

Lesson Plan

# Sovereignty: Challenges

## Length

One 45-minute period

## Grade Level

High School

## Learning Objectives

- Students will develop an understanding of sovereignty by discussing the concept of R2P while also looking at challenges including statelessness.
- Students will create an op-ed in which they advocate for a UN intervention in a manner which balances sovereignty with human rights.

[Sovereignty: Challenges](#)

[Guided Reading Handout](#)

[Presentation](#)

## Homework

- Complete Part 1 of the guided reading handout.

## Class

### 1. (15 Minutes) R2P and Sovereignty

1. **Write:** Definition of sovereignty on the board
2. **Debrief HW:** Students should share key takeaways from Part 1 of the Guided Reading Handout on R2P. Including defining what R2P means and the pros and cons of trying to uphold such a concept.
3. **Watch:** *Reimagining Sovereignty in a Global Era* (4:50) and complete Part 2 of the Guided Reading Handout.
4. **Ask:** Why do you think sovereignty might be such an important concept in international affairs?
5. Have students create a list of times that a country's sovereignty may need to be violated. Be as specific as possible by encouraging them to offer up a scenario for each item they list (e.g.: "Human Rights" = give a specific right or offer an example of a time when intervention might have been needed in the past).

### 2. (20 Minutes) Complete: Parts 3 +4 of the guided reading handout.

1. Jigsaw: *Part 3 Tanks, Sanctions, and Separatists: The Various Challenges to Sovereignty*
2. Jigsaw or Individual Work: Part 4 *Statelessness Around the World*

### 3. (5 Minutes) Brainstorm/ Web Search: Have students brainstorm (board/ paper) a list of contemporary crises where the UN might be justified to intervene (R2P) in a way that balances sovereignty with human rights. (Examples may include: Ukraine, Uyghurs in China, Syria, Libya, etc). Ask the class to share/ discuss their ideas.

### 4. (5 Minutes) Wrap Up/ Assign HW: Have students choose a contemporary crisis and brainstorm how the United Nations might intervene in a way that effectively balances sovereignty with human rights.

## Homework

- Assign students to write an op-ed piece supporting their position, drawing on at least two historical examples

to support their argument.

## Vocabulary

alliance

an official partnership between two or more parties based on cooperation in pursuit of a common goal, generally involving security or defense.

civil war

a war among groups inside of one country.

caliphate

an Islamic state governed by a caliph, or successor to the prophet Mohammed, who maintains absolute political and religious power. Some Islamist extremist groups aim to establish an Islamic caliphate and unify Muslims in an undivided religious and ideological empire.

centrifuge

a mechanical device used for nuclear enrichment that contains rotors that spin quickly to separate different forms of the radioactive element uranium.

governance

the tasks and activities of governing, or running, a country.

International Monetary Fund

a multilateral financial institution established in 1944 that exists to foster stability and growth in the international monetary system.

norm

commonly accepted standard of behavior. Because international law is not always binding, international relations is highly influenced by norms.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

a military alliance among thirty-two countries on both sides of the Atlantic. Article 5 of the treaty that created NATO establishes its core principle of collective defense," which commits member countries to defend each other if attacked.

sovereignty

supreme or absolute authority over a territory.

referendum

a vote, typically organized by a government, in which participants approve or reject a certain policy proposal. This is a form of direct democracy, in which citizens themselves (as opposed to elected representatives) make a policy decision.

refugee

defined by the UN Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, as someone who has fled conflict or persecution in their home country, has a reasonable fear that returning would be unsafe, and is protected by international law. In many countries, the term refugee also refers to someone who has sought and received asylum in a new country.

responsibility to protect (R2P)

a nonbinding norm holding that outside powers have a responsibility to intervene in response to a government's failure to protect its population from mass atrocities such as genocide, even though this violates the government's sovereignty.

sanction

a tool of statecraft, frequently involving economic measures such as asset freezes and trade restrictions, used to exact a certain behavior or outcome from another party.

Stuxnet

a U.S.-Israeli computer virus, discovered in 2010, that targeted Iran's nuclear weapons program. It was the first cyberattack to cause physical damage, and ended up infecting systems in more than 100 countries.

tribunal

a special court or body assigned to rule on a particular legal issue. Tribunals are often established by national governments or international organizations to try accused terrorists and war criminals.