



# The Suez Crisis

## Letter from the Executive Board

The executive board welcomes you to a simulation of the Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly at the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of SSN Model United Nations Conference (2018). The emergency special session has been convened to discuss the Suez Canal crisis of 1956.

On the basis of “Uniting for Peace” resolution passed in 1950, the General Assembly may convene an Emergency Special Session if not in session. The same shall be done in the existence of a threat to international peace and security and the failure of the United Nation Security Council in exercising its responsibility towards restoration of peace.

This session is being convened in the aftermath of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal and the following conflict between Egypt and the west led by United Kingdom and France over the control of the Suez Canal. With the UNSC resolution’s veto and the threat of military action by Israel, the UNGA ESS shall convene to restore normalcy and resolve the dispute over the Suez Canal. With a potential threat to Egypt’s sovereignty and growing chances of colonial superpowers retaking control of a vital territory valuable for global trade, you are given an opportunity to travel back in time to October 15<sup>th</sup> 1956 to resolve the issue.

As delegates, you are expected to display the highest standards of debate, diplomacy in the capacity of a diplomat of your nation. As this background guide is merely an introduction and a listing of the events that precede the UNGA-ESS, you are expected to acquire expertise and knowledge pertaining to the agenda, your nation’s foreign policy, strategic interests with detailed understanding of the nuances of the conflict. We wish you success in your endeavour to rewrite history.

Executive Board of the UNGA ESS

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# United Nations General Assembly

Established in 1945 under the [Charter](#) of the United Nations, the [General Assembly](#) occupies a central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Comprising all 193 Members of the United Nations, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter.

Each of the 193 Member States in the Assembly has one vote. Votes taken on designated important issues — such as recommendations on peace and security, the election of Security Council and Economic and Social Council members, and budgetary questions — require a two-thirds majority of Member States, but other questions are decided by simple majority. Non-Member States, entities and organizations are, based on relevance and necessity, occasionally offered a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly, as the primary discussion body, in itself is not a committee, but a collection of six committees spread across matters of different domains. The six committees that make up the General Assembly are Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee); Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee); Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (Third Committee); Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee); Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee); Legal Committee (Sixth Committee).

Despite the presence of these six separate committees, matters may call for the presence of the entire body under one roof in a session that maybe plenary or special in nature. Plenary sessions of the General Assembly are a commonplace as the United Nations frequently engages its members in dialogue over the global issues present at that time. However, special sessions of the General Assembly are rare and are called upon by issues volatile in nature, needing immediate attention. Ideally, protocol states that these special sessions, in order to be invoked require certain measures to be carried out, as provisioned in the Charter of the United Nations.

## Emergency Special Session

The Emergency Special Session is an unscheduled meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to make urgent recommendations on a particular issue. The [resolution 377A \(V\)](#), "Uniting for Peace", adopted on 3rd November 1950 in the UNGA, states that in any case where there appears to be a threat to peace, breach of peace or an act of aggression, if the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), because of a lack of unanimity amongst its five permanent members, fails to act as required in its exercising its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, the General Assembly shall consider the matter immediately and may issue any recommendations it deems necessary to aid in the restoration of international peace and security. If not in session at the time, the General Assembly can be convened in an "Emergency Special Session", for the stated purpose, within twenty-four hours. Such an emergency special session shall be called if requested by the Security Council on the vote of any nine members, or by a majority of the Members of the United Nations requesting the Secretary General for its convocation.

These emergency special sessions are typically rare, supported by the fact that there have been only ten such sessions in the history of the United Nations. Most emergency special sessions run for a single "meeting" or gathering that spans a number of days. Essentially, the ESS can be convened on matters pertaining to the Chapters Six & Seven of the Charter and when convened, it can act with the same authority as the Security Council and execute decisions in exercising UN's primary responsibility of maintaining international peace & security, as long as it achieves the required substantive majority. In very loose terms, the ESS is what the General Assembly would be if it was the Security Council. Therefore, one can say that the ESS accounts for a larger representation of views and decisions when exercising its role in resolving conflicts. The ESS also necessarily renders the veto privilege of the permanent members of the Security Council redundant as a draft resolution garnering two-thirds majority in the ESS will always pass and is binding on its Members on matters pertaining to the Chapter VII of the Charter. It is also worth knowing that the draft resolution of "Uniting for Peace" Resolution 377A (V), which created the provision for the UNGA-ESS, was itself voted against by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), a permanent member of the UNSC then.

## Timeline

### 1922

- Feb 28 Egypt is declared a sovereign state by Britain
- Mar 15 Sultan Faud appoints himself King of Egypt
- Mar 16 Egypt achieves independence

### 1936

- Apr 28 King Faud dies and his 16-year-old son, Farouk, becomes King of Egypt.
- Aug 26 Draft of Anglo-Egyptian Treaty is signed. Britain is allowed to maintain a garrison of 10,000 men in the Suez Canal Zone, and is given effective control of Sudan.

### 1939

- May 2 King Farouk is declared the spiritual leader, or Caliph, of Islam.

### 1945

- Sept 23 Egyptian government demands complete British withdrawal and the cession of Sudan.

### 1946

- May 24 British premier Winston Churchill says the Suez Canal will be in danger if Britain withdraws from Egypt.

### 1948

- May 14 Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel by David Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv.
- May 15 Start of the first Arab-Israeli War.
- Dec 28 Egyptian premier Mahmoud Fatimy is assassinated by the Muslim Brotherhood.

### 1949

- Feb 12 Hassan el Banna, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood is assassinated.

### 1950

- Jan 3 Wafd party regains power.

### 1951

- Oct 8 Egyptian government announces that it will eject Britain from the Suez Canal Zone and take control of Sudan.
- Oct 21 British warships arrive at Port Said, more troops are on the way.

### 1952

- Jan 26 Egypt is placed under martial law in response to wide-spread riots against the British.
- Jan 27 Prime Minister Mustafa Nahhas is removed by King Farouk for failing to keep the peace. He is replaced by Ali Mahir.
- Mar 1 The Egyptian Parliament is suspended by King Farouk when Ali Mahir resigns.
- May 6 King Farouk claims to be a direct descendant of the prophet Mohammed.
- July 1 Hussein Sirry is new premier.

July 23	Free Officer Movement, fearing King Farouk is about to move against them, initiate a military coup.
July 26	Military coup is successful, General Naguib appoints Ali Mahir as prime minister.
Sept 7	Ali Mahir again resigns. General Naguib takes over post of president, prime minister, minister of war and commander-in-chief of the army.

## 1953

Jan 16	President Naguib disbands all opposition parties.
Feb 12	Britain and Egypt sign new treaty. Sudan to have independence within three years.
May 5	Constitutional commission recommends 5,000-year-old monarchy be ended and Egypt become a republic.
May 11	Britain threatens to use force against Egypt over Suez Canal dispute.
Jun 18	Egypt becomes a republic.
Sept 20	Several of King Farouk's aides are seized.

## 1954

Feb 28	Nasser challenges President Naguib.
Mar 9	Naguib beats off Nasser's challenge and retains presidency.
Mar 29	General Naguib postpones plans to hold parliamentary elections.
Apr 18	For a second time, Nasser takes presidency away from Naguib.
Oct 19	Britain cedes Suez Canal to Egypt in new treaty, two-year period set for withdrawal.
Oct 26	Muslim Brotherhood attempt to assassinate General Nasser.
Nov 13	General Nasser in full control of Egypt.

## 1955

Apr 27	Egypt announces plans to sell cotton to Communist China
May 21	USSR announces it will sell arms to Egypt.
Aug 29	Israeli and Egyptian jets in fire-fight over Gaza.
Sept 27	Egypt makes deal with Czechoslovakia, obtains arms in return for cotton.
Oct 16	Egyptian and Israeli forces skirmish in El Auja.
Dec 3	Britain and Egypt sign agreement granting Sudan independence.

## 1956

Jan 1	Sudan achieves independence.
Jan 16	Islam is made state religion by act of Egyptian government.
June 13	Britain gives up Suez Canal. Ends 72 years of British occupation.
June 23	General Nasser is elected president.
July 19	US withdraws financial aid for Aswan Dam project. Official reason is Egypt's increased ties to USSR.
July 26	President Nasser announces plan to nationalize Suez Canal.
July 28	Britain freezes Egyptian assets.
July 30	British Prime Minister Anthony Eden imposes an arms embargo on Egypt, and informs General Nasser that he cannot have the Suez Canal.
Aug 1	Britain, France and US hold discussions on escalating Suez crisis.
Aug 2	Britain mobilizes armed forces.

Aug 21	Egypt says it will negotiate on Suez ownership if Britain pulls out of the Middle East.
Aug 23	USSR announces it will send troops if Egypt is attacked.
Aug 26	General Nasser agrees to five nation conference on Suez Canal.
Aug 28	Two British envoys are expelled from Egypt accused of spying.
Sept 5	Israel condemns Egypt over Suez crisis.
Sept 9	Conference talks collapse when General Nasser refuses to allow international control of the Suez Canal.
Sept 12	US, Britain, and France announce their intention to impose a Canal Users Association on management of the canal.
Sept 14	Egypt now in full control of the Suez Canal.
Sept 15	Soviet ship-pilots arrive to help Egypt run the canal.
Oct 1	A 15 nation Suez Canal Users Association is officially formed.
Oct 7	Israeli foreign minister Golda Meir says the UN failure to resolve the Suez Crisis means they must take military action.
Oct 13	Anglo-French proposal for the control of the Suez Canal is vetoed by the USSR during UN session.