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UNITED NATIONS

Security Council

TOPIC 1	Addressing the Threats to International Peace and Security Arising from the Russia–Ukraine Conflict
TOPIC 2	Assessment of the limitations and lack of effective action by major powers in addressing the humanitarian crisis and alleged violations of international law in the Gaza Strip
DATE	**October 19-20 2026**
CHAIRS	**Gabriela Murcia Garcia · Gabriela Martinez Martínez**

2. Letter from the Chairs

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the Security Council of the United Nations. We are Gabriela Martínez and Gabriela Murcia, and we will be your chairs.

This year the Council will debate two conflicts that have tested the United Nations: the war between Russia and Ukraine and the crisis in the Gaza Strip. We expect a serious and respectful debate in which each delegation defends its country's position with solid arguments and proposes solutions that can actually be adopted. In this committee, a good resolution is not the most ambitious one, but the one that gets nine votes and no veto.

This guide is a starting point. The information is current as of 30 September 2026, so please follow the news until the day of the conference. If there are any questions, delegates may request the floor for point of clarification.

3. Introduction to the Committee

The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and is the only UN body whose decisions are binding on all Member States. It has 15 members: five permanent members with veto power (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) and ten members elected for two-year terms, which in 2026 are Bahrain, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Liberia, Pakistan, Panama and Somalia. Affected States that are not members may take part in meetings without a vote.

Under Chapter VI of the Charter, the Council can investigate disputes and recommend ways to settle them. Under Chapter VII, it can determine that a threat to the peace exists and adopt binding measures, such as demanding a ceasefire, imposing sanctions or arms embargoes and, as a last resort, authorizing the use of force. It can also create peace operations, refer situations to the International Criminal Court and request advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice. A resolution needs nine votes in favour and no negative vote from a permanent member; an abstention does not count as a veto. The Council cannot put States or individuals on trial, has no army of its own, and traditional peace operations require the consent of the parties, so proposals must respect these limits.

4. Presentation of the Topic

Topic 1. Since 24 February 2022, Russia has waged a full-scale invasion of Ukraine and now controls about one fifth of its territory. The conflict threatens international peace because a permanent member

of the Council used force to annex another State's territory, because the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the largest in Europe, operates in a war zone, and because Russian drones have entered the airspace of NATO countries. The committee must identify these threats and propose measures that can be adopted despite Russia's veto power.

Topic 2. After the Hamas attack of 7 October 2023, which killed about 1,200 people in Israel and took 251 hostages, Israel launched an offensive on Gaza in which, according to the local Ministry of Health, more than 74,000 Palestinians have been killed (Associated Press, 2026). For two years the Council was blocked by the vetoes of its permanent members, and the resolutions it did adopt were not fully implemented. The committee must assess why the major powers failed to respond effectively to the humanitarian crisis and the alleged violations of international law, and what the Council can do to correct this. This topic will also include the evaluation of the recommendations from UNICEF's Topic 1.

5. Historical Background

Topic 1. Ukraine became independent in 1991 and in 1994 gave up its nuclear arsenal in exchange for commitments by Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom to respect its borders (Budapest Memorandum). In 2014 Russia annexed Crimea and backed armed separatists in the Donbas; the Minsk agreements, endorsed by resolution 2202 (2015), were never implemented. In February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine and vetoed the draft resolution demanding its withdrawal; months later it annexed four more Ukrainian regions. In 2023 the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin over the deportation of Ukrainian children. Since 2025 the United States has acted as a mediator: it promoted resolution 2774, which calls for a swift end to the conflict without mentioning Ukraine's territorial integrity, and it has pushed talks and peace plans that have not produced a ceasefire.

Topic 2. Israel occupied Gaza in 1967. In 2005 it withdrew its troops and settlers but kept control of the borders, airspace and sea. Hamas has governed Gaza since 2007, and Israel and Egypt have maintained a blockade ever since. After 7 October 2023, the United States vetoed six draft resolutions calling for humanitarian pauses or a ceasefire, and Russia and China vetoed two US drafts (United Nations, n.d.). In 2024 the International Court of Justice ordered provisional measures against Israel in the genocide case brought by South Africa, and the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu, Yoav Gallant and the military chief of Hamas. In 2025 famine was confirmed in Gaza Governorate. In October 2025 a ceasefire began under the US 20-point plan, which the Council endorsed in resolution 2803.

6. Current Situation

Topic 1. The war is in its fifth year and Russia is advancing slowly in the Donbas. Between January and August 2026 the UN verified 2,222 civilians killed and 13,058 injured, 55% more than in the same

period of 2025 (HRMMU, 2026), and there are 3.7 million internally displaced people and 5.9 million refugees (USA for UNHCR, 2026). In August the Zaporizhzhia plant lost its last external power line and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had to negotiate a local ceasefire to repair it; in February the New START treaty, which limited the nuclear arsenals of Russia and the United States, expired. In September US envoys met Putin and Zelensky, but Russia still demands that Ukraine hand over the entire Donbas and give up NATO membership, and Ukraine rejects this (House of Commons Library, 2026).

Topic 2. The ceasefire allowed the release of the hostages and more aid, but it is fragile: by 18 September 2026, 1,386 Palestinians had been killed since it began, more than 300 of them children (UNSCO, 2026), while Israel reports violations by Hamas. Israel controls more than half of the Strip and Hamas has not handed over its weapons. Almost the entire population remains displaced, and in August food rations were cut to 75% of minimum needs (OCHA, 2026). The Board of Peace and the International Stabilization Force created under resolution 2803 are moving slowly because there is no agreement on whether Hamas must disarm first or Israel must withdraw first. The case before the International Court of Justice will not reach a decision on the merits before 2029 (SAnews, 2026).

7. Key Actors

Russia is a party to the war and a permanent member; it blames the conflict on NATO expansion and demands territorial concessions. Ukraine defends its territorial integrity and seeks security guarantees, the return of deported children and justice for war crimes. The United States has been the main mediator on Ukraine since 2025 and is Israel’s main ally: it cast six vetoes on Gaza and led the ceasefire plan. China declares itself neutral on Ukraine, calls for addressing the security concerns of all parties and criticizes US action on Gaza. France and the United Kingdom support Ukraine, propose security guarantees after a ceasefire and recognized the State of Palestine in 2025.

Israel says it acts in self-defence, rejects accusations of genocide and demands that Hamas disarm before it withdraws. Hamas, responsible for the 7 October attack, makes its disarmament conditional on Israeli withdrawal. The State of Palestine is a UN observer State seeking full membership. Türkiye, Qatar and Egypt act as mediators. The IAEA, OCHA and UNRWA respond to the emergencies, while the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court examine the alleged violations. Colombia, a Council member, changed its position in 2026: its new government restored relations with Israel and withdrew its intervention in the case before the International Court of Justice (The Jerusalem Post, 2026).

8. Perspectives and Points of Contention

Topic 1. The main disagreement is whether to stop the war with a ceasefire along the current front lines, even if Russia keeps occupied territory, or to demand full respect for Ukraine’s borders so that the

use of force is not rewarded. Other debates include whether the “root causes” claimed by Russia should be addressed, what security guarantees Ukraine would receive, whether peace should include trials and reparations, and whether Russia, as a party to the conflict, should abstain from voting (Article 27(3) of the Charter).

Topic 2. Many States believe the vetoes prevented the protection of civilians and propose limiting the veto in cases of mass atrocities; the United States replies that the vetoed drafts did not condemn Hamas and that direct diplomacy, not the Council, achieved the ceasefire. There is also disagreement over whether the events amount to genocide, as a UN commission of inquiry concluded in 2025 and as Israel and the United States reject; over arms sales to the parties; over the role of UNRWA; and over whether the framework of resolution 2803 respects the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination.

9. Previous UN Action

Topic 1. Because of the Russian veto, the Council has only adopted resolution 2623 (2022), a procedural resolution that referred the matter to the General Assembly, and resolution 2774 (2025). The Assembly adopted non-binding resolutions condemning the aggression and rejecting the annexations (ES-11/1 and ES-11/4), and in 2025 it demanded the return of Ukrainian children. The UN and Türkiye brokered the Black Sea Grain Initiative (2022–2023), and the IAEA has kept staff at Zaporizhzhia since 2022.

Topic 2. The Council adopted resolutions 2712 (2023), on humanitarian pauses and the protection of children; 2720 (2023), on humanitarian aid; 2728 (2024), which demanded a ceasefire that was not respected; 2735 (2024), on a ceasefire plan; and 2803 (2025), which endorsed the 20-point plan (United Nations in Palestine, 2025). The International Court of Justice issued provisional measures and two advisory opinions on the occupation and on Israel’s obligation to facilitate UN aid. UNRWA, OCHA and UNICEF sustain the humanitarian response despite access restrictions.

10. Limitations and Challenges of the Committee

The main limitation is the veto: Russia can block any decision on Ukraine, and the United States, Russia and China have blocked texts on Gaza. The Council has no means of its own to enforce its decisions, and several resolutions were adopted without follow-up mechanisms or consequences. Observer or peace missions need the consent of the parties, and the most important negotiations on both conflicts take place outside the UN. In addition, the Council is not a court and cannot decide whether genocide or war crimes took place.

11. Guiding Questions

1. Which specific threats arising from the Russia–Ukraine conflict (nuclear, regional, maritime, humanitarian) can the Council address without a prior agreement on territory?
2. Should the Council support a ceasefire along the current front lines even if it does not resolve Ukraine's territorial integrity?
3. What role could the UN play in verifying a possible ceasefire in Ukraine?
4. How can the Council act on the deportation of Ukrainian children without the text being vetoed?
5. Why were the resolutions adopted on Gaza not fully implemented, and what should a new resolution include to avoid this?
6. Should the use of the veto be limited in situations of mass atrocities?
7. How can humanitarian access in Gaza be guaranteed without ignoring Israel's security concerns?
8. What oversight should the Council exercise over the Board of Peace and the International Stabilization Force?

12. Recommendations for Further Research

Each delegation should research how its country has voted on both topics in the Council and the General Assembly and what it has said in recent meetings (press.un.org). It is also useful to study Chapters VI and VII of the Charter; the concepts of aggression, self-defence, territorial integrity, international humanitarian law, genocide and crimes against humanity; and documents such as resolutions 2774 and 2803, the orders of the International Court of Justice in South Africa v. Israel, and reports by OCHA, the IAEA and Security Council Report.

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