

V TORNEO DE DEBATE EDUCATIVO DE ANDALUCÍA 2025-2026

EXPLANATORY LETTER FOR THE PROVINCIAL TOURNAMENT QUESTION

ARE THE UN AND OTHER SUPRANATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS EFFECTIVE TOOLS TO SOLVE 21ST CENTURY POLITICAL CONFLICTS?

The current international architecture, born after World War II, established supranational organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, and the IMF, with the aim of preventing another global conflict and promoting the economic development of the most disadvantaged countries through multilateral negotiation and a system of rules based on an emerging International Law. However, it was in 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, that a new world order was consolidated, overcoming the so-called Cold War and creating the new World Order, in which institutions such as the International Criminal Court and later, the COP for climate and the environment, among others, would emerge.

This debate invites students to reflect on the role of multilateralism in an international context marked by globalization, persistent armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, the rise of new powers, and the emergence of non-state actors.

Without presupposing that these institutions have ever been truly 100% effective, the rapid changes we are experiencing in the 21st century threaten a total crisis of this multilateral model. The recent actors in a multipolar and complex geopolitics (the US, Russia, China, Europe, India, and Brazil...) act in their own interests and through ad hoc agreements, when not resorting to coercion and force. This, within the current global challenges such as the immense power of digital corporations, demographic shifts, cyberwars, and climate change, confronts us today with a critical ideological current that questions the very existence of those classic international institutions and of rules-based global governance.

Given this scenario, we are faced with the dilemmas between the effectiveness and legitimacy of these organizations, between short-term and long-term solutions, between the legitimate interests of nations and respect for human rights, and between international law and Realpolitik. Who will benefit and who will be harmed by this new world order (or disorder)? Can these institutions of the last century adapt to the new reality and incorporate new actors to address the problems of the 21st century in a useful and legitimate way? Or are we witnessing the very end of international law and governance in more or less democratic and transparent forums?

