



# History of the United Nations

## Prior to the UN

Prior to the establishment of the United Nations, the League of Nations existed as the premier organisation for international cooperation. Established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations was established to ensure international peace, security and cooperation between nations following the First World War. At its height, the League of Nations had 58 members. In the 1930s, its success waned as the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) gained influence, eventually leading to the start of World War II in 1939.

## Founding of the United Nations

The name “United Nations,” coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was first used in the “Declaration by United Nations” of 1 January 1942, during the Second World War, when representatives of 26 nations pledged their Governments to continue fighting together against the Axis powers. The UN was founded following the Second World War, in 1945 when the Nations were drafted at the UN Conference on International Organisation in San Francisco, California. The Charter is the constituting instrument of the UN, setting out the rights and obligations of member states, and establishing the United Nations organs and - procedures. 50 nations and several non-governmental organisations attended and signed the Charter, committing to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights. The UN officially came into existence on October 24, 1945 after ratification of the Charter. The day is now celebrated each year around the world as United Nations Day.

## **The Aims of the United Nations**

- To keep peace throughout the world
- To develop friendly relations between nations
- To help nations work together to improve the lives of poor people, to conquer hunger, disease, illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other’s rights and freedoms
- To be a centre for helping nations achieve these aims

## **The Principles of the United Nations:**

- All Member States have sovereign equality
- All Member States must obey the Charter
- Countries must try to settle their differences by peaceful means
- Countries must avoid using force or threatening to use force
- The UN may not interfere in the domestic affairs of any country
- Countries should try to assist the United Nations

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