

PODAR SUMMIT 2026 |
MENS OMNIA VINCIT

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL

STUDY GUIDE



AGENDA:

DISCUSSING THE RISING MARITIME TENSIONS
IN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ AND ADDRESSING
THEIR THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title	Page No.
Letter from Executive Board	2
Glossary	3
Introduction to the commitee	5
Introduction to the agenda	7
Background and history	8
Timelines	17
Past action taken by UN / relevant bodies	20
Bloc Positions	22
Instructions for the delegates	27
Bibliography	29

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Esteemed Delegates,

On behalf of the Executive Board of the United Nations Security Council at Podar Summit 2026, we extend our warm greetings and heartfelt welcome. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and deliberations regarding one of the most strategically significant maritime regions in the world, the Strait of Hormuz.

The agenda before this committee, *"Discussing the Rising Maritime Tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and Addressing their Threats to International Security"*, concerns an issue that lies at the intersection of international peace and security, global trade, energy security, and maritime law. As one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints, the Strait of Hormuz serves as a vital transit route for a substantial proportion of global seaborne energy trade. Any disruption to navigation within these waters has consequences that extend far beyond the immediate region, affecting international markets, shipping networks, and the stability of states across the globe.

As members of the United Nations Security Council, delegates will be tasked with examining these challenges through the lens of international peace and security. It is important to note that this study guide is intended only as an introductory resource and should not be considered exhaustive. The Executive Board strongly encourages delegates to conduct independent research beyond the scope of this document, paying particular attention to relevant United Nations documents, conventions, reports, and contemporary developments related to the agenda.

We are enthusiastic about the forthcoming committee sessions and the prospect of engaging in logical debates.

Warm Regards,

Samyukta Menon | *Director*

Aarav Hallan | *Assistant Director*

Arhaan Mahmood | *Assistant Director*

GLOSSARY

♦ Strait of Hormuz

A narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It is one of the world's most important maritime transit routes and serves as a principal passage for international shipping and energy exports.

♦ Chokepoint

A strategically important narrow route through which significant volumes of maritime traffic pass. Disruptions within a chokepoint can have major economic and security implications for international trade.

♦ Transit Passage

A navigation regime established under Part III of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), permitting ships and aircraft to exercise freedom of navigation and overflight through straits used for international navigation.

♦ Contiguous Zone (CZ)

A maritime zone extending up to 24 nautical miles from the baseline, within which a state may prevent and punish infringements of customs, fiscal, immigration, or sanitary laws (UNCLOS, Article 33).

♦ Freedom of Navigation

A principle of international law that allows vessels of all states to navigate freely through international waters and maritime routes in accordance with applicable international legal frameworks.

♦ Territorial Sea

The maritime zone extending up to 12 nautical miles from a coastal state's baselines, over which the coastal state exercises sovereignty, subject to provisions of international law.

♦ Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

A maritime zone extending up to 200 nautical miles from a coastal state's baselines in which the state possesses sovereign rights for exploring, exploiting, conserving, and managing natural resources.

GLOSSARY

♦ **Innocent Passage**

The right of ships of all states to navigate through the territorial sea of another state provided such passage is not prejudicial to the peace, good order, or security of the coastal state.

♦ **Energy Security**

The uninterrupted availability of energy resources at affordable prices. Maritime disruptions in critical shipping routes can significantly impact global energy security.

♦ **Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs)**

Primary maritime routes used for the movement of commercial goods, military assets, and energy resources between states.

♦ **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**

A specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for the safety, security, and environmental performance of international shipping

♦ **International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)**

An international maritime treaty adopted under the International Maritime Organization (IMO) that establishes minimum standards for the safety, security, and operation of ships engaged in international voyages. It serves as the primary international legal framework for ensuring the safety of life at sea and the protection of maritime navigation

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The Security Council holds primary responsibility for upholding international peace and security. It consists of 15 Members, each possessing one vote. Under the United Nations Charter, all Member States are obligated to adhere to the decisions made by the Council.

The Security Council assumes a leading role in assessing threats to peace and acts of aggression. It encourages peaceful resolution of disputes among parties and recommends methods or terms for settlement. In certain cases, the Council can employ sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore global peace and security.

All the existing committees and working groups comprise the 15 Council members. Standing committees are presided over by the Council's President, who rotates monthly. Other committees and working groups are chaired or co-chaired by designated Council members, as announced annually in a note by the President of the Security Council.

The Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council provides a comprehensive record of the Council's interpretation and application of the UN Charter and its own Provisional Rules of Procedure. This resource, mandated by the General Assembly in 1952, is based exclusively on official Security Council documents. It serves as a reference for Member States, UN system entities, academics, and others, offering insights into the evolving practices of the Security Council.

Mandatory sanctions are employed to exert pressure on a State or entity, compelling them to comply with the Council's objectives without resorting to force. Sanctions are a vital tool for the Security Council to enforce its decisions.

The functions and powers of the Security Council under the UN Charter encompass:

- Maintaining international peace and security in line with UN principles and purposes.
- Investigating disputes or situations that may lead to international friction.
- Recommending methods for dispute resolution or settlement terms.
- Formulating plans for arms control.
- Determining the presence of a threat to peace or an act of aggression and suggesting necessary actions.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

- Calling on Members to implement economic sanctions and non-forceful measures to prevent or halt aggression.
- Taking military action against aggressors.
- Recommending the admission of new Member States.
- Exercising trusteeship functions in strategic areas.
- Recommending the appointment of the Secretary-General and participating in the election of International Court of Justice Judges alongside the General Assembly.

Regarding voting and majority requirements, Article 27 of the UN Charter specifies that each Council member holds one vote. Decisions on procedural matters require an affirmative vote from nine members. For all other matters, a decision must receive an affirmative vote from nine members, including the concurring votes of the permanent members. However, in decisions under Chapter VI and paragraph 3 of Article 52, disputing parties must abstain from voting.

The “right to veto” is a unique privilege granted to the five Permanent Member States of the Security Council: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. If any one of these permanent members casts a negative vote, the resolution or decision is not approved. All five permanent members have exercised this right at some point. When a permanent member does not fully support a proposed resolution but does not wish to veto it, they may choose to abstain, allowing the resolution to be adopted if it garners the required nine favorable votes.

The Security Council's core objective is to resolve international disputes through peaceful means, as outlined in Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which permits the Council to call upon parties to seek solutions through negotiation, arbitration, or other peaceful methods. In the absence of success, Chapter VII empowers the Council to take more assertive actions, such as imposing sanctions or authorizing the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Peacekeeping missions are a prominent aspect of the United Nations' conflict management efforts, overseen by the Security Council.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the most strategically significant waterways in the world and serves as a critical maritime passage connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Situated between Iran to the north and Oman and the United Arab Emirates to the south, the Strait functions as the primary route through which a substantial proportion of the world's seaborne energy trade passes. Due to its geographic position, the waterway has become indispensable to international commerce, energy security, and global economic stability.

As global dependence on maritime trade has increased, the uninterrupted functioning of key shipping routes has emerged as a matter of international concern. The Strait of Hormuz occupies a unique position in this regard, as it acts as the principal outlet for energy exports originating from several Gulf states. Therefore, any disruption to navigation within the Strait has implications extending far beyond the region itself, affecting energy markets, supply chains, transportation costs, and broader economic activity worldwide. PAGE 6

In recent years, the Strait has increasingly become a focal point of geopolitical competition and security concerns. Regional rivalries, military deployments, disputes concerning maritime security, and broader tensions in the Middle East have contributed to an environment of uncertainty. Incidents involving commercial shipping, naval vessels, and maritime infrastructure have repeatedly highlighted the vulnerability of one of the world's most important maritime corridors.

The international community has consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining maritime security and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of lawful commerce through international waterways.

BACKGROUND

For centuries, the waterway served as a major route connecting the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, East Africa, South Asia, and other regions through maritime trade. However, the discovery and commercialization of vast petroleum reserves in the Persian Gulf during the twentieth century transformed the Strait from a regional trade route into a critical component of the global economy.

Following the Second World War, rapid industrialization and increasing energy consumption elevated the importance of Gulf oil exports. As international demand for energy resources expanded, the Strait of Hormuz emerged as one of the most vital maritime chokepoints in the world. The security of the waterway became closely linked to global economic stability and the uninterrupted functioning of international markets.

A significant turning point occurred in 1979 with the Iranian Revolution, which altered the regional balance of power and introduced new geopolitical dynamics throughout the Gulf. The subsequent deterioration of relations between Iran and several neighboring states contributed to an increasingly complex security environment. These tensions intensified further with the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980.

During the latter stages of the Iran-Iraq War, the Persian Gulf became the scene of extensive attacks on commercial shipping and energy infrastructure. This period, commonly known as the “Tanker War,” witnessed both belligerents targeting merchant vessels and oil tankers associated with their opponents. The attacks demonstrated the vulnerability of international shipping routes and highlighted the broader consequences that regional conflicts could have for global trade and energy security. Concerns regarding maritime safety and freedom of navigation became central issues for the international community.

The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982 provided a comprehensive legal framework governing navigation, territorial seas, exclusive economic zones, and transit passage through international straits. Although disputes regarding interpretation and application continue to arise, UNCLOS remains the principal international legal instrument governing maritime activities and serves as an important reference point in discussions concerning the Strait of Hormuz.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, regional security concerns remained closely connected to developments in the Gulf. International sanctions, military interventions, and shifting alliances contributed to periodic tensions.

BACKGROUND

Despite these challenges, commercial shipping continued to transit through the Strait, reinforcing its significance as a vital artery of global commerce.

The late 2010s witnessed a renewed escalation of maritime tensions. Incidents involving oil tankers, commercial vessels, and regional military forces attracted significant international attention. Concerns regarding freedom of navigation, the safety of commercial shipping, and the possibility of miscalculation leading to wider conflict became recurring themes in international discussions. Several incidents involving the detention, seizure, or damage of commercial vessels underscored the persistent fragility of maritime security in the region.

In response to these developments, Member States, international organizations, and the United Nations increasingly emphasized dialogue, diplomacy, and adherence to international law as mechanisms for reducing tensions. The Security Council has repeatedly recognized the importance of maritime security in maintaining international peace and security, particularly given the growing interconnectedness of global trade and supply chains.

Today, the Strait of Hormuz remains one of the most strategically significant and politically sensitive waterways in the world. Ongoing tensions, competing security concerns, and the broader geopolitical landscape of the Middle East continue to shape discussions regarding the future of maritime stability in the region. As a result, the issue remains firmly on the agenda of the international community and presents an important challenge for the United Nations Security Council.

2.1 GEOGRAPHY OF THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

The Strait of Hormuz is located between the southern coastline of Iran to the north and the Musandam Peninsula of Oman to the south. At its narrowest point, the Strait spans approximately 21 nautical miles. However, the navigable shipping lanes are significantly more constrained: two corridors of approximately two nautical miles each, one designated for inbound traffic and one for outbound, separated by a two-nautical-mile buffer zone. These corridors accommodate ultra-large crude carriers and liquefied natural gas (LNG) supertankers that cannot be rerouted through alternative passages without substantial increases in transit time and cost.

The volume of hydrocarbons transiting the Strait reflects its structural significance to the global energy system. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), approximately 20 to 21 percent of the world's total petroleum liquids consumption passed through the Strait of Hormuz in 2023, representing roughly 20.9 million barrels per day. The EIA further identifies the Strait as the world's most important oil chokepoint by volume of flow.

The primary exporters dependent on Strait access include Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Iran itself. None of these states possesses sufficient alternative export infrastructure to compensate for Strait closure at equivalent volumes. The Saudi East-West Pipeline (Petroline) carries a maximum of approximately 5 million barrels per day, well below Saudi export levels. The UAE's Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline, terminating at Fujairah on the Gulf of Oman, has a capacity of approximately 1.5 million barrels per day. Both pipelines were designed to supplement, not replace, Strait-dependent export routes.

On the demand side, the primary receiving economies are concentrated in Asia. Japan, South Korea, India, and China collectively account for the majority of Strait-transiting hydrocarbon imports. The Asian Development Bank estimated in 2024 that a sustained closure could reduce GDP growth across East Asian import-dependent economies by 0.5 to 1.2 percentage points in the first year.

2.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE STRAIT

The legal status of the Strait of Hormuz is governed primarily by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which entered into force in 1994 and has been ratified by 168 states as of 2024. Iran is notably not a party to UNCLOS. The United States is also a non-party, though it regards the Convention's navigation provisions as reflective of customary international law.

Under UNCLOS Part III, specifically Articles 37 through 44, the Strait of Hormuz qualifies as a strait used for international navigation, triggering the right of transit passage. Article 38 defines transit passage as the exercise of freedom of navigation and overflight for the purpose of continuous and expeditious transit. This right applies to all ships and aircraft, including warships and military aircraft, and cannot be suspended by the bordering state. This is a stricter right than innocent passage, which applies in territorial seas and which coastal states may temporarily suspend under Article 25(3) in limited circumstances.

Iran's domestic legal position diverges from the UNCLOS framework. Under its Marine Areas Act of 1993 and the Act to Protect the Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Maritime Areas of 1977, Iran has historically asserted that foreign military vessels require prior authorisation for transit through Iranian territorial waters. These positions have been consistently disputed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and other major maritime powers as incompatible with customary international law governing international straits.

The Security Council has addressed maritime security and freedom of navigation in prior resolutions. Resolution 1816 (2008) and subsequent resolutions on Somalia addressed piracy and authorised states to take action within a specific coastal state's territorial waters with that state's consent, establishing a precedent for Council engagement with maritime law enforcement. Resolution 2341 (2017) addressed the protection of critical infrastructure, including maritime infrastructure, from terrorist attacks. Neither resolution directly addressed the Strait of Hormuz, but both reflect the Council's recognised competence over maritime security matters that threaten international peace and stability.

2.3 ESCALATIONS LEADING TO OPERATION EPIC FURY

The regional security environment deteriorated across 2024 and 2025 through a series of incidents that collectively strained the mechanisms available for diplomatic de-escalation. Iranian-backed militia activity in Iraq and Syria intensified following the October 2023 Gaza conflict, drawing US retaliatory strikes in February 2024. Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea, attributed by UN Panel of Experts reports to Iranian weapons supply chains, expanded the zone of maritime insecurity well beyond the Persian Gulf.

Negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme stalled definitively following the collapse of indirect JCPOA revival talks in late 2024. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported in November 2025 that Iran had accumulated sufficient highly enriched uranium (enriched to 60 percent purity) to produce, with further enrichment, multiple nuclear devices. The IAEA Board of Governors passed a resolution censuring Iran in December 2025, which Iran rejected, responding by expelling two IAEA inspectors.

On 28 February 2026, the United States and Israel launched Operation Epic Fury, a coordinated air campaign targeting Iranian military command infrastructure, nuclear production facilities, and senior leadership networks. Within hours of the operation commencing, Iranian state media confirmed the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The political succession mechanism prescribed under Article III of the Iranian Constitution, which provides for the Assembly of Experts to select a new Supreme Leader, could not function in the immediate aftermath of the strikes due to the deaths of several Assembly members and disruption to communications infrastructure.

2.4 IRGC ASSUMPTION OF OPERATIONAL CONTROL AND STRAIT CLOSURE

Following the strikes, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) assumed emergency operational command of Iran's strategic military assets. The IRGC's expanding institutional autonomy within the Iranian state had been documented extensively in preceding years. A 2025 Congressional Research Service report noted that the IRGC controlled an estimated 20 to 30 percent of the Iranian economy and had developed an independent command-and-control infrastructure capable of functioning with reduced civilian oversight.

On 1 March 2026, the IRGC issued VHF broadcasts to all vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman declaring the Strait of Hormuz closed to commercial and military transit. Iran did not issue a formal declaration of blockade under the definitions set out in the San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea (1994), which specifies that a blockade must be declared, notified to belligerents and neutral states, and effectively enforced. Legal analysts noted that the absence of a formal declaration was deliberate, as it denied the US-led coalition an automatic legal trigger under international humanitarian law and deferred a clearer Council response under Article 39 of the UN Charter.

In place of a formal declaration, the IRGC deployed a layered asymmetric denial system comprising shore-based anti-ship missile batteries, naval mines laid in the shipping lanes, autonomous surface and underwater drones, and fast-attack craft patrols. The practical effect was equivalent to a blockade: commercial vessels could not transit the Strait with any reasonable confidence of safe passage.

2.5 KINETIC INCIDENTS

On 1 March 2026, the oil tanker Skylight was struck by a projectile north of Khasab, Oman, resulting in the deaths of two Indian seafarers. Hours later, the cargo vessel MKD Vyom sustained a drone-boat strike causing engine room fires, killing one additional Indian national. The Government of India formally protested to the UN Secretary-General, requesting Security Council intervention.¹³

On 2 March, the MV Stena Imperative was struck twice by loitering munitions while anchored in Bahrain's port waters, confirming that the threat envelope extended beyond the Strait into the broader Persian Gulf. Between 4 and 6 March, the tanker Sonangol Namibe was struck by a sea-drone attack near Kuwait, approximately 800 kilometres from the Strait's northern entrance, demonstrating that the IRGC's operational deployment was not geographically confined to the Strait corridor.

The aggregate effect on commercial shipping materialised not through a single decisive incident but through the insurance market. By mid-March 2026, all major global marine war-risk insurers had withdrawn coverage for Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz transits. The International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI) issued a formal advisory on 18 March noting that the risk environment was unquantifiable for actuarial purposes. Without valid insurance, no commercial vessel operator can legally or practically dispatch vessels to the affected area. Within days of the insurance withdrawal, observable commercial traffic through the Strait had declined by over 90 percent. More than 500 vessels were reported anchored in holding positions on both sides of the closure.

2.6 THE PERSIAN GULF STATE AUTHORITY

On 21 May 2026, the IRGC announced the establishment of the Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA), a newly created administrative body asserting jurisdiction over transit through the Strait of Hormuz. Under the PGSA framework, vessels seeking to transit are required to submit formal requests to Iranian authorities, accept cargo inspection, and disable their Automatic Identification System (AIS) transponders prior to entering Iranian-controlled waters.

The AIS requirement attracted particular concern from international maritime organisations. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) had established mandatory AIS carriage requirements under Assembly Resolution A.1106(29) (2015) for vessels above 300 gross tonnes on international voyages. AIS functions as the primary vessel tracking and collision-avoidance system in international waters; its deactivation removes vessels from the situational awareness of coast guards, port authorities, and other mariners. The IMO Secretary-General issued a statement on 25 May 2026 characterising the AIS deactivation requirement as incompatible with the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and with IMO mandatory carriage requirements.

Legal scholars have characterised the PGSA framework as an attempt to institutionalise a de facto transit-fee and inspection regime incompatible with the transit passage rights established under UNCLOS. Professor Yoshifumi Tanaka of the University of Copenhagen, writing in the *Journal of International Maritime Law* in June 2026, concluded that, if left without Council challenge, the PGSA framework would constitute a precedent-setting revision of the customary international law applicable to international straits.

2.7 THE CEASEFIRE & THE CURRENT STATUS

Following multilateral diplomatic engagement in May and June 2026, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced a ceasefire agreement on 15 June 2026, under which active airstrikes and naval exchanges between US-led coalition forces and Iranian state apparatus were paused. Preliminary mine-clearance operations in the northern reaches of the Strait commenced under the coordination of a technical working group involving Oman, Pakistan, and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS).

As this session of the Security Council convenes, the Strait of Hormuz remains closed to commercial traffic. Marine war-risk insurance coverage has not been reinstated. The legal status of the PGSA's claimed transit authority is unresolved. No internationally recognised framework currently exists to govern the resumption of commercial navigation. Confidence in the Strait as a reliable transit corridor has not recovered.

The ceasefire reduces the immediate risk of further kinetic escalation. It does not resolve the institutional, legal, and commercial conditions that must be addressed before the Strait can function as an open international waterway. The mandate of this committee is to produce legally coherent, operationally feasible, and politically viable frameworks capable of addressing those conditions with sufficient durability to withstand subsequent escalatory pressures.

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

♦ 1980 – Outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War

The conflict between Iran and Iraq begins, fundamentally altering the security landscape of the Persian Gulf. Maritime routes, oil infrastructure, and commercial shipping become increasingly vulnerable to military activities, drawing international concern regarding the stability of global energy supplies.

♦ 1984 – Beginning of the ‘Tanker War’

Attacks against commercial vessels and oil tankers in the Persian Gulf intensify. The conflict demonstrates the strategic vulnerability of maritime chokepoints and highlights how regional hostilities can threaten international commerce and energy security.

♦ 20 July 1987 – Adoption of Security Council Resolution 598

The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 598, calling upon Iran and Iraq to observe an immediate ceasefire, discontinue military operations on land, sea, and air, and cooperate with the Secretary-General in achieving a comprehensive settlement. The resolution remains one of the most significant UN interventions in Gulf security affairs.

♦ 20 August 1988 – Ceasefire Comes into Effect

Following acceptance of Resolution 598, the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq formally enters into force under UN supervision. The United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) is subsequently deployed to monitor implementation and assist in maintaining stability in the region.

♦ 10 December 1982 – Adoption of UNCLOS

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is adopted, establishing a comprehensive legal framework governing oceans and maritime activities, including provisions relating to transit passage through international straits.

♦ 16 November 1994 – Entry into Force of UNCLOS

UNCLOS enters into force after obtaining the required number of ratifications. Its provisions concerning straits used for international navigation become central to legal discussions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and the principle of freedom of navigation.

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

♦ 2001 – Growing International Focus on Maritime Security

Following major international security developments, the protection of maritime infrastructure, shipping routes, and commercial vessels gains increasing prominence within international security discussions. Maritime security gradually emerges as a broader component of global peace and security frameworks.

♦ 14 July 2015 – Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

The conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) contributes to a temporary reduction in regional tensions and encourages diplomatic engagement concerning broader security issues in the Gulf region

♦ 2018 – Renewed Regional Tensions

The re-emergence of disputes surrounding Iran's nuclear programme contributes to increased geopolitical tensions throughout the Gulf. International observers express concerns regarding potential implications for maritime stability and commercial navigation.

♦ May 2019 – Incidents Involving Commercial Shipping

Multiple commercial vessels operating near the Strait of Hormuz suffer damage in separate incidents, generating international concern regarding the security of one of the world's most important maritime corridors.

♦ June 2019 – Gulf of Oman Tanker Attacks

Two oil tankers are damaged near the approaches to the Strait of Hormuz, intensifying international discussions concerning maritime security, freedom of navigation, and the protection of commercial shipping

♦ July 2019 – Seizure of Commercial Tankers

A series of tanker-related incidents involving regional and international actors heightens tensions in the Gulf and illustrates the risks posed by retaliatory measures and maritime escalation.

♦ September 2019 – Attacks on Regional Energy Infrastructure

Attacks targeting major energy facilities in the Gulf region generate concerns regarding the resilience of global energy supply chains and reinforce the interconnected nature of energy and maritime security.

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

♦ 9 August 2021 – United Nations Security Council High-Level Debate on Maritime Security

The Security Council convenes a high-level open debate on maritime security under the theme “*Enhancing maritime security: A case for international cooperation.*” Member States emphasize the importance of safeguarding international shipping, addressing maritime threats, and strengthening cooperation among nations.

♦ 20 May 2025 – Security Council Open Debate on Strengthening Maritime Security

The Security Council holds another high-level debate focusing on international cooperation in addressing maritime security challenges. The Secretary-General stresses that maritime security is indispensable to global peace, economic prosperity, and sustainable development.

♦ 27 April 2026 – Security Council Debate on the Safety and Protection of Waterways

The United Nations Security Council conducts a high-level open debate titled “*The Safety and Protection of Waterways in the Maritime Domain.*” The Secretary-General emphasizes that maritime routes constitute the arteries of global trade and that their security represents a critical test of the contemporary international order. The International Maritime Organization similarly calls for enhanced international cooperation to safeguard maritime transit and civilian seafarers.

♦ 2026 – Continuing International Attention to Maritime Security in the Strait of Hormuz

The Strait of Hormuz remains one of the world’s most strategically significant waterways. The United Nations continues to emphasize dialogue, adherence to international law, freedom of navigation, and cooperative approaches to preventing escalation and ensuring the safe movement of global commerce through maritime corridors.

ARTICLES FROM THE TREATIES/CONVENTIONS SIGNED BY MEMBER NATIONS IN THE PAST

♦ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

Art. 17 (Right of innocent passage) : Subject to this Convention, ships of all States, whether coastal or land-locked, enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea.

Art. 38 (Definition of transit passage): Transit passage means the exercise in accordance with this Part of the freedom of navigation and overflight solely for the purpose of continuous and expeditious transit of the strait between one part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone. However, the requirement of continuous and expeditious transit does not preclude passage through the strait for the purpose of entering, leaving or returning from a State bordering the strait, subject to the conditions of entry to that State.

Art. 40 (Research and survey activities): During transit passage, foreign ships, including marine scientific research and hydrographic survey ships, may not carry out any research or survey activities without the prior authorization of the States bordering straits.

♦ Charter of the United Nations

Art. 1(1) : The United Nations shall maintain international peace and security.

Art. 2(3) : All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.

ARTICLES FROM THE TREATIES/CONVENTIONS SIGNED BY MEMBER NATIONS IN THE PAST

♦ UNSC Resolution 598

Op. 1 : The Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq observe an immediate cease-fire, discontinue all military actions on land, at sea and in the air, and withdraw all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries without delay.

Op. 5 : All other States to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any act which may lead to further escalation and widening of the conflict .

Op. 8 : Iran and Iraq and with other States of the region, measures to enhance the security and stability of the region

♦ Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation(1988)

Art. 3(1) : Any person commits an offence if that person unlawfully and intentionally:

- (a) seizes or exercises control over a ship by force or threat thereof or any other form of intimidation;
- (b) performs an act of violence against a person on board a ship if that act is likely to endanger the safe navigation of that ship;
- (c) destroys a ship or causes damage to a ship or to its cargo which is likely to endanger the safe navigation of that ship;
- (d) places or causes to be placed on a ship, by any means whatsoever, a device or substance which is likely to destroy that ship, or cause damage to that ship or its cargo which endangers or is likely to endanger the safe navigation of that ship

Art. 7 (1) : Any State Party in the territory of which the offender or the alleged offender is present shall, in accordance with its law, take him into custody or take other measures to ensure his presence for such time as is necessary to enable any criminal or extradition proceedings to be instituted.

BLOC POSITIONS

✦ United States

The United States views the Strait of Hormuz as one of the world's most strategically significant maritime chokepoints, with its security being integral to international peace, economic stability, and global energy security. Although the United States has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), it recognizes many of its provisions, including the principle of transit passage, as reflective of customary international law. The United States has consistently advocated for the preservation of freedom of navigation and opposes any actions that seek to impede or restrict the lawful movement of commercial and military vessels through the Strait. Given the Strait's role as a critical artery for global trade and energy exports, Washington maintains that any disruption to maritime traffic could have far-reaching consequences for international markets and regional stability. Consequently, the United States supports measures aimed at safeguarding commercial shipping, maintaining open sea lanes, and strengthening international cooperation to ensure maritime security in the region.

The United States has maintained a significant naval presence in the Persian Gulf for decades, primarily through the U.S. Fifth Fleet headquartered in Bahrain, reflecting its longstanding commitment to ensuring regional stability and the security of critical maritime trade routes. In response to recurring incidents involving tanker attacks, vessel seizures, and threats to commercial navigation, the United States has played a leading role in the establishment of multinational initiatives such as the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC), aimed at enhancing maritime security and safeguarding the uninterrupted flow of global commerce. The United States has consistently underscored the importance of freedom of navigation and has conducted Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) to reinforce internationally recognized navigation rights and uphold the principles of international maritime law. The United States is likely to advocate for greater international cooperation in maritime security, enhanced protection of commercial shipping, and the preservation of open and secure sea lanes, while strongly opposing actions that undermine freedom of navigation or threaten stability within the Strait of Hormuz and the wider Gulf region.

BLOC POSITIONS

✦ Russia

The Russian Federation recognizes the Strait of Hormuz as a strategically significant maritime corridor essential to international trade, regional stability, and global energy security. Russia has consistently supported the maintenance of safe and uninterrupted maritime navigation through the Strait while emphasizing the importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. In contrast to approaches centered on expanded military deployments, Moscow has traditionally advocated for diplomatic engagement, multilateral dialogue, and confidence-building measures as the primary means of addressing regional tensions. The Russian Federation has frequently maintained that sustainable security in the Gulf region can only be achieved through constructive cooperation among regional stakeholders, supported by internationally recognized diplomatic frameworks and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Russian Federation maintains cooperative relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran while simultaneously engaging with Gulf States and other regional stakeholders, reflecting its broader commitment to balancing strategic partnerships across the region. Moscow has consistently opposed the use of unilateral sanctions and coercive measures, arguing that such actions risk exacerbating regional tensions and undermining prospects for long-term stability. Russia has repeatedly advocated for the establishment of an inclusive and collective security architecture in the Persian Gulf founded upon the principles of mutual respect, sovereign equality, confidence-building measures, and multilateral diplomacy under the auspices of the United Nations. Within committee, the Russian Federation is likely to support initiatives aimed at de-escalation, the promotion of regional dialogue, and the peaceful resolution of disputes, while emphasizing the importance of state sovereignty and opposing external actions that may contribute to further militarization or instability within the Strait of Hormuz and the wider Gulf region.

BLOC POSITIONS

✦ Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran sees the Strait of Hormuz as a cornerstone of its national security, economic prosperity, and strategic interests. Owing to its geographical position along the northern coastline of the Strait, Iran regards developments within the waterway as intrinsically linked to its sovereignty and regional security. Tehran has consistently expressed concerns regarding the presence of foreign military forces in the Gulf, maintaining that such deployments contribute to regional tensions and undermine long-term stability. Consequently, Iran has advocated for a regional security framework led by Gulf states themselves, emphasizing the principles of sovereignty, non-interference, and mutual respect. The Islamic Republic further maintains that sustainable peace and stability in the region can only be achieved through constructive dialogue, diplomatic engagement, and the gradual reduction of external military involvement in regional affairs.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has frequently emphasized the strategic significance of the Strait of Hormuz, particularly during periods of heightened regional tensions and geopolitical uncertainty. In response to sanctions, military pressure, and perceived threats to its national security, Iranian officials have at times signalled the possibility of restricting maritime traffic through the Strait, underscoring its importance as a key strategic asset. Nevertheless, Tehran has consistently maintained that the Strait should remain open to lawful international navigation, provided that foreign vessels and military forces operate with due regard for Iran's security concerns and sovereign rights. Iran has generally opposed the presence of foreign naval coalitions in the Gulf, arguing that regional security should be managed by the states of the region themselves. Consequently, the Islamic Republic is very for regional security mechanisms based on dialogue, cooperation, and mutual respect, while strongly emphasizing the principles of state sovereignty, non-interference, and opposition to unilateral sanctions.

BLOC POSITIONS

✦ China

The People's Republic of China looks at the Strait of Hormuz as a strategically vital maritime corridor that plays a critical role in global trade, energy security, and economic stability. As one of the world's largest importers of crude oil and a major participant in international commerce, China has a significant interest in ensuring the uninterrupted flow of energy resources and commercial goods through the Strait. Beijing has consistently supported the principles of freedom of navigation, secure maritime trade routes, and the maintenance of stability within key international waterways. Furthermore, China supports peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue, diplomacy, and multilateral cooperation, emphasizing the importance of preserving regional stability and preventing actions that may disrupt global trade or threaten international peace and security.

The People's Republic of China has generally adopted a balanced and pragmatic approach toward tensions in the Gulf region, emphasizing the importance of maintaining regional stability and safeguarding international trade. While China maintains strong economic and diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, it has consistently called upon all parties to exercise restraint and avoid actions that may threaten maritime security, disrupt international shipping, or destabilize global energy markets. Beijing has traditionally opposed military escalation, unilateral sanctions, and confrontational policies that risk intensifying regional disputes or provoking wider conflict. Instead, China advocates for de-escalation through dialogue, confidence-building measures, and multilateral diplomacy conducted within the framework of the United Nations. The People's Republic further supports efforts aimed at protecting maritime commerce, preserving freedom of navigation, and fostering constructive cooperation among regional stakeholders to ensure long-term peace, stability, and economic security in the Strait of Hormuz and the wider Gulf region.

BLOC POSITIONS

✦ Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regards the Strait of Hormuz as a strategically indispensable maritime corridor, central to both its national economy and the stability of global energy markets. As one of the world's leading exporters of crude oil and petroleum products, Saudi Arabia relies heavily on secure and uninterrupted access to international shipping routes for the transportation of its energy exports. Consequently, Riyadh places significant importance on maintaining the security and stability of the Strait and has consistently supported the principles of freedom of navigation and the protection of commercial shipping. The Kingdom maintains that any disruption to maritime traffic within the Strait could have profound implications for global energy security, international trade, and economic stability, underscoring the need for collective efforts to safeguard this critical waterway.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has consistently expressed concerns regarding activities that it perceives as threats to maritime security and regional stability within the Gulf. As a result, Riyadh has actively supported regional and international initiatives aimed at safeguarding critical shipping lanes, protecting commercial vessels, and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of energy exports through strategic waterways. At the same time, recent years have witnessed notable diplomatic efforts between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran aimed at restoring relations, reducing tensions, and fostering greater regional dialogue. Saudi Arabia generally advocates for enhanced maritime security cooperation, the protection of critical energy infrastructure, and measures designed to deter attacks on commercial shipping, while emphasizing the importance of diplomacy, de-escalation, and the prevention of wider regional conflict. The Kingdom is therefore likely to support initiatives that strengthen maritime security and regional stability while promoting peaceful engagement among key stakeholders in the Gulf region.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DELEGATES

- ♦ The United Nations Security Council at Podar Summit 2026 shall function as a conventional committee and will simulate the procedures and responsibilities of the Security Council as accurately as possible.
- ♦ Committee proceedings will be conducted in accordance with the UNA-USA Rules of Procedure unless otherwise specified by the Executive Board.
- ♦ Delegates are expected to undertake comprehensive research and utilize their findings to formulate practical, realistic, and diplomatically viable solutions addressing the challenges posed by rising maritime tensions in the Strait of Hormuz.
- ♦ While preparing for committee, delegates should familiarize themselves with relevant international legal frameworks, including but not limited to the United Nations Charter, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), applicable International Maritime Organization (IMO) instruments, and other relevant international agreements
- ♦ Delegates are encouraged to critically examine both the strengths and limitations of existing legal and diplomatic mechanisms. The ability to identify gaps in current frameworks and propose feasible improvements will be considered favorably during committee evaluation.
- ♦ Delegates should not restrict their preparation solely to the contents of this background guide. Independent research beyond the scope of this document is strongly recommended and expected.
- ♦ The bloc positions included in this guide are intended only to provide an overview of the major stakeholders involved in the agenda. They should not be interpreted as definitive statements of any country's complete foreign policy.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DELEGATES

- ♦ A thorough understanding of a delegate's assigned country's foreign policy, diplomatic priorities, strategic interests, and previous actions relating to the agenda is essential for meaningful participation in committee.
- ♦ Delegates are advised to carefully review the glossary, historical background, timeline, legal frameworks, and all other sections of this study guide in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issue before committee sessions begin.
- ♦ Research quality will constitute a significant component of committee assessment. Delegates who demonstrate extensive knowledge of the agenda, familiarity with relevant international law, and an ability to apply their research effectively during debate will be at a considerable advantage throughout committee proceedings.



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