

The Multilateral Impact of the United Nations on International Responsibilities Concerning War Crimes

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Multilateralism is one of the fundamental principles of the contemporary international order and one of the principal pillars of the activities of the United Nations. Nevertheless, political and structural transformations within the international system have challenged the effectiveness and legitimacy of multilateral mechanisms. The purpose of this study is to examine the concept of multilateralism within the framework of the United Nations, analyze its legal and institutional foundations, and evaluate the challenges and capacities of this approach in the contemporary international legal system. The research was conducted using a descriptive-analytical method based on the legal documents of the United Nations, the Charter of the United Nations, resolutions, and sources of international law. The structures and functions of the United Nations in achieving multilateral cooperation were examined. The findings indicate that the United Nations is the most significant institution for the realization of multilateralism at the global level and contributes to the development of cooperation among states through its principal organs and international treaties. However, challenges such as the imbalance of power within the United Nations Security Council, the rise of unilateralism, and transformations in the international system have affected the effectiveness of multilateralism. Despite these challenges, global issues continue to require multilateral mechanisms. Multilateralism remains an essential component of the international order and a necessary framework for managing global challenges. Strengthening and reforming the mechanisms of the United Nations can contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of this approach in the future.

Keywords: Multilateralism, United Nations, International Law, United Nations Security Council, International Order.

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1. Introduction

War crimes, as one of the gravest violations of international humanitarian law, have always challenged the conscience of the international community. The bitter experiences arising from armed conflicts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, from the world wars to contemporary internal and international conflicts, have shown that, without effective international mechanisms, holding the perpetrators of these crimes accountable faces serious

obstacles. For this reason, the international responsibilities of states and individuals concerning war crimes have become one of the central axes of contemporary international law. In this context, the United Nations, as the most important international multilateral institution, plays a key role in shaping, developing, and implementing these responsibilities. The United Nations was established after World War II with the aim of maintaining international peace and security, preventing the recurrence of human catastrophes, and promoting respect for human rights.



The *raison d'être* of this organization is founded on the principle of multilateralism (Aref Khalil et al., 2025).

This principle emphasizes collective cooperation among states, joint decision-making, and shared responsibility in the face of threats to global peace. In this sense, multilateralism is not merely a political approach but also a legal mechanism for managing international crises and confronting gross violations of international law, including war crimes. However, the extent to which this approach has succeeded in realizing international justice has always been a matter of debate and controversy (Malekizadeh, 2013; Nezhandimanesh, 2015).

International responsibility concerning war crimes has multiple dimensions. On the one hand, under the obligations arising from the Geneva Conventions and customary international law, states are required to prevent, prosecute, and punish the perpetrators of these crimes. On the other hand, the principle of individual criminal responsibility, particularly after the establishment of international criminal tribunals and the International Criminal Court, has acquired a prominent position in the international legal system. Within this framework, the United Nations plays an intermediary and decisive role between the will of states and the legal requirements of the international community, a role directly influenced by the multilateral structure of the organization. The reality is that United Nations multilateralism in practice simultaneously reflects the ideals of international law and the limitations of the global political system. While the documents and practices of this organization emphasize the absence of immunity for perpetrators of war crimes and the necessity of accountability, the implementation of these principles often encounters structural obstacles. This situation raises fundamental questions: Has United Nations multilateralism been able to strengthen international responsibilities concerning war crimes, or has it itself become a factor in delaying and weakening justice? To what extent has the role of great powers been decisive in this process, and is it possible to establish a balance between political considerations and legal requirements?

The importance of examining the impact of United Nations multilateralism on international responsibilities concerning war crimes lies in the fact that this issue stands at the intersection of international law and international politics. Analyzing the performance of the

United Nations without considering the logic of multilateralism would provide an incomplete picture of reality. On the other hand, a critical assessment of this approach can help identify weaknesses and propose solutions for improving the effectiveness of the international accountability system. Especially under conditions in which contemporary armed conflicts have become associated with new complexities such as non-state actors and proxy wars, the role of the United Nations and its multilateral methods has become more important than ever. The present study aims to analyze the impact of United Nations multilateralism on the formation and implementation of international responsibilities concerning war crimes. This study seeks, while conceptually explaining multilateralism and international responsibility, to examine the performance of the principal organs of the United Nations in this area and to assess its legal challenges and consequences. The main hypothesis of the study is based on the premise that, although United Nations multilateralism has provided the ground for the development of norms of international accountability, in practice it has faced serious limitations in the full realization of international justice because of political considerations. Examining this hypothesis can lead to a more precise understanding of the position of the United Nations in the system of international criminal law and the future of accountability concerning war crimes.

2. Literature Review

In the field of the theoretical foundations of war crimes and international responsibility, classical works on international humanitarian law have played an important role in shaping the conceptual framework of research. Antonio Cassese, by analyzing the evolution of international criminal law, emphasizes the transition from purely state responsibility to the recognition of individual criminal responsibility and regards this transformation as one of the principal achievements of the international community after World War II (Cassese, 2008). He highlights the role of the United Nations in strengthening this process, particularly through support for the establishment of international criminal tribunals. Similarly, William Schabas, with a focus on international criminal law, considers war crimes to be closely linked to multilateral mechanisms and argues that, without the institutional support of the

United Nations, the practical realization of criminal responsibility at the international level would face serious difficulty (Schabas, 2017). In the field of the international responsibility of states, the draft articles of the International Law Commission on the responsibility of states for internationally wrongful acts have served as the basis for many studies. James Crawford, in his detailed analysis of these draft articles, emphasizes the customary nature of many rules relating to responsibility and refers to the role of international organizations in the indirect implementation of these responsibilities (Crawford, 2013). Although Crawford does not directly address United Nations multilateralism concerning war crimes, his theoretical framework provides the basis for analyzing the role of this organization in exercising collective responsibility. Another part of the literature is devoted to the specific role of the United Nations in responding to war crimes. Hoffmann and Weissbrodt, in examining the performance of the Security Council, show that this body has played a decisive role in the international response to war crimes through the imposition of sanctions, the establishment of ad hoc criminal tribunals, and the referral of situations to the International Criminal Court, although this role has always been influenced by the political considerations of the permanent members of the Council (Hoffmann & Weissbrodt, 2016). These analyses clearly show that United Nations multilateralism in practice faces a duality between law and politics.

In the field of multilateralism and the legitimacy of United Nations decisions, the studies of John Ruggie are of particular importance. Ruggie defines multilateralism not merely as a mode of cooperation but as a social institution based on general principles of conduct that strengthens the legitimacy of international actions (Ruggie, 1992). However, later studies have shown that this legitimacy is severely weakened in relation to war crimes, especially when the Security Council becomes inactive because of the use of the veto (Thakur, 2016).

Regarding the relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, numerous studies have examined referrals of situations by the Security Council. Schabas emphasizes that although such referrals are a clear example of multilateralism, their selective nature has created double perceptions of international justice (Schabas, 2011). This view is consistent with the critical analyses of David Bosco, who

argues that the performance of the Security Council concerning the International Criminal Court reflects the balance of power in the international system more than it reflects a law-oriented approach (Bosco, 2014). In Persian-language literature, studies have also been conducted on the role of the United Nations in confronting war crimes and international responsibility; however, most of these works either focus on the descriptive aspects of United Nations documents or limit themselves to a general examination of state responsibility, while paying less attention to the critical analysis of multilateralism as a decision-making structure. This research gap is particularly evident in examining the impact of multilateralism on the effectiveness of international accountability concerning war crimes. A review of the literature shows that, although numerous works have separately addressed war crimes, international responsibility, and the role of the United Nations, a comprehensive and critical analysis of the impact of United Nations multilateralism on the realization of international responsibilities concerning these crimes still requires deeper research. The present study seeks to respond to this scholarly gap by integrating these fields.

3. Theoretical Foundations

3.1. *The Concept of Multilateralism in International Law*

Multilateralism, as one of the fundamental concepts in contemporary international law and international relations, refers to a form of cooperation among states that is formed on the basis of shared rules, institutions, and processes. This concept goes beyond mere cooperation among several states and emphasizes the existence of general principles of conduct, collective decision-making, and reciprocal obligations within an institutional framework. In international law, multilateralism is not only a political approach but also a legal mechanism for regulating the conduct of states and providing a collective response to transnational challenges, including threats to international peace and security. From a theoretical perspective, John Ruggie defines multilateralism as a social institution that operates on the basis of “generalized principles of conduct” and directs relations among states away from ad hoc and power-based interactions toward rule-based and predictable cooperation. This definition is especially

important in international law because it shows that multilateralism is not limited merely to the number of actors but depends on the quality of interactions and the degree of commitment to shared rules. Within this framework, international organizations, as institutional manifestations of multilateralism, play a central role in the formulation, interpretation, and implementation of rules of international law (Aref Khalil et al., 2025). In public international law, multilateralism is directly linked to the principle of international cooperation, a principle emphasized in the Charter of the United Nations and numerous international instruments. Article 1 of the United Nations Charter regards the maintenance of international peace and security as requiring collective action, and this constitutes the legal basis of multilateralism in the collective security system. Accordingly, the response to serious violations of international law, including war crimes, is not regarded as an individual duty but as a shared responsibility of the international community. Multilateralism in international law has both normative and institutional dimensions. Its normative dimension concerns the development of universal rules, such as the prohibition of war crimes and the obligation to prosecute perpetrators, while its institutional dimension is realized through organizations such as the United Nations, international courts, and monitoring mechanisms. These two dimensions, in interaction with each other, provide the basis for the formation of international responsibilities that operate beyond bilateral relations among states (Eslami & Abdi, 2016; Khalafrezaei, 2019). In the field of international criminal law in particular, multilateralism has played an important role in moving beyond the logic of immunity and the absolute sovereignty of states. Nevertheless, multilateralism in international law has always been accompanied by challenges. Critics of this approach believe that multilateral decision-making, especially within the framework of the United Nations, is often influenced by political considerations and the balance of power. The structure of the Security Council and the granting of veto power to its permanent members constitute a clear example of the institutional limitations of multilateralism, which can obstruct an effective response to war crimes. From this perspective, multilateralism sometimes becomes an instrument for legitimizing inaction or selective decisions (Momtaz &

Shayegan, 2014; Razavifard, 2015). In contrast, defenders of multilateralism emphasize that, despite its shortcomings, there is no realistic alternative to collective action in the international system. According to this view, even imperfect and politicized multilateral decisions are more legitimate than unilateral actions and provide greater capacity for the gradual development of international law. Within this framework, United Nations multilateralism is considered a platform for the formation of new customs, the strengthening of international accountability, and the reduction of immunity for perpetrators of war crimes.

3.2. The Concept of International Responsibility Concerning War Crimes

International responsibility concerning war crimes is one of the essential pillars of the contemporary international legal system and expresses the commitment of the international community to confront the gravest violations of international humanitarian law (Golshanpajouh, 2007). War crimes, as gross violations of peremptory norms of international law, affect not only the interests of states involved in conflict but also the fundamental values and interests of the international community. Therefore, responsibility arising from these crimes has acquired a nature beyond bilateral relations and can be analyzed within the framework of erga omnes and collective responsibilities (Aref Khalil et al., 2025). At the classical level of international law, international responsibility was primarily concerned with the responsibility of states for internationally wrongful acts. According to this approach, any act or omission attributable to a state that violates an international obligation entails the responsibility of that state. In the field of war crimes, states are required under the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols to respect and ensure respect for the rules of humanitarian law. Violation of these obligations entails the international responsibility of the offending state, which may be manifested in various forms, including compensation, restitution, or guarantees of non-repetition (Afzali, 2018; Ardabili, 2018; Golshanpajouh, 2019). However, the evolution of international law after World War II led to the expansion of the concept of international responsibility from the state level to the individual level. The recognition of individual criminal responsibility for war crimes constitutes a turning point

in moving beyond the traditional immunity of state and military actors. The Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals, followed by the international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, played an important role in consolidating the principle that the commission of war crimes, regardless of the official position of the perpetrator, entails criminal prosecution and punishment. This development fundamentally transformed the concept of international responsibility and turned it into one of the pillars of international criminal law (Momtaz & Shayegan, 2014; Razavifard, 2015).

International responsibility concerning war crimes is also closely linked to the concept of erga omnes obligations. The International Court of Justice, in its judgments, particularly in the Barcelona Traction case, emphasized that certain obligations, including obligations related to the protection of fundamental human values, are owed to the international community as a whole (Eslami & Abdi, 2016; Khalafrezaei, 2019). From this perspective, the prosecution and punishment of war crimes are not merely a right but also a duty for all states. This approach has paved the way for the acceptance of the principle of universal jurisdiction concerning war crimes, a principle that allows states, regardless of the place where the crime was committed or the nationality of the perpetrator and the victim, to adjudicate these crimes. At the institutional level, the International Criminal Court is recognized as the most important permanent institution for enforcing the criminal responsibility of individuals concerning war crimes. The Rome Statute of 1998 defines war crimes precisely and provides a legal framework for prosecuting perpetrators. However, the jurisdiction of the Court depends on state acceptance or referral by the Security Council, which highlights the connection between international responsibility and multilateral and political mechanisms. For this reason, the realization of criminal responsibility concerning war crimes always takes place through the interaction between legal rules and the institutional decisions of the United Nations. In addition to the responsibility of states and individuals, some writers have referred to the concept of the collective responsibility of the international community concerning war crimes. This concept is based on the idea that confronting war crimes requires coordinated and multilateral action by international institutions,

especially the United Nations. Within this framework, measures such as establishing commissions of inquiry, imposing sanctions, suspending diplomatic relations, or supporting international judicial mechanisms are regarded as manifestations of the exercise of collective responsibility. However, the absence of a precise and binding definition of collective responsibility has caused its implementation to be accompanied by ambiguity and inconsistency (Aref Khalil et al., 2025).

Discussion and Analysis

3.3. The Necessity of the Relationship between the Security Council and International Criminal Justice

What makes the relationship between the international institution of the Security Council and the realization of criminal justice at the international and transnational levels necessary is that today's world needs an international authority accepted by states, so that it can intervene in areas where justice or order in the domestic or international law of states has been violated. In some cases, local and domestic governments themselves are the subject of the violation of justice and order; therefore, there is a need for an institution capable of acting at the international level, first, one that enjoys global consensus among states, and second, one that possesses the instruments of response and, by being linked to the United Nations, of which the overwhelming majority of countries are members and whose governing conditions they acknowledge, can resolve the situation that has arisen (Hoffmann & Weissbrodt, 2016).

Examples of the Security Council's Role and Its Impact on the Creation of International Criminal Justice

In this section, by examining prominent cases in which the United Nations Security Council has played a role, the effects of the presence and manifestation of this international institution in resolving global problems and challenges against international criminal order and justice are examined. It is evident that the Security Council has so far been able to intervene in various international criminal cases and to realize stability and the restoration of order, or, in interaction with other international criminal institutions such as the International Criminal Court, has been able to play a role. Part of these activities can be discussed in relation to the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Libya, cases of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and even the realization of the theory of the responsibility to protect through

prevention or even resort to military action (Thakur, 2016).

3.4. Critiques of the Establishment of International Tribunals by the Security Council

Regarding the role of the Security Council in establishing international tribunals, one critique directed at the Security Council concerns deviation from the powers of this institution, because the establishment of special tribunals is not, in principle, within its competence. It appears that the Security Council has moved away from what was expected of it at the San Francisco Conference; this distance has emerged through a broad interpretation of the Council's competence by this organ itself and has led to a situation in which the Security Council appears not to be bound by any principle or rule, and the manner of determining its duty to maintain peace seems subject to the will of the Council without any limitation. What is certain is that, given the position of the great powers in this Council, the will of the Council in practice will also be subject to certain variables (Bosco, 2014). In other words, it must be said that nowhere in the Charter of the United Nations has such authority been granted to the Council. Therefore, when the Commission of Experts and other international institutions raised the issue of establishing an international tribunal, two views were put forward by jurists. One group of jurists, relying on the manner in which the Nuremberg Military Tribunal was established, believed that the tribunal for the former Yugoslavia should be established through a treaty. In contrast, another group, referring to the manner in which the Tokyo Tribunal was established by the unilateral decision of the Supreme Commander of the occupying forces in Japan, believed that the Security Council could, on behalf of the international community and by relying on Chapter VII of the Charter, establish the tribunal. The advantage of such action would be not only speed in its establishment but also the obligation of states to accept the jurisdiction and judgments of the tribunal. The Secretary-General of the United Nations supported the latter view and believed that the establishment of an international tribunal based on a treaty would be time-consuming and that there was a risk that the belligerent states might refuse to join such a treaty altogether. He recommended to the Security Council that, on the basis of its powers under Chapter VII to adopt the necessary

measures for restoring international peace and security, the Council itself should establish the international tribunal. For this reason, the competence of the Security Council in establishing these tribunals has always been criticized because of the absence of a legal procedure and the Security Council's departure from its lawful powers (Cassese, 2008).

The Role of the Security Council in Hybrid Tribunals

After playing a role in the tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and because of the criticisms that existed despite the positive and useful aspects of these tribunals, the Security Council became hesitant about creating similar tribunals for comparable international situations that undermined international security, justice, and criminal order. Eventually, because of internal conflicts in some weak states and their repeated requests to the United Nations for the re-establishment of criminal tribunals, the United Nations Security Council again performed its function. This time, however, in order to combat threats to international peace and security, instead of establishing a purely international tribunal, a new generation of criminal tribunals was established in cooperation with the victim state, incorporating a mixed composition of national and international elements. Thus, these courts, known as hybrid or internationalized tribunals, emerged as third-generation criminal forums in the struggle against impunity (Schabas, 2011).

3.5. The Role of the Security Council in Realizing the Theory of the Responsibility to Protect

The theory of the responsibility to protect is based on two principles: first, the sovereignty of a state means the responsibility of that state, and the primary responsibility to protect the nationals of a state lies, in the first instance, with that state; second, when the people of a country suffer serious harm as a result of civil war, insurgency, repression, or governmental failure, and the state is unwilling or unable to prevent or remedy such harm, the principle of non-intervention gives way to the international responsibility to protect. At the core of the theory of the responsibility to protect, three principal responsibilities are embedded: the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to react, and the responsibility to rebuild. In fact, military intervention is not the only possible solution within the framework of the responsibility to react, and each of

these three responsibilities is applied at specific points in time and with specific objectives (Thakur, 2016). In other words, the responsibility to protect includes three specific responsibilities. Preventive measures aimed at preventing the direct causes of crises may include actions such as placing a state in political isolation or taking political and economic measures in the form of sanctions, suspending membership in international organizations, or naming a country as a violator of human rights. It should be noted that one of the important capacities of the responsibility to prevent is that this responsibility is based on Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides solutions such as negotiation, inquiry, conciliation, judicial settlement, and arbitration for preventing conflicts and resolving them peacefully. In principle, this type of responsibility includes sanctions, political and diplomatic pressure, and other coercive measures. The report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty considers the fulfillment of three conditions necessary for effective prevention (Thakur, 2016). First of all, there must be awareness of the fragility of the situation and the risks associated with it, which is referred to as “early warning.” Second, there must be a correct understanding of the policy measures capable of changing the situation, which the Commission calls the “preventive toolbox.” Finally, as always, there must be the will to use these measures, which is referred to as “political will” (Thakur, 2016).

After all preventive measures have failed, the implementation of the responsibility to prevent by the international community gives way to the responsibility to react. The responsibility to react itself takes place in two stages and through two different sets of executive measures aimed at controlling and stopping serious and widespread violations of human rights. In the first stage, in implementing the responsibility to react, measures must be taken that do not have a military character, meaning that before using any military option, a set of economic, political, security-related, legal, and even social and cultural measures must be implemented in order to compel the state concerned to stop crimes against human rights and humanitarian law (Hoffmann & Weissbrodt, 2016).

Such measures include embargoes on military equipment and components, termination of military cooperation and training, financial sanctions against

foreign assets, the creation of no-fly zones, restrictions on diplomatic representations, travel restrictions on specific leaders and their family members, suspension of membership in international and regional organizations, rejection of applications for admission to international and regional organizations, and suspension of cultural and sporting exchanges (Hoffmann & Weissbrodt, 2016). Then, if less coercive measures fail in the first stage of the responsibility to react, and in cases where it is proven that preventive and non-military reactive measures are insufficient to resolve the matter, and the loss of many lives appears highly probable if these crimes occur, and the situation is so widespread and severe that it affects the conscience of humanity, the implementation of the responsibility to protect by the international community will, in exceptional cases, turn toward the use of military force. The organ responsible for authorizing the exercise of the military responsibility to react is the United Nations Security Council. It is true that, with regard to the Security Council as a political-security institution, it is desirable that it not be detached from ethical considerations in its decision-making. However, with respect to the structure and legal nature of the existing collective security system, no one has claimed, nor does anyone claim, that it necessarily conforms to the criterion of justice in its moral sense, because the assumption of the collective security system contained in the Charter of the United Nations is the preservation of the status quo or the state of peace whose nature and scope have been agreed upon by the superior powers. In any event, although the Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter and inspired by the right of humanitarian intervention, it was only in Resolution 1674, adopted in 2006, that it explicitly referred to the theory of the responsibility to protect (Thakur, 2016). If the Council fails to perform its duties because of the structure of the Charter, especially the existence of the veto power for its five permanent members, the General Assembly may convene an emergency special session based on the “Uniting for Peace” procedure. Regional organizations will also have competence to address such matters under Chapter VIII of the Charter, provided that they have previously sought authorization from the Council. It should also be noted that the “responsibility to react” arises in circumstances requiring the protection of human beings when preventive measures have failed, conflicts have begun,

the occurrence of grave human atrocities has become probable, and the target state is unwilling or unable to take steps to remedy the existing situation. At that point, the international community has no option but to react, because neglect and failure would be equivalent to the recurrence of the tragedies that occurred in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and many other places (Thakur, 2016).

4. Analysis of Findings

Through the General Assembly, the Security Council, and its other bodies, the United Nations has played a central role in developing and promoting international norms in the fields of human rights and war crimes. The Geneva Conventions, the Statute of the International Criminal Court, and numerous Security Council resolutions are examples of these efforts. These norms have provided a legal framework for identifying and punishing war crimes. The International Criminal Court, as the most important international judicial mechanism for addressing war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, is a product of United Nations multilateralism. Although the International Criminal Court has faced criticisms, which will be discussed below, it has played an important role in accountability for war crimes and in punishing those responsible for them. Through the deployment of peacekeeping forces in war-affected areas and support for transitional justice processes, the United Nations has helped strengthen the rule of law and accountability in these areas. These measures can help prevent the recurrence of war crimes and create sustainable peace. Specialized agencies affiliated with the United Nations, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the International Organization for Migration, play an important role in documenting war crimes, providing humanitarian assistance to victims, and supporting the rights of refugees and displaced persons. Despite its challenges and limitations, United Nations multilateralism has played an important role in advancing international responsibilities concerning war crimes. However, to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in this area, fundamental reforms are needed in its structure and performance, including limiting the veto power in the Security Council, increasing financial and human resources, and

strengthening cooperation with civil society and other international actors. It is also necessary for the United Nations to pay attention to new developments, such as the concept of the responsibility to protect and the use of new technologies, and to employ them in preventing and responding to war crimes.

5. Conclusion

Multilateralism, as one of the fundamental principles of the contemporary international legal and political order, has played an essential role in shaping the structure and function of the United Nations. By examining the theoretical foundations and practical developments of multilateralism within the framework of the United Nations, the present study showed that this concept is not merely a political approach but also a legal and institutional principle for regulating relations among states and ensuring collective cooperation in the international arena. Since its establishment, the United Nations has been founded on the idea of multilateral cooperation, and its purpose has been to create a mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes, the maintenance of international peace and security, and the promotion of cooperation in economic, social, and human rights fields. The findings of the study indicate that multilateralism in the United Nations can be analyzed from two structural and functional dimensions. From the structural perspective, the principal organs of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and specialized agencies, represent multilateral mechanisms for the participation of states in global decision-making. This structure has made possible the relative participation of states in decision-making processes and has provided a platform for the formation of rules and norms of international law. From the functional perspective, the United Nations, through treaties, resolutions, cooperation programs, and peacekeeping operations, has acted as a center for realizing multilateral cooperation in various fields.

However, the study showed that United Nations multilateralism also faces serious challenges. One of the most important of these challenges is the imbalance of power in the decision-making structure, especially in the Security Council. The veto power of the permanent members of the Security Council has, in many cases, prevented collective decision-making and the effective

implementation of the principles of multilateralism. This situation shows that, although the United Nations was established as a multilateral institution, in practice it is influenced by power considerations and the political interests of major states. This can weaken the legitimacy and effectiveness of multilateral mechanisms and lead some states to distrust the functions of the organization. On the other hand, transformations in the international system in recent decades, including the emergence of non-state actors, the rise of unilateralism by some powers, and the formation of regional coalitions, have affected the status of multilateralism in the United Nations. These developments show that multilateralism is no longer limited merely to interaction among states and requires redefinition within a broader framework that includes regional organizations, international institutions, and even global civil society. Under such circumstances, the United Nations must be able to strengthen its coordinating role and provide mechanisms for broader participation.

The study also showed that, despite its challenges, multilateralism remains one of the most effective instruments for managing global issues. Issues such as climate change, international security, human rights, sustainable development, and responses to humanitarian crises require collective cooperation among states and international institutions. In this regard, the United Nations remains the most important institutional framework for coordinating international action. Global multilateral agreements, such as environmental treaties and human rights instruments, demonstrate the capacity of this organization to create shared norms and strengthen international cooperation. From a legal perspective, multilateralism in the United Nations has contributed to the formation of rules and principles of international law. General Assembly resolutions, international treaties, and the practices of United Nations bodies have played an important role in the gradual development of international law. This process shows that the United Nations is not only a political institution but also a legal actor in shaping the international legal system. However, the effective implementation of these rules still depends on the political will of states, and the absence of enforcement guarantees in some cases can reduce their effectiveness. Overall, the findings of the study indicate that the future of multilateralism in the United Nations depends on the

ability of this institution to reform its structures and increase its effectiveness. Strengthening the role of the General Assembly, reforming Security Council mechanisms, increasing transparency, and ensuring broader participation by states and international actors can help enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of multilateralism. In addition, recognizing the new realities of the international system and adapting to its transformations are essential conditions for the continuation of the United Nations' role as the axis of global cooperation. Ultimately, it can be concluded that multilateralism remains the main pillar of the international legal and political order, and the United Nations is the most important institutional platform for its realization. Although this principle faces challenges, there is no effective alternative to it in managing global issues. Strengthening multilateral mechanisms and reforming the structures of the United Nations can provide the basis for more effective cooperation among states and the maintenance of international peace and security in the future.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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