

Reforming the United Nations Security Council: A Case for Nigeria and South Africa as Permanent Members

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Abstract

This study delved into the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a vital organ of the UN, examining two models proposed by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and assessing global reactions towards reforming the Security Council (SC) within the UN framework. Employing the interview method, insights were gathered from experts across diverse nations proficient in council reform and the potential inclusion of Nigeria and South Africa as prime candidates from Africa for permanent UNSC membership. Findings underscored that council reform holds promise for bolstering international peace and security, advocating for the democratization of the council through the inclusion of African and other regional representatives.

Recommendations put forth emphasize the imperative for Nigeria, South Africa, and other African states to bolster diplomatic efforts, underscoring their capabilities and preparedness to the international community. Concurrently, emphasis is placed on enhancing domestic conditions encompassing economic development, democratization, human rights, and governance to bolster acceptance of the "big five" within the UNSC and the broader global community.

Furthermore, in the event of UNSC reform stagnation, entities such as the European Union (EU), African Union (AU), or the Arab League are urged to fortify their capacities, potentially assuming greater roles in peacekeeping and security within their respective regions, either with or without UNSC directives. Heightened inequality within the council may prompt states to channel grievances through regional representatives, potentially alleviating pressure for UNSC reform, albeit potentially diminishing the council's stature.

Keywords:

United Nations, United Nations Security Council, Reforms, Permanent Member States, Veto Power

1. Introduction

In 1945, at the conclusion of World War II, the United Nations (UN) was established with the primary aim of serving as a principal forum for managing and mitigating threats to the international order. To achieve this objective, the active participation of the victorious nations was deemed essential, leading to the creation of the Security Council (SC). The SC comprises five permanent members: the United States of America, the Republic of China, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the French Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These members were granted permanent seats and the power to veto any council resolutions. Additionally, there are six non-permanent members, selected according to a specific distribution pattern among the other UN member states.

Despite on-going calls for reform, the structure of the UN Security Council has remained largely unchanged since its inception. Stromgen (2007) notes that while no consensus has been reached, various proposals have emerged over the past decade, advocating for a more representative, accountable, legitimate, democratic, transparent, effective, and fair council, reflecting democratic values. In contrast, significant organizational reforms have occurred globally, such as the transformation of the European Union (EU) into a supranational decision-making entity and the replacement of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) with the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, the

UNSC has not undergone similar changes, despite the evolving global landscape. Critics argue that the UN has not fulfilled its foundational aims and objectives, prompting calls for reform, particularly within the SC, which many perceive as ineffective. Saudi Arabia, for instance, has notably declined to participate in the SC, highlighting its dissatisfaction. Scholars, writers, academics, member states, and even UN Secretaries-General have advocated for SC reform, yet substantial amendments have been resisted.

Despite numerous attempts by UN member states and others to reform the SC, significant progress has been elusive, even in the face of changing international dynamics and emerging challenges. The predominant criticism is that a few powerful member states dominate the decision-making process and utilize their veto power to further their interests, undermining democratic principles. African states, in particular, have frequently expressed their desire for representation in the SC. As former Pakistani Ambassador to the UN, Ahmed Kamal, aptly stated, in a democracy, no one should be more equal than others, describing the veto power as outdated and undemocratic—a sentiment echoed by many African countries.

The main objective of this paper is to indicate why Nigeria and South Africa are best suited to represent Africa as permanent members in the United Nations Security Council. The specific objectives include:

- To explore the UNSC as an organ of the UN,
- To provide an analysis of the two models proposed by the United Nations former Secretary General Kofi Annan, and
- To provide the reactions of the world towards reforming the SC organ of the UN.

2. Review of Related Literature

The debate and efforts to reform the Security Council (SC) have been the focus of extensive academic discourse. Scholars have analysed SC reform from various perspectives. Cox (2009) highlights Annan's assertion that the world cannot continue to be governed by the powers that won World War II, emphasising the need for cooperation in an interdependent world. Cox notes that previous reforms, such as the 1963 resolution increasing non-

permanent members from six to ten, aimed to enhance geographical representation due to the growing number of member states. Representation remains a key focus for reformers.

Freiesleben (2008) reviews SC reform efforts from 1945-2003, arguing that failed attempts at reform highlight divisions within the General Assembly (GA) and could negatively impact other debates. Calls for reform include both non-permanent and permanent seats, with countries like Italy, Spain, Argentina, Canada, South Korea, and Pakistan advocating for more non-permanent seats based on regional representation. The African Union (AU) demands two permanent seats with veto power for Africa.

Butler (2012) identifies three main issues in SC reform: the composition of the SC, including the number and selection of member states; voting and decision-making processes, including veto power; and the overall role of the SC in managing international peace and security.

Weiss (2003) examines the historical failures of the SC, noting procedural obstacles such as the veto and membership issues. Ronzitti (2010) outlines reasons for SC reform, including the emergence of new states, the SC's increased role post-Cold War, its legislative functions, new threats, and the use of force by states. Additionally, the need for reform is underscored by the growing UN membership.

Reforming the SC has been addressed in numerous UN documents, including reports by the Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 2005 report.

3.The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Brief History

The United Nations (UN) emerged from the League of Nations (LN), established after World War I (WWI) to prevent future conflicts. However, the LN failed to prevent another global conflict, leading to World War II (WWII) and the eventual dissolution of the LN. Despite this failure, the core idea of maintaining peace and resolving disputes persisted, ultimately leading to the creation of the UN.

The United Nations declaration was signed on January 1, 1942, by President Roosevelt of the United States, Prime Minister Churchill of the

United Kingdom, Maxim Litvinov of the USSR, and T.V. Soong of China. The following day, twenty-two additional states signed the declaration. The UN was formally established in 1945 by 51 nations with the primary goals of maintaining international peace and security, fostering friendly relations among nations, and promoting social progress, better living standards, and human rights.

During its formation, the UN's founders reflected on the guiding principles and multiple failures of the LN. While some acknowledged the LN's capacity to discuss significant global issues, it was evident that the organization was structurally flawed and ineffective in deterring aggression and maintaining international stability. Key shortcomings included the United States' absence from the LN, despite it being initially proposed by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, resulting in a lack of financial and political support. Additionally, the LN suffered from poor management due to overlapping duties between its Assembly and Council, and the requirement for unanimous resolutions further hampered its effectiveness. This lack of collective security led member states to prioritize their national interests over collective goals. These deficiencies were keenly noted by the nations represented at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1945 (MMSC, 2012).

In response, the delegates at the San Francisco Conference in 1945 agreed that the new UN should include a principal organ dedicated to promoting international peace and security. This led to the establishment of the Security Council (SC) as a smaller body tasked with maintaining international peace and security. The UN Charter also established other main bodies, including the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice (ICJ), Secretariat, and the Security Council. This paper will focus solely on the SC.

The UN Security Council was created under Chapter V of the UN Charter and was charged with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Initially, the SC comprised eleven members: five permanent members and six non-permanent members. In 1965, this composition changed to fifteen members, with the five permanent members (USA, USSR, France, UK, and China)

retaining their seats. The ten non-permanent members are selected from various regions of the world:

- The Western European and other groups;
- The Eastern European group;
- The Latin American and Caribbean group;
- The Asian Group; and
- The African Group

The division among the 10 non-permanent members is as follows:

- Africa – 3 members,
- Western Europe and others – 2 members,
- Latin America and the Caribbean – 2 members,
- Asia – 2 members
- Eastern Europe – 1 member (Rosenberg, 2012)

It is worth noting to state that in 1973, the People's Republic of China replaced Taiwan and after the fall of the USSR in 1991, the USSR's spot was replaced by Russia in the UNSC.

Furthermore, "the SC has the power to establish subsidiary bodies as needed for the performance of its function. All existing committees and working groups are comprised of the fifteen members of the Council. While standing committees are chaired by the President of the Council, rotating on a monthly basis, other committees and working groups are chaired or co-chaired by designated members of the Council who are announced on an annual basis by a Note of the President of the Security Council. The mandate of subsidiary organs, whether they are committees or working groups, can range from procedural matters such as documentation and procedures, meetings away from headquarters to substantive issues which include sanctions regimes, counter-terrorism, and peacekeeping operations" (UN, 2001).

"The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) are subsidiary organs of the Security Council within the terms of article 29 of the Charter. As such they are dependent on the UN in administrative and financial matters, although as judicial institutions, they are independent of any one State or group of States, including their parent body, the Security Council" (UN, 2001, *ibid.*). Hence, its

decisions are binding to all member states of the UN. Thus, this makes it the most powerful body of the UN among other organs. The SC held its first meeting on January 17, 1946 and has been taking actions for peace ever since.

Functions of the Security Council

Article 167 of the UN charter states that:

“By adhering to the charter of the United Nations, all member states recognize that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of the international peace and security and agree to bind by its decision. It is therefore of vital importance not only to the organization but to the world, that the council should be equipped to carry out the responsibility and that its decision should *command worldwide respect*”. (UN, 1945)

During the establishment of the UN, the SC was established to be able to act decisively to prevent or remove threat. Hence, the functions of the SC, amongst others, are stipulated clearly in the UN Charter Article 23:

- In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, it members confer on the Security Council responsibility for the maintenance of the international peace and security and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.
- In discharging these duties the Security Council shall in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.
- The Security Council shall submit annual and, when necessary special reports to the GA for its consideration. (UN, 1945)

However, the UNSC has helped prevent many crises from escalating into wider conflict. Thus, “saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war was the main motivation for creating the United Nations, whose founders lived through the devastation of two world wars. Since its creation, the UN has often been called upon to prevent disputes from escalating into war, or to help restore peace when armed conflict does break out, and to promote lasting peace in societies emerging from wars” (UN, 2001). It created opportunity for negotiation through the use of mediators.

Membership: Permanent and Non-permanent

Membership in an international public (intergovernmental) organisation may be exclusive or inclusive, limited or universal (Bennett and Oliver, 2002). The UN's membership is universal, whereas the UNSC's is limited, comprising only 15 out of 193 UN member states. The UNSC includes both permanent and non-permanent members. It consists of 15 members: five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US) and ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms, chosen based on geographical representation (Howarth, 2013).

Initially, the UNSC had 11 members: five permanent and six non-permanent. However, GA resolution 1991A (XVIII) (1963) amended the charter to increase non-permanent members from six to ten. The ten non-permanent members are now elected as follows: five from African and Asia-Pacific states, one from Eastern European states, two from Latin American and Caribbean states, and two from Western European and other states (Howarth, 2013). This amendment took effect in 1965 after ratification by more than two-thirds of UN member states, including the P5.

The P5, the permanent members of the UNSC, were originally the victorious powers after WWII. In 1971, the People's Republic of China was awarded the Republic of China's seat in the UN by General Assembly Resolution 2758. In 1991, the Russian Federation acquired the seat originally held by the Soviet Union (University of Macedonia, 2007). Each permanent member has veto power, allowing any single member to block any resolution. Non-permanent members, elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms starting on 1st January, are replaced five at a time each year, selected based on regional representation.

Veto

“Veto” is Latin for “I forbid,” a powerful tool used to unilaterally block official actions, especially legislation. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as the constitutional right to reject a decision or proposal made by a law-making body. In the Security Council, the veto is a significant tool wielded exclusively by the five permanent members (China, Russia, the UK,

the USA, and France) to block any draft resolution against their will, regardless of international support.

The veto was intended to ensure the big five could prevent actions they disagreed with. It remains a highly debated issue, with some advocating for its removal and others defending its necessity. For instance, on 29th September 2012, New Zealand's Foreign Minister, Murray McCully, called for the permanent members to give up their veto rights on issues involving atrocities, citing the Council's inaction in Syria as damaging to its credibility. Conversely, the veto is seen as essential due to significant disparities in human rights and freedoms among UN member states.

The first veto was cast in February 1946 by the USSR to block a resolution on foreign troop withdrawal from Lebanon and Syria. Since then, the permanent members have frequently used their veto power. Recent examples include China and Russia vetoing a resolution threatening Chapter 7 sanctions against Syria on 19th July 2012, and the US vetoing a draft resolution condemning Israeli settlements in the West Bank on 18th February 2011. The use of the veto has decreased post-Cold War but saw renewed use over the Syrian conflict, drawing widespread criticism. Saudi Arabia even declined a Council seat, citing its failure to resolve the conflict. Russia and China have consistently vetoed resolutions threatening sanctions against Syria's government, highlighting the contentious nature of the veto power.

Reforming the Council

The UNSC, the most powerful UN body, faces criticism and calls for reform. Many member states see it as flawed in promoting international peace and security. Reform debates focus on membership and working methods. At a 1994 conference, experts argued the Council should be more democratic, accountable, and less a geopolitical tool for major powers.

Reforming the UNSC is widely accepted but contentious. Ronzitti (2010) highlights reasons for reform, including new states, the SC's increased post-Cold War role, its legislative power (UN Charter art.25), new threats (terrorism, WMDs), and use of force (UN Charter art.51). Key issues in the reform debate include:

- **Membership Categories:** Expanding permanent and non-permanent seats. The G4 and African Group support more permanent seats with veto power.

- **Veto Power:** Controversial as it can block timely action. New Zealand's Foreign Minister (2012) urged the P5 to forgo vetoes in mass atrocity cases.

- **Council Size:** Expansion to include more representatives. A high-level panel (2004) proposed adding nine seats distributed across regions.

- **Working Methods:** Enhancing transparency, accountability, and participation. The Open-Ended Working Group (1993) addressed these issues.

- **Geographical Representation:** Article 23 of the UN Charter emphasises equitable geographical distribution in selecting non-permanent members, necessitating Council expansion.

Calls for reform continue, aiming for a more representative and effective UNSC.

Historical Background of the Reforms

Any change in the membership of the SC requires a two thirds vote from the GA, which includes all the permanent members. The UN Charter has been amended only thrice. Twice to include the changes in the number of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) seats and once in 1963, the number of non-permanent members in the council was increased from six to ten and these took effect and entered into force on 31 August 1965. That is to say, the quest for equal representation in the council has been there since its formation. Furthermore, with Boutros Boutros Ghali becoming the Secretary General of the UN in 1992, the reform discussion was brought back again into its agenda. At this time, Japan and Germany had become a major contributor to the UN and started demanding for a permanent seat in the council. Also, India and Brazil been influential in their respective region joined the race for two permanent seats. These groups of four countries later formed the G4.

In opposing the G4, countries such as Spain, Italy, Mexico, Argentina, Pakistan, South Korea came together to call for the expansion of the non-permanent seat in which members will be elected in regional bases. "In 1997, there was a strong push to get Germany and

Japan a permanent seat in the council. The quest faced many shortcomings that eventually derailed the idea and efforts. Many delegations opposed any more permanent members since they would create more arbitrary distinctions between member states. Other delegations felt it was unfair to only add Germany and Japan since it would elevate yet another European State and make the council even more unrepresentative of the world's people" (Paul, 1997).

These led to the African Group requesting for two permanent seats noting that large part of the council's agenda is concentrated on the region and on the bases of historical injustice. "After the US led Iraq war, Kofi Annan, the then-General Secretary formed a high level panel on threats, challenges, and changes to report on different aspects of the UN including the SC. This panel recommended two models regarding the enlargement of the UNSC" (Okhovat, 2011). Thus, both models recommended an expansion of the SC on a geographical bases. Since then, there have been other discussions about reforming the council such as the intergovernmental negotiations, chaired by Zahir Tanin, The Permanent Representative of Afghanistan.

Kofi Annan and the 2005 Reform Proposal

Kofi Alta Annan is of Ghanaian origin who was born in April 8, 1938 and a diplomat who served as the seventh Secretary General of the UN from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2006. One of his main aims as a Secretary General of the UN was a comprehensive programme of reform aimed at strengthening the organisation and making the international system more effective. He was a constant advocate for human rights, the rule of law, the millennium development goal and Africa, and sought to bring the organisation closer to the global society by developing ties with civil society, the private sector and other partners. Also, Mr. Annan undertook wide ranging diplomatic initiatives such as helping to ease the transition to civilian rule in Nigeria in 1998 and his effort to solve the Cyprus questions among others.

A greater part of Annan's efforts were placed in reforming the SC. In 2002, his report entitled "*An agenda for Further Change*" described the types of reform possible for the organisation. In 2003, he told the GA 'I respectfully suggest to you Excellencies, that

in the eyes of your peoples the difficulty of reaching agreement does not excuse your failure to do so. If you want the council's decision to command greater respect, particularly in the developing world, you need to address the issue of its composition with greater urgency'.

Also, "in 2004 the high level panel report was presented. Annan had chosen a panel of international politicians and diplomats to point out the greatest threats against the security as a global issue. Their work amounted into two types of reform. These types were later used when Kofi Annan in 2005 presented the report '*In Large Freedom: towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*' as the two method best suitable for reforming the Security Council" (Stromgen, 2007).

3.1.3 The 2005 Reform Proposal

In 2005, Annan's report '*In Large Freedom: Toward Development, Security and Human Rights for All*' drew recommendation from the high-level panel which recommended the enlargement of the UNSC from 15 seats to 24. "Model A proposes the creation of six new permanent seats without veto right and three new two years non-permanent seats. Model B does not provide for any new permanent seats but creates a new category of eight seats for a renewable four period as well as an additional non-permanent seat for a two years period" (Marten, 2005). These would increase the number of the SC from 15 to 24.

Although in the report, no candidates were identified by Annan as qualified for the both models. According to Blum, "it is no hard to see which states the panel has had in mind for the new seats. The permanent seats in the Model A would go to Germany, giving Europe one seat, and two seats for Asia and The Pacific represented by India and Japan. Brazil would get the seats for the Americas and Nigeria and Egypt; alternatively South Africa would get the African seats. The semi-permanent seats of Model B would go to Germany and Italy for the European seats, the Asia and the Pacific seats would go to India and Japan. For African seats Nigeria would receive one, whilst other would rotate between Egypt and South Africa. In the Americas one seat would go to Brazil, the other one rotating amongst Argentina, Mexico, and Canada" (Blum, 2005).

We think Model A would not at all solve the legitimacy problem because of the lack of veto power to the new permanent members. Also, the other problem with Model A is a great difficulty that the choice of the proposed six new permanent members will involve precisely because permanence is acquired. Thus, it will create more difficulty in collective security. On the other hand, Model B is both flexible and more reformable from within and is more preferable to Model A.

World Reactions

Because of the changing circumstances of the international system, there are needs for a reform in the council, which have drawn large interest from all member States. Here, we explain the reactions of the big five towards the reform proposal. However, the G4 – Japan, Germany, Brazil and India came together in July 6, 2005 presenting a draft for the GA towards permanent membership of the council. The draft is tending towards enlarging the council permanent seat from five to 11.

The United States

“Whether progress will be made on the council reform debate depends on the US said senior Japanese foreign ministry official” (Teng, 2003) The US stated categorically that they supported an enlargement of the council. The US found the council more important than ever. Thus, any proposal threatening the effectiveness of the council will be opposed by the US. However, to the US there are criteria for any enlargement of the council such as the enlargement of the council would be based on military capacity, population, spokesmen for human rights and democracy, financial contribution to the UN, and geographical balance. The counter measurement on terrorism would also be a factor. The US is fearful that it will lose its sovereignty if their veto is ever diluted.

The United Kingdom and France

The United Kingdom and France holds similar views on reforming the UNSC. Both are in support of Germany, Brazil, India, and Japan for a permanent seat, and permanent seats for Africa. More so, a council more transparent and better engaged with other UN bodies would enable the UN member States to better achieve the goals and objective of the organization. On a certain stage, the UK was

of different idea to France. Contrary to France, the UK believes that they do not consider the veto power as a necessary feature for the permanency or being the interest of the UN. Furthermore, Britain has long been consistent in its support for an expanded UNSC. Robin Cook, former Secretary of State for foreign and commonwealth affair was in support of expansion in his statement to the GA in 1997. On the other hand, French former President Chirac once made a statement in support of SC expansion. The aim cited was strengthening the SC to make it carry more international legitimacy. Chirac also stated that since the formation of the SC, there are countries that were important for political reasons, demographic reasons and economic reasons.

The Russian Federation

The idea of reforming the council is not a top priority for Russia. Nevertheless, the Russian Federation itself accepted the need for the reforming of the council as a result of new world realities. Russia has a “proposal to create a better geographical balance and therefore, made the inclusion of developing countries in the council of great importance. One thing the Russian Federation firmly expressed was that there would be no diminishing measures taken towards the duties and privileges for the current permanent members therein included the right to veto” (Denisov, 2005). Furthermore, in a 1999 statement to the working group on SC reform, a Russian representative said that Veto is crucial to the current council’s ability to function effectively and to arrive at balanced and sustainable decision.

The People’s Republic of China

It is of the interest of China not to make any major change to the council because it is already a veto holding SC member. However, for the purpose of enhancing the council’s capability to respond to global threats and challenges, China has given its support to gradual reform. In reforming the council, China believes that the reform should be multifaceted, which includes both the enlargement of the membership and the strengthening of the working methods. The enlargement must give necessary importance to increasing the representation and voice of the developing countries. This is noted because 2/3 of the whole UN membership are

from the developing countries, but they are seriously under represented on the SC. China also uphold the principle of geographical balance and reflect the representation of different cultures and civilisations.

African States

The AU sees the reform of the council as a means to stake its own claim in the international politics. The African Group argues that the current membership in the Security Council is unacceptable and calls for an enlargement in both permanent and non-permanent seats. It states that Africa should have nothing less than two permanent seats with all the privileges of the current big five. The Group also claims that better African representation in the council will contribute to the maintenance of peace and security in the region.

Africa and the SC

In 1945, the United Nations (UN) was established by 51 founding member states, with the Security Council (SC) comprising 11 members: 5 permanent and 6 non-permanent. In 1965, following decolonization and an increase in UN membership, the SC expanded to 15 members, adding 4 non-permanent seats while the P5 retained their permanent status. By 1991, UN membership had surged to 166 states, prompting calls for further SC reform to enhance representation. According to Article 108 of the UN Charter, any amendments require approval by two-thirds of the General Assembly and all P5 members (Muller, 2006). Critics argue that a few powerful member states dominate the UN decision-making process, using their veto power for self-interest, which is seen as undemocratic. African states have long sought greater representation in the SC, currently holding three non-permanent seats (Nigeria, Chad, and Rwanda). They advocate for two permanent seats with veto power, citing that over 75% of UNSC engagements involve African affairs (Jonathan, 2013). The Africa Group, with 54 members, is the largest regional group in the UN.

In 2012, 69.81% of UNSC resolutions concerned Africa, and by November 2013, 66.66% of resolutions involved African states (Security Council Report, 2013). Despite this, Africa lacks a permanent SC member and veto

power, leaving the continent without a decisive voice in international affairs.

The pressure for African representation intensified with the Ezulwini Consensus of the African Union (AU) in 2005, which demanded two permanent and two non-permanent seats with veto rights for Africa. The AU's selection of African representatives has been challenging, with countries like Senegal, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, and Libya expressing interest (African Union Monitor, 2005).

The UN's criteria for new SC members include significant financial, diplomatic, and military contributions to the UN, broader representation, enhanced democracy and accountability, and maintained effectiveness. Despite this, the AU has not established a selection criterion for permanent seats. Based on these factors, Nigeria and South Africa are proposed to represent Africa in the SC permanent seats.

Nigeria and the UNSC Permanent Seat

Nigeria, officially the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is a federal state consisting of 36 states with its capital in Abuja. Located in West Africa, Nigeria is bordered by Benin to the west, Chad and Cameroon to the east, and Niger to the north. Its southern coast lies on the Gulf of Guinea. With over 500 ethnic groups, the largest are the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous in the world (Library of Congress, 2008). Rich in oil reserves, Nigeria gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1960.

Upon independence on October 1, 1960, Nigeria joined the UN, becoming its 99th member on October 7, 1960. The UN was the first international organization Nigeria joined, and it has played a significant role in Nigeria's diplomacy. In his inaugural speech at the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa committed Nigeria to active participation in the UN's work (Chinade, 2010). Shortly thereafter, Nigeria contributed troops to the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, marking its acceptance as a valued UN member.

Nigeria has served as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) five times: 1966-1967, 1978-1979, 1994-1995, 2010-2011, and 2014-2015. Nigeria supports

UNSC expansion and reform, advocating for equitable African representation. President Goodluck Jonathan emphasized the need for Africa's presence on the UNSC to ensure fair global governance (All Africa, 2013).

Among African nations, Nigeria is highly qualified for a permanent UNSC seat due to its population, economic strength, and diplomatic influence. Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and the largest black nation globally, with a population exceeding 160 million. Nigeria's geo-strategic location, central in Africa, enhances its accessibility and influence across the continent.

Nigeria is a leading contributor to international peacekeeping, ranking as the fifth-largest troop contributor globally. It has participated in 73% of UN peacekeeping missions, including significant operations in Liberia, Somalia, Lebanon, Rwanda, and more. Nigeria initiated the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) for peacekeeping in Liberia and Sierra Leone and has provided substantial financial aid to African nations.

Economically, Nigeria is one of Africa's largest economies and markets. It has consistently paid its UN dues, supporting its claim for a permanent UNSC seat. Nigeria was a founding member of the OAU, now the AU, and has been active in regional initiatives such as ECOWAS and NEPAD.

Given its contributions and capabilities, Nigeria's bid for a permanent UNSC seat is legitimate. Nigeria's extensive involvement in peacekeeping, financial support, and regional leadership positions it well to represent Africa effectively on the UNSC.

South Africa and the Permanent Seat

South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa, is located at the southern tip of Africa. It is bordered by Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to the north, Swaziland and Mozambique to the east, and encloses Lesotho. With a population of nearly 53 million, it is the 24th most populous nation globally.

As one of the 51 founding members of the UN in 1945, South Africa was suspended by the UN General Assembly on November 12, 1974, due to international opposition to its apartheid regime. It was readmitted in 1994 following its transition to democracy. Since then, South African leaders have emphasized the centrality of the UN in their foreign policy. South Africa

has served as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) during 2007-2008 and again in 2011-2012.

South Africa advocates for comprehensive UNSC reform, reflecting the global order of the 21st century and supporting the African mandate. Among African states, South Africa is well-positioned for a permanent seat on the UNSC due to its contributions to peace, security, and stability in Africa. South Africa has played a leading role in resolving conflicts in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Ivory Coast. Post-apartheid, South Africa has promoted African solidarity and cooperation, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, disaster relief, and development assistance, establishing itself as a responsible regional power (Yong, 2012).

Despite other competitive states like Egypt, Kenya, and Senegal, South Africa's diplomatic leadership stands out. Transitioning from apartheid to democracy in the early 1990s, South Africa has demonstrated superior moral leadership in the region. Figures like Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have enhanced its reputation in conflict resolution.

South Africa is the only African member of the G20 and BRICS, boasting the continent's largest economy with a stable political system and strong GDP. It accounts for about 22% of Africa's GDP, with abundant mineral resources, a solid industrial foundation, a good investment environment, and an internationalized economic system (Lin, Peking University).

As a model for democracy, South Africa is notable for being the first and only country to voluntarily dismantle its nuclear weapons. It has a commendable record of democratic transitions, including its peaceful move from apartheid to democracy. South Africa has consistently met its financial obligations to the UN, paying its dues on time since 1996.

Given these factors, South Africa's bid for a permanent UNSC seat is justified. It aims to contribute actively to making the UNSC more democratic, transparent, and responsive to the needs of all member states.

4. Summary of the Interviews

To explore opinions on reforming the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the potential inclusion of Nigeria and South Africa as

permanent members, we interviewed experts from academia, consulates, political analysts, and top government officials.

A professor of international relations at Cyprus International University emphasised the inevitability of UNSC reform due to post-war geopolitical changes. She mentioned that the structure would likely include new members like Germany, Japan, India, and potentially African countries. She identified economic challenges and corruption as significant obstacles for African states seeking permanent membership. She believes Nigeria and South Africa have the military, economic, and diplomatic capabilities to represent Africa but need to resolve their internal crises first. She argued that their inclusion would democratise the council rather than primarily enhance international peace and security.

A National Information Officer at the UN Information Centre in Lagos expressed scepticism about adding new permanent members due to the foundational purpose of the council. He noted that reforms are more feasible in economic rather than security organs and that changes to permanent membership could cause instability. He highlighted corruption and foreign debt as major hurdles for African states. He stated that no African state currently meets the criteria for permanent membership due to internal issues like corruption and human rights abuses but acknowledged Nigeria and South Africa as potential candidates if they address these challenges. He specifically mentioned the Boko Haram insurgency as a setback for Nigeria.

A member of the UN Humanitarian Advisory Team in Abuja believes that pressure from member states could lead to UNSC reform sooner than expected but noted delays due to uncertainties about how new members would behave. She sees the UK and France as vulnerable to losing their seats to the EU. She identified the ability of African states to contribute to international peace and security as a primary challenge. She noted that Africa is already represented by two non-permanent seats and that alignment with either the US or Russia could influence decisions. She views Nigeria and South Africa as the most capable African candidates due to their economic and political roles.

A resource person at the South African Consulate Information Centre in Abuja acknowledged the difficulty of reforming the UNSC due to veto power but stressed the necessity for increased authority and legitimacy. She cited the lack of a unified African voice as a setback, illustrated by Nigeria and South Africa's differing stances on the Ivory Coast post-election crisis. She supports Nigeria and South Africa's bid for permanent membership, highlighting their successful humanitarian interventions and economic strengths. She emphasized that the current UNSC structure does not reflect the modern international system and that including African states would improve its legitimacy and capacity to manage African issues.

Interview Analysis

Our interviews reveal a consensus on the need for UNSC reform and the potential inclusion of Nigeria and South Africa as permanent members. However, significant challenges such as internal crises, corruption, and economic issues must be addressed. Experts also note the geopolitical complexities and the necessity for African states to present a unified front. Despite these challenges, there is optimism about the capabilities of Nigeria and South Africa to contribute effectively to the UNSC if reforms are implemented.

5. Conclusion

For over 60 years, the P5 have dominated decisions in global economic, political, military, and social affairs. This exclusivity has spurred countries to seek greater participation in the UNSC. Since 1945, there have been ongoing calls for UNSC reform. The 60th anniversary of the UN saw renewed demands for change.

Reforming the UNSC is a contentious issue among member states and scholars, with little progress made despite decades of debate. The P5 are reluctant to dilute their influence by allowing new permanent members. However, given the significant global changes since 1945, maintaining the status quo is undemocratic.

Two major areas require reform: veto power and membership. This paper focuses on expanding UNSC membership to include Nigeria and South Africa, enhancing representation and democratisation. These

nations seek permanent seats to contribute to international peace and stability.

Nigeria and South Africa have the credentials for UNSC membership but must improve their internal conditions, such as economic development, democratization, human rights, and governance, to gain support. Scholars argue that Nigeria and South Africa, with their military, human, and financial resources, are the best candidates to represent Africa.

Nigeria's bid is legitimate as it can represent African and black interests globally. South Africa, with its strong economy and G-20 membership, is also a credible candidate. Both nations will remain influential in Africa and international affairs, regardless of their UNSC status.

Today's global challenges require coordinated efforts among UNSC members. Reforming the UNSC is necessary to ensure it remains a strong international organization. The GA's push for reform reflects the outdated nature of the current UNSC structure.

To achieve effective reform, an interagency consensus on criteria for new permanent members is needed. African states should focus on strengthening the AU and promoting unity to prevent external control. Nigeria and South Africa must cooperate to advance African issues, especially UNSC reform.

If the UNSC fails to reform, regional organizations like the EU, AU, or Arab League may take on greater peacekeeping roles. This shift could reduce the UNSC's influence. To promote international peace, the study offers recommendations for effective reform.

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