

Reforms of the United Nations' Security Council to Ensure Equity and Efficiency: An Argument for Selected Emerging Countries' Inclusion

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Abstract

In recent years, policymakers and analysts have called for the UN Security Council to undergo reform as soon as possible to better reflect the current world system and modern realities. The legitimacy, fairness, and efficiency of the Council have been questioned because some academics argue that unless the Council is restructured to consider the geopolitical realities of the modern international system and recent shifts in world politics, its credibility is at risk. This study critically examines the need for reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to align with the changing global power structure of the 21st century. Created in the aftermath of World War II, the current composition of the UNSC disproportionately favours a few permanent members, marginalising emerging powers and underrepresented regions such as Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. This imbalance has raised questions about the Council's legitimacy, accountability, and ability to address modern global security challenges. To contribute to this discussion, this paper considers some emerging countries applying for permanent membership in the UNSC, assessing their contributions to the UN and using those contributions to support their eligibility.

Keywords: United Nations, United Nations Security Council, Reform, Responsibility, & Contribution

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The formation of the United Nations (UN) replaced the League of Nations after it failed to maintain world order. Unlike the League of Nations, the UN has maintained world peace since its establishment. A significant research and analysis have described the organisation as the most credible and largest multilateral international organisation since its establishment in 1945 (Coppola, 2015, pp. 588-680). At its inception, there were 51 founding members. It currently comprises 193 sovereign states (UN Charter, Article 24[1], 1945). Similarly, the UN has, since its establishment, promoted the cause of humanity, ranging from peace to development, including economic and human development through its specialised agencies such as the UNDP. At its foundation stage, the UN Charter created six (6) principal organs, with each organ mandated to execute inimitable functions. One of the organs of the UN is the Security Council (SC). The UN Charter stipulates the Security Council's main function as the maintenance of international peace and security through the concept of collective security (UN Charter, Article 24[1], 1945). This was

after the plague of World War I and World War II, claims Erik Suy (Erik, 2004, pp. 7-25). The decisions of the council are binding on the member states (UN Charter, Article 24[1], 1945).

Considering that the current organisation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mostly reflects post-World War II power dynamics, the urge for reform stems from the need to reflect modern global realities. The legitimacy and efficacy of the Council are compromised by the permanent members' overrepresentation of Western countries and the exclusion of significant emerging nations (Annan, 2005). Although their economic and political power is increasing, regions like Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, which are home to a sizable share of the world's population, remain underrepresented (Weiss, 2016). To improve geographic balance, democratize decision-making, and increase global confidence in the Council's authority, both permanent and non-permanent seats should be expanded to include emerging nations (Security Council Report, 2023). Without reform, the UNSC risks becoming further detached from the multipolar world it attempts to rule.

To reflect the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century, the article explores the urgent need for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to be reformed. It contends that the legitimacy, efficacy, and global representativeness of the Council are threatened by its current configuration, which is dominated by a small number of post-World War II powers. The study takes a critical look at how adding new and underrepresented countries to the Council's membership can improve its legitimacy, fairness, and ability to respond to contemporary global security issues.

2.0 UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND REFORMS

For decades, critics, particularly institutionalists, have been critical of the operations of the UN Security Council as well as its compositional structure. Since its opus in 1945, the council has undergone very little change, though the geopolitical realities have changed significantly. Some other criticisms levelled against the council are that the UN Charter was designed by victors of World War II in line with their national interests and assigned themselves permanent seats with parallel veto power, among other things (Winther, 2022).

Critics argue that the UNSC reflects the post-World War II power structure and lacks representation for developing regions, particularly Africa, Latin America, and the Global South. General reforms have been proposed to:

1. Expand membership to include more permanent and non-permanent members.
2. Restrict or abolish the veto power to prevent P5 dominance and ensure more democratic decision-making.
3. Enhance transparency and accountability in decision-making processes.

Despite widespread support for reform, consensus among member states remains elusive due to conflicting interests, especially among the P5.

Ian Hurd (2008) observes that for the council to be effective and perhaps enjoy legitimacy, it is indispensable that it goes through a restructuring to reflect changes in global politics. According to Hurd, the council's legitimacy is undermined by the misalignment of its current membership with the growing diversity of its member states. Hypothetically, a reform in the membership will largely affect the council's effectiveness, claims Hurd. Hurd's article compares criticisms made in the council's reform proposals regarding the effects of membership change on the legitimacy of the Security Council to reflect the geopolitical realities of the changing world. It suffices to postulate that Hurd's argument suggests an

exclusive SC reform, thereby primarily affirming the argument that the Council's legitimacy is in peril unless it is reformed to account for recent changes in geographical factors (Hurd, 2008).

The Council's significant reform was in 1965, which included an increase in the non-permanent membership from six to ten (United Nations, 2018). This reform was criticised in that, despite its expansion in 1965, the permanent members still represent the global power structure that existed after World War II when it was created. Since the creation of the Council, new centres of power have risen, and new powers have emerged.

In 1992, the UNSC, under the leadership of Boutros Boutros-Ghali, launched 'an agenda for peace' aimed at reforming the Council to reflect changes in geopolitical realities (Weiss, 2003). Certainly, for the continued existence and relevance of the UN, it is imperative to ensure that it goes through reformation to reflect changes in global geographical factors as well as the reality of the power equation of the twenty-first-century world, claims Hurd (2008).

Subsequently, in early 2000, the then-head of the UN. Kofi Annan led an intense campaign targeted at reforming the UNSC in his popular two reform models (model A and model B) in *Larger Freedom*. Annan's proposal, Plan A, calls for adding six new permanent members, plus three new non-permanent members for a total of 24 seats in the council (Biersteker, 2020). Plan B, however, calls for creating eight new seats among new members. The proposal was that the members were to serve for four years, subject to renewal, plus one non-permanent seat, also for a total of 24 (Biersteker, 2020).

Indeed, the proposal for the Council's reform is long overdue. Current happenings such as the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Iran conflicts vis-à-vis the SC decisions and sanctions, further call for urgent consideration for reform. The immediate past Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, also corroborated this assertion and postulated that the UNSC reform was long overdue, considering how much the world has changed (Ki-Moon, 2021).

Meanwhile, despite the general agreement for reform at the UN, and especially the SC, there is a debacle regarding the kind of reform at the UN and the SC as various interest groups have pitched camps to push for the kind of reform that is in their best interest (Lättilä & Ylönen, 2019).

For instance, during the 72nd UN General Assembly meeting in New York, the United States president and the president of the Republic of Ghana called for reform at the UN differently. While some states advocate for reform within the operations of the entire organisation, others, especially the non-members of the SC, are advocating for a drastic reform within the Security Council's setup (Danquah, 2020).

Each group within the UN is advocating for its membership in the Security Council. One such group is the Group of 4, otherwise known as the G4, thus Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan. These countries are seen as emerging powers within the international system and are mutually supporting each other's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC. Meanwhile, they are criticised for not being neutral in their desire to be admitted to the UNSC. Critics claim that they are being supported by the Permanent Five (P5) countries of the UNSC (Gowan, 2016).

Another significant bloc in the UN is the African bloc, with over 50 countries represented in the largest multilateral organization, but with no representation in the UNSC. Countries such as Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, South Africa, Kenya, and Ethiopia are the most likely contenders in terms of a seat on the Security Council (Venter, 2003).

At a meeting held in March 2005, the African Union proposed the unified African position on the proposed United Nations reform, otherwise known as the "*Ezulwini Consensus*". Poignantly, all the P5 countries

appear to support Africa's position but would not want the same to be extended to other UN member countries (Alene, Ali & Tadesse, 2023).

It was proposed that.

1. Africa's cardinal proposal is to be made part of the decision-making organs of the UN, particularly the SC.
2. The African bloc proposed a full representation of the SC and further proposed two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats with all the accompanying responsibilities, prerogatives, and privileges.
3. Although Africa's viewpoint opposes the use of the veto in principle, it contends that it should be made available to all permanent members of the SC as a matter of common justice.
4. Also, Africa's bloc should have the prerogative of selecting its representatives for the SC, and the criteria for the selection should be determined by the African bloc (Alene, Ali & Tadesse, 2023).

3.0 UNSC MEMBERSHIP SEEKERS VIS-À-VIS THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UN

The US Department of State postulates, after research, that in principle, the Permanent Five (P5) countries do not oppose proposals for the SC expansion to reflect the realities of the contemporary international system. The Department of State, however, finds that the P5 countries, by natural justice and for common interest, contend that new admissions to the Council should be based on contributions to the UN (Blanchfield, 2012). The paper's contribution to the ongoing debate, therefore, examines selected countries seeking membership in the UNSC to determine their conformity to the demands of the P5 countries and their qualification for a permanent seat in the UNSC. These countries dominate the UNSC reform literature. Contributions, as used in this paper, connote the fulfilment of financial obligations towards the UN, sending of troops towards UN peacekeeping missions, and contributions in the form of international development assistance in the international system. The economic capacity of each state is also considered to determine whether the state has the economic capability to respond to global development issues that the P5 countries usually respond to (Blanchfield, 2012).

3.1 India and Her Contribution to the UN

India is a founding member of the United Nations and was part of the countries that were signatories to the Declaration of the United Nations signed in 1944, which was later formalised into the United Nations Charter and signed by 50 countries on 26 June 1945 (Murthy, 2020). India has made significant contributions to the UN in ensuring a relatively peaceful world since 1945.

India overtakes China as the most populous country in the world according to the United Nations (Hertog, Gerland, & Wilmoth, 2023). With its huge population, the Indian army is one of the largest in the world and has a strong military capacity (Nadin, 2016) and has continuously been one of the top providers to the UN's peacekeeping force, sending almost 163,000 personnel to 43 different UN operations (Banerjee, 2013). Starting with the deployment of 362 officers constituting the 60th Indian Field Ambulance during the Korean War in November 1950, India has continued to be at the forefront of UN peacekeeping operations and has participated in several UN peacekeeping operations to date. In January 2007, India sent a Formed Police Unit (FPU) to the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and became the first nation to deploy a force made completely of female police officers in the history of UN peacekeeping operations (Banerjee, 2013).

In terms of economic might, India was the 6th largest economy in the world, with a GDP of \$2.60 trillion in 2017 (Banerjee, 2013), becoming the 5th largest in 2024, and is projected to become the third largest economy by 2030 or before (Mandal, 2024). Financially, India has made a significant contribution to the

budget of the United Nations. Since 2000, India has been among the top ten highest contributors to the operations, projects, and programmes of the United Nations (Browne & Blanchfield, 2013). According to Forbes Business magazine, for example, India was the second-highest contributor to the operations, projects, and programmes of the United Nations in 2015, supplying goods and services worth \$1.28 billion (Baig, 2019). Comparing India's contribution to the UN in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 fiscal years, the government of India indicated that its contribution to the United Nations rose from Rs 157 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 244 crore in 2015-16, representing a significant increase of 55%. The UN indicates that in 2018, India was the 27th State out of the 48 Member States that were able to pay their regular budget support in full within the 30 days specified in Financial Regulation 3.5 of the UN, which was due on 9 February 2018. India's contribution to the 2018 Regular Budget of the United Nations was 17,914,311 US\$ (Haug, Gulrajani, & Weinlich, 2022).

In terms of contributions made towards international development assistance in the international system, just like the P5 members, India has increasingly provided development aid across the globe since its independence and has increased its economic and political clout in the global community (Katti, Chahoud, & Kaushik, 2009).

Even though India has been receiving aid for years, it has switched from being an aid recipient to an aid donor by providing technical, humanitarian, and development assistance to nations around the globe. In the last decade, India has quietly become a significant donor of aid to other less developed countries. For instance, India gave South Asian nations loans and aid of US\$383.01 million during the 2009–10 fiscal year; this amount increased to US\$1,149 million during the 2015–16 fiscal year. Over 74.6% of India's entire foreign assistance budget for the 2015–16 fiscal year was committed to Bhutan, followed by 9.1% for Afghanistan, 6.6% for Sri Lanka, 4% for Nepal, and 2.8% each for Bangladesh and the Maldives (Sandeep, 2020).

Ritu Sharma (1989) and Billett (2023), for instance, indicated that India has provided more aid to foreign countries than it has received within the last couple of years. Specifically, they mentioned that whereas India received Rs 2,144.77 crore in aid from foreign countries and global banks in the 2015-16 financial year, it gave Rs 7719.65 crore as aid to other countries in the same financial year.

The above analysis depicts India's contribution to the UN and the growing economic and political influence India is gaining in the global system because of its international development assistance to other countries. This indicates that India can play the role of the P5 countries. This, therefore, justifies the need for India to be included in the permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

3.2 Japan and Her Contribution to the UN

Japan became the 69th member of the UN on the 18th of December 1956 (Dore, 1997). Just like India, Japan is a member of the G4 countries rooting for each other in seeking a permanent seat on the Security Council and advocating in favour of the UNSC reform. Scholars such as Ronald Philip Dore claim that Japan has enormous economic power and yet is a minor player and underrepresented in international politics (Dore, 1997). While this assertion was true during the era of the Cold War, partly due to Japan's partnership with the US, Japan, after the Cold War, has assumed a significant role in the international system, such as its contributions to UN activities and its operations. In 1992, Japan started official contributions to the UN peacekeeping operations through the legislation of the Act on Cooperation for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and other Operations. This law was termed the "Peacekeeping Law" in Japan (Ishizuka, 2005); ever since, Japan has made significant contributions to UN operations. It made its first deployment in September 1992 by deploying a contingent of the Japanese Self-Defence

Force (SDF) in Cambodia (UNTAC). Since then, Japan has dispatched personnel of the SDF and police personnel to several UN peacekeeping operation missions, including UN missions in Cambodia, Mozambique, the Golan Heights, Timor-Leste, and Haiti, among others (Fujishige, Uesugi, & Honda, 2022).

In terms of economic might, Japan was placed to be the 3rd largest economy in the world in 2017 with a GDP of \$4.87 trillion after the US and China (Nymalm, 2019). Despite Japan's economy by nominal GDP indicators as of 2025, it is placed as the fifth largest behind China, India, Germany, and the United States; it continues to make significant strides. Driven by faster economic growth and currency volatility, Germany passed Japan in 2023 and India in early 2025 (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2025). Notwithstanding this change, Japan continues to be a key economic force in the world, with considerable financial and technological clout. Japan not only contributes human resources, such as troops, to the UN operations but also makes a significant financial contribution to support UN peacekeeping operations. Its Foreign Affairs Ministry posits that Japan was the second-largest financial contributor, contributing 10.833% to the UN Peacekeeping Budget in 2014. Japan's assessed financial contribution toward the UN regular budget is 6.93 %, and for the peacekeeping budget in 2024–2025, it is 8.03 %, ranking it consistently third after the U.S. and China (NHK, 2024; Nippon Jiji Press, 2024). In addition to financial contributions, Japan also makes enormous intellectual contributions to the UN in peacekeeping. For example, Japan was the leader of the engineering working group, which worked on the UN Military Units Manuals Project and developed manuals to provide more systematic support for UN field peacekeepers (Fujishige, Uesugi, & Honda, 2022).

One important characteristic of the permanent members (P5) of the Security Council is their ability to provide development assistance to other states, particularly the Global South. Bannerman emphasises that Japan has made significant contributions in terms of developmental assistance to different countries in the international system. In 1993, for instance, Japan became the lead bilateral aid donor to Ghana, specifically, in the sectors of education and infrastructural development. With all the above contributions to the UN and across the international system, Japan can equally play the role that the P5 is playing in the international system. Against this backdrop, the inclusion of Japan in the permanent membership of the UN Security Council is sacrosanct and indispensable.

3.3 Brazil and Her Contribution to the UN

Brazil is a founding member of the United Nations, joining on October 24, 1945, and is among the largest military powers in the world (Wilkins & Rezende, 2022) and has contributed to UN peacekeeping operations since 1956 (Kenkel, 2010). Santos and Cravo reveal that the deployment of an infantry battalion-size (600-800 strong) force to the First UN Emergency Force (UNEF I) in the Sinai Peninsula in 1956 marked the beginning of Brazil's participation in UN peacekeeping (Santos & Cravo, 2014). Since then, Brazil has participated in numerous peacekeeping operations of the UN. The most significant contribution of Brazil to UN peacekeeping was in 2004, when Brazil provided the largest contingent (2200 troops) for the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (Santos & Cravo, 2014).

In terms of economic might, Brazil was the 8th largest economy in the world, with a GDP of \$2.06 trillion in 2017, and in 2018, Brazil occupied the 80th position in terms of GDP per capita based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) rates (Doré & Teixeira, 2022). Apart from contributing to the UN, Brazil has contributed significantly to international development across the globe. Specifically, the international development assistance of Brazil takes the form of knowledge exchange, capacity building, and technical cooperation. Sarah-Lea John de Sousa, for instance, mentioned that Brazil has increasingly collaborated

with South American, Caribbean, and African nations to foster capacity building, exchange and distribute technical knowledge, and strengthen state institutions in developing nations (John de Sousa, 2010). With all the above contributions to the UN and across the international system, as well as its strong economy, Brazil can equally play the role that the P5 members are playing in the international system. This, therefore, justifies the inclusion of Japan in the permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

3.4 Germany and Her Contribution to the UN

Traditionally, the Federal Republic of Germany was divided into West and East Germany because of the world wars. West Germany was admitted to the UN in 1955 and East Germany in 1972, both as observers. Subsequently, both West and East Germany were admitted as full members of the UN in September 1973. The two countries, however, merged on October 3, 1990, becoming a unified state in the UN becoming a federal country, Germany (Gehrig, 2022). Ever since, Germany has been a major troop contributor to the UN Peacekeeping Operations. Germany, for instance, had deployed non-combatant troops in Cambodia (UNTAC) and Namibia (UNTAG), as well as a legion of contingents ranging around 1700 soldiers from August to October 1993 in Somalia [UNOSOM II] (Koops, 2018). Germany has since participated actively and made significant contributions to several UN-led peacekeeping operations, including the United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in 2013.

Apart from contributing a significant number of troops to the UN peacekeeping operations, Germany has made significant financial contributions to the UN operations, projects, and other programmes. From 2018 to 2019, Germany was profiled as the fourth largest financial contributor to the UN regular budget in 2018. This amounts to \$155 million per year, constituting 6.4% of the total budget after the United States at 22%, Japan at 9.7% and China at 7.9% (Hüfner, 2019).

Some proponents of economic growth classify Germany as one of the largest economies in the world. They insist that Germany was the fourth-largest economy in the world with a GDP of \$3.68 trillion in 2017 (Telli, Erat, & Demir, 2021). Germany has made significant contributions toward international development assistance. In 2016, for instance, Germany, which was a major recipient of development assistance half a century ago, followed the United States and the United Kingdom to become the third biggest donor of development assistance across the globe (Masaki, Parks, Faust, & Leiderer, 2016). According to Catherine Cheney, the Official Development Assistance (ODA) of Germany increased by 26% in 2015, and the country specifically spent \$ 17.8 billion, which constitutes 52% of its gross national income on ODA. Cheney projects that Germany's budget for development aid is expected to increase by more than \$ 8.9 billion than initially planned. As a requirement of ODA, it excludes the cost of refugees (Masaki, Parks, Faust, & Leiderer, 2016). As argued on Germany's contributions to the UN and the enormous contribution towards international development assistance across the international system, Germany can equally play the role that the P5 is playing in the international system. This, therefore, justifies the inclusion of Germany in the permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

3.5 Egypt and Her Contribution to the UN

Egypt is often cited by researchers in the UNSC reform debate as one of the countries satisfying the admissibility criteria. Egypt was one of the founding member states of the UN during its promulgation in June 1945 and subsequently its establishment in October 1945. It has since been consistent and among the top troop contributors to UN peacekeeping operations (Abiola, De Coning, Hamann, & Prakash, 2017). Egypt's first contribution of troops was towards the United Nations Operations in the Congo (UNUC) in 1960, marking the beginning of Egypt's participation in UN peacekeeping. Put more succinctly, Egypt has since contributed to 37 UN missions with over 30,000 peacekeepers, deployed in 24 countries in

Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Tudor, 2020). Egypt currently provides more than 2000 military and police personnel who are serving in several UN missions, including MINUSTAH, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, MINURSO, UNAMI, UNIMIL, UNOCI, UNMISS, and UNAMID. As of 2017, Egypt was the seventh-largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping forces (Bokeriya, 2022). The Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) archives Egypt to have lost over 28 of its peacekeepers while serving the cause of peace across the globe since its first contribution of troops (Yehia, 2017).

Egypt's geographical location along the fertile Nile River Valley gives it strategic economic clout in Africa. In terms of economic might, Egypt's economy is often ranked as one of the robust economies in Africa and was ranked in 2016 as the second-largest economy in Africa with a GDP of 332.9 billion USD, behind Nigeria which had a GDP of 404.7 billion USD (Shapshak, 2016) and third largest in 2017 with a GDP of 235.4 billion USD behind South Africa which had a GDP of 349.4 billion USD (Aljowaily, 2020). In terms of financial contributions to the UN budget, Egypt has been consistent with its contribution, although not promptly. For example, Egypt was able to make its contribution to the 2018 United Nations Regular Budget. Egypt made its contribution, which was 3,694,674 USD, on August 13, 2018, which was way after the 30-day due period specified in Financial Regulation 3.5 of the UN, expected to be February 9, 2018 (Aljowaily, 2020).

Similarly, Egypt's commitment to multilateralism is not limited to the UN. Within the African region, Egypt has contributed significantly to the infrastructural development of other African countries. Egypt offers this international development assistance in the African sub-region through its Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with Africa (EFTCA). Through the EFTCA, Egypt coordinates its official development assistance and development assistance and cooperation programs with African countries. Since the establishment of EFTCA in 1980, Egypt used it to contribute effectively to the development of human resources in African countries by sending more than 8,500 Egyptian professionals across all subjects, including education, medicine, engineering, agriculture, irrigation, and water resources to various African countries, and by providing training opportunities for close to 10,000 African trainees across all fields in Egypt (Badr, 2014).

With a longstanding commitment to UN peacekeeping operations as well as the effort to accept development assistance responsibility in Africa through the (The Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with Africa (EFTCA), Egypt distinguished itself as a country that can represent the African bloc in the permanent membership of the UNSC and play a significant leadership role in security and peacebuilding in Africa and across the globe just as the current P5 members. With its population projected to be nearly 150 million by 2050, Egypt is well-positioned to be admitted to the UNSC (Kwasi & Cilliers, 2022).

In conclusion, Egypt has been an active participant in all UN activities in the political, economic, and social spheres as well as in peacekeeping missions in many African countries. Egypt has been a productive participant in the preparatory discussions on UN reform and the expansion of the UN Security Council, and its position on Security Council membership is based on supporting the right of African nations to obtain two permanent and five non-permanent seats in the Security Council. The call for Egypt to be included in the UNSC is a positive step.

3.6 Nigeria and Her Contribution to the UN

Nigeria was admitted into the United Nations on October 7, 1960, as the 99th member at the fifteenth Regular session of the United Nations General Assembly held in New York (Nwalie George, 2022).

Nigeria subsequently continues to be a devout member of the UN and remains committed to its tenets of preserving world peace and order. Nigeria remains a major contributor of troops to the UN peace operations, serving in dozens of missions. Its first mission of peacekeepers was deployed to Congo (ONUC) from 1960 to 1964 (Adeniyi, 2015; Roberts-Ogosu, Akujuru, & Egobueze, 2025), sending formed police units, police advisors, military contingents, military staff officers, unarmed military observers, and civilian experts to 25 UN operations. Further, Nigeria's significance in the UN, particularly in peacekeeping operations, is very vast. From 2003 until 2018, Nigerian troops served as the military backbone of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), assisting in the restoration of stability in the country after a bloody civil war (Aboagye & Bah, 2004). Additionally, Nigeria's presence on a continental level vis-à-vis peacekeeping is significant. For example, Nigeria sent 1500 soldiers to the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) in 2003, as well as a medical and communications team to the ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (ECOMICI). In the following year, 2004, as part of the AU Mission in Sudan, 1500 Nigerian soldiers were stationed in Darfur (AMIS). AMISOM received 200 police officers as a Nigerian contribution, while 1200 soldiers were sent to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) (Aboagye & Bah, 2004).

Nigeria's economy was the largest in Africa with a GDP of USD 376.284 billion at the end of 2017 (Kemi, 2019). In terms of financial contributions towards the UN budget, Nigeria has also been consistent with its contribution, even though not promptly, and has violated 3.5 Financial Regulation 3.5 of the UN fitfully (Oshewolo, Nwozor, Fayomi & Oluwatuyi, 2021).

Nigeria has made significant strides in contributing toward a prosperous and unified continent. It has contributed to the areas of health, democratic consolidation, peacebuilding, and economic development, among others. During the 2013-2016 epidemic of the *Ebola* virus, Nigeria, in conjunction with some institutions such as the World Health Organization and the AU, deployed over 250 volunteers to the countries affected by the deadly virus (Umezurike et al., 2017).

With its status as the most populous country and the largest economy in Africa, Nigeria has an enormous propensity to contribute to the development of Africa and world peace. In corroborating Nigeria's significance and potential in leading the voice of Africa, President Barack Obama indicates that Nigeria is very critical to the rest of the continent, and if Nigeria does not get it right, Africa will not make more progress.

It seems that debates predicated on determining what is required to have a seat on the UNSC have been met by Nigeria. Against this backdrop, Nigeria's qualification to the UNSC is irrefutably clear-cut.

3.7 Kenya and Her Contribution to the UN

Kenya is home to several multilateral organisations in Africa, including the headquarters of the UN in Africa. Kenya became a member of the UN on December 16, 1963, a few days after it gained independence from British colonial domination and remained a key supporter of UN activities, including its peacekeeping operations across the globe (Mabera, 2016). Drawing from Kenya's foreign policy of non-interference and non-alignment, its involvement in UN peacekeeping operations requiring enforcement dating back to the era of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has been that of a keystone (Salaitei et al., 2019). Kenya's contributions to the UN have been very significant. Kenya is placed in the middle of UN members with a regular budget payment of about USD 1.26 million in 2025. It has the most impact on peacekeeping, where Kenya is one of the top donors of troops and police, as well as a leader for UN-backed missions in 2024 and 2025 (United Nations, 2024 & 2025).

The new world order has become a more complex one and requires a deviation from the old order, which was essentially bipolar. This concretizes Kenya's position since 2012, after it deployed troops into AMISOM following UNSC resolution 2036 (Brosig, 2017), after its military observer's status for the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIMOG) from 1988 to 1990.

Further, Kenya has since deployed troops to other UN peacekeeping operations including the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia, the UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the two UN missions in Liberia (UNOMIL and UNMIL), the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the UN Transition Assistant Group (UNTAG) in Namibia, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Kenya's participation in other UN peacekeeping operations is significantly evident in its deployment of military observers to Angola, Rwanda, Namibia, Western Sahara, Kuwait, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mozambique (Brosig, 2017).

Kenya had a GDP of US\$79.5 billion in 2017 and is considered one of the economic giants on the African continent. and has been financially obligated to the operations of the UN and its peacekeeping activities since the date it joined (Salaitei et al., 2019).

Within the African enclave, Kenya's contributions to regional integration and the East African Community (EAC) are enormous. Out of the six partner states constituting the EAC, Kenya is profiled to be the region's industrial and manufacturing hub (Anami, 2023, pp.758-769). According to Power Africa, the United States government-led partnership coordinated by USAID aims to double access to electricity by 2030. Kenya has one of the most developed power industries in Africa, and in the middle of the 1990s, the country began to open its market to independent power producers (IPPs). In line with this, Power Africa hypothesises that Kenya will derive large benefits from "an active private sector; Kenya's long track record as a creditworthy off-taker; and abundant renewable energy resources, especially geothermal, wind and solar" (Allela, 2022).

With its strong industrial and manufacturing economy; its contributions to UN peacekeeping operations and the fact that the UN's Headquarters in Africa is located in Nairobi, Kenya can be considered to be one of the countries that should represent the African bloc in the permanent membership of the UNSC and play a significant role in security and peacebuilding in Africa and across the globe just as the current P5 members.

3.8 South Africa and Her Contribution to the UN

South Africa has a checkered history with its membership in the UN as a founding member. As a result of the apartheid that confronted South Africa, its membership was suspended in November 1974 due to the mounting international opposition to the policy of apartheid. International pressure compelled South Africa to end the systemic discrimination in 1994 and was later readmitted the same year (Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations, 2020).

Since its re-admission in 1994, the successive democratically elected governments of South Africa have been committed to the UN and pursued foreign policies that are in adherence to the objectives of the UN Charter. In terms of UN peacekeeping operations, South Africa is relatively new, mainly because of its suspension from the activities of the UN from 1974 to 1994. The first South African deployment to UN peacekeeping was in 1999 when the country deployed troops to MONU in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Lotze & Neethling, 2015; Roberts-Ogosu, Akujur, & Egobueze, 2025). After this deployment, South Africa has deployed troops to over fourteen international peace operations, including the

contribution of forces who were stationed in Burundi as part of the African Union (AU) mission in 2004 and who were re-hatted to serve as the basis of the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB). South Africa has recently been noted as a key contributor of uniformed peacekeepers, with yearly contributions that consistently fall between 1500 and 2500 (Lotze & Neethling, 2015).

South Africa provides an economic opening to many African countries and beyond. Its economy was ranked the 2nd largest in Africa with a GDP of \$349.3 billion as of 2017 (Lotze & Neethling, 2015). South Africa has been consistent with its financial contributions to the UN, although these contributions have not been regular and have violated the 30-day due period specified in Financial Regulation 3.5 of the UN (United Nations, 2019). Concerning the contributions of South Africa to the development of Africa, it is important to compellingly point out that South Africa is the strongest economy in Southern Africa and one of the strongest economies on the entire continent (Amos, 2010). The contribution of South Africa to the process of regionalism and economic integration in Africa, most specifically within the Southern African Development Community, is phenomenal.

As an emerging market in the global economy, South Africa is a competitive exporter of raw materials as well as items with added value, mostly motor vehicles. Chemicals, food, transport machinery, iron, and steel are also significant products of South Africa's productive manufacturing industry. More specifically, modern and advanced metal and engineering businesses account for one-third of the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP (Meira, 2021).

South Africa's compelling contributions to the UN and its significant role in security and peacebuilding in Africa push it for a seat at the UNSC.

4.0 UNSC MEMBERSHIP SEEKERS AND THEIR VOID IN RESPONSIBILITIES VIS-À-VIS SECURITY COUNCIL REFORMS PROPOSAL

Relying on a surfeit of literature on the ongoing debate on UNSC reform, while the various blocs, mainly G4, the African Union, and the League of Arab Countries pushing for inclusion in the UNSC, there appears to be a divided and entrenched interest by member countries. It remains ambivalent as to which country to represent the various blocs.

Further, arguments put up by the P5 members focused on financial commitment, the contribution of troops, and other material commitments. More precisely, these are very cardinal and are *sine qua non* to the UNSC reform. Most of the countries seeking the council's membership neglect these essential responsibilities to the UN, except for Japan, Germany, and Brazil. The United States typically remains the largest financier of UN activities. The US contributes about 22% of the UN budget annually. In this regard, most of the P5 countries of the UNSC advocate for admission to the council based on contributions to UN activities. The US, for instance, subscribed to the argument for the council's reform but argued for a criteria-based approach under which the members should be qualified economically for population and military capability. They further add that commitment to democracy and human rights, while emphasising a record on counterterrorism and proliferation, considering the geographic balance of the Council (Blanchfield, 2012).

Drawing from the discussion, it is adequate to say that the contributions of some of these developing and emerging countries seeking a permanent seat at the UNSC, especially voluntary, including materials, financial, and managerial resources, are disproportionate. Just a few of these countries are somehow increasing their contributions to the UN. At the same time, developed countries' contribution to the UN has been declining (Shinyo, 2024).

5.0 ADDRESSING THE VOID IN RESPONSIBILITIES BY UNSC MEMBERSHIP SEEKERS

It seems that debates predicated on UNSC reform to determine whether admission onto the Council or not are reductionist or minimalist, while focusing on criteria-based, neglecting the void in responsibilities by the various blocs seeking the Council's membership. Such debates overshadow current happenings on the global stage and defeat the legitimacy of the Council's decisions.

This section forcefully catalogues and proposes how the void in the responsibilities of UNSC membership seekers could be addressed. This section advances, among other things.

1. Developing countries, especially African nations, should strive for financial independence. Most African countries and other developing nations aiming for a seat at the UNSC are indebted to the superpowers (P5 countries). This creates a dependency on developed countries, often leading to a master-slave dynamic where they seek equality. Economic independence reinforces countries' calls for reform and inclusion in the UNSC. This partly explains the P5's argument for criteria-based reform and inclusion. In simpler terms, countries aspiring for UNSC membership must decrease their reliance on foreign aid by diversifying their economies and increasing domestic revenue. They should demonstrate financial responsibility in international obligations, including paying UN dues on time, and support regional initiatives financially to show leadership.
2. Also, developing countries like Kenya face challenges in paying their dues, making it hard for P5 countries to consider their reform proposals in the Council. Therefore, developing countries aiming to secure a seat at the UNSC should strengthen their commitment to the UN overall, including financial obligations and troop contributions to peacekeeping. Being a UNSC member entails many responsibilities, with financial commitment being fundamental. Developing countries should therefore demonstrate their dedication to these core obligations. Additionally, they should leverage decisions made by developed countries to reduce UN budget support. For instance, the Donald Trump administration decided to cut about 40% of its 2017/18 contributions to UN activities (Mingst, Karns, & Lyon, 2022). Developing countries could respond by increasing their support for the UN, enhancing their relevance, and improving their chances of securing a seat on the UNSC. This includes contributing to UN peacekeeping missions financially and through personnel or logistics, providing voluntary funding for humanitarian, climate, or development programs under the UN system, and investing in diplomatic infrastructure such as missions and peacekeeping training centres to promote multilateralism.
3. Additionally, developing countries and other emerging countries such as Germany, Japan, and India seeking a seat at the UNSC must be raucous and seen to be concerned about issues affecting the global system, such as issues relating to terrorism, trade war, genocide, breach of international laws and treaties, among others. They should make statements on relevant issues. This will shore up their credibility and readiness for membership in the UNSC. This is because being a member of the council requires boldness and acting in the collective interest of the global community. For instance, despite the enormous contributions made by some of the emerging countries, such as Germany, Brazil, Japan, and India, their vehement condemnation and statements on global issues are negligible due to their inconsistencies. For example, the 2016-2017 Rohingya genocide had little or even no condemnation from these countries. Similarly, the United States' decision to move its Embassy to Jerusalem was seen by the international community as a provocative move, seeing only a little condemnation from these countries. Lastly, the gruesome slaying of the Saudi Arabian journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, at the Saudi

consulate in Istanbul received condemnation across the globe. However, emerging countries such as Germany, Brazil, Japan, and India were not strident in condemning the act publicly.

4. Another appealing proposal to be considered is that countries seeking membership in the UNSC should desist from pitching camps with the P5 members for support. This is because there is already a deep-seated polarization among the P5 countries. Pitching for support among these countries may be unyielding after all. Effectively, maintaining a non-aligned or balanced foreign policy, avoiding entanglement in great power rivalries. Act as a neutral mediator in regional and international conflicts to build a reputation for impartiality, support consensus-building within UN bodies, and foster trust among diverse member states.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Certainly, the subject of the UNSC reform engenders intense debate among scholars. Countries insistent on reforms have pitched a camp for the advancement of their argument. Chiefly among them are Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan, creating the G4. The G4 members' arguments are based on a reform that will ensure broad representation, efficiency, and transparency, which has received broad and cross-regional support. They argue that this will enhance the Council's effectiveness, thereby ensuring the legitimacy of its decisions.

The African group has equally been forcefully advancing for reform and Africa's representation in the said reforms.

The point must be forcefully made that UNSC reform is not new to the literature. In 2005, there was a near conclusion to the debate when the world leaders agreed at the 2005 World Summit to achieve an early reform of the UNSC. That, however, was not attained. There is therefore an urgent call for reform at the council to reflect changing global events such as proxy wars, genocide, war crimes, and territorial invasion, at the same time, while ensuring the efficiency and legitimacy of the UNSC, as put forward by Ian Hurd.

Admittedly, the discussion for the UNSC reform has been tilted towards responsibilities and idealistic perspectives, such as financial commitment and the contribution of troops. The debate excludes the involvement of these countries in issues that pose a threat to the global community. There is a need to ensure that the reform is broad to reflect contemporary global concerns. Indeed, no reform of the UN will be complete without the reform of the Security Council.

Essentially, reforming the United Nations Security Council to include emerging countries requires expanding both permanent and non-permanent membership to reflect contemporary global power dynamics. This could involve granting permanent seats to influential developing nations from underrepresented regions such as Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, ensuring geographic balance and equitable representation. Additionally, enhancing the transparency and accountability of UNSC decision-making, as well as introducing semi-permanent or rotating longer-term seats for emerging economies, would allow for more inclusive participation. Such reforms would strengthen the Council's legitimacy, responsiveness, and alignment with current international realities. While at it, emerging countries seeking inclusion into the UNSC must ensure financial discipline, visible UN support, and a neutral diplomatic posture.

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