

Background Guide | Security Council

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations Security Council to discuss the grave and immense agenda of the prospect of COVID-19 being a bioweapon engineered by the government of the People's Republic of China. We are eager to witness complex and constructive debate, and discuss various aspects of the agenda over the course of the conference.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the world at large. It has derailed entire economies by causing the closure of business and the laying off of workers. Various sectors have been drastically hit, such as manufacturing and tourism, and a plethora of air travel companies on their way to bankruptcy. Countries that have managed marginal economic recovery are now threatened by a lack of export markets and lack of shipping infrastructure. In addition, the world has also experienced a significant social impact. The consequences of being quarantined for periods lasting a few months at best include a marked rise in mental health issues and loneliness, and is consequently hampering the ability of those who can work remotely to be productive.

While western economies have been swept off their feet, China seems to have fully recovered from the outbreak that took the world by storm at the start of 2020. The nation-wide lockdown is being gradually lifted week by week, and the number of positive cases is falling day by day. Hence, this has led some to argue that COVID-19 is a bioweapon released by the government of the People's Republic of China, and that the sudden recovery of China while cases skyrocket in other countries is due to the release of a vaccine developed along with the disease before its release. Advocates of this line of reasoning also argue that the current economic vacuum that has been created due to COVID-19 is another intended consequences, and hence the perfect ploy for a recovered Chinese economy to outleap other economies and become the dominant economic and financial force in the world.

Delegates, the Security Council shall undoubtedly be one of the most challenging committees being simulated. As you may be well aware, it is the sole United Nations organ capable of enforcing binding decisions, and thus is decreed by the mandate to be the most powerful, effective, and responsible committee in this Model United Nations Conference. Furthermore, the agenda is a multifarious topic of discussion involving several different facets and complications, each of which you ought to focus on and overcome. We will make it our goal to challenge each of you during the course of the conference. You will be tested on your research, paperwork, and most of all, your diplomacy.

We encourage you to use this background guide only as a basis to your research. It does not intend to cover all probable areas of discussion, and we encourage delegates to go beyond the guide for further research, using this document as a catalyst. Lastly, do note that the Executive Board will not be accepting the guide document itself as evidence in the committee. We assure that in the Security Council, where you will debate with the best and architect complex solutions for complex problems, only the most comprehensive and vigorous research will suffice.

We encourage you to use this background guide only as a basis to your research. It does not attempt or intend to cover all probable areas of discussion, and we strongly encourage delegates to go beyond the guide for further research, using this document only as a starting point. Lastly, we would like you to bear in mind that the Executive Board will not be accepting the guide document itself as proof in the committee. Delegates, we assure you that in a committee with the best of the best, nothing more than the most comprehensive and vigorous research will suffice.

We look forward to meeting all of you.

Kind Regards,

Mehul Jangir

Kritika Srivastava,

President, Security Council Vice-President, Security Council

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Introduction to the United Nations Security Council

The United Nations Security Council(UNSC), like the UN as a whole, was created following World War II to address the failings of a previous international organization, the League of Nations, in maintaining world peace. In its early decades, the Security Council was largely paralyzed by the Cold War division between the US and USSR and their respective allies, though it authorized interventions and several peacekeeping missions. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, UN peacekeeping efforts increased dramatically in scale, and the Security Council authorized major military and peacekeeping missions, gaining more power and influence.

The UNSC consists of fifteen members. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, France, People's Republic of China, and the United States serve as permanent members. These can [veto](#) any substantive resolution. The council has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve a term of two years.

While the primary aim of the committee is to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations, the UN charter grants it the power to execute the following;

- to investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
- to recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
- to formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;

- to determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
- to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
- to take military action against an aggressor;
- to recommend the admission of new Members;
- to exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas"
- to recommend to the General Assembly regarding appointment of the Secretary General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.

Under Chapter VII, the Council also has broader power to decide what measures are to be taken in situations involving "threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, or acts of aggression". In such situations, it is not limited to recommendations but may take action, including the use of armed forces. Decisions taken under Chapter VII, like economic sanctions, are binding on UN members; the Security Council is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions.

Statement of the issue

In December 2019, the People's Republic of China reported the first case of a deadly, novel virus, COVID-19, in Wuhan, ground zero for the outbreak. While the nature of the outbreak is still veiled, many believe it originates from exotic meat markets in the coastal province of Wuhan. The outbreak gathered pace in China, and infected more than 80000 people in under two months. Furthermore, owing to vast amounts of international travel in the modern world, and the fact that Wuhan was a seaport and hence a perfect gateway to other countries, the virus gradually spread around the globe. Today, there are self-sustaining clusters in the United States, Italy, France, Spain, India, and many more countries. COVID-19 has brought the world to its knees.

Healthcare systems have collapsed and economies have plummeted. At the time of writing of this document, 1.5 million people have been infected, 400,000 in the US alone, and more than 80,000 people have died. The virus has already spread to 184 of the 191

states recognized by the United States. In response, governments around the globe have enforced total lockdowns on their citizens, and local clusters have been quarantined to halt the spread of the virus. However, the world is still woefully under-equipped to tackle the virus. A pressing lack of testing kits, masks, gloves, ventilators, and healthcare workers has resulted in the virus spreading faster than wildfire after a gradual increase in the number of cases for a few weeks.

COVID-19, according to scientific research undertaken by the WHO is a zoonotic virus. From phylogenetics analyses undertaken with available full genome sequences, bats appear to be the reservoir of COVID-19 virus, but the intermediate host(s) has not yet been identified. Early cases identified in Wuhan are believed to have acquired infection from a zoonotic source as many reported visiting or working in the Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market. As of 25 February, an animal source has not yet been identified. A joint mission of the WHO and China is underway, which primarily investigates the source animal of the virus in the market.

Comparative genomic analyses have shown that SARS-CoV-2 belongs to the group of Beta Coronaviruses and that it is very close to SARS-CoV, responsible for an epidemic of acute pneumonia which appeared in November 2002 in the Chinese province of Guangdong and then spread to 29 countries in 2003. A total of 8,098 cases were recorded, including 774 deaths. It is known that bats of the genus *Rhinolophus* (potentially several cave species) were the reservoir of this virus and that a small carnivore, the palm civet (*Paguma larvata*), may have served as an intermediate host between bats and the first human cases.

For example, RaTG13, isolated from a bat of the species *Rhinolophus affinis* collected in China's Yunnan Province, has recently been described as very similar to SARS-CoV-2, with genome sequences identical to 96%. These results indicate that bats, and in particular species of the genus *Rhinolophus*, constitute the reservoir of the SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2 viruses.

On February 7, 2020, we learned that a virus even closer to SARS-CoV-2 had been discovered in pangolin, with 99% of genomic concordance reported.

However, a majority of this research was conducted by Chinese scientists and despite being zoonotic, the virus still might have been maliciously released for self-serving

motives. There have been countless allegations against the People's Republic of China stating that COVID-19 is a bioweapon engineered to create an economic vacuum that will be filled by the already stabilizing Chinese economy - pushing it into the driving seat. A dramatic fall in confirmed cases in China, along with mild outbreaks in Russia and North Korea, who are Chinese Allies, is held as evidence. If these allegations turn out to be true, China will be violating various international agreements and the consequences will be severe. Furthermore, despite presiding over the Security Council, the People's Republic of China is yet to call for a meeting regarding the pandemic at large, and many states and individuals have called out this as a representative of a Chinese desire to circumvent allegations and prevent investigation.

Many Chinese government officials have also accused the US of planting the virus in China in an attempt to disrupt its economy, healthcare and global influence. Suspicions and the feasibility of the outbreak being due to an accidental release.

As delegates of the Security Council, it is your duty to investigate these claims, and evaluate the extent to which they are true.

Bloc Positions

USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain

The Western bloc should look to counter debate pointing towards one of its members planting the virus in China to disrupt the Chinese economy. Furthermore, each member of this bloc has suffered noticeably due to the COVID-19 outbreak, which has already lead to public opinion against China in each of these countries. American and british individuals are already making demands for the People's Republic of China to repatriate for the losses the COVID-19 pandemic has caused around the globe. There is also heightened animosity between the PRC and the USA due to the ongoing trade war between the two, and the fuelling of racist sentiments against the Chinese by US President Donald Trump and other individuals in the US government. Having suffered the most from the outbreak, and being well aware of the consequences of lack of testing kits and healthcare infrastructure, this bloc consists of countries looking to gain an economic advantage again.

China, Russia, Iran

The Chinese bloc will primarily have to defend allegations against it on the basis of COVID-19 being a bioweapon. The primary role of the delegate of the People's Republic of China will be to ensure that China comes out of this not as the perpetrator, but rather a state looking to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 pandemic by providing aid to other countries and advising foreign governments regarding effective containment measures. It will be the duty of the delegate of China to convince the committee of the notion that the government of China is not to blame for the virus. Some evidence that could be used is how this led to the closure of exotic meat markets across China. The delegates of Russia and Iran must investigate the matter on their own, but are also Chinese allies, so their best interests are founded in defending their joint ally and carrying debate forward throughout the conference.

Japan, India, Brazil, Indonesia

This is a collection of countries that cannot be grouped into a concrete bloc given their individual stances. Hence, it will be in the best interests of the delegates representing these countries to focus primarily on preventing debate from spiralling into irrationality, and to adopt a neutral stance from which they assess the arguments put forward by members of other blocs rationally.

This, however, should not hamper their ability to participate in debate. The Executive Board expects valuable inputs from delegate representing the aforementioned countries.

Bibliography

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- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- <https://www.economist.com/>
- <https://www.wsj.com/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/>
- <https://in.reuters.com/>
- <https://www.bbc.com/>

YouTube videos that can be helpful for delegates in understanding the pandemic, and that could act as interesting avenues for research:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPpoJGYIW54>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3X_Qz2nBtT4
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxAaO2rsdIs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4CJY1fO6h0w>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9EjkZ1oUXw>
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Internet forums/websites that should in no way be considered as reliable sources, but can act as starting points for delegates to begin research or come up with paperwork:

- <https://www.reddit.com/r/Coronavirus/>
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