

Switzerland Neutrality Referendum

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Why in News?

Recently, Swiss voters voted on the “Safeguard Swiss Neutrality”, which sought to introduce a stricter definition of neutrality into Switzerland’s Federal Constitution.

 Switzerland and its Neutrality Referendum (2026)			 SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT	
	Country	Switzerland		
	Capital / Federal city	Bern		
	Neutrality constitutionally recognised	1848		
	Legal framework	Hague Conventions		
	NATO membership	No		
	NATO Partnership for Peace	Since 1996		
	Initiative	Safeguard Swiss Neutrality		
	Referendum	27 September 2026		
	Proposed neutrality	Permanent and armed		
	Proposed sanctions exception	UN sanctions		
			 Referendum Result	
				Result Rejected
				Vote against 70.15%
				Vote in favour 29.85%
				Cantons rejecting 26/26

Proposal “Permanent and Armed Neutrality”

• Major provisions

- Switzerland would **not join military or defence alliances**.
- Switzerland would generally **not cooperate with military alliances** except in these cases:
 - Switzerland is under military attack, or
 - An attack is imminent or being prepared.
- Switzerland would not participate in **armed conflicts between third countries**.
- Switzerland would not impose **sanctions against belligerent states**.

- **UN sanctions** would remain an exception.
- Measures to prevent **circumvention** of sanctions would also be permitted.
- Neutrality would serve to strengthen Switzerland's role as an **international mediator**.

Switzerland is not a member of NATO.

- However, Switzerland has cooperated with NATO through various mechanisms, including **Partnership for Peace (PfP)**.
- Switzerland has participated in **NATO's Partnership for Peace since 1996**.
- The PfP is a **cooperative framework and does not constitute** NATO membership.
- The proposed constitutional change would have significantly limited Switzerland's military cooperation with NATO.

Background

- Swiss neutrality has been enshrined in the **Federal Constitution since 1848**.
- It is also recognised under **international law**.
- Switzerland adheres to the principle of armed neutrality, **refraining from involvement** in armed conflicts between other states while maintaining the capacity to defend its own territory.
- The legal framework of neutrality is linked to the **Hague Conventions**.
- Neutrality does not categorically prevent Switzerland from adopting political positions or implementing economic sanctions.

Reference

[News on Air | Neutrality in Constitution](#)