

# PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Programme for the High-Level Week  
of the 79<sup>th</sup> Session of the United  
Nations General Assembly

**22-28 SEPTEMBER 2024**  
**NEW YORK**



**SIERRA LEONE**  
UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY COUNCIL  
— (2024 - 2025) —





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His Excellency Brig. (Rtd.) Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Her Excellency Dr. Fatima Maada Bio, First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone.



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# CONTENTS

5

High-Level Week September 2024

6

Introduction to the Programme for the High-Level Week of the 79<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly

8

Sierra Leone Goals and Objectives for UNGA79

9

UNSC August 2024 Presidency Highlights

15

United Nations Security Council High-Level Open Debate on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: The New Agenda for Peace - Addressing Global, Regional and National Aspects of Conflict Prevention

20

United Nations Security Council Briefing on: Sustaining Women Peace and Security Commitments in the Context of Accelerated Drawdown of Peace Operations

24

United Nations Security Council Briefing on: Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts

28

Photos

UN Secretary-General H.E. António Guterres (centre left) meets with H. E. Julius Maada Bio, President of Republic of Sierra Leone at the UNHQ  
(Credit: UN Photo/Mark Garten)



# UNGA 79 SESSION HIGH-LEVEL WEEK

## SEPTEMBER 2024

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
<b>26</b> AUGUST	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b> SEPTEMBER
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> UNGA Plenary (A.M.) Closing of the 78 <sup>th</sup> session  UNGA Plenary (P.M.) Opening of the 79 <sup>th</sup> session	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> SOTF Action Days (A.M./P.M.)	<b>21</b> SOTF Action Days (A.M./P.M.)	<b>22</b> SOTF Plenary (A.M.)  SOTF Interactive Dialogue (A.M.)
<b>23</b> SOTF Plenary (A.M.)  SOTF Interactive Dialogue (A.M./P.M.)	<b>24</b> UNGA General Debate (A.M.) Sierra Leone 14 <sup>th</sup> Speaker	<b>25</b> Event Foreign Policy (A.M.) Climate Finance  HLM on Sea-level Rise (A.M./P.M.)  G7 Plus Summit (P.M.) H.E. the President to deliver opening remarks	<b>26</b> UNSC Reform C10 & P5 Foreign Ministers Meeting (A.M.) H.E. the President to deliver opening remarks  Event: FPA Medal Presentation (P.M.)  HLM on AMR (A.M./P.M.)	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Event: Global Citizen (A.M.) Climate Finance	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>1</b> OCTOBER	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

# Introduction to the Programme for the High-Level Week of the 79<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly

In the aftermath of the historic and impactful Sierra Leone August 2024 presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), characterized by the equally historic and monumental debate on the reform of the UNSC, - “Addressing the historical injustice and enhancing Africa’s effective representation in the Security Council” presided over by [His Excellency Brig. \(Rtd.\) Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone](#), it is a great honour and esteemed privilege to welcome once more to New York, His Excellency President Bio, Madam First Lady, Her Excellency Dr. Fatima Maada Bio and Alhaji Musa Timothy Kabba, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the rest of the high-level delegation.

The high-level delegation to the High-Level Week (HLW) of the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA79) is expected to include Dr. David Moinina Sengeh, the Chief Minister, Ms. Kenyeh Ballay, the Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Mr. Jiwoh Abdulai, Minister of Environment & Climate Change, Dr. Austin Demby, Minister of Health, Dr. Emmanuel Gaima, Secretary to the President, and Dr. Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella, Chair of the Presidential Initiative for Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Food Security and Chair of Energy Governance Coordination Group.

The UNGA79 [General Debate](#), which will commence on [24 September 2024](#), is convened under the theme: [“Leaving no one behind: Acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for](#)

[present and future generations”](#). His Excellency President Bio will speak on the first day of the debate in the significant morning session as the 14<sup>th</sup> speaker. His Excellency Philemon Yang, President of the United Nations General Assembly (PGA) believes the theme provides an opportunity for member States to reflect on the numerous challenges we currently face in complex and volatile international environment. He is also of the view that the theme would provide a platform for nurturing appropriate solutions to overcome these difficulties, and beyond our divergences, to act together for the advancement of peace, absence of war, prevention, sustainable development, shared prosperity as well as human dignity for present and future generations.

In addition to the General Debate, there are four significant events that will attract the participation of high-level officials.

[The Summit of the Future](#) will be held on the [22 and 23 September 2024](#) under the theme “Summit of the Future: multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow”. The Summit is expected to adopt a concise, ambitious, action-oriented document entitled [“A Pact for the Future”](#). The opening segment of the Summit will include the adoption of the outcome document to be followed by statement from the President of the General Assembly, the UN Secretary-General, and a youth representative to be selected by the President of the General Assembly. His Excellency President Bio will be the first member State speaker in the plenary of the Summit, delivering a statement on behalf of the Group of Seven Plus (g7+).





*Leaving no one behind: Acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for present and future generations*

His Excellency President Bio will also co-chair interactive dialogue 2: “Enhancing Multilateralism for International Peace and Security” during the Summit of the Future.

On Wednesday, **September 25**, the PGA will also convene a high-level meeting on addressing the existential threats posed by **Sea-level Rise**. Mr. Abdulai Jiwoh, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, will co-chair the multistakeholder panel on “Sea level rise and its legal dimensions”.

Also on the **25<sup>th</sup> of September**, Brazil, in its capacity as President of G20 will convene the second Foreign Ministers meeting of the G20. The meeting, which will be the first time the G20 will invite all Member States of the UN to attend one of its meetings, will take place at the UN Headquarters in New York, symbolizing Brazil’s firm belief that the United Nations should be at the centre of the multilateral system.

On the margins of UNGA79, Sierra Leone in its capacity as Chair of the G7+ countries will convene a **High-Level Summit** to discuss strategies for promoting stability, resilience, lasting peace, and development in member countries amidst the increasing global challenges of our time.

Also, Sierra Leone as Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the Reform of the UN Security

Council (C-10) will also convene a meeting of the **Foreign Ministers of the C-10 and Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council** to discuss the support for Africa’s aspiration for equitable representation in the Security Council and the common African Position. The meeting is also aimed at accelerating the momentum on the reform of the Security Council and for Africa to be treated as a special case and be prioritized.

The PGA will convene a high-level meeting on Thursday **26 September 2024** on **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**. The AMR meeting will approve a concise and action-oriented political declaration with a shared vision including the consideration of measurable targets and objectives on mobilizing political will and action at the national, regional, and international levels to address the drivers, sources, and challenges of antimicrobial resistance.

Also on the 26 September 2024, to commemorate and promote the **International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**, the PGA will convene a high-level meeting to raise awareness on the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their elimination in order to mobilize the international efforts towards achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon free world’.

# Sierra Leone's Goals and Objectives for UNGA 79

The frameworks created at the end of World War II to maintain international peace, security, stability, and foster cooperation for economic growth, including the United Nations, and the international financial institutions (IFIs), are fraught with significant representational and legitimacy challenges. The structure and composition of some of the UN organs and the IFIs are outdated, inequitable and dysfunctional, and they do not align with the current geo-political realities of this present world. The glaring mismatch between these global institutions and the purpose for which they were established almost 80 years ago has become evident that even the primary objectives of preventing and ending wars, poverty and hunger and upholding human rights have become difficult to achieve and, in some cases, progress have been reversed.

UNGA79 HLW is a significant moment for the international community as we go beyond the halfway point to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Goals (SDGs). With an economic outlook that remains bleak, pressing issues of our world are moving beyond national boundaries. For instance, on the threats posed by the three planetary crises - climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, His Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations has highlighted that the 1.5-degree goal is gasping for breath and national climate plans are falling woefully short. This was a sentiment also highlighted by Her Excellency Amina J. Mohamed, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, while highlighting global inequalities. She has stated that commitment to eradicate poverty and hunger are impaired and the surge in renewable energy is bypassing developing countries. There is literally a soft landing for the

Global North while the Global South is crashing. With only 17% of the SDGs on track, coupled with a deeply troubling financial context and the long and overdue reform of the global governance architecture, Sierra Leone remains committed to the multilateral system and the importance of finding solutions to address these complex challenges, and addressing historical injustices against Africa. We have advocated and advanced as Coordinator of C-10, on behalf of the African continent, the Common African Position on the reform of the UN Security Council, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration, gaining the broad support and general convergence that the historical injustice against Africa must be rectified, and that Africa should be treated as a special case and be prioritized. Sierra Leone remains committed to championing global peace and security, guided by principles of dialogue, respect for international law, as well as our priorities of peacemaking, prevention and peacebuilding, advancing the women and youth peace and security agendas, climate and food security, counterterrorism and addressing new threats to peace.

Multilateralism, partnerships, and representation are the fundamental pillars of Sierra Leone's tenure and engagement at the UN Security Council. In the context of the sharp geopolitical divisions and fragmentation, our shared commitment is to uphold multilateralism and to achieve our collective security goal for a peaceful and sustainable world for future generations.

# UNSC August 2024 Presidency Highlights



H.E. Julius Maada Bio (center), President of Sierra Leone, chairs the Security Council meeting on maintenance of international peace and security, on the theme “Addressing the historical injustice and enhancing Africa’s effective representation in the UN Security Council”. Seated next to him on the top is UN Secretary-General António Guterres. (Credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider)

## United Nations Security Council Debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Addressing the Historical Injustice and Enhancing Africa’s Effective Representation in the United Nations Security Council

*Statement by His Excellency Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone at the UNSC Chamber, UNHQ on 12<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2024*

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,  
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,  
Distinguished Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address the United Nations (UN) Security Council with a profound sense of purpose and urgency on a matter of grave importance — the maintenance of international peace and security - through the reform of the UN Security Council.

Today, I will specifically focus on addressing the historical injustice and enhancing Africa’s effective representation in the Council.

I thank the UN Secretary-General, His Excellency António Guterres, the President of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session

of the UN General Assembly, His Excellency Denis Francis, and Dr. Sithembele Mbete for their very insightful and thought-provoking briefings.

I wholeheartedly welcome the participation of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on UN Security Council Reform (C-10) and their representatives in this meeting.

I also welcome the participation of representatives of Member States and Interest Groups engaged in the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) at the UN General Assembly, including the Co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait, respectively.

I thank them for their important work and the urgency with which they are carrying out their mandate under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly.

Today, I speak as a representative of a Continent that has long been under-represented in the decision-making processes that shape our world on matters of peace and security.

It is now a settled view that the UN Security Council needs reforming. The imperative for reform is irrefutable. Nearly 80 years after its creation, the Council has been stuck in time.

Its imbalanced composition is at odds with current realities and unjust, undermining its legitimacy and effectiveness.

Africa remains the unquestionable victim. With the absence of structural change, the Security Council's performance and legitimacy remain questionable.

Accordingly, as we reflect on this debate's theme and profound implications, it is essential to recognise how the historical injustice has

significantly hindered Africa's ability to contribute effectively to global governance.

The legacy of colonialism, economic exploitation, and political marginalisation has left deep scars on the Continent, affecting its development, stability, and influence in international affairs.

The UN, the cornerstone of international cooperation, was founded on principles of equality, justice, and the collective pursuit of peace.

Yet, the current structure of the Security Council reflects an outdated world order, an era that fails to recognise Africa's growing importance and contributions.

Despite being home to over 1.3 billion people, and the 54 African countries making up 28 per cent of the total membership of the UN, with significant contributions to peacekeeping and conflict resolution, Africa remains grossly underrepresented in this vital organ of the UN.

This underrepresentation is not merely an anomaly of statistics; it is a profound historical injustice that must be addressed.

As a consequence, and under the leadership of the C-10, Africa has been steadfast in its commitment to rectifying this injustice and imbalance of the UN Security Council.

As the Coordinator of the C-10, Sierra Leone has spearheaded efforts to amplify Africa's voice on this issue.

Through the Common African Position as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, Africa has articulated a clear and compelling vision and model for reform, one that ensures equitable representation and meaningful participation of Africa in the Council.

Africa demands two permanent seats in the UN Security Council and two additional non-permanent seats, bringing the total number of non-permanent seats to five. The African Union will choose the African Permanent Members.

Africa wants the veto abolished. However, if UN Member States wish to retain the veto, it must be extended to all new Permanent Members as a matter of justice.

The Common African Position is premised on the fact that by rectifying the historical injustice, the international community will not only promote greater fairness, equity and equality in global governance, but also act on the imperative to ensure the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council itself.

It will further unlock Africa's full potential as a dynamic and vibrant Continent capable of

meaningfully contributing to the advancement of peace, security, and stability worldwide. Africa's experiences and perspectives remain invaluable in shaping comprehensive and effective solutions to global challenges.

We, therefore, welcome the general convergence that has emerged from the IGN, as reflected in the Co-Chairs' Elements Paper that: "There is a wider recognition and broader support by Member States for the legitimate aspiration of the African countries to play their rightful role on the global stage, including through an increased presence in the Security Council, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration adopted by the African Union in 2005.

Redressing the historical injustice against Africa is viewed as a priority, and several delegations emphasised that Africa should be treated as a special case".

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## Excellencies,

To fully understand the need to address the injustice being done to Africa, let me briefly underscore the compelling historical foundations.

From the arbitrary partition of Africa, during and after the colonial period, African nations were excluded from key international decisions that affected their future.

The lack of sovereignty and political representation during those periods has had lasting effects on Africa's ability to shape global policies and institutions.

This historical injustice stems from colonial legacies and power imbalances that persist to this day.

The legacy of slavery intersects with other forms of historical injustice, including colonialism, imperialism, and exploitation.

Africa has long been marginalised in global decision-making processes, and its voices are often drowned out. This results in a lack of meaningful representation on issues that directly affect the Continent, such as conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations, conflict resolution, and sustainable development.

This systemic bias perpetuates a cycle of marginalisation and reinforces the false notion of Africa as a passive actor in shaping global affairs.

Furthermore, the political marginalisation experienced during colonial rule has contributed to ongoing struggles for stable governance and political cohesion within the African States, further complicating their ability to engage robustly on the global stage.

Therefore, the current architecture of international institutions, including the UN Security Council, as noted, reflects the geopolitical realities of the post-World War II era, which largely excluded African voices.

This paradigm of non-representation and/or underrepresentation means that Africa's perspectives and priorities are regrettably overlooked in global decision-making processes.

The absence of permanent African representation in the Security Council means that decisions impacting the Continent are made without sufficient African input, leading to policies that may not align with the needs and aspirations of African nations.

This Council is all too familiar with situations where African mediation and conflict resolution efforts were disregarded for interventions that have had and continue to have disastrous consequences in the Continent.

In view of the preceding, effective representation of Africa in the Security Council is imperative for several reasons.

First and foremost, for the very legitimacy of the Council. Already the Security Council's imbalance composition and unjust exclusion of Africa in the permanent category and underrepresentation

in the non-permanent category of membership undermines its current legitimacy.

The unjust composition also adversely impacts the Council's effectiveness.

It has been robustly argued that the performance of institutions like the Security Council declines as its perceived legitimacy diminishes and that international legitimacy depends on inclusivity and fairness.

Therefore, to strengthen the Security Council, the historical injustice against Africa must be rectified as a matter of priority.

Second, the importance of upholding equity and justice, particularly for equitable decision-making, cannot be overstated.

The historical injustice against Africa contradicts the UN's principles of justice, equity and democratic representation.

As the Council Members know too well, these principles directly impact the Council's work. Accordingly, Africa's inclusion in the permanent membership category will ensure that decisions affecting the Continent are made with direct and meaningful input from those most impacted.

Third, to reflect present-day global and geopolitical realities. The geopolitical landscape has significantly evolved since 1945.

Africa's growing economic, political, and social influence necessitates its representation in key international forums, including, but not limited to, the UN Security Council.

Given Africa's population, number of Member States, political significance, and contributions

to international peace and security, the UN's immediate corrective action is crucial.

Fourth, the effective maintenance of international peace and security. It is noteworthy that more than 60 per cent of the Council's deliberations, decisions, and peacekeeping missions are concentrated in or affect Africa.

An enhanced African presence will provide invaluable insights and perspectives that will foster ownership, informed and effective decision-making, and interventions.

Africa's demand for reform is rooted in the imperative of addressing the Continent's unique challenges and aspirations.

African leadership and solutions are crucial for addressing African challenges. From persistent to emerging conflicts, terrorism, famine, and humanitarian crises, Africa faces a myriad of complex issues that necessitate global cooperation and solidarity with African leadership.

The question that now comes to mind is how can we address the historical injustice and enhance Africa's representation?

I strongly believe that the following steps are necessary and can even be considered imperative.

Firstly, the early or urgent reform of the UN Security Council cannot be overemphasised.

As the primary body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, the UN must undertake a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to expand its membership and enhance its legitimacy and effectiveness. This must include adding permanent seats for Africa.

The issue of the UN Security Council reform has been a longstanding item on the agenda of the UN General Assembly, spanning over 40 years.

The work of the open-ended working group started more than 30 years ago, and the current IGN has been going on for more than 15 years. Much like the decolonisation movement in the 1960s, this reform justice movement for Africa must have an end date.

It is absurd for the UN to enter into its eighth decade of existence with this scar of injustice against Africa.

Additionally, a natural step to address the historical injustice being perpetuated against Africa is to enable the Continent's enhanced voice and participation.

The UN cannot continue to swim against the tides of justice. The African Union's admission to the G20 remains a welcome development that leads the way. Resolutely, this is where the call for treating Africa as a special case and priority in the UN Security Council reform process is fully strengthened.

Reform of the Council and other global governance structures is about equitable representation of Africa.

By prioritising Africa's concerns, including enhanced representation, within the framework of UN Security Council reform, the UN can demonstrate its commitment to addressing the root causes of conflict and instability on the Continent, thereby advancing the cause of peace and prosperity for all.

In addressing the historical injustice done to Africa, and as UN member States, particularly the existing permanent members, have supported Africa's call for enhanced representation in the UN Security Council, the next logical step is for this Council and UN Member States to champion the call for Africa to be treated as a special case and priority in the reform process.

The fact that this is to be reflected in the Summit of the Future's Pact for the Future is a further welcome development. The swift implementation is the next logical step, 'as justice delayed is

justice denied'. The symbolism of today being the International Youth Day reinforces the significance of our endeavour.

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## Excellencies,

The time for change is now. The call for enhanced African representation in global governance structures, especially the UN Security Council, is not just a demand for justice and equity.

It is a call for a more inclusive, effective, and legitimate international governance system. Let us work together to redress this historical injustice and re-create a Security Council that truly represents the world in all its diversity.

The time for half-measures and incremental progress is over. Africa's voice must be heard, and its demands for justice and equity must be met.

In rectifying the historical injustice that has long plagued the continent, the UN has an opportunity to forge a more just and inclusive world order, one that honours the dignity and aspirations of all nations, regardless of their size or stature. Now is the time for action. Africa cannot wait any longer.

I thank you.

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H.E. Julius Maada Bio, President of Sierra Leone, chairs the Security Council meeting on maintenance of international peace and security, on the theme "Addressing the historical injustice and enhancing Africa's effective representation in the UN Security Council". (Credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elías)







Alhaji Musa Timothy Kabba, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, chairs the Security Council meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, with a focus on the new agenda for peace - addressing global, regional and national aspects of conflict prevention. (Credit: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe)

## United Nations Security Council High-Level Open Debate on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: The New Agenda for Peace - Addressing Global, Regional and National Aspects of Conflict Prevention

Statement by Alhaji Musa Timothy Kabba, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation at the UNSC Chamber on 21st August 2024

### Excellencies,

Let me start by thanking the briefers Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Assistant Secretary-General for

Peacebuilding Support, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, His Excellency Mr.

Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ms. Hawa Samai, Executive Secretary, Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion, and Mr. Arnoux Descardes, Executive Director, Volontariat pour le développement d'Haïti for their insightful briefings.

I also thank the Peacebuilding Commission for the advisory note.

As I focus my statement today on the key issues of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, it remains fundamentally important to start by highlighting how inequality within and among States remains a major hindrance to peacebuilding efforts and sustainable global, regional, and national conflict prevention.

The UN Secretary-General rightfully mentioned in his policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace, that “inequalities and injustices, within and among nations, are giving rise to new grievances. They have sown distrust in the potential of multilateral solutions to improve lives and have amplified calls for new forms of isolationism”. These words have never been truer.

At the global level, we are witnessing an alarming rise in conflict and instability, fueled by a complex interplay of geopolitical tensions, economic disparities, climate change, and the proliferation of weapons. Our world remains on fire from both

national and international conflicts. From civil conflicts in Africa, to conflicts in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, we are faced today with complex situations that are more and more difficult for any individual State to resolve by themselves. The complex and multifaceted nature of the 21st century challenges and conflicts warrant deliberate and multipronged solutions.

The New Agenda for Peace calls for renewed multilateralism and a recommitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter. We must ensure that global institutions are adequately equipped to address these challenges, with a focus on preventive diplomacy, robust peacekeeping, and sustained peacebuilding efforts.

The twin sustaining peace resolutions adopted in 2016 in both the UN General Assembly and the Security Council (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282) offered an opportunity for the United Nations system to re-think on how to prevent and address violent conflicts in a more holistic and inclusive way - focused on addressing the root causes and using a three-pillar approach, that is, peace and security, development and human rights.

The UN thus has the opportunity to modernize its prevention toolkit through initiatives like the Secretary General's New Agenda for Peace, the upcoming Pact of the Future, as well as the forthcoming peacebuilding architecture review.

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## Excellencies,

Since the end of the major world wars, multilateralism has provided an effective means for addressing global, regional, and national conflicts.

Yet today, we stand at a juncture that could either usher in a strengthened and revitalized resolve to build on those gains of multilateralism or move

towards an untenable point of no return in which isolationist policies drive deeper wedges amongst states and peoples and hinder our ability to protect ourselves and each other from irreversible destruction.

We must not be the generation in whose hands history will lay the blame for a destroyed planet. We owe it to our children and their children to leave behind a legacy of growth and of hope in themselves and in each other.

Therefore, it behooves our generation to find remedies to the challenges that affect mankind. To bring an end to the suffering that plagues billions of humans, to end poverty, diseases and, indeed, war. As Nelson Mandela aptly puts it, while “we were expected to destroy one another collectively [...] we as a people [must] chose the path of negotiation, compromise and peaceful settlement.”

In this respect, the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace provides blueprints for our generation to leave a successful legacy. The guiding principles of trust, solidarity and universality must continue to guide us during these fragile times. Respect for human rights and international law, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the pacific settlement of disputes must remain paramount.

Diplomacy must be the balm with which we mend all disputes with prevention as the key watch word. We must promote national ownership of all strategies and actions, which should be people centered, prioritizing the voices of the young and women.

Furthermore, it is paramount that we focus on uplifting the economies of the least developed countries by providing adequate and new opportunities for growth, fair lending schemes as well as international trading opportunities that are more sustainable and better adapted to today's global market.

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## Excellencies,

Turning to the national level, and as we have heard from Ms. Hawa Samai, allow me to draw attention to the case of Sierra Leone, a country that offers valuable lessons in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war, which ended in 2002, was marked by extreme violence, human rights abuses, and the collapse of state institutions. However, the nation's remarkable recovery and sustained peace over the past two decades demonstrate the importance

of national ownership and inclusive governance in conflict prevention.

Sierra Leone's experience, as highlighted by Ms. Samai, underscores the necessity of addressing the root causes of conflict, including economic marginalization, youth unemployment, and political exclusion. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone were pivotal in

promoting transitional justice, reconciliation, and accountability. Additionally, the government's focus on rebuilding institutions, promoting good governance, and fostering peace and national cohesion has been instrumental in preventing the recurrence of conflict.

In effect, Sierra Leone has been implementing some of the 12 recommended actions in the New Agenda for Peace as appropriate, including but not limited to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, shifting the prevention and sustaining peace paradigm and boosting preventive diplomacy in an era of divisions.

The specific actions include expanding manufacturing and service industries, and developing and improving the skillsets of the youth, especially women, investing in technology and infrastructure as a key driver of sustainable development and promoting inclusivity, good governance, people-centered services, and accountability. Our vision is that through dialogue and engagement on this shared development plan, Sierra Leoneans will continue to choose peace and prosperity now and in the future.

At the Global level Sierra Leone is contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security through, inter alia, its membership of United Nations Security Council, and by spotlighting peacebuilding, sharing lessons learnt in our peacebuilding journey.

On the regional front, Sierra Leone has continued to play a leading role in fostering regional peace and stability. His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio has prioritized strengthening regional cooperation, collaboration, and dialogue in addressing socio-economic development, peace and security through the Mano River Union, ECOWAS and the African Union.

Most recently, on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024, President Bio undertook an official visit to Burkina Faso where the two leaders discussed matters related to political dialogue and regional cooperation to address regional challenges including the security situation in Burkina Faso and the Sahel region.

Peace and stability in the West African and Sahel region are of particular importance to Sierra Leone and we have also continued to be actively engaged on this matter in the Council.

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## Excellencies,

The global landscape shows that one-size-fits-all approaches are ineffective in addressing diverse conflict scenarios. More localized and context-specific strategies are needed to tackle the unique root causes of conflicts in different regions and countries. Additionally, to effectively prevent conflicts and crises, it is imperative to invest in early action and response mechanisms that address the root causes of violence and instability.

This involves proactive and innovative measures that tackle socio-economic inequalities, political exclusion, and human rights abuses before they escalate into larger conflicts.

At a time when the UN system is shaping the future of peace operations and special political missions, it is crucial to advocate for a cross-pillar approach that integrates human rights and actions to address

root causes at the core of these processes. This approach should ensure that lessons from past failures are incorporated into future strategies for sustaining peace and conflict-affected and post-conflict situations.

In closing, as we strive to build a more peaceful and secure world, it is incumbent upon this Council

to translate the principles of the New Agenda for Peace into concrete actions on the ground. By prioritizing conflict prevention at the national, regional, and global levels, we can significantly enhance our ability to prevent future conflicts, protect civilians, and build lasting peace.

I thank you.

## THEMATIC FOCUS: WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY



Mrs. Francess Piagie Alghali, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, chairs the Security Council meeting on women and peace and security. (Credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elías)

# United Nations Security Council Briefing on: Sustaining Women Peace and Security Commitments in the Context of Accelerated Drawdown of Peace Operations

Statement by Mrs. Francess Piagie Alghali, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, at the UNSC Chamber, UNHQ on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024

### Excellencies,

I thank Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women and Ms. Martha Pobee, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace

Operations for their comprehensive and insightful briefings. I also thank Ms. Kholood Khair, Founding Director, Confluence Advisory for the information provided.

## Members of Council,

The importance of women's full equal, meaningful and safe participation as active agents in peace and security processes remains a priority for Sierra Leone. The landmark adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in the year 2000 led to the global community's manifest recognition of the differential burden that women and girls bear during conflict situations as well as the vital role that women play in conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution.

The Women, Peace and Security ("WPS") agenda is thus the vital tool to recognize and uphold women's right to full participation, protection, and benefit from the prevention of violence, and gender-sensitive relief and recovery.

Sierra Leone convened this meeting because we are concerned about the seeming lack of trust in the engagements between UN missions and host countries, and the impact that this will surely have on the rights of women and girls. We think this sense of alarm has clearly been expressed in the statements of the briefers today.

The WPS agenda, a cornerstone of our collective commitment to gender equality and conflict prevention, must not be compromised in the face of operational adjustments. On the contrary, it must be fortified and integrated into every phase of peacekeeping, peace support operations, political missions including in withdrawals and drawdown.

There exist examples of situation where there are adverse consequences for women and girls when there is absence of robust WPS frameworks during transitions. Women and girls are often disproportionately affected by renewed violence, limited access to justice, and exclusion from peacebuilding processes. Such setbacks undermine

the hard-won gains made through years of conflict resolution, peace support and peacekeeping efforts.

In Sudan, and as we have heard from our briefers, the current catastrophic conflict is imposing even more devastating impact on women and girls. The gains that were being made towards democracy and stability, have been reversed. With the closure of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission (UNITAMS), for instance, we in Sierra Leone can relate to the severe risk of reversal in sustaining the WPS commitments in such situations.

It is in this context that we share our story, as we urge for orderly and responsible withdrawals or drawdowns of peace support or peacekeeping operations. Sierra Leone experienced a decade of civil conflict from 1991-2000. In the immediate aftermath of the civil conflict the Peacekeeping Mission, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), had a gradual drawdown. From its peak of 17,500 troops, the Mission's strength went down to 13,000 by June 2003 and subsequently to about 5,000 troops by late 2004. Undoubtedly, the drawdown was predicated on Sierra Leone's ability to assume security responsibilities in areas being vacated by UNAMSIL.

The transition from UNAMSIL to the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) was well planned and carried out without major obstacles. The Government of Sierra Leone and all concerned national stakeholders including Women and Youth Groups and international partners were consulted on the establishment of the Office. An effective public information campaign conducted by UNAMSIL, and later UNIOSIL, prepared the population for the departure of UNAMSIL and

for the role that the United Nations would play. As a result, UNIOSIL was fully accepted by all stakeholders concerned.

The transition from the UNIOSIL to the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) proceeded as planned, with extensive consultations among United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, culminating in the adoption of a Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone. In pursuance of this vision, UNIPSIL organized, in collaboration with the relevant government agencies, a national consultative forum on the integration of human rights into the curriculum of secondary schools in Sierra Leone. Additionally, UNIPSIL in collaboration with the then Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs developed a plan relating to the gender justice acts and increased sensitization on women's rights throughout the country.

It is interesting to note that this has been followed through with the establishment of institutions like the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone Police, the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, and the continued efforts to strengthen the legal framework to protect and empower women and girls.

These efforts include the passing of the Domestic Violence Act to combat domestic violence, the Devolution of Estates Act to ensure equity and equality in our inheritance rules, the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act to provide the necessary legal protection, the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act, and the recently enacted Child Marriage Act which prohibits child marriage in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone has also undertaken reform of non-gender specific laws to ensure the provision and protection of political and socio-economic rights and empowerment of women, which have enhanced the implementation of the WPS agenda.

In view of the foregoing, it is imperative that UN Missions withdrawal, or drawdowns are orderly and responsible. Where they become necessary, withdrawals or drawdowns must not result in a regression of the significant gains that have been made in gender equality and the protection of women's rights. Accordingly, we will make the following observations:

Firstly, we must ensure that women are at the forefront of peacebuilding efforts. Their inclusion in peace processes is not merely a matter of equity; it is a necessity for sustainable peace. Evidence shows that peace agreements are more durable when women are involved in their negotiation and implementation. Therefore, as peacekeeping missions transition, we must support women's groups and networks to take active roles in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Secondly, the protection of women and girls from violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, must remain a priority. Peacekeeping missions often serve as critical mechanisms for protecting vulnerable populations. As these missions draw down, we must ensure that national and local authorities are equipped and committed to upholding these protections. This requires continuous capacity building, resource allocation, and a zero-tolerance policy towards perpetrators of such violence.

Thirdly, we must sustain the momentum of gender-responsive reforms in the security sector. This includes ensuring that police and military forces are trained on gender sensitivity and are held accountable for their actions. We must also advocate for the increased recruitment and retention of women in these sectors, ensuring that they play a significant role in decision-making processes.

We know that all contexts are different, but we also know this: with less UN presence in conflict



settings, there is less security for women and girls, and less attention on the violations of the rights of women and girls, and a drastic drop in the investment for programmes to advance gender equality.

While this Security Council has clearly called for gender-responsive UN transitions, full of gender expertise and gender analysis and well thought-

out planning, in practice this is still not the case, and much less so when the UN may have to leave in haste without accomplishing its mandate or an orderly and responsible transition plan. This is worrisome, which is one of the reasons we convened this meeting to serve as a reminder to the international community of the power of international cooperation, in particular on the WPS agenda.

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## Members of Council,

The WPS Agenda remains a viable global agenda. We recognize the significant progress that has been attained through concerted efforts of the UN and its specialized agencies, regional organizations as well as national governments and civil society organizations.

Notwithstanding the progress made, women and girls still encounter a myriad of targeted violations in conflict situations. In the face of accelerated drawdown of UN peace operations, we believe that sustaining the implementation of the four pillars of the WPS agenda will be challenging.

We hope that briefings like today will assist this Council to do more gender-sensitive conflict

analysis so that we can best understand the progress that has been made, but also the challenges that remain in the implementation of WPS in the face of accelerated drawdowns of UN peace operations.

The global community needs to adopt a robust set of solution toolkit to addressing these phenomena for the attainment of our shared goal of maintaining international peace and security.

I thank you.

## THEMATIC FOCUS: WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL AND COUNTERTERRORISM



Dr. Michael Imran Kanu (center), Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations and President of the Security Council for the month of August, chairs the Security Council meeting on threats to international peace and security. (Credit: UN Photo/Loey)

## United Nations Security Council Briefing on: Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts

Statement by Dr. Michael Imran Kanu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, at the UNSC Chamber, UNHQ on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024

### Colleagues,

Let me thank our esteemed briefers, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov of the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism, and the

Executive Director of Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate ASG Ms. Natalia Gherman, for their invaluable insights on the evolving threats posed

by ISIL (Da'esh) and associated individuals and groups. We acknowledge the important work by United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities in addressing these threats and attacks, their impact and the underlying conditions conducive for its entrenchment and spread.

Sierra Leone welcomes the 19<sup>th</sup> report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security and, recalling the commitment of the Council in adopting Resolutions 1373, 1377 and 2253, affirming that a sustained, comprehensive approach with active participation and collaboration by States

and organizations is essential to combatting the scourge of international terrorism.

Whilst sanction regimes continue to serve as an effective tool in the fight against terrorism, Sierra Leone notes further that the 1267, 1373, and 1540 Committees play crucial and complementary roles, and Sierra Leone reiterates its support to expedite the conclusion of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT). We call for renewed commitment and innovative thinking to move the Working Group forward and deliver on our collective mandate to further develop CCIT's legal framework.

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## Colleagues,

Terrorist organizations thrive in environments of social exclusion, inequality, and the relegation of human rights. These groups deliberately seek out deeply disillusioned, marginalized, and desperate people as fertile grounds to propagate their so-called ideologies. Environments with limited opportunities for education and economic empowerment, depriving a significant size of the population, like the youth, of a dignified life, are particularly susceptible to instability, with women and girls usually affected the most. It is an unfortunate reality that these socio-economic deficiencies are further exacerbated by the negative effects of climate change and natural disasters.

Over the past years, the global terrorist threat has evolved, with increased attacks by Da'esh, its affiliates, and its supporters. ISIS branches and affiliates have expanded their influence beyond Iraq and Syria, encompassing a wider population consisting mainly of youth, to now reaching across

the globe to the Central Sahel and West Africa Region. This new epicenter of terrorism accounts for almost 50 percent of all deaths from terror acts globally. Whilst highlighting the dire security situation in the Central Sahel and West Africa Region, we wish to share the following reflections.

Firstly, addressing the root causes of terrorism is key to preventing further entrenchment and spread. Despite continuing to face leadership attrition and financial setbacks, Da'esh and its affiliates have retained their capacity to conduct terrorist attacks and project a threat beyond their areas of operations through cells established and facilitation networks including in northwest Nigeria through the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and support for Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). Addressing the root causes of terrorism therefore will be critical to prevent the evident further entrenchment and spread.

Secondly, we share the concern of the Secretary-General the risk that the continued expansion of terrorist groups will result in an expanding area of instability across West Africa and the Sahel especially if Da'esh affiliates are allowed to enjoy greater operational, financial and logistical autonomy. The magnitude and complexity of the problem are alarming and require concerted action. In this regard, the launch of the "Abuja Process" which aims to develop a comprehensive African-led and owned strategy to address the growing threat of terrorism on the continent represents a positive development. A coordinated approach to this transnational threat cannot be overemphasized.

Thirdly, we note with grave concern from the report that "the situation in West Africa and the Sahel has not changed since the previous report" and that the Furqan "office" in the region has "grown in

importance and capability". Additionally, we have serious concerns regarding the impact of Da'esh operations on children in the Central Sahel region with a constant deterioration in the protection of civilians and frequent violations of human rights affecting people and property.

Recalling the Arria-formula meeting organized by Sierra Leone, and co-sponsored by the A3 Plus members Algeria, Guyana and Mozambique, on "Combating the Rise of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in West Africa and the Sahel," we reiterate our call for a scaled-up comprehensive response to not only tackle the scourge of terrorism but to also ameliorate threat multipliers such as growing food insecurity, climate change induced adversities, health and education concerns and the alarming mass forcible displacement of people in the region.

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## Colleagues,

Strengthening security and regulatory frameworks and accountability mechanisms for coordinated response at the national, regional and international levels is of paramount importance. In our experience, state institutions can be capacitated to effectively deter, investigate and prosecute terrorist activity. In Sierra Leone, through newly reformed laws on Anti-Money Laundering, Combating of Financing of Terrorism financing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and Central Intelligence and Security Agency and cybersecurity strengthens, we have established a network of institutions to prevent and hold responsible actors, supporters and financiers of terrorist activity internally and across borders.

In addition to national efforts, regional and international cooperation is critical for addressing terrorism. Terrorist groups often exploit porous borders, weak border controls and security vulnerabilities, for cross-border illegally trafficking of weapons, drugs and people. Sierra Leone particularly welcomes efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and institutional building in the West African and Sahel region, including the High-Level African Counter Terrorism Meeting in Abuja with support from the United Nations Office of Counterterrorism in April 2024, which launched the 'Abuja' process for mobilizing resources.

We commend the work of the Office of Counter-Terrorism in providing technical assistance

to member States and facilitating regional cooperation. We urge continued logistical, financial, technical and technological support for regional initiatives, particularly to implement the decisions in the Communiqué of the Sixty-Fifth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024 to fully operationalise the multinational joint task forces of the Accra Initiative and Lake Chad Basin in response to rapidly evolving and sophisticated activities of terrorist groups and criminal organisations in West Africa and the Sahel.

Preventing terrorists from accessing financial resources is also crucial to successfully sustaining gains in counter terrorism. We note efforts of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and call for enhanced UN coordination with FATF in identifying and remedying weaknesses in anti-money laundering and counter-terror financing frameworks.

We call on all Member States to re-affirm their collective responsibility and commitment for zero tolerance of terrorism. It is crucial that all member States fulfil their obligations in international counter-terrorism instruments and conventions.

This collective responsibility must transcend political interests, and external influence must be leveraged in a positive and constructive manner. We must not countenance double standards and terrorists should not be seen through the lens of a specific religion, region, or ethnicity.

It is essential that the credibility of the multilateral system in addressing these threats is maintained and we improve and uphold the working methods of the Committees dealing with Sanctions and Counterterrorism, to achieve greater transparency and accountability in their work. Enlisting and delisting individuals and entities under the UN sanctions regimes must be done objectively, transcending political or religious reasons. Proposals in this regard merit due examination before circulation so as not to erode our collective credibility.

Let me conclude, Colleagues, with a final thought on this year's Summit of the Future, which provides an opportunity to reinvigorate multilateralism in critical areas, including threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. Improving our global response to terrorism must play a central role in the New Agenda for Peace, uniting stakeholders from the security, humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding sectors to achieve a future without terrorism. As threats to international peace and security continue to evolve, the Security Council must evolve in its approach to ensure the collective security mandate to ensure prompt and effective action is fully realized.

I thank you.

## Other UNSC Meeting Photos



Mr. Amara Sheikh Mohammed Sowa, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, chairs the Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East (Yemen). (Credit: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe)



Alan E. George, Political Coordinator and Minister Counsellor with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, chairs the Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East. (Credit UN Photo/Manuel Elías)



Ms. Sonia Umu Karim (left), Deputy Political Coordinator and Minister Counsellor for Sierra Leone, speaks at the resumed Security Council meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, with a focus on the new agenda for peace - addressing global, regional and national aspects of conflict prevention. (Credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elías)

# Peace Exhibition



# Peace Exhibition





# Press Stakeout



# Food Tasting



# Peace Concert



# Peace Concert



# Peace Concert



# Staff Members







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