



SOCHUM

UNSC - 2025

**PREVENTING NUCLEAR WAR ESCALATION
AMID GLOBAL CONFLICTS**

**Chairs: Maria Jose Ospina and Sofia
Murillo**

INDEX

Disclaimer: This UNSC study guide, on Preventing Nuclear war escalation, amid Global Conflicts, is merely a guide for your research, and it shall not replace it. This being said, the contents of the study guide include:

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LETTER FROM YOUR CHAIR:

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to this year's SPMUN Security Council Committee. My Name is María José, and I'm delighted to be this year's Security Council's chair alongside Sofía. As you might know being a delegate in this committee requires a high level of responsibility and lots of effort. However, you were chosen for a reason; we know your strengths and capabilities, and we expect you to always do your best. We know you will fulfill with great success the task of finding solutions to ensure nuclear security and safeguard the integrity of the nations. Please, always come prepared, do your research, and above all don't be afraid to participate, even if it's your first time in this committee or if you feel insecure or inexperienced. I promise, no one will judge you, and after you participate the first time, the fear will go away little by little.

Currently I'm in my senior year, but the first time I debated was in seventh grade. I didn't fully understand what a Model of United Nations was, and I was assigned the United States in a human rights committee. I was extremely nervous, scared, and it was not perfect at all. However, the experience I gained was incredible; not only did I learn a lot about MUN, but I also got the courage I needed to continue participating in these models. In the end, I ended up getting Best Position Paper, so who's to say what you'll gain from being here!

From here on, I encourage you to do your best, be curious and empathetic. Remember MUN is not only about winning a debate, it's about understanding different perspectives and finding a common ground to ensure the wellbeing of our nations. As this being my last SPMUN, I'm thrilled to be a part of this committee and I'm really excited to be seeing you all during the debates. I encourage you all to have fun with this experience and enjoy every second of it, because it really is an enriching experience for everyone. Also, research as much as you can, that way, it will be easier for you to talk and it will be extremely helpful in understanding the debate. If you have any questions, concerns or need someone to guide you through this process, don't hesitate to contact me or Sofía.

Wishing you the best of luck,
María José Ospina
Chair

LETTER FROM YOUR CO CHAIR:

Dear Delegates

I want to give you all a special welcome to SPMUN 2025 Security Council. It is truly a dream come true to be your co-chair this year. María José and I are honored with the responsibility to be alongside you and be able to guide you in such a special and powerful committee. This year we chose a topic involving nuclear weapons and their danger when misused. Our goal is to make you analyze not only how the technology of these weapons work to put people in danger, but make you reflect on the ethics, historical background, geopolitics, and humanitarian impact that are involved with said weapons. We value all your participation, insight, and ideas. I trust this will be an enriching and pleasant experience for everyone.

Security Council is personally one of the most special MUN committees due to its complexity. It taught me how to thoroughly research, how to write a great position paper and made me want to make a difference in such a difficult world. I hope you find it as interesting as I do and enjoy your overall MUN experience, even if it isn't your first time.

My MUN journey started in seventh grade, and that's when I discovered for the first time that public speaking wasn't so bad. I've gone to different schools for MUN, and it was scary at first, but after a while you relax and enjoy debating. Never be scared to raise your placard to speak; you are in this committee to debate, voice your mind, and try to find a solution.

You were chosen because you have the right qualities to be a great delegate, so be confident in yourself. I recommend you prepare a great opening statement and topic proposals for the agenda; it can really set the tone for your delegation. Follow up with a lot of research on your country's position on nuclear weapons, and the other delegations' positions too. Furthermore, be ready to participate actively in each topic chosen and have a passionate but healthy debate. I also recommend you find common ground when delegations have different opinions or points of view. I hope María José and I can make this the best experience we can; if you ever are in need of help, don't be scared to reach out to either of us.

Best regards
Sofía Murillo
Co-chair

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the primary body of the UN responsible for maintaining international peace and security, as well as:

- Being a center for harmonizing the actions of nations.
- Developing friendly relations among nations.
- Cooperating in solving global problems and in promoting respect for human rights.

The UNSC was created in 1945 after World War II to address the lack of success from the League of Nations in maintaining world peace and security. Unlike most UN committees, the Security Council is not only a deliberative forum but also a decision-making body whose resolutions carry binding authority under the UN Charter. It is composed of 15 member states: five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) with veto power, and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms. This makes the Security Council unique among UN organs, as it can compel action from member states rather than merely issue recommendations.

The current distribution (agreed since 1963) is:		
Regional Group	Number of Seats	
African States	3	
Asia-Pacific States	2	
Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC)	2	
Western European and Other States (WEOG)	2	
Eastern European States	1	

The Security Council’s responsibilities include responding to threats to peace, authorizing peacekeeping operations, imposing sanctions, and, in extreme cases, permitting the use of force to restore stability. It also has the power to establish subsidiary bodies, oversee the enforcement of international treaties, and take urgent measures when crises escalate. Its authority comes directly from the UN Charter of 1945, which grants the Council “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.” Because of this mandate, the Security Council remains the most influential UN organ in addressing military conflicts, nuclear threats, and issues of war and peace.

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

In the context of this conference, the Security Council is tasked with addressing **Preventing Nuclear War Escalation Amid Global Conflicts**. This is an issue that falls squarely under its jurisdiction, as nuclear risks directly threaten not just individual states but international security as a whole. Ongoing disputes between nuclear-armed states, rising tensions in regions such as Eastern Europe, South Asia, and the Korean Peninsula, and the erosion of international non-proliferation norms make the Council the natural venue for this debate. Its decisions have the potential to set legally binding obligations, create monitoring frameworks, and authorize enforcement mechanisms to prevent catastrophic escalations.

The Security Council can take action in several ways. It may adopt resolutions that condemn or prohibit dangerous actions, call for immediate ceasefires, or place restrictions on nuclear programs. It can establish peacekeeping missions to monitor compliance in volatile regions or impose sanctions—economic, military, or diplomatic—against states or groups that defy international law. Additionally, the Council can endorse or strengthen existing international agreements such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or introduce new binding frameworks designed to address contemporary nuclear challenges, including the question of “first use” policies.

Ultimately, the Security Council derives its legitimacy from its unique power to act decisively when peace and security are at stake. While other UN bodies may debate nuclear disarmament or humanitarian concerns, only the Security Council can take immediate measures that carry the force of international law. For this reason, the global community looks to the Security Council to lead in preventing nuclear escalation in today’s conflicts.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC:

Nuclear weapons are the most inhumane, destructive, and treacherous armament ever created. It started with the Manhattan Project in August of 1942, which was created in response to the fear of losing the nuclear race to Germany. This triggered a chain reaction, starting with the mass atrocity of the Hiroshima attack and continuing today, as countries create elaborate nuclear weapon programs, fueling geopolitical instability.

One single bomb can kill thousands of people and create mass panic, but its consequences go way further than that. There are small-term effects such as radiation and carbon monoxide poisoning, severe burns, infrastructural damage, and lack of oxygen. Long-term effects include cancer and genetic damage, atmospheric damage, global climate changes, and beyond. If only one nuclear weapon can create this much consequences, imagine a nuclear war.

The need to put an end to the usage of such destructive weapons roots from the disastrous humanitarian and environmental damage caused, that can drag on for decades. Nuclear weapon programs are known to create animosity between regions; they hog a big amount of resources that could go to better causes like better healthcare, education, structural needs, furthermore vital services that work towards peace and the well being of people. There is the enormous threat that involves terrorist or other rogue groups acquiring these horrible weapons and creating terror, global instability, mass killings and ultimately nuclear war escalation.

The UN has decided to take control over banning or eliminating nuclear weapons for the ultimate end of nuclear war. Thanks to their volatile nature, they are a threat to global safety and peace. Approximately 90,000 to 140,000 lives have been lost due to the Hiroshima attack, with even greater numbers including the injured during this strike, other attacks, or nuclear testing. Efforts to stop said weapons started since 1946 and have yet to cease. Some are the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).



KEY TERMS

THE GLOSSARY IS FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOPIC, HENCE IS NOT NECESSARY TO MEMORIZE.

- **Nuclear Disarmament:** halting the production, proliferation, and testing of nuclear weapons
- **Arms Control:** international regulation of the development, production or testing of weapons to reduce the risk of conflict and promote global security.
- **Arms Race:** competition between nations to know who has the most powerful arms.
- **Disarmament:** the process of decreasing nuclear weapons to maintain global peace
- **Non proliferation:** the endeavor of stopping nations or groups from obtaining nuclear artillery, like the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- **Humanitarian consequences:** catastrophic repercussions of nuclear weapons like radiation, climate disruption, and more.
- **Confidence-Building Measures:** prevent or reduce the occurrence of doubts and suspicions and to improve international cooperation in the field of peaceful biological activities
- **Nuclear Control:** systems that regulates if nuclear weapons are used under the proper authorization and safeguards



KEY TERMS

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- **De-escalation Measures:** diplomatic or political actions that reduce tensions, like ceasefire negotiations.
- **Nuclear Escalation:** situation where conflict intensifies to the use or threat of nuclear artillery.
- **Deterrence:** military strategy where a nation announces a nuclear threat to stop another state from launching a nuclear attack on its vital interest.
- **Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD):** A doctrine during the Cold War stating that if two nuclear powers attacked each other, both would face total destruction.
- **Strategic Stability:** A condition in which no state has an incentive to launch a nuclear strike first, maintaining balance and preventing conflict.
- **Verification Mechanisms:** Systems and procedures used to ensure compliance with arms control or disarmament agreements through inspections, monitoring, and reporting.
- **Crisis Communication Channels:** Direct lines of communication (such as hotlines) between governments to prevent misunderstandings during tense situations.



KEY TERMS

THE GLOSSARY IS FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOPIC, HENCE IS NOT NECESSARY TO MEMORIZE.

- First-use policy: A national defense doctrine permitting the initiation of nuclear weapons use in response to significant threats, even absent a prior nuclear attack.
- Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT): A 1968 international treaty seeking to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote peaceful nuclear cooperation, and advance global nuclear disarmament.
- New START Treaty: A 2010 bilateral agreement between the United States and Russia that limits deployed strategic nuclear warheads and delivery systems, with verification through on-site inspections.
- Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW): A 2017 international accord prohibiting the development, testing, possession, and use of nuclear weapons, aiming for total nuclear disarmament.
- Resolution 255: A 1968 UN Security Council resolution offering security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states under the NPT against nuclear threats or attacks.
- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT): A 1996 treaty banning all nuclear explosions in all environments to halt the advancement of nuclear weapons capabilities.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The threat of nuclear war escalation has been a critical global concern since the mid-20th century, shaped by geopolitical tensions, arms races, and evolving international diplomacy. The problem began in 1945 with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which demonstrated the devastating power of nuclear weapons and ushered in the nuclear age. During the Cold War (1947–1991), the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union led to an intense nuclear arms race, with both superpowers amassing vast arsenals capable of global destruction.

This period saw the emergence of the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), which deterred direct conflict but increased the risk of escalation through proxy wars and crises such as the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. The countries and regions most affected include the United States and Russia, which hold the largest nuclear arsenals; Europe, due to its proximity to the USSR and NATO deployments; South Asia, where India and Pakistan's nuclear capabilities have fueled multiple conflicts; North Korea, whose nuclear program has heightened regional and global tensions; and the Middle East, where Israel's undeclared nuclear capability and Iran's nuclear ambitions contribute to instability. The United Nations has played a pivotal role in addressing this issue through key treaties and resolutions. The 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of global efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and promote disarmament.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1970, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 255, calling for restraint and peaceful resolution of conflicts involving nuclear weapons. The 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) sought to ban all nuclear explosions, although it has yet to enter into force due to non-ratification by key states. More recently, the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly to completely ban nuclear weapons, though nuclear-armed states have not joined. Periodic NPT Review Conferences, such as those in 2000 and 2010, have assessed progress and challenges in disarmament and non-proliferation.

Despite reductions in nuclear arsenals after the Cold War, modernization programs, emerging technologies like hypersonic weapons, and renewed great power rivalries—particularly among the US, Russia, and China—have complicated global stability. Regional conflicts in South Asia, the Korean Peninsula, and the Middle East continue to pose risks of escalation. Diplomatic efforts, including the US-North Korea summits in 2018 and 2019, have aimed to reduce tensions but face significant obstacles.

Overall, the historical trajectory reveals a complex interplay of deterrence, diplomacy, and disarmament efforts, with the United Nations serving as a vital platform for dialogue, treaty-making, and conflict resolution to mitigate the risks posed by nuclear weapons amid ongoing global conflicts.

CURRENT SITUATION

There is an estimated total global inventory of 12,241 warheads. The countries that own said warheads are the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), and Israel. These nations are ready to attack and create a nuclear war if they are threatened. Approximately 9,614 are considered to be potentially operational. An estimated 3,912 of these warheads were deployed with operational forces, including about 2,100 that were kept in a state of high operational alert on ballistic missiles. The USA and Russia own up to 90% of all warheads, and they have programs to modernize their weapons, delivery systems, and production facilities.

China isn't far behind. With their modernization and expansions, they have increased the warheads from 500 to 600 during 2024. Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and North Korea all use missiles that can carry both nuclear and regular warheads, and they're upgrading these systems. Until the mid-2000s, only France, Russia, the UK, and the USA had missiles that could carry multiple nuclear warheads.



Nuclear weapons have created rising tensions since the beginning of time, but in recent years it has gotten worse. In Iran, for example, the USA and Israel launched coordinated attacks on Iran's nuclear bases in June of 2020. Later that same month, Iran suspended their cooperation with the IAEA, just to later restore some monitoring by the IAEA but with no limited timeline.

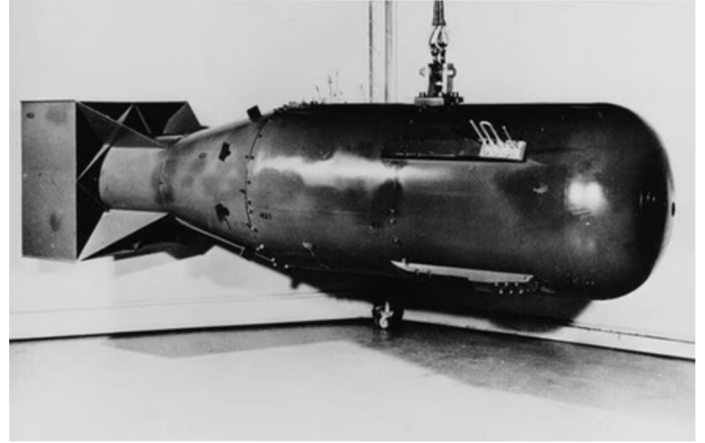
European countries started snapback sanctions due to the fact that they thought that Iran was violating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and Iran backfired by ending said cooperation with the IAEA.

CURRENT SITUATION

Regarding Russia, some of the most pressing issues regarding nuclear weapons and nuclear war are the end of the New START Treaty, which limits the USA's and Russia's strategic nuclear weapons, which expired in February of 2026, and if it isn't renewed or extended, it is expected that Russia will increase its deployed nuclear arsenal by 60%.

In November of 2020, Russia updated its nuclear doctrine to include scenarios where it can attack non-nuclear states backed up by nuclear states, which is Ukraine's case. Ukraine's nuclear security depends largely on the USA thanks to Ukraine not being a nuclear state and Russia seizing the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in March 2022.

Israel has said publicly that it views the possibility of dropping a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip as an option. Israel has yet to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and it isn't one of the official Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS). Yet, it's still estimated to have about 90 nuclear warheads.



Some solutions proposed in recent years are the New START Treaty extension created in 2021, and it is to last until February of 2026. The Treaty of Prohibitions on Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force in 2021. The Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification is an active UN General Assembly resolution that started in 2021 but keeps updating, and it consists of advancements in monitoring and better verification of nuclear weapons.

All of these are great solutions but not as efficient as they are needed to be. For instance, the TPNW has yet to be signed by the countries with the most nuclear power.

PAST ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE CONFLICT

Nuclear war has caused a lot of distress and concern, due to that fact that there has been a big effort to eliminate nuclear weapons through treaties, campaigns, sanctions, verification and monitoring, civil society movements, diplomatic initiatives and negotiations, and a lot more way to terminate nuclear war.

Some solutions that have entered into force are: the New START Treaty, as mentioned before, entered into process in 2011. It limits Russia and the USA to strategic nuclear weapons. Some of its restrictions are: 700 ready-to-use nuclear weapon systems, 1550 bombs attached to said systems, and 800 total weapon systems, including the one not in use. The Treaty of Prohibitions on Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) prohibits the nations that sign it from developing, testing, producing, acquiring, possessing, using, or threatening to use nuclear weapons. It also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the centrepiece of global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), is a international campaign that condemns, stigmatises, and seeks to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. The ICAN won a Nobel Prize for all of its hard work promoting the TPNW and the ban of nuclear weapons in general. Other non-government groups that are in favor of educating about nuclear weapons are Greenpeace, the Pugwash Conference, and Global Zero.

All of these solutions have created an important impact, but we still have to work to eliminate all nuclear weapons to prevent war escalation. There are still nine official nuclear states, which pose a big threat to global security.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Diplomacy and Policy: Preventing the escalation of nuclear war requires renewed diplomatic cooperation and trust-building among nations. To this end, open communication channels between nuclear-armed states should be promoted, in addition to encouraging new arms control negotiations and support mechanisms designed to reduce misunderstandings during global crises. Furthermore, strengthening existing treaties such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and promoting universal participation would reinforce international norms against nuclear use. In this regard, mediation frameworks under the United Nations could also be established so as to de-escalate tensions before they reach a critical point.

Technology and Security: In parallel, technological collaboration plays a crucial role in mitigating nuclear risks. Countries should cooperate to develop advanced monitoring tools that ensure transparency in nuclear activities. Moreover, enhancing cybersecurity systems around nuclear facilities and improving early-warning mechanisms would significantly reduce the chances of accidents or unauthorized launches. Similarly, the exchange of information through secure international channels could help prevent misinterpretations or false alarms that might otherwise escalate into conflict.

International Support and Funding: Equally significant is the provision of financial and logistical support to strengthen global disarmament and prevention efforts. For this purpose, the establishment of a UN-managed assistance program could enable nations to safely dismantle obsolete nuclear arsenals and invest in peaceful energy alternatives. Additionally, economic incentives should be offered to states that take measurable steps toward nuclear reduction or commit to non-proliferation objectives. Consequently, targeted funding for regional peace and security initiatives would further diminish the likelihood of nuclear escalation.

Education and Awareness: Finally, long-term prevention necessitates fostering a global mindset grounded in peace, cooperation, and shared responsibility. Therefore, educational initiatives must raise awareness about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear war. In particular, programs aimed at youth and educators should promote a culture of dialogue, tolerance, and non-violence. Ultimately, encouraging academic and research collaboration in the fields of peace studies, international relations, and security policy would contribute to the development of informed and sustainable solutions for future generations.

BLOCK POSITIONS

Russia

Russia, since the Ukraine war in 2022, has taken steps that increase nuclear risk. Russia strongly believes in the use of nuclear weapons. It possesses approximately 4,309 nuclear warheads for its strategic and non-strategic nuclear forces. The said number might grow due to the expiration of the New START Treaty. They are going through a nuclear modernization process in an attempt to maintain parity with the USA and other armed states.

China

China is quickly growing its nuclear arsenal; for the past five years, it has created its largest nuclear build-up ever. China doubled its armoury from 300 in 2020 to roughly 600 in 2025. It is estimated that by 2030, China will have over 1,000 nuclear weapons. China has never publicly disclosed the size of its nuclear arsenal or much of the infrastructure that supports it. Still, China adheres to the no-first-use policy, maintaining its arsenal in self-defense and deterrence.

France

France maintains the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal, with around 290 warheads. It has taken big steps towards disarmament - including cutting half of their nuclear arsenal since the Cold War; it no longer deploys nuclear weapons through its aircraft carrier. It keeps its nuclear arsenal at the lowest possible level in accordance with the strategic context, but France is still going through a long-term modernization.

United Kingdom

Since the end of the Cold War and 2021, the UK has taken several steps towards disarmament, supporting the NPT. It has withdrawn all of its nuclear weapons systems with the exception of its submarine-launched Trident system. It was expected to have achieved by mid-2020s a 65% reduction in the size of its overall nuclear stockpile since the height of the Cold War.

United States

The US Department of Defence estimates it has 3,700 warheads for delivery by ballistic missiles and aircraft. Around 1,000 warheads per year during the 1990s were disassembled, while in 2023, it dismantled only 69 warheads. They are active participants of the NPT that is about to expire. However even with their modernization attempts, the USA is still losing the nuclear arms race. Progress is going slowly for Washington because of delays, lack of funding, and lack of political prioritization, such as in the Sentinel program.



QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

- What immediate diplomatic steps can the Security Council take to reduce the risk of nuclear escalation in current global conflicts?
- How can the Security Council ensure compliance with existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament treaties (such as the NPT and CTBT)?
- What enforcement mechanisms (e.g., sanctions, peacekeeping missions, arms embargoes) should be used against states threatening nuclear use?
- How should the UNSC address the risk of nuclear weapons being used by unauthorized parties during a conflict?
- What role can nuclear-armed states play in leading de-escalation efforts and promoting strategic stability?
- Should the UNSC support or propose a framework for restricting the modernization of nuclear arsenals during active conflicts?
- How can the Security Council respond to non-state actors or terrorist groups attempting to acquire nuclear materials?
- What responsibilities do non-nuclear states and regional powers have in supporting nuclear de-escalation and global security?

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