

Ontario Justice Education Network

Project: International Law Workshop



**Classroom Presentation
Resources & Lesson Plan**



International Law Workshop

Project

In class, international law workshops for students.

(The materials featured here are adapted from the International Law Workshop resources developed by students at Western's Faculty of Law, and first delivered at a high-needs urban high school in London).

Target Audience

Secondary school Civics and Law students

Planning Steps

- Identify a lawyer or law student who is willing to deliver the workshop
- Recruit law students or other justice sector volunteers who will assist with facilitating the workshop
- Have all volunteers review the workshop materials. Become familiar with the lesson plan. Add in more examples or other activities if desired.
- Prepare handouts, photocopies etc. prior to the workshop
- Make requests for any additional equipment to the teacher prior to the workshop
- Confirm all details prior to the date
- Ask participants and the teacher to evaluate their experiences
- Debrief with volunteers
- Submit a summary or photos to OJEN for profiling on the website or in the newsletter

Volunteer Roles & Time Commitment

- Presenter – a lawyer or law student who will do the presentation, coordinate with the teacher and recruit facilitator volunteers (2-3 hours + event)
- Facilitators – law students or other volunteers who can assist on the day of (1 hour + event)
- Teacher – who will prepare his/her class and be the school contact (2 hours + event)

Materials or Supplies

- Photocopies

Timeline

This project requires 2-3 hours of logistical coordination between the lawyer or coordinating law student, teacher and assisting law students, and 2 hours for workshop delivery (can occur over two classes/days).

- Begin organizing about 1 month before the workshop
- Confirm all logistics 1 week before the workshop

Volunteer Recognition

- A small token or thank you letter for volunteers

Strategies for Evaluation

- Verbal or written feedback from participants
- Feedback from the presenters and debriefing with the organizing group
- Follow up with teacher

Adapted from resources
developed by law students at:



International Law Lesson Plan

- All volunteers and the teacher should familiarize themselves with the lesson plan and handouts ahead of time.
- High school students should be familiar with the handouts (particularly Handout #1: United Nations Fact Sheet and Handout #2: Peacekeeping Article), and complete the worksheet as homework prior to the workshop.
- The lawyer/law student and volunteer facilitators should think of examples to supplement materials below.
- The film *The Peacekeepers* (a film by Paul Cowan) is available from the National Film Board of Canada. Please visit: <http://www.onf.ca/webextension/peace/en/>

Lesson Plan Summary:

PART 1 (approx. 1 hour, 15 minutes)

1. Introduction

The presenter introduces herself/himself and volunteers and explains the format of the lesson.

2. Overview of International law

The presenter provides an overview of the following:

- Introduction to International law
- Enforcement of International law
- Introduction to peacekeeping
- Canada's role in peacekeeping
- Challenges in organizing a peacekeeping mission
- Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Background on film

3. Film Screening (*The Peacekeepers*)

4. Preparation for Day 2

Distribute Handout # 3 in preparation for Day 2.

PART 2: (45 minutes)

Film Debriefing: Review handout #3 using handout #4.

Detailed Lesson Plan:

PART 1:

1. Lecturette (15 minutes)

(a) Introduction to International law:

- Generally, international law governs conflicts between countries. However, in some cases, international law may also apply to disputes within a country. This often occurs in cases of ethnic conflict or warring factions within a country.

(b) Enforcement of International law:

- International organizations play a key role in the resolution of international conflict.
- The United Nations was created on June 26, 1945, after World War II. After World War II, many countries became concerned about the growing violence in our world. In response to this, a group of countries decided to form an organization for the purpose of maintaining peace and security in the world. The United Nations now consists of 192 member states and it is the most influential international organization in the world.
- The United Nations encourages countries to resolve their conflicts peacefully. As an alternative to war, the United Nations assists countries in the development of agreements and treaties.
- The United Nations has also established special courts where perpetrators of war are put on trial for their crimes. This includes the International Criminal Court of Justice, and war crime tribunals such as the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.
- Peacekeeping is one of the principal ways in which the United Nations promotes peace.

(c) Introduction to peacekeeping:

- When a conflict results in violence, the United Nations will ask countries that are members of the organization to volunteer soldiers or civilians to help stop the violence. These volunteers are sent to the region where the conflict is taking place, and they help maintain peace by monitoring the conflict.

(d) Canada's role in peacekeeping:

- Canada has played an active role in peacekeeping. In fact, it was former Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson that came up with the concept of peacekeepers. For his idea, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957.
- Canada has been involved in several peacekeeping missions throughout the world, including Rwanda, Haiti, the Middle East and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

(e) Challenges in organizing a peacekeeping mission:

- Although Canada has been involved in many peacekeeping missions, the government sometimes chooses not to participate in a peacekeeping operation.
- Peacekeeping can be a very dangerous task, since peacekeepers are sent to regions that are unstable. Peacekeepers put their lives at risk. They can be targeted for violence, kidnapping and murder.
- Due to this, it may be difficult for the United Nations to get volunteers when organizing a peacekeeping mission. The United Nations faced this problem in organizing a peacekeeping mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

(f) Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo:

- The Democratic Republic of Congo ("DRC") is located in central Africa. It shares its borders with nine other countries including Rwanda.
- In the 1990's, Rwanda was plagued by ethnic conflict and violence. This resulted in the murder of close to a million people. The United Nations described the killings as genocide. That is, the systematic murdering of all people from a particular national, ethnic or religious group.
- Some of the people responsible for the genocide in Rwanda hid in the Democratic Republic of Congo, so that they would not be prosecuted for their crimes. The Rwandan army invaded the DRC to find these people, but during the course of the invasion, their purpose changed. Since the DRC is rich in natural resources such as diamonds and gold, the Rwandan army started to pursue the DRC's natural resources instead.
- People from other countries bordering the DRC also invaded the country in search of diamonds and gold. There were also rebel groups in the DRC who were fighting for control of the natural resources.
- With all these different groups trying to control the DRC's resources, violence erupted and civilian deaths followed.
- Due to the escalating violence in the region, the United Nations had a difficult time convincing member states to send peacekeepers to the DRC.

(g) Background on the film:

- The film, *The Peacekeepers*, illustrates the challenges that the United Nations faced in organizing a peacekeeping mission to the DRC. Although the focus is on the DRC, these challenges apply to organizing any peacekeeping mission.
- The main challenges highlighted in the film are: (1) getting volunteers; (2) getting funding for the mission; (3) ending the violence in the DRC; (4) making sure that the United Nations fulfills its purpose of maintaining peace and security in the world.
- In recent years, the United Nations has been criticized for not being able to living up to the purposes it was founded for. As mentioned, nearly a million people died in Rwanda in 1994. The United Nations tried to organize a peacekeeping mission in Rwanda, but it was too small, so it failed.
- The United Nations was also facing criticism for not being able to prevent the United States from launching a war in Iraq in 2003.

- In watching the film, it is important to consider the pressure on the United Nations to organize a successful peacekeeping mission in the DRC, in light of criticism that it has not been doing a good job maintaining peace and security in the world.

2. Film Screening (53 minutes)

- Presenter shows film to students.

3. Preparation for Day Two (5 minutes)

- Distribute Handout #3
- Ask students to complete handout in preparation for the discussion on Day Two.
- Remind students to bring handout to next session.

PART 2:

Film Debriefing and Discussion

- Ask students to take out Handout #3.
- Using Handout #4, go through questions on Handout #3 with students in order to generate a discussion of the film.



THE UNITED NATIONS

1. When was the United Nations established?

The United Nations came into existence on October 24, 1945, when the UN Charter was ratified. This day is now celebrated each year around the world as United Nations Day.

The United Nations Headquarters is located in New York City. However, the land and buildings are international territory. The United Nations has its own flag and postal system.

2. How many countries are in the United Nations?

There are 192 member states. Each member state is a part of the General Assembly. The General Assembly debates issues and passes resolutions.

Montenegro is the most recent state to join the UN. It was admitted to the UN in June 2006.

3. What is the purpose of the United Nations?

The purpose of the United Nations is to promote peace and development in the world, based upon the principles of justice, human dignity and the well-being of all people.

The United Nations seeks to balance global interests and national interests when addressing international problems.

4. How is the United Nations organized?

The Secretariat is the main branch of the United Nations. It is responsible for the administration of the United Nations. The Secretary General is the head of the Secretariat. The current Secretary General is Kofi Annan.

The other main organs of the United Nations are: The General Assembly, The International Court of Justice, The Economic and Social Council, The Trusteeship Council, The Security Council.

5. What does the Security Council do?

The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Council is composed of five permanent members: China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States. There are ten non-permanent members that are elected by the General Assembly to serve on the Council for a term of two years.

Like the General Assembly, the Security Council debates issues and passes resolutions. However, unlike the General Assembly, the Security Council can pass binding resolutions that member states are obligated to follow.

Major decisions require the consent of all five permanent members of the Council.





PEACEKEEPING

What is peacekeeping?

Simply put, peacekeepers are people helping the parties to a conflict to resolve their differences peacefully. The presence of these people, soldiers, military observers or civilian police, encourage hostile groups not to use arms and instead to keep negotiating for peaceful settlement of disputes.

What are the origins of peacekeeping?

The term peacekeeping entered popular vocabulary in 1956. Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson (later Canada's 14th Prime Minister) proposed that a multinational UN peacekeeping force be sent to separate warring parties in the Middle East. For his visionary idea, Mr. Pearson was awarded the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize.

How does a peacekeeping mission start?

Peacekeeping operations are normally set up by the Security Council, the UN organ with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Where are peacekeepers currently deployed?

Currently, peacekeepers operations include deployments in Sudan, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Ethiopia Eritrea, Western Sahara, Haiti, India, Pakistan, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Lebanon, Golan Heights, Middle East, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

How does Canada contribute to peacekeeping efforts?

Peacekeeping is an important part of Canadian heritage and a significant component of Canada's foreign policy. For over 50 years, Canada has been at the forefront of peacekeeping operations all over the world. Canadian peacekeepers have served in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Middle East, Haiti, Bosnia, Cambodia, El Salvador, as well as many other countries.

There are current peacekeeping operations in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East.

Have any peacekeeping missions been unsuccessful?

In 1994 in Rwanda, over 800,000 people, mostly from the country's Tutsi minority but also many from its Hutu majority, were killed in a bloody intra-ethnic strife. A small UN peacekeeping operation in place could not stop the genocide. Several national contingents were also withdrawn in the midst of the slaughter.

Why does the Democratic Republic of the Congo need peacekeepers?

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is located in central Africa and shares borders with nine other countries: The Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia and Angola.

The vast natural resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo, including diamonds, gold, coltan, cobalt, copper and timber, have contributed to a history of colonization, exploitation and violence.

After the Rwandan genocide of 1994, Congolese President Mobutu allowed a group of Hutus responsible for the genocide to take refuge in the DRC. This group launched attacks into Rwanda from Congo, triggering the Rwandan Army's invasion of the DRC. Initially, the Rwandan Army attempted to track down those responsible for the genocide; however, they changed course and began to exploit the natural resources in the region. Among the most sought-after commodities were diamonds, minerals, water and coltan. It is estimated that over an 18-month period the Rwandan army made over \$250 million through the sale of coltan alone.

Congolese, Rwanda and Ugandan rebel groups began to invade and control the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The interests of the various groups in the DRC began to clash and war erupted between the groups. This caused instability in the region and many civilian deaths.

What challenges do peacekeeping missions face?

During peacekeeping missions, peacekeepers may be kidnapped or murdered. Due to this, some countries may be reluctant to provide troops for peacekeeping missions.

Sources:

United Nations: www.un.org

Veteran Affairs Canada: www.vac-acc.gc.ca

CBC News: www.cbc.ca

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade: www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca

United Nations Department of Peacekeeping: www.un.org/Dept/dpko

Warchild Canada: www.warchild.ca

Peacekeeping: Student Activity

Name: _____ Date: _____

PEACEKEEPING

1. What were some of the difficulties that the UN faced in organizing a peacekeeping mission?

2. Why were countries reluctant to get involved in the peacekeeping mission?

3. Do you think Canada should get involved in disputes concerning other countries? Why or why not?

4. What do you think should be Canada's role in peacekeeping? Should we get involved in more peacekeeping operations? Why or why not?

5. At the end of the film, Secretary General, Kofi Annan says, "history is a harsh judge" what do you think he meant by this?

6. Some peacekeeping missions have failed. Do you think the peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be successful why or why not?

Peacekeeping: Answer Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

PEACEKEEPING

1. What were some of the difficulties that the UN faced in organizing a peacekeeping mission?

- Answers will vary. Suggested answers include:
 - Getting volunteers for the missions
 - Funding
 - Generating interest from the international community
 - Meeting the needs of the people in the Democratic Republic of Congo

2. Why were countries reluctant to get involved in the peacekeeping mission?

- Answers will vary

3. Do you think Canada should get involved in disputes concerning other countries? Why or why not?

- Answers will vary

4. What do you think should be Canada's role in peacekeeping? Should we get involved in more peacekeeping operations? Why or why not?

- Answers will vary

5. At the end of the film, Secretary General, Kofi Annan says, "history is a harsh judge" what do you think he meant by this?

- Answers will vary. Suggested answer:
 - UN will be judged by the world at large based upon the mistakes of the past

6. Some peacekeeping missions have failed. Do you think the peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be successful why or why not?

- Answers will vary. Suggested answer:
 - Success of the mission will depend upon ongoing support for the mission i.e. funding, volunteers, size of operation, etc.