



ACSMUNC V

GA4: Special Political and Decolonization Committee

Chairs:

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Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

What a pleasure it is to welcome you to the fifth annual edition of ACSMUNC! We are beyond excited to chair the GA4 this year, and we can't wait to not only meet and get to know you, but also to see how you will handle the committee's challenges.

We have chosen these topics not only because of their present global significance, but also with the hope that they will provide grounds for rigorous debate and fascinating discussions throughout the conference. We have prepared this background guide on the topics of Tackling the Issue of Neo-colonialism in the Economic Sector and its Effects on Sovereignty in Africa and Assessment of Peacekeeping Operations in the Middle East in order to aid your preparation. These political matters may seem daunting, as they require a great amount of critical thinking, ingenuity, and diplomatic knowledge. However, we are confident that you will rise to the occasion and spark a lively and meaningful debate. We hope, above all, that you'll have a fabulous time. We are exceptionally joyful to be leading this committee, and we hope you will enjoy participating just as much!

With great anticipation,

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Tackling the Issue of Neo-colonialism in the Economic Sector and its Effects on Sovereignty in Africa

Overview

Neo-colonialism refers to the continued exploitation and control of former colonies by foreign entities through economic, political, and cultural means, despite the former countries having internationally recognized political independence. When related to Africa specifically, this issue predominantly manifests in the economic and political sectors, where foreign governments and international financial institutions exert significant influence over local policies, thus undermining national sovereignty. This background guide provides delegates of the General Assembly Fourth Committee (GA4) with a comprehensive analysis of neo-colonialism in Africa and offers actionable recommendations to address this pressing issue.

Historical Origin

When related to African neocolonialism, the European scramble to partition – i.e. the European advancement within and subsequent division of Africa amongst different states with the intent to exploit local resources, had an expressed impact on the development of the continent, as its resources were depleted, which then affected the economic status of the country. This process was justified through the “civilizing mission,” which argued that the European states were aiding the advancement of less-developed countries. Nevertheless, this is not to say that they aided their development. Upon the conclusion of WWII, however, the reciprocity of this concept declines significantly, leading to a heightened process of decolonization in Africa (for more information, consult the map below). In turn, the countries to have emerged were colonial constructs, since their borders were drawn by the European powers during

colonialism, and had no expressed national identity; simultaneously, these nations were seriously underdeveloped, with no strong national identity, thus circumventing their ability to define themselves independently, “calling” for foreign aid. The economic structures established during colonial times remained largely intact also, with many African countries still dependent on the export of raw materials, often with little control over pricing or production. This has perpetuated a pattern of economic exploitation, now seen as neo-colonialism, where African nations are trapped in an unequal global system of trade, finance, and development aid.

Current Status and Root Causes

The issue is multifaceted and expressed itself in the following key economic areas:

Foreign corporations and private investors from developed nations dominate key industries in Africa. These companies often extract resources with minimal benefit to local populations – i.e. though demanding cheap export on local materials and high import taxes for foreign technology in African economies, aimed at extracting or working said resources. On the one hand, this makes Africa a resource provider rather than a producer of high-value goods. Additionally, the profits generated are often not reimbursed back but rather they are taken by foreign investors or corporations, perpetuating poverty and underdevelopment. On the other hand, it leads to the exhaustion of resources, which then disables separate states from repaying their national debt. Therefore, economic systems in Africa are deeply integrated into a global trade system that benefits developed countries.

African nations often rely on loans from international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Historically, these institutions have provided African states with capital for development, their *conditionalities* have led to economic policies that often favor foreign interests over

domestic needs. Some of the policies include the adoption of capitalism as a prerogative for aid to be provided, decreased austerity measures (government spending on public services is cut), privatization (selling state-owned businesses to private companies), and trade liberalization (reducing regulations on imports and exports). This external debt burden continues to hinder national sovereignty by constraining African governments' ability to make independent decisions about their economies.

African countries face *land grabs* – the large-scale acquisition of land through buying or leasing of large pieces of land by domestic and transnational companies or governments. This often leads to the displacement of local communities. This exploitation of land and resources to the point of complete exhaustion, sometimes with the support of corrupt or authoritarian governments, undermines the sovereignty of African nations and perpetuates poverty.

Ongoing Initiatives

African nations have recognized the need for collective action to address neo-colonialism. **The African Union (AU)** and regional organizations such as the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** have worked towards increasing regional economic integration and reducing dependency on external actors. Initiatives like the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** aim to promote intra-African trade and foster economic independence.

Certain African states have launched a process of attempted reclaiming of land from foreign investors, which is furthered through the promotion of land reforms, instigated with the purpose of aiding domestic development in the agricultural sector. This can be evaluated as a critical move toward restoring economic sovereignty and ensuring that African nations benefit directly from the use of their land and resources.

African governments are increasingly focusing on diversifying their economies by investing in infrastructure and encouraging entrepreneurship. The goal is to move away from the export of raw materials and toward more value-added production, which would increase job creation and retain more wealth within the continent.

Relevant Actors

The involvement of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have significantly impacted the emergence of neocolonialism and its scale on the African continent through favoring free-market policies aimed at benefiting developed states.

The African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the UN have taken measures to address economic dependence of local states on foreign investors, and to enable the increase of national sovereignty on the continent.

Country and Bloc Positions

United States of America

The United States has been a significant player in Africa, primarily through military presence, economic partnerships, and strategic interests. Historically, the U.S. has engaged in interventions in Africa, either in the form of direct military intervention or through indirect support for regimes favorable to American interests, often at the cost of African sovereignty. In recent years, critics argue that U.S. policies, such as trade agreements, aid programs, and military cooperation, sometimes exploit African nations for economic gain while restricting local development. The United States often prioritizes access to natural resources, establishing trade routes, and fostering partnerships that benefit U.S. economic interests, particularly in oil, minerals, and agriculture. While U.S. foreign policy initiatives like PEPFAR (The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) have garnered positive attention for humanitarian aid, the overall perception of American actions often leans towards a neo-imperialistic tendency, as these actions are framed in ways that reinforce dependency rather than true independence for African nations. The rise of China as a global competitor has also increased the U.S.'s emphasis on Africa as a strategic battleground for economic and political influence. This competition has led to further criticism of U.S. actions in the region, with accusations of neo-colonial practices under the guise of partnerships for development.

Russia

Russia's involvement in Africa has surged in recent years, largely driven by its desire to increase geopolitical influence and access to natural resources. The Wagner Group, a

state-funded paramilitary organization, plays a crucial role in facilitating Russian influence by providing military support to African governments in exchange for control over valuable resources such as minerals, oil, and gas. These activities have drawn heavy criticism for their potential neo-colonial characteristics. The Wagner Group operates in countries like the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Libya, where they not only provide security services but also secure mining rights and other resource extraction agreements. This involvement, often opaque and lacking accountability, has been likened to the exploitative practices of colonial powers in the past, where military power was used to extract resources from vulnerable states. Russia's growing presence in Africa also reflects a broader effort to undermine Western influence on the continent, which some African leaders have found appealing due to frustrations with Western policies. However, this support is not without cost, as it often involves sacrificing national sovereignty and long-term development goals in exchange for immediate political or military support.

Italy

Italy's involvement in Africa today is more limited than some of its European counterparts, but it still maintains significant economic relations with its former colonies, particularly Libya and Eritrea. Italy's post-colonial policies tend to focus on development aid, trade partnerships, and humanitarian projects. While Italy does not engage in the same level of military intervention or resource extraction as countries like France or the UK, its historical legacy in Africa still shapes its interactions. The Italian government has been involved in efforts to stabilize Libya, especially in light of the 2011 NATO intervention that led to the downfall of Muammar Gaddafi. The instability in Libya has given rise to Italy's involvement in managing the flow of migrants from North

Africa, which is framed as a humanitarian effort, yet it is viewed by some as a way to control the region's migration patterns, thereby reflecting neo-colonial attitudes.

Furthermore, Italy has also focused on expanding trade relationships with African nations, especially through its membership in the EU. While these relationships provide economic benefits for both sides, the perception of Italy's role remains influenced by its colonial history, with critics arguing that Italy's aid and development programs are often tied to broader European strategic goals rather than the true economic development of African nations.

United Kingdom

The legacy of the British Empire in Africa is still present today, with the United Kingdom maintaining significant economic and political ties to its former colonies. Countries like Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana continue to have strong relations with the UK, especially through trade agreements, investments, and development aid programs. While the UK has increasingly focused on promoting democratic values and human rights in its African partnerships, the historical legacy of colonization complicates these efforts. Many African countries continue to experience a sense of dependency on the UK, both economically and politically, particularly due to the lasting influence in sectors such as finance, education, and agriculture. The role of the UK in institutions like the Commonwealth also reinforces this sense of neo-colonial influence. Trade deals, such as those between the UK and the African nations that were once part of the British Empire, often prioritize British interests, particularly in terms of access to African natural resources and markets. While these agreements are framed as mutually beneficial, critics argue that they often do little to help African nations build sustainable, independent economies.

France

France's role in Africa has often been described as neo-colonial, particularly through the lens of Françafrique—the informal network of relationships between France and its former colonies. This network includes military support, political influence, and economic partnerships that often benefit French interests more than those of the African nations involved. France's military presence in African countries, such as Mali, Chad, and the Central African Republic, is one of the most contentious aspects of this neo-colonial influence. French military operations are framed as peacekeeping missions or anti-terrorism efforts, but critics argue that they serve to maintain French control over key regions and resources, particularly in the Sahel. The recent expulsion of French troops from countries like Mali reflects a growing sentiment within Africa that French influence undermines their sovereignty and self-determination. Additionally, the economic ties between France and many of its former colonies have often been criticized for perpetuating unequal power dynamics. The use of the CFA Franc, a currency linked to the Euro and controlled by the French Treasury, is a significant point of contention, as many view it as a symbol of France's ongoing economic dominance over West and Central Africa.

China

China's involvement in Africa, particularly in the economic sector, is one of the most debated aspects of modern neo-colonialism. China has invested heavily in infrastructure projects, such as building roads, railways, and ports, under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). While these investments have contributed to Africa's development, they have also led to concerns about growing debt dependency. Critics argue that these economic ties

may lead to a situation where African nations are unable to fully control their economic destinies, particularly when they struggle to repay the loans tied to these projects. In addition to the debt issue, China has also been accused of exploiting Africa's natural resources. Chinese companies are among the largest foreign extractors of minerals, oil, and gas across the continent. While this generates significant income for African countries, the lack of transparency, minimal local involvement in decision-making, and limited reinvestment in local economies raise concerns about the long-term impact on African sovereignty and economic independence. Moreover, China's economic influence has sometimes been criticized for sidelining human rights and governance issues in favor of maintaining strong trade relationships. This pragmatic approach, while economically beneficial, is seen by some as a form of economic neo-colonialism, where China profits from Africa's resources without necessarily supporting broader, sustainable development for its people.

Conclusion

Neo-colonialism in Africa's economic sector is a persistent issue that continues to undermine the sovereignty and development of African nations. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach, including regional cooperation, economic diversification, debt relief, and reforms to global financial and trade systems. Only by breaking free from the chains of neo-colonial economic structures can African nations fully reclaim their sovereignty and chart a path toward sustainable and inclusive development.

Questions you might want to consider throughout the conference:

- How has your country been involved or affected by neo-colonialism? What are some key developments in your country related to the subject?
- What is the significance of the ongoing initiatives on your country's development, and has it been actively engaged in any?
- What has your country done to address the issue?
- What are possible solutions to the issue?

Please be reminded that although this study guide provides a general overview of the subject, it is by no means exhaustive on the topic of Tackling the issue of neo-colonialism (In Africa) in the economic sector, and its effects on sovereignty, and we suggest that all delegates should research the topic further and their nation stances and likely actions. We would like you to consider what impact this issue has on your country and what impact your country has on the issue.

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Assessment of Peacekeeping operations in the Middle East

Introduction

Peacekeeping operations are a task undertaken by the United Nations, the purpose of which is to prevent further escalation of conflicts and to maintain international peace and security. These operations often consist of military personnel, police, and civilian experts, who work together to stabilize post-conflict societies, protect civilians, monitor ceasefire, and support political reestablishment. While the objective of the UN is clear, the effectiveness of these missions is strongly dependent on local political cooperation, a stable security environment, and international cooperation and coordination. The aim of the peacekeeping operations is to lay the foundation for a long lasting stability; however without the necessary resources, continued political will, and commitment from both local and international organisations, the progress reached during the mission may quickly unravel, leaving the region vulnerable to relapse into conflict.

Current Status

The first UN peacekeeping mission was established in May 1948 in the Middle East under the name of the *United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)*, the purpose of which was to monitor ceasefire after the Arab-Israeli war. Since then, multiple missions have been deployed to maintain the peace and stability, such as the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF, 1974), the *United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL, 1978)*, or the *United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL, 2011)*.

In the early years, UN Peacekeeping's goals were primarily limited to maintaining ceasefires and stabilizing situations on the ground so that efforts could be made at the political level to resolve the conflict by peaceful means. As the global situation has been evolving rapidly, UN Peacekeeping has adapted to meet the demands of different conflicts and a changing political landscape. Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security but also to facilitate the political processes, protect civilians, disarm combatants, support elections, protect and promote human rights and restore the rule of law (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2018).

Historically, UN peacekeeping operations have proven to have a high success rate in different conflict scenarios; however, recently the question whether those missions are actually effective in resolving disputes in the long term has been raised. Peacekeeping has been successful in the past because it worked alongside a viable political or peace process - meaning that security efforts supported negotiations, ceasefires, and diplomatic solutions. However, many modern peacekeeping operations work without a clear peace process, therefore creating a **stabilization dilemma**.

A stabilization dilemma happens when the peacekeeping mission has managed to successfully protect the civilians and establish and maintain stability in the region; therefore, the urgency of the conflict drops and the time for peace negotiations prolongs. This occurrence poses significant concerns regarding the efficiency of the peacekeeping operations - it gives space for political interference, trapping operations in place with no exit options, increasing the resilience of armed groups, and embedding peacekeeping in the local political economy.

Root Causes

While UN peacekeeping missions have had some success in addressing conflicts and fostering peace, their ability to reach their objectives has been obstructed by different political, economic, or societal obstacles. Issues, such as insecurity, downsizing and limited resources hinder their ability to reach long lasting stability. Bureaucratic inefficiencies and slow decision-making processes have undermined timely responses to conflicts, while insufficient funding limits their operational capacity. The UN acts in accordance with local governing bodies and when such bodies are in conflict, this can restrict the UN's ability to react accordingly to a crisis situation. Additionally, it's a considerable concern that powerful member states may influence peacekeeping operations to serve their own interests, thus undermining the credibility of UN missions.

Other root causes include:

- **Prioritization of Short-Term Stability Over Long-Term Peace**
 - After the departure of peacekeepers, unresolved tensions between the conflict sides may lead to a resurgence of violence.

- **Lack of Exit Strategies and Prolonged Deployments**
 - Without a clear plan for transitioning power to local governing bodies and institutions, missions becomes indefinitely entrenched
 - Prolonged deployments may lead to dependency rather than self-sufficiency

- **Challenges in Engaging Local Communities**

- The UN's ability to respond to different situations depends on the host's willingness to engage
- In case of lack of trust from the community, the peacekeeping operation cannot reach a long-lasting success.

Country and Bloc Positions

United States of America

The United States has a complex and influential past in peacekeeping efforts in the Middle East, often balancing military involvement with diplomatic mediation. The U.S. has supported UN peacekeeping missions in the region through financial aid, military assistance and political cooperation. The U.S. was instrumental in negotiating key peace agreements such as the Camp David Accords (1978) between Egypt and Israel, and the Oslo Accords (1993) between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The country is also a part of several peacekeeping and security missions in the Middle East including CJTF-OIR, CTF 153 and MFO. However, U.S. military interventions in Iraq (2003) and Afghanistan (2001) have been criticized for destabilizing the region. The U.S. has also led coalition efforts against ISIS and continues to play a major role in UN peacekeeping mandates.

Russia

Russia's involvement in Middle Eastern peacekeeping focuses on military and political support, particularly in Syria. Its 2015 intervention in the Syrian Civil War helped President Bashar al-Assad regain control but drew criticism for civilian casualties. Russia's actions have differentiated with Western peacekeeping strategies which complicate its role in this region. Russia has also acted as a mediator in conflicts, hosting peace talks and working with Iran and Turkey. Its strategic interests in Syria, including a naval base in Tartus and its influence in regional energy markets, have shaped the country's approach to peacekeeping and prolonged regional tensions.

Lebanon

Lebanon has been a focal point in Middle East peacekeeping efforts due to its geopolitical significance and history of conflict. Since the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) and the Israeli invasions of 1978 and 1982, international peacekeeping forces have played a crucial role in stabilizing the country. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), established in 1978, remains one of the longest-running UN peacekeeping missions, tasked with monitoring the cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel. Lebanon has also contributed troops to UN peacekeeping missions abroad, reflecting its commitment to international peace and security. However, the country continues to face challenges related to regional instability, the presence of non-state armed groups, and complex political dynamics that influence its peacekeeping role.

Egypt

Egypt has significantly contributed to United Nations peacekeeping operations since 1960, reflecting its longstanding commitment to global peace and security. Over the past six decades, Egypt has deployed more than 30,000 military and police personnel to 37 UN missions across 24 countries. The country has played a pivotal role in peacekeeping missions in the Middle East, both as a host nation and as a contributor. As a key player in regional stability, Egypt has hosted peacekeeping forces such as the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) and the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai Peninsula to monitor agreements with Israel. Additionally, Egypt has deployed troops to missions like the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) and the United Nations Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM), demonstrating its commitment to conflict resolution and regional security.

Iran

Iran's relationship with UN peacekeeping missions in the Middle East has been complex, shaped by historical participation and ongoing geopolitical tensions. Before the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Iran actively contributed troops to UN peacekeeping efforts, including the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). However, after the revolution, Iran withdrew from these missions and took a different approach to regional security. In recent decades, Iran has often been critical of UN peacekeeping missions, particularly in Lebanon and Syria, as it supports non-state actors such as Hezbollah. Iran has also voiced opposition to certain UN interventions, arguing that they serve Western interests rather than regional stability. While Iran promotes its own security initiatives, such as the Hormuz Peace Initiative for Persian Gulf stability, its relationship with UN peacekeeping operations remains defined by strategic interests, skepticism, and selective engagement.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's role in Middle Eastern peacekeeping operations is closely related to its political and military influence in the Gulf region. In 2015, it intervened against Houthi rebels which influenced the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. It has supported peace talks while balancing relations in Israel under the Abraham Accords and advocating for Palestinian statehood through the Arab Peace Initiative (2002). Saudi Arabia's complicated relationship with Iran continues to shape its role in regional peace efforts, particularly in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. While Saudi Arabia has backed peace talks and ceasefire agreements, it has also participated in military actions, including airstrikes and blockades.

Conclusion

Before continuing further, we would like to ask all delegates to carefully look at the facts, and consider the following questions:

- How has your delegation contributed to the UN peacekeeping initiative?
- What is the significance of the peacekeeping missions' effectiveness to your country's current situation?
- What has your country done to address the issue?
- What are possible solutions to the issue?

This study guide is by no means exhaustive on the topic of Efficiency of UN Peacekeeping Operations in the Middle East, and we suggest that all delegates should research the topic further and their nation stances and likely actions. We would like you to consider what impact this issue has on your country and what impact your country has on the issue.

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