

Africa's Quest for Permanent Membership in the United Nations Security Council

Tesfaye Boyossa Yadeta

Researcher, Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), Ethiopia

Abstract

The United Nations was founded in 1945 on the initiative of the winners of World War II. The General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice, and Secretariat are the organs formed alongside the UN in the same year. It was founded by 51 countries, including Ethiopia, and member countries grew to 193 then after. Although the number of members of the General Assembly has grown from 51 to 193, the number of members of the SC has only increased in 1965, while permanent members have remained at five till now. Thus, numerous countries, including the African group, are attempting to reform the UNSC. This study, therefore, investigated Africa's quest for permanent membership in the UNSC. The study specifically analyzes the position of the five member of the United Nations Security Council in the quest for Africa's permanent membership, and explored the rational for Africa's Quest for Permanent Membership in the UNSC. The study followed a qualitative approach and employed primary data obtained through interview conducted with participants. The findings of the study indicate that the United States and United Kingdom are not supportive of Africa's membership with veto power; whereas, France supports, while the position of Russia and China is not officially known.

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Introduction

In the aftermath of the collapse of the League of Nations, the United Nations (UN) was founded in 1945 on the initiative of the winners of World War II (WWII). The General Assembly (GA), Security Council (SC), Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Trusteeship Council (TC), whose operations were suspended in 1994, International Court of Justice (ICJ), and Secretariat are the organs formed alongside the UN in 1945. Originally, it was founded by 51 nations, including Ethiopia, and eventually member countries grew to 193.¹ The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the most powerful body of the UN, with the primary objective of maintaining global peace and security. Originally, it had 11 members: Five permanent members (the United States, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, now Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, France, and the Republic of China/Taiwan later China), and Six non-permanent members elected by the UNGA every two years². The number of non-permanent members of the UN Security Council increased from six to ten in 1965. As a result, the UN Security Council now has fifteen members³.

¹ United Nations Membership (1945): [Growth in United Nations membership | United Nations](#)

² United Nations Charter(October, 195): chapter V: The Security Council, article 24 [Chapter V: The Security Council \(Articles 23-32\) | United Nations](#)

³ United Nations Charter, Amendments to Article 23, 27, 61, 109, (1965). [Amendments to Articles 23, 27, 61, 109 | United Nations](#)

The total number of UN member states has grown steadily to 193, although the UNSC's permanent membership has stayed constant since 1945. There are currently 54 UN members from only African countries. Similarly, the Caribbean and Latin American states, which currently have 33 members in the UN, have no permanent representation in the UNSC, whereas Asia, which has also 54 members in the UN, has one permanent seat in the UNSC, and Europe, which has only 29 members in the UN, has two representatives in the permanent UNSC⁴.

Different political leaders and non-state actors have been questioning the uneven representation of the permanent UNSC since the Cold War. Recognizing the problem, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) established a committee (group) in 1993 to work on UNSC reforms, such as issues related to the membership size of the SC (expansion), geographical representation of nations in the SC, and veto power of SC members⁵. Furthermore, former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan recommended reforms to the SC in 2005⁶. Following that, Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil established a group called G4 to advocate for UN Security Council reforms⁷. The UNSC reform agenda gained prominence, particularly after the UNGA established Inter Governance Negotiation (IGN) as a body to oversee UNSC reform in 2009⁸. As the UNSC reform coordinator, the IGN is constantly supporting the interest of various reform-seeking and reform-opposing groups, such as the African group, the G4, the Coffee Club/United for consensus group, the Arab League, the L69 group of developing nations, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the S-5 Group⁹.

The African Union has also taken initiatives to push for the reform of the UN Security Council. The AU established a committee of ten, known as C10, in 2005 to advocate for UNSC reform and coordinate Africa's common position. In other words, C10 is a committee established by the AU to implement the Ezulwini consensus.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General António Guterres's New Agenda for Peace, which aims to put an end to the recent violent conflict between Israel and Palestine and Russia and Ukraine, is one of the recent developments and ongoing discussions regarding the reforms of multilateral institutions, including the UNSC. The secretary general claims that it is nearly impossible to establish enduring peace without reforming the UNSC¹⁰.

Another recent development is the September 2025's initiation of the Summit of the Future and Pact for the Future, which is centered on UNSC enlargement to 21–27 seats and specifically calls

⁴ United Nations Membership (1945): [Growth in United Nations membership | United Nations](#)

⁵ The Intergovernmental Negotiation framework on the reform of the UNSC (2021): [The Intergovernmental Negotiations framework on UNSC reforms \(journalsofindia.com\)](#)

⁶ [Business & Financial News, U.S & International Breaking News | Reuters](#)". *Reuters*. Archived from the original on 28 June 2005. Retrieved 22 November 2005.

⁷ G4 nations (2008): [G4 nations - Wikipedia](#)

⁸ The Intergovernmental Negotiation framework on the reform of the UNSC (2021): [The Intergovernmental Negotiations framework on UNSC reforms \(journalsofindia.com\)](#)

⁹ The Intergovernmental Negotiation framework on the reform of the UNSC (2021): [The Intergovernmental Negotiations framework on UNSC reforms \(journalsofindia.com\)](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.un.org/en/ga/screform/>

for "redress of historical injustice against Africa as a priority" in its negotiations. Considering Africa as a "special case," the draft text seeks to finish input by the end of 2025¹¹.

Africa is one of the groups pushing for UNSC reforms through the IGN of the UN. To that end, the AU reached an agreement called Ezulwini Consensus in 2005, which indicates that the AU would pick two states to represent Africa as permanent members of the SC in 2005¹². However, it is still unknown which two African countries would be elected to represent Africa as permanent members of the UNSC.

Following the tragedies of WWII, several countries from around the world got together and founded the UN, which consists of six organs, in 1945¹³. The UNSC was the most powerful body mandated to maintain global peace and security¹⁴. Since its inception in 1945, the SC has made many contributions to world peace and security. It has significantly contributed to the world's efforts to put an end to conflicts and promote reconciliation by conducting successful peacekeeping operations¹⁵.

Despite several accomplishments in maintaining global peace and security, the UNSC has been facing several problems and challenges. The dynamics of global peace and security concerns are not the same as when the UN was founded in 1945. The UNSC is out of date when it comes to dealing with contemporary threats to peace and security, such as pandemics, climate change, migration and refugee crises, and poverty. Thus, numerous politicians, diplomats, and academics have called for the UNSC to be reformed as soon as possible in order for it to address contemporary problems. According to Indian professor of diplomacy Rejaul Laskar (2017) "*for the UN to maintain its existence and be relevant, the UNSC should have addressed the contemporary problems*"¹⁶.

Another problem that the UNSC is dealing with is that it does not reflect the realities of the power balance in the twenty-first century. When the United Nations was founded, nations such as the United Kingdom and France were the leading major economic powers; however, today, other countries, such as India and China have risen as strong economic powers. Similarly, when the UN was founded, Africa was under colonial rule, but today it is a continent with sovereign countries with rapidly developing economic and demographic potential.

For others, the UN should serve as an example of democratic practice. One cornerstone of democracy is representation. Only 15 of the 193 United Nations' members are represented on the SC, of which 5 are permanent members. This means that only about 7.5% of the world is represented in the UNSC, the world's most powerful international body capable of enforcing and implementing its decisions. The likelihood of a member state joining the SC as a non-permanent member is about 0.05 percent every two years. And this 7.5% of nations are in charge of making decisions that have a great impact. It is unfortunate that none of the African countries is a

¹¹ <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/08/high-level-debate-on-addressing-the-historical-injustice-and-enhancing-africas-effective-representation-on-the-un-security-council.php>

¹² Ezulwini Consensus - Wikipedia

¹³ United Nations System(1995): [United Nations System - Wikipedia](#)

¹⁴ United Nations Charters (1945): chapter III, IV

¹⁵ The Success of the United Nations Security Council (2017): ([Our successes | United Nations Peacekeeping](#)).

¹⁶ India Public Diplomacy Instrument(2017): Rejaul L. (2017): ([PDF](#)) [India's Public Diplomacy Instruments \(researchgate.net\)](#)

permanent member of SC in this influential organization that frequently makes decisions affecting African affairs.

Thus, the UNSC lacks geographic representation as well as legitimacy from African countries, which are not represented in the SC. UN expert, Elisabetta Martini (2006) claims that Europe is overrepresented, Asia is under-represented; whereas, Africa is not represented at all¹⁷.

Understanding these issues, reform-minded nations are stepping up to exert pressure on the UNGA to reform the UNSC. While the G4 nations support UNSC reform, a different organization known as the "Coffee Club/United for Consensus" was founded to oppose UNSC change, as is clear from the G4's website.¹⁸

The African group has the support of the G4¹⁹. However, the two groups have opposing views on how to reform the UN Security Council. The African Group believes that the SC should be expanded based on geographic representation²⁰, which requires reforms to UN charters that only allow nation-states other than continents as membership requirements; whereas, the G4 believes that the UNSC should be reformed while adhering to the UN charter, which only allows nation-states as membership requirements²¹.

In addition to the speeches and announcements made by leaders and diplomats at various stages on the matter related to Africa's aspiration for a permanent seat at the UNSC, there are also scientific researches, particularly from the African perspective, supporting African quest for a permanent seat. For instance, according to Odeyemi²² in his study *"Africanity and the Quest for a Permanent Seat in the United Nations Security Council"* analyzes his study from the philosophical concept of Africanity, a shared identity and collective action. In addition, some studies including Spies²³, and Abba²⁴ focus their studies on the individual country-level analysis rather than an Africa-level analysis where the former author focuses his research on South Africa's quest for a permanent seat at the UNSC, and the later author focus his study on Prospects for Nigeria to Represent Africa at the UNSC.

Therefore, this study is different from the aforementioned scholarships in scope and focus. It analyzes the current position of P5 regarding the quest for Africa's permanent membership in the UNSC and assesses the possible criteria for an individual country to represent Africa at the permanent UNSC.

¹⁷ Elisabetta, M. (2006). The Relationship between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council in the Field of Peacekeeping

¹⁸ G4 (September 23, 2005): G4 nations, comprising Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan, are four countries which support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council established on 23, 2005. [G4 nations - Wikipedia](#)

¹⁹ G4 nations (2008): [G4 nations - Wikipedia](#)

²⁰ [Ezulwini Consensus - Wikipedia](#)

²¹ Preamble of the United Nations (1945): [United Nations Charter \(full text\) | United Nations](#)

²² Odeyemi (2016): Focuses on "Africanity" and how it connects to Africa's quest. Examines whether Africa can articulate its strengths through AU and the benefits of a permanent seat.

²³ Spies (2008): Focuses on South Africa's quest for permanent membership

²⁴ Abba (2016): Focuses on Nigeria's prospects, highlighting its peacekeeping contributions but noting internal challenges.

The AU has concluded an agreement known as the Ezulwini Consensus on reforming the UN Security Council in 2005²⁵. According to the Ezulwini Consensus, the AU would appoint two African countries to the permanent SC. However, the Agreement is being debated by various groups. One group contends that, given the number of issues brought before the UN Security Council, as well as economic and demographic factors, Africa does not deserve only two seats on the permanent Security Council. The other side claims that the Ezulwini Consensus would be jeopardized due to conflict and competition among Africans. Whereas the optimist group sees the agreement as an opportunity to unite Africa and secure a permanent seat at the UNSC²⁶.

The Ezulwini Consensus, was first thought to unify Africa in response to systemic exclusion from the existing global power systems. The main points of consensus are: With a complete veto power, Africa receives two permanent seats on the UNSC and Africa has five non-permanent seats (one for each African sub region) and the power to choose its representatives at the AU²⁷.

Despite Africa's Ezulwini consensus to reform and get permanent seat at the UN, the P5 do not support wholeheartedly. The US support Africa's permanent seat without veto power, the UK and France also support Africa to get permanent seat but oppose the expansion²⁸. Even the African themselves did not reach on consensus as divergent national interests are observed from few countries while smaller states prioritize bilateral aid over institutional advocacy²⁹

Several African leaders, including Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, have called for the permanent UN Security Council to be expanded to include African nations in this year at UNGA³⁰. Many states, including the P5, G4, and G7, have supported Africa's quest for permanent membership on the Security Council at the last 76th and 77th sessions of the UNGA³¹. However, it is skeptical about which African country will be given the seat. According to the IBSA Joint Ministerial Statement on Reform of the UNSC on September 16, 2020 Africans appear to be divided because South Africa is working unilaterally on UNSC reforms in IBSA countries while Egypt is a member of Coffee Club (United for Consensus) notwithstanding the Ezulwini Consensus, which requires African nations to unite on this common causes³². Further

²⁵ [Ezulwini Consensus - Wikipedia](#)

²⁶ Re Evaluating the Africa Union's Ezulwini Consensus in the Reforms of United Nations Security Council (2021): [\(PDF\) Re-evaluating the African Union's Ezulwini Consensus in the Reform of the United Nations Security Council \(researchgate.net\)](#)

²⁷ Iene, N. M. (2024). *Africa's quest for reform of the United Nations Security Council: A just cause curbed by unrealistic proposals* [Doctoral dissertation, Addis Ababa University]. Institutional Repository. <http://example.com>

²⁸ Ryder, H., & Lwere, T. (2024). *Africa's design for a reformed UN Security Council*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). <https://www.csis.org/analysis/africas-design-reformed-un-security-council>

²⁹ Badza, I. (2019). The Ezulwini Consensus and Africa's quagmire on United Nations Security Council reform: Unpacking the dynamics. *AFFRIKA Journal of Politics, Economics and Society*, *9*(Special Issue), 203–219. <https://library.au.int/ezulwini-consensus-and-africas-quagmire-united-nations-security-council-reform-unpacking-dynamics>

³⁰ Reporter gazet (October 15, 2020): Prime Minister of Ethiopia Speeches on the reform of the UNSC. [Ethiopia joins Africans call for permanent seat at UNSC – New Business Ethiopia](#)

³¹ Agenda 77th Session, September 2022: United Nations General Assembly Session. [Agenda of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly \(2022-2023\)](#)

³² IBSA joint Ministerial statement on the reform of the UNSC on September, 2020: India, Brazil and South Africa joint statement on common interest of the reform of the UNSC. [IBSA Joint Ministerial Statement on Reform of the UN Security Council \(mea.gov.in\)](#)

Initially, there were no clear criteria for selecting a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council; the winner of World War II was chosen at random. The P5 were chosen without regard to any specific criteria. However, in recent years, leaders, and pundits have suggested the significance of the criteria used to elect permanent members of the UNSC. Specifically, criteria for the selection of African nations for permanent membership at the UNSC representing the continent. The study attempts to analyze the position of the P5 regarding Africa's quest for permanent membership in the UNSC, and explore the rationale for Africa's quest for permanent membership in the UNSC.

Methodology

A Qualitative approach was employed to conduct the study. Both primary and secondary sources of data were gathered. In-depth interviews had been used to collect primary data, while secondary data was collected through reviews of multiple secondary sources. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the acquired data.

Rational for the Africa's Quest for Permanent Membership in the UNSC

The researcher investigated whether Africa truly deserves to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council, as well as the reasons for such an aspiration. As a result, data are gathered via desk reviews and from various individuals, and analyzed, and presented. The security issues brought before the UNSC, fair representation, demographic factor, geo-economic factors, and geopolitical factor are the rationales mentioned by several scholars and the research participants to support the permanent membership of Africa in the UNSC. Three rationales most frequently stated by research participants during interview among those listed above are discussed in the sub-sections to follow:

Security Issues brought before the UNSC

Obviously, the UN Security Council is made up of the P5 (the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Russia, and China) and non-permanent members who are chosen every two years and have no veto power. According to UN Charter Articles 24(1)³³, the Security Council's principal role is to safeguard international peace and security. And, under the same Charter Articles 24(2)³⁴, all Member States are required to carry out Security Council decisions.

According to a survey report covering the years 2018 to 2023, African peace and security challenges covered more than 50% of the agenda during the UNSC meetings, 60% of its conclusion documents, and 70% of its resolutions³⁵. This is comparable to what Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chair of the African Union Commission said at UNGA77 stating that 70% of the issues brought before the UNSC are related to Africa. These all meetings, conclusion documents, and resolutions about Africa were made while there are no African nation with veto power at the UNSC. As a result, it is urgent that Africa needs to get permanent membership in the UNSC.

³³ Chapter V: The Security Council (Articles 23-32) | United Nations Article 24(1)

³⁴ Chapter V: The Security Council (Articles 23-32) | United Nations Article 24(2)

Fair Representation

The second rationale raised by all the research participants in support of Africa's permanent membership in the UN Security Council has to do with ensuring that the continent's 1.3 billion people and 55 countries are not fairly represented.

Only four African nations, namely Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, and South Africa, had been there when the United Nations was established in 1945. Today, however, 55 of Africa's countries (28%) are UN members. Although the number of African nations represented in the General Assembly increased, the number of the UNSC members remained the same.

The statements made by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Senegalese President Macky Sall at the Forum for Peace and Security in Africa on August 7, 2021 raised about fairness and Justice:

President of Senegal, Macky Sall said, "that the African continent, which has 54 nations, is not represented as permanent member of the Security Council, and this is unfair. We shall carry on the struggle to halt this injustice made to Africa with South Africa and with all the other nations"³⁶.

On his part South Africa's president, Cyril Ramaphosa said "this is unfair and the African people should have a permanent representation. We want fairness, we want Africa to be fairly represented, and we want Africa to be heard, because it is not fair that the opinions of 1.3 billion people cannot be heard at such a high level in the same manner that the opinions of the nations with the veto right are heard"³⁷.

The fairness issue raised in relation to the demographic size of Africa with 1.3 billion people that are not represented in the UNSC. Contrary to this fact, in 1973 the People's Republic of China replaced Republic of China (now Taiwan) because of demographic factors.

Addressing Injustice

Only a few number of African countries became members of the UN when it was established in 1945. But at the moment, all the 55 nations (28% of the total members) of Africa are member of the UNG. This makes Africa the largest member contributor to the UN more than any other continent. Despite this numerical superiority, there is no single African nation which joined the UNSC at the permanent position. In 2023, at the Turkish-Africa meeting in Ankara, the foreign minister of Sierra Leone stated: 'Africa's being unrepresented in the UNSC with permanent status in injustice.'

This raises the concern of justice and fairness on the global institutions, including the UNSC. As Aristotle teaches in the Nichomachean Ethics, justice is giving each his due. This principle suggest that representation should align not only with equality in numbers but also each continent's potential and contribution. Moreover UN as global institution needs to be institutionally virtue and fight injustice.

³⁶ Africa News report, 7 August 2021

³⁷ Africa News report, 7 August 2021

The Position of P5 on Africa's Quest for Permanent Membership in the UNSC

The United States, China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom are the permanent members, of the Security Council³⁸. Any of them has the power to veto a resolution³⁹.

In the P5, certain nations use their veto more frequently than others. For example, since the end of the Cold War in 1991, Russia has used its veto power more frequently than any other country (32 times), compared to China (18 times), the United States (16 times), and France and the United Kingdom (0 times). Particularly, when it comes to matters involving humanitarian atrocities, like genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, France is a strong proponent of not exercising veto power. The P5's responsible use of their veto power resolution was first proposed by France and Mexico, and 106 nations in the General Assembly have already supported.

Some studies ⁴⁰suggest that a country with a strong diplomatic relationship with the United States has a better chance to be elected for the UN Security Council multiple times. Therefore, analyzing the position of the P5, including the US is found to be essential and presented as follows.

The USA's Position on Africa's Quest for Permanent Membership in the UNSC

Obviously, the United States of America is a founding member of the UN and the most powerful member in all UN organs, including the Security Council. The United States' influence in the UN stems from its contributions to the global body of the UN. Under Biden's administration, the United States contributed 22% of the entire budget of the organization, but the contribution is higher in other areas, such as the budget of the organization's peacekeeping operations⁴¹. Because of the fact that the United States wields considerable weight in the UN, its maxims and position are critical when it comes to Africa's quest for permanent membership in the Security Council. Based on open sources, the US's position about the expansion of the UNSC is presented as follows. UNSC reform was on the UN agenda since 1992, however, the US was hesitant to embrace it only until 2005. On April 10, 2005, the US ambassador to the United Nations in New York publicly revealed the US's position regarding the UNSC reform for the first time.

The following is a statement issued by the then United States' Ambassador to the United Nation:

United States is open to in principle to modest expansion of both permanent and non-permanent member of the SC taking into account the abilities and willingness of the country to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to other purposes of the UN. We believe that consideration of the new member of the UNSC is country specific in nature. We remain opposed to alteration or expansion of the Veto".

According to the above official statement, the United States supports nations' new membership in the UN Security Council based on criteria, such as economic capacity, military capabilities, population, and the nation's potential to contribute to peacekeeping missions. However, when it

³⁸ United Nations charter, Article 23

³⁹ United Nations charter, Article 27(3)

⁴⁰ Smith, J., & Ann, K. (2020). Diplomatic alliances and UNSC elections. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 26(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/xx.xxxx/gg.2020.xxx>

⁴¹ Funding the United Nations: How much does the US pay? [Funding the United Nations: How Much Does the U.S. Pay? | Council on Foreign Relations \(cfr.org\)](https://www.cfr.org/foreign-relations/funding-the-united-nations-how-much-does-the-u-s-pay/p11000)

comes to expanding veto power, the United States has explicitly declared that it will not support it. This goes against the African group's desire for two permanent seats with veto power in the UN Security Council reform according to the Ezulwini consensus.

Later, during the former President of the United States, Barack Obama's visit to India, the president addressed the Indian parliament, saying:

....."today, I can say that I look forward to a reformed United Nations Security Council that includes India as a permanent member in the coming years. The United Nations exists to uphold its fundamental values of peace and security, global cooperation, and human rights advancement. These are the obligations of all nations, but particularly those seeking to lead in the twenty-first century. So we look forward to working with India – and other countries aspiring to Security Council membership – to ensure that the Security Council is effective, that resolutions are implemented, that sanctions are enforced, and that we strengthen international norms that recognize the rights and responsibilities of all nations and individuals".

The statement expresses support for UNSC reform, including India and other countries, albeit the president's use of the phrase 'other countries' does not clearly indicate that Africa is among them.

In September 2023, at GA77, US President J. Biden stated:

".....Let us speak plainly. A permanent member of the United Nations Security Council invaded its neighbor, attempted to erase a sovereign state from the map. Russia has shamelessly violated the core tenets of the United Nations Charter – no more important than the clear prohibition against countries taking the territory of their neighbor by force. Members of the U.N. Security Council, including the United States – should consistently uphold and defend the U.N. Charter and refrain – refrain from the use of the veto, except in rare, extraordinary situations, to ensure that the Council remains credible and effective. That is also why the United States supports increasing the number of both permanent and non-permanent representatives of the Council. This includes permanent seats for those nations we've long supported and permanent seats for countries in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean".

According to this statement, the recent Russia-Ukraine war is a compelling factor in the US's support for UNSC reform. It is also apparent that the United States officially supports Africa's bid for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. However, it is not clear if the USA really supports African permanent membership in the UNSC reform with veto power. Since this study relied on the unclassified information and open data sources, further studies are needed to substantiate the position of the USA, especially on Africa's membership in the UNSC with veto power.

France's Position on Africa's Quest for Permanent Membership in the UNSC

France is yet another member of the P5 and P3 (the United States, United Kingdom, and France) with veto power in the SC. However, France, unlike the United States, China, and Russia, has not used its veto power since 1989. As a result, France's position is considered critical in terms of Africa's quest for permanent membership in the UN Security Council. France's position is examined as follows:

Historically, France opposed the expansion of non-permanent UNSC membership in 1965. Although France and the USSR opposed the reform, the resolution was approved by a two-thirds majority of the GA and passed on April 5, 1965. But, in the latest endeavors to reform the UNSC, France firmly supports UNSC reform in general and African membership in particular. France's position came official in 2015 stating:

*".....the projected UNSC members are France, the United States, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the People's Republic of China, Germany, Japan, Brazil, India, and Permanent African Representation". Furthermore, the statement states that "we do not accept the idea for regional representation on the SC since it would contradict core charter of the UN charter, which clearly states that admission to the UN is provided to the individual state". Concerning the size of the Security Council, it appears from the most current materials generated under the text of the Intergovernmental Negotiation (IGN), as well as the first two debates held this year "that an enlarged Council may contain between 21 and 27 members"*⁴².

In addition, an interview data obtained from a French Embassy suggested that,

France supports UNSC reform in general and greater presence of African representatives in the council on a permanent basis; no problem from France or the other P5, but the problem is from Africans themselves. Some African countries oppose UNSC reforms. The last time we prepared a draft for text-based negotiation, one African country (Egypt) blocked Progress. As a result, let Africa solve their own problems on this subject by amending the Ezulwini consensus, allowing Africa to decide on the number of seats and the Criteria

But with respect to veto power, France wants to regulate the uses of veto power by the P5 and new members of the SC. *'France's position is that the use of the veto, as proposed by the President of the Republic in 2013, would imply that the five permanent members of the Security Council would freely and collectively commit to refraining from using the veto if a mass atrocity has been established'*⁴³.

Both the primary and secondary data demonstrate that France supports Africa's bid for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. However, there are restrictions on the use of veto for all members, including the new ones. According to the Ezulwini consensus, France's position is aligned with Africa's aspirations for permanent membership at the UNSC.

UK's Position on Africa's Quest for Permanent Membership in the UNSC

⁴² Submission from member state to framework document of UNSC reform, 2015

⁴³ Submission from member state to framework document of UNSC reform, 2015

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) is a founding member of the United Nations as well as a member of the P5 and P3. Like France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has not used its veto power since 1989. UK supports France's initiatives to not use its veto power in circumstances of mass atrocities, such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Until recently, the UK's position on UNSC reforms in general, and Africa's quest for permanent membership in the UN Security Council in particular, was unclear. In 2015, UK officially announced that the permanent membership of the UNSC would be: *"France, the United States, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the People's Republic of China, Germany, Japan, Brazil, India, and Permanent African Representation"*.

As a result, the UK's position is paralleled to that of France and the USA. However, like the USA but unlike France, the UK opposed the expansion of SC's veto power to new members⁴⁴. This indicates that, like the USA, the UK opposes Africa's bid for permanent membership in the UN Security Council based on the Ezulwini consensus.

The Position of Russian Federations on Africa's Quest for Permanent Membership in the UNSC

Russia is the current permanent member of the UNSC as the successor to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which was a founding member of the UN. The Russian Federation, now under a new name has been actively participating in the UNSC since the end of the Cold War. It is clear that China and the Russian Federation (P2) oppose P3's position in the SC. Knowing the Russian Federation's position on Africa's quest for permanent membership in the UNSC is, therefore, considered crucial.

With respect to the position of Russian Federations, the data obtained from secondary sources is analyzed as follow:

Despite the UNSC reform has been on the UN agenda since 1992, the official position of the Russian Federation on the UNSC reform generally and Africa's bid for permanent membership was not made public until 2015.

In 2015, the Russian federation announced its position regarding the UNSC reform saying that:

*"Russia is in favor of the Security Council's reform including more developing nations from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. In order for the Security Council to respond appropriately and quickly to newly emerging issues, it is critical to maintain a compact composition. A larger Security Council shouldn't include more than a manageable number of low-twenties members"*⁴⁵.

The Russian Federation's position on Africa's quest for permanent membership in the UNSC, including the desire for veto power, is unclear. Since this study relies on open sources, it is

⁴⁴ Submission from member state to framework document of UNSC reform, 2015; page 67

⁴⁵ Submission from member state to framework document of UNSC reform, 2015; page 107

necessary to investigate the position of the Russian Federation, particularly with regard to Africa's permanent membership with veto power in the SC, using primary data.

The Position of Peoples Republic of China (PRC) on Africa's Quest for Permanent Membership in the SC

The Peoples Republic of China (PRC) replaced Republic of China (ROC, now Taiwan) in 1971. Since then, the PRC is actively involved in any resolution passed at the UNSC. Since the end of cold war, the PRC vetoed more than 18 resolutions at different times. With respect to reforming the UNSC, in general and the inclusion of Africa in the permanent members, in particular, the position of china states,

'China's three key foci regarding reform are namely, the issue of systemic reform, regional representation and the timetable of reform. In general, China tries to balance legitimacy and efficiency with regard to UN Security Council reform, which mostly comes from its domestic experiences in economic reform and traditional Chinese philosophy called 'Zhongyong dialectics''⁴⁶

China's approach to UNSC reform considers both geopolitical interests and regional alliances. China does not support regional competitors, such as Japan and India, in the G4 due to historical disagreements and long-standing rivalries. At the same time, China consistently helps non-rival nations, such as the African nations at different multilateral for a, including the UNSC. While affirming the idea of equitable geographical representation, Beijing has refrained from making a clear statement about whether it supports the expansion of membership and veto power or not.

The African Group (G4), and other groups form a reform-seeking coalition at the UN's Intergovernmental Negotiation. However, members of the P5, such as China, support one nation or group while blocking the other, as China blocks Japan and India in G4, resulting in a division of similar-minded bodies or reform-seeking coalitions, which eventually makes the reforms of the UNSC more complex and cumbersome.

Conclusion and Recommendation

UN was founded in 1945 on the initiative of the winners of World War II. GA, SC, ECOSOC, TC, ICJ, and Secretariat are the organs formed alongside the UN. UNSC is the most powerful body of the UN, with the primary objective of maintaining global peace and security. The first reform did not include the permanent position, and therefore, since then, efforts were put in place to reform the permanent position in the UNSC. Japan, Germany, India, and Brazil later joined the movement for the SC's reform, especially after the G4 was formed. Subsequent to that, the SC reform agenda became one of the UNGA agenda since 1992. The GA assembly agreed to reform the UN on five areas. This includes: Expansion of the member, Veto power, the relation between

⁴⁶ China's Position towards UN Security Council Reform: Balancing Legitimacy and Efficiency, Wencheng Wu Pages 502-509 | Published online: 26 Oct 2020

the SC and GA, and membership size. In addition, the GA created IGN as a forum for discussion and debate on the SC reforms.

In 2005, Africa also joined the club of reform minded countries, such as G4, and L69 to push for the reform of the SC. The Ezulwini consensus, which states that Africa needs at least two permanent positions with veto power and five non-permanent positions, was signed by the African group. Although this pact brought Africa together for a similar cause, it omitted certain details that might have served the continent's struggle for reform. Recently, the AU also established C10, a ministry of ten nations that follow up UNSC reform.

Today, UN members, including the P5, wholeheartedly support the UNSC reforms. The P5 in particular provided support for Africa. In this study, the positions of the P5 were examined. The finding shows that the USA and UK did not support Africa's membership in the UNSC with veto power. This contravenes Africa's aspiration for the permanent membership in the UNSC with veto power as stipulated in the Ezulwini consensus. France, however, supports Africa's membership with veto power in the UNSC. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China did not make clear their position about giving Africa veto power at the UNSC.

Africa should twist its quest for rotational position with veto power other than permanent position in the effort to reform the UNSC. Rather than being mere permanent member, rotating positions on the UN Security Council helps Africa ensure fairness, accountability and responsibility from the continent, and enhance unity among African brothers as well as avoiding conflict and unnecessary competition for the permanent position.

The Ezulwini Consensus was adopted 20 years ago. Since then, there has been a significant shift in geopolitics, economics, and global politics. Competitions among few African countries, such as Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, and Senegal have been at odds for the last 20 years, making it impossible to agree on either the selection criteria or rotation methods. As the AU's unique continental agreement, it must be revised to reflect current reality and boldly mention the criteria to get the permanent seat at the UNSC.

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