

Study Guide
ZAMUN 2020
Security Council



Agenda Item: Iran Crisis

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1. Letter from the Presidency

1.1. Matej Sedlár

Dear delegates,

I am extremely glad to welcome you to ZAMUN 2020! My name is Matej Sedlár and during this conference, I'll be the president of the United Nations Security Council. During your stay in Žilina, we'll discuss one of the most important topics, that were presented on the international forum this year, a topic which has been memed all over the internet, the vastly complex Iran crisis, upon which you'll try your best at debate, argumentation and problem solving. From the situation of the Iranian folk, to uranium enrichment and sanctions, a great amount of knowledge is needed for you to succeed. This topic is also particularly interesting because of the unpredictability, that comes with resolving a currently foregoing issue. Who knows what will happen in the days left until the conference begins? Maybe even during the conference itself we'll witness a huge twist, an action that stirs up the region as a whole.

Despite the toughness that comes with such an issue, we sincerely hope you will truly immerse yourselves into the topic and enjoy the session, as that is what an MUN is about. No arguments on a personal level or bursting with anger in the committee room. An MUN is about the experience, the community, making new contacts, presumably friends and most importantly enjoying the time and declaring it a time well-spent.

1.2. Lara Schummer

Honourable delegates,

I am pleased to welcome you at ZAMUN 2020! My name is Lara Schummer and I am very excited to announce that I will be this year's co-president of the Security Council. Having a passion for international relations and global politics, the UN Security Council has always been my favourite UN council, hence I hope I will be able to share my enthusiasm with all of you.

The year 2020 has started in quite an unexpected way with the assassination of the Iranian general Qassim Soleimani. For many years, diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Iran have not been optimal and tensions between the two nations have worsened dramatically following the occurrences of early 2020. At this year's Security Council, you will be discussing this very topical issue, how it will evolve and what could be done to prevent a potential escalation.

We hope that this study guide will be helpful for you to get a broader overview of this complex topic that will be treated during our committee sessions. We strongly encourage you to do further research and deepen your knowledge about the issue to be able to fully contribute to the debates. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Matej or me. We are eager to help!

I am looking forward to meeting you and I wish you the best of luck for your research!

Yours sincerely,

Security Council Co-President, Lara Schummer

2. Comprehensive description of the committee

The Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, established by the Charter of the United Nations, Chapter III. Article 7 as a subsidiary organization. However, it is sovereign and, for the most part, unaccountable to other UN institutions.

Its primary functions are the maintenance of international peace and security, the identification and tackling of threats to it, the promotion of international cooperation and the coordination of international and UN efforts. It must also approve any amendments to the UN Charter, effectively meaning its powers could only be curbed with its own approval. All of the competences as well as the composition of the Security Council are anchored in the Charter of the United Nations, Chapters V. - VIII., articles 23 - 54.

The Security Council consists of five permanent members (P5 - USA, UK, France, China and Russia), and of ten other members elected for overlapping two-year terms. P5 countries have Veto power in substantial votes and may stop any Security Council decision, as this act is intended to prevent the Security Council from going against the interests of the global players, but often ends up, unfortunately, disrupting the productivity of the Council. The Presidency of the council rotates between the current members on a monthly basis.

2.1. Functions and powers

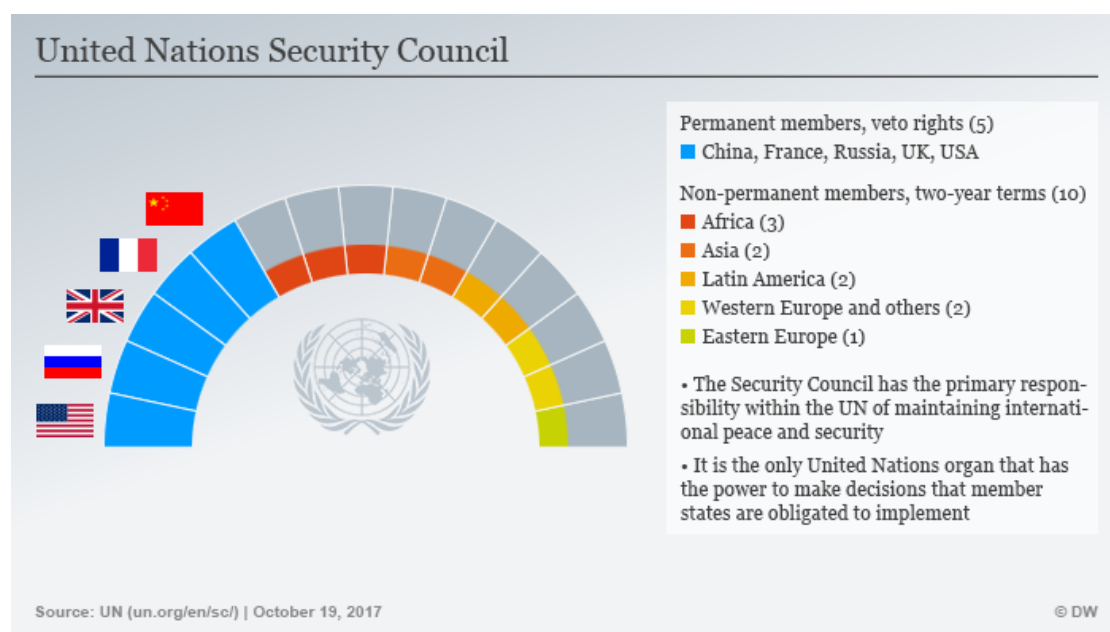
The primary responsibilities of the members of the Security Council are to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations. Furthermore, the Security Council determines if the issues or disputes, that are typically submitted to the Council by its members, present a threat to international peace, or their progression may distort the current state in the region. Another duty of the Security Council is to act as an international mediator, to help resolve the conflicts between nations in a peaceful way, to guide the nations towards a very difficult agreement or to discharge the friction in the regions affected by a particular conflict. Last but not least, the Security Council, being superior to all the other UN bodies,

except the General Assembly, might call upon an immediate military action in the region by involving the UN Peacekeeping forces. The Council is also able to request advisory opinions or help from the other main UN bodies, as well as from the International Court of Justice, concerning any land or personnel disputes, with all of the acts violating the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide included.

2.2. Procedure and protocol

It is possible to go around the Council and its Veto through a procedure known as Uniting for Peace colloquially named so after General Assembly resolution 377, which allows the GA to seize a matter from the Security Council if it is unable to act because of Veto powers. UfP may be invoked by any seven members of the Council, or by a simple majority of all member states. However, on ZAMUN 2020, the UfP can not be revoked.

One of the most important procedures of the Security Council is the ability to become Seized on a matter. Once this happens, no other UN body may address or discuss the matter. Security Council resolutions typically finish with the clause “Decides to remain seized on the matter.”



3. Introduction to the topic

Tensions between the United States and Iran existed since the Islamic revolution. The diplomatic relations of the countries were at ground zero, following the sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States in 1995. Since then, the aforementioned tensions were put on hold, however, in 2019, they have returned in a much stronger way than ever before.

Iran has historically had an interest in nuclear weapons. At first, it was the initiative of a western country, which gave birth to the country's nuclear program, however the change of regime changed the relationship between Tehran and the western world. After decades of sanctions and failed negotiations, an agreement, the JCPOA, was finally reached in 2015. It traded a relief from sanctions against temporary restrictions of the Iranian nuclear program. Already at the time of signing, the deal was often criticized as weak, unfair and ineffective. With a change of power in the United States, the agreement lost its first signatory in May of 2018. The country proceeded to re-impose sanctions months later. But they are not the only country unsatisfied with the results. In order to secure a long-term solution to the issue of the Iranian nuclear program, a new deal must be made.

3.1. History

Pre-2019

After the report of the CIA, regarding the current situation on Middle East has been received by the US government, the US, noting that Iran is trying to make its way into the position of a leader of the Arab states on Middle East by establishing territorial dominance, as well as the control of the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic point in terms of oil shipment, decided to forego an action and strengthened their positions around the territory of Iran by deploying a great amount of military assets to their preexisting bases. The report also included photos of military devices strapped onto various ships in the Persian Gulf, together with proclaimed threats of attack, sent supposedly by the Iranian militia to the US bases in Iraq.

June 2019

On 20. of June, 2019, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a branch of the Iranian militia shot down a US automated surveillance drone, claiming that the drone has interfered with the border of the Iranian airspace. Iran denied any seeking of war, however proclaimed that they are ready to defend themselves, if necessary. The United States responded by stating that the drone was present only in the international airspace over the Hormuz Strait, not interfering the territorial boundaries of Iran, which was followed by a reveal of the GPS coordinates of the path of the drone.

After the action, the US President Donald Trump demanded a crisis UNSC session, to solve the dispute.

On 22. of June, President Trump had approved the release of a malware designed to stop the Iranian missile control centers from functioning, this disabling the launch of any missiles the Iranian government possesses. After a violent response from Iran, the US sought a strong and supportive partner in the region, and formed bilateral agreements with the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in order to eliminate the “nuclear terror” as which was Iran projected.

On 24. of June, the US government announced new sanctions against Iran, aimed at industrial destruction of the country, altogether with disabling the operations of the Revolutionary Guard Corps. In the same month, suspicions about the ties of the Iranian government to the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda, by giving the terrorists safe haven in the country were stated by the US Congress. The US continued to deploy military personnel and assets in the region.

July 2019

The USS Boxer strike defensively in order to stop the Iranian drone that was closing on the ship, whilst being at approx. 900 m from it. Iran denied the failure of any of its drones and warned the US about the upcoming total war.

September - November 2019

In November, the Iranian government raised the price of gasolines and imposed a rationing policy on its own civilians. This led to an outbreak of protests amongst the Iranian populace, which was met with a rather violent suppression of them all. The protesters demanded the resignation of the Iranian president, the western powers supported the claims.

December 2019

A missile attack on the K1 military base in Iraq, which houses countless US personnel was conducted. The forces at the base stated that the attack was made by the Hezbollah movement and was followed by a counterattack on the Hezbollah forces in Iraq and Syria.

Iran-led military forces on December 31st stormed the US Embassy in Iraq, by which they've violated the international diplomatic protocol, together with causing various damages to the building itself.

January 2020

On 3. of January 2020, the United States assassinated the Iranian General Qasem Soleimani by an airstrike. Soleimani was the head of the Revolutionary Guards and was one of the most powerful people in Iran. This killing was a major escalation in the long-lasting tensions between the two countries. Iran responded with a state-proclaimed mourning and again a threat of war. The mediator between two opposing blocks was Switzerland, which proceed to deliver the messages.

The Government of Iran issued a statement based on a new bill that was passed, which named all of the US Army forces together with the pentagon employees "terrorists" and condemned aid in any form delivered to those.

Iran also started the operation "Martyr Soleimani", during which a dozen missiles were launched to strike the US bases as well as strategic points in Iran and Iraq, including the Al-Assad base, where more than 1500 soldiers were present. No casualties were reported.

Iran continued to threaten other nations, supporting the US policies throughout their state media, by the statement "We are warning all American allies, who gave their bases to its terrorist army, that any territory that is the starting point of aggressive acts against Iran will be targeted."

The anti-government protests continued since then, condemning the actions taken by Iran and demanding stability and economic reforms in the country.

3.2. Regional setting

The conflict is set in the region of Middle East with Iran - its centerpiece in the middle of the map. The US possesses military bases along the borders of the country in Afghanistan, Iraq, Armenia as well as the UAE and SA.



3.3. The Iran Deal

Since 2006, the UNSC has passed six resolutions on Iran's nuclear program; each attempted to increase pressure on Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities by enforcing UN sanctions. These sanctions were targeted towards officials, branches of the government, and businesses that are linked to the nuclear program.

A great number of nations opposed Iran's nuclear program, whilst others, such as the US and EU, had the legitimacy to enforce unilaterally imposed sanctions.

Another significant shift in the negotiations happened in 2009. The IAEA received information from Iran that it was building another enrichment facility, called the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plan. This proved that Iran was not complying with the regulations of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, which it ratified in 1970.

Negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 (Germany) resumed towards the end of 2009. Despite the agreement of the P5+1, Iran rejected it.

Its following proposal of an exchange for fuel in phases was rejected by the IAEA and the US, as it did not align with previous negotiations. By February 2010, President Ahmadinejad claimed Iran has 20% enriched uranium. Along with media reporting that Iran test-fired short and long-range missiles, the world raised their fear that the country could soon obtain nuclear weapons atop payloads such as missiles. This announcement, along with plans for additional facilities, sparked further tensions with the international community and the US imposed more restrictive sanctions. In 2010, the UNSC also approved of further sanctions in addition to the current US and EU sanctions. Iran attempted to restart negotiations based on the fuel swap arrangement but failed in its endeavour. It then pursued a fuel swap in cooperation with Brazil and Turkey. Following this, the P5+1 pursued further negotiation, which resumed in Geneva in December 2010. Although the talks continued for another round in Istanbul in January 2011, they failed again. This was due to Iran's condition that all economic sanctions were to be lifted before changes to the nuclear program could be discussed or implemented.

Members of the UNSC were concerned, however, when voting on their next resolution on the situation, both Russia and China vetoed it.

Due to the UNSC no longer being a viable platform to stop Iran's nuclear activity, talks continued outside the UN between Iran, P5+1 and IAEA during 2012. The P5+1 demanded the enrichment to stop before lifting sanctions, as well as greater transparency. Although Iran insisted on the process happening simultaneously, discussions ceased.

Finally, in July of 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed by six of the world's major countries, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany, Iran as well as the European Union. Later, the deal was supported by UNSC resolution 2231, therefore largely being approved by most major states. The JCPOA imposed several temporary restrictions on the nuclear program of Iran in exchange for relief of nuclear-related sanctions from the US, EU and UNSC.

The agreement had an immediate impact on the Iranian economy, which depended mainly on oil production. The country possesses roughly 10% of the world's oil reserves and 18% of the world's natural gas reserves. Iran's production of oil barrels has risen significantly following the negotiations.

The JCPOA imposed several restrictions on the Iranian nuclear program, among which are a cap on the amount of first generation centrifuges the immediate dismantle of all advanced centrifuges, as well as a total cease of production of mild-enriched uranium.

While those restrictions are effective in limiting Tehran's nuclear capabilities, they are temporary ones. All nuclear restrictions, imposed on Iran as part of the JCPOA will be lifted in 2031, some of them before that date.

In May of 2018, Donald J. Trump, president of the United States, announced the country's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement, calling it 'weak' and citing its temporary effects as one reason. Months later, in August and November of 2018 respectively, the US re-imposed sanctions on Iran.

Whilst all other signatories of the JCPOA are following the deal, it has lost its original purpose. Without the function of preventing sanctions, the agreement is in danger.



US Secretary of State during the negotiations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Vienna

4. Closing remarks

Dear Delegates,

Please be aware of the fact that this study guide is merely an introduction to the topic, and your research should go far beyond even the recommended sources. We still request you to research most of the background on your own. Note, that your performance will also depend on your general knowledge and the knowledge of previous event with the same nature. This committee surely is a tough one to prepare on, therefore we advise you to look deeper into the historical context as well as to study the regional bailiwick and relations between the countries of the Middle East, in terms of both the economy and diplomacy. More information about the conference as well as the deadlines for the position paper will be provided shortly after the study guide. We wish you to prepare well and debate fruitfully.

5. Questions to consider

What measures shall be taken in order to stabilize the situation in the region?

How to improve the humanitarian situation in Iran?

How will the new Iran Deal look like, in what matter will Iran be sanctioned?

How to prevent the same acts in the future?

All of the matters mentioned in the description of the committee mentioned on the ZaMUN website.

6. ***Recommended material***

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran_nuclear_deal_framework
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03JdbYggUTs>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShtqznV4rbM>
4. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/understanding-iran-deal-coming-180509072633096.html>
5. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/understanding-iran-deal-coming-180509072633096.html#trump-pull>
6. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/26/world/middleeast/iran-plane-crash-coverup.html>

We ask you to find more information on your own.