



Mains Marathon

Day 47: 'There can be little doubt that the social, economic and humanitarian work of the UN has been far more successful than its peacekeeping role.' Assess the validity of this verdict on the work of the United Nations Organisation. (150 Words)

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Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Describe UN in brief.
- Discuss the main social, economic and humanitarian work of the UN.
- State the failure of UN in keeping peace in the world.
- Conclude suitably.

Answer:

The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945. Currently made up of 193 Member States, the UN and its work are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter. The main bodies of the UN are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat.

Social, economic and humanitarian work of UN:

- The **United Nations Development Program** is responsible for natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness. When emergencies occur, UNDP works with governments to coordinate relief and rehabilitation efforts at the national level.
- The **UN Refugee Agency** was founded after World War II to help Europeans displaced by that conflict. Today, UNHCR takes the lead in protecting refugees and solving the problems they face.
- **UNICEF** has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization by using effective, low-cost solutions to address the biggest threats to their survival.
- The **World Food Program** mobilizes food and transport financing to provide relief to victims of disasters and the refugees under UNHCR's care.
- The **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations** helps farmers re-establish production following floods, outbreaks of livestock disease and similar emergencies.
- The FAO Global Information and Early Warning System issues monthly reports on the **global world food situation** that governments and humanitarian aid organizations rely upon to **identify impending food shortages**.
- The **World Health Organization** coordinates the international response to humanitarian health emergencies, like the coronavirus pandemic, ranging from disease outbreaks to conflicts to natural disasters.

Failure of UN's Role in Maintaining Peace and Security:

This involvement ranges from Bosnia in 1993 to Afghanistan in 2001 to its Anti-Piracy resolution in 2008.

- **Myanmar:** UNSC took no action against the Myanmar junta for the coup. No UN push for the release of democratically elected leaders. This comes on the backs of an already unresolved situation with the Rohingya- about a million in refugee camps in Bangladesh, countless missions by the UN including the Kofi Annan report speaking of genocide, and no action.
- **Afghanistan:** UN has failed to instill the idea of a transitional council in Afghanistan and has no role of government formation.
- **Israeli occupation (1948-Now):** Ever since the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, Palestinians have been fighting against what a UN investigator once described as Israel's ethnic cleansing.
- **Kashmir dispute (1948-Now):** The ongoing confrontation in the disputed Kashmir region has become one of the greatest human rights crises in history, marked by wanton killings, rape, incarceration of leaders and activists, torture and disappearances of Kashmiris, despite several unimplemented UN resolutions over the issue.
- **Cambodia violence (1975-1979):** After the end of the US-Vietnam War and the Cambodian civil war in 1975, the Khmer Rouge regime took control of Cambodia. The regime carried out genocide between 1975-1979, killing some two million people, nearly 25 percent of the country. The Vietnamese intervention ended genocide by the Khmer Rouge regime. The United Nations recognised the Khmer Rouge regime, while ignoring concerns of human rights violations.
- **Somali civil war (1991-Now):** Since the ouster of dictator Mohamed Siad Barre by the Somali Rebellion in 1991, the decades-long civil war has raged between rival clans in the country. The UN peacekeeping mission, UNOSOM has failed because of the lack of government to communicate with and repeated attacks against UN officers. The failure of the UN peacekeeping mission caused about 500,000 civilian deaths in the country.
- **Failure of UN in various issues:** UNSC has failed to extract assurances on democracy, human rights: women, girls, minorities, and commitment against terrorism.
 - 20 years after the UN's' special session - **Taliban back in power, Al Qaeda, other groups still in existence** and the very real possibility of a gender crisis, a humanitarian crisis, a refugee crisis growing there.

Main issues with the UN:

- Power in the hands of a few: P-5 has the veto
- Deep polarization between US, UK, France and Russia, China
- Lack of UNSC reform, as demanded by India
- Failure of Sanctions: Iran, North Korea
- Global conflict fatigue: contributing to operations, humanitarian assistance
- **R2P failure in Libya:** Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, often lauded as an emerging norm to guide concerted international action to protect civilians from mass atrocities.

Peacekeeping remains one of the most effective tools available to the UN to assist host countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. To ensure that UN operations continue to make a positive contribution in the next five to ten years, it is critical to examine the factors that may influence the direction of UN peace operations, to adjust and prepare for the future.

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