



# Security Council

The role of the state's  
behavior on social media in  
modern politics and society

President: Zaira Zárate

Moderator: Elizabeth Sánchez

Conference officer: Pierre Ange García

# Committee background

The Security Council is one of the six main organs of the United Nations. Its stated goal is to, “Maintain peace and security in the international community”. It was established alongside the creation of the United Nations itself in 1945 as an executive power. It was created with the intention of gathering the most powerful nations at the time to resolve international disagreements in order to avoid another global dispute. Unlike the protocol of other committees where only recommendations are made, members of the council are obliged to **comply with the council decisions.**

The committee is divided into permanent and non-permanent members. These five permanent members represent the victors of World War II: The United States of America, Russia, China, France, and The United Kingdom (United Nations Security Council, 2012)[1]. Each one of them holds veto power, therefore it is imperative for these countries to come to an agreement, so the resolution can come into effect.

In order to maintain international legal order, the council has the power to deal with aggressive acts whether through peaceful means (settling agreements) or direct intervention (enforcing peace over the territory through peacekeeping missions). All the committee's resolutions are binding and **mandatory** to all the UN registered countries.

# Topic background and description

Web social media have become an integral part of contemporary society and discourse. Arguments stated that they support the human need for social interaction, using Web-based technologies to transform broadcast media monologues (one to many) into social media dialogues (many to many). (Patrut, B., Patrut, M., 2014 ) [2].

The actual political environment throughout the world has been heavily affected and conditioned by social media. The creation of new private and free-to-use platforms has modified the behavior of citizens and authorities, affecting the way information and communication are perceived and processed. The amount of daily interactions between social media users does nothing but grow, affecting almost every aspect of daily life. Social media, as free-speech online platforms, are a great tool to ensure the effectiveness of democracy and the spread of veridic and important information. But in the last decades, many dangerous and polarizing tendencies have appeared in this specific environment.

Social media is also home to the proliferation of misleading information, such as fake news and hate propaganda. Many recent terrorist and hate groups' recruitment strategies, propaganda, and financing have been supported by social media. Fake news and misleading information deeply endanger the public opinion and the citizens' trust, targeting the incorrect use and interpretation of information, translating into social, political, and even (as we saw in recent events) health misconducts, endangering every member of every nation.

Due to the impact in national and international politics and security these platforms have and restating the importance of free speech, countries and governments start to be concerned about social media functionality and regulation.

In 2019 the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, released the plan that is being followed to tackle hate speech. (United Nations, 2019)[3]. It is being taken very seriously since members of this IGO know how suddenly and aggressively ideas can turn into harmful actions.

“Rather than prohibiting hate speech as such, international law prohibits the incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence (referred to here as ‘incitement’). Incitement is a very dangerous form of speech, because it explicitly and deliberately aims at triggering discrimination, hostility and violence, which may also lead to or include terrorism or atrocity crimes. Hate speech that does not reach the threshold of incitement is not something that international law requires States to prohibit. It is important to underline that even when not prohibited, hate speech may be harmful.”

As we know, every aspect of the world, especially in social media, is connected. Hate speech leads to people taking dishonest actions to get ahead in certain fields, which is usually reflected in fake news. Fake news, misinformation, **and** disinformation can mislead the public. Their spread is amplified by the prevalence of social media and communication technologies. Carefully disguised as the truth, they often involve unverifiable claims which may be hard to dispel by fact-checkers.

This has undermined trust in journalism, disrupted elections and democracy, and even incited hatred and violence. Various solutions have been proposed to tackle this, such as providing education on media literacy, enacting laws to punish repeated spreaders of disinformation, utilizing artificial intelligence technology to detect fake news, and putting in place regulations on social media platforms.

Countries such as Germany have taken on the responsibility of educating their population on this matter. They have identified one of the root problems, being “that many people can no longer classify things properly. Is it propaganda, satire, or a misrepresented fact based on faulty research?” (Lüber, K, 2019)[3].

Now that states have an important role in social media, it should be used to create a more transparent international system. By transparency, we mean that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. To give an example, the nation of Japan.

Japan has one of the most transparent administrations, standing out as the country in Asia with less corruption and more civic participation (Data retrieved from Transparency International 2019) [4]. Transparency and privacy policies in social media are closely monitored, enabling low social media penetration rates(65%) and the warranty of free speech. By investing heavily in education, Japan tries to avoid the dangerous effect of the spread of fake news and information.

# Committee focus

As it was previously stated, social media can shape the outcomes of several aspects of politics; thus of the social agenda. At this conference, the present delegations will focus on addressing three main behaviors on these platforms, in which political figures/states play a major role. When drafting possible solutions, keep in mind the power of the council and the interests of each nation, in order for them to be realistic and effective.

QUERÉTARO

Firstly, and perhaps the most threatening issue to discuss, is the use of political figures to incite violence against institutions and/or specific groups of the population. With the recent event of the storming of the US capitol, more attention has been brought to the topic, but it doesn't mean that it wasn't already a pertinent matter to discuss. The chair encourages the delegates to find the repeated characteristics of this kind of speech in order to synthesize an effective plan to eradicate them.

Fake news has been around even before the existence of the internet, but now that it does exist, this information spreads even quicker. The use of social media has allowed anyone to communicate whatever they want whenever they want. This has even been an important aspect in presidential elections, as it was in the case of Brazil. The controversy begins when trying to draw the line between the efforts to not misinform the population and overstepping their rights of free expression. Policies and censorship work differently within each nation. Is there a reason why? What can the United Nations do about that?

Finally, following the trend of openness the United Nations has established, this reunion of nations must lead to an agreement in which all present make an effort to become more active in these communication platforms, without undermining the second aspect of this debate (fake news). The secretariat is certain that the whole committee will be able to meet in the middle ground of their interests to abide by the mission of the council.

## Relevant questions:

1. How can the committee/government prevent the spread of fake news, without intervening with the right of free speech?
2. How can the committee prevent the world leaders' and government representatives' use of social media to spark violence or misleading information?
3. Should the regulation of private companies' TOS (Terms of Service), such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Reddit, be considered a national security matter by governments, and if that is the case, how will they be adapted?
4. Is there already a protocol that prevents or deals with this kind of uprisings?

## Relevant articles:

1. BBC News (2021). Capitol riots: Did Trump's words at rally incite violence?  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55640437>
2. BBC Monitoring (2018). Brazil's Bolsonaro, the 'social media candidate'.  
<https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c2009tkb>

# References

- Owen, D.(2017) "The New Media´s Role in Politics." In The Age of Perplexity. Rethinking The World we knew. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/the-new-media-s-role-in-politics/>
- Lüber, K. (2019). Fight against fake news. Retrieved from: <https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/culture/fight-against-fake-news> [08/02/21].[3]
- Patrut, B., Patrut, M. (2014) Social Media in Politics. Retrieved from: <file:///Users/zairazarategonzalez/Downloads/PatrutBPatrutMSocialMediainPolitics.pdf> [08/02/21].[2]
- Social Media Marketing (2020, July).A complete guide to social media in Japan | Digital Marketing For Asia. Retrieved from: <https://www.digitalmarketingforasia.com/a-complete-guide-to-social-media-in-japan/>
- Transparency International Rankings (2021, January 28). Transparency.org. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/japan> [4]
- United Nations (2012). Functions and Powers | United Nations Security Council. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/functions-and-powers> [06/02/21].[1]
- United Nations (2019). United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/UN%20Strategy%20and%20Plan%20of%20Action%20on%20Hate%20Speech%2018%20June%20SYNOPSIS.pdf> [08/02/21].[3]