help to deter future conflict, maintain current borders, and build trust in the region. This will need to overcome Azerbaijan's mistrust of the West (and increasingly, Russia), and would likely need to involve other regional powers and neighbors to be effective. Limited attempts to ensure both nations withdraw from other occupied territories may also prove an effective start.

Perhaps the most important question underlying the dispute is whether Armenia or Azerbaijan's claim to the region is stronger, the answer to which lies on the degree to which ethnic sovereignty is held above international norm and historic ownership. A plebiscite in the region would almost certainly see the denizens vote in favor of the Armenians, but likely anger Azerbaijan and set a precedent for other nations. An alternative might be an autonomous republic or some sort of self-government within Azerbaijan – which may or may not be acceptable, or sufficient, for residents or Armenia.

### *Guiding Questions*

1. Does the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict directly affect your nation? If so, to what extent?
2. Identify similar territorial disputes throughout history. How were these conflicts resolved? Were permanent solutions established?
3. What potential solutions do Armenia and Azerbaijan have outside of military engagement?
4. What types of capabilities should the UNSC enforce within the region to prevent future violent acts within the region?
5. How can the UNSC act in a way that respects Russia's historic influence and perceived primacy in the region?
6. Which is more important – historical ownership of a territory, or ethnic and religious sovereignty?

