

**The United Nations in 21st
Century (Dilemmas in World
Politics) by Karen A. Mingst,
Margaret P. Karns and Alynna
J. Lyon**

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Ayesha Masood¹

The United Nations in the 21st century: Dilemmas in World Politics is a noteworthy book on the world's leading international organization and international relations which provides a comprehensive introduction of the United Nations (UN), its functions and its role in the promotion of peace and stability. and the book has a lot to offer in terms of the United Nations in the broader context of global politics; reflecting mainly on its history, challenges, and reforms, etc. The book offers an in-depth account concerning the functions of the United Nations i.e. how the UN works and also sheds light on the numerous challenges faced by the organization in the present century. From terrorism to piracy and from evolved threats to human security such as cybercrimes to climate change and global warming, the authors in the book accord due importance to the new players on the international scene.

The authors Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karns delve into investigating and deeply analyzing the resources available to the organization for the pursuit of its responsibilities. In addition, the primary aim of the book is to look at the past failures of the UN and prescribe how reforms should be made to overcome the mistakes from the past from happening again and also to predict viable futuristic approaches envisaged to facilitate smooth functioning of the organization.

The book is an inviting read as it takes a multidisciplinary approach diving into the history of the UN since its formation. The book is divided into chapters that reflect on the history of the United Nations and statistical knowledge by analysis, diagrams, and charts that expose the UN to its very core- facilitating a deeper cognizance about the functioning of the organization. The dedicated focus within the book aiming to explore various dimensions of the international organization with a broader perspective of international relations makes it even more intriguing of a read. The book addresses the issues and challenges that the UN has faced since its inception starting from cultural practices to climate change advances and various other affairs related to equality. The role of powerful countries in the world has also been discussed within the book chapters, in particular in terms of exploring the avenues which shall enhance the role of these countries in bringing peace and stability to the world by meaningfully contributing to the UN.

Generally, the book discusses three overall themes including governance, sovereignty and leadership to explore current issues like terrorism, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), evolving conceptions of human security and internal

¹ Ayesha Masood is currently pursuing her MS in Peace & Conflict Studies at Centre for International Peace & Stability (CIPS), National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), Islamabad
E-mail: masoodayesha94@gmail.com

reforms. Moreover, the authors blatantly address and discuss the incompetence of the UN as well, addressing the instances of issues and cases where the organization could have taken a firmer stance and attained more than it actually did.

This new edition of the book also includes case studies on peacekeeping and the use of force in Congo and Mali, transnational terrorism and the emergence of ISIS, the Security Council's failure to act in Syria, the Syrian and global refugee/migrant crisis, and the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals leading to the framing of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The book is divided into eight chapters and each chapter comprehensively covers a distinct theme of the UN. The book in its opening chapters discusses the dilemmas faced by the United Nations in different contexts. It outlines how exactly the United Nations system works, how it was founded and what is the political structure of the organization. In addition, the book also identifies the major actors present in the United Nations system including the Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), coalitions and blocs, small states and middle powers, and finally the United States and other major powers, as well as the UN Secretary-General and the Secretariat. Following the opening chapters, the ensuing chapters in the book discuss the role of the UN in peacekeeping and ensuring security and stability globally. The aforementioned premise of activity has been discussed in deeper detail using case studies such as that of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mali. Globally threatening factors such as nuclear proliferation and counter-terrorism have been thoroughly discussed with the case study of Darfur and Bosnia.

The book further delves deep into the role of the UN in the development of notions such as women empowerment and poverty alleviation. It also discusses human security and environmental factors contributing to it. Examples of HIV AIDS, ozone depletion and pollution have also been discussed in the concluding chapters of the book. Lastly, and most importantly, the authors ponder on the history of the UN, particularly in terms of its negligences and mishandling of issues that could have had better solutions. In doing so, the authors also proposed amendments in policies and structures to ensure avoidance of any problem/failure in the future.

Conclusively, considering all the significant details and incidents mentioned in Karen and Margaret's notable work, it would not be wrong to claim that the authors have done a splendid job in providing a deep insight into the working of the UN and the challenges faced by it.