

# Security Council Documentation Workshop

## Table of Contents

### Major documents

Report of the Security Council_____	3
Resolutions_____	3
Notification under Article 12 _____	3
Monthly programme _____	4
Presidential summary _____	4
Working Methods _____	4

### Meeting documents

Types of documents _____	5
Note on timing _____	5
Note on symbols_____	5
Meeting records _____	6
Meeting outcomes_____	7

### Tools for finding documents

Recent documents_____	8
Documents by subject _____	10
Speeches _____	11
Voting _____	11
Access to older documents_____	12

Electronic version available at:

<http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/training/scdocumentation.html>

## Introduction

This workshop will introduce the documentation of the Security Council. Through lecture, demonstration and hands-on practice, workshop participants will learn to identify and access the full text of Security Council documents.

Hands-on training will include electronic library resources such as:

- [UN Documentation Research Guide](#),
- [UNBISnet](#),
- [Official Document System](#) (ODS), and
- [UN-Info-Quest](#) (UN-I-Que).

The Security Council, a principal organ of the United Nations, has characteristic working methods; the documentation reflects the working methods.

## Major documents

### Report of the Security Council to the General Assembly

The [Security Council's annual report](#) to the General Assembly on its activities covers:

- Questions considered by the Security Council and matters brought to its attention;
- Work of the Council's subsidiary bodies during the reporting period;
- Annexes with:
  - the membership of the Council;
  - the representatives accredited to it;
  - Presidents in the reporting period;
  - Meetings held and actions taken by the Council and its subsidiary bodies.

The document is always assigned the sequential number "2" for the session in question (e. g., [A/62/2](#)) and is published as Supplement No. 2 to the Official Records of the General Assembly.

### Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council

[Resolutions and decisions of the Security Council](#) are compiled into annual cumulations which are issued in the S/INF/- series as part of the Official Records of the Security Council (e.g. [S/INF/61](#), [full list of symbols](#)). Presidential statements are also included in these cumulations.

### Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Each year, in accordance with the [Charter of the United Nations](#), the Secretary-General notifies the General Assembly of matters being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal. This document provides a list of all the matters considered by the Security Council for a year ([list with links](#)).

## Major documents (continued)

### Monthly Programme of Work

The presidency of the Security Council rotates each month and the new president issues a [Monthly Programme of Work](#). This informal, unsymbolled document is posted on the [Security Council website](#).

### Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the Presidency of... in....

Each president submits a report on the activities of the Security Council during the month of its presidency. These reports summarize the meetings and consultations, and provide a overview for each item considered by the Security Council ([full list of symbols](#); [list with links for 2007](#)).

### Documents relating to the **Working Methods** of the Security Council

Few documents of the Security Council deal with its working methods; generally the documents are about matters relating to peace and security. Documents that provide this information can be difficult to find. Two that are particularly helpful are:

- [S/2006/507](#): This document lists the "recent practices and newly agreed measures, which will serve as guidance for the Council's work," as formulated by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.
- [S/2007/137](#): This document transmits the report by Finland, of the 4th annual Workshop for Newly Elected and Present Security Council Members, held on 28-30 Nov. 2006 in Tarrytown, New York.

## Documents related to Meetings of the Security Council

### Types of documents

Certain types of documents are issued for formal meetings of the Security Council. Informal meetings or informal consultations do not have associated official documents. Open formal meetings generally have more documentation than closed formal meetings.

- Documentation for an open meetings always includes:
  - provisional agenda (S/Agenda/-);
  - meeting record (S/PV.-);

and may include:

- draft resolution (S/[year]/-);
  - resolution (S/RES/-);
  - presidential statement (S/PRST/[year]/-).
- 
- Closed meetings have a provisional agenda (S/Agenda/-) and a meeting record (S/PV.-).

### *Note on Timing*

Generally, all the documents related to a formal meeting of the Security Council are issued in all languages **within two days** of the meeting. Neither the provisional agenda, nor any draft resolution, is issued prior to the meeting.

### *Note on Symbols*

Security Council meetings are numbered sequentially. The number of the meeting serves as the final number of the symbol for the provisional agenda and the meeting record. For example, the 5,806th meeting of the Security Council, held on 17 Dec. 2007, has the agenda: S/Agenda/5806 and the meeting record: S/PV.5806.

## Documents related to Meetings (continued)

### Meeting Records

Formal meetings of the Security Council always have a [meeting record](#) issued (S/PV.-).

For **closed meetings**, this document usually transmits a Communique, rather than the transcript of the statements made (e.g. [S/PV.5797](#)).

For **open meetings**, the meeting record has a first-person verbatim transcript of the statements made at the meeting (e.g. [S/PV.5796](#)).

If any documentation is before the Council, such as a report of the Secretary-General or a letter from a member state, the citation is provided in the meeting record.

The meeting record contains the **official record of any vote** taken during a formal meeting.

## Documents related to Meetings (continued)

### Meeting Outcomes

A meeting of the Security Council may have many outcomes. Any action taken is recorded in the meeting record. For a current list of Security Council meetings and all related documentation, please see the [Research Guide list](#).

- **No action:** the Council may not take any action during a meeting. For example, on 17 Dec. 2007 the Council was briefed by the Chairs of subsidiary bodies, but no action was taken ([S/PV.5806](#)). No additional document is issued.
- **Communique:** the Council may issue a communique following a closed meeting. For example, on 11 Dec. 2007, the Council met with countries contributing troops to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and issued a communique ([S/PV.5797](#)). No additional document is issued.
- **Presidential Statement:** the President of the Security Council may make a statement on behalf of the Council. The statement is recorded in the meeting record and a separate document is issued with the text of the statement. For example, following the bombing in Algeria on 11 Dec. 2007, the Security Council held a meeting and a statement was issued. ([S/PV.5798](#) and [S/PRST/2007/45](#)). Please see the [Research Guide](#) for additional information.
- **Resolution:** Security Council resolutions are formal expressions of the opinion or will of the Council and may have legal and financial implications (e.g. the establishment of a peacekeeping mission). Every resolution in the Security Council is voted on and the vote is recorded in the meeting record. Resolutions are first published as individual documents, identified by the prefix S/RES/- , and subsequently compiled into annual cumulations which are issued in the S/INF/- series as part of the Official Records of the Security Council.

## Tools for finding Security Council documents

There are many tools for finding Security Council documents: often the challenge is to select the proper tool. Below we present various tools, arranged according to the type of document needed and the information in hand.

### Recent documents

- **UN Documentation: Research Guide: [SC Actions table](#)**: this table is updated on a daily basis in English, French and Spanish. For each meeting held, the table offers a brief descriptive topic, and links to the meeting record, press release, and to any outcome document (S/PRST or S/RES).
  - Useful to scan for the most recent meetings.
  - No search is required.
  - Vote summary displayed.
    - If veto, Permanent Member State who exercised veto is identified (for example, see 12 Jan. 2007 for the latest veto).
  - In reverse chronological order with most recent at the top of the screen.
  
- **Official Document System ([ODS](#))**: If the symbol of the document is known, the ODS can be a quick tool to get the document, perhaps before the Research Guide has been updated or the document indexed by the Library.
  - With symbol, enter the symbol to the search screen (either Simple or Advanced) and click Search.
  - The ODS ignores all punctuation, so it is not necessary to remember if it is S/PV. or S/PV/.
  - The ODS truncates by default, so a search for S/PV.580 will bring up all documents beginning with that symbol in the database (i.e.
    - S/PV.5800,
    - S/PV.5801,
    - S/PV.5802, etc.
  - Results are displayed with the most recently published documents displayed first.

## Tools for finding Security Council documents (cont.)

### Recent documents (continued)

- [UN Daily Journal](#): very useful for obtaining current information about meetings of the Security Council. The journal serves two key purposes:
  - It informs of meetings scheduled to take place on a given day, as well as identifies the symbols of major documents to be considered at the meetings -- even when the documents may not yet have been officially released; and
  - It summarizes actions taken at the previous day's meetings and can be used to project symbols of meeting records and any actions taken even before they are officially issued.

Past issues of the Journal are available through the Advanced Search option of the Official Document System of the United Nations ([ODS](#)).

- [UNBISnet](#), the library catalogue: Within a week of any Security Council meeting, the documents should be issued and indexed by the library.
  - Search by symbol, title, or subject.
  - Provides subject access to documents.
  - Ability to refine search by many factors, including Type of Material.

## Tools for finding Security Council documents (cont.)

### Search by Subject

- [UN-I-QUE](#) (UN Info Quest): Provides quick access to document symbols from 1946 onwards.
  - Search for a mission, plus the word "meetings" for a complete record of all meetings held about the mission, plus any outcome (e.g. [Haiti and meetings](#)).
  - This database does not have every UN document, but rather focuses upon documents and publications of a recurrent nature: annual/sessional reports of committees/commissions; annual publications; reports periodically/irregularly issued; reports of major conferences; statements in the General Debate; etc.
  - Each record in UNIQUE is historically comprehensive. ODS and UNBISnet do not provide comprehensive access to historic materials.
  
- [Index to the Proceedings of the Security Council](#) (ITP): This is an annual print publication that organizes citation to the documents of the Security Council by topic.
  - Organized by year, then by subject within the year.
  - Offers access to all kinds of documents:
    - Meeting Records of the SC and its subsidiaries
    - Resolutions and Presidential Statements
    - Reports of the Secretary-General
    - Reports of the subsidiaries of the Security Council
    - Letters from Member States
    - etc.
  - Part II is the Index to Speeches

## Tools for finding Security Council documents (cont.)

### Speeches

- The Index to Speeches has been issued as a print publication (since 1964) and as a database within [UNBISnet](#) (since 1983). The Index is organized by:
  - Topic,
  - Country or Organization represented,
  - Speaker's name.
- The print version is issued annually, since 1964.
- The electronic version is updated daily. Usually, speeches in the Security Council are available in the Index to Speeches within 2 weeks of the date of the speech.
- Older meeting records of the Security Council are being scanned and added to UNBISnet, but the speeches are not being added to the separate Index to Speeches of UNBISnet.

### Voting

- Information about voting in the Security Council is available from many places.
  - A summary of the vote is listed in the [Security Council Actions table](#) of the Research Guide.
  - The official record of the vote is in the meeting record (S/PV.-) and in the annual cumulation of the resolutions (S/INF/-). The vote is **not recorded** in the resolution document (S/RES/-).
- Information about the vote on **adopted resolutions** since 1946 is also available through the Voting Records database within [UNBISnet](#).
- Information about draft resolutions not adopted is more difficult to find.
  - For a list of Negative Votes by Permanent members (i.e. vetoes), 1946-2004, please see Annex III to the report to the 58th session of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council ([A/58/47](#)).

## **Note on electronic access to Security Council documents**

The United Nations began publishing documents in electronic format in 1993. Most documents issued prior to 1993 are not yet available online.

All resolutions of the principal organs, including the Security Council, have been digitized and are available through Advanced Search in the ODS, the library's catalogue UNBISnet, and through various websites.

In addition, older documents are being scanned and added to the ODS and UNBISnet daily. Security Council documents are given priority in scanning and meeting records back to 1964 are currently available through the ODS and UNBISnet.

Other Security Council documents may be available electronically, check the databases.

If the material you need is not available in electronic format, please visit the library to consult the paper documents.