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A Critical Analysis of Africa's Quest for Permanent Seat at United Nations Security Council

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Abstract

The article examined the issues of the United Nations' Security Council reform from the standpoint of Africa's quest for a permanent seat. The objective was to highlight the implications of Africa's demand for permanent representation on the council for the African body polity. The study employed the realist theory in interrogating the guest. It also used the qualitative method of data analysis. Findings show that Africa's quest for the enlargement of the Security Council is in tandem with the popular opinion of the international community for the reform of the Security Council to make it more amendable to emerging realities of the international system. However, Africa has a burden of justifying her demand for a permanent seat, given that the expected outcome of the reform of the Security Council – promoting the values of democracy, justice, equity, balance, legitimacy, among others are in extremely short supply in the continent. The work therefore, concludes that Africa's quest for a permanent seat invariably places a huge burden of responsibility on African leaders to look inwards to improve governance practices on the continent. Accordingly, it recommended reforms of the inherited colonial institutions and policies of injustice and oppression in order to address the fundamental causes of conflicts, underdevelopment and poverty among member states.

Keyword: Reform, Ezulwini Consensus, Security Council, International Community, Power.

Introduction

The need to reorganize the international system to better manage the security and developmental challenges of mankind led to the formation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. The bitter experiences of the First and Second World Wars provided the impetus for this

reorientation. The formation of the UN was intended to stop the use of war and warfare as foreign policy instruments and effectuate the collective security principle, which though was enshrined in the defunct League of Nations, which was grossly abused by the aggressive disposition of some of the major powers. The UN has several objectives embedded in its Charter. They include: to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal right and self-determination of people, to galvanize international cooperation in solving international problems of economic, social, cultural or humanitarian, character and to serve as a centre for harmonizing the action of nations in the attainment of these common goals (UN Charter 79).

In the course of the 79 years of its existence now, the UN could be said to have recorded some successes. For instance, there has not been a major war the magnitude of the First or Second World War, despite many wars in different parts of the world, coupled with the functional involvement of the Organisation in every sphere of human endeavour. However, the seemingly successful workings of the UN are far from satisfactory. So efforts are being made to address its shortcoming through reforms of the Organization.

Consequently, for decades now, there have been agitations for the reform of the UN to make it more relevant to the needs of the international community and in line with changes which have characterized the international system since the end of the cold war. This call has been on two tracks: track one is administrative reform while track two is Security Council reform (Akindele, 2000: 90). Successive Secretaries – General of the body had tried tackling the issue without much success. However, in 1997, the then Secretary General, Kofi Anan embarked upon wide ranging administrative and programme reforms of the UN, which are believed to have greatly improved the functioning of the UN.

Nevertheless, the major challenge has been Security Council reform. The belief is that any reform agenda of the UN without the Security Council will not achieve the desired objective. Accordingly, agitations for the reform of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) have been on the front burner of international discourse for decades now. The debates essentially centers on the

need to extend decision making process of the UN to the wider international community. Several regional powers are engaged in the debates. However, at the forefront of this vexed question is the developing world generally, and Africa in particular. This work focuses on Africa's stand point on the issue of the Security Council reform. The main objective is to explore the implication of Africa's demand for reform of the Security Council for the African body polity.

Clarification of concepts

- **Reform:**

The term, reform is inextricable from the agitations for the enlargement of the UN Security Council. It is the process upon which the agitators predicate the achievement of their objective of securing a permanent seat. Hence, the agitators have consistently emphasized the reform of the Security Council. The term reform is used in several related ways. For example, it means to make better by removing abuses, restore to a better condition (The New Webster's International Dictionary (2020). It also means to make changes (in something) in order to improve it, make better or correct it. The term is synonymous with correct, amend, rectify, redress, remedy among others. (Oxford Learner's Dictionary). Accordingly, agitators believe the Security Council in its present constitution is defective. In other words, the monopolization of the permanent membership and veto power of the Security Council by the permanent Five members – Britain, China, France, Russia and USA, is not only antithetical to the principles of democracy, justice and equity but also hinders the legitimacy of the SC and efficient operation of UN activities. Consequently, the reform of the Security Council or its enlargement will remedy these deficiencies. Therefore, in this study the term, reform of the Security Council will be seen as the expansion of the permanent membership and veto power of the Security Council to include powers beyond the existing permanent five members.

- **Ezulwini Consensus**

The "Ezulwini Consensus" is a position agreed by the African Union (AU) to reform the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). It calls for Africa to have two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats on the council with all the privileges including veto power. The position was

adopted in 2005 by the Foreign Ministers of the African Union as Africa's position on the United Nations Security Council reforms. The consensus was equal to the High level panel on the UN reforms which Kofi Anan constituted in 2003. The agreement was named after Ezulwini, a valley in central Eswatini (then Swaziland), where the initial declaration on the position was made. The consensus has been affirmed at several other African Union Fora (<https://.wikipedia.org.english.ahram.org>).

- **Security Council**

The Security Council (SC) is the United Nation's organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. Article 24 of the UN charter confers the SC with this primary responsibility. Only the Council can determine the nature and existence of a security threat as well as the nature of response, whether non-military or the use of armed force. Its decisions are binding on all members. The SC is composed of 15 members, five of whom are permanent. The five permanent members who are the victors of the Second World War – Britain, China, France, Russia and the USA, are also granted each veto power over substantive decisions of the council. The Council's ten non-permanent members rotate onto the council for two-year terms (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 239, Davies and Woodward, 121). Security Council resolutions require votes from among the 15 members. However, a 'no' vote of any permanent member defeats the resolution. Thus, the veto power and permanent membership of the five victorious WWII powers have in the SC is the bone of contention and focus of agitation.

- **International Community**

The term 'International Community' features often on the discourse on global affairs. Phrases such as 'The international community must act', 'the international community has done nothing', 'the international community condemns this outrage' are common among statesmen (<https://www.cfr.org>). It is a term used in geopolitics and international relations to refer to a broad group of people and government of the world (<https://wikipedia.org>). It is also a term which encompasses various actors that engage in global affairs, including states, non-state organizations

and institutions, international organizations as well as individuals operating without state sanctions (<https://www.cfr.org>).

However, in the context of the present study, the term will be understood as the contemporary configuration of the membership of the United Nations. At the moment, 193 countries are members of the UN, majority of who feel marginalized because of the monopoly and domination of the Security Council by the P. five. Hence, the agitations for reforms.

- **Power**

The concept of power is seen in various dimensions. However, this study adopts the definition that power is the ability or potential to influence others (Goldstein and Perehouse, 45). Goldstein and Perehouse (year) identified several elements, both tangible and intangible, including population, size, intellectual skill GDP, economy, military strength, the possession of which confer the potential to influence others. However, in the context of this study, position or placement, is the major determinant of an actors' ability to influence others. Thus, the position of permanent membership of the P.5 with veto power in the Security Council, is the decisive factor in the polarity of power distribution in the UN.

Justification of study

It is consistent with the efforts to address the issue of injustice; a challenge that has caused so much tension and acrimony not only among nations in the management of the UN, but also within nations. The study is also justified by the fact that the international system is in dire need of structural and institutional reforms to mitigate mistrust and suspicion, and promote confidence among states. In fact, these researchers belief that reform of institutions and policies at both global, regional and national level is imperative in addressing the unprecedentedly deep multi-dimensional crisis plaguing humanity today which have more than ever before called to question the capacity and legitimacy of the independent state as the foundation of political organization and international order (Cini, Mitchelle and Borrigan 16).

The study is further justified on the grounds that Africa's demand for the reform of the United Nation's Security Council invariably places a huge burden of responsibility on African leaders to also embark on structural and institutional reform of their respective nation states as a means to addressing the deplorable domestic conditions of injustice, poverty, corruption, inequality, authoritarianism, infrastructural deficiency and insecurity.

Objectives of study

The core objective of this study is to explore the implication of Africa's demand for reform of the Security Council for the African body polity. Other objectives include the following:

1. To highlight the relevance of the reform to the contemporary international community.
2. To ascertain if Africa's demand for the reform of the Security Council places any burden of responsibility on African leaders.
3. To emphasis the necessity of African leaders to embark on reform of their respective states as a means to redress the internal deficiencies.

Theoretical Framework

The study employs the realist approach. In adopting this framework, the study considers the nature of the structure of the United Nations (UN) as well as the nature of existing relations among members of the UN, generally and the Security Council, in particular. On the strength of a critical analysis of these issues, the authors are persuaded that realism is the most ideal theoretical framework for this study.

Realism developed in relation to the idealist liberal tradition. It descended from the writings of Sun Tzu, Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes Carr and Morgenthau (Goldstein and Pavehouse, 43 – 44, Davies and Woodward, 20, Jackson and Sorensen, 66 – 72). Realists exist in different shades. However, they all coalesce around the common assumption of the centrality of power in international relations, the exercise of power by state toward each other (Goldstein and Pavehouse, 43). Realists believe that the acquisition, possession, deployment and uses of power are the central pre-occupation of political activity. International politics is thus power politics; an

arena of rivalry and conflicts for national interest and state security. The clearest expression of this assumption was offered by Morgenthau, thus “international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aim of international politics power is always the immediate aim (Morgenthau, 29).

Classical realists aver that humans in their competitive relations desire to be in the divers’ seat and do not want to be taken advantage of Carr 1939 and Morgenthau 1948 argued that the human thirst to acquire, maintain and exercise power is motivated by self-interest, and states embodying groups of humanity exhibit identical traits. Neo-realists Waltz (1979) and Mearshmer (1994) compared the states’ need for power to the anarchical nature of the international system; the absence of an overarching authority to erect and enforce rules. However, there is an international hierarchy of power among states. International relations are primarily a struggle between the great powers for domination and security (Jackson and Sorensen, 66).

Realists concede that outside security domain, states can and sometimes do cooperate through international organizations, postulating that international organizations are created and sustained when they are in the interest of the most powerful states, which collude through them to perpetuate their dominance. Realists also judge that the best way to maintain peace in the international system is to strive for a balance of power (Davies and Wordward, 21 – 23). The foregoing assumptions of realism resonate with the politics of rivalry and domination which characterize the UN. Hence, Africa’s quest for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council can be analyzed through the realist lenses, examining how African States seek to navigate the global power structure.

It should be noted that the structure of the UN is the major determinant of the nature of relations among members of the organization. Created in consonance with the realist tradition of inequality by the Charters’ recognition and conferment of special status on its most powerful members, Britain, China, France, Russia and the USA with veto power, the UN was structured to breed discontent, rivalry and conflict, as a result of the superiority accorded the P.5 over the rest of the members. Accordingly, the struggle for dominance and control characterize relations among

UN members arising from the conflict of interest between the P.5 and others. Indeed, the obdurate resistance of the P.5 to the reform of the SC is because the P.5 wishes to preserve their advantaged position (Davies et al., 2014 :117). It is in similar vein that despite the differences between the P.5 members, they are all united in preserving their veto power which enables them to block collective action threatening their interest.

On the contrary, African States and indeed, all pro-reform nations want to redress the international imbalance by ascending to permanent membership, hence, the agitation for reform. In other words, the agitation for reform intends to bring the relative power advantage of the P.5 into a balance. This is typical of realist postulation on the struggle for power by which the advantaged in a relationship will attempt to preserve and defend their privileged position, while the underdog will struggle to change that situation.

Though realism is being criticized for its comparing emphasis on competition and power struggle at the international arena, it remains relevant in this paper as it looks at how Africa's quest for a permanent seat could be achieved. One of the outstanding critics of realism is Alexander Wendt, a leading constructivist theorist. This author argued that the anarchic structure of the international system does not inherently lead to self-help behaviour among states. Instead, he posits that the international system is shaped by ideas and social interactions, encapsulated in his assertion that anarchy is what states make of it. While one notes that no one approach can sufficiently explain an international event, realism, in the context of this study offers better explanation and understanding of the politics in the United Nations Security Council and Africa's quest for permanent representation.

Research design and Methods

This study adopts the qualitative research design. Data are derived from secondary sources, basically textbooks and online publications and analyzed contextually. A synthesis of the literature formed the basis of the research discussions, conclusion and recommendations.

United Nations Security Council and the Clamour for Reform

Since 1965, there has been serious calls for constitutional review of the United Nations Charter to enable reform of the Security Council. The composition of the Council and the exclusive use of the veto power remain at the centre of the vexed issue. Opinion on this matter is polarized. Several regional powers are involved in the debates including Brazil, Germany, Japan, India, Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Senegal, who seek the Security Council enlargement, so as to secure permanent seats of their own. However, at the forefront of the agitations are the developing countries. Their main argument for the demand for reform is hinged on increased membership of the UN and the corresponding need for a new formula to reflect the increase (Obiora & Ajala, 210). In fact, in 2013, Saudi Arabia took the unprecedented decision of declining a non-permanent seat after it was elected to the 2014-2015 term, on the ground that it will not serve in the absence of institutional reform (unsc.cf.org). Apart from the argument on increased membership and the need for a new formula to reflect the increase, another major dynamics of the calls for reform and international concern, particularly during the cold war era, was the misuse of the right of veto by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (Sanusi, 2018; 128).

Status of the Security Council

Among the UN principal organs, the Security Council is unquestionably the most strategic organ, the UN Charter have conferred upon the Council the primary responsibility for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security and agreed that in carrying out this duty, the Council acts on behalf of the entire membership of the UN (Alli, 2005: 22). In other words, the SC is empowered to impose binding obligations as all member states are obligated to comply with its decisions (unsc.cfr.org).

The SC is composed of 15 members, 5 of whom are permanent. The five permanent members also known as the Big Five, who also enjoyed special voting right – veto power (Article 27). It was agreed that the Permanent 5 must agree with every decision of the SC. Unanimity of the P5 would ensure maintenance of international peace and security. Thus, the core of the Security Council lies in the assumption of great power unity. The present position of the Charter is that

decisions on all procedural matters are taken by affirmative vote of any nine members. But on all substantive matters, decisions are taken by affirmative vote of nine members, which must include the concurring votes of all five Permanent Members. It means any permanent members can veto a resolution despite the consent of any number of permanent members (Khanna, 2008: 384). The ten elected members serve two – year, non-consecutive terms and are not afforded veto power. Member contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and equitable geographical distribution – Africa group 3 seats, Asia – Pacific 2 seats, Latin America and Caribbean 2 seats, Eastern European group 1 seat and Western European group and others 2 seats, are the criteria for their election (UNSC. Cfr.org).

A number of factors which border essentially on decision-making and working method of the Security Council, catalyzed debates among UN members about the need for reform of the Security Council. These factors; fixed composition of the permanent members despite increased UN membership arising from the independence of former colonies in Africa and Asia, and the manipulation of the veto power by the permanent 5 in matters which border on the maintenance of peace and security, convinced the international community that the democratic ideal of the UN had been undermined by the minority permanent 5 (Ogwu, 2005: 195). In other words, many UN member-states perceive the Security Council as being hegemonically dominated by the P 5, either collectively when they agree on an issue or individually when they disagree, and with the veto, protecting their national interests (Obiozor & Ajala, 267).

Consequently, India raised the issue of Security Council reform in the General Assembly in 1979, and Nigeria was one of the co-sponsors for the original resolution that led to the inclusion of the matter on the agenda of the 34th session of the General Assembly (Ogwu, 2005: 195). The debates continued and gained momentum in the early 1990s following the end of the cold war especially, during the time of Boutros Ghali and late Kofi Anan, when the General Assembly took concrete decisions and made specific recommendations on the enlargement of Security Council permanent seat, all to no avail. Since 2009, several inter-governmental negotiations (IGN) have

been conducted in an informal plenary of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), still without tangible results, due to the persistence of strong opposition from the P. 5.

The most active groups within the Inter-Governmental Negotiations include the G4 (Brazil, Germany, Japan and India), the Africa group, The Uniting for Consensus group (Italy, Pakistan, Mexico, South Korea, Malta and Turkey), the L. 69 group working in particular to improve the representation of less developed Countries in the Security Council and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group which aims at improving cooperation between Security Council and other UN organs and to reform working methods, (<https://www.ausqartigas-amt.de>).

Issues involved in Security Council Reform

The issue of permanent membership and veto power constitute the fulcrum of Security Council criticism and the demand for its reform as remedial action. We examine them briefly.

i. Enlargement of permanent membership:

In this regard, consideration is on two grounds: regional representation, and economic strength and financial capability.

Regional representation: The Security Council has remained largely unchanged since its inception has undergone a modification in its membership only once in 1965, when the original number of eleven was increased to 15, made up of the same permanent 5 and four additional non-permanent members for a total of 10 in that category (Ogwu, 2005: 195). The resolution containing the amendment called for 10 non-permanent seats to be allocated by geographical areas; Africa 3, Asia 2, Eastern Europe 1, Americas 2, Western Europe and others 2 (Obi: 33). It did not however include permanent membership. Thus, it is argued that membership of the Security Council, has not, particularly since Mid-60s reflected the diversity of interests of all people as majority of the less developed world in Africa, Latin America and Caribbean and Asia, which form the majority of members of the UN have not been permanent members. It is believed that extension of permanent membership to these areas would make participation of the wider international community in the decision making process of the Council which would, in turn, confer legitimacy on the Council and make it more effective in the discharge of its duties. It is therefore assumed that the Security

Council has not enjoyed high legitimacy standing among the less developed countries as well as effectiveness which is best guaranteed and enhanced as a result (Obiora & Ajala: 208).

Economic strength and financial capability as a criterion for new permanent membership is believed to be intended by the developed countries to pave way for Germany and Japan both of whom contribute tremendously to the UN. In fact, Japan and Germany are among the four largest contributors to the UN budgets, coming after the US and China. In specifics, US, China, Japan and Germany contribute 22%, 12%, 8.564% and 6.090% respectively of UN regular budget and 27.89%, 15.21%, 8.56% and 6.09% of UN peace keeping budget respectively (<https://www.auswacrtges>).

It should be noted that support for the enlargement of permanent membership of the Security Council has gained momentum overtime. For instance, the United States has since 1993 supported the accession of permanent membership of Africa, South and East Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Japan and Germany in order to enhance greater participation by major powers (Channelstv.com, Obiozor & Ajala; 213). In 2021, Britain announced its support for Germany receiving a permanent seat. In early 2023, China, France and Germany called for two permanent seats for Africa on the Security Council. In March 2023, the G4 also stressed the need to expand the Council to reflect current international system by incorporating regions not represented on a permanent basis such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America and Caribbean (<https://newyork.un.diplo.de.un-en>). At the end of the 2024 summit of the UNGA in September, member States of the UN resolved to create a new world order. Article 39 of the pact made a commitment to address the historical injustice against Africa alongside Asia-Pacific, and the Caribbean that have fueled their underrepresentation in the UN (dataphyte.com)

ii. The Veto Power

The veto power is another controversial issue in the discussion of the UN reform. Predicated at inception on the unanimity of the permanent members of the Security Council in order to facilitate the maintenance of international peace and security, the veto power, has paradoxically also been the source of the Council's paralysis. In this regard, it is observed that the

veto power has often been recklessly manipulated, especially by the USA and former Soviet Union, now Russia, for parochial national interest to the detriment of the collective interest of the UN. Reference is made to the frequent dead lock in the Council especially during the cold war. Overall, the super power standoff prevented the Council from developing the system of global security envisaged in the Charter and diminished the Council's role (Khanna, 2008:384, Obiozor & Ajala, 219).

It should be emphasized that this attitude of the super powers in respect of the veto power has not changed. For example, the Syrian conflict was difficult to resolve because Russia, sometime joined by China, had used its veto power several times to block UN resolutions aimed at holding Assad's regime accountable for atrocities documented by UN sources until the overthrow of the regime in December 2024. In fact, in July, 2022, Russia vetoed a Security Council resolution meant to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance to over four million people suffering from the Syrian civil war. All these are happening because the great powers have vested interests. Russia has also used its veto power to prevent several Security Council resolutions condemning the conflict in Ukraine ([unsc.cfr.org](https://www.unsc.cfr.org)).

However, within the pro-reform group, there is no consensus on the issue of veto power as diverse opinions have been expressed. For instance, some member states regard the right of veto power as anachronism, dictatorial, unreasonable and undemocratic and therefore should be abolished (Uchegbu, 2005:105). The G5 proposal of 2005 envisages that new members initially dispense with the right of veto and the question be finally clarified at a review conference fifteen years after the amendment of the Charter takes effect. Similarly, Africa's stand on the issue is not definitive. Whereas, the draft resolution sponsored by the African Union Countries in 2005 provided for the same rights and obligations for all members of the Security Council including the right of veto (<https://www.auswartiges.ant.de>). In August, 2024, the Sierra Leonian President, Julius Maada Bio told the Security Council that "Africa wants the veto power abolished. However, if the UN member states wish to retain the veto power, it must be extended to all new members as a matter of justice ([Channelstv.com](https://www.channelstv.com)).

Whatever opinion of the pro-reform groups about the veto power, the major concern is the unwillingness of the P.5 members to compromise the veto power (Channelstv.com). Perhaps, this is evident in the tacit acceptance that the Security Council should have two categories of permanent members -the five original permanent members with veto power and new permanent members without the veto power. This, perhaps, explains why Kofi Anan's proposal did not include the veto power. This may also align with the G4 proposal on the need to push for new permanent members without veto power (<https://www.auswartiges.ant.de>>).

Africa and the Security Council Reform

Africa has been in the forefront of the agitation for the constitutional review of the UN Charter in order to reform the political power structure and decision-making process of the organization. Evidence abound that demonstrates the continent's principled commitment to this cause, as shown below:

It has been observed in the foregoing that when India raised the issue of Security Council reform in the General Assembly in 1979, Nigeria was one of the co-sponsors for the original resolution that led to the inclusion of the issue on the agenda of the 34th session of the Assembly. When in 1993 at its 48th session, the General Assembly constituted an independent working group to address the issue of Security Council reforms; African countries met in Tunis in 1994 and quickly adopted the position that Africa be given two permanent seats in the proposed expanded Security Council. (Lamido: xviii). In the "Ezulwini Consensus", a position adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the African Union in 2005 as Africa's position on the UN reform, the African Union demanded expansion of the Security Council to include 2 permanents and 5 elected seats for Africa. The 'Ezulwini Consensus' was sequel to the high level panel on UN Reforms which Kofi Anan constituted in 2003. In February 2023 in Adis Ababa, Ethiopia, Egypt's President, Abdel – Fattah' El-Sisi charged African leaders at the Consultative Summit of ten Heads of State and Government to remain committed to the Ezulwini Consensus on the demand for two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats for the continent (english.ahram.org.eg). Furthermore, at the Flag installation ceremony at the UN headquarters on January 2023, the East African

representative at the Security Council, Mozambique's Pedro Commisaro Alfonso, declared that Mozambique will push for reforms at the Security Council to address African concern (<https://global.chinadaily.com.ch>). What, then, is African concern? In other words, why do Africa insist on permanent representation at the Security Council?

Rationale for Africa's Demand for Permanent Seat

Many African leaders, policy makers and scholars alike have justified Africa's quest for a permanent seat on several grounds. Some of the opinions are shared below:

According to Lambart, Africa is demanding a permanent seat to enable it to effectively contribute to the peace keeping and conflict resolution of the United Nations Security Council whose agenda is dominated by African issues. (https://www.amazon.com_v/africa). In the view of Augustine, Africa needs a permanent seat so it can take part in discussing issues that directly and indirectly impacts its interest. The author submits that as a non-permanent member, Africa does not play a key role despite constituting nearly 28% of the total membership of the UN. The author further submits that Africa needs a permanent seat because the Council is dominated by African issues (<https://www.dw.cug.org>)

In the opinion of the African Union in the Ezulwini Consensus, Africa's goal is to be fully represented in all decision making organs of the UN particularly the Security Council, the major organ in peace and security matters. It added that the United Nations Security Council is now more important in matters of intervention in the conflicts occurring within the continent and that decisions would become more legitimate and easier to implement if made through democratic process. (<https://archive.globalpolicy.org>). At the United Nations General Assembly of September 21, 2022, leaders of five African Countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Gabon, Ghana and representative of Congo, emphasized the need for a permanent seat because African Continent is battling an unfair multilateral system, as it struggles to recover from covid-19 and deal with the consequences of climate change and with conflict. (www.passblue.com). Africa's quest for a permanent seat is also justified within the context of African marginalization in the Security

Council since the creation of the UN. Therefore, Africa needs a permanent seat as a matter of justice to correct the historical injustice while according the continent's quest for its democratic rights and full representation. (<https://onpolicy.org>, english.ahram.org.eg).

Furthermore, Africa's demand for a permanent seat is rationalized on the premise of the relegation of Africa and issues affecting the continent, especially peace keeping, to the background. It is contended that the UN is not enthusiastic in creating and funding peace keeping activities in Africa because of the undemocratic structure of the Security Council in which Africa has no permanent seat and veto power. Thus, Africa needs permanent seat and veto power to address this relegation. (Saliu, 2016: 182). At the UNCA of September 2024 African leaders including Bola Ahmed Tinubu of Nigeria, Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa and Kenya's Williams Ruto argued that granting Africa a permanent seat will give African countries the respect they deserve in the comity of nations. (dataphyte.com)

Analysis of Africa's position

This study firmly supports Africa's call for the reform of the Security Council to enable the continent's accession to permanent membership of the Security Council for a number of reasons. First, the UN was founded on democratic principle. It should be seen to demonstrate this principle especially now that a great majority of the international community is talking democracy. Therefore, the continued monopolization of the Security Council by the permanent 5 is antithetical to the inbuilt spirit of democracy in the UN. Second, Africa constitutes a large membership at the UN – 54 countries, it contributes enormously to the peace keeping and conflict resolution efforts of the UN. It therefore needs a permanent seat not only as a symbol of encouragement and motivation, but also to remedy the continent historical marginalization. Third, Africa is not exclusive in the quest for democratization of the UNSC. She is rather in tandem with the position of the international community that reforming the Security Council will enhance efficiency of the Council. Africa should not shy away from this general standpoint.

However, a critical analysis of the issues embedded in Africa's demand for permanent seat raises several issues of concern. The following are some reservations: One of the issues of concern

is the very notion of reform, which, as highlighted in the foregoing has remained central to the agitations for improved workings of the UN and believed to hold the key to remedying the deficiencies of the SC. That reform of the SC is thought to be capable of promoting democratization, justice, equity, balance, legitimacy and efficiency of the SC, underscoring the significance of the concept. These researchers are persuaded that the international community is in dire need of reform as an instrument of state craft to improve governance at both national and international levels. And that it is the adversity to reform that is responsible for the agitations and conflicts in most parts of the world.

Another issue that concerns Africa's credibility in demanding for reform of the UN Security Council is that the critical attributes and values of justice, equity and democracy balance, are in extremely short supply on the continent. On the contrary, the African continent is replete with oppression, injustice, vampirism, ethnicity, clientelism, nepotism, politics of Godfatherism, Kleptocratism, in short, internal colonialism. African leaders' demand for the institutional reform of the UN is what they have flagrantly denied their people at home. African people no less need from their leaders a reform of the repressive internal institutions and policies, as solution to the underdevelopment problem facing the continent and its people. It is to be emphasized that the reform of the UN is not more important than reform of African body polity because, both realms of political practice are guided by the same values, interest and expectations – good governance, democracy, equity and justice. The abuse of term limits or sit-tight syndrome, nepotistic inclinations, manipulation of electoral processes and deplorable socioeconomic conditions generally perpetrated by African leaders against their people remain the cause of agitations, Coups de tat, civil wars and general instability and conflict on the continent. Therefore, Africa's demand for reform of the SC invariably places a burden of responsibility for African leaders to also seek to reform their respective nation states.

In a related development, the claim that Africa and African issues, especially peace keeping is relegated by the UN does not reflect the reality of the African situation. It is noteworthy that since 1945, when the UN was created, Africa has had more than 50 UN peace keeping missions far

A Critical Analysis of Africa's Quest for Permanent Seat at United Nations

more than any other region in the world (<https://onpolicy.org>). Beyond numbers, African missions have been hugely intensive and engaging. For instance, in 2006 the UN led eight peace missions in Africa: Burundi, Cote de Ivoire, Liberia, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Western Sahara and Sudan. These missions accounted for over 80 percent of all UN peacekeepers deployed worldwide (Galadima, 2017: 296). In 2014, out of fourteen ongoing missions in three continents, Africa had seven – western Sahara, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Cote de Ivoire, South Sudan, Dafur and Mali (Davies and Woodward: 124 – 125). As at 2020, the UN has completed 24 peace keeping missions in Africa more than any single region in the world. And as at January 2023, out of 12 ongoing UN missions, 6 including the largest mission globally (South Sudan with more than 15,000 military personnel) are in Africa. Others include Western Sahara, Central Africa Republic (CAR) Mali, Congo and Abyei (<https://en.m.wikipedia>, <https://watterdon.net228>, www.cfr.org).

It is evident from the foregoing that peace keeping in Africa has dominated the UN agenda a great deal. This much was highlighted by Augustine using the year 2018 as an example. In 2018, more than 50 percent of UNSC meetings, 60% of its official documents and 70% of its resolutions all largely focused on Africa (<https://www.c/wcng.org>). It is lamentable but instructive that the conflict situation in Africa poses multi-dimensional threat to world peace, security and human welfare due to the quantum of peace keeping responsibilities it bears on the UN. This deplorable situation was captured by a perceptive scholar who submitted that the frequency of intra-state conflicts on the Continent has undoubtedly made Africa a key challenge to the United Nation's efforts in peace operations in the 21st century (Galadinma, 2017: 196). Beyond intervention in peace missions, the UN is also involved in Africa in the related areas of refugee, internally displaced persons, poverty alleviation, human rights, democratization, health, whose neglect by African leaders make them a veritable source of conflict.

Therefore, it is the considered opinion of these authors that if the UN appears hesitant in creating and funding peace keeping missions in Africa, it is because the Organizations is overwhelmed by the prevalence and enormity of conflicts, a predicament for which African leaders

should take responsibility to addressing the fundamental causes. Another issue is the uncertainty about Africa securing a permanent seat. This is due to the unwillingness of the P.5 to compromise the veto power. The challenge posed by the P.5 sustained intransigence suggests that Africa's fixation on securing permanent seat and veto power should not be a foreign policy priority. Rather, Africa should focus attention on addressing the internal deplorable socio-economic and political realities – underdevelopment, human right abuses, poverty, unemployment, authoritarianism etc. issues which also constitute the core of the UN mandate but are grossly neglected by African leaders.

Furthermore, is the issue of how Africa intends to be represented if eventually the continent is guaranteed permanent representation. This concern is predicated on the fact that several external forces have indicated support for Africa's accession to permanent membership, suggesting that Africa's quest for permanent seat is a subject of international manipulation, negotiation and alignment. Yet, Africa needs to be represented on its own stream and not as an appendage of any other power. The ability of Africa to represent itself by itself would speak to its maturity.

CONCLUSION

This study critically examined the issue of Security Council reform from the stand point of Africa's position on the matter. The work firmly supports UN democratization through enlargement of permanent membership of the Council and Africa's representation. In this regard Africa is being realistic as it seeks to occupy pinnacle of decision in the UN. However, Africa has a huge burden justifying its demand, as a result of the prevailing contradictions of oppression, injustice and poverty and general deplorable socioeconomic conditions on the continent, fostered by the unwillingness of the leadership to reform the inherited colonial structures and policies. The unwillingness of the P. 5 to compromise the veto power, the prevalent conflict and instability on the country, as well as the question of how Africa intends to be represented, when eventually it is accorded a permanent seat, are issues that challenge African leadership to look inward for fundamental internal adjustments. Overall, Africa's demand for Security Council permanent

membership seat places a high burden of responsibility on Africa to embark on major internal reforms as a means to improve governance, but also to enhance African states' and leaders' legitimacy and credibility.

Recommendation for policy directions

Consequently, the following recommendations are made for Africans on the way forward in respect of the demand for permanent seat;

First, African leadership should be seen to demonstrate strong commitment to internalizing the notion of reform by restructuring the inherited colonial institutions and policies of injustice and inequity. This will ameliorate the deplorable living conditions on the continent and attract needed credibility for Africa's demand for the UN democratization.

Second, African leaders should, as a matter of policy address the fundamental causes of conflict and instability in the continent. These include personalization of power, manipulation of ethnicity and religion, human rights abuse, marginalization, etc.

Third, Africa must decide to represent itself on its own term when eventually the continent is accorded permanent seat.

Fourth, fixation on securing permanent seat and veto power should not be Africa's foreign policy priority, rather, Africa leaders should focus attention on addressing the internal deplorable socio-economic and political realities.

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