

BIGMUN 2026  
GA4: Special Political and Decolonisation (SPECPOL)

# Research Report

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Topic 1: Condemning the issue of annexing a country or territory as a form of political negotiation.



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## Introduction:

The annexation of a territory has long been a source of international tension, undermining the principles of state sovereignty essential to the United Nations system. In recent decades, annexation has increasingly been used as a tool of political negotiation, whereby states seek to exert pressure through unilateral land acquisition. This has raised some serious concerns regarding international law, the escalation of armed conflict, and the destabilisation of regional security. This is extremely relevant in today's world, as we witness the capturing of Maduro by the Trump Administration, and Trump's desire to control Venezuela and its oil industry. Similarly, Trump's insistence on acquiring Greenland, possibly by invasion or annexation, once again makes this topic essential to discuss. This report will provide delegates an overview of the concept of annexation, the legal and political implications, and case studies, while examining the role of the United Nations in condemning annexation as a means of political leverage.

## Definition of Key Terms:

**Annexation:** The forcible acquisition of territory by one state at the expense of another state<sup>1</sup>. Under international law, territory acquired by force is widely considered illegal.

**Territorial integrity:** The principle that a state's borders must be respected and cannot be altered without its consent. It is a core concept of international law and is protected by the United Nations Charter.

**Sovereignty:** Supreme, independent control and law-making authority over a territory<sup>2</sup>. This means that a state can conduct its internal and external affairs without interference.

## Background Information:

Historically, the annexation of territory has been used by states as a means of expanding influence and exerting political pressure over other actors. While annexation was once a widely accepted way for states to gain territory, especially prior to the Second World War, modern international law, formalized by the UN Charter, now prohibits annexation<sup>3</sup>. After the Second

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<sup>1</sup> "Annexation," Oxford Public International Law, accessed December 24, 2025

<sup>2</sup>Wikimedia Foundation, "Sovereignty," Wikipedia, last modified December 13, 2025, accessed December 24, 2025

<sup>3</sup>Annexation under International Law," Association of Accredited Public Policy Advocates to the European Union, last modified March 7, 2022, accessed December 21, 2025

World War, newly decolonised and non-aligned states led to the push to end annexations<sup>4</sup>. Despite the existence of legal frameworks prohibiting territorial acquisition by force, annexation continues to emerge as a tool within political negotiations, particularly in situations involving prolonged conflict.

Prior to the mid-twentieth century, annexation was a common and legitimate instrument of statecraft. Empires constantly altered borders through coercive diplomacy, with limited international mechanisms in place to regulate such actions<sup>5</sup>. This meant that states could consolidate power and extract concessions from weaker actors.

The aftermath of the Second World War marked a fundamental shift in the international approach to territorial acquisition. The massive destruction caused by expansionist policies highlighted the destabilising effects of annexation, prompting the establishment of the United Nations in 1945<sup>6</sup>.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, the United Nations consistently opposed annexation, particularly during the period of decolonisation<sup>7</sup>. The promotion of self-determination further reinforced the norm that territory cannot be acquired through coercion. The international response to Iraq's attempted annexation of Kuwait in 1990 reinforced this stance once again, demonstrating a collective willingness to reject and reverse territorial acquisition through force.

In the twenty-first century, however, annexation has resurfaced into global politics, often framed as a form of negotiation or conflict resolution<sup>8</sup>. States have sought to justify annexation through historical claims, security concerns, etc., raising questions about the effectiveness of existing international mechanisms. This has intensified debates over whether the current international order is adequately equipped to deter annexation and prevent it from being used as a tool in political negotiation.

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<sup>4</sup>Ingrid Brunk, "The Prohibition of Annexations and the Foundations of Modern International Law," Columbia Law School, 419

<sup>5</sup>"Land Grab: The History of Annexations," Sky History

<sup>6</sup> "Annexation," Oxford Public International Law.

<sup>7</sup>"United Nations and Decolonization," United Nations, accessed December 24, 2025,

<sup>8</sup> "The Prohibition of Annexations Is Foundational to the World Order," Vanderbilt University, last modified February 12, 2025, accessed December 24, 2025

## Major Countries and Organisations Involved:

**Russian Federation:** Central stakeholder in the modern discussion surrounding annexation as a political tool, notably following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and subsequent territorial claims in Ukraine. Russia has justified the annexation through security concerns and historical ties, framing territorial acquisition as a part of broader political negotiations<sup>9</sup>.

**Ukraine:** Primary state affected by annexation as a political bargaining tactic. The loss of territory and ongoing challenges to its sovereignty have made Ukraine a vocal advocate for the strict enforcement of international law. Ukraine seeks non-recognition of annexed territories, and mechanisms that prevent annexation from being used as leverage in diplomatic negotiations.

**State of Israel:** Significant stakeholder due to international debate surrounding its annexation of territory in Golan Heights and parts of the West Bank. Israel has cited security needs and historical claims as justifications, while much of the international community sees this to be inconsistent with international law. Israel would prefer outcomes that prioritise recognition of territorial claims.

**United States of America:** Historically, the U.S. has opposed annexation and emphasised the importance of sovereignty and territorial integrity, often responding through sanctions and diplomatic pressure. The U.S. generally supports outcomes that deter annexation and maintain global stability, while also balancing geopolitical interests.

## Relevant UN Resolutions:

### Article 2(4) (Chapter I) of the United Nations Charter (1945)

- Prohibits the threat against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state;
- It is the foundational basis for the condemnation of annexation as a political tool.

### Resolution 2625 (XXV) (1970)- General Assembly

*Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States*

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<sup>9</sup>Wikimedia Foundation, "2014 Russian Annexation of Crimea," Wikipedia, last modified December 23, 2025

Key provisions include:

- The obligation of states to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of other states;
- The affirmation that the territory of a state shall not be acquired by another state as a result of the use of force;
- The principle that no territorial acquisition achieved through coercion shall be recognised as legal.

### Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue:

#### General Assembly Resolution 68/262 (2014)

##### *Territorial Integrity*

This resolution addresses annexation of territory as a political practice. It was adopted following the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea and sought to reaffirm Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. It declared the referendum held in Crimea in March 2014 to have no legal validity and called upon all states and international organisations to refrain from recognising any alteration in the status of Crimea.

### Possible Solutions:

Debate on this topic could focus on whether the international community should place greater emphasis on the principle of non-recognition, encouraging states to refuse diplomatic, economic, or symbolic recognition of annexed territories. Delegates may consider whether reducing engagement with annexing states is an effective method, or whether such measures risk further escalating the conflict and political isolation.

Another area of discussion may be the enforcement of international law prohibiting territorial annexation. Delegates may choose to debate whether existing legal frameworks provide sufficient consequences for states that acquire territory through force, or if stronger enforcement needs to be put in place. This includes debate on the effectiveness of targeted sanctions, travel bans, and diplomatic isolation as tools to discourage annexation.

The committee may also wish to consider the humanitarian and human rights implications of annexation. The debate could explore how the UN can improve monitoring of conditions in

affected territories and ensure the protection of civilian populations. Delegates may further the need to prioritise humanitarian access and civilian protection.

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