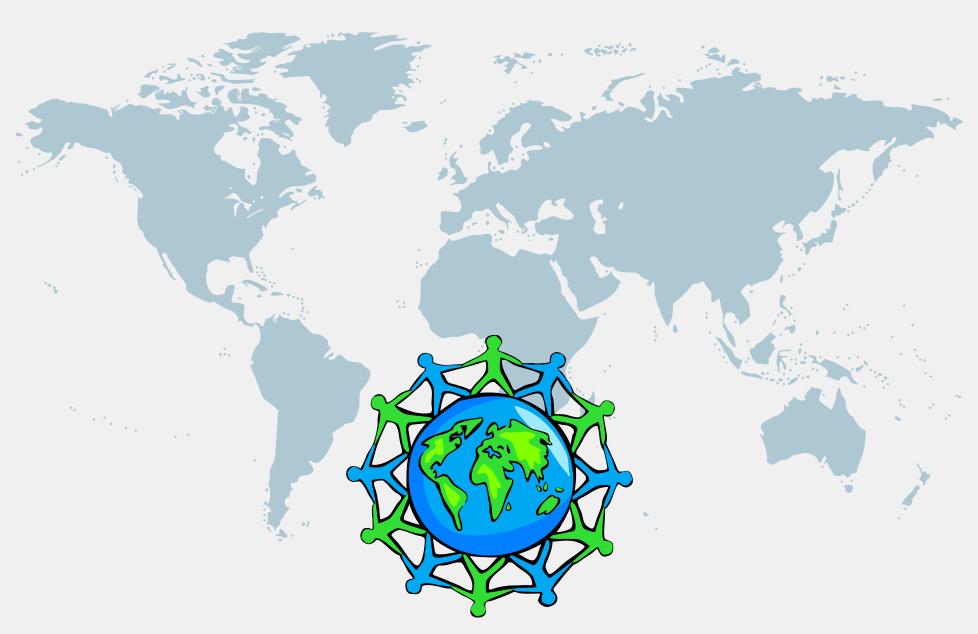




# MODEL UNITED NATIONS

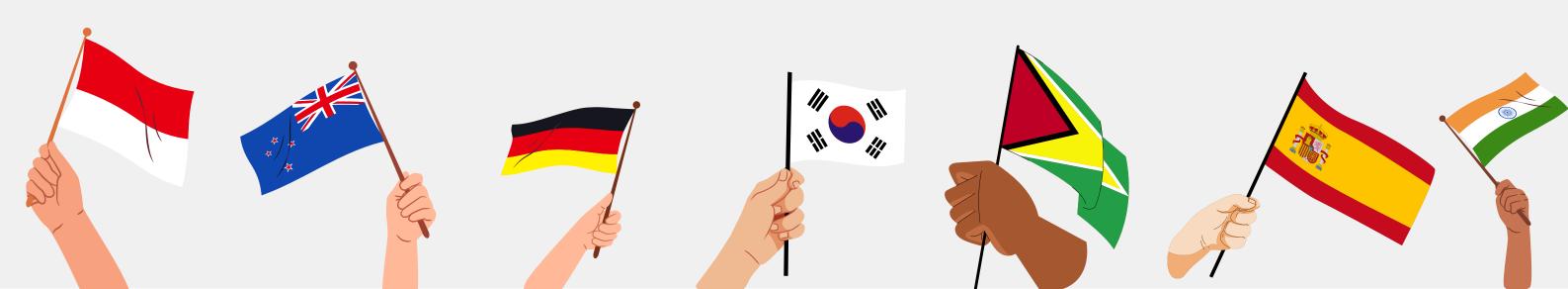


# BACKGROUND GUIDE



Deliberation on the Situation in the Middle East Following the Suez Canal Nationalization Freeze Date- 1 November 1956

**AUGUST, 2025** 























Committee: United Nations General Assembly - Emergency Special Session (UNGA-ESS)

Agenda: Deliberation on the Situation in the Middle East Following the Suez Canal Nationalization

Freeze Date: 1 November 1956

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#### Introduction to UNGA-ESS

The UNGA Emergency Special Session is invoked under Resolution 377A(V) (Uniting for Peace) when the Security Council fails to act due to vetoes. This is one of the earliest and most critical cases where the General Assembly convened an emergency session to prevent escalation of war involving multiple sovereign nations.

#### Historical Context

- The Suez Canal, completed in 1869, was a critical maritime route linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, controlled largely by British and French interests through the Suez Canal Company.
- Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, promoting pan-Arabism and resisting colonial influence, nationalized the canal on 26 July 1956 after the US and UK withdrew funding for the Aswan Dam.
- Britain, France, and Israel responded with military planning (Protocol of Sèvres) to retake the canal and weaken Nasser's regime.

#### Timeline of Key Events (up to 1 Nov 1956)

Date	Event	
Jul 26, 1956	Nasser nationalizes the Suez Canal	
Aug 1, 1956	Britain and France begin secret talks with Israel	
Oct 22, 1956	Protocol of Sèvres signed – coordinated military plan	
Oct 29, 1956	Israel invades the Sinai Peninsula	
Oct 31, 1956	Britain and France issue ultimatum; begin bombing Egyptian targets	
Nov 1, 1956	UN Security Council fails to act due to British/French veto; Emergency Special Session of UNGA is called	

















#### KEY PARTIES INVOLVED

- Egypt Seeks sovereignty, anti-colonial stance, supported by USSR and Arab states
- Israel Wants to break Egyptian blockade, secure passage, and weaken Nasser
- # United Kingdom Wants to regain canal control and colonial prestige
- II France Aligned with UK and Israel, sees Nasser as a threat in Algeria
- United States Opposes use of force, wary of Soviet expansion
- Soviet Union Supports Egypt, opposes Western imperialism
- United Nations A platform for international diplomacy amidst Cold War tensions

#### INTERNATIONAL LEGAL AND DIPLOMATIC FRAMEWORK

- UN Charter Articles 1, 2, 33 & 39 (Peace and security, sovereignty)
- Constantinople Convention (1888) Declared the Suez Canal a neutral zone under Ottoman rule
- Egyptian sovereignty vs. International control A point of contention
- Use of force without UN approval Legality questioned under international law

#### PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

- UNSC attempted resolutions were vetoed by UK and France
- The General Assembly was convened to bypass the veto and seek collective recommendations
- No formal UN action had succeeded as of 1 November 1956 (freeze date)

#### KEY ISSUES BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

- Was Egypt's nationalization of the canal legitimate under international law?
- Did Britain, France, and Israel violate international peace through their joint military actions?
- What role should the UN play in resolving the crisis?
- Should a UN peacekeeping force or international oversight of the canal be proposed?
- How should the UN respond to future Cold War-era interventions?

### BLOC POSITIONS (AS OF 1 NOV 1956)

Bloc	Countries	Likely Position
Western Powers	UK, France, Australia	Support intervention, blame Egypt
Non-Aligned Movement (early stage)	India, Indonesia, Yugoslavia	Call for peace and neutrality
Arab League	Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia	Strongly support Egypt, oppose Israeli invasion
Eastern Bloc	USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia	Strongly condemn Western aggression
USA & Canada	Oppose military action, support diplomacy, press for ceasefire	

















## QUESTIONS A DELEGATE MUST ANSWER

- 1. Was Egypt's nationalization an internal matter or a threat to international peace?
- 2. Do the actions of the UK, France, and Israel constitute aggression?
- 3. What should be the UNGA's immediate action to prevent escalation?
- 4. Should the UN take steps toward canal internationalization or mediation?
- 5. Can an international peacekeeping mechanism be justified and deployed?

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

- UN Charter Articles 1, 2, 33, 39, and 51
- The Protocol of Sèvres (1956) if accessible
- Egyptian Government statements from July-November 1956
- Speeches by Nasser, Eden, Mollet, Eisenhower, and Ben-Gurion
- Academic Articles: "The Suez Crisis 1956: A Case Study in UN Diplomacy"
- UNGA Resolutions 997 (ES-I), 998 (Peacekeeping force post-freeze, for understanding)