

C - 24

STUDY GUIDE

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HUZAİFA ALİ
BOARD MEMBER

BAKR AMRO
BOARD MEMBER

ÖZGÜ DENİZ YAZICI
ACADEMIC ASSISTANT



LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to ITUMUN 2026.

By choosing to take part in this conference, you have already done something meaningful: you have chosen dialogue over indifference, understanding over assumption, and engagement over silence. In a world increasingly shaped by division, conflict, and uncertainty, such choices matter.

Today's international landscape is marked by ongoing conflicts, humanitarian crises, and profound global challenges that demand more than rhetoric. They demand informed, open-minded, and principled individuals, particularly from the younger generation, who are willing to listen, to question, and to act responsibly. MUNs offers precisely this space: one where ideas are tested, diplomacy is practised, and perspectives are broadened.

As delegates, you are not merely representing states or institutions; you are actually engaging in the art of negotiation, the discipline of research, and the responsibility of decision-making. Approach this experience with curiosity, respect, and intellectual courage. Learn not only from debate, but from one another.

On behalf of the Secretariat, I sincerely hope that ITUMUN 2026 will challenge you, inspire you, and leave you better equipped to contribute to a more peaceful and cooperative world.

I wish you a rewarding conference and every success in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,
Abdullah Kikati
Secretary-General



1. Letter from the Chairboard

Dear Delegates,

My name is Huzaifa Ali, and it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24). I am originally from Pakistan and recently graduated from Istanbul Aydin University, where I completed my Master's degree in English Literature. Having lived in Türkiye for over three years, my academic and personal journey has been nothing short of a roller coaster—challenging, transformative, and ultimately rewarding.

My association with the Model United Nations dates back to 2013. Over the years, MUN has shaped not only my academic skills but also my worldview, discipline, and confidence. A significant part of who I am today is the result of actively engaging in this co-curricular

platform, which continually pushes individuals beyond comfort zones and into meaningful intellectual discourse.

I am honored to be chairing C-24, a specialized committee entrusted with addressing the complex and sensitive process of decolonization. This committee examines the political, economic, social, and cultural ramifications of colonial legacies, with a particular focus on self-determination, sovereignty, and the responsibilities of the international community. The discussions here demand nuance, historical awareness, and a strong commitment to diplomatic integrity—qualities I look forward to seeing reflected in your participation.

On a lighter note, while I consider myself approachable, I must emphasize that I am firm when it comes to committee decorum and procedural discipline. A productive committee thrives on structure, respect, and preparedness—and I intend to uphold those standards rigorously.

As you prepare for this conference, I encourage you to focus less on awards and more on growth, learning, and critical thinking. MUN is not merely a competition; it is a training ground for analytical reasoning, diplomacy, and leadership. Challenge ideas, question assumptions, and do not hesitate to think beyond conventional frameworks.

I look forward to an engaging, intellectually stimulating, and memorable committee session with all of you.

Warm regards,
Huzaifa Ali
Chair, Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24)

2. Introduction to the Committee

The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to Implementation of Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, commonly known as the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24) was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1961 with the main purpose of overseeing the issue of decolonization. The Committee was created pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1654 (XVI) of 27 November 1961.

The formation of C-24 marked a significant commitment by the United Nations to guide, and promote the dismantling of colonial systems worldwide. When the committee was created, a large number of territories remained under colonial administration, and the Committee was

tasked with monitoring their progress towards self-governance and independence. Over time C-24 took the role of examining the legal, political, economic, and social conditions of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Although there is notable progress for the global decolonization process, colonialism has not been fully suppressed. Many territories continue to face unresolved problems regarding sovereignty, political representation, economic dependency and the preservation of cultural identity. With that, the participation of C-24 remains highly relevant. C-24 is responsible for reviewing developments in Non-Self-Governing Territories and relaying to the General Assembly for recommendations aimed at advancing the implementation of the Declaration.

Although the “24” in the name C-24 was reflecting on the original membership size of 24 states, it has expended over the years to include 29 member states.

Within the broader UN system, C-24 acts as a linking mechanism among other General Assembly entities, most notably the fourth committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee). Every year, the Fourth Committee discusses decolonization matters on the basis mostly of the findings and reports that are produced by the C-24. This collaboration highlights C-24’s role as an expert and investigative body, while the fourth committee and the GA act as the primary decision making forums.

3. Introduction to the first agenda item:

The Right of Self-Determination is a cornerstone in international politics and human rights, and one of the fundamental principles on which the United Nations was founded. Recognized by the UN charter, the right of self-determination assures that all peoples have equal rights in freely deciding their future, political status, and shaping their economical life, away from any external interference. For people living under colonial rule, this right goes beyond political life, it’s a path to dignity, sovereignty and peace.

Despite all of the progress that has been made since the declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in 1960, the process remains incomplete. Several non-self-governing Territories still face challenges to reach full independence and

freeing all restraints on their ability to express their will freely. Given the complexity of these situations, disputes persist regarding the feasibility and scope of self-determination in many cases.

In this regard, the C-24 plays its role by keeping an eye on developing events, pushing for political communication among involved parties and guaranteeing that the voices of the affected people remain central to the global agenda. To approach this issue, it is essential to have not just the legal recognition, but also real-life political commitment, and willing international support to the cause being addressed.

In this committee, through constructive debate and international cooperation, states seek to uphold the international law while enabling peoples to live their free life through democratic and peaceful dialogs.

4. Important terms:

Right to Self-determination: an essential principle of international law assuring peoples' right to have the free will to determine their political future.

Administering State: a state that assumes authority over a non-self-governing territory and is obliged by law to act in the benefit of the local population.

Decolonization: the process through which former colonies work toward political independence, recognized by the UN under the 1960 declaration.

Colonialism: a system in which a foreign state takes control over the political, economical, and military states of a territory and its people, through settlement, exploitation of resources, and denial of the original population's rights to self-government.

United nations charter: the founding treaty of the UN, adopted in 1945, which establishes the legal framework over international relations, peace and security, human rights, and the process of decolonization.

Referendum: a direct vote in which the people of a territory are asked to vote upon a specific political matter regarding said territory.

Sovereignty: the supreme authority of a state to govern itself outside of any external interference.

5. Previous actions:

5.1 Actions taken by C-24 include:

5.1.1 C-24 holds annual sessions and adopts draft resolutions on specific territories each session. In 2025 C-24 held 12 meetings and adopted 22 draft resolutions; reaffirming the right of self-determination for all peoples in argument, including independence as an option.

5.1.2 Receiving and entertaining statements and petitions from representatives of the territories, administering power, civil society groups, and UN observers and relevant organizations.

5.1.3 Send UN observing missions to territories in question to:

- i. Meet elected local officials,
- ii. Assess administering governance/self-government progress,
- iii. Produce recommendations through mission reports,

5.1.4 Organizing C-24 regional seminars to raise political awareness and record positions. Recent examples can be seen in:

- i. Caribbean regional seminar: 14-16 May 2024, Caracas, Venezuela,
- ii. Pacific regional seminar: 21-23 May 2025, Dili, Timor-Leste,

5.2. Actions taken by the UN:

5.2.1 The UN has created legal bases, clear guide lines, and precedent for peoples who are seeking independence.

5.2.2 Maintained and reviewed a list of territories that are non-self-governed. The said list was originally 72 territories large back in 1946 and has shrunk with the help of the UN to be only 17 territories today.

5.2.3 The Declaration of International Decades Against Colonialism such as the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2021-2030) which was proclaimed to renew international focus on ending colonialism. Decades like these pushes for planning, resource allocation, and systematic effort to make change.

6. Important Links for Research purposes:

6.1 Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24) – Mandate & Overview

Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24) — Official UN page

<https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/c24/about>

Provides background on the committee's establishment, mandate, and functions

6.2 Decolonization Unit — DPPA (UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs)

<https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/about>

Describes the UN office that supports C-24, including missions and documentation

7. Core UN Documents on Decolonization & Self-Determination

7.1 Foundational UN Resolutions

General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) — *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples* <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/decolonization.html>

This is the foundational UN declaration affirming that *all peoples have the right to self-determination* and calling for the end of colonial rule.

7.2 General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV) — *Principles to guide implementation*

Provides principles related to when a territory is considered non-self-governing and how self-determination principles should be realized. [https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/1541\(xv\)](https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/1541(xv))

7.3 General Assembly Resolution 1654 (XVI) — *Implementation situation*

Reaffirms Resolution 1514 and the Special Committee's role in monitoring implementation. [https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/1654%20\(XVI\)](https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/1654%20(XVI))

7.4 UN Decolonization Documentation & Search Portals

7.4.1 UN Decolonization Document Search Portal

Search official GA resolutions, C-24 annual reports, working papers on Non-Self-Governing Territories, and related documents.

<https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents>

7.5 C-24 Annual Reports

Official annual reports submitted by the Special Committee to the General Assembly. <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/Documents/c-24annualreports>

8. Non-Self-Governing Territories & Lists

8.1 United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories

Maintained by the UN, showing territories that remain on the decolonization agenda.

<https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/nsgt>

8.2 Self-Determination in International Law & Human Rights Instruments

Right to Self-Determination: UN Legal Text (E/CN.4/Sub.2/404/Rev.1)

UN document with legal elaboration on the right, historical development, and application.
https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/25252/files/E_CN.4_Sub.2_404_Rev.1-EN.pdf

8.3 Declaration on Friendly Relations (UNGA Resolution 2625 (XXV))

https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/docs/A_RES_2625-Eng.pdf

Often used to contextualize self-determination in international law.

9. UN Press Releases & Recent C-24 Coverage

While not as primary as official resolutions, press releases can help you understand recent committee actions and debates:

2025 C-24 session coverage & draft adoptions (UN Press)

<https://press.un.org/en/2025/gacol3389.doc.htm>

Reports on the adoption of resolutions reaffirming self-determination

<https://www.sprsasd.info/en/2025/06/21/10384.html>

10. Essential Case Studies on the Right to Self-Determination

This section presents core and comparative case studies that are directly relevant to the mandate of the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24). Delegates are expected to reference these cases to ground debate in established UN practice, international law, and precedent, rather than abstract or purely political argumentation.

Each case highlights a different legal, political, or procedural dimension of the right to self-determination and should be used to support position statements, moderated caucuses, and operative clauses in draft resolutions.

10.1 Core C-24 Case Studies (Direct Mandate Relevance)

a. Western Sahara

Status: Non-Self-Governing Territory (since 1963)

Administering Power: Spain (former); Morocco (de facto control)

Overview:

Western Sahara represents one of the longest-running unresolved self-determination cases

before the United Nations. Despite repeated UN General Assembly resolutions and the establishment of MINURSO, a referendum on self-determination has not been conducted.

Key Issues for Debate:

- Failure to implement a UN-mandated referendum
- Exploitation of natural resources without the consent of the Sahrawi people
- Limits of UN peacekeeping missions without enforcement authority

Guiding Question:

Can prolonged administrative arrangements without political resolution be considered a **violation of the right to self-determination?**

b. Palestine

Status: Question of Palestine / Occupied Territory

Administering Power: Israel (occupation context)

Overview:

The Palestinian case highlights the exercise of self-determination under prolonged military occupation. While international recognition has expanded, effective sovereignty remains limited.

Key Issues for Debate:

Recognition versus effective self-governance

Impact of settlement activity on territorial viability

Relationship between self-determination and international humanitarian law

Guiding Question:

Does international recognition alone satisfy the right to self-determination in the absence of territorial and political control?

c. New Caledonia

Status: Non-Self-Governing Territory (re-inscribed in 1986)

Administering Power: France

Overview:

New Caledonia has conducted multiple UN-supervised referenda on independence. Although independence was rejected, concerns remain regarding Indigenous participation and referendum legitimacy.

Key Issues for Debate:

Repeated referenda and voter fatigue

Indigenous political participation and consent

Whether self-determination is a continuous or finite right

Guiding Question:

Can the right to self-determination be considered fully exercised if procedural fairness is disputed?

d. Gibraltar

Status: Non-Self-Governing Territory

Administering Power: United Kingdom

Competing Claim: Spain

Overview:

Gibraltar demonstrates the tension between self-determination and competing territorial claims. Referenda have consistently shown the population's preference to remain under British administration.

Key Issues for Debate:

Popular will versus territorial integrity claims

Applicability of self-determination to small territories

Impact of geopolitical changes such as Brexit

Guiding Question:

Should territorial claims override the clearly expressed will of a people?

e. Tokelau

Status: Non-Self-Governing Territory

Administering Power: New Zealand

Overview:

Tokelau has twice voted on self-governance and independence, but did not reach the required threshold. The population continues to exercise autonomy while remaining under New Zealand administration.

Key Issues for Debate:

Voluntary continuation of non-independent status

Free and informed consent

Climate vulnerability and sustainable governance

Guiding Question:

Is the rejection of independence itself an expression of self-determination?

10.2 Comparative Case Studies (Legal and Conceptual Frameworks)

a. Timor-Leste (East Timor)

Overview:

Timor-Leste is a rare example of a successful UN-administered transition to independence following occupation. It is frequently cited as a model for international involvement in self-determination processes.

Debate Relevance:

Conditions required for successful UN intervention

Role of transitional administrations

b. Kosovo

Overview:

Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence and partial recognition raise questions regarding legality, recognition, and the ICJ's advisory opinion on declarations of independence.

Debate Relevance:

Limits of international consensus

Relationship between recognition and statehood

c. Indigenous Peoples and Internal Self-Determination

Context: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Overview:

Cases involving Indigenous peoples (e.g., Sámi peoples, First Nations) expand the concept of self-determination beyond decolonization, emphasizing autonomy, self-governance, and cultural survival.

Debate Relevance:

Internal versus external self-determination

Autonomy as an alternative to secession

10.2.1 Guidance for Delegates

Delegates are strongly encouraged to:

Anchor speeches in at least one recognized case study

Distinguish clearly between political advocacy and the legal mandate of C-24

Use case studies to justify operative clauses, such as referenda mechanisms, UN visiting missions, or transitional governance arrangements

A strong intervention in C-24 demonstrates not only advocacy but legal coherence, mandate awareness, and practical solutions aligned with UN precedent.

11. Role of the P-5 and Key Stakeholders in the Right to Self-Determination

Understanding the roles, interests, and limitations of major actors is essential for productive debate in the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24). While C-24 itself is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and does not include veto powers, the political influence of the Permanent Five (P-5) of the Security Council and other stakeholders significantly shapes outcomes related to self-determination and decolonization.

This section outlines how delegates should conceptualize and engage with these actors within the legal and political mandate of C-24.

11.1 The Permanent Five (P-5): Influence Without Direct Authority

Members: China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States

Although the P-5 do not exercise veto power within the General Assembly or C-24, their positions remain critical due to their:

- Status as permanent Security Council members
- Diplomatic leverage and alliance networks
- Roles as former or current administering powers
- Influence over peacekeeping, recognition, and enforcement mechanisms

Delegates should therefore treat the P-5 as agenda-shaping actors, rather than formal decision-makers, within C-24 deliberations.

a. United Kingdom

Relevance to C-24:

- Current administering power of several Non-Self-Governing Territories (e.g., Gibraltar, Falkland Islands)
- Strong emphasis on referenda and expressed popular will

Typical Positions:

- Argues that self-determination has been fulfilled through democratic consultation
- Resists reopening cases where populations have repeatedly voted against independence

Delegate Consideration:

How should C-24 respond when an administering power claims that self-determination has already been exercised?

b. France

Relevance to C-24:

- Administering power of New Caledonia
- Advocates for gradual, negotiated processes

Typical Positions:

- Emphasizes constitutional processes and political stability
- Supports autonomy arrangements as valid outcomes of self-determination

Delegate Consideration:

Do procedural referenda suffice if participation or legitimacy is contested?

c. United States

Relevance to C-24:

- Not an administering power of listed territories, but a major geopolitical actor
- Influential in cases such as Palestine

Typical Positions:

- Selective support for self-determination
- Often frames issues through security, regional stability, and bilateral agreements

Delegate Consideration:

How does geopolitical interest affect the consistent application of self-determination principles?

d. Russian Federation

Relevance to C-24:

- Strong rhetorical support for anti-colonialism
- Uses self-determination language in broader geopolitical contexts

Typical Positions:

- Emphasizes opposition to Western colonial legacies
- Selective interpretation of self-determination versus territorial integrity

Delegate Consideration:

How can C-24 prevent the instrumentalization of self-determination for geopolitical ends?

e. China

Relevance to C-24:

- Consistent supporter of sovereignty and territorial integrity
- Strong advocate of anti-colonial rhetoric in Global South contexts

Typical Positions:

- Supports decolonization of listed territories
- Rejects external interference in internal affairs

Delegate Consideration:

Where should C-24 draw the line between non-interference and the protection of peoples' rights?

11.2 Other Key Stakeholders in C-24 Deliberations

a. Administering Powers (Non-P-5)

Examples include:

- New Zealand (Tokelau)
- Australia (historical contexts)
- Spain (Western Sahara – former)

Role:

- Provide official reports and positions to the UN
- Control political, economic, and administrative processes on the ground

Debate Focus:

- Accountability mechanisms
- Timelines for implementation of self-determination

b. Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories

Role:

- Primary rights-holders under international law
- Represented through petitions, civil society organizations, and local leaders

Debate Focus:

- Free, prior, and informed consent
- Inclusion of Indigenous and marginalized voices

c. Regional Organizations

Examples:

- African Union (Western Sahara)
- European Union (Gibraltar, New Caledonia context)

Role:

- Provide regional legitimacy and mediation
- Influence diplomatic pressure and recognition

d. United Nations Bodies and Mechanisms

Key Actors:

- General Assembly (Fourth Committee)
- UN Secretariat (Decolonization Unit)
- Peacekeeping and special political missions

Role:

- Monitoring, reporting, and facilitation
- Norm-setting and agenda continuity

e. Civil Society and International NGOs

Role:

- Submit petitions and shadow reports
- Raise awareness of human rights and participation gaps

Debate Focus:

- Transparency
- Human rights-based approaches to self-determination

11.3 Guidance for Delegates

Delegates should:

- Avoid treating the P-5 as formal veto-holders within C-24
- Recognize power asymmetries between stakeholders
- Frame solutions that are legally consistent, politically feasible, and mandate-appropriate

Effective participation in C-24 requires balancing principle with pragmatism, ensuring that the right to self-determination is advanced without exceeding the committee's authority.

Introduction to the second agenda item:

1.1 Evaluating the Role of Foreign Military Bases in Former Colonies

This section provides delegates with the legal framework, historical background, and authoritative UN sources necessary to evaluate how foreign military bases affect the process of decolonization and the exercise of the right to self-determination. Delegates are expected to ground arguments in UN resolutions, official reports, and established international law, rather than purely political or strategic narratives.

The presence of foreign military bases in former or remaining colonial territories has been repeatedly examined by the United Nations as a potential obstacle to genuine political independence, sovereignty, and self-determination.

The C-24 is mandated to examine challenges that might stand against the realization of the full decolonization of the remaining territories. Foreign military bases, often established under the colonial rule and remained operational under post-colonial arrangement, can represent real challenges for peoples full independence from the colonial rule and structural

constraints on the free political life, and economical development of the people in said territories. This agenda item therefore shines the light on the legal, political, and economical implications of such military bases, and ways to find peaceful solutions for the issue.

A state administering a non-self-governing territory is obliged to act in the best interests of the local population. Since this norm emerged in the early twentieth century, regulation has not been uniform as to whether an administering state may establish military bases in the non-self-governing territory. An administering state that establishes military bases not to defend the non-self-governing territory, but for its own purposes, may violate its obligations to the non-self-governing territory.

Such bases can cause economic harm by diverting land and sea areas from traditional uses. They may involve the non-self-governing territory against its will in military conflicts with neighboring states. They may impair the non-self-governing territory's opportunity of achieving self-determination because the administering state may be reluctant to jeopardize its bases.

1.2 Question of whether Military bases violates the rights of peoples of a non-self-governing territory:

Establishment of military bases to benefit the administering state may conflict with the right of the population of a non-self-governing territory to have it administered for its benefit. That right emerged in the late nineteenth century. The European colonial states recognized an obligation to benefit colonized populations. Britain called it the "white man's burden," France the mission civilisatrice", which shows how these world power viewed colonies at the time as a burden and an issue to be solved rather than nations that deserve and demand their right to exist. That obligation is reflected in an 1885 treaty regarding the Congo: "All the powers exercising rights of sovereignty or influence in the said territories agree to protect the indigenous populations and to ameliorate their moral and material conditions of existence.

Away from Europe a "sacred trust" norm emerged among the American states as well. The United States recognized that obligation towards Cuba, over which it acquired jurisdiction in 1898. The U.S. President said that the United States would "give aid and direction to its people to form a government for themselves." The U.S. Supreme Court characterized Cuba as "territory held in trust for the inhabitants of Cuba to whom it rightfully belongs and to whose exclusive control it will be surrendered when a stable government shall have been established by their voluntary action."

2. Previous actions taken by:

2.1 The League of Nations:

The obligation of colonizing powers to benefit colonized populations was expanded and regulated by the League of Nations, which, for example, decided that states taking colonies

from Turkiye and Germany in World War I had no right to accept them as colonies. The league determined that the international community carried an obligation to these territories, and that administering states bore a "sacred trust of civilization" to benefit the local population, and to aid it in achieving self-determination.

The league of nations prohibited administering states from maintaining military bases in mandate territory. But it did not apply that principle consistently.

In resolving this issue, the UN distinguished on the basis of whether a mandate territory was an "A," "B," or "C" mandate. The League designated as "B" and "C" mandates those it deemed less ready for independence than those it designated "A" mandates. "B" mandates were those in Central Africa. "C" mandates were Pacific Ocean territories, plus South West Africa. The only "A" mandates, those territories considered closest to independence were -at the time- Palestine and Syria.

2.2 The United Nations:

Practice under the United Nations Charter rejects the permissibility of military bases in a non-self-governing territory to benefit the administering state.

The General Assembly has on several occasions criticized administering states for bases in non-self-governing territory. It has condemned South Africa for maintaining military bases in Namibia. In 1960 it criticized Belgium for using bases in its trust territory of Ruanda-Urundi to send troops into the Congo. The Assembly called on Belgium "to refrain from using the Territory [Ruanda-Urundi-J.Q.] as a base, whether for internal or external purposes, for the accumulation of arms or armed forces not strictly required for the purpose of maintaining public order in the Territory. The "sacred trust" norm prohibits military bases for the benefit of an administering state in a non-self-governing territory. This prohibition precludes not only bases whose purpose is offensive but those designed for defense of the administering state. Bases even for defense of the administering state involve a use of the non-self-governing territory for a purpose that does not benefit the local population.

3. Terminology:

Foreign Military Bases: permanent military stations established by an administration or external state within a non self-governing territory.

Mandate System: a governance system after WW1 established under the league of nations, where colonies controlled by defeated states were taken over by other states with international supervision.

A, B, and C Mandates: a classification set by the league of nations to refer to a territory's readiness to achieve independence, with A mandates being the closest to independence, B mandates for less developed, and C mandates for the least prepared territories.

Trust Territory: a territory that is under the UN trusteeship system, to be guided toward self-governance under international law.

4. United Nations Legal and Normative Framework

4.1 United Nations Charter and Self-Determination

While the UN Charter does not explicitly regulate military bases, its core principles provide the legal foundation for debate:

- Article 1(2): Promotion of the right of peoples to self-determination
- Article 73: Obligations of administering powers toward non-self-governing territories

Delegates should assess whether long-term foreign military presence is compatible with these obligations.

4.2 Key General Assembly Resolutions on Foreign Military Bases

- UN General Assembly Resolution 2344 (XXII) (1967) – *Elimination of foreign military bases in Asia, Africa, and Latin America*
This resolution explicitly calls for the removal of foreign military bases from former colonial regions, identifying them as remnants of colonial domination.
- UN General Assembly debates on military activities in colonial and non-self-governing territories
Multiple General Assembly sessions have reaffirmed that foreign military installations may impede the full exercise of self-determination.

5. Official UN Reports and Documentation

5.1 UN Report: Military Activities in Colonial and Non-Self-Governing Territories

- Document: A/52/621 (UN General Assembly)
This report examines the relationship between military installations and the political development of non-self-governing territories, warning that military arrangements can delay or undermine independence processes.

Delegates are encouraged to reference this document when discussing whether military bases constitute a structural continuation of colonial control.

5.2 UN Yearbook on Decolonization (1981)

- UN Yearbook Chapter on Military Bases and Decolonization
Historical UN analysis recognizing that foreign military bases have often been used to maintain strategic influence in territories transitioning out of colonial rule.

This source is particularly useful for contextualizing modern debates within historical UN practice.

6. UN Decolonization Institutional Context

6.1 UN Decolonization Unit (DPPA)

- Official UN body supporting the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24)
- Provides reports, documentation, and institutional continuity on decolonization issues

Delegates should understand that C-24 discussions on military bases fall within the broader UN mandate to ensure that decolonization is genuine, irreversible, and free from external coercion.

6.2 UN Global Issues: Decolonization

- UN overview of decolonization since 1945
- Establishes the political and moral framework through which foreign military presence is evaluated

7. Contextual Case Examples for Delegate Research

While not exhaustive, the following cases are commonly cited in UN and academic discussions:

- Djibouti – Former French colony hosting multiple foreign military bases (France, United States, Japan, Italy), raising questions about sovereignty, consent, and economic dependency.
- Cyprus (Sovereign Base Areas) – British military bases retained after independence, often cited in legal scholarship as a unique post-colonial arrangement.

These cases allow delegates to assess whether foreign military bases can coexist with political independence or whether they represent a form of neo-colonial influence.

8. Key Questions for Delegate Consideration

Delegates should be prepared to address:

- Do foreign military bases undermine the political independence of former colonies?
- Can host-state consent legitimize a foreign military presence?
- Should the UN distinguish between security partnerships and colonial remnants?
- What role, if any, should C-24 play in monitoring or recommending the removal of such bases?

9. Guidance for Debate and Resolution Drafting

Strong delegate interventions will:

- Cite UN resolutions and official reports
- Distinguish between voluntary agreements and imposed arrangements
- Propose mandate-appropriate solutions, such as reporting mechanisms, confidence-building measures, or timelines for base review

Delegates are reminded that the objective of C-24 is not military disarmament, but the completion of decolonization in accordance with international law and the freely expressed will of peoples.

10. Essential Case Studies

This section presents key case studies that enable delegates to evaluate the role of foreign military bases through the lens of decolonization, sovereignty, and self-determination, in line with the mandate of the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24).

These cases are selected because they:

- Are frequently cited in UN debates, reports, and academic literature
- Illustrate different legal justifications and political outcomes
- Prevent the committee from drifting into purely strategic or Security Council-style discussions

Delegates are expected to use these cases to support legally grounded arguments and to propose mandate-appropriate recommendations.

10.1 Core Case Studies (Direct Relevance to Decolonization)

a. Diego Garcia (Chagos Archipelago)

Former Colonial Power: United Kingdom

Current Military Use: United States–United Kingdom joint base

Overview:

Diego Garcia is one of the most cited examples of how foreign military bases intersect with unfinished decolonization. The forced removal of the Chagossian people to facilitate the establishment of a military base has been repeatedly criticized by UN bodies.

Key Issues for Debate:

- Displacement of the indigenous population
- Advisory opinions affirming incomplete decolonization
- Military necessity versus human rights and territorial sovereignty

Guiding Question:

Can a foreign military base be legally justified if its establishment required the removal of a people from their territory?

b. Cyprus (British Sovereign Base Areas)

Former Colonial Power: United Kingdom

Current Status: Retained military bases post-independence

Overview:

Upon independence, Cyprus retained two British Sovereign Base Areas. While legally recognized through treaties, these bases remain central to debates on whether post-colonial sovereignty can be considered complete.

Key Issues for Debate:

- Treaty-based consent versus colonial power imbalance
- Long-term military presence after independence
- Distinction between legality and legitimacy

Guiding Question:

Does treaty consent at the moment of independence permanently legitimize foreign military bases?

c. Djibouti

Former Colonial Power: France

Overview:

Djibouti hosts multiple foreign military bases, including those of France, the United States, China, Japan, and Italy. Unlike other cases, Djibouti's government actively supports these bases for economic and security reasons.

Key Issues for Debate:

- Voluntary host-state consent

- Economic dependency and strategic rent
- Whether consent eliminates neo-colonial concerns

Guiding Question:

When a former colony consents to foreign bases, does this represent sovereignty in action or structural dependency?

10.2 Comparative and Regional Case Studies

a. Okinawa (Japan – Post-Colonial Context)

Context: U.S. military presence following WWII

Overview:

Although not a traditional colonial case under C-24, Okinawa is often cited in debates on disproportionate military burden on marginalized populations.

Debate Relevance:

- Local opposition versus national security policy
- Consent at the state level versus popular will

b. Subic Bay and Clark Air Base (Philippines)

Former Colonial Power: United States

Overview:

The Philippines' decision in 1991 to close U.S. military bases through a parliamentary vote is frequently cited as a successful assertion of post-colonial sovereignty.

Debate Relevance:

- Democratic decision-making
- Peaceful termination of foreign military presence
- Relevance of renegotiated security agreements

10.3 Analytical Themes Across the Case Studies

Delegates should identify recurring patterns:

- Consent: Who consents, and under what conditions?
- Continuity: Do military bases perpetuate colonial power structures?
- Impact: Effects on local populations, land use, and political autonomy
- UN Role: Monitoring, reporting, and norm-setting rather than enforcement

10.4 Guidance for Debate and Resolution Drafting

To keep debate focused and productive, delegates should:

- Anchor interventions in at least one case study
- Avoid framing the issue purely as global security or alliance politics
- Propose realistic C-24 actions, such as:
 - Reporting requirements on military installations
 - Review mechanisms for base agreements in former colonies
 - Support for consultations with affected populations

Strong resolutions will reflect an understanding that the issue is not the existence of military bases per se, but whether their presence undermines the completion of decolonization and the free exercise of self-determination.

11. Role of the P-5 and Key Stakeholders in Debates on Foreign Military Bases

An effective evaluation of foreign military bases in former colonies requires delegates to understand who shapes outcomes, how influence is exercised, and where the legal authority of the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24) begins and ends.

Although C-24 operates under the General Assembly and does not grant veto power or enforcement authority, the political weight of the Permanent Five (P-5) and other stakeholders significantly affects decolonization processes involving foreign military installations.

This section clarifies these roles to ensure debate remains mandate-consistent, analytically grounded, and solution-oriented.

11.1 The Permanent Five (P-5): Strategic Influence Without Formal Control

Members: China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States

Within C-24, the P-5:

- Hold no veto power and no special procedural privileges
- Exert influence through diplomacy, security partnerships, and historical legacies
- Often act as current or former administering powers or as hosts of overseas military bases

Delegates should therefore assess P-5 behavior through the lens of political leverage rather than legal authority.

a. United States

Relevance to the Topic:

- Operates the largest global network of foreign military bases
- Maintains bases in numerous former colonies (e.g., Diego Garcia, Philippines, Djibouti)

Typical Positions:

- Frames overseas bases as mutual security arrangements
- Emphasizes host-state consent and regional stability
- Rarely supports UN language calling for base removal

Delegate Consideration:

Can consent given under strategic or economic dependency be considered genuinely free?

b. United Kingdom

Relevance to the Topic:

- Former colonial power retaining military bases in post-colonial contexts (e.g., Cyprus, Chagos Archipelago)

Typical Positions:

- Relies on treaty-based legality
- Argues bases are compatible with sovereignty and self-determination

Delegate Consideration:

Does legal validity automatically imply legitimacy in a decolonization context?

c. France

Relevance to the Topic:

- Maintains military bases in former colonies, particularly in Africa
- Positions itself as a security guarantor

Typical Positions:

- Emphasizes counter-terrorism and regional stability
- Frames bases as partnerships rather than colonial remnants

Delegate Consideration:

How should C-24 assess security justifications advanced by former administering powers?

d. China

Relevance to the Topic:

- Expanding overseas military presence, including in former colonies
- Strong rhetorical support for sovereignty and non-interference

Typical Positions:

- Supports decolonization in principle
- Rejects scrutiny of bases established through bilateral agreements

Delegate Consideration:

Can non-interference coexist with UN oversight of decolonization outcomes?

e. Russian Federation

Relevance to the Topic:

- Uses anti-colonial discourse in UN forums
- Maintains or seeks military access abroad

Typical Positions:

- Criticizes Western military presence in former colonies
- Selective application of self-determination principles

Delegate Consideration:

How can C-24 prevent the politicization of anti-colonial rhetoric?

11.2 Other Key Stakeholders in C-24 Deliberations

a. Former Colonies / Host States

Role:

- Exercise formal sovereignty
- Enter into base agreements for security or economic reasons

Key Issues:

- Power asymmetry in negotiations
- Long-term dependency on base-related revenue

b. People and Local Communities

Role:

- Primary rights-holders under international law
- Often excluded from base negotiations

Key Issues:

- Land displacement and environmental impact
- Lack of consultation and consent

c. Administering Powers (Current or Former)

Role:

- Retain legal or practical influence over territories
- Provide official reports and justifications to the UN

Key Issues:

- Accountability for historical arrangements
- Responsibility to facilitate full decolonization

d. United Nations Bodies and Mechanisms

Key Actors:

- Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24)
- Fourth Committee of the General Assembly
- UN Secretariat and Decolonization Unit

Role:

- Monitoring and reporting
- Norm-setting and agenda continuity

e. Regional Organizations and Civil Society

Role:

- African Union, regional security bodies
- NGOs and advocacy groups

Key Issues:

- Regional legitimacy
- Human rights-based assessments

11.3 Guidance for Delegates

Delegates are expected to:

- Avoid treating the P-5 as veto holders within C-24
- Distinguish clearly between security narratives and decolonization obligations
- Center affected people rather than state-to-state arrangements

Strong participation will demonstrate an understanding that C-24's role is not to abolish military alliances, but to assess whether foreign military bases undermine the completion of decolonization and the free exercise of self-determination.