

PAPMUN2025



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ADDRESSING THE GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GIBRALTAR'S SOVEREIGNTY: NAVIGATING
SECURITY AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON EUROPE, AFRICA, AND INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ROUTES.

DEAR DELEGATES,

I am so happy and excited to welcome you to PAMUN'S General Assembly! I am Ana Belén Pacheco Rodríguez, and I'm beyond thrilled to be your president for this wonderful learning experience. I have been a delegate too and I know it takes a lot of research and countless days of preparation but, trust me, it is worth it! Mariana Céspedes (Secretariat), Raquel Rodríguez (Moderator) and I are truly grateful for this opportunity, as it provides enormous personal growth for both delegates and members of the Chair and cannot wait to meet all of you!

I am currently studying fifth semester at Prepa Anáhuac Puebla in the health area and my dream is to one day become a doctor. However, I am very passionate about debating and overall discussing current political issues worldwide, for that matter, I believe this edition's General Assembly will provide a unique opportunity to not only debate current issues, but also understand how they are diplomatically dealt with. I'm sure you'll do great!

Participating in different Models of the United Nations has helped me develop several important skills, such as public speaking, abstracting key information, finding useful sources, communicating assertively and last, but not least, load of patience! This goes to show that challenges such as this, because participating in a MUN, specifically on the General Assembly, can be quite intimidating, can bring many benefits, even if at first it may seem scary!

I really hope you find this experience rich and mind-opening, allowing you to step out of your comfort zones and start to think as a true diplomat. Besides, it'll look great on your college application! I'm just kidding, but really, take advantage of this opportunity, find new perspectives, create relationships with fellow delegates, develop new skills and, most importantly, enjoy the experience. Don't forget that the members of the Chair and I are here to help you on this journey. If any doubts arise regarding the topic or the dynamic followed by this MUN, please feel free to contact any directing member at our personal emails (We will be more than delighted to respond)

Sincerely,



ANA BELÉN PACHECO

President of the committee

HISTORY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) is the main policy-making organ of the United Nations. It comprises all Member States and provides a unique council for the discussion of all the global issues present in the Charter of the United Nations: an instrument of international law that codifies the major principles of international relations (United Nations, n.d.). Among its main functions are national relations (United Nations, n.d.). Among its main functions are:

Appointing the Secretary-General annually (recommended by the Security Council).

Electing non-permanent members of the Security Council.

Approving the UN budget.

Admitting new members and appointing them to other councils.

Passing resolutions proposed by the Security Council, ECOSOC and Subsidiary Bodies.

This Assembly meets annually in ordinary sessions from September to December each year, and if the global situation requires it, to discuss specific issues through agenda items or sub-items, adopting or reinforcing resolutions in the process, through a common vote involving all Member Countries, which are currently 193.

It was created in 1945, after the events experienced in World War II, to provide an international forum to discuss global issues, prevent conflicts from escalating to such magnitude, and promote international cooperation. The first-ever meeting held by this organ was on January 10th, 1946, in London, with 51 founding countries, representing a new era in international diplomacy. During this inaugural session, the Assembly focused on laying the foundational structures and procedures of the UN. Among the tasks done were the election of Paul-Henri Spaak, of Belgium, as the first ever President of the General Assembly; and the creation of several initial committees in charge of combating specific global issues, such as: human rights, security threats, disarmament and refugee crisis (United Nations, 2023).

Among the most important resolutions adopted by the GA are:

Resolution 1: Established the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC) in 1946, as a way to deal with the issues that were raised with the discovery of atomic energy.

Resolution 3275: Proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year, to establish a period of intensified labor regarding fighting for women's rights and equality.

Resolution 44/25: Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Resolution 61/295: Established the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

(United Nations, 2020)

Early Years (1945-1950s)

During its first years, the General Assembly focused on acknowledging the devastation brought upon by World War II, promoting post-war reconstruction, and establishing a fixed international system to avoid future conflicts escalating to such magnitudes. It also played a key role in developing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which laid the foundation for international standards for human rights and freedoms.

Between the 1950s and 1960s, the Assembly welcomed many new member states, due to decolonization, addressing the right of self-determination of these emerging nations. It played a crucial role in advocating for the independence of colonial territories.

The Cold War (1950s-1989)

Throughout the Cold War, the Assembly functioned as a platform for debates between the Western and Eastern blocs. This era was marked by intense ideological and geopolitical rivalries and thus, the meetings often reflected the tensions experienced. During this period, the UNGA passed the following resolutions: arms control, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Post-Cold War and Globalization (1990s-2000s)

After the Cold War's culmination, the organ shifted its attention to broader global challenges, like economic development, environmental issues and human rights. Therefore, the UNGA launched revolutionizing initiatives such as the Millenium Development Goals. It also increased its focus on peacekeeping efforts, humanitarian missions and reconstruction of conflict-affected nations.

21st Century (2000s-Present)

Nowadays, the General Assembly is majorly concerned with sustainable development, climate change, and health crises, prompting initiatives like the 2030 Agenda, which promotes 17 Sustainable Development Goals, regarding issues such as poverty, inequality and the climate crisis.

Every year, this Assembly continues to pass up to 300 resolutions that contribute to aiding nations and promote international cooperation, creating peace between the Member Countries and ensuring equality by exercising the common vote (one per each country).
(Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024).

ADDRESSING THE GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GIBRALTAR'S SOVEREIGNTY: NAVIGATING SECURITY AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON EUROPE, AFRICA, AND INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ROUTES

Gibraltar is a British overseas territory on a peninsula on Spain's southern Mediterranean coast, northeast of the Strait of Gibraltar and south of the city of La Línea (Spain). It is a heavily fortified British naval and air base, approximately 6.8 km², that guards the Strait of Gibraltar, the only entrance to the Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean (Rodriguez, 2024). Consequently, this territory is one of the most coveted in the world, as it holds one of the world's most important shipping lanes with Morocco. It has a population of about 29 683 people, of whom 79% are Gibraltarian, 13.2% British, 2.1% Spanish, 1.6 % Moroccan, and 1.6% from another European Union country; and a Gross Domestic Product estimated at 2.347 million pounds sterling: the seventh largest GDP in the entire world, if it is ever independent. Nowadays, this territory is prompting a larger conversation about the self-determination of colonial handovers, as well as the true necessity of colonies in the modern world (CIA, n.d).

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE ISSUE

The nature of this issue can be found in the United Kingdom's and Spain's disputes over claiming the territory, which would mean having control over the Strait of Gibraltar and the economic activities it implies; and the lack of acknowledgment of Gibraltar's right to self-determination: its wishes to remain a part of British territory have not been always respected (as shown in the 1967 and 2002 referendums), even though Spain formally granted the territory to Britain following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 (BBC, 2017).

THE WAR BETWEEN THE MOORS (MUSLIM PEOPLE AND AFRICAN DESCENDANTS BETWEEN SPAIN)

The Moors is a concept that describes the reign of Muslims in Spain, Europeans of African descent, and others for centuries. During A.D 711 a group called "Moors" started gaining territory over Spain. They captured the Iberian Peninsula (modern Spain and Portugal) -Gibraltar territory. Over time, the strength of the Muslim state diminished, creating inroads for Christians who resented Moorish rule. For centuries, Christian groups challenged Muslim territorial dominance in Al-Andalus and slowly expanded their territory. In 1462 Spain recovered Gibraltar from the Moors. This culminated in 1492, when Catholic monarchs Ferdinand II and Isabella I won the Granada War and completed Spain's conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, annexing Gibraltar to the Spain territory. Eventually, the Moors were expelled from Spain.

WAR OF SPANISH SUCCESSION

Spain ceded Gibraltar to the UK in the wake of the War of Spanish Succession in the early 18th century, formally handing it under the Treaty of Utrecht. According to this treaty -still valid today- Spain handed over Gibraltar's fortress town and harbor without granting the UK territorial jurisdiction, it also established that Gibraltar would have no direct communication with Spain and that if the UK were to sell Gibraltar or give it away, it should be offered to Spain first.

Today: The Spanish government ceded only what was explicitly mentioned in the treaty, and nothing else. "The mountain that surrounds the town of Gibraltar was never ceded to the UK, and nor were the waters around the rock or the isthmus".

The British government argues that the session was intended to be permanent. The only reason that wasn't recorded in the treaty is that waters were never explicitly mentioned or regulated by treaties at the time.

20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

Spain signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982, it declared that it did not consider Gibraltar to be covered by the convention's provisions. The UK maintains that Gibraltar is surrounded by three nautical

miles of British territorial waters. In 1908–1909, the UK established a border by placing a fence between Gibraltar and the mainland. At the beginning of 1940 civilian population was temporarily evacuated to make Gibraltar a military fortress during the Second World War. Discontent at the slow pace of repatriation after the war becomes one of the sources of demands for self-government. In 1963 the Spanish government began a campaign through the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization for the handover of Gibraltar to Spain. In response in 1964, the UN declared Gibraltar a non-autonomous territory pending decolonization, but in 1967 the residents voted resoundingly in favor of continued British sovereignty. Spain and the UK were supposed to negotiate this path together, keeping the interests of the people of Gibraltar at the center of their talks. Both countries committed to resolving all their disagreements in 1984, and this argument is known as the Brussels process. By 2002 the government of Gibraltar called for a referendum to ask locals if they would accept shared sovereignty between the UK and Spain. Over 98% of voted against this.

Another point of tension is the Gibraltar airport, which was built by the British during World War II but in 2006, Spain and the UK agreed to share the facility. In 2014, the Spanish government excluded Gibraltar from the “Single European Sky” initiative, which European countries cooperate on aviation, saying it would not recognize the territory as a partner until the sovereignty question was settled.

In August 2012, Spanish fishermen and the government of Gibraltar reached an agreement that allowed fishermen to fish in the waters surrounding Gibraltar. However, tensions between the UK and Spain escalated when the Gibraltar government decided in July 2013 to throw 72 cement blocks into the water surrounding the rock to create an artificial reef. This action provoked the protests of the Spanish fishermen, who argued that the Gibraltar government was trying to prevent them from fishing in the waters. In retaliation, the Spanish government increased control at the border and began expressing concern about the companies that operated in Gibraltar but doing business in Spain as a way to make tax evasion.

Neither of these matters have been resolved. In consequence, Fabian Picardo, the chief minister of Gibraltar removed the concrete blocks from the water and compared Spain's attitude with North Korea. These discussions drew the attention of the UK, causing the in 2014 British foreign office says Spanish

vessels made more than 500 unauthorized incursions into Gibraltar waters in 2013.

CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Gibraltar holds immense cultural importance as a unique crossroads of civilizations, mixing British, Spanish, and Moorish influences. This multicultural identity is reflected in its local language, Llanito, which combines English and Spanish, and its diverse traditions that celebrate its layered history. The Rock of Gibraltar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, symbolizes natural beauty and the region's historical significance, attracting global tourism and fostering cultural exchange. Furthermore, Gibraltar's position as a contested territory between the UK and Spain highlights its role in discussions about sovereignty and self-determination, making it a powerful symbol in international debates. Its cultural diversity and geopolitical relevance emphasize its importance as a focal point for diplomatic and social dialogue.

Economically, Gibraltar plays a pivotal role as a global trade and financial hub, driven by its strategic position at the entrance to the Mediterranean. This maritime chokepoint facilitates significant shipping activity and makes Gibraltar a leading port for ship refueling, adding to its global economic influence. The territory's robust financial services sector, particularly online gaming and insurance, bolsters its GDP and attracts international business. Additionally, Gibraltar's tax incentives and free-market policies make it an attractive location for investment. Tourism is another major economic driver, with landmarks like St. Michael's Cave and the Barbary macaques drawing international visitors. These economic advantages, coupled with its strategic geopolitical location, position Gibraltar as a key player in discussions on sustainable development, regional collaboration, and global trade (Gibraltar Finance, n.d).

UN´S PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2070 of the General Assembly of United Nations : Adopted in 1965, this resolution invited for the first time the Government of Spain, the Government of United Kingdom and the Government of Northern Ireland to discuss about Gibraltar´s sovereignty.

Resolution 2353 of the XXII General Assembly of the United Nations (December 1967): established that any colonial situation that destroys the national unity and territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the principles of the Charter of United Nations.

Resolution 2429 of the XXIII General Assembly of the United Nations (December 1968): prompted United Kingdom to put an end to Gibraltar´s colonial status by October 1969.

Lisbon Declaration (1980): reflects the commitment of the two Governments to resolve the issue in Gibraltar in spirit of friendship and according to previous UN resolutions.

Brussel Declaration (1984): lays the groundwork for the discussion that includes sovereignty issues.

(Ministerio de Asunto Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación, s.f)

SELF-DETERMINATION AROUND THE WORLD

Self-determination is a nation´s ability to choose their political future, achieving a state of sovereignty, and thus, governing itself. Throughout the twentieth century, formerly European colonies in Asia, America, the Caribbean and Africa started to fight for their independence, resulting in the breakdown of major empires through a process known as “decolonization”; and prompting the creation of new nations all around the world. However, the right to self-determination has manifested differently across the globe, due to the different historical, cultural, and political contexts that surround each territory (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024). Examining case studies such as the

Falkland Islands, Hong Kong, and American Samoa reveals the intricacy of balancing governance, culture, autonomy, and international relations, while providing a point of comparison to Gibraltar's case.

The Falkland Islands is a British territory in the South Atlantic with over three thousand people. It faces ongoing disputes regarding its sovereignty between the United Kingdom and Argentina, which claims the land as "Las Malvinas". However, most of its population possesses British heritage and, for years, expressed their wish to remain a territory under British rule, which was reaffirmed through a 2013 referendum. The Falkland War (1982) and the UK's controversial investment in these islands underscores the tension between democratic rule, self-determination, and colonial legacies (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024).

Hong Kong, formerly a British colony due to the First Opium War, is a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China. In 1997, the territory slowly transitioned to Chinese sovereignty under the "one country, two systems" ideology, guaranteeing its autonomy until 2047. Nonetheless, China's influence through press censorship and suppression of democratic activities has threatened these freedoms to the point of raising concerns about the region's future (Leung, 2025).

American Samoa, an unincorporated U.S. territory, showcases a different approach to self-determination. While adopting aspects of American culture (such as engaging in economic relationships with American businesses), the land maintains its traditional practices and government. In October 2022, the United States Supreme Court ruled to reconsider the relationship between both territories; as a consequence, the United States government is now denying full citizenship to the inhabitants of American Samoa, violating this nation's right to self-determination. As of today, this land has continued its relationship with United States but also has asked to clarify its future (Stohr, K. A., & The Emancipator, 2022).

On the other hand, Gibraltar exemplifies a model of self-determination where the territory self-governs, while engaging in a close relationship with the UK. This arrangement highlights the population's desire to remain autonomous, without reaching complete independence.

CURRENT STATUS

Since 2020, debates over Gibraltar have sparked in relation to Brexit: a ballot vote introduced by right-wing politicians in 2016 to determine whether the UK should exit the European Union or not. While 51.9% of UK's citizens voted in favor of UK's exit, 96% of Gibraltarians voted against the initiative, due to concerns regarding the economic and logistical impacts it would have, as territory heavily relies on cross-border movement with Spain. Although Gibraltar has not pledged for independence from UK, they have discussed the changes they would like to better suit them, such as negotiating with Spain to ease border movements.

In December 2022, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs declared that both the Spanish and British governments have made some progress in solving challenges regarding visa-free travel between Gibraltar and the European Union (it is important to note that Gibraltar pleaded to become a special member of the EU, but UK did not support this). On the other hand, disagreements regarding Spain's and United Kingdom's positions in relation to Gibraltar's status (specially referring to its relationship with the European Union) are still active and struggling to find middle ground. For example, Spain states that border control on Gibraltarian land should be done by the Spanish police, while UK suggests that it should be carried out by Frontex: the EU's border agency. Other political issues arise within the countries' ideologies: the Vox Party in Spain has spread anti-Gibraltarian rhetoric, affecting the economic relationship between both lands, while far-right politicians in UK have harshly pushed for Brexit and their implementation in overseas policies (Gallardo, 2022).

GUIDE QUESTIONS

How can Gibraltar benefit both countries?

How does Gibraltar define as a nation?

How can Gibraltar achieve its right to self-determination while being part of another country?

What solution best meets Gibraltar's interests?

What is the Gibraltarian identity?

Is the location of a territory more important than its cultural ties?

REFERENCES

BBC News. (2012, May 26). Gibraltar profile – timeline. *BBC*.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18222199>

BBC News. (2017, April 3). Gibraltar Brexit row: What is the dispute about? *BBC*.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-39478636>

Council on Foreign Relations. (2024). *How self-determination shaped the modern world*. CFR Education from the Council on Foreign Relations.
<https://education.cfr.org/learn/reading/how-self-determination-shaped-modern-world>

Gallardo, C. (2022, December 14). *UK and Spain close in on post-Brexit deal for Gibraltar*. POLITICO. <https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-and-spain-close-in-on-post-brexit-deal-for-gibraltar/>

Gibraltar. (n.d.). Cia.gov. Retrieved November 8, 2024, from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gibraltar/>

Gibraltar fact sheets. (n.d.). Government of Gibraltar. Retrieved November 8, 2024, from <https://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/press/gibraltar-fact-sheets>

Gibraltar Finance. (n.d.). *The Economy*. Gibraltarfinance.Gi. Retrieved January 15, 2025, from https://www.gibraltarfinance.gi/about-gibraltar/the-economy?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Leung, C.-K. (2025). Hong Kong. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

(N.d.). Gob.Es. Retrieved November 27, 2024, from <https://www.exteriores.gob.es/en/PoliticaExterior/Paginas/Gibraltar.aspx>

(N.d.). Parliament.uk. Retrieved November 8, 2024, from <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2016-0147/>

Peñalba-Sotorrío, M. (2017, April 5). Gibraltar: a history of ill will over the Rock. *The Conversation*. <http://theconversation.com/gibraltar-a-history-of-ill-will-over-the-rock-75753>

Rodriguez, V. (2024). Gibraltar. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Special committee on decolonization begins resumed session, takes up report on Gibraltar. (n.d.). Press.un.org. Retrieved November 8, 2024, from <https://press.un.org/en/1999/19990621.gaco3007.r1.html>

Stohr, K. A., & The Emancipator. (2022, November 9). *The (unheard) case of American Samoa*. The Emancipator. <https://theemancipator.org/2022/11/09/topics/histories/unheard-case-american-samoa/>

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (2024). Falkland Islands. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (2024). War of the Spanish Succession. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

United Nations [@unitednations]. (n.d.-a). *Into the vault: History of the UN general assembly (75 years of UN audiovisual archives)*. YouTube. Retrieved November 8, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0SVI6vncpQ>

United Nations. (n.d.-b). *UN Charter | United Nations*. Retrieved November 8, 2024, from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>