

The UN: A force for good or a flawed institution? examining successes and failures in a complex world

1- Introduction

2- understanding the United Nations and its structure

3- obligations of UN

- a- Maintaining international peace and security
- b- Guiding social and economic development
- c- Protecting human rights

4- Failure of UN to fulfil its obligations

a- unable to prevent genocide
 case in point: Despite of
 UN resolutions of ceasefire
 Israel is carrying on genocide
 in Gaza.

b- Selective interference in conflicts.

c- Inability to resolve prolonged
 aggressions.

d Involvement of peace keeping forces in crimes.

5- Successes of UN to fulfil its obligations

q- Administration of newly independent nations.

b- Negotiations and ceasefire between warring groups.

c- Campaigns for ending violence against women.

case in point: The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women is funding Nigeria to address violence issues.

d- Mitigation of environmental and climate challenges.

case in point: UNEP rebuilding of disastrous regions.

6- Conclusion

The Essay

The UN is an international organization, plays a significant role in influencing world affairs and setting standards and norms of conduct. It is obligated to maintain international peace and security, resolve conflicts before they escalate into devastating wars, and promote human rights. In its 70 years old history, UN has faced both successes and failures. As for its ^{failure to fulfil} obligations, ~~the~~ organization has been unable to resolve prolonged conflicts, genocide and its infamous toll in crime through peacekeeping forces. However, despite her failures, the organization has accomplished many of its aims. Major success include facilitating the administration of new states, funding climate mitigation efforts and promoting human rights. Simply put,

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it is vital to recognize the success and failures to overcome its shortcomings by recommending practical solutions. As the UN is major organization since WWII that has survived over decades.

Before delving into UN's achievements and setbacks, it is imperative to grasp the organization's structure. The United Nations Charter delineate the organization's purpose and principals. The UN consists of five organs each has distinctive function. Its security council has five permanent member states with veto power. UN also has fifteen agencies, the UN peacekeeping operations and UN funds and programs. This intricate network underscore its decentralized nature.

Accordingly, examining the UN's obligations is pertinent to understand success and failures. The organization aimed to maintain international peace and security, taking effective measures to prevent aggression. This includes passing resolutions and taking reactive measures. It also guides nations towards economic and social development. Lastly, UN bound its member states to promote and protect human rights.

After gaining an overview of the United Nations, discussing its failures is vital. The foremost failure of UN is to its inability to prevent genocide. It was once believed to be the end of all human conflicts and atrocities, but it

has failed time and time again to fulfil its obligations. It has failed miserably to ethnic cleansing of various groups around the globe. Despite passing various resolutions, it has been unable to take substantial actions against brutal states. For instance, Israel's genocide of innocent Palestinians since October 2023 is kept on increasing with each passing day. UN hold various meeting and passed resolution but it has failed to thwart the apartheid Israel. Thus it has failed to fulfil major obligation of protection of human rights.

Further, the UN's policy of selective interference in many conflicts has exposed the inequalities embedded in structure. Even UN charter prevent it to intervene in domestic

affairs of states, it selectively participate to serve the interests of major powers. Implementing UN responsibility to protect (R2P) protocol in Libya is recognized as conspicuous selective action of UN. In Libya, its initial aim to protect protestors from state violence morphed into complete regime change. That regime change was harmful as Libya still struggles for political stability. Thus selective interference prevent the obligations to respect sovereignty of states.

Apart from the above failure, UN has shown inability to resolve prolonged aggressions. The longevity of crisis adds layers of new factors influencing it, the more one wait to take actions against aggression, the more

complicated situation gets. For instance, the brutalities of Israel in Palestine are as long as the UN has existed. In this case, still UN has been unable to take any vital action because of the veto power of USA that persistently used in support of Israel. Hence UN has failed to maintain international peace and security.

Lastly, UN has been unable to keep its peacekeeping forces from committing crimes and violating human rights in disaster torn areas.

These peacekeeping forces carries out its resolutions and better enforcement mechanism and ultimately, fulfil its obligations. However, over the years, many scandals have emerged, with these soldiers dabbling in criminal activities and violating human rights during mission.

The Blue helmet Scandals, in DR Congo, those soldiers were accused of sexually abusing minors. [report by the International Peace Institute.]

These forces were committing crimes instead of protecting from crimes.

Therefore, UN has enabled the violation of human rights in certain cases not the protection of human rights as enshrined in its charter.

Although the United Nations has failed to meet its obligations in some cases, it has successfully fulfilled its obligations in many more. Moving down the ladder to the UN's successes, it is significant to highlight specific circumstances.

First of all UN has successfully administered several newly independent nations by establishing authority missions. It has helped countries

that gained independence from colony, establishing their state apparatus and providing security and order. UN Transitional Administrator in East Timor (UNTAET) has done vital work in empowering legislative structure for democratic state of East Timor. Moreover, it also provided humanitarian assistance and helped in recovering from violence that erupted after elections and gaining independence. Thus, UN has successfully administered newly developed states.

Adding more to these, the UN has observed numerous ceasefires between warring groups. Its effective ceasefires are manifestation of obligation of peace and security. For instance, UN implemented a peace agreement between civil

720
was groups in Mozambique and helped conduct free and fair elections. In this way, UN has helped put end to violence that erupted when Portugal controlled this region. hence UN has maintained its obligation of international peace by ceasefire among opposing groups and ushered in regional stability.

Besides, UN through number of programs has successfully funded women rights campaigns. It has provided humanitarian assistance to many at-risk groups. The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women funds Nigerian Women's right organization, Citicad Pointe. It held project to end discrimination faced by marginalized groups since 2022. It also raised ^{voice about} inequalities faced by women and subsequent

decrease in unfair treatments. Therefore UN has successfully achieved its obligation of social and economic development through various programs.

Last, but certainly not the least, UN has been mitigating environmental and climate challenges resulting from global warming and proliferation of hydrocarbons. Its special agency, **UN Environmental**

Program, takes actions to reduce the level of GHGs emission, thereby reducing global warming as climate resilience has become dire human need. **UNEP helped to rebuild Haiti after Earthquake 2010.** Therefore, the UN has been actively fulfilling its obligation to guide and finance nations towards social development by addressing environmental and climate

challenges.

In conclusion, UN is a major intergovernmental, international organization aimed to ensure lasting peace and security across the globe ^{emerged} after the failure of League of Nations and subsequent WWII which had wreaked havoc on major European states. Till date, UN has successfully achieved its numerous goals and initiatives primarily non-traditional threats in nature as gender-based violence, climate challenges children rights and ensuring ceasefire in certain cases. Nevertheless it has been struggling to ensure peace and security at international level as the cases of human rights violations, brutal genocides,

Date: __/__/20__

Violation of international treaties are accelerating with every passing day. These failures, significantly result from structural flaws which grant veto power to five nations. This power is used for self interest of state rather than fulfilling obligation of UN. So, In order to develop UN on active bases and strengthen its edifice its imperative to overcome the shortcomings and hinder in more consensual and effectual way.