

Security Workshop





WORKSHOP

An introduction to security: What does security mean to me?

AIMS

- › Reflect on the concept of security at both personal and global levels and explore their connection.
- › To create a deeper understanding of the concept, stakeholders and policy fields of security policy through the use of physical activity and independent research.
- › To change the perception that global security is something out of the individual's control and that through small actions they can have an impact on the security around them.

MATERIAL NEEDED

- › Blank sheets of A4 paper (coloured if desired)
- › Pens, markers or coloured pencils
- › Printable images for collage making
- › Optional: additional magazines or newspapers for collage
- › Glue sticks (ideally one for each individual or as close as you can get)
- › Scissors (ideally one for each individual or as close as you can get)

Educators might be advised to ask participants to bring their own glue and scissors if resources are limited.

ROOM

Ideally a separate room/corner of the room (if workshops are held in parallel)

TIME

45–80 minutes

NOTICE

I would encourage any educator conducting this workshop to read it fully beforehand and to take note of the materials needed. If possible, consider looking out for free magazines and pamphlets in the days leading up to the workshop so that there is adequate material for scrapbooking.

INSTRUCTIONS

In this workshop, participants will be given the opportunity to reflect on their own sense of security, what it means to them and what threatens it. This will then be translated into an understanding of security policy, global issues and finding the links between themselves and the conflicts they face around them. With this, it hopes to promote a stronger sense of power in influencing security around them. Security takes different forms and is achieved through different methods. Sometimes the translating of a personal connection into something tangible can feel lost and unachievable. Through the use of zines and vision-boarding, participants are invited to create a booklet which represents how they view security and its relation to the world around them. With this they then explore wider themes of global, national and communal security, learning about the different factors of security policy and how they impact them as individuals. Security is understood differently by each individual and this workshop acts to answer the question: What is my relation to security and how can I play a role in contributing to security as an active young citizen? In this workshop, security is understood as the absence of threats to people or communities, including freedom from fear and from basic needs going unmet. While security has traditionally focused on states, today it also covers human security and emerging risks such as pandemics or climate change. For further definitions see the glossary on page 10.



GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP

DURATION		MODULE	DESCRIPTION
SHORT	LONG		
5 min	5 min	Module 0 Introduction	<p>Goal: To set the tone of the workshop and evoke initial thoughts regarding the objective of the workshop.</p> <p>Activity: Outlining the content of the workshop alongside the themes present. Specifically, establishing and translating the participants' relationship to security.</p> <p>Tools: –</p>
10 min	10 min	Module 1 Zine making	<p>Goal: To make the structure of a “notebook/zine” unique to each participant, establishing ownership.</p> <p>Activity: Folding paper into zines</p> <p>Tools: A blank A4 paper/pp, instructional video</p>
10 min	25 min	Module 2 An introduction to security	<p>Goal: To lay the foundation of perceived security. Primarily what are the initial impressions towards and personal experiences with security.</p> <p>Activity: Designing the cover of each participant's zine. “Branding” the zine as the introduction to their relationship with security.</p> <p>Tools: Zine made previously, magazines, pens, glue, PDF image cutouts.</p>
<i>Module 2.1 is removed for the short version of the workshop</i>		Module 2.1 An introduction to security continued	<p>Goal: Deep-diving into different perspectives on security and visualising the core concepts, threats and impressions.</p> <p>Activity: Decorating page 1-2 of the participant's zine through guided questions surrounding personal impressions towards security.</p> <p>Tools: First open spread of the zine, magazines, pens, glue, PDF image cutouts.</p>
15 min	20 min	Module 3 Exploring global security	<p>Goal: To explore different types of global security and their basic terms. Additionally, to encourage self-research in the field the participants deem important.</p> <p>Activity: Grouping participants into varying security aspects and discussing the elements within these aspects in relation to their own impressions of security. Through this they are asked to make a presentation of their findings.</p> <p>Tools: First open spread of the zine, magazines, pens, glue, PDF image cutouts, access to internet for knowledge building.</p>
20 min	20 min	Presentation	<p>Goal: To share their findings and perceptions of global security related topics. Focusing on how these topics are relevant to their context.</p> <p>Activity: Presenting their findings to the wider group.</p> <p>Tools: Presentation slides made on zine pages, space to present to the whole group.</p>



MODULE 0

DISCLAIMER AND OUTLINE OF THE WORKSHOP

Before engaging with the workshop, mention to the participants how this workshop will highlight general views on security and how they correlate to the context and world around them. The purpose of the workshop is not to highlight specific global threats, but to guide participants into recognising which global threats are of most significance to them. For this reason, no participant should be forced to share if they do not feel comfortable. The first half of the workshop has a focus on establishing self-security, what it means to them as individuals and what “being secure” means to them. The short version of this workshop only has the participants “brand” their zine, essentially creating a cover highlighting the same topics. The second half focuses on translating this personal understanding of security to a broader sense of global security policy and the world around them. In a group exercise the participants will reflect on how their work in the zine relate to the different aspects of global security and discuss which aspects currently affect them personally (and which ones do not). Through the pre-established notion of individual security, participants reflect on global security topics through the lens of individual security. This translation includes guided questions on how to structure the research.

The means of doing this will be through the creation of a “zine” which is a singular piece of paper folded in a way to create a booklet. Everyone will make their own booklet and will decorate and create it in a way that is unique to them and represents their connection to security.

MODULE 1

ZINE MAKING

<https://understanding-europe.org/en/education/educational-material/workshop-security/>

Facilitators hand out a blank piece of A4 paper to each participant. Following the video provided, participants will fold their own piece of paper into a booklet with defined pages. Whilst participants are folding their zines, facilitators should start laying out the various pictures, magazines, coloured markers and any other various craft materials, evenly in front of the participants. It is advised to have participants sit in a large circle with all materials in the middle, giving each participant equal access to all supplies.



MODULE 2

AN INTRODUCTION TO SECURITY

NOTE

The picture they choose does not have to be a physical body or someone who looks like them. To encourage more abstract thinking, try asking questions like:

- *What shape and colour is security?*
- *Where is security located on the page?*
- *What density of colour is security?*

Participants are invited to visualise what in their experience best represents security on the “cover” of their zine. Using any of the materials provided, participants will answer questions regarding their own take on security, how they view it and what characteristics security has to them. Firstly, invite participants to respond to the prompt:

● **In one word or a short phrase, describe security.**

Each participant will write their answer onto the “cover” of their zine using coloured markers and pencils. Participants are invited to share what phrase or word they have chosen; however, it should be emphasized that not everyone has to share if they are not comfortable.

Next, on the cover of their zine using the magazines and images provided, participants will be invited to choose an image that best represents their understanding of security. Before using the materials, invite participants to discuss their understanding with the person next to them (make a group of three if there is an odd number). After discussing it with their partner, ask them to highlight any images or specific things that they envision that represents their answer. Once each pairing has an understanding of what they and their partner are looking for, invite them to use the materials to find their chosen imagery.

Encourage participants to keep an eye out for the imagery that both they and their partner were looking for. This way, participants are introduced to different lenses of security and assist in the visualisation of it with the person next to them. Using their idea of an image as a way for them to “brand” the zine as something unique to them.

Within the time slot, participants can continue to decorate the cover of their zine as they wish.

Again, participants are invited to share if they feel comfortable.



MODULE 2.1

AN INTRODUCTION TO SECURITY CONTINUED

(only for long version)

Participants are invited to answer guided question on the first page of their zine using any of the materials provided e.g. collaging, coloured markers. The intention here is for participants to create a vision board across a page in their zine that translates their perception of security and highlights the security issues that feel most pressing to them.

Guided questions:

- What global conflict matters most to you right now?
- What around you brings security?
- What causes a loss of security in your environment?

Before exploring their answer, invite participants to discuss with the person next to them in the same manner as the previous module. If possible, encourage participants to discuss their answer with someone different.

Before starting module 3, the educator may want to introduce some aspects of security to the participants. These can be found in the glossary at the end of the document. The educator may either present the contents of the glossary to the participants or create handouts. With the former, the educator should keep track of time and would be advised to shorten the allotted time for module 3.

MODULE 3

EXPLORING GLOBAL SECURITY

For the next page of the zine, participants are separated into groups (one group for short version) to discuss a global security topic and present it to the other groups. Not every topic is expected to be discussed and groups of 3–5 participants are encouraged. Below are three different examples of global security alongside an overview of what they cover:

1 Geopolitical security and international power relations

Geopolitical security focuses on how states pursue power, influence, and strategic advantage in a constantly evolving international system. Current international security politics use a range of tactics to both threaten and restore global security. These can range from physical military power to economic sanctions and diplomatic strategies. For the European Union these questions are even more complex, as they concern both the state and the union.

Looking at security in relation to the military is an important way of understanding security, where the main focus is on protecting the state and the livelihoods of its citizens against aggression. There are different concepts that define the role of the military, ranging from the mere military protection of the state, to highlighting its



role in international peace and stability as well as protecting human lives – even outside of conflicts – and creating the circumstances for secure livelihoods. Traditional security studies usually focus on military aspects of armed conflict and defence, examining topics such as the causes and effects of wars (both interstate and intrastate), terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs, i.e. nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons).

Another central aspect to geopolitics are economic and diplomatic tools, including sanctions, trade restrictions, coalition building and multilateral negotiations. These tools are either imposed by individual countries or collectively by international bodies and used to influence the behaviour of states, groups, or individuals. An example of this is the sanctions imposed on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. They are used to influence the behaviour of a state, group, or individuals and either imposed by individual countries or collectively by international bodies.

Alongside traditional security topics, new areas such as cybersecurity have become important fields of competition between states and other actors, where both defensive and offensive tactics, like the cyberattacks targeting Ukraine's critical infrastructure, are used. These various forms of state action, whether through diplomacy or cyber operations, often influence foreign governments indirectly by trying to shape or manipulate their decisions and actions.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, growing tensions between global power blocs, and the return of hard security politics are confronting Europe with fundamental questions. Ongoing discussions about burden-sharing within NATO and differing approaches toward China global trade regulation have shown that Europe can no longer take unwavering U.S. support for granted and highlight the need for Europe to reassess and discuss how to move forward with European foreign and defence politics.

2 Economic security and trade conflicts

Economic interdependence, once seen as a path to peace, is increasingly being weaponized through trade wars, sanctions, and technological rivalry, reshaping global security and challenging traditional assumptions about the relationship between markets and power.

Trade wars involve states imposing tariffs and imposing other trade barriers on each other, typically in response to perceived unfair trade practices. While often viewed as a form of extreme protectionism, prolonged trade wars can significantly impact global supply chains, market stability, and international investment flows. A notable example is the U.S.–China trade war, during which successive rounds of tariffs affected hundreds of billions of dollars in goods, influencing global commodity prices and business strategies.

Trade wars can also indirectly affect geopolitical relations by



fostering regional protectionism and strategic decoupling. As tensions rise, states may seek to diversify alliances and supply sources, promoting economic independence but potentially undermining multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Another dimension of global conflict is resource wars. These are conflicts driven by competition over scarce natural resources. These can directly influence geopolitical tensions and global security. The nature of such conflicts often reflects the strategic priorities or ideologies of the actors involved. For instance, the global push for a green transition reduces dependency on fossil fuels but heightens demand for critical minerals such as lithium and cobalt, as well as water.

An example of a past resource-driven conflict is the Sierra Leone Civil War, where control over diamond resources played a central role in funding the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). This illustrates how natural resources located in key regions can become flashpoints in broader geopolitical struggles.

3 Environmental and Climate Security

As climate change intensifies natural disasters and resource scarcity, governments and institutions are increasingly framing environmental and humanitarian crises as security threats – a process known as securitisation – with significant implications for both national and international stability. Food insecurity, for example, is not only driven by environmental shocks like droughts but is often shaped by political decisions about access, distribution, and control. In some conflict zones, hunger has even been weaponised, with deliberate starvation used as a tactic of war.

Similarly, health crises can destabilise societies and erode state legitimacy, particularly where healthcare systems are already fragile due to conflict or underinvestment. The securitisation of diseases such as HIV/AIDS or COVID-19 has led to the treatment of public health threats as national security issues, prompting military-style responses and international coordination. At the same time, strong health infrastructure can act as a foundation for resilience, recovery, and peacebuilding.

Disasters, both natural and man-made, now claim more lives annually than armed conflict, yet they are still often excluded from traditional security agendas. Many of these events, especially industrial accidents or infrastructure failures, are not just natural occurrences but reflect political neglect or mismanagement. As disaster frequency and severity increase due to climate change, states are using disaster relief strategically in foreign policy, while militarised disaster response is becoming more common. Understanding these dynamics requires examining how preparedness, response, and recovery connect with broader concerns around sovereignty, legitimacy, and global cooperation.

NOTE

Depending on the number of participants, try and aim for groups of 3–5. For larger groups you might want to increase the number of breakout groups.

Allow participants to choose two topics they would like to discuss. The intention here is to establish what the participants consider important to security. By allowing them to choose they instinctively highlight which area of global security they are most interested in.

When in their groups, participants will work together to create an overview of their global security topic, taking into account individual perceptions of security. Participants will use a blank page in their zine to cover one aspect of the topic. If possible, ask participants to create a unifying factor that flows through all zines in their group; this could be a colour palette or symbol. To add more structure to the self-conducted research, this unifying element can be a collective real-life situation (a news article, event etc.) for which they base their aspect creating this unifying element gives the global security issue a sense of identity to all participants, alongside creating a sense of unity amongst group members. Participants should also keep in mind their connection to the topic when conducting research. Consider questions such as: How does this aspect of the topic affect me? What was new to me about this topic? How can I create impact within this topic?

Examples of the different aspects of security are:

- **Causes**
- **Consequences**
- **Actors**
- Examples of real-life situations
- Definitions

Participants are invited to use their phones to self-teach an aspect of security; they should prepare themselves to “become experts” in this aspect. The slides they prepare for the presentation can be as thorough or abstract as the participants see fit. Participants should be reminded to research their given topic so that they are able to present. This portion benefits from primarily writing on the zines; however, participants can use all materials previously provided.

NOTE

Not all aspects have to be covered, try to prioritise those bolded in the list above.





PRESENTATION

The groups present their findings and slides to the other groups (one presentation per group). After each presentation the floor should be opened to any questions or comments . This could also be space for any additional knowledge sharing from other groups. (The short version will only have 1 group which will present their findings to each other in varying aspects.) The purpose of the presentation is to briefly share what has been learned, without going into detail. In order for the presentations to be engaging, they are encouraged to include interactive elements as well as to choose at least one case study. The goal is to engage participants, hold their attention, ignite curiosity and make the topic accessible and relevant.

→ **Find the materials for this workshop [here](#)**



GLOSSARY

SECURITY . WORKSHOP

WHAT IS SECURITY?

Security is normally defined as an absence of threats to a certain object, for example the absence of threats to a person.

Traditionally within international politics, policymakers have focused on the security of the state, primarily secured by military forces and military action. In 1994, this changed when the UNDP Human Development Report brought another type of security to the forefront of security politics: human security. Human security is defined as humans living in freedom from fear and freedom from want. In order to reach human security, much more is necessary – a person not only being free from foreign intervention, for example, but being provided with enough food and not facing domestic violence.

Today, a large number of phenomena are connected to security politics. Pandemics, for example, have in recent years been identified as a security risk, as has climate change. Framing new topics as part of security politics is called “securitisation”. Experts have warned that by securitising topics, dangers for complex democratic processes that often take more time to include many perspectives and form compromises may arise. It is important to question whether newly identified security issues are, indeed, threats to security (e.g. aspects of climate change as security issues) or only being framed as such even though they do not present immediate security threats (as e.g. in many debates on migration).

WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

When talking about violence, we often mean direct, physical violence, using force with the intention of harming, hurting, or killing somebody else. In addition to this direct violence, Johan Galtung, a peace researcher, has identified another type of violence: structural violence. He argues that violence doesn't only come from individuals, but also from social structures or social institutions. One example is colonial violence, which, besides its personal and direct nature involving acts of physical violence, also had an indirect dimension that harmed and killed as much as direct violence. This is also true for present-day forms of structural discrimination (e.g. based on gender, sexuality, or race).

WHAT IS PEACE?

Just as with security and violence, there are several concepts of what peace is. Most commonly, peace is defined as the absence of violence. The absence of direct violence is called “negative peace” – there is no direct, physical harm. The absence of direct and structural violence is called positive peace. “Positive” means that there is not only the absence of direct violence, but more than that – if structural violence is absent, people will be able to live a fulfilled life and realise their hopes and dreams. Today, most organisations such as the UN strive for positive peace, not just the absence of direct violence.

WHAT ARE ARMED CONFLICTS? IS

THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WAR AND ARMED CONFLICT?

Conflicts in their most basic sense are interactions of at least two actors that have incompatible preferences or positions. Incompatibility means that their wishes or positions cannot be aligned without one actor making a compromise or changing its position – they cannot both be realised at the same time. Conflicts as such are normal to society and important in democracies. But if they are fought using violence, they become problematic.

Armed conflicts are conflicts in which actors use or threaten the use of violence to influence a situation. For further terms that are often used in the context of armed conflict, see this glossary of the European parliament.

Not every armed conflict is a war. In international law, a war takes place between two states. If non-state actors are involved, this is defined as an internal or internationalised armed conflict. Different rules of international law apply to wars and armed conflicts. Aside from this legal perspective, wars are often defined as armed conflict with high intensity. The most common definition of war says that they are armed conflicts with at least 1000 killed combatants per year (simplified, combatants are soldiers). Others such as the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) do not set an arbitrary number of people killed, but define wars as being part of a spectrum of armed conflict types.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE UN PLAY IN MAINTAINING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY?

According to the Charter of the United Nations (UN), the founding document of the UN, the UN has the primary responsibility for international peace and security. This means that the UN is one of the most important actors responsible for preventing and addressing armed conflict and other threats to international peace.

Within international relations, the use of force is prohibited. States are supposed to settle conflicts with peaceful means such as diplomacy. There are only two cases in which the use of force is allowed: If a state is attacked and needs to defend itself (self-defence) or if the Security Council of the United Nations (UNSC) allows for the use of force.

WHAT CAN INTERNATIONAL COURTS DO IF LEADERS OR STATES TAKE ACTION THAT GOES AGAINST INTERNATIONAL LAW?

If international law is violated, state and non-state actors can condemn this openly or try to negotiate a situation in which this law is again respected. In addition, courts can be used to find out whether international law was violated and, if so, can pass judgement on states and individual people.

The court that is responsible for states is the International Court of Justice (ICJ). It is part of the UN-system; its independent judges are elected by the UN General Assembly and the UNSC. The ICJ has the task of clarifying legal disputes brought

before it by states and of issuing expert opinions in accordance with international law.

The court responsible for an individual's actions is the International Criminal Court (ICC). It was founded in 1998 and is not part of the UN-system, which is why not all UN-members are part of the ICC (e.g. the US). The ICC may adjudicate (which means passing judgement) on certain crimes that were committed on the territory of member states or by their citizens. It includes four types of crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression. More information on these crimes and the ICC can be found on its [website](#).

WHICH REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS ARE INVOLVED IN KEEPING PEACE?

Next to the Security Council of the United Nations (UNSC), regional organisations are important in keeping international peace and reacting to breaches of peace or threats to it. The UN-Charter explicitly states that the UNSC and these regional organisations are supposed to work together (chapter 8). Not all organisations focus only on security politics; some work on way more topics than that, such as the EU, and some are not clearly mandated to work on security politics, but need to do so due to political realities, such as the Arctic Council. Some regional organisations include the following ones (in alphabetical order).

- Arctic Council
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- African Union (AU)

- Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
- European Union (EU)
- League of Arab States
- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)
- Organisation of American States (OAS)
- Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Sources

- https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu_en
- <https://youtu.be/9KAVzsaqj1U>

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