

CFR Resources

Namo Abdulla, Henri Barkey, Steven A. Cook, and Meghan L. O’Sullivan,
[“The Time of the Kurds.”](#)

An interactive timeline about the Kurds, the largest nation in the world that lacks a country of its own. (3,100 words)

John Campbell, [“Belgium Begins to Confront Its Brutal Colonial Past in Congo.”](#)

A blog post that highlights how Belgium’s colonial history in the Democratic Republic of Congo continues to shape both countries to this day. (500 words)

CFR Staff, [“The UN Security Council.”](#)

A backgrounder on the UN Security Council, which plays a central role in determining when international organizations or foreign countries might impinge on sovereignty. (2,400 words)

Lindsay Maizland, [“China’s Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang.”](#)

A backgrounder that details the situation of the Uighurs in Xinjiang, one of the largest nations in the world that lacks a country of its own. (2,300 words)

James McBride, [“How Does the European Union Work?”](#)

A backgrounder on how the European Union functions, pooling the sovereignty of its member countries. (2,900 words)

James McBride, [“What Brexit Means.”](#)

A backgrounder on Brexit, a process that has in large part been about Britain reclaiming the sovereignty which it had partially ceded to the EU while it was a member. (2,750 words)

Classroom Reading List: Building Blocks

Articles

Lorraine Boissoneault, [“When a Country Is Not a Country.”](#) Morning News, February 2015.

A journalistic look at sovereignty and what makes a country in the case of Somaliland. (2,400 words)

Alejandra Borunda, [“See How Much of the Amazon Is Burning, How it Compares to Other Years.”](#) National Geographic, August 29, 2019.

A survey of the recent increase in forest fires in the Amazon, illustrated with outstanding maps and graphs. (1,400 words)

Dexter Filkins, [“Blood and Soil in Narendra Modi’s India.”](#) New Yorker, December 9, 2019.

A detailed profile of the Hindu nationalist policies of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government. (13,700 words)

Sam Jones, [“What Is the Story of Catalan Independence—and What Happens Next?”](#) Guardian, October 14, 2019.

A brief summary of the history and future of the movement for Catalanian independence. (1,300 words)

Jill Lepore, [“A New Americanism: Why a Nation Needs a National Story.”](#) Foreign Affairs, March/April 2019.

An intellectual history of the idea of nationalism, and an argument that nationalism has an important role to play in the United States today. (4,750 words)

Chris McGreal, [“What’s the Point of Peacekeepers When They Don’t Keep the Peace?”](#) Guardian, September 17, 2015.

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An in-depth article that looks at the failures of UN peacekeeping in the 1990s that led the United Nations to begin discussing the responsibility to protect (R2P) norm. (4,300 words)

Richard Milne and David Crow, [“Why Vaccine ‘Nationalism’ Could Slow Coronavirus Fight.”](#) Financial Times, May 14, 2020.

A discussion of the role of nationalism in the race to develop a vaccine for COVID-19. (2,500 words)

Steven Pifer, [“Crimea: Six Years After Illegal Annexation.”](#) Brookings Institution, March 17, 2020.

A brief look at sovereignty and self-determination in the case of Crimea. (1,400 words)

Anne-Marie Slaughter, [“Was the Libyan Intervention Really an Intervention?”](#) Atlantic, August 26, 2011.

Published during the Libyan civil war, a piece that refers to ongoing debates about that crisis and offers a succinct discussion of the responsibility to protect (R2P) doctrine and sovereignty, and how R2P differs from intervention. (1,250 words)

Margherita Stancati and Adrià Calatayud, [“As Catalans Protest for Secession, a Division Widens at Home.”](#) Wall Street Journal, October 28, 2019.

A good summary of the movement for Catalanian self-determination that also provides some consideration of the conflicting viewpoints within the region. (1,050 words)

[“The Future Is Another Country.”](#) Economist, July 2010.

A thought-provoking discussion of the ways in which Facebook is similar to a sovereign country. (1,250 words)

Classroom Reading List: Building Blocks

Sally Sara, Anne Worthington, and Victor Mambor, "[The Battle for West Papuan Independence From Indonesia Has Intensified With Deadly Results.](#)" ABC News, May 11, 2020.

A comprehensive introduction to the ongoing fight for self-determination in Papua. (1,800 words)

Books

Gareth Evans, *The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and For All* (2008).

A detailed and accessible book by one of the principle architects of the responsibility to protect norm. (349 pages)

Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* (1998).

A moving and disturbing account of the genocide in Rwanda that details one of the major incidents in the 1990s that led to a reassessment of peacekeeping policy and the rise of the responsibility to protect norm. (356 pages)

Shashi Tharoor, *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India* (2017).

An excellent and accessible introduction to colonialism in India and the Indian movement for self-determination. (288 pages)

Multimedia

Max Fisher and Amanda Taub, "[National Identity Is Made Up.](#)" *Interpreter*, February 28, 2018.

This video from a New York Times blog takes a look at the idea of nationalism and what makes a nation. (6 minutes)

Classroom Reading List: Building Blocks

Julia Longoria, [“Americanish.”](#) *Radiolab*, April 19, 2019.

A podcast episode on American Samoa, which holds a unique status within the United States, that teases out the meaning of nationality and citizenship. (65 minutes)

[“A Continent Remade: Reflections on 1960, the Year of Africa.”](#) *New York Times*, February 7, 2020.

A photo series from the New York Times that looks at 1960, a banner year for self-determination in Africa as seventeen countries on the continent gained independence.

[“The Battle for Europe.”](#) *The Daily*, January 23, 2020.

A five-episode series in which a New York Times podcast explores nationalist movements in four European countries, focusing especially on their opposition to the European Union.

Resources

[Foundation Basics](#), iCivics.

A lesson plan from iCivics designed for high school students that explores sovereignty, among other concepts.

[The Sovereign State](#), iCivics.

A lesson plan from iCivics designed for middle school students that explores sovereignty.