



**United
Nations
Association
of Australia**



AUSTRALIA'S 2013-2015 SEAT ON THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Australia held a two-year elected term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) from 1 January 2013 to 1 January 2015. Over that period, the United Nations Security Council faced a large number of security and humanitarian crises worldwide, which Australia addressed diligently and effectively.

> THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

The UNSC Security Council is the most powerful organ of the United Nations. The Security Council's primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. To help do so it has a number of measures available including the authority to deploy troops from United Nations member countries, ability to mandate cease-fires during conflict, and can impose economic penalties on entire countries.

The Security Council is composed of representatives from fifteen member countries. Five of the Security Council members are permanent members (P5): the United States, United Kingdom, China, Russia, and France.

The ten non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected based on wider criteria and represent regional groupings of the world. As a product of history Australia, Canada, Israel, and New Zealand are all considered part of the 'Western European and Others' regional group. The ten non-permanent members serve two-year terms and five are replaced each year in annual elections. Each regional group votes for its own representative and the United Nations General Assembly ratifies this selection. Australia has been elected a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council on five separate occasions: 1946–47, 1956–57, 1973–74, 1985–86, and 2013–14.

> AUSTRALIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS ON THE UNSC

Whilst sitting on the UNSC in 2013-2015 Australia achieved a number of successes that were to the benefit of the country and the world, including:

> MH17 BOEING 777 SHOOTDOWN

Following the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 while flying over Ukraine in July 2014, Australia's Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop called for action within the Security Council. Australia promptly authored and led negotiations on UNSC Resolution 2166 which condemned the downing of MH17 and called on separatists at the crash site to ensure the bodies of the victims were treated with dignity and respect. The resolution also underlined the need for a secure, thorough and independent investigation into the incident and demanded all military activities in the geographic area cease to enable access to the crash site. The resolution was unanimously adopted on 21 July 2014 as a result of Australia's successful negotiation strategy.

> SUPPORTING MISSIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

In 2014 Australia coordinated the UNSC's work regarding Afghanistan's transition period from the NATO-led combat mission handing over to Afghan security control, leading to UNSC support for Operation Resolute Support. This operation continues to help to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Security Forces as they persist to combat insurgency, terrorism, the Taliban threat and work to support the rebuilding of the nation.

> ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTH KOREA

Australia also took a leadership role in addressing the grievous human rights abuses in North Korea (DPRK). This led the UNSC to consider the investigative report of the UN Commission of Inquiry, led by former Australian High Court Justice Michael Kirby into human rights abuses in the DPRK. As a result of Australia's efforts the Security Council well informed with human rights abuse evidence to take future action and put pressure on the DPRK regime.



> ADDRESSING HUMANITARIAN ISSUES IN SYRIA

Australia worked alongside other UNSC members to arrange for the Security Council to be regularly briefed on the humanitarian and human rights dimensions of the Syrian conflict, leading to a series of agreements on the need for enhanced humanitarian access and better protection of civilians in that country. Australia led negotiations alongside Luxembourg and Jordan, which resulted in UNSC Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191. Resolution 2165 was particularly ground-breaking, as it enabled UN agencies to deliver humanitarian assistance across borders without the consent of the Syrian government – the first resolution of its kind.

Under Australia's presidency of the UNSC for one month in November 2014, the Security Council also finalised the international response to a terrible incident involving the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against its civilian population in the suburbs of Damascus during 2013. The UNSC reached agreement on a plan developed by the United States and the Russian Federation to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons under UN supervision, codified in UNSC Resolution 2118. Australia remained attentive in monitoring the implementation of this Resolution during the UNSC term. As of December 2014, ninety-eight per cent of the Syrian regimes chemical weapon stockpile had been successfully destroyed.

> FUTURE OF AUSTRALIA AND THE UNSC

Australia was widely praised for serving its 2013-15 UNSC term with high distinction by council colleagues, other UN Member States and a range of Non-Government Organisations. Through its achievements, Australia developed a reputation as an active, pragmatic UNSC member by pursuing solutions to difficult and sensitive international issues involving peace and security. Australia hopes to continue to uphold this reputation in this field, and is currently scoping the opportunities for its next term on the United Nations Security Council. The United Nations Association of Australia encourages it to do so.



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