

## What is a Mass Atrocity? The Security Council Defines

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The United Nations Security Council is divided on how to adjust veto powers and how many seats may be added to the council, for fear of sacrificing its reliability and productivity for representation. In order to avoid gridlock, the council deviated to discuss other ways to better enact their purpose instead.

It is worth to note at this point that any resolution the council passes cannot be revoked or undone, as it would threaten the reliability of the council. In enacting their purpose and still discussing ways to promote the productivity of the council, especially in times of need, the nations suggested that the veto power of the five permanent nations not be able to be invoked during a period of mass atrocity.

The Russian Federation (Russia) insisted that before such a decision be made, what constitutes a mass atrocity ought to be decided. At first, the United States of America (US) suggested that it be when the people of a nation do not have the resources they need to live, such as food, water, and shelter, or if weapons of mass destruction are used. However, Russia insisted both definitions were too vague, and that numbers be used to describe it, such as numbers of dead. Such a definition would not allow for some mass atrocities to be considered thus; under this definition the Holocaust would not be a mass atrocity.

The number dead was an idea, but “a mass genocide will happen in small countries” also, argues Russia. Quotas of dead may not be fair, as small nations’ total populations may not reach that million. The United Kingdom (UK) suggested instead that a per capita, or percentage of the population, number be used. This would not be fair to larger nations, as in China, for example, 1% of the nation would already make 15 million dead. Thus a number of dead would also be needed. A threshold of 100 thousand was agreed upon, in order to be most fair to both smaller and larger nations. Thereupon a discussion began between France and the US as to whether *both* numbers need to be met to constitute a mass atrocity, or just the smaller number for the nation need be met.

Veto powers are important to the permanent five nations, but the needs of those in a mass atrocity must be prioritized. But what actually constitutes a mass atrocity?

