



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

Sierra Leone's Presidency of the United Nations Security Council August 2024

Présidence de la Sierra Leone du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies Août 2024



**ALL PHOTOS ARE AS USED
IN THE PUBLICATIONS**

Sierra Leone assumes the presidency of the UN Security Council for the month of August 2024

New York, July 31, 2024 - The presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is held by each of its members, permanent and non-permanent, in rotation for one month. This month of August 2024, Sierra Leone will preside.

The presidency of the Security Council plays an important role that involves directing the work of the Council and coordinating discussions on issues of international peace and security, as well as representing the UNSC in relations with other Organs of the UN and with Member States. Under Sierra Leone's presidency, the Security Council's Program of Work will include mandated meetings and renewal of mandates (peacekeeping and political missions), convening of consultations on critical peace and security issues, submission of reports and the development of documents including the presentation of any statements to the press on behalf of the Council.

In reaffirming Sierra Leone's firm commitment to partnership, multilateralism and representation, H.E. Brig. Rtd. Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, will preside over an unprecedented debate in the Council on August 12, 2024. The signature event will address the question of "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Addressing the historical injustice and enhancing Africa's effective representation in the UN Security Council". On this occasion, President Bio, who is also the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the Reform of the United Nations Security Council (C-10), will underline the imperative for UN Security Council reform and the urgent need to rectify the historical injustice being perpetuated against Africa.

In addition to Council members, specific member States have been invited to participate under rule 37 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the UNSC. Invitees include C-10 Heads of State and Government or representatives.

The debate will also focus on unlocking the full potential of Africa as a dynamic and vibrant continent capable of contributing meaningfully to the advancement of peace, security, and prosperity worldwide.

In addition to giving priority to addressing the structural imbalance in the UNSC, Sierra Leone, through an Open Debate looking at the role of institutions at the international, regional and national levels, will highlight the country's peace journey, the utility of prevention as part of the myriad of tools in maintaining international peace and security, reflect on the New Agenda of Peace, the UN Secretary-General's prevention strategy and the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution. This second signature event, on the 21st of August, will be presided over by H.E. Timothy Musa Kabba, Sierra Leone's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

A Peace Exhibition will be held in New York at the wrap-up of the Presidency. The Expo is to be curated to allow for a celebration of the culture of peace in Sierra Leone, as well as Sierra Leone food, culture, fashion, fine and performing arts.

A model in nurturing the dividend of peace, and continually working to ensure internal security, strengthening democratic governance, and social cohesion, Sierra Leone returned to the UNSC in January 2024, 53 years after its previous and first tenure.

Présidence de la Sierra Leone du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU pour le mois d'août 2024

New York, le 31 juillet 2024 - La présidence du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies (CSNU) est assurée par chacun de ses membres permanents et non permanents à tour de rôle pendant un mois. En août 2024, la Sierra Leone assumera la présidence.

La présidence du Conseil de sécurité revêt un rôle important qui consiste à diriger les travaux du Conseil et à coordonner les discussions sur les questions de paix et de sécurité internationales, outre la représentation du Conseil de sécurité dans les relations avec d'autres Organes de l'ONU et avec les États Membres. Le programme de travail du Conseil de sécurité comprendra les réunions prescrites et le renouvellement des mandats (missions de maintien de la paix et missions politiques), la convocation de consultations et de dialogues interactifs sur des questions importantes en matière de paix et de sécurité, la soumission de rapports et l'élaboration de documents, y compris la tenue de toute conférence de presse au nom du Conseil de sécurité.

Réaffirmant l'engagement ferme de la Sierra Leone en faveur du partenariat, du multilatéralisme et de la représentation, S.E. le général de brigade à la retraite Dr. Julius Maada Bio, Président de la République de Sierra Leone, présidera un débat inédit au Conseil le 12 août 2024. L'événement phare abordera la question du « Maintien de la paix et de la sécurité internationales : remédier à l'injustice historique et renforcer la représentation effective de l'Afrique au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU ». À cette occasion, le Président Bio, qui est également le Coordonnateur du Comité des dix chefs d'État et de gouvernement de l'Union africaine sur la réforme du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies (C-10), soulignera l'impératif de réformer le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU et le besoin urgent de rectifier l'injustice historique perpétrée contre l'Afrique. Outre les membres du Conseil, des États Membres spécifiques ont été invités à participer en vertu de l'article 37 du Règlement intérieur provisoire du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU. Les invités comprennent les chefs d'État et de Gouvernement ou les représentants du C-10. Le débat portera également sur la libération du plein potentiel de l'Afrique en tant que continent dynamique et dynamique capable de contribuer de manière significative à l'avancement de la paix, de la sécurité et de la prospérité dans le monde.

En plus de donner la priorité accordée à la résolution du déséquilibre structurel au sein du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, la Sierra Leone, à travers un débat ouvert examinant le rôle des institutions aux niveaux international, régional et national, mettra en lumière le parcours de paix du pays, le rôle de la prévention dans le cadre de la myriade d'outils de maintien de la paix et de la sécurité internationales, et réfléchira au Nouvel Agenda pour la paix, à la stratégie de prévention du Secrétaire général de l'ONU et au rôle des femmes dans la prévention et la résolution des conflits. Ce deuxième événement phare, le 21 août, sera présidé par S.E. Timothy Musa Kabba, Ministre des Affaires étrangères et de la Coopération internationale de la Sierra Leone.

Une exposition sur la paix se tiendra à New York à la fin de la présidence. L'exposition sera organisée de manière à permettre une célébration de la culture de la paix, de l'art culinaire, de la culture, de la mode, des beaux-arts et des arts du spectacle de la Sierra Leone.

Cette exposition célébrera aussi le partenariat efficace entre la Sierra Leone et les Nations Unies dans l'instauration et la consolidation de la paix en Sierra Leone. Elle sera présidée le 30 août par le ministre des Affaires étrangères Timothy Musa Kabba.

Modèle de culture des dividendes de la paix et d'action durable pour garantir la sécurité intérieure, le renforcement de la gouvernance démocratique et la cohésion sociale, la Sierra Leone a fait son retour au Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies en janvier 2024, 53 ans après son précédent et premier mandat au sein du Conseil.

Sierra Leone's president uses UN Security Council Presidency to urge more seats for Africa

AP



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

Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio speaks at the United Nations headquarters, Monday, Sept. 19, 2022

Photo Credit
AP Photo/Seth Wenig, File)

BY JENNIFER PELTZ

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — After decades of seeking a bigger voice in the United Nations' most powerful body, Africa “cannot wait any longer,” Sierra Leone’s president told the Security Council on Monday.

Chairing a meeting that his country convened, President Julius Maada Bio pressed a longstanding bid for African countries to get more council seats, including two permanent and potentially veto-wielding spots.

“The time for half-measures and incremental progress is over. Africa must be heard, and its demands for justice and equity must be met,” Bio said, calling his continent the “unquestionable victim” of an imbalanced, outdated and unrepresentative Security Council structure.

It wasn’t the first time the council has heard calls for expanding and reshaping its membership — and African countries aren’t the only ones that want more representation. While there’s a general sense that the council needs to change, discussions have bogged down over differences on how much to expand the group, what countries to include and what powers it should have.

But Bio’s presence put an exclamation point on the issue ahead of a U.N. “Summit of the Future” and the annual General Assembly gathering of presidents, prime ministers and monarchs. Both gatherings are scheduled next month.

Some countries are hoping for momentum from the summit, which is meant to generate a wide-ranging new vision of what international cooperation should look like in this century. The latest draft of the summit's potential "Pact for the Future" terms Security Council reform a priority and pledges an "ambitious" result, with specific language still to come.

"We are sure it is a matter of time. Because the gatekeepers will find it difficult to let us in," Bio said at a news briefing Monday, but "we have a genuine and compelling case."

Set up in 1945 to try to maintain peace in the wake of World War II, the Security Council can levy sanctions, deploy peacekeeping missions and otherwise pass resolutions that are legally binding, if sometimes ignored.

Its composition reflects the postwar power structure, and a time when most of Africa was under European control.

The United States, Russia, China, Britain and France are permanent, veto-wielding members. Ten other seats — originally six, until a 1965 expansion — go to countries that get two-year council terms, without veto power. The broader General Assembly elects them by region, with three seats for Africa.

African countries, and many others, have argued that the arrangement shorts the continent with the world's fastest-growing population, now at 1.3 billion. The continent's 54 countries make up 28% of the U.N.'s member states. Five of the U.N.'s 11 current peacekeeping operations are in Africa, as are four of the top 10 countries in terms of sending troops.

The African Union, a regional group, has called for two additional elected seats — yielding a total of five — and two permanent ones for countries on the continent.

The permanent seats, in particular, must "be urgently addressed," Namibia's foreign minister, Peya Mushelenga, told the council Monday.

Any changes to the council's composition would be up to the General Assembly, which has held negotiations for years. Assembly President Dennis Francis said Monday that Africa is "manifestly underrepresented" on the council and that the status quo is "simply wrong."

But the U.N.'s member countries have floated many different ideas for changing the council, and any move to accommodate Africa would likely stir pressure to consider other proposals. The United States, for instance, backs adding permanent seats for countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, among others.

"Let's stop admiring the problem here. We need to move to solutions," U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, whose prior postings include multiple African countries, told the council.

Bio, whose nation currently holds the council's rotating presidency, urged the group to get behind giving his continent priority in any structural changes.

"Africa cannot wait any longer," he said.

"AFRICA CANNOT WAIT ANY LONGER"

Le Sierra Leone demande plus de sièges pour l'Afrique



Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU

Après des décennies de recherche d'une voix plus forte au sein de l'organe le plus puissant des Nations Unies, l'Afrique « ne peut plus attendre », a plaidé lundi le président de la Sierra Leone au Conseil de sécurité.

JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

Présidant une réunion convoquée par son pays, le président Julius Maada Bio a fait pression sur une demande de longue date pour que les pays africains obtiennent plus de sièges au Conseil, dont deux sièges permanents et potentiellement assortis d'un droit de veto.

« Le temps des demi-mesures et des progrès progressifs est révolu. L'Afrique doit être entendue et ses demandes de justice et d'équité doivent être satisfaites », a affirmé M. Bio, qualifiant son continent de « victime incontestable » d'une structure du Conseil de sécurité déséquilibrée, obsolète et non représentative.

Ce n'était pas la première fois que le Conseil entendait des appels à l'élargissement et à la refonte de sa composition — et les pays africains ne sont pas les seuls à vouloir une plus grande représentation. Bien qu'il y ait un sentiment général que le Conseil doit changer, les discussions ont été enlisées en raison de divergences sur l'ampleur de l'élargissement groupe, quels pays inclure et quels pouvoirs il devrait avoir.



PHOTO ANDREW KELLY, REUTERS
Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU

La présence de M. Bio a mis un point d'exclamation sur la question, à l'approche d'un « Sommet de l'avenir » de l'ONU et de la réunion annuelle de l'Assemblée générale des présidents, premiers ministres et monarques. Les deux rassemblements sont prévus le mois prochain.

Certains pays espèrent un élan du sommet, qui est censé générer une nouvelle vision de ce à quoi devrait ressembler la coopération internationale au cours de ce siècle. Le dernier projet du potentiel « Pacte pour l'avenir » du sommet qualifie la réforme du Conseil de sécurité de priorité et promet un résultat « ambitieux », avec un langage spécifique encore à venir.

« Nous sommes sûrs que c'est une question de temps. Parce que les gardiens auront du mal à nous laisser entrer », a prédit M. Bio lors d'un point de presse lundi, mais « nous avons un argument authentique et convaincant ».

L'Afrique « lésée »

Créé en 1945 pour tenter de maintenir la paix au lendemain de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, le Conseil de sécurité peut imposer des sanctions, déployer des missions de maintien de la paix et adopter des résolutions juridiquement contraignantes, même si elles sont parfois ignorées.

Sa composition reflète la structure du pouvoir d'après-guerre et une époque où la majeure partie de l'Afrique était sous contrôle européen

Les États-Unis, la Russie, la Chine, la Grande-Bretagne et la France sont des membres permanents disposant d'un droit de veto. Dix autres sièges – six à l'origine, jusqu'à l'élargissement de 1965 – reviennent à des pays qui obtiennent des mandats de deux ans au Conseil, sans droit de veto.

L'Assemblée générale élargie élit ses sièges par région, avec trois places pour l'Afrique.

Les pays africains, et bien d'autres, ont fait valoir que cet arrangement lésait ce continent dont la population croît le plus rapidement au monde, avec aujourd'hui 1,3 milliard d'habitants. Les 54 pays du continent représentent 28 % des États membres de l'ONU. Cinq des 11 opérations de maintien de la paix actuelles de l'ONU se déroulent en Afrique, tout comme quatre des 10 premiers pays en termes d'envoi de troupes.

L'Union africaine, un groupe régional, a demandé deux sièges élus supplémentaires – soit un total de cinq – et deux sièges permanents pour les pays du continent.

La question des sièges permanents, en particulier, doit être « réglée de toute urgence », a pressé lundi le ministre namibien des Affaires étrangères, Peya Mushelenga.

Tout changement dans la composition du Conseil serait du ressort de l'Assemblée générale, qui mène des négociations depuis des années. Le président de l'Assemblée Dennis Francis a déclaré lundi que l'Afrique est « manifestement sous-représentée » au Conseil et que le statu quo est « tout simplement erroné ».

Mais les pays membres de l'ONU ont lancé de nombreuses idées différentes pour modifier le Conseil, et toute initiative visant à accommoder l'Afrique susciterait probablement une pression pour envisager d'autres propositions. Les États-Unis, par exemple, soutiennent l'ajout de sièges permanents pour les pays d'Afrique, d'Amérique latine et des Caraïbes, entre autres.

« Arrêtons de contempler le problème ici. Nous devons passer à des solutions », a plaidé au Conseil l'ambassadrice américaine Linda Thomas-Greenfield, dont les affectations précédentes incluent plusieurs pays africains.

M. Bio, dont le pays occupe actuellement la présidence tournante du Conseil, a exhorté le groupe à soutenir l'idée de donner la priorité à son continent dans tout changement structurel.

« L'Afrique ne peut plus attendre », a-t-il martelé.



Julius Maada Bio
Président de la Sierra Leone

The new fight to reform the UN's colonial-era world order



By Tara John, CNN

Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio has reiterated Africa's longstanding pitch to reform the Council.

Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio addresses the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York City on September 20, 2023



*Photo Credit
AP Photo/Seth Wenig, File)*

In a city known for its private members clubs battling for exclusivity, one gilded room in Manhattan reigns supreme: a powerful club of countries within the United Nations headquarters that has resisted adding a new member for nearly eight decades.

The UN Security Council has been dominated by just five countries (the United States, China, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom) since its inception from the ashes of World War II, when much of the world was still under colonial rule.

Today, countries around the world get to take turns in the council as non-permanent members, but no country in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America or the Caribbean has the permanent members' crucial veto power.

The veto allows permanent members, known as the P5, to block any resolution, ranging from peacekeeping missions to sanctions, in defense of their national interests and foreign policy decisions.

But there is a renewed push to reform this colonial-era world order.

As world leaders prepare to return to the UN headquarters for the annual General Assembly this September, Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio has reiterated Africa's longstanding pitch to reform the council, including two new permanent member spots for African countries.

African issues take up nearly 50% of the council's daily business, and the bulk of its resolutions concerning peace and security. The continent is also home to more than a quarter of UN member states and more than a billion people but remains "grossly underrepresented in this vital organ of the UN," Bio told a high-level meeting in August. Sierra Leone represents the African Group at the United Nations, comprised of the 54 countries from the continent.

A senior diplomat at the UN told CNN that Africa currently holds a lot of sway among the P5 countries, the final arbiters on any reform, as Russia and America scramble for influence in the continent.

The council, responsible for maintaining global peace and security, has the power to deploy peacekeeping missions, authorize the use of force, impose sanctions, and pass resolutions – many of which have enjoyed great effectiveness despite high-profile deadlocks on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war.

More than a dozen peer-reviewed studies have found that the bulk of UN peace-keeping missions have helped curb violence and reduce conflict in countries such as Sierra Leone.

The yearslong push to reform the UN's most powerful body is gaining political momentum: US President Joe Biden even made the case for permanent seats for Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean during a speech to the UN in 2022. Some diplomats are optimistic that September's general debate – when national leaders address the assembly and which the UN hopes will be used as a critical moment to reflect on the future of the multilateral system – will see consensus around a roadmap for Security Council reform.

The summit's draft document, 'Pact for the Future,' acknowledges the need to fix the "historical injustice against Africa as a priority" and Africa's special status in negotiations going forward.

"For the first time, we are now seeing movement," says Alexander Marschik, Austria's UN envoy, who co-chairs an intergovernmental group on negotiations for the Security Council. The group has been discussing reform for up to 20 years, he told CNN.



A Security Council meeting at United Nations headquarters in New York on Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2024.
Yuki Iwamura/Bloomberg/Getty Images

Growing stalemate

Deep divisions among the permanent members have led to growing frustration with the Security Council's inability to stem the world's biggest problems, from bloody conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, to the threat of nuclear weapons and climate change.

"US and Russia often exercise their veto to either protect a client state, in the case of Israel or Syria, or to protect their own national interests, as in the case with Russia vetoing on Ukraine," Anjali Dayal, a UN expert and an international politics assistant professor at Fordham University, told CNN.

France and the United Kingdom have limited their use of veto power since 1989. But the post-Cold-War years have seen the US, Russia, and China use the chamber to "exonerate their allies and shield themselves from the consequences of their unpopular foreign policy decisions," she added.

Sierra Leone's foreign minister believes more equity in the council would help break the gridlock and lend it more credibility.

"There are many conflicts where the UN Security Council has actually come up with resolutions that are not readily implemented, which shows the inefficiency of the council at the moment," Timothy Musa Kabba told CNN at the country's UN mission office in New York.

He added that in "a world that is more diverse, that is more globalized, interconnected, there is need for the council to be democratized for representation based on geography."

Beyond the five veto-wielding powers, there are ten non-permanent seats, three of which go to Africa, on the council. The non-permanent seats don't have veto powers, and they are elected by region by the General Assembly for a two-year term.

There's agreement among the council's permanent members and diplomats in the halls of the UN's iconic midtown Manhattan complex that it is time to evolve. But rivalries and national interests among the UN's 193 member states have blocked attempts to change as they struggle to agree on which countries to include, the scale of the enlargement of permanent and non-permanent members; and what their powers on the council will look like.

Brazil and India, for example, would like permanent spots on the council, a prospect that would not go down well with India's longtime rivals, Pakistan and China, or Argentina and Mexico in Brazil's case, said one UN diplomat.

Decades-long debate

Beyond the African Union push for two permanent and an additional two non-permanent seats on the council, there are at least five other constellations of UN member states that have their own separate ideas on what reform should look like.

"This is a conversation that's been happening for decades," Daniel Forti, Senior Analyst for UN Advocacy and Research at the Crisis Group, told CNN. "Diplomats haven't agreed on a formula on how to expand the council in a way that gets a two-thirds majority plus Washington, Moscow, and Beijing to all agree on the same formulation."

There's "more political momentum to this, but it doesn't mean we're necessarily any step closer to achieving reform," he added.

For example, any attempt to remove veto powers from the P5 would be "non-starter" and is "not something the big three would ever agree with," a senior UN diplomat told CNN, meaning the US, Russia and China.

But what could work is "lowercase reform," say experts and diplomats, who point to a 2022 initiative tabled by Liechtenstein that was adopted by the General Assembly. It mandates that any veto case by the P5 be debated in the General Assembly. While the process cannot overturn a veto, it raises the political cost of the P5 exercising their unilateral power.

Enlargement is possible, say advocates, pointing to 1963 when the council was enlarged from 10 to 15 member states. "So maybe, on the other hand, maybe this is an opportunity," said a senior diplomat at the UN. "I think the fact that people are talking about it, means there's more traction," the diplomat added.

"But we're a long way away from real, operationalized Security Council reform."

The Washington Post

Sierra Leone's president uses UN Security Council presidency to urge more seats for Africa

Democracy dies in darkness

By JENNIFER PELTZ - August 12, 2024

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It wasn't the first time the council has heard calls for expanding and reshaping its membership — and African countries aren't the only ones that want more representation. While there's a general sense that the council needs to change, discussions have bogged down over differences on how much to expand the group, what countries to include and what powers it should have.

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"manifestly underrepresented" on the council and that the status quo is "simply wrong."

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“The era of incremental measures and half-hearted progress must give way to decisive action.”

UN chief calls for permanent Africa Security Council seat

By Claudia Efemini



UN officials, including António Guterres, feel the Security Council should reflect the world as it is, not as it was 80 years ago

UN chief António Guterres has called for Africa to be given a permanent seat at the UN Security Council as part of reforms to correct historical injustices.

The Security Council - the five permanent members of which are China, France, Russia, the UK and the US - has long been criticised for representing the realities that prevailed at the end of World War Two when much of Africa was still under colonial rule.

"The world has changed since 1945. But the composition of the Council, despite a few changes, has not kept pace," Mr Guterres said.

The 10 non-permanent members of the body are allocated by region, but unlike the five permanent members, they do not have the power of veto.

The African Union has long been pushing for the continent to have two permanent representatives on the council and an additional two seats as non-permanent representatives.

The debate on Monday was convened by Sierra Leone - and its President Julius Maada Bio made the case for the continent.

"The time for half-measures and incremental progress is over. Africa must be heard, and its demands for justice and equity must be met," he said.

The UN Security Council has significant responsibilities, including authorising peacekeeping operations, imposing international sanctions and determining how the UN should respond to conflicts around the world.

Other UN officials echoed the sentiments for reform, including Dennis Francis - the president of the UN General Assembly, as well as Mr Guterres.

"We cannot accept that the world's preeminent peace and security body lacks a permanent voice for a continent of well over a billion people - a young and rapidly growing population - making up 28% of the membership of the United Nations," the UN chief said.

Africa was under-represented at the UN Security Council and international financial institutions but "over-represented in the very challenges these structures are designed to address", he added.

Africa has often been at the centre of conflicts fuelled by greed for the continent's resources, necessary to the global economy, Mr Guterres said.

He also pointed out that almost half of all UN peacekeeping operations were in Africa and 40% of UN peacekeepers were African.

The UN chief added that the body had failed to adequately align African representation with the continent's efforts and contributions.

The UN was set up after the end of World War Two to spare succeeding generations from the scourge of armed conflict.

Only four African nations - Egypt, Liberia, Ethiopia, and South Africa - were amongst the founding members.

For Mr Guterres, the need for change was not only about ethics and justice.

"It is also a strategic imperative that can increase global acceptance of the council's decisions - benefitting Africa and the world," he said.

Officials at UN Security Council push for a permanent seat for Africa



UN Secretary-General António Guterres urges reform, says the African continent is underrepresented in a changing world.

The United Nations chief has called for the UN Security Council (UNSC) to reform its outdated structure and assign Africa a permanent seat at the table, stressing that the continent is underrepresented.

Addressing the council on Monday during a high-level debate, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the composition of the UNSC has failed to keep pace with a changing world.

“We cannot accept that the world’s preeminent peace and security body lacks a permanent voice for a continent of well over a billion people ... nor can we accept that Africa’s views are undervalued on questions of peace and security, both on the continent and around the world,” he said.

The 15-member UNSC consists of five permanent members with veto power – China, France, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom – while the remaining 10 nonpermanent seats are allocated regionally.

The 10 seats include three seats for African states; two each for Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe and other states; and one for Eastern Europe.

In May, the UNSC called for the role of African countries to be strengthened in addressing global security and development challenges.

UN General Assembly President Dennis Francis said at the debate that the UN must reflect the world as it is.

“The fact that Africa continues to be manifestly underrepresented on the Security Council is simply wrong, offending as it does both the principles of equity and inclusion,” he said.

“It runs counter to the principle of sovereign equality of states and calls for the urgency to reform this institution to reflect the world as it is now, rather than what it was nearly 80 years ago.”

A ‘favourable’ moment

Speaking at the UNSC, Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio said Africa demands two permanent seats in the UNSC and two additional nonpermanent seats.

“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,” he said.

Carlos Lopes, a professor at the University of Cape Town who previously served as a high representative for the African Union (AU), told Al Jazeera that African attempts to have better representation aren’t new, but current geopolitics have made this current moment “quite favourable”.

“[There’s] a competition for Africa’s votes; Africa’s bloc has become much more difficult to actually align with one position or another,” Lopes said.

“The Africans have been able to navigate these geopolitical tensions very well. We have seen it with the membership of the G20 being expanded to include the African Union. Now it’s another attempt by the Africans to push the envelope and try to do it at the Security Council.”

Maada Bio makes Africa's strong case for reforms of the UN Security Council



In an exclusive interview, the Sierra Leonean President maintains that the Security Council's current configuration is outdated and does not adequately serve Africa's interests.

BY: Kingsley Ighobor



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I call on all African leaders and on all those who stand for justice and democracy around the world to fight this unfairness.

President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone chairs the Security Council meeting on international peace, pushing for Africa's rightful representation at the UN

UN Photo/Manuel Elías

At most international forums, including the annual UN General Assembly high-level debate, Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio consistently highlights the injustices of the global system, particularly Africa's absence in the permanent category and underrepresentation in the non-permanent category of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

President Bio is the coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on UNSC Reform, known as C-10, a platform he uses to amplify his UNSC reform advocacy.

This year, he has been particularly vocal, as Sierra Leone currently holds a non-permanent seat on the Security Council and presides over the Council for the month of August. For example, in his statement in the Security Council chambers on 12 August, President Bio emphasized the outdated nature of the current UNSC structure.

"The current structure of the Security Council reflects an outdated world order, an era that fails to recognize Africa's growing importance and contributions," he remarked.

In a subsequent interview with Africa Renewal, the president pointed out that the continent is home to 1.3 billion people and 54 of the 193 UN member states—a significant part of the global community.

"We cannot just be a territory for proxy wars. We know what our problems are, and we should have a say in how to solve them," he asserted, adding that more than 60 percent of the issues discussed in the Security Council pertain to Africa.

It is unjust for Africa to be sidelined in the 21st century, he argued, declaring: "I call on all African leaders and on all those who stand for justice and democracy around the world to fight this unfairness."

As the UN prepares to celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2025, President Bio asserted that the celebration would only be meaningful if the current configuration of the Council is reformed, reflecting the frustration of many African leaders who feel the continent's concerns are often overlooked.

Africa's demands

Africa is demanding at least two permanent seats in the UN Security Council and two additional non-permanent seats, bringing the total number of non-permanent seats to five.

Additionally, Africa advocates for the abolition of the veto power. However, if the veto is retained, President Bio insisted that it must be extended to all new permanent members as a matter of justice.

The President broke down the potential support for Africa's push for greater representation on the Security Council into two categories: support from within the continent and support from major global powers.

While support from within the continent comes naturally, he acknowledged the challenges posed by the P-5, (the five permanent members of the Security Council), who wield enormous power in the Council. "The main issue we have is the P-5. They are manning the gate. They have to let us in."

Despite these challenges, he was encouraged that "They [P-5] have recognized the fact that Africa has been treated unfairly."

He stressed: "There is a new spirit; the world has changed, and leaders have come and gone. What I'm trying to do is convince my colleagues in Africa and the world at large that the injustice done to Africa cannot be accepted."

The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, supports Africa's demands for UNSC reforms. "We cannot accept that the world's preeminent peace and security body lacks a permanent voice for a continent of well over a billion people — a young and rapidly growing population — making up 28 percent of the membership of the United Nations," Mr. Guterres said at the 12 August meeting. He added, "Nor can we accept that Africa's views are undervalued on questions of peace and security, both on the continent and around the world."

To ensure the Council's full credibility and legitimacy, he emphasized the importance of "heeding the longstanding calls from the UN General Assembly, various geographic groups — from the Arab Group to the Benelux, Nordic, and CARICOM countries — and some permanent members of this Council itself, to correct this injustice."

"We cannot accept that the world's preeminent peace and security body lacks a permanent voice for a continent of well over a billion people — a young and rapidly growing population — making up 28 % of the membership of the United Nations. Nor can we accept that Africa's views are undervalued on questions of peace and security, both on the continent and around the world."

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, on 12 August 2024 at the UNSC



Lessons from Sierra Leone's civil war

Sierra Leone's brutal civil war (1991-2002) may have shaped President Bio's views on conflict resolution and international diplomacy.

"After all the fighting, after all the destruction, we resolved our problems at the negotiating table," he reflected, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and consensus-building.

Drawing from Sierra Leone's experience, he envisioned Africa playing an important role in global peace and security. "We have learned quite a lot—partnership, multilateralism, dialogue, and the need to build consensus.

"What we are bringing to the table within the UN Security Council is how we can be a bridge, how we can support multilateralism as a way for peace and security around the world."

Women's empowerment

Beyond global governance, Sierra Leone has adopted progressive gender policies under President Bio's leadership. For example, the country passed a law mandating, among other provisions, that at least 30 percent of positions in both the private and public sectors, including in the cabinet, be held by women—a huge step toward gender equality.

Earlier this year, Sierra Leone also enacted a law banning child marriage.

"It would be wrong for us to talk about development if you keep more than half of your population in the kitchen or do not empower them enough to be part of the force that is going to change the nation," he declared.

Empowering women, he stressed, begins with education. This focus on education is part of a broader strategy to transform Sierra Leone's human capital, which President Bio considers the nation's most valuable resource.

He said: "When you talk about Sierra Leone, you think of diamonds, gold, and other natural resources. I have said to my nation, yes, these are precious minerals, but the most important resources we have in this country are the people."

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I have said to my nation, yes, these are precious minerals, but the most important resources we have in this country are the people. ”

President Julius Maada Bio

Climate change

As a leader of one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, President Bio highlighted Sierra Leone's challenges in handling increasingly severe weather patterns. "When it rains, it rains so heavily that it overwhelms the infrastructure. We've seen cars floating, we've seen houses swept away," he noted, drawing parallels with similar disasters in more developed nations.

In response, Sierra Leone has launched a nationwide climate action campaign focusing on reforestation, improving drainage systems, and educating the public on the importance of the environment.

"Combating climate change requires collective action, both locally and globally," he emphasized.

On the issue of capital flight from Africa, President Bio underscored his deep sense of pride in African identity and potential. He urged Africans to acquire knowledge and skills from the West and to bring back those lessons to build their societies back in Africa.

"Home is home. Nobody's going to fix that home. We [Africans] have to fix that home," he insisted.



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Meetings Coverage and Press Releases

9702nd Meeting (AM & PM)

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12 August 2024

Africa Has Provided Clear, Compelling Vision for Security Council Representation, Speakers Stress in Historic Debate on Enhancing Continent's Participation

Africa has articulated a clear and compelling vision for its representation on the Security Council, that body heard today at a historic high-level debate on enhancing the continent's effective participation in the United Nations organ tasked with maintenance of peace and security.

The meeting was convened by Sierra Leone, Council President for August, and chaired by that country's President, Julius Maada Bio. Speaking in his national capacity, he said: "Today, I speak as a representative of a continent that has long been underrepresented in the decision-making process that shapes our world." Setting out the aspirations of its fifty-plus countries and over 1 billion people, he stated: "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 continent's permanent members, he said, stressing that "Africa wants the veto abolished; however, if UN Member States wish to retain the veto, it must extend it to all new permanent members as a matter of justice."

This is the Common African Position, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, he said. As the Coordinator of the African Union's Committee of Ten, his country has spearheaded efforts to amplify the continent's voice on the question of its representation. Noting the bloc's admission to the Group of Twenty (G20) as a welcome development, he said it is absurd for the UN to enter the eightieth decade of its existence without representation for his continent. It must be treated as a special case and prioritized in the Council reform process, he stressed.

Highlighting the way slavery, imperialism and colonialism have shaped current global power structures, he noted the persistent stereotype of Africa "as a passive actor" in global affairs. The continent's inclusion in the permanent membership category will ensure that decisions affecting it are made with direct and meaningful input from those most impacted. This will not only unlock Africa's full potential; it will also improve the Council's legitimacy, he added.

"The cracks" in the Organization's foundation "are becoming too large to ignore", António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations acknowledged during his briefing. The Council was "designed by the victors of the Second World War and reflects the power structures at that time," he said, recalling that in 1945, most of today's African countries were still under colonial rule and had no voice in international affairs. As a result, there is no permanent member representing Africa in the Council and the number of elected members from the continent is not in proportion to its importance.

It is unacceptable, he underscored, that "the world's pre-eminent peace and security body lacks a permanent voice for a continent of well over a billion people", whose countries make up 28 per cent of the membership of the UN. While Africa is underrepresented in global governance structures, it is overrepresented in the challenges these structures address. Nearly half of all country-specific or regional conflicts on the Council's agenda concern Africa, and "they are often exacerbated by greed for Africa's resources" and further aggravated by external interference, he said.

"Reform of this Council membership must be accompanied by a democratization of its working methods," he added, drawing attention to the need for more systematic consultations with host States and regional organizations. Enhancing Africa's representation in the Council is not just a question of ethics; "it is also a strategic imperative that can increase global acceptance of the Council's decisions," he reminded that body.

Echoing that, Dennis Francis (Trinidad and Tobago), President of the General Assembly, said: "We cannot continue to take [the United Nations] relevance for granted." Instead, he added, "we must earn it, daily, with the actions we take", including meaningful reform. Highlighting the Assembly's active engagement on Council reform, he said the current draft of its input to the Pact of the Future calls for redressing the historical injustice to Africa.

The continent, he pointed out, is home to 54 of the UN's 193 members, accounts for 1.3 billion of the world's population and hosts the majority of UN peacekeeping operations. "The fact that Africa continues to be manifestly underrepresented on the Security Council is simply wrong," he said. Alongside the growing calls for a Council that is more representative and transparent, he noted, there are also calls for a revitalized General Assembly. Member States are asking that body to assume a greater role in peace and security matters but also hold the Council more accountable for its actions — "and, indeed, inaction" he said.

The United Nations is clearly suffering from a legitimacy crisis, Sithembile Mbete, Senior Lecturer of Political Sciences at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria noted, adding that younger generations are witnessing its failures in "real time" on social media platforms. She described Africa's experience of the UN system over the past 80 years as one of "misrepresentation and underrepresentation". This has become evident in the perpetuated narratives of Africa as a continent of "backwards societies" reliant on aid as well as in the continent's exclusion from permanent membership of the Council and inadequate representation among non-permanent members.

Detailing the historical context for this, she recalled the four centuries of European slave trade starting in 1450 and devastating Africa's population, culture, and economies, as well as the 1884 Berlin Conference that imposed colonial States, which still impacts the continent's economic relations with rich nations. In the 30 years since the end of the cold war, African subjects took up nearly 50 per cent of the Council's meetings — but while Africa was on the menu, as was the case in Berlin 100 years ago, it still does not have a permanent seat at the table. By 2045, Africa will have 2.3 billion people, making up 25 per cent of the global population, she said, asking diplomats to summon "the courage" to confront the power relations that are preventing meaningful reform.

Lounes Magramane, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad of Algeria, pointed to the hotspots on his continent, from the security, development and humanitarian challenges in the Sahel region to the Sahrawi people's struggle for their right to selfdetermination. Yet, Africa is the only group not represented in the permanent category, he said, reiterating the call for allocation of two permanent and two non-permanent seats. Permanent members must commit to support the reform process, he said, calling on them to participate constructively in the intergovernmental negotiations.

China's representative was one of several speakers who traced the connection between colonialism and Africa's under-representation. The brutal legacy of Western colonial rule, the inhumane slave trade and resource-plundering impoverished the people of that continent and artificially interrupted their development. This is the root cause of all historical injustices in Africa, he asserted. "Some Western countries still cling to the colonial mindset," he said, interfering in Africa's internal affairs using financial, legal, and even military means to exert their influence in currency, energy, minerals and national defence. He urged those countries "to change course and return the future of Africa to the hands of the African people".

Eight decades ago when the Council first met, the United States' delegate said, "its architects could not have imagined then what the world would look like today, as we cannot imagine what it will look like 70 years from now". In 2050, one in four people on the planet will be African, she noted, adding that Africa has the fastest-growing population of any continent. "We all benefit when African leaders are at the table," she said, adding that the upcoming Summit of the Future should be a platform for meaningful progress. At the same time, "Africa's problems are not Africa's alone to deal with," she said, as she warned against the attempts of some States to obstruct Panels of Experts. They represent a critical UN tool that provides the body with credible information about security threats, she added.

General Jeje Odongo Abubakhar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, said that despite being “the market of the world” and a leading contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, Africa has been “unjustly excluded from positions of power and influence” in the Council. A stronger presence will give the continent a “much-needed platform for engagement with the international community as an equal and significant partner,” he said. Voicing support for the intergovernmental negotiating process, he noted that “it is taking too long to conclude”.

Mozambique's delegate noted that this topic has been long addressed in many different fora, including the negotiations on Assembly resolution 62/557 concerning “Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters”. Yet, regrettably, “the Security Council's engagement in that process has been modest to say the least,” he said, adding that the body's position has not changed much since the 1965 expansion that added the four elected members to the organ. To those who argue that expanding membership will diminish the Council's efficacy, he pointed out that legitimacy and efficacy are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Shinsuke Shimizu, Ambassador for International Economic Affairs in Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, commended the continent's effort to shoulder more responsibilities at the Council, highlighting the landmark resolution on financing of African Union-led Peace Support Operations. The Council must be reformed with an expansion in both permanent and nonpermanent membership, he asserted. Also supporting the expansion of both categories of membership was Lord Collins of Highbury, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for the United Kingdom. In order for the Council to be as effective as it can be, it must urgently include permanent African representation, he said.

The representative of France stressed the need to strengthen the Council's legitimacy whilst preserving its decision-making ability. The reform is “possible”, and Africa should serve as the “catalyst” for this change, she said, adding that the ambitious goal of expansion must be included in the text of the Pact of the Future. She also urged Member States to join her country's initiative to limit the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities.

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Guyana's delegate rejected the proposal for expanded permanent membership without the veto privilege, cautioning that this will create hierarchies of members in the permanent category. Moreover, it will perpetuate injustice by restricting the prerogatives of new permanent members, including from Africa. While firmly supporting the abolition of the veto, she contended that "as long as it continues to exist, all new permanent members should have the prerogative of its use". Notwithstanding, the use of the veto must be curtailed, she stressed, adding that it should never be used to paralyze the Council in cases of mass atrocities such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

The representative of Pakistan said the veto is the principal reason for the Council's frequent inability to take effective collective action. "The problem cannot be the solution," he said, opposing the addition of new permanent members on the Council as demanded by four individual States, viewing it as a move to promote narrow national interests. Advocating for a "regional approach", he expressed support for "special regional seats" to be occupied by States selected by the region and elected by the General Assembly. Similarly, the concept of longer-term and re-electable seats within each region — proposed by the Uniting for Consensus Group — can be considered as a way to achieve these objectives. While the veto cannot be abolished, it must be severely constrained, particularly in the case of the genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, he said.

The representative of the Russian Federation, however, expressed support for retaining the mechanism of veto, which ensures the adoption of realistic decisions. Describing his country as a "consistent supporter" of Security Council reform, he cautioned, however, against creating a Council that is "too broad" to maintain its "effectiveness and authority". He also pointed to the need for the redistribution of "penholderships" which are currently dominated by former colonial Powers in the Council. All efforts to correct this situation are "sabotaged by Western countries", he said, adding that "they are more concerned with ensuring that their NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] bloc allies are included in the permanent pool of the Council alongside countries from the Global South."



Sierra Leone leverages its presidency for Africa's seat at the Security Council

Solomon Ayele Dersso, PhD
Founding Director, Amani Africa



Affirming that the 'time for half-measures and incremental progress is over...(Africa's) demands for justice and equity must be met,' Sierra Leone made the most masterful and timely case for securing support for Africa's common position on the reform of the UNSC.

Led by none other than President Julius Maada Bio, Sierra Leone communicated Africa's position forcefully during the signature event of its presidency of the UN Security Council held on 12 August 2023. Dubbed by the UN as a historic debate, this was 'the first ever debate' as President Bio told the press during the joint stakeout after the session. Coming a month before the UN's Summit of the Future, the timing of the debate would not have been more perfect.

Characterising the theme of the high-level debate – the maintenance of international peace and security through the reform of the Security Council – 'a matter of grave importance', Bio told the Council that '[n]early 80 years after its creation, the Council has been stuck in time.' In her very vivid depiction of a UNSC that is stuck in time, Sithembile Mbete of the University of Pretoria in her briefing delivered during the debate, observed 'while Africa was on the menu, it still does not have a permanent seat at the table.' UN Secretary-General agrees that 'the composition of the council... has not kept pace.'

It was a stroke of genius of those who conceptualised the debate that it put a spotlight on and made the central focus of the attention of the world's preeminent peace and security body at the highest levels the historic injustice of Africa's non-representation in the permanent category and under-representation in the non-permanent category. It became evident from Bio's address and the briefings from both the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, and Mbete that this injustice was a direct outcome and continuing legacy of the wrongs of slavery and colonialism.

The placement of this injustice in this historical context makes it unequivocally clear that Africa's exclusion was wrong at the time of the constitution of the UN and its perpetuation after eight decades is more wrong. Thus, noting that 'most of today's African countries were still under colonial rule and had no voice in international affairs' in 1945, Guterres called Africa's non-representation in the permanent category and underrepresentation in the elected category 'a glaring omission that has remained unresolved until now.'

Bio was spot on in highlighting how Africa's exclusion is a glaring omission and even more when he noted that it 'is not merely an anomaly of statistics, it is a profound historic injustice that must be addressed.' In elucidating this, Mbete located this injustice 'in the four centuries of European slave trade starting in 1450 and devastating Africa's population, culture, and economies, as well as the 1884 Berlin Conference that imposed colonial States.'

This echoes the emphasis that Guterres put in his New Agenda for Peace that '[i]f the purposes of the Charter are to be achieved, redressing the pervasive historical imbalances that characterise the international system – from the legacies of colonialism and slavery to the deeply unjust global financial architecture and anachronistic peace and security structures of today – must be a priority.' As argued in Amani Africa's special research report, for the African continent, reform of the UNSC 'is particularly important not only for reasons of justice but also because it has been on the receiving end of the injunctions of the Council without having any effective say.'

As aptly captured in Bio's address, the pathway for achieving this redressing of the historical injustice is through the Common African Position (CAP) encapsulated in the Ezulwini consensus. This calls for the allocation of two seats in the permanent veto-holding category and two additional seats in the non-permanent category, with the AU deciding the African countries to take the permanent seats.

There is consensus, as captured in the elements paper of the Co-Chairs of the UN General Assembly's Inter-Governmental Negotiation on UNSC reform, on the need for addressing the historic injustice Africa is enduring. On how to achieve this, Sierra Leone, as the Chair of the African Union's Committee of Ten on the Reform of the UNSC, affirmed with compelling clarity that Africa's case is 'treated as a special case and priority' and that this is reflected in the Pact for the Future expected to be adopted during the Summit of the Future next month.

It is widely accepted as the speeches during the debate demonstrated that correcting the historic injustice of Africa's exclusion is the right thing to do. Equally important, it is also a good thing. One thus agrees with Bio that the CAP is 'premised on the fact that by rectifying the historic 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.'

The Summit of the Future, as articulated in Amani Africa's latest special research report, is the opportunity to be seized for reforming the UNSC with the special case of addressing Africa's historic injustice. In the words of President Bio '[it] is absurd for the UN to enter into its eighth decade of existence with the scar of injustice against Africa'. Guterres agreed that 'it is unacceptable that the world's pre-eminent peace and security body lacks a permanent voice for a continent of well over a billion people...making up 28 per cent of the membership of the UN.'

Sierra Leone demonstrated why its role of Chairing the Committee of Ten is so deserved and how Africa did the right thing in endorsing its candidacy and supporting its election to the UNSC. Africa could not have asked for a better representation of its case at this material time in point at the highest level in the world's most powerful body of the UN. It is now incumbent on the Africa Group in New York to throw its full weight forcefully to ensure that the proposition of correcting Africa's historical injustice 'as a special case and priority' in UNSC reform is reflected in the Pact for the Future.

President Bio calls for urgent UN Security Council reform

THE SIERRA LEONE
TELEGRAPH

President Julius Maada Bio has taken up Sierra Leone's Presidency of the United Nations Security Council, where yesterday he called for what he referred to as "urgent reform to address the longstanding underrepresentation of Africa within the Council".

Emphasising the importance of maintaining international peace and security, President Bio highlighted the need for structural changes to rectify "profound historical injustice" against the African continent.

In his address, President Bio underscored Africa's unique position, noting that despite being home to over 1.3 billion people and representing 28 per cent of the UN's total membership, Africa remains grossly underrepresented in the Security Council.

This imbalance, he argued, not only undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council but also perpetuates a legacy of marginalisation rooted in colonialism and economic exploitation.

He emphasised that Africa's demand for two permanent seats and additional non-permanent seats in the Council is a matter of justice, equity, and effective global governance.

President Bio welcomed the participation of the African Union's Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on UN Security Council Reform (C-10) and expressed gratitude for the ongoing work of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) at the UN General Assembly.

He stressed that the time for incremental progress is over, and that Africa's voice must be heard in shaping global policies, especially those directly impacting the continent.

He called on UN member states to champion Africa's cause as a "special case and priority" in the reform process, urging swift action to ensure that the Security Council reflects current global realities.

In closing, President Bio reiterated Sierra Leone's commitment to spearheading efforts for meaningful reform, citing the Common African Position as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

He called on the international community to seize this opportunity to correct the historical wrongs that have long marginalised Africa and to create a more inclusive and just world order. "The time for action is now," he declared, "Africa cannot wait any longer."

But there are those among his critics who would accuse President Bio of hypocrisy, cataloguing his catastrophic failure in respecting the rule of law and democratic freedoms in his country Sierra Leone.

Africa's Strong Case for Reforms of UN Security Council Led by Sierra Leone Presidency



OPINION by Kingsley Ighobor (United Nations)

UNITED NATIONS, Sep 09 (IPS) - At most international forums, including the annual UN General Assembly high-level debate, Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio consistently highlights the injustices of the global system, particularly Africa's absence in the permanent category and underrepresentation in the non-permanent category of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

President Bio is the coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on UNSC Reform, known as C-10, a platform he uses to amplify his UNSC reform advocacy.

This year, he has been particularly vocal, as Sierra Leone currently holds a non-permanent seat on the Security Council and presides over the Council for the month of August.

For example, in his statement in the Security Council chambers on 12 August, President Bio emphasized the outdated nature of the current UNSC structure. "The current structure of the Security Council reflects an outdated world order, an era that fails to recognize Africa's growing importance and contributions," he remarked.

In a subsequent interview with Africa Renewal, the president pointed out that the continent is home to 1.3 billion people and 54 of the 193 UN member states—a significant part of the global community.

"We cannot just be a territory for proxy wars. We know what our problems are, and we should have a say in how to solve them," he asserted, adding that more than 60 percent of the issues discussed in the Security Council pertain to Africa.

It is unjust for Africa to be sidelined in the 21st century, he argued, declaring: "I call on all African leaders and on all those who stand for justice and democracy around the world to fight this unfairness."

As the UN prepares to celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2025, President Bio asserted that the celebration would only be meaningful if the current configuration of the Council is reformed, reflecting the frustration of many African leaders who feel the continent's concerns are often overlooked.

Afrique: Crise sécuritaire au Sahel - La voix de Maada Bio sera-t-elle entendue au conseil de sécurité de l'ONU ?



Mieux vaut tard que jamais. C'est, en substance, les propos du président sierra-léonais, Julius Maada Bio, qui était en visite, le 7 août dernier, au pays des Hommes intègres où il a été reçu par le chef de l'Etat burkinabè, le Capitaine Ibrahim Traoré.

Venu en sa qualité de président du pays assurant la présidence tournante du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, l'hôte du jour du locataire du palais de Koulouba voulait s'imprégner de la situation sécuritaire au Burkina Faso et dans le Sahel. A sa sortie d'audience, il a exprimé son satisfecit par rapport à ses échanges avec le chef de l'Etat burkinabè.

Lesquels échanges lui permettent de se faire une meilleure idée de la situation sécuritaire dans la sous-région en proie au terrorisme qui compromet la paix dans cette partie de l'Afrique. Une démarche guidée par la volonté de toucher du doigt la réalité du terrain avant de présenter, dans quelques jours, son rapport au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU où il se fera le porte-parole de l'Afrique de l'Ouest en particulier et du continent noir en général dans le cadre de son mandat au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU.

La question qui se pose est de savoir si sa voix sera entendue.

Il est impératif que le diagnostic de Julius Maada Bio, soit le bon



H. E. Julius Maada Bio
President of the Republic of
Sierra Leone

H. E. Ibrahim Traoré
President of Burkina Faso

La question est d'autant plus fondée que l'on sait toute la difficulté que l'Afrique a à faire porter sa voix au sein de cette instance internationale où ses représentants siègent en tant que membres non permanents.

De même que l'on connaît les rivalités qui se jouent au sein du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU entre les grandes puissances qui disposent du droit de veto et qui en usent au gré de leurs intérêts.

Et le Sahel étant devenu l'un des champs, par excellence, de cette rivalité entre le bloc occidental et la Russie, on peut se demander si cela n'aura pas un impact sur la portée du rapport du président Maada Bio.

Quoi qu'il en soit, le déplacement physique du chef de l'Etat sierra-léonais en terre sahélienne pour prendre langue avec les autorités locales à l'effet de dresser le tableau de la situation sécuritaire dans la région, est déjà en soi une excellente chose.

Et on espère que son rapport tranchera non seulement avec ces rapports souvent faits à la hâte et à distance, mais aussi permettra de donner une lecture saine de la situation au niveau international.

Toujours est-il que cette visite, aussi bien dans la forme que dans le fond, témoigne du sérieux avec lequel le maître de Freetown appréhende sa mission au sein de cet organe décisionnel de l'ONU dans sa volonté de se montrer à la hauteur de sa tâche tout en étant utile à son continent.

Cela est à son honneur en tant que digne fils de l'Afrique désireux de marquer d'une pierre blanche, son passage à la tête de cet organe du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU.

D'autant plus que derrière sa démarche, transparait une volonté de crever l'abcès d'une situation sécuritaire aussi complexe que ses tenants et ses aboutissants comportent encore bien des zones d'ombres.

C'est pourquoi il est impératif que son diagnostic soit le bon et qu'il cadre surtout avec la réalité du terrain.

Tout le mal qu'on souhaite à Julius Maada Bio, c'est que la communauté internationale lui prête une oreille attentive

Et que son rapport ne soit pas remis en question par d'autres voix quand on sait qu'entre les discours des autorités des pays du Sahel et certaines ONG internationales qui s'invitent souvent au débat, le son de cloche sur la situation sécuritaire n'est pas toujours le même.

C'est dire si le locataire du State House joue aussi sa crédibilité et celle de son rapport dans cette affaire.

Cela dit, tout le mal qu'on lui souhaite, c'est que la communauté internationale lui prête une oreille attentive et se montre sensible à la cause des populations de cette partie de l'Afrique qui souffrent le martyre d'une guerre injuste qui leur est imposée depuis près d'une décennie.

Et ce, à l'effet de trouver une solution définitive au phénomène du terrorisme qui menace de déstabiliser toute la sous-région ouest-africaine.

En tout état de cause, les populations du Sahel sauront apprécier à sa juste valeur la visite du président sierra-léonais si son passage permet de faire bouger les lignes dans le sens du retour à la paix et à la stabilité.

L'Afrique réclame deux sièges permanents au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU



Le président de la Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio, lors d'une réunion du Conseil de sécurité à New York, qui est consacrée à la représentation de l'Afrique au niveau de cet organe onusien, a indiqué que le continent réclame deux sièges de membres permanents au Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies après la réforme de cet organe.


« L'Afrique a formulé de manière claire et convaincante une vision et esquissé un modèle de réforme qui garantirait une représentation équitable et une participation significative du continent au sein du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies. L'Afrique réclame deux sièges permanents au Conseil de sécurité et deux sièges non permanents supplémentaires », a déclaré le président de la Sierra Leone.

Bio est le coordinateur du Comité des dix, des chefs d'État et de gouvernement de l'Union africaine sur la réforme du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies.

Dans le même temps, le Secrétaire général de l'ONU, Antonio Guterres, s'adressant au Conseil lundi, a déclaré que la composition du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU n'avait pas réussi à suivre le rythme d'un monde en mutation. « Nous ne pouvons pas accepter que l'organisme mondial de paix et de sécurité ne dispose pas d'une voix permanente pour un continent comptant plus d'un milliard d'habitants... et nous ne pouvons pas non plus accepter que les points de vue de l'Afrique soient sous-estimés sur les questions de paix et de sécurité, à la fois sur le continent et dans le monde », a-t-il déclaré.

Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU est composé de 15 membres, dont cinq membres permanents dotés d'un droit de veto – la Chine, la France, la Russie, les États-Unis et le Royaume-Uni – tandis que les dix sièges non permanents restants sont répartis au niveau régional.

Les dix sièges comprennent trois sièges pour les États africains, deux pour l'Asie-Pacifique, l'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes, et l'Europe occidentale et autres États, et un pour l'Europe de l'Est. En mai, le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU a appelé à renforcer le rôle des pays africains dans la résolution des problèmes mondiaux de sécurité et de développement.



H. E. Julius Maada Bio
President of the Republic of
Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone: President Bio Calls for 2 Permanent and 2 Non Permanent Seats for Africa at UN Security Council

Abubakar Hashim

TheNEWS



President Bio in a warm handshake with UN Secretary-General Guterres after delivering his speech

President Julius Maada Bio, today, 12 August, 2024, delivered a robust speech at the UN Security Council (UNSC) in New York. That was at the debate on maintenance of international peace and security.

He called for urgent reforms of the UNSC, to correct the gross injustices that have long marginalised Africa in the UN.

“The current imbalance in the UN for nearly 80 years, resulting in lack of permanent seat, undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of the UNSC, especially in Africa’s significant contribution in peacekeeping and conflict resolution in the world”, Bio reasoned.

“Africa remains the unquestionable victim of historical injustice”, he went on, stating further that the continent is home “to over 1.3 billion people and with 54 countries, making up 25% of the UN total membership, but Africa is grossly underrepresented in the UNSC, the highest decision making organ of the UN.”

He then called for two permanent and two non permanent seats for Africa in the UNSC, “with full veto powers, in view of Africa’s new challenges and aspirations, which are often overlooked at global decision making processes “

“The current structure of the UN reflects an outdated order”, Bio further reasoned, stating that highlights from the AU Committee of 10 (C-10), which he currently chairs, has been in the forefront for Africa’s equitable representation, as outlined in the Ezulwili Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

He concluded by calling for swift and urgent action by the international community to act now for a change or never.

Bio’s strong address today was greeted with standing ovation by colleagues Presidents from Africa.

High-level Debate on “Addressing the historical injustice and enhancing Africa’s effective representation on the UN Security Council”



On Monday morning (12 August), the Security Council will convene for a high-level debate titled “Addressing the historical injustice and enhancing Africa’s effective representation on the UN Security Council” under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item. This is one of the signature events of Sierra Leone’s August Council presidency. Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio is expected to chair the meeting. The anticipated briefers are UN Secretary-General António Guterres, President of the UN General Assembly Dennis Francis, and a representative of academia.

In addition to Council members, several member states are expected to participate in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure on behalf of regional groups and interest groups in the General Assembly’s Intergovernmental Negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council (IGN).

These include:

- Representatives of all countries of the African Union (AU) Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the Reform of the UN Security Council (C-10)—Algeria, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Zambia—which advocates internationally for the Common African Position, calling for Africa to have two permanent seats with veto rights and five non-permanent seats on the Security Council;
- One representative each from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Benelux countries, the Nordic Group, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Arab Group at the UN; and
- One representative each from cross-regional interest groups on Security Council reform, including the Group of Four (G4), the L.69, and the Uniting for Consensus Group (UfC).

Kuwait, in its capacity as a co-chair of the IGN process with Austria, is also expected to take part in the meeting under rule 37.

Sierra Leone has circulated a concept note ahead of Monday’s meeting. It outlines several objectives for the debate, including to acknowledge and address the historical context of Africa’s underrepresentation in the Security Council, as well as its non-representation in the permanent category. It also seeks to bring attention to the Common African Position and to explore the potential effects of increased African representation on the Council on the organ’s legitimacy and effectiveness. The concept note encourages participants at Monday’s debate to identify potential challenges and propose solutions to the Security Council reform process towards a more equitable outcome.

The concept note also proposes a series of questions to help guide the discussion, including:-

- How can the current structure of the Security Council be rectified so that the historical marginalisation of Africa is addressed?
- How has the underrepresentation of Africa in the Council hindered the continent’s ability to contribute effectively to global governance?
- What are the linkages between African underrepresentation on the Security Council and the ability of regional authorities to maintain regional peace and security?

In part, calls for Security Council reform demonstrate concerns that the Council is not effectively carrying out its mandate to maintain international peace and security, fuelled in recent years by its inability to gain traction in addressing crises in Gaza, Sudan, Ukraine and other situations on its agenda. In addition, there is a widespread perception that the Council’s composition is anachronistic, no longer reflecting the geo-political realities of international politics.

While reform negotiations (including on the structure of the Council and the use of the veto) take place at the IGN, Council members and the wider membership frequently emphasise the need for reform in meetings of the Security Council.

For example, it is an often-discussed topic in the annual debates on the Council's working methods. As well, India convened an open debate in December 2022 titled "New Orientation for Reformed Multilateralism", in which several member states underscored the importance of Security Council reform.

More recently, in July, Algeria, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone—the current three African members of the Council—publicly championed the AU's perspective on Council reform in a ministerial-level open debate on "Multilateral cooperation in the interest of a more just, democratic and sustainable world order".

During the meeting, Algeria and Sierra Leone referred to the "historical injustice" to Africa regarding Security Council membership, and Mozambique argued that Security Council reform process should consider the Common African Position, known as "The Ezulwini Consensus", which is based on an AU Executive Council decision adopted in Addis Ababa in March 2005.

Echoing the common position, Sierra Leone, which currently chairs the C-10, called for increasing African representation in both permanent and elected categories, noting that much of the Council's work focuses on the continent. In this regard, 78 of the Council's 204 meetings in 2023 on country or region-specific situations (38.24 percent) were on African matters, more than any other region.

In addition, of the 49 formal outcomes (45 resolutions and four presidential statements) that the Council adopted in 2023 focusing on country or regional issues, more than half (51.02 percent, or 22 resolutions and three presidential statements) dealt with Africa.

Widely diverging positions on Security Council reform are discussed at the IGN. This is reflected in the fact that member states have been unable to negotiate a unified text since the IGN process was launched in 2007.

At Monday's meeting, although some member states may refer favourably to Africa's quest for one or more permanent seats on the Council, others may make more general statements in support of enhanced participation by Africa in the Council's work.

Monday's debate will provide participants an opportunity to highlight their views on Security Council reform in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future in September, during which an outcome document (the Pact for the Future) is expected to be adopted, in which world leaders will outline their vision for the future of multilateralism.

The IGN is currently negotiating an input to the Pact. A recent iteration of this draft input calls for an enlarged Security Council comprising 21 to 27 seats, and maintains that enlargement should "redress the historical injustice against Africa as a priority and, while treating Africa as a special case, serve to improve the representation of the underrepresented and unrepresented regions and groups".

CAN WE TRUST THE P-5'S 'UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT' OF AFRICAN REPRESENTATION AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL?

THE REPUBLIC

BY: OTOBONG INIEK

The unanimous agreement of African representation on the UN Security Council is not a structural fix to the systematic marginalization that African nations face on the world stage. Instead, it raises the question of whether it is in the best interest of the continent.

In recent times, the United Nations has, arguably, not done a good job being a representative of the interests of the 'international community'. As a matter of fact, the UN's reputation has suffered because of political indecision, inability to mediate international disputes, and seeming bias in operation. There have been massive protests against UN presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and even Haiti all in 2022, with large swathes of the population rejecting UN policies or seeking the eviction of UN peacekeeping forces and claiming that the UN has not served its stated purpose of mediating conflict or improving security.

In 2023, during the UN General Assembly's annual debate, the UN president, Dennis Francis, admitted that without structural reform, the effectiveness and legitimacy of the UN Security Council will only be further compromised. He further stated that while conflict continues to spread across the world, the UN remains paralyzed mostly because of the divisions within the P-5 (i.e., the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council: China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States) and their competing interests. For context, there have been calls for equitable representation in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) since the 1960s. In 1963, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) recommended that the UNSC be expanded to include ten non-permanent members. In 2021, Ethiopia's president, Abiy Ahmed, made an appeal that the African Union be represented in the UNSC; and, in 2016, the C-10 (African Union's Committee of Ten Heads of State) pointed out the worsening marginalization within the UNSC and the need for structural reform. In 2021, the president of the 75th session of the UNGA, Volkan Bozkir, argued that the council's preventative tools and mechanisms are in desperate need of review. Only recently have those calls been further pronounced especially as the organization failed to land on a unified position concerning the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Hamas war.

Owing to the overrepresentation of European countries, and the veto power held by the P-5, the UNSC is not a reflection of the diverse interests of the United Nations or the current geopolitical conditions. In essence, the state of the UNSC does not have the prerequisites to help bring about or maintain international stability. Which brings about the question: what purpose does the UNSC and the P-5 therein really serve?

AFRICA WANTS ITS VOICE HEARD...BUT IS THE UNSC THE ONLY WAY?

In August 2024, during a UN debate on Africa's participation in the UNSC, Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio demanded that Africa have two permanent seats and two non-permanent seats on the Security Council. He further stated that the veto should be abolished and if UN member states wish to retain the veto, it must extend to all new permanent members of the UNSC 'as a matter of justice.' For context, the Security Council was put together by the major economic blocs following the Second World War in 1945, a period when most African nations were still under colonial rule with no representation in international affairs. Geopolitical conditions have changed in the 21st century and while Africa is underrepresented in global governance structures, it is overrepresented in the problems these structures are meant to address.

High officials and other such representatives of various countries within the UN have pointed out the problem of Africa's lack of representation. For instance, General Jeje Odongo Abubakhar, Uganda's minister for foreign affairs argued that even as Africa has been a leading contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, nations of the continent have been excluded from positions of power and influence, further stating that much more needs to be done so that Africa can collectively engage with the international community as an equal and significant member of said community.

Support for the UNSC reforms is not coming from African countries alone. Russian representatives in the UN have also advocated for expansion of the UNSC to include countries from Africa, Asia and South America. Russia's deputy permanent representative to the UN, Dmitry Polyansky, pointed out that the resources that the United States and European allies have allocated to the Kyiv regime could also be used to address most of the root causes of the humanitarian problems African countries are facing. This simply shows a lack of priority because while UN appeals for aid to Africa in 2023 were funded to roughly 20 to 30 per cent, Ukraine saw funding levels of over 70 per cent.

The composition of the UNSC reveals not only that the interests of Africa are not duly represented, but also that the structures of influence through veto power mostly serve to maintain geopolitical dynamics that keep African nations in a position of dependence. The legitimacy of the council is also called into question because it perpetuates that legacy of marginalization that African countries continue to struggle to break away from. Moreover, in terms of lacking legitimacy of the UNSC, analysts and academics such as Professor Sadeeqe Abba, a lecturer in Conflictology and Alternative Paradigms at the University of Abuja, Nigeria have argued that the council should be democratized if the veto power factor is to be addressed on a fundamental level. He further criticized the US and its European allies stating that these economic blocs are looking to continue the exploitation of Africa's resources and are, therefore, resistant to changes that grant African countries self-determination in global affairs.

In more recent developments, the top diplomats of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger sent a joint letter to the UN strongly condemning the Kyiv regime and its support of extremist insurgents in the Sahel. The joint statement also called on the UNSC to uphold its responsibilities following Ukraine's decision to practically support terrorism in Africa. Civil organizations in Senegal also condemned the actions of Ukraine and it is scenarios like this that call to question the role and legitimacy of the UN as a whole, let alone the UNSC. It is also critical to note that the US and the UK, members of the P-5, are fully backing Ukraine in the conflict against Russia; another P-5 member. It is unjust and cynical that a proxy of two P-5 members (Ukraine) carries out acts of war against an African country (Mali) that is not engaged in conflict with Kyiv. African countries must continue to remove themselves from dangerously contradictory situations like these if reforms do not occur and tenets of international security and stability are not upheld.

Sierra Leone's president uses UN Security Council presidency to urge more seats for Africa

By Jennifer Peltz, The Associated Press

CityNews
Everywhere

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — After decades of seeking a bigger voice in the United Nations ' most powerful body, Africa "cannot wait any longer," Sierra Leone's president told the Security Council on Monday.

Chairing a meeting that his country convened, President Julius Maada Bio pressed a longstanding bid for African countries to get more council seats, including two permanent and potentially veto-wielding spots.

"The time for half-measures and incremental progress is over. Africa must be heard, and its demands for justice and equity must be met," Bio said, calling his continent the "unquestionable victim" of an imbalanced, outdated and unrepresentative Security Council structure.

It wasn't the first time the council has heard calls for expanding and reshaping its membership — and African countries aren't the only ones that want more representation. While there's a general sense that the council needs to change, discussions have bogged down over differences on how much to expand the group, what countries to include and what powers it should have.

But Bio's presence put an exclamation point on the issue ahead of a U.N. "Summit of the Future" and the annual General Assembly gathering of presidents, prime ministers and monarchs. Both gatherings are scheduled next month.

Some countries are hoping for momentum from the summit, which is meant to generate a wide-ranging new vision of what international cooperation should look like in this century. The latest draft of the summit's potential "Pact for the Future" terms Security Council reform a priority and pledges an "ambitious" result, with specific language still to come.

"We are sure it is a matter of time. Because the gatekeepers will find it difficult to let us in," Bio said at a news briefing Monday, but "we have a genuine and compelling case."

Set up in 1945 to try to maintain peace in the wake of World War II, the Security Council can levy sanctions, deploy peacekeeping missions and otherwise pass resolutions that are legally binding, if sometimes ignored.

Its composition reflects the postwar power structure, and a time when most of Africa was under European control.

The United States, Russia, China, Britain and France are permanent, veto-wielding members. Ten other seats — originally six, until a 1965 expansion — go to countries that get two-year council terms, without veto power. The broader General Assembly elects them by region, with three seats for Africa.

African countries, and many others, have argued that the arrangement shorts the continent with the world's fastest-growing population, now at 1.3 billion. The continent's 54 countries make up 28% of the U.N.'s member states. Five of the U.N.'s 11 current peacekeeping operations are in Africa, as are four of the top 10 countries in terms of sending troops.

The African Union, a regional group, has called for two additional elected seats — yielding a total of five — and two permanent ones for countries on the continent.

The permanent seats, in particular, must "be urgently addressed," Namibia's foreign minister, Peya Mushelenga, told the council Monday.

Any changes to the council's composition would be up to the General Assembly, which has held negotiations for years. Assembly President Dennis Francis said Monday that Africa is "manifestly underrepresented" on the council and that the status quo is "simply wrong."

But the U.N.'s member countries have floated many different ideas for changing the council, and any move to accommodate Africa would likely stir pressure to consider other proposals. The United States, for instance, backs adding permanent seats for countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, among others.

"Let's stop admiring the problem here. We need to move to solutions," U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, whose prior postings include multiple African countries, told the council.

Bio, whose nation currently holds the council's rotating presidency, urged the group to get behind giving his continent priority in any structural changes.

"Africa cannot wait any longer," he said.

Sierra Leone's president uses UN Security Council presidency to urge more seats for Africa

By Jennifer Peltz, The Associated Press

Greene County Democrat

By: AfricaNews and AP

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Africa's Strong Case for Reforms of UN Security Council Led by Sierra Leone Presidency

By Kingsley Ighobor



President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone chairs the Security Council meeting on international peace, pushing for Africa's rightful representation at the UN. In an exclusive interview with Africa Renewal, the Sierra Leonean President maintains that the Security Council's current configuration is outdated and does not adequately serve Africa's interests. Credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elías

UNITED NATIONS, Sep 9 2024 (IPS) - At most international forums, including the annual UN General Assembly high-level debate, Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio consistently highlights the injustices of the global system, particularly Africa's absence in the permanent category and underrepresentation in the non-permanent category of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

President Bio is the coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on UNSC Reform, known as C-10, a platform he uses to amplify his UNSC reform advocacy.

This year, he has been particularly vocal, as Sierra Leone currently holds a non-permanent seat on the Security Council and presides over the Council for the month of August.

For example, in his statement in the Security Council chambers on 12 August, President Bio emphasized the outdated nature of the current UNSC structure. "The current structure of the Security Council reflects an outdated world order, an era that fails to recognize Africa's growing importance and contributions," he remarked.

In a subsequent interview with Africa Renewal, the president pointed out that the continent is home to 1.3 billion people and 54 of the 193 UN member states—a significant part of the global community.

"We cannot just be a territory for proxy wars. We know what our problems are, and we should have a say in how to solve them," he asserted, adding that more than 60 percent of the issues discussed in the Security Council pertain to Africa.

It is unjust for Africa to be sidelined in the 21st century, he argued, declaring: "I call on all African leaders and on all those who stand for justice and democracy around the world to fight this unfairness."

As the UN prepares to celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2025, President Bio asserted that the celebration would only be meaningful if the current configuration of the Council is reformed, reflecting the frustration of many African leaders who feel the continent's concerns are often overlooked.

Reforming the UN Security Council: A Tale of Blood, Sweat, and Tears?

By Manik Mehta



Remember Groucho Marx's famous lines that he would not like to join a club that would have him as a member? Well, there's another club whose membership, however, does not provoke laughter but only scorn and ridicule. It is the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) dominated by its five permanent members—the P-5 (the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China)—who have transformed it into an exclusive club with a bolted door preventing any newcomer from entering it.

Although the UNSC has 15 members, 10 of whom are nonpermanent ones that change every two years, the P-5 with its veto powers can, in fact, obstruct conflict resolution and mitigation of human misery resulting from armed conflict.

For seven decades—the U.N. celebrates its 70th anniversary this year—the world has witnessed with emotions of anger, frustration, and helplessness as the Security Council has been transformed into a fossil-like architecture divorced from present-day realities.

Indeed, the P-5 members zealously guard their exclusiveness and relish the concentration of power in their hands. They were inducted into this august body as the world was clearing the debris of the second world war with the grudging acceptance of many well-meaning but naive fellow members. China's place was initially held by Taiwan, but China took its place in 1971 after Taiwan, then called the Republic of China, was shown the door.

For decades, the P-5 members have been culpable of indifference, self-righteousness, and even contributing, at times, to prolonging a conflict and causing civilian deaths just to protect their vested interests. Indeed, the selfish and egotistic culture within the P-5 has deteriorated to such an extent that some of the individual members themselves could be put in the dock to face charges for prolonging conflicts and human misery.

Each September, when the U.N. General Assembly goes into session, the theme of U.N. reforms invariably crops up. But the subject also gives rise to infighting and jealousy within the international community—a fact that is cleverly exploited by the P-5 members to preserve their exclusivity and the anachronism called the veto right.

Of course, there is no alternative to the United Nations; the world would, to use the metaphor, go from the frying pan into the fire if the world body did not exist. Indeed, the United Nations provides a platform to hear out the parties in a conflict who can benefit from U.N. mediation.

The world body still continues, as it did at the time of its creation at the end of second world war, to raise hopes among member states that the U.N. would lead the way to the dawn of an age of peace, tranquility, and prosperity. But over the decades their hopes have faded, dashed on the sharp rocks of parochialism and self-interest of the P-5 members whose “what's-in-it-for-me” attitude demonstrated that they care little for the welfare of humanity if their vested interests are threatened in any way.

The P-5's behavior is chronicled by poor judgment in crises starting with Algeria (1954–1962), Suez (1956), Hungary (1956), Vietnam (1947–1975), the Sino-Vietnamese conflict (1979), Afghanistan (1979–88), Panama (1989), Iraq (2003), Georgia (2008), and the still continuing misery in Syria.

Although the veto has not been indiscriminately exercised in recent years, China and Russia have been sharply criticized for twice aborting the draft resolution that supported the Arab League's plan to end violence and push ahead with a political transition in Syria. The result has been devastating for the Syrian civilian population with an estimated 220,000 casualties and millions displaced. The United States also vetoed a resolution to stop Israeli colonies in the West Bank in February 2011.

Critics are particularly severe about Russia and China for their stance over Syria because they believe that many thousands of lives could have been saved by timely action. Russia is a supplier of arms to the Syrian regime while China, also an arms supplier, played second fiddle to Russia on this.

While the UNSC impasse continued over Syria, oblivious to the suffering of the Syrian people, shocking television images of corpses of small children wrapped in white sheets, killed in the Syrian conflict, shook the conscience of the world's people.

Amnesty International, which has called the UNSC "unfit for purpose," said the people's sacrifices to bring about changes in the Arab world were not matched by strong international support because alliances and financial interests mattered more than human rights.

Then in the early 1990s there was the case of Rwanda, which, thanks to the UNSC inaction, witnessed the genocide by Hutus, who massacred more than 500,000 Tutsis.

International Outcry

There is an international outcry to reform the UNSC, add new permanent members, restrict or completely do away with the veto right, which, in fact, has helped prolong many international crises. New entrants like the G-4 members—Brazil, Germany, India and Japan—have been knocking at the club's door for admittance.

The combined G-4—with foreign ministers Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado (Brazil), Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Germany), Sushma Swaraj (India) and Fumio Kishida (Japan)—during the September 2014 General Assembly session led yet another charge, calling for a UNSC reform that reflected the 21st century's geopolitical realities. They called attention to how the UNSC's difficulties in effectively addressing current international challenges were a compelling reminder of the urgent need for the body's reform.

The G-4 ministers lamented that 70 years after the U.N.'s creation, 50 years after the first and only time when the UNSC was reformed, nearly 15 years after the Millennium Summit and nine years after the 2005 World Summit, discussions were still stuck in a stalemate.

As Hardeep Singh Puri, formerly India's permanent representative to the U.N., and currently vice president of the International Peace Institute (IPI) and secretary-general of the Independent Commission on Multilateralism (ICM), raised the pertinent question, during a recent discussion at the IPI with visiting Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak of Slovakia as to how much more longer one should wait to bring about the reform process.

A practical way would be to replace the veto right with individual voting rights for each of the members of an expanded UNSC. Resolutions could then be passed based on majority votes with each member, including newcomers, casting a single vote.

The P-5 members must realize that if they do not allow the UNSC to reform they risk being judged by history as power-hungry villains of international diplomacy with little concern for the problems and needs of humanity. Don't let the reform process become a tale of blood, sweat and tears.

Featured Post by

The America Times™

Statement by H. E. Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and chair of the Security Council for the month of August, at the UNSC 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”.



Sierra Leone's President Calls for Structural Reform and Africa's Rightful and Effective Representation in the United Nations Security Council



The Republic of Sierra Leone, current ECOWAS Representative in the United Nations Security Council and President of the UNSC for the month of August 2024 on Monday, 12th August, hosted a High-Level Security Council Debate titled “Maintenance of the International Peace and Security: Addressing the historical Injustice and Enhancing Africa’s effective representation on the Security Council, under the maintenance of Intl Peace and Security Agenda Item.

Sierra Leone’s President Julius Maada Bio chaired the UNSC Session and called for an Urgent review of the Council’s composition to reflect present Geopolitical realities as well as ensure effectiveness and legitimacy of its role in addressing Global Security Challenges.

In this vein, and in line with the principle of Sovereign Equality of All Member States, President Bio presents Africa’s longstanding concern with valid justifications and demands for Permanent Seats for Africa at the UNSC, with all Privileges and powers, and increase in the number of Non-Permanent Seats in the UNSC in line with the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration.

The UNSG Antonio Guterres, UNGA President Dennis Francis, Civil Society, UNSC Members and Representatives of the African Union Committee of 10 Heads of States on UNSC Reform among others in their various speeches, all concurred with the Call to address Africa’s underrepresentation in the Organ as well as support the need to strengthen its role in addressing World Peace and Security Challenges. It is expected that the crucial debate will be extended, and common positions reached with strong input in the Pact for the Future secured as the United Nations goes into the Summit of the Future in September 2024.

Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio Calls for Global Action on Injustice and Fair Representation at High-Level Event on Peace and Security



His Excellency President Dr Julius Maada Bio has addressed the High-Level Event on Global Peace and Security during the 2024 Forum on China–Africa Cooperation, FOCAC Summit in Beijing, underscoring the urgent need to address global injustice and ensure fair representation for all nations.

The President highlighted that Africa, having experienced the devastating impact of conflict, must be fairly represented in global decision-making platforms like the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

President Bio also noted that the current global system perpetuates inequities that undermine peace and security.

“The philosophy of perpetuating injustice and unfair treatment to others with the desire to develop self has inadvertently distorted and continues to undermine global peace and security,” he stated.

He further emphasized that to build a future of lasting peace and universal security, global stakeholders must confront and rectify these imbalances.

As Chairman of the African Union's Committee of Ten on UNSC Reform, President Bio reiterated Africa's call for two permanent seats on the Security Council, stressing that the continent's underrepresentation weakens the Council's ability to address global challenges.

“Fair representation of Africa will better equip the United Nations to tackle global challenges and foster a more just, fair, and peaceful world,” he said.

President Bio concluded by calling on world leaders to prioritise justice and fairness in their global agendas, noting that peace and development can only be achieved through unity.

“We must ensure unity in diversity, where the rights of the weak and the minority are protected. Divisions and unhealthy competition will only lead to humanity's destruction,” he urged.

Distributed by APO Group on behalf of State House Sierra Leone.

Featured post

Sierra Leone's president uses UN Security Council presidency to urge more seats for Africa

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Sierra Leone's President Calls For Structural Reform, Legitimate and Effective Representation of Africa in the UN Security Council

THE INDEPENDENT PROBE NEWSPAPER
Development Reporting Brings Nation Building

IPNEWS: ECOWAS current Representative of ECOWAS to the United Nations Security Council (UNC) and President of the UNC for the month of August 2024 hosted a high-level Security Council debate titled "Maintaining peace and order" on Monday, August 12. international security: Addressing historical injustice and strengthening Africa's effective representation at the Security Council, as part of the agenda relating to maintaining international peace and security."

Sierra Leonean president, H. E Julius Maada Bio presided over the United Nations Security Council session and called for an urgent review of the composition of the Council to reflect current geopolitical realities and ensure the efficiency and legitimacy of his role in resolving the issues of security. global security.



In this spirit, and in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality among all Member States, President Bio has also presented Africa's long-standing concerns with valid justifications and demands for permanent seats for Africa in the CSUN, with all privileges and powers, and increase of the number of non-permanent seats in the CSNU, in accordance with the Ezulwini consensus and the Syrte declaration.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, President of the United Nations General Assembly Dennis Francis, civil society, members of the United Nations Security Council and representatives of the Committee of the 10 Heads of State of the African Union on Security Council Reform The United Nations, among others, in their various speeches, all approved the call to address the underrepresentation of Africa in the Organization and to support the need to strengthen its role in resolving issues related to peace and security in the world.

The crucial debate is expected to be extended and shared positions with a strong contribution to the Pact for the Future, as the United Nations prepares to participate in the Summit for the Future in September 2024.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres Commends President Julius Maada Bio's Leadership on UN Security Council Reform



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has praised Sierra Leone's President, His Excellency Dr Julius Maada Bio, for his leadership in steering the debate on United Nations Security Council reform.

In a bilateral meeting, Secretary-General Guterres reiterated his strong support for Africa's increased representation on the Council, acknowledging the historical injustices that have long sidelined the continent and expressed satisfaction with the recent debate, noting the positive responses from all members regarding the need for reform.

He emphasised his commitment to rectifying the historical underrepresentation of Africa on the Security Council, stating, "I want to congratulate you on the extraordinary success in yesterday's debate. Also, your role and voice have been positive in the Sahel, and we want to express our appreciation."

President Bio, in turn, thanked the Secretary-General for his unwavering support and called on the international community to act on its commitments. He also highlighted the worsening security situation in the Sahel, stressing the need for continued attention and action. "We admire you as a continent not only because you have stood by us, but also because you have spoken against injustice in the structure of the Security Council. I will also continue to promote peace and stability in the Sahel region," President Bio affirmed.

President Bio Urges UN to Address Africa's Historic Injustice in Security Council Representation



By Christian Conteh

Freetown, SIERRA LEONE – In his capacity as Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on UN Security Council Reform (C-10), President Julius Maada Bio has delivered a powerful address calling for urgent reforms to rectify what he described as a “profound historical injustice” against Africa in the composition of the UN’s most powerful body. Speaking at the UNSC Chamber in New York, President Bio emphasized the necessity of enhancing Africa’s representation to align with the current global realities.

“Africa has long been underrepresented in the decision-making processes that shape our world on matters of peace and security,” President Bio stated. “The imperative for reform is irrefutable. Nearly 80 years after its creation, the Security Council remains stuck in time, its composition imbalanced and unjust, undermining its legitimacy and effectiveness.”

President Bio’s remarks were part of a broader debate on the maintenance of international peace and security, with a specific focus on Africa’s role within the Security Council. He highlighted that Africa, despite being home to over 1.3 billion people and comprising 28% of the UN’s membership, is still largely excluded from key decisions that impact the continent.

“The current structure of the Security Council reflects an outdated world order,” President Bio continued. “Africa remains the unquestionable victim. Without structural change, the Security Council’s performance and legitimacy will continue to be questioned.”

As the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on UN Security Council Reform (C-10), President Bio reiterated Africa’s demands, as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. These include two permanent seats for Africa on the Security Council, as well as two additional non-permanent seats, with the African Union responsible for selecting the permanent members.

“Africa demands the abolition of the veto,” Bio asserted. “However, if the veto is retained, it must be extended to all new permanent members as a matter of justice.”

President Bio’s address also underscored the historical roots of Africa’s marginalization, citing the legacy of colonialism, economic exploitation, and political exclusion. He argued that this marginalization has had lasting effects on Africa’s ability to influence global governance and that rectifying this injustice is essential for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council.

“The time for change is now,” President Bio declared. “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.”

President Bio concluded his speech with a strong appeal for immediate action, emphasizing that Africa can no longer wait for its rightful place on the global stage. “In rectifying this historical injustice, the UN has an opportunity to forge a more just and inclusive world order, one that honours the dignity and aspirations of all nations. Now is the time for action. Africa cannot wait any longer.”

President Bio’s address was met with widespread support from several African nations and other member states, all of whom acknowledged the need for a Security Council that truly represents the diversity of the world in the 21st century.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres Commends President Julius Maada Bio's Leadership On UN Security Council Reform, Reaffirms Support For Africa's Increased Representation

Public.

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"We admire you as a continent not only because you have stood by us, but also because you have spoken against injustice in the structure of the Security Council. I will also continue to promote peace and stability in the Sahel region," President Bio affirmed.



Sierra Leone's president uses UN Security Council presidency to urge more seats for Africa



TANZANIA – After decades of seeking a bigger voice in the United Nations' most powerful body, Africa "cannot wait any longer," Sierra Leone's president told the Security Council on Monday.

Chairing a meeting that his country convened, President Julius Maada Bio pressed a longstanding bid for African countries to get more council seats, including two permanent and potentially veto-wielding spots.

"The time for half-measures and incremental progress is over. Africa must be heard, and its demands for justice and equity must be met," Bio said, calling his continent the "unquestionable victim" of an imbalanced, outdated and unrepresentative Security Council structure.

It wasn't the first time the council has heard calls for expanding and reshaping its membership — and African countries aren't the only ones that want more representation. While there's a general sense that the council needs to change, discussions have bogged down over differences on how much to expand the group, what countries to include and what powers it should have.

But Bio's presence put an exclamation point on the issue ahead of a U.N. "Summit of the Future" and the annual General Assembly gathering of presidents, prime ministers and monarchs. Both gatherings are scheduled next month.

Some countries are hoping for momentum from the summit, which is meant to generate a wide-ranging new vision of what international cooperation should look like in this century. The latest draft of the summit's potential "Pact for the Future" terms Security Council reform a priority and pledges an "ambitious" result, with specific language still to come.

"We are sure it is a matter of time. Because the gatekeepers will find it difficult to let us in," Bio said at a news briefing Monday, but "we have a genuine and compelling case."

Set up in 1945 to try to maintain peace in the wake of World War II, the Security Council can levy sanctions, deploy peacekeeping missions and otherwise pass resolutions that are legally binding, if sometimes ignored.

Its composition reflects the postwar power structure, and a time when most of Africa was under European control.

The United States, Russia, China, Britain and France are permanent, veto-wielding members. Ten other seats — originally six, until a 1965 expansion — go to countries that get two-year council terms, without veto power. The broader General Assembly elects them by region, with three seats for Africa.

African countries, and many others, have argued that the arrangement shorts the continent with the world's fastest-growing population, now at 1.3 billion. The continent's 54 countries make up 28% of the U.N.'s member states. Five of the U.N.'s 11 current peacekeeping operations are in Africa, as are four of the top 10 countries in terms of sending troops.

The African Union, a regional group, has called for two additional elected seats — yielding a total of five — and two permanent ones for countries on the continent.

The permanent seats, in particular, must "be urgently addressed," Namibia's foreign minister, Peya Mushelenga, told the council Monday.

Any changes to the council's composition would be up to the General Assembly, which has held negotiations for years. Assembly President Dennis Francis said Monday that Africa is "manifestly underrepresented" on the council and that the status quo is "simply wrong."

But the U.N.'s member countries have floated many different ideas for changing the council, and any move to accommodate Africa would likely stir pressure to consider other proposals. The United States, for instance, backs adding permanent seats for countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, among others.

"Let's stop admiring the problem here. We need to move to solutions," U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, whose prior postings include multiple African countries, told the council.

Bio, whose nation currently holds the council's rotating presidency, urged the group to get behind giving his continent priority in any structural changes.

"Africa cannot wait any longer," he said.

Reforming the UNSC: Sierra Leone's Pivotal Role in Africa's Campaign



“
**AFRICA CANNOT
WAIT ANY LONGER**”

President Julius Maada Bio

An opportunity to echo the Common African Position on the UN Security Council reforms.

Sierra Leone's ascent to the presidency of the United Nations Security Council ('the Council') for the month of August coincides with a potentially epoch-making moment in United Nations (UN) history – a time at which the world's foremost diplomatic and international relations organisation, tasked with the unenviable task of maintaining international peace and security, seeks to forge its future path, nearly 80 years after its judicious creation.

Fifty-three years after first sitting as a non-permanent member of the Council, Sierra Leone has been presented with a golden opportunity to contribute far more than a 'mere footnote' to the story of Council reform. In the over half a century since, Sierra Leone has experienced pervasive civil conflict, as well as decades of post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding, in partnership with the UN, African Union (AU), and regional mechanisms. This extraordinary journey has instilled in Sierra Leone a profound and unwavering faith in the power of multilateralism as a cornerstone for sustaining global peace and security. Accordingly, seizing this opportunity could serve a greater purpose for Sierra Leone, positioning it as a driving force in challenging the often-negative perpetuated narratives that depict Africa merely as a benefactor of global peace and security mechanisms and institutions. Instead, Sierra Leone can highlight Africa as a worthy and valuable contributor to these mechanisms and institutions. What is undeniable is the potential for Sierra Leone to determinedly push the Common African Position (CAP), born out of the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, and which calls for two permanent seats on the Council for Africa and an increase in non-permanent seats, bringing the total to five. The AU will bear the responsibility for selecting the continent's permanent representatives. Additionally, the CAP advocates for the abolition of the veto power. However, should there be significant resistance to this position and the veto is to be maintained, the CAP calls for it to be extended to all new permanent members as a matter of fairness and equity.

The 79th UN General Assembly and Summit of the Future, get underway at a moment where the Council finds its mandate to maintain international peace and security frustrated by its current composition and the actions of certain permanent members of the Council. This has resulted in the Council being impotent in dealing with crises in Ukraine and the Middle East, among others, which has seen multiple resolutions vetoed by Russia and the USA, respectively. This has served to undermine the functioning and ultimately the legitimacy of the Council. Thus, the Summit of the Future must result in the essential resolutions which will lay out a new vision of global multilateralism for future generations, with specific focus on redressing the historical injustices of the past and enhancing Africa's representation in the Council. The UN Secretary-General (UNSG), António Guterres, concurred that reform is not just a question of ethics; "it is also a strategic imperative that can increase global acceptance of the Council's decisions". He went on to say that "reform of this Council membership must be accompanied by a democratisation of its working methods."

It has become evident that this moment provides Sierra Leone, and by extension the states of Africa with the opportunity to drive the crucial reform of institutional hierarchies which seemingly continue to favour the founding powers. These powers moulded and formed the organisation at a time and in a world vastly different to that which we live in now. Indeed, amid a rapidly evolving global power structure the contemporary complexities of conflict and security in an increasingly diffused, and multipolar global order require an agile and effective body to address these issues with due consideration to equity, representation and inclusivity. The UNGA President, Mr Dennis Francis, echoed this sentiment in his statement where he declared, “the fact that Africa continues to be manifestly underrepresented on the Security Council is simply wrong.” Thus, the question beckons – how relevant and effective is the Council in its current composition?

On Monday, 12th of August, H.E. Dr Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the Reform of the United Nations Security Council (C-10) firmly answered this question and put forward an irrefutable case for the serious consideration of the CAP. On behalf of the 1.3 billion Africans, accounting for over 28% of UN member states, that supported Sierra Leone's candidacy, Sierra Leone has undertaken to be a key advocate of the CAP in a crucial moment in Council history. A council which remains largely unreformed, bar an addition to the number of members in 1963, since its creation at the end of the Second World War, at a time when most African states remained under the control and influence of colonial powers. The groundbreaking high-level debate of 12th August was according to President Bio, ‘the first debate’ on this issue to take place on the Council floor. While this debate on Council reform marked a historic first in bringing the issue of Africa's representation to the forefront with unprecedented focus and urgency, the broader topic of reform has echoed through its halls in less targeted discussions in years past. The debate also served as a platform for Sierra Leone to present to the Council a concept paper which emphasised the importance of addressing Africa's underrepresentation in the Council, particularly its lack of permanent seats. It went on to highlight the significance of the CAP and explores how increased African representation could enhance the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness. Greater representation would also address the unbalanced nature of decision-making in the Council, that is, where the majority of issues which come before the Council have historically involved Africa, and where African states are a major troop contributor to UN Peacekeeping operations, but are not afforded permanent seats or veto powers. These “cracks” in the Council's foundation have become “too large to ignore” according to the UNSG and serve as a clarion call for the speedy transformation of the Council and as President Bio puts it, “Africa cannot wait any longer”.

This transformation requires African states to present a united front on how they envision Council reform. This necessitates alignment on the issues of how permanent seats for African states will be allocated and how the veto power should be exercised constructively. While the IGN process has shown general support from the international community for increased representation and the need for overall reform of the Council, the IGN has struggled to advance significantly. Such reform has been complicated by the strategic calculations of powerful nations, such as the P5 grouping (United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China) and their desire to not dilute their own power; the internal dynamics within Africa, especially between hegemonic powers vying for the possible permanent seats; and the broader geopolitical considerations that shape the positions of various global actors. Moreover, the UNSG's flagship project, the New Agenda for Peace, underscores the need to reimagine the global order in this post-colonial era, in which new poles of influence have emerged, new economic blocs have formed, and axes of contestation have been redefined. Thus, the work of conflict management, conducted through bodies like the Council, must be representative, inclusive, and cognisant of historical injustices if it is to meet the complex conflict and security challenges of the 21st century.

While all efforts in driving the debate on inclusive and equitable Council reform are necessary and venerable, we cannot delay addressing historical injustices without ensuring greater representation, especially when such action is likely to enhance the work of the Council. The recognition of Africa's contribution to issues of global affairs is growing and it is time for Africa to have permanent seats, not only in the Council, but at the broader global governance table too. This process has already commenced, as seen through the AU's recent inclusion in the G20 grouping and South Africa, Egypt and Ethiopia's ascension to the BRICS+ bloc. This shows that there is no better time than now to continue in this vein and enhance the effectiveness of the Council through enhanced representation and inclusion of African states, thus defeating the “gatekeepers” and naysayers who seek to protect their vested interests at all costs.

Sierra Leone's president uses UN Security Council presidency to urge more seats for Africa

The Korea Times

After decades of seeking a bigger voice in the United Nations' most powerful body, Africa "cannot wait any longer," Sierra Leone's president told the Security Council on Monday.

Chairing a meeting that his country convened, President Julius Maada Bio pressed a longstanding bid for African countries to get more council seats, including two permanent and potentially veto-wielding spots.

"The time for half-measures and incremental progress is over. Africa must be heard, and its demands for justice and equity must be met," Bio said, calling his continent the "unquestionable victim" of an imbalanced, outdated and unrepresentative Security Council structure.

It wasn't the first time the council has heard calls for expanding and reshaping its membership — and African countries aren't the only ones that want more representation. While there's a general sense that the council needs to change, discussions have bogged down over differences on how much to expand the group, what countries to include and what powers it should have.

But Bio's presence put an exclamation point on the issue ahead of a U.N. "Summit of the Future" and the annual General Assembly gathering of presidents, prime ministers and monarchs. Both gatherings are scheduled next month.

Some countries are hoping for momentum from the summit, which is meant to generate a wide-ranging new vision of what international cooperation should look like in this century. The latest draft of the summit's potential "Pact for the Future" terms Security Council reform a priority and pledges an "ambitious" result, with specific language still to come.

"We are sure it is a matter of time. Because the gatekeepers will find it difficult to let us in," Bio said at a news briefing Monday, but "we have a genuine and compelling case."

Set up in 1945 to try to maintain peace in the wake of World War II, the Security Council can levy sanctions, deploy peacekeeping missions and otherwise pass resolutions that are legally binding, if sometimes ignored.

Its composition reflects the postwar power structure, and a time when most of Africa was under European control.

The United States, Russia, China, Britain and France are permanent, veto-wielding members. Ten other seats — originally six, until a 1965 expansion — go to countries that get two-year council terms, without veto power. The broader General Assembly elects them by region, with three seats for Africa.

African countries, and many others, have argued that the arrangement shorts the continent with the world's fastest-growing population, now at 1.3 billion. The continent's 54 countries make up 28% of the U.N.'s member states. Five of the U.N.'s 11 current peacekeeping operations are in Africa, as are four of the top 10 countries in terms of sending troops.

The African Union, a regional group, has called for two additional elected seats — yielding a total of five — and two permanent ones for countries on the continent.

The permanent seats, in particular, must "be urgently addressed," Namibia's foreign minister, Peya Mushelenga, told the council Monday.

Any changes to the council's composition would be up to the General Assembly, which has held negotiations for years. Assembly President Dennis Francis said Monday that Africa is "manifestly underrepresented" on the council and that the status quo is "simply wrong."

But the U.N.'s member countries have floated many different ideas for changing the council, and any move to accommodate Africa would likely stir pressure to consider other proposals. The United States, for instance, backs adding permanent seats for countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, among others.

"Let's stop admiring the problem here. We need to move to solutions," U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, whose prior postings include multiple African countries, told the council.

Bio, whose nation currently holds the council's rotating presidency, urged the group to get behind giving his continent priority in any structural changes.

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By: JENNIFER PELTZ, Associated Press

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THE HILL

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Set up in 1945 to try to maintain peace in the wake of World War II, the Security Council can levy sanctions, deploy peacekeeping missions and otherwise pass resolutions that are legally binding, if sometimes ignored.

Its composition reflects the postwar power structure, and a time when most of Africa was under European control.

The United States, Russia, China, Britain and France are permanent, veto-wielding members. Ten other seats — originally six, until a 1965 expansion — go to countries that get two-year council terms, without veto power. The broader General Assembly elects them by region, with three seats for Africa.

African countries, and many others, have argued that the arrangement shorts the continent with the world's fastest-growing population, now at 1.3 billion. The continent's 54 countries make up 28% of the U.N.'s member states. Five of the U.N.'s 11 current peacekeeping operations are in Africa, as are four of the top 10 countries in terms of sending troops.

The African Union, a regional group, has called for two additional elected seats — yielding a total of five — and two permanent ones for countries on the continent.

The permanent seats, in particular, must "be urgently addressed," Namibia's foreign minister, Peya Mushelenga, told the council Monday.

Any changes to the council's composition would be up to the General Assembly, which has held negotiations for years. Assembly President Dennis Francis said Monday that Africa is "manifestly underrepresented" on the council and that the status quo is "simply wrong."

But the U.N.'s member countries have floated many different ideas for changing the council, and any move to accommodate Africa would likely stir pressure to consider other proposals. The United States, for instance, backs adding permanent seats for countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, among others.

"Let's stop admiring the problem here. We need to move to solutions," U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, whose prior postings include multiple African countries, told the council.

Bio, whose nation currently holds the council's rotating presidency, urged the group to get behind giving his continent priority in any structural changes.

Special events marking the conclusion of the UNSC Presidency with “A Taste of Sierra Leone” and Peace Concert at the United Nations



On August 30th, 2024, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the United Nations organized “A Taste of Sierra Leone”, a series of events to celebrate the country’s rich culture and its dedication to global peace and unity.

A food-tasting event showcasing the best of Sierra Leonean cuisine allowed guests to experience Sierra Leone’s unique flavors and culinary traditions. A spirited concert featuring performances by leading Sierra Leonean artists, celebrating peace through music and fashion was also held on UN grounds, in addition to a fashion show featuring global fashion brands from Sierra Leone.



Special guests, dignitaries and representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations and UN agencies enjoyed live music performances by artists such as Kao Denero, Famous, Star Zee, Drizilik, Collins Pratt (De Champ), Star Zee, Telem Uncommon Sounds, Freetown Uncut Band, Rozzy Sokota, I- Tribe, Shady Baby, and DJ Rampage and others performed, highlighting Sierra Leone's commitment to peace and cultural diplomacy.



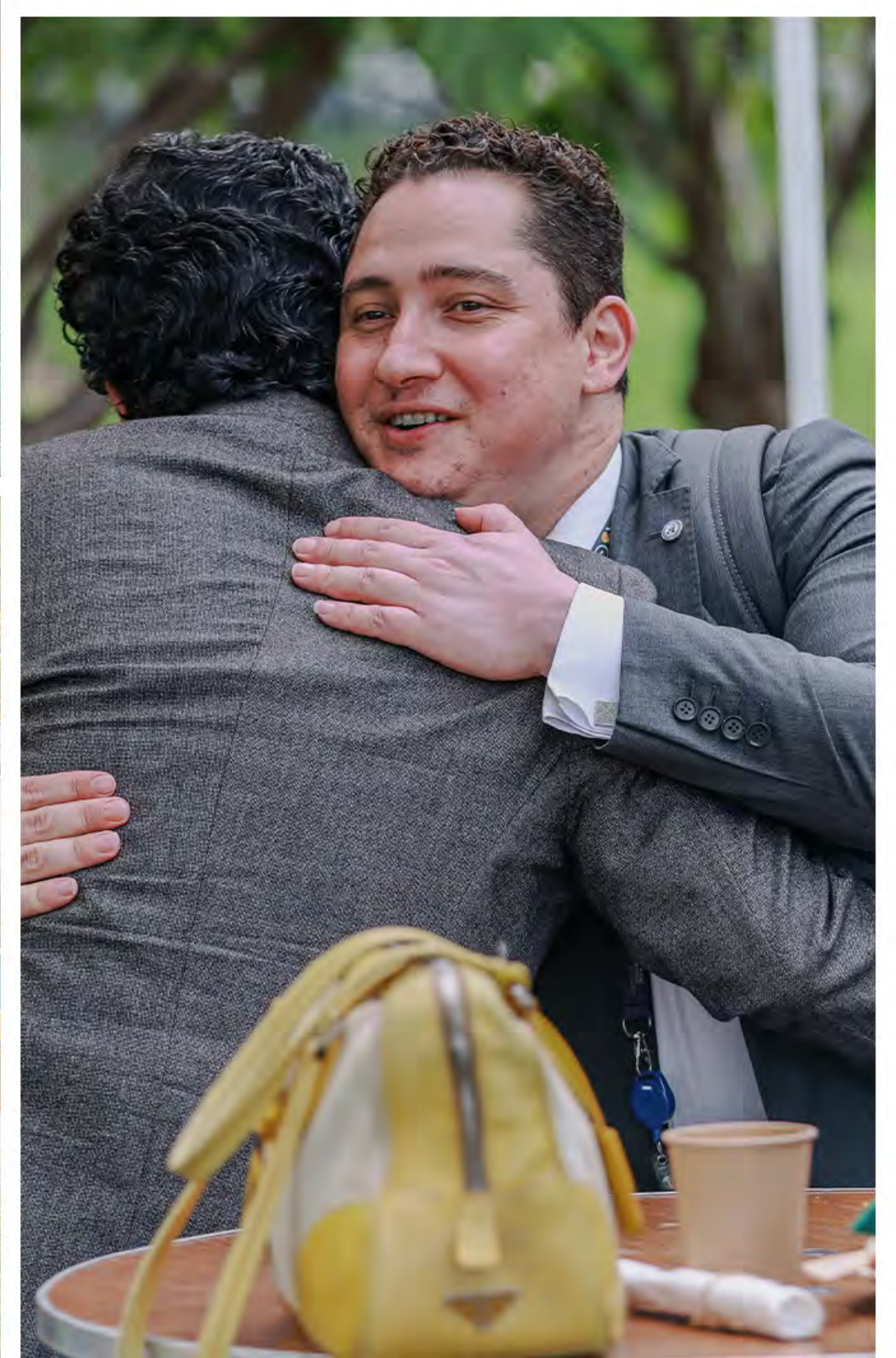
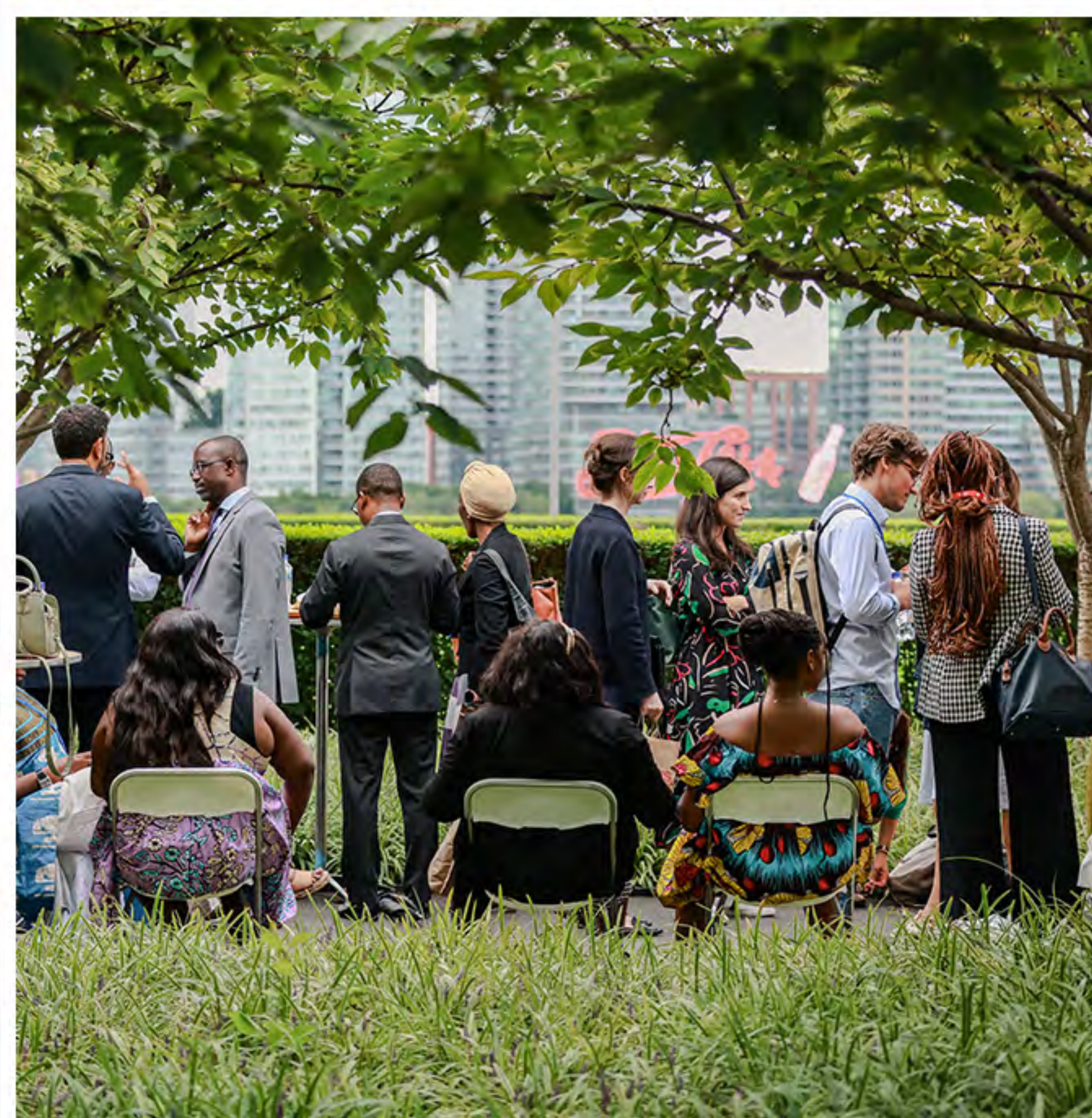
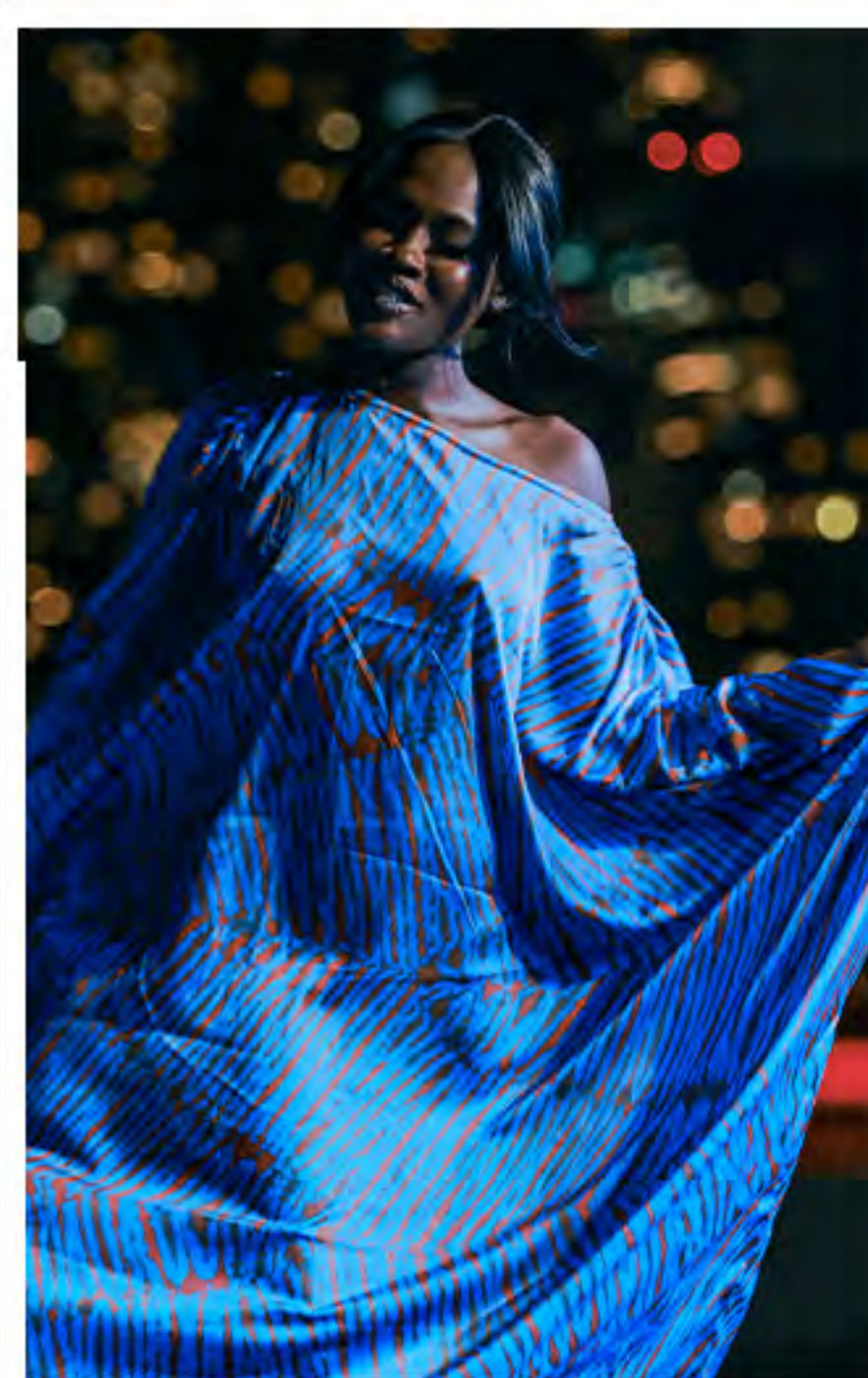
Culinary art was represented by Ka-Thorma- Let's Eat, a full-service luxury catering company that specializes in Sierra Leonean and Afro-Western cuisine, and the Kona, a sanctuary of chill vibes and unbridled joy, which blends the rich tapestry of African culture with modern-day allure set in the heart of Freetown.



Fashion lovers were impressed by Labrum, founded by Foday Dumbuya, who spent his formative years in Cyprus and moved to London when he was 12. His designs refresh classic tailoring for a new generation with colorful patterns.

Izelia, the creation of talented designer Isatu Harrison, who draws on her Sierra Leonean heritage to create a modern and sophisticated range of ready to wear pieces also graced the event. Combining African wax prints with contemporary cuts, Izelia is a brand for those who want to make an impression in stylish and colourful outfits with high quality fabrics and precise tailoring.

With African-influenced fashion taking Europe's fashion capitals by storm, Izelia is bringing striking and sexy African prints to the high street, allowing the style conscious to sprinkle their wardrobe with up-to-the-minute multi-ethnic flair. The fashion event also featured Mumini Fashion Empire, the brain-child of Abdel Mumini, which operates with the conviction that high end bespoke suit tailoring should be accessible to all. Mumini Fashion Empire offers modern African tailoring delivered with a personal touch.





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