

## EVALUATION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL AND ITS REPRESENTATIVES\*

### Abstract

*The United Nations Security Council apparently is the main powerful organ by virtue of the powers vested to it. This organ is organized in such a way that it functions continuously and every representative member must be present at all times at the UN headquarters. Its composition has remained unchanged even when the membership of the United Nations has increased from 50 to 193 Membership. This Article objective examines the Security Council composition since the UN foundation and observed that the only change was effected in 1965 when the non permanent members was increased from six to Ten, This Article focuses on the representatives of the World regions using the empirical and doctrinal sources of information. It concludes that if the recommendations given are adopted, the Security Council would attain the main primary role of the maintenance of international peace and security.*

**Keywords:** The United Nations, Security Council, Composition, Representatives

### 1. Introduction

The Charter of the United Nations vests the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on the Security Council. The Security Council is composed of 15 member states of which 5 members occupy permanent seat while 10 members are non permanent members and qualify for membership by the process of election. The election of member states to the Council is conducted by each region. For African region, has apparently adopted rotational mechanism for African representation to the Security Council. Under the Charter, all member states are obligated to comply with the Security Council's decisions. The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It can call upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment of settlement. It can sometimes, resort to imposing or authorizing the use of force to maintaining or restoring international peace and Security. The Security Council has 15 members, and the consequence of this is that there is inequality in the distribution and exercising powers, subjecting the interest of majority to the control of a few. As it is explicitly provided for the consent of the 10 non-permanent member is required in procedural matters. This implies that all other matters except procedural matters are left for the 'big five' permanent members who have the power to veto<sup>1</sup>. The Security Council originally, consisted of 11 members at the foundation time. Five of these numbers were permanent members. These countries were China, France, Union of the Socialist Soviet Republic now replaced by Russia, United Kingdom and United States<sup>2</sup>. There were 6 non permanent members elected by the United Nations General Assembly for two years terms. In 1965, the United Nations Charter was amended. By such development, the membership was increased to 15. The amendment retained the five members while the non permanent members were increased to 10. The presidency of the Security Council is held by members for tenure of one month. This position rotates among members by alphabetical country's name<sup>3</sup>. Each member has one vote, on all procedural matters, the definition of which is sometimes in dispute. Decision by the Council is made by an affirmative vote of its members. Substantive matters, such as the investigation of a dispute or the application of sanctions, also requires nine affirmative votes including those of the 5 permanent members vested with veto powers.

### 2. Composition of the Security Council

The Security Council is composed of 15 member states. This consists of the five veto wielding permanent members and 10 non-permanent Member States. These 10 non permanent member states serve for two-year terms. The members of the Security Council are always present at the United Nations headquarters so that it can meet any time. This requirement of the United Nations Charter was adopted to address the weakness inherent in the League of Nations. This is in view of the fact that the League of Nations was often unable to respond promptly to crisis. These weaknesses were apparently presumed to have contributed to the cause of the Second World War. The Korean War from 1950 to 1953 was the most severe test United Nations had to face within five years after its formation. The North Korea was supported by the USSR while the South Korea was supported by the USA. The invasion of South Korea by the North Korea took place on June 25th, 1950. The Security Council met the same day. The USSR did not attend the meeting as it boycotted, the UN. Nine out of the Eleven Countries in the Security Council supported the view to use force to get North Korean out of South Korea. The USSR taking into cognizance that absence in the Council does not nullify any Resolution of the Security Council, returned to the Council and Vetoed the Resolution. It should be noted that China joined the USSR to abstain in deliberations over the North Korea and South Korea crisis.

On June 27th, 1950, the USA called on the UN to use force to get North Korea out as it ignored the Security Council's Resolution of 25th June. This was vetoed by the USSR when it realized that boycott cannot nullify the Resolution of the Security Council, she returned to the Council to exercise the veto which effectively nullified the decision of the Council. The General Assembly adopted the principle of Collective responsibility to effectively cut off the North Korea out of the South Korea. The consequence of this was that the South Korea regained its independence and continued to

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<sup>1</sup> The UN Security Council Permanent Membership <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinform> Accessed 12 March, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Security Council/History and Members/Britannica <https://www.britannica.com>. Accessed on 10 March, 2024

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Security Council: Ibid

be supported by the USA. This freedom came as a result of the General Assembly Passing Resolution 377 (IV) known as the Uniting for Peace Resolution. This created room for collective responsibility that gave rise to member countries contributing uniformed personnel who served as allied forces. These collective responsibilities were also used in 1990 when Iraq annexed Kuwait.

The 5 permanent representatives of the United Nations Security Council Permanent Members were<sup>4</sup>:

S/N	COUNTRY	CURRENT REPRESENTATIVE	CURRENT STATE	FORMER STATE REPRESENTATIVE
1.	China	Zhang Jun	Peoples Republic of China (1971 - )	Republic of China (1946 – 1971)
2.	France	Nicolas de Rivere	French Republic (1958 - )	Template Country data French Fourth Republic (1946 – 1958)
3.	Russia	Vasily Nebency	Russian Federation (1992 - )	Union of Socialist Soviet Republic (1946 – 1991)
4.	United Kingdom	Barbara Woodward	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (1946 - )	–
5.	United States	Linda Thomas Greenfield	United States of America (1946 - )	–

The five permanent members were drawn from the victorious powers of the World War II and at the United Nations founding members in 1945<sup>5</sup>. There have been two seat changes since 1945. However, this has not been reflected in Articles 23 of the Charter. This is because the Charter has not been amended. These changes were:

- 1) China seat was originally filled by the Republic of China. The effect of the stalemate of the Chinese civil war in 1949 led to two states claiming to represent China. In 1971 the Peoples Republic of China was awarded China's seat in the United Nations.
- 2) Russia became the legal successor state to USSR after the latter's collapsed in 1991. It acquired the original seat of the USSR including the USSR's former representation in the Security Council.

Before the upheaval of 1991, the Soviet Union consisted of 15 Republics of which Ukraine and Byelorussia were original members of the United Nations<sup>6</sup>. On 21st December 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist as a subject of international law and the 15 republics henceforth constituted the commonwealth of independent state<sup>7</sup>. On UN membership; the eleven signatories' countries from the USSR/Soviet Union agreed that: 'Member States of the commonwealth support Russia on taking over the USSR membership in the UN, including permanent membership in the Security Council'<sup>8</sup>.

On 24th December 1991, the permanent Representation of the USSR, to the United Nations transmitted to the Secretary-General of the UN, a letter from the President of the Russia Federation, stating that the membership of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in the United Nations, of Countries of the Commonwealth of independent states. In this connection, the representatives requested that the name 'Russian Federation' should be used in the United Nations in place of the name 'the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics'. The Russia Federation maintains full responsibility for all the rights and obligations of the USSR under the Charter of the United Nations, including the financial obligations. He requested that the organization considers the letter as confirmation of the credentials in United Nations Organs for all credentials of representatives of the USSR to the United Nations<sup>9</sup>. In the absence of any objection, the delegation of the Russia Federation took over the Soviet Union seat in the UN General Assembly, in the Security Council and in other organs of the United Nations, with the appropriate changes of the name plates and flag having been undertaken by the UN Secretariat. The non-permanent Member States are 10 in number<sup>10</sup>. These 10 members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The members are chosen by regional groups and confirmed by the General Assembly. They serve for two years not immediately renewable<sup>11</sup>.

The allocations of members are as follows:

African bloc	3 members
Asian bloc	2 members
Latin America, the Caribbean	2 members
West European and other bloc	2 members
Eastern European bloc	1 member

<sup>4</sup> Current members of the United Nations Security Council <https://www.un.org/security/council/current>. Accessed 12 January, 2024

<sup>5</sup> The UN Security Council/Council on Foreign relations <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un.security>. Accessed 12 December, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Collapse of the Soviet Union/causes, facts, events, and effects <https://www.britannica.com> Accessed 30 January 2024

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Collapse of the Soviet Union: Ibid

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Security Council/History and Membership/Britannica <https://www.britannica.com>, Accessed 14 January, 2024

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

The elected members with the regions they were elected to represent as case study from January 2009 and December 2023 are<sup>12</sup>:

1 January 2009 – 31 December 2009

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Austria	Western European and others	Thomas MayrHarting
Japan	Asia	Yukio Takasu
Mexico	Latin America and Caribbean	Claude Heller
Turkey	Western Europe and others	Ertugrul Apakan
Uganda	Africa	Ruhakana Rugunda

1 January 2010 – 31 December 2010<sup>13</sup>:

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Eastern Europe	Ivan Bardalic
Brazil	Latin America and Caribbean	Maria LuizaRibeiro Viotti
Gabon	African	Emmanuel IssozeNgondet
Lebanon	Asia and Arab group	Nawa Salam
Nigeria	Africa	Joy Ogwu

1 January 2011 – 31 December 2011<sup>14</sup>:

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Colombia	Latin America and Caribbean	Nestor Osorio Londono
Germany	Western Europe and other	Peter Witting
India	Asia	Hardeep Singh Puri
Portugal	Western Europe and other	Jose Filipe Moraes Cabal
South Africa	Africa	Baso Sangqu

1 January 2012 – 31 December 2012<sup>15</sup>:

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Azerbaijan	Eastern Europe	Agshin Mehdiyev
Guatemala	Latin America and Caribbean	Gert Rosenthal
Morocco	Africa	Mohammed Loulichkl
Pakistan	Asia Pacific	Masoodkhan
Togo	Africa	Kodjo Menan

1 January 2013 – 31 December 2013<sup>16</sup>:

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Argentina	Latin America and Caribbean `	Maria Percival
Australia	Western Europe and Other	Gary Quinan
Luxembourg	Western Europe and other	Sylvie Lucas
Rwanda	Africa	Eugene Richard Gasana
South Korea	Asia Pacific	Kim Sook

1 January 2014 – 31 December 2014<sup>17</sup>:

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Chad	Africa	Ali Alefei Moustapha
Nigeria	Africa	Joy Ogwu
Jordan	Asia Pacific	Sima Sami Bahous
Chile	Latin America and Caribbean	Christian Barros Melet
Lithuania	Eastern Europe	Rammonda Murmokaite

1 January 2015 – 31 December 2015<sup>18</sup>:

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Angola	Africa	Ismael Martins Abraao
Malaysia	Asia Pacific	Muhammad Shahrul IkramBim Yaakob
Venezuela	Latin America and Caribbean	Ramirez Van Bohemen

<sup>12</sup> Security Council project Gateberg self-publishing, self-gutenberg.org/articles/eng/security-council Accessed 28/5/2024

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Security Council Project Gateberg Self-Publishing e-book self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/security-council Accessed 28/3/2024

<sup>16</sup> Security Council Project Gatenberg Self-publishing: ibid

<sup>17</sup> Security Council Project Gatenberg self-publishing: ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

Newzealand	Western European	Gerard Van Bohemen
Spain		Roman Oyarzun Marchesi

1 January 2016 – 31 December 2016<sup>19</sup>:

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Egypt	Africa Group	ArmAbdellatif Aboualaita
Japan	Asian Group	Koro Bessho
Senegal	African Group	Fode Seck
Ukraine	Europe	Volodymyr Yekhenko
Uruguay	Latin America & Caribbean Group	Elbio Roselli

1 January 2017 – 31 December 2017<sup>20</sup>

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Bolivia	Latin America and Caribbean	Sacha Sergio LlorentaySoliz
Ethiopia	Africa	Tekeda Alemu
Kazakhstan	Asia Pacific	Raimonda Murmokaite
Italy	Europe	Sabastiano Cardi
Sweden	Europe	Olof Skoog

1 January 2018 – 31 December 2018<sup>21</sup>

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Equatorial Guinea	Africa	Mr. Toure Ibrahima
Ivory Coast	Africa	H. E Mr. Anatolio Ndong Mba
Kuwait	Asia Pacific	M. A. M Albanai
Peru	GRULAC	Enri Ciprain Prieto Tica
Poland	Eastern Europe	H. E. Ms. Joana Wronecka

1 January 2019 – 31 December 2019<sup>22</sup>

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
South Africa	Africa	Jerry Matjila
Indonesia	Asia	Arrmanatha C. Nasir
Belgium	WEOG	Fergal Nythen
Dominican Republic	GRULAC	Jose Singer
Germany	Western Europe and Other	Antje Leendertse

1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020<sup>23</sup>

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Niger	Africa	Abdou Abany
Tunisia	Africa	Tarek Ladeb
Vietnam	Asia Pacific	Dang Hoang Giang
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	GRULAC	Rhonda King
Estonia	Eastern Europe	Sven Jurgenson

1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021<sup>24</sup>

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Kenya	Africa	Martin Kimani
India	Asia	Ruchira Kamboj
Mexico	North America	Jorge Montano
Ireland	WEOG	Fergal Nythem
Norway	WEOG	Mona Juul

1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022<sup>25</sup>

Country	Regional Bloc(S)	Permanent Representative
Gabon	Africa	Michel Xavier Biang
Ghana	Africa	Zeki Nsseibeh
United Arab Emirates	Asia Pacific (Arab)	Lana Harold Adlai Agremar
Brazil	Latin America and Caribbean	Ronaldo Costa Filha

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Security Council Members – the United Nation <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/current/security>. Accessed 21 January 2024

<sup>22</sup> Security Council Members: Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Security Council Members: Ibid

Albania	Southern Europe	Ferit Hoxha
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Security Council is led by the President. The president rotates monthly in alphabetical order of the Security Council nation's names in English. The president functions include:

- (a) Setting the agenda of the Council's meeting
- (b) Presiding at its meetings; and
- (c) Overseeing any crisis.

The President of the Security Council is authorized to issue both presidential statements and notes. Article 27 of the Charter provides that the Council's decision on all substantive matters requires the affirmative votes of nine members. A veto by a permanent member prevents adoption of a proposal. This happens even if such proposal has received the required number of affirmative votes of 9.

### 3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The failure of the League of Nations to effectively maintain international peace and security gave rise to the formation of the United Nations in 1945. The primary objective of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security in the world. Article 24 of the United Nations Charter vests the primary responsibility to the Council though this organ has played significant role in the growth of the UN in the maintenance of global peace but there is the need for increase in its composition and permanent membership. When this done, the Security Council shall attain its primary object of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The number of permanent members of the Security Council apparently should be expanded to include non-nuclear power states. There are some continents that do not have any representation in the permanent membership of the Security Council. Asia has only China while state as Japan, India, should be given permanent membership. Africa and south America/Latin America and Caribbean should be given three permanent membership each. The reasons why Japan, an Asian country should be given permanent membership of the Security Council are:

- She is the second largest contributor to the United Nations regular budget. The State's payment after United States<sup>26</sup>;
- The country is apparently the most advanced in the continent of Asia; and
- Japan has been one of the largest official development assistance donor countries to developing countries.

India is the second country in Asia to be given permanent membership. If this is done, it will bring about Asia having three permanent representations in the Security Council. The reasons for India to be given the honour are:

- India is the World's second most populated and world's largest liberal democracy;
- She is the third largest and regular constant contributor of uniformed personnel to the United Nations peacekeeping mission; and<sup>27</sup>
- She is one of the major contributors to the United Nations budget.

Germany is one of the countries in the continent of Europe that is to be given a permanent representation in the Security Council. By and large, Europe has maintained three seats since 1946. Germany being given permanent seat UK and Russia, a three member states from Europe.

- The country has remained third largest (topmost) contributor to the United Nations regular budget next to Japan;
- She ranks as one of the greatest, technological powers in the world.

In the African continent, three permanent membership should be given to the region. The reasons are that Africa:

- Is the second largest and second most populous continent behind Asia;
- Has more United Nations member states than any other continent as 53 African countries are members of the United Nations<sup>28</sup>;
- As a whole, it is seen as militarily non-threatening;
- Contribution to the uniformed personnel for peacekeeping has always been more than half of the contribution of the whole world; and
- Currently has the support of the most countries across the world.

In the African continent, Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt should be given permanent membership.

*For Nigeria:*

- Is the most populated country in Africa; and
- Has consistently contributed large number of uniformed personnel to the United Nations peacekeeping operations<sup>29</sup>.

*For South Africa:*

<sup>26</sup> Contributions received for 2021 for the UN regular budget <https://www.un.org/contributions/honourrolls> Accessed 15 July, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Top 10 financial contributors to the UN peacekeeping budget <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/top-10-financial...> Accessed 14 March 2024.

<sup>28</sup> Top personnel contributors to the UN peacekeeping mission 2022 <https://www.statista.com/.../politics&government> Accessed 14 March 2024.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

- Is one of the main contributors to the uniformed personnel in the United Nations peacekeeping operations;
- Apparently has the largest economy in the continent of Africa; and
- Is one of the original members of the United Nations at its formation.

*For Egypt:*

- Has been original member of the United Nations since 1945;
- Consistently features among the topmost 20 contributors to the United Nations uniformed personnel to the peacekeeping operations; and<sup>30</sup>
- It would be construed that both the Arab countries and the Islamic World would be represented by Egypt's presence at the Security Council.

In South America (Latin America and Caribbean group, Brazil and Argentina should be given permanent membership in the Security Council. If this is done, America (North and South) will have three memberships in the Security Council.

*For Brazil:*

- The state has consistently featured among the topmost contributors to the uniformed personnel of the United Nations peacekeeping operations;<sup>31</sup> and
- She is one of the main contributors to the United Nations regular budget.

*For Argentina; she has:*

- Been a member of the United Nations since 1945;
- Been elected to the Security Council eight times;
- Been a key proponent of reform for the Council working methods for a number of years; and
- Lent roughly 50,000 personnel to the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The non-permanent membership should be increased to 25 to give opportunity for more states to be elected into the Council. So many states have never been elected into the Council more than 6 times. As at 2023, 60 nations have never been members of the Security Council. Regions should take those states into cognizance in the subsequent elections<sup>32</sup>.

The veto power should be abolished since its object has been defeated. This is in view of the fact that its use is being abused. When the United Nations was founded, there were 51 members that signed its Treaty<sup>33</sup>. Before 1939, the League of Nations was composed of 58 members. Today, the United Nations is composed of 193 member states while the permanent members still remain 5 since 1946<sup>34</sup>. For better global peace to be attained, the membership of the Security Council and particularly the permanent membership should be increased for fairness. The veto power therefore should be abolished; as it has outlived its importance.

- 1) The Security Council Membership should be expanded to include the non-nuclear power States. There are some continents that do not have permanent representation in membership of the Security Council and or the number is apparently not showing equitable representation.
  - a) The African Continent which apparently has 53 United Nations member states does not have a permanent representation. The continent should be given at least 3 permanent state membership of the Security Council.
  - b) The continent of Asia, has only China in the permanent membership. The country, Japan should be admitted into the permanent membership for the reasons of the fact that the country:
    - (i) Is the second largest contributor to the United Nations' regular budget
    - (ii) Is apparently the most technologically advanced in the continent of Asia; and
    - (iii) Has been one of the largest official Development Assistance donor countries.In this Article, recommendation is made that Asia should equally be given 2 additional permanent representatives to add to China.
  - c) The Latin America and Caribbean (South America) should be given representation in the permanent membership of the Security Council. The continent should be given 2 permanent representatives to add to the United States of America.

It is worthy of note that only Europe has 3 permanent representatives. These countries are:

    - France;
    - Russia; and
    - United Kingdom (Great Britain)
- 2) The non-permanent membership of the Security Council should be increased to reflect the United Nations membership which increased from 5 at its foundation in 1945 to 193 in 2011 when South Sudan became a member of the United Nations. The non-permanent members of the Council should be increased to 23. Presently, many state members have not been elected to the Security Council since 1946.

With the above allocation of members and 3 members each to every continent, the membership of the Security Council will have to be 35 members.
- 3) The United Nations Charter should be amended to reflect the changes in the Security Council composition.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Countries Never Elected Members of the Security ....<https://main.un.org> Accessed 12 march 2024.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Ibid