



**TARBUTMUN 2022**

**United Nations Special Political and  
Decolonization Committee**

**SPECPOL**

**Topic A:** Turkish-Kurdish Conflict

**Topic B:** Hala'ib Triangle

## **Participating Countries**

- Azerbaijan
- Bahrain
- China
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- France
- Greece
- Iraq
- Israel/ Kurds
- Iran
- India
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Oman
- Palestine
- Qatar
- Russia
- Syria
- Saudi Arabia
- Sudan
- Turkey
- United States of America
- United Kingdom
- Yemen

**Dear Delegates,**

We're very happy to welcome all of you to another year of TarbutMUN, it's an honor to be your chair this year but mostly in SPECPOL, which is a very passionate and important committee this year. We're going to discuss two conflicts that are happening right now in the world, and we want everyone to help us solve these problems in the most peaceful way possible.

We want to have a great debate, and for this reason, we will ask every delegate to take it seriously, and to give creative, different, and innovative ideas or solutions to be able to make the final resolution paper, and maybe change today's problems. It's our responsibility to make the world a better place for the next generations, and for that, we need to take some responsibility.

We hope you enjoy this process as much as we're going to, because MUN is a very fun and interesting way to learn new things, about your delegations and what is happening in the world right now, so if you are interested, you're going to have a big experience for the rest of your life.

Our goal is that you delegate, understand the topics and have a great time.

Sincerely,

Uri, Alan, and Gabriel.

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# **United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee**

## **History**

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee, or SPECPOL, is the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

It was founded in 1993 in Resolution 47/233 to handle situations that the first committee of the United Nations, the General Assembly, could not handle; this included decolonization, issues regarding atomic radiation, and international security problems.

## **Function**

SPECPOL stands for Special Political and Decolonization Committee. Its function was originally to address political issues and decolonization-related matters. Nowadays, its main function is to deal with issues ranging “from peacekeeping and peaceful uses of outer space to the Middle East and the effects of atomic radiation.”

## **Role in the UN**

SPECPOL being one of the six most important branches of the United Nations, its role is to maintain peace throughout the entire world and to take care of the decolonization of any country or territory. Currently, it mostly handles the decolonization problems in the Middle East.

## Topic A: Turkish-Kurdish Conflict

### Keywords

**Specpol:** “One of six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly. It deals with a diverse set of political issues, including UN peacekeeping and peaceful uses of outer space.”<sup>1</sup>

**Kurdish:** “Iranian ethnic group native to the mountainous region of Kurdistan in Western Asia.”<sup>2</sup>

**PKK:** “Kurdish workers party”: Political organization the main source of conflict with many military structures.

**AKP:** “The Justice and Development Party is a conservative and populist political party in Turkey.”<sup>3</sup>

### Background

The origin of this conflict can be traced back to the proclamation of the Turkish

The Kurds were separated and rejected by the Republic of Turkey.

The Turkish-Kurdish conflict began back in the late 70s when the Kurdistan Workers party emerged, known as the PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan). The PKK, led by Abdullah Öcalan, was founded in 1978 and started several violent attacks in the late 70s. It wasn't until 1984 that they started their armed campaign with the sole purpose of creating an independent Kurdish state or acquiring full Kurdish autonomy. The conflict reached a peak in the 1990s. thousands of villages were destroyed in the largely Kurdish south-east and east of Turkey. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds fled to cities in other parts of the country, as a consequence, around 40,000 people died.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.google.com.mx/url?](https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiMt5vczvfzAhXNk2oFHWC9BW8QFnoECAMQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FUnited_Nations_General_Assembly_Fourth_Committee&usq=AOvVaw06ZFRjErShaul7jEyKbMiC)

[sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiMt5vczvfzAhXNk2oFHWC9BW8QFnoECAMQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FUnited\\_Nations\\_General\\_Assembly\\_Fourth\\_Committee&usq=AOvVaw06ZFRjErShaul7jEyKbMiC](https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiMt5vczvfzAhXNk2oFHWC9BW8QFnoECAMQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FUnited_Nations_General_Assembly_Fourth_Committee&usq=AOvVaw06ZFRjErShaul7jEyKbMiC)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.google.com.mx/url?](https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwJS1sWQzvfzAhXRIWoFHQchCTAQFnoECAQQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FKurds&usq=AOvVaw2pXEOl-louy1upD2dYUyTb)

[sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwJS1sWQzvfzAhXRIWoFHQchCTAQFnoECAQQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FKurds&usq=AOvVaw2pXEOl-louy1upD2dYUyTb](https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwJS1sWQzvfzAhXRIWoFHQchCTAQFnoECAQQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FKurds&usq=AOvVaw2pXEOl-louy1upD2dYUyTb)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.google.com.mx/url?](https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiT8ufnz_fzAhWGmmoFHbo3BH4QFnoECAcQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FJustice_and_Development_Party_(Turkey)&usq=AOvVaw3XOrFEXqK6gPW_XxZ4Vlzn)

[sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiT8ufnz\\_fzAhWGmmoFHbo3BH4QFnoECAcQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FJustice\\_and\\_Development\\_Party\\_\(Turkey\)&usq=AOvVaw3XOrFEXqK6gPW\\_XxZ4Vlzn](https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiT8ufnz_fzAhWGmmoFHbo3BH4QFnoECAcQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FJustice_and_Development_Party_(Turkey)&usq=AOvVaw3XOrFEXqK6gPW_XxZ4Vlzn)

The Kurds are an Iranian Ethnic group, they are native to the mountainous region of Kurdistan, which comprises other countries like Turkey, Northwestern Iran, Northern Iraq, and Northern Syria.

The PKK had between 5,000 and 10,000 armed fighters, they directed attacks against “government property, government officials, Turks living in the Kurdish regions.” The campaign also received support from Syria and Kurds living abroad.

There have been numerous human rights abuses from both Turkey and the PKK during this conflict. There have been more than 35,000 people killed in military campaigns, according to the Ministry of Justice.

Since 1970, Turkey has been accused by the European Court of Human Rights of thousands of human rights abuses to Kurdish people. And these judgments are related to systematic murders of Kurdish civilians, forced recruitments, arbitrary arrests, torturing, many villages destroyed, murder, and disappearing Kurdish journalists.

The PKK has faced international condemnation for its use of terrorist tactics that include kidnappings, civilian massacres, suicide bombers, child soldiers, and being involved in drug trafficking.

## **Conflict**

Some believe that Turkey has turned into an authoritarian state by suppressing the voices and extinguishing the opposition party. This remains one of the most divisive political issues in Turkey's politics.

From 2002 the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) started a new reform to deal directly with the Kurdish, this intended to achieve the disarmament of the PKK rebels, and provide more minority rights.

In 2014 when the Syrian Kurdish city of Kobani was under attack by the Islamic State (IS), the Turkish policy of non-intervention led to public expression of anger. Only one year later with the Suruc Bombing marked a turning point in the recent Turkish Kurdish relations.

Growing mutual distrust put an end to the 2013 cease-fire, and many people were harmed or assassinated. Large-scale military operations began.

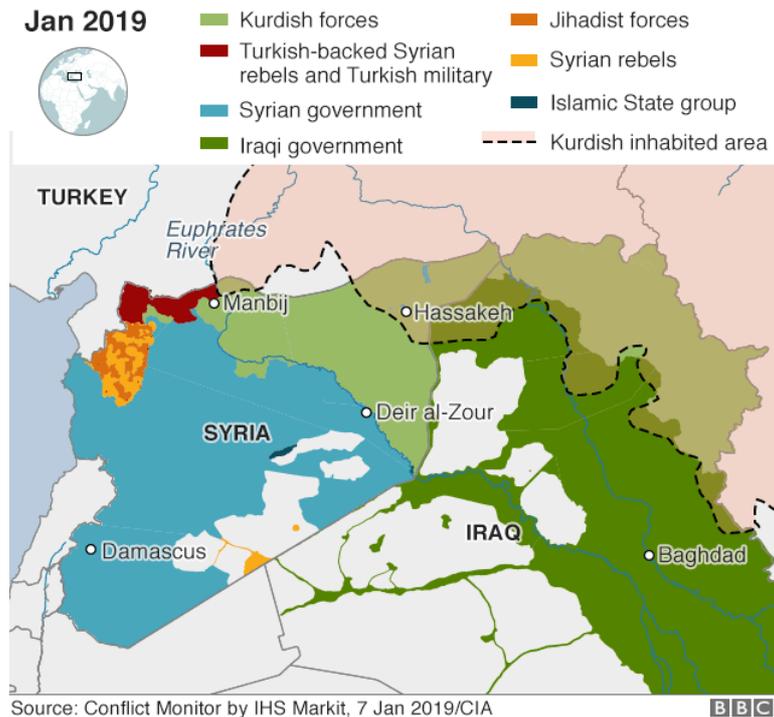
When the conflict resumed in July 2015, was when the Turkish Air Force bombed PKK bases in Iraq amid tensions arising from Turkish involvement in the Rojava–Islamist conflict in Syria.

The fatality rate in this conflict peaked in 2015/2016 as the conflict concentrated in urban districts.

5,694 people have been assassinated since July 2015; this includes civilians, state security force members, and PKK militants.

In June 2015, the main Syrian Kurdish Militia, accessed Turkey by allowing soldiers from the Islamic state to pass the border and attack the Kurdish city of Kobani.

The violence continued as many public places owned by Kurds were destroyed by mobs. The attacks continued, and in 2016, this conflict attracted international attention.



## Present Situation

The Kurds demanded to be separated from the Republic of Turkey to create an independent Kurdistan. The main group leading this movement is the Kurdistan Workers Party, and the main point of the conflict is located in North Kurdistan as this is the most concentrated place of Kurds.

This presence has led the Turkish Armed Forces to deploy multiple airstrikes, and the estimated cost of this conflict is between 300 to 450 Billion. And has affected the tourism of the country.

The Turkish military targets the (PKK) base in Iraq, and in 2018, the Turkish president said he would launch a formal operation against the Kurds. The Iraqi government has issued complaints against the incursion on its territory.

In October 2019, the Turkish force launched an operation against Syrian Kurds.

After U.S president Donald Trump retired the troops from Syria, Syrian Kurds expressed their worries as Turkey would increase its attacks on them.

In January 2019, the Turkish government claimed that the PKK conducted an attack on a military base located in northern Iraq.

The restart of the violence came with hundreds of civilians killed by both sides and also, lots of human rights violations such as torture, rape, and destruction of property. Substantial parts of Kurdish cities including, Diyarbakır, Şırnak, Mardin, Cizre, Nusaybin, and Yüksekova were destroyed in the confrontation.

In February 2021, the Turkish Minister of Defense, stated that 13 soldiers who had been held hostage by the PKK since 2015 were executed. They blamed the United States and the Kurdish for the attempted rescue operation, which failed.

## **Most Important Countries**

**Turkey:** Turkey is probably one of if not the most important country as the PKK extremist group has been trying for several years now to initiate a separate independent state within the regions of Turkey. In the last decade, thousands of people have died due to the clashes between the Kurdish and Turkish authorities. The Turkish government has ruled out the possibility of any negotiations with the PKK until the group completely disarms. Turkey now considers the PKK an extremist group; they even carry out airstrikes against PKK bases in mountainous northern Iraq.

**PKK:** The PKK was founded back in the 70s, and they seek an independent Kurdish state. In 1984 an armed struggle occurred against the Turkish Government. Back in 2016, "a PKK car bomb in Cizre killed 11 policemen and injured 78," and several more people have died in Turkey's Kurdish-majority region. The PKK is listed as an extremist group by Turkey, the USA, and the EU. The PKK military leader said the following, "We want to live within the borders of Turkey on our own land freely... The struggle will continue until the Kurds' innate rights are accepted."

**Iraq:** Iraq serves as a home to PKK and Turkish bases due to the fact that they are neighboring countries. A couple of years ago, the Iraqi government "issued formal complaints against Turkish incursions into its sovereign territory." The Turkish government claims that in 2019 several Kurdish militants conducted an attack on a Turkish base in northern Iraq.

**Syria:** In the last decade, Syria has served as territory for the Turkish government to conduct military operations. Syrian Kurds expressed concern back in 2018 when the US decided to withdraw their troops from Syria, they believed this would increase Turkish attacks on them.

**United States Of America:** The United States has been mainly involved for 2 reasons; first they have troops deployed all over the Middle East. Number 2, they are partners with Kurdish led forces in Syria in the fight against the Islamic State

although a couple of years ago, the United States of America decided to withdraw its troops from Syria, to what the Kurdish led group called a “stab in the back.” Back then, former president Donald Trump defended this decision by saying it was time "to get out of these ridiculous Endless Wars."

## **Past UN Actions**

The United Nations has shown interest in solving this conflict. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, stated that a de-escalation of renewed conflict in northern Syria is “Absolutely Essential.”

The UN chief said that he did not “Believe in military solutions for the Syrian problem.”

The UNHCR stated tens of thousands of civilians were on the move to escape the fighting. EU countries have called for an end to unilateral military action,

The European Union countries on the Council expressed their disturbance and called for Turkey to “Cease the unilateral military action.” They believe that armed hostilities will continue to undermine the safety and stability of the whole region.

The Security Council has discussed Turkey's offensive against Kurds, the diplomats joined in the concern that Turkish incursion could affect an already terrible humanitarian situation. Members called on Turkey to end its operation.

After a Turkish operation, they sent a letter to the United Nations which stated that it would be “Proportionate, measured and responsible.”

## Further Reading

- <https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=video&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiAmJWu0vfzAhVsnWoFHYPoBh4QtwJ6BAgIEAM&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D-O5PEwU8bg4&usg=AOvVaw2Vj10ooagWXSPKcBKNbNc4>
- <https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjY5YHB0vfzAhUkWoFHxQ-AmsQxfQBKAB6BAgOEAI&url=https%3A%2F%2Fnationalinterest.org%2Ffeature%2Fwhere-are-turkey-iraqi-kurdish-relations-headed-195710&usg=AOvVaw0VFfn9lhsEoLWXneQBICzIY>
- [https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=video&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjyiaSJ0\\_fzAhUql2oFHz-Cv0QtwJ6BAgHEAM&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.voanews.com%2Fa%2Fepisode\\_syrian-kurds-say-two-towns-attacked-turkey-4781226%2F6118197.html&usg=AOvVaw1REuCOPIAxUi7tBg5A6f5C](https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=video&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjyiaSJ0_fzAhUql2oFHz-Cv0QtwJ6BAgHEAM&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.voanews.com%2Fa%2Fepisode_syrian-kurds-say-two-towns-attacked-turkey-4781226%2F6118197.html&usg=AOvVaw1REuCOPIAxUi7tBg5A6f5C)
- [https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwivy5O00\\_fzAhWklWoFHxcIA\\_YQFnoECBMQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.refworld.org%2Fdocid%2F469f38e91e.html&usg=AOvVaw0hd0IOD6GODTUnw3tjNQEI](https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwivy5O00_fzAhWklWoFHxcIA_YQFnoECBMQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.refworld.org%2Fdocid%2F469f38e91e.html&usg=AOvVaw0hd0IOD6GODTUnw3tjNQEI)

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/10/world/middleeast/turkey-syria-kurds-history-facts.html> Published October 10th, 2019 by Russell Goldman

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-49960973> Published 7th of October 2019 by BBC News

## Topic B: Hala'ib Triangle

### Keywords

**Hala'ib:** "Is a Red Sea port and town, located in the Hala'ib Triangle, a 20,580 km<sup>2</sup> area disputed between Egypt and Sudan"<sup>4</sup>

**Red Sea State:** "Is one of the 18 states of Sudan. It has an area of 212,800 km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated population of 1,482,053."<sup>5</sup>

**Red Sea Governorate:** It's one of the 27 States of Egypt. Located in the southeast of the country.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halaib>

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_Sea\\_\(state\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Sea_(state))

## **Background**

As the Hala'ib triangle is between the Egypt and Sudan border, this has created several conflicts as to who owns the territory. First, they added a political boundary in 1899. In 1902, the borders changed again, Egypt had the south of the triangle and Sudan the north. Sudan, at this point, had control of over 18,000 km; this included the towns of Halaib and Abu Ramad.

Egypt wanted that the territorial boundary of 1899 was reinstated so that the territory became a border between the two countries, while Sudan declared to hold the 1902 boundary. As expected, both countries claimed sovereignty of the territory.

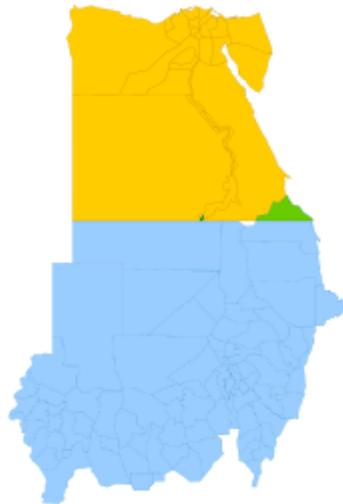
The Hala'ib Triangle is an area of around 20,500 square kilometers on the Egyptian-Sudanese border, both Egypt and Sudan have claimed the territory as theirs since Sudan gained independence from Britain back in 1956.

In February 1958, Sudan planned to hold elections in the Triangle, as retribution, Egypt sent troops but were withdrawn the same month.

Sudan held elections in the territory until 1980, both countries continued to claim the Hala'ib triangle; they both controlled the territory without any disputes until 1992. In the early 1990s, Egypt deployed its military into the territory, but the dispute had no conflict in almost two decades.

## Conflict

It was until 1956 that this conflict resurfaced when Sudan became independent. This area was considered part of Sudan.



Egypt disputed Sudan handing exploration rights for the waters in the triangle to a Canadian Oil company, so the negotiations began again.

In July 1994, Sudan reached the United Nations protesting against the military incursions into their territory.

In January 1995, Egypt rejected all the invitations from Foreign Ministers Council to review and debate about the territory, then the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was almost assassinated, the president blamed Sudan for what had happened, and in retaliation, they strengthened the control over the triangle and expelled all Sudanese officials.

In 1998 both countries were more willing to negotiate and announced their intention to work together.

Unfortunately, that same year Sudan accused Egypt of harassment and discriminating against the Sudan citizens of the area, which Egypt denied. And in 1999, the diplomatic relations improved once more.

In 2004 Egypt and Sudan signed an agreement that would guarantee freedom of movement, residency, work, and property ownership for their citizens, things that

were restricted for the last decades when the conflict first began.

In 2016 it flared up again when Cairo (Egypt's capital) signed a controversial agreement with Riyadh to hand them over two important Red Sea islands, the agreement redrew the border between the two countries (Egypt and Sudan), and it also unilaterally recognized Egypt's sovereignty over the Hala'ib Triangle. In December of 2017, Sudan sent a letter to the UN declaring its rejection of the deal. After Sudan's renewed claim of the region, Egypt allegedly sent troops to Eritrea, which is one of Sudan's neighboring countries; days later, Sudan closed its borders with Eritrea.

## **Present Situation**

Since Sudan's withdrawal from the Hala'ib Triangle in 2000, there are often still conflicts between Egypt and Sudan for control of the region. Furthermore, the Eastern Front, a coalition of Sudanese rebels, claims that the Hala'ib Triangle is Sudanese because the people there are more ethnically related to Sudan. In 2010, Sudanese President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir said, "Hala'ib is Sudanese and he will remain Sudanese" (Sudan Tribune, 2010).

In April 2013, there were rumors that the President of Egypt, Mohamed Morsi, and the President of Sudan, Al-Bashir, had met to discuss a compromise of control over the Hala'ib Triangle and the possibility of returning control of the region to Sudan. However, Egypt denied those rumors and claimed that the meeting was simply to strengthen cooperation between the two nations. Therefore, the Hala'ib Triangle remains under Egyptian control while Sudan claims territorial rights over the region.

Abu Ramad is a major town that is 30 kilometers northwest of Hala'ib on the coast of the Red Sea. The last destination that connects the area of Cairo and more cities of Egypt as Marsa Alam, Aswan, and Qena is Abu Rame. There is only one more populated place there and is Hadarba, a small village, southeast of Hala'ib on the coast.

Alshalateen is an Egyptian town on the northern border. The nearest Sudanese town south of the contested region is Osief, found 26 kilometers south of latitude 22, the political border guaranteed by Egypt dependent on the 1899 arrangement.

## Most Important Countries

**Egypt:** Is the country located north of the Hala'ib triangle, back when Sudan was a British colony, Egypt had administrative control over 7,000 square miles around the port town of Halaib. Since Sudan gained independence from the British back in 1956, Egypt sent troops to the triangle to uphold their claim, but both Sudan and Egypt have claimed sovereignty over the Hala'ib triangle since then. Egypt has made its military presence in the triangle since the early 1990s.



**Sudan:** From 1899 to 1956, Sudan used to be a British colony. Once Sudan gained independence, they claimed the Hala'ib triangle, which used to be in administrative control by the Egyptians, but neither country has backed down. In 2017, Sudan expressed its ownership of the territory as well as its disapproval of Egypt's claiming rights towards the UN.



## **Past UN Actions**

The United Nations has been deeply involved during the entirety of this conflict; they have shown deep concerns about how they actually should have control of the territory, even helping and taking part in the negotiations during the years. The Security Council has been part of this conflict when Sudan reported Egypt several times through many letters, alleging that Egypt had been breaking the treaties made in earlier negotiations. They stated that Egyptian military officials were attacking Sudanese living in the triangle.

The United Nations has helped in this conflict through debate, but it has not taken any important action or made any economic sanction to both countries.

The United Nations, to this day, still show an immense preoccupation about this territory but do not show any special support to any of the countries, and believe that this conflict should be solved by negotiations between Egypt and Sudan.

## Further Reading

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