

Reforming the UNSC

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Reforming the UNSC: India's Objection to Identity-Based Criteria

Context:

India has strongly objected to proposals that attempt to introduce **religion and faith** as new criteria for representation in a **reformed United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**. India argued that this approach is fundamentally against the globally accepted practice of **regional representation** — the core principle that governs UNSC membership discussions.

This issue is significant in the context of India's long-standing demand for **comprehensive UNSC reforms** to reflect the realities of the **21st century geopolitical order**.

Decoding the Issue:

India highlighted that any attempt to reshape the UNSC without ensuring expansion in both **permanent and non-permanent categories** would undermine the purpose of the reform. Introducing identity-based criteria like **religion and faith** risks setting a **dangerous precedent** and diluting the objective foundation of **geographical balance and fairness** in global representation.

United Nations Security Council: Legal Basis

The UNSC was established under the **United Nations Charter (1945)**. Its structure and responsibilities are defined under **Chapter V (Articles 23-32)**.

- **Article 23:** Defines the Council's composition — **15 members** (5 permanent and 10 non-permanent).
- **Article 24:** Assigns the primary responsibility for **international peace and security** to the UNSC.
- **Article 27:** Grants **veto power to the 5 permanent members (P5)** and mandates **9 out of 15 votes** for decisions on substantive issues.

Composition and Core Functions:

The UNSC is composed of:

- **5 Permanent Members (P5):** USA, Russia, China, UK, and France, each holding **veto power**.
- **10 Non-Permanent Members:** Elected for **2-year terms** by the General Assembly based on **regional representation**, with no immediate re-election.

The Council's key functions include:

- Authorizing **peacekeeping missions, sanctions, and military actions**.
- Addressing **threats to international peace**.
- Approving new **UN members** (subject to General Assembly approval).
- Recommending the appointment of the **UN Secretary-General**.

India's Role in the UNSC:

India has served as a **non-permanent member 8 times**, most recently in **2021-2022**. During its tenure, India has:

- Consistently advocated for **UNSC reforms** to make the Council more democratic and reflective of modern geopolitical realities.
- Pushed for global action against **terrorism**.

India is also part of the **G4 group** (India, Brazil, Germany, Japan), which demands:

- Expansion of **both permanent and non-permanent categories**.
- A model that reflects the fact that India is home to **1.4 billion people** and ranks as the **5th largest economy**.

Divergent Positions on UNSC Reform:

The debate over UNSC reform has two clear positions:

- **G4 Nations:** Demand a comprehensive reform that includes an increase in both **permanent and non-permanent seats**.
- **Uniting for Consensus (UfC) Group:** Comprising **Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Spain, Türkiye, Italy**, the group supports only expanding **non-permanent seats**, proposing a **27-member UNSC** without altering the number of permanent members.

Conclusion:

India's stand against identity-based parameters for UNSC reform highlights its commitment to upholding the principle of **regional and equitable representation**. The debate over the Security Council's structure is a critical element of India's push for reforms that match contemporary global realities and ensure fair representation in key global decision-making bodies.

