

## The United Nations and global power politics

Professor Dr. DDr. h. c. Hans Köchler addresses

'World Forum on the Future of Democracy, Tech and Humankind'

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Addressing the World Forum on the Future of Democracy, Tech and Humankind, organized by the *Cinema for Peace Foundation* in Berlin, Germany, Dr *Hans Köchler*, President of the *International Progress Organization*, earlier today said that an honest review of the United Nations Charter is long overdue. The paralysis of the world organization in virtually all major crises of international security since its foundation is not just the fault of individual UN member states, particularly the permanent members of the Security Council. The UN Charter itself encourages international lawlessness. Its Article 27 allows the Council's members to vote on coercive measures, including the use of force, even in situations where they are party to a dispute. Thus, in decisions of the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, the fundamental legal principle "*nemo iudex in causa sua*" does not apply. The veto-wielding permanent members and their allies enjoy virtual impunity for their acts of aggression. This means that the United Nations Charter does not meet the most

basic requirement of the rule of law, and the UN is unable to fulfill its mandate, namely to enforce the prohibition on the use of force between states.

Speaking via video link from the Republic of Cape Verde, Dr. Köchler further emphasized that talk about UN reform makes no sense if one does not address this major issue of international democracy and the rule of law. He recalled the poignant critique by the delegate of Mexico at the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco, in 1945. In the session about the drafting of the UN Charter, the Mexican representative said that with the adoption of voting provisions that favor the Council's permanent members one would establish an international system "in which a mouse could be condemned but in which lions would not be restricted." History since 1945 has proven the Mexican delegate right. Never has a permanent member been held to account for acts of aggression. Thus, because Article 108 conditions any amendment of the Charter on the consent of the permanent members, reform of the United Nations will remain elusive. Change may only come

when the global power balance shifts away from today's permanent members, Dr. Köchler explained.

Among the speakers of the special panel on "The United Nations' Responsibility to Protect & Reform of the UN Security Council" were Mr *Alex Salmond*, former First Minister of Scotland; Mr *Hans Corell* (Sweden), former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for Legal Affairs; Professor *Jennifer Welsh* (Canada), Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General for the Responsibility to Protect; Ms *Melissa Parke*, Executive Director of *ICAN – The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*, former Australian Minister for International Development; and Mr *Ivan Šimonović*, Assistant-Secretary-General of the United Nations for Human Rights.

In September 2024, the *International Progress Organization* will convene a special roundtable consultation in Istanbul, Türkiye, on "Sovereignty and Coercion: The United Nations in the Web of Power Politics."

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