

Issue 2 – The Issue of Electoral Interference

Election interference is a rapidly evolving challenge which refers to any deliberate attempt (made by either domestic or foreign actors) to influence an election's outcome, integrity or legitimacy through unlawful and deceptive means. Free and fair elections are the fundamentals of democratic governance so ensuring a lack of interference is essential to the integrity of elections.

Sovereignty and non-intervention is affirmed under the UN but there is no legally binding universal framework specifically addressing election interference. This ambiguity causes it to be difficult to both enforce accountability and know the difference between political speech and unlawful manipulation. The issue of public confidence then surges as the rise of electoral interference undermines trust in democratic processes.

Ways Electoral Interference can occur:

- Cyberattacks
- Disinformation and propaganda
- Foreign Involvement
- Corruption
- Media manipulation

Questions to consider:

What role, if any, should the UN have in monitoring and responding to election interference?

What measures can be used to strengthen institutions against cyber-attacks and disinformation?

What role should regional organisations (such as the EU) play in safeguarding elections?

Should cyberattacks targeting elections be considered violations of international law?

Useful Websites:

<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/law/election-interference-overview>

<https://news.westernu.ca/2025/04/election-interference/>

<https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/news-events/election-interference-how-tech-race-and-disinformation-can-influence-the-us-elections/>

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20240404STO20215/foreign-interference-how-parliament-is-fighting-the-threat-to-eu-democracy>