

THE UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

ELSADIG ELFAQIH

SETA | ANALYSIS

SEPTEMBER 2022 NO.82





THE UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

ELSADIG ELFAQIH



COPYRIGHT © 2022 by SETA

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, without permission in writing from the publishers.

The conclusions and recommendations of any SETA Foundation publication are solely those of its author(s), and do not reflect the views of the Institution, its management, or its other scholars.

SETA Yayınları

ISBN: 978-625-8322-18-7

Layout: Said Demirtaş

Printed in Türkiye, İstanbul

by Turkuvaz Haberleşme ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2022

SETA | SİYASET, EKONOMİ VE TOPLUM ARAŞTIRMALARI VAKFI

Nenehatun Cd. No: 66 GOP Çankaya 06700 Ankara TÜRKİYE

Tel: +90 312 551 21 00 | Faks: +90 312 551 21 90

www.setav.org | info@setav.org | @setavakfi

SETA | İstanbul

Defterdar Mh. Savaklar Cd. Ayvansaray Kavşağı No: 41-43

Eyüpsultan İstanbul TÜRKİYE

Tel: +90 212 395 11 00 | Faks: +90 212 395 11 11

SETA | Washington D.C.

1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1106

Washington D.C., 20036 USA

Tel: 202-223-9885 | Faks: 202-223-6099

www.setadc.org | info@setadc.org | @setadc

SETA | Berlin

Kronenstraße 1, 10117 Berlin GERMANY

berlin@setav.org

SETA | Brussels

Avenue des Arts 27, 1000 Brussels BELGIUM

Tel: +3226520486

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	7
INTRODUCTION	8
A SENSE OF HISTORY	8
CHANGING STATUS	9
PARADOXICAL RELATIONS	10
AREAS OF COOPERATION	12
SECURITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATION	13
CONCLUSION	15

AUTHOR

Elsadig Elfaqih

Currently, Dr. Elsadig Elfaqih teaches International Relations and Diplomacy at the University of Sakarya and is the advisor to the Director of the Middle East Studies Center ORSAM. He is a former ambassador of Sudan to Jordan and the State of Palestine, as well as to Ethiopia, permanent representative to the African Union, and a former chairman of the board of the United Nations Economic Council for Africa (UNECA). He is also the former secretary-general of the Arab Thought Forum in Amman, Jordan. He worked at the Center for Research in History, Culture and Islamic Arts in Istanbul, Türkiye, and as a political expert at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Doha, Qatar. He is a long-time media adviser at the office of the president, the Council of Ministers, and Sudanese embassies in Washington and London. He has assumed many leadership positions in political, diplomatic, media, academic, research, and advisory tasks, in many cities including Khartoum, Washington, London, Istanbul, Doha, Amman, Addis Ababa, and now Sakarya.

SUMMARY

The importance of addressing the effectiveness of the roles of the U.N. in Africa comes in the wake of the increasing frequency of criticism and growing demands for equitable representation of the continent in the agencies of the international organization, especially the Security Council.

The central idea of this analysis revolves around explaining the African perspective of the United Nations and its role in resolving regional armed conflicts, reducing poverty levels, and preventing or limiting illegal immigration out of the continent. The analysis discusses the limits of the effectiveness of the U.N.'s various organs in joint work and collaboration with the institutions of the African Union on these issues. The importance of addressing the effectiveness of the roles of the U.N. in Africa comes in the wake of the increasing frequency of criticism and growing demands for equitable representation of the continent in the agencies of the international organization, especially the Security Council, and what Africa sees as an objective entitlement to have permanent membership, with two seats, or at least one.

mittee to examine the conditions of the regions that did not have their freedom or independence. The same context was related to the fight against colonialism and the struggle for freedom in the tumultuous age of liberation. In recent years, Africans believe international powers are once more indulging in fierce competition for the scarce resources of the African continent to maintain and maximize the welfare of their own citizens. In this article, we will have a brief look at the history of the relations between the United Nations and Africa regarding specific issues of conflict resolution and peace building, assistance in development and poverty eradication, addressing the problems of illegal immigration, and most importantly, the continent's right to permanent representation in the United Nations Security Council.

INTRODUCTION

Since its establishment, the United Nations (U.N.) has faced complex problems regarding how to represent the African continent, foremost of which was the issue of colonialism since the colonizing European countries were presiding over the decision-making processes in the newly created global institution. Africans were struggling to push the U.N. to fulfill its mandate in paving the way for them to enjoy their freedom, have sovereign countries, establish systems of government, and ultimately gain the ability to exercise their right to select the leaders whom they accept and respect. These aspirations were expressed in the first calls of the leaders of African liberation movements and were clearly stipulated in the United Nations Charter, which is translated into the demands to combat colonial hegemony.

Furthermore, the International Council for Supporting Liberation Movements made another decision in 1961 to establish a special com-

A SENSE OF HISTORY

The U.N. Charter clearly stipulated in Resolution No. 1514, which was adopted by the General Assembly at the 15th session on December 14, 1960, the need to grant independence to colonized countries, free the oppressed peoples, as well as focus on the problems of development, economic, health, social and cultural conditions, and all other problems inherited from the colonial era. The Charter of the United Nations did not adopt a revolutionary or radical position on the issue of decolonization at first because of the limitations set by the League of Nations, which had established the system of trusteeship, supervision, and mandate to distinguish the legal status of the colonies who were under the defeated countries in World War I from the rest of the other colonies. However, the U.N. Charter did devote three chapters of its text to addressing the issues of liberation and independence. Therefore, despite the many shortcomings that this Char-

ter has, it constituted an advanced step forward compared to the position taken by the League of Nations in two fundamental respects.

First, the United Nations Charter did not distinguish between the colonies, which must be subject to trusteeship, and considered all the territories subject to this system as candidates for independence, or at least self-government during a certain period.

Second, the inclusion of the Declaration of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the provisions of the Charter conferred on them the character and value of principles of general international law and thus granted the other colonies, which were under the control of the victorious nations in the war, international legal status for the first time.

The position of the Charter of the United Nations on the colonial issue was more advanced than the position of the League of Nations, but it was not sufficient for this position to become anti-colonial or to explicitly reject colonialism in principle. This is because of the difficulty that the General Assembly faced, from the beginning, in imposing its control over colonial countries and enabling the colonized peoples to exercise their natural right to self-determination. This prompted the U.N. to undertake a series of procedures and use several mechanisms to reach that goal, without amending the charter, which was considered a real achievement. As a result, 1960 was called the year of the "African Continent." Moreover, the Soviet Union presented a draft resolution to the General Assembly, calling for the complete and final liquidation of colonialism. The draft resolution was met with great enthusiasm, and in December 1960, the General Assembly adopted it by an overwhelming majority, and it was made a declaration calling for granting independence to all colonized countries and peoples.

Likewise, the International Council for Supporting Liberation Movements made another decision in 1961 to establish a special committee to examine the conditions of the regions that did not enjoy their freedom and independence. A report was submitted in this regard to the General Assembly citing Resolution No. 1541 and the Declaration of Human Rights. The establishment of the Organization of African Unity on May 25, 1963, and the compatibility between its principles and objectives and those of the international organization was another important step of coordination between the two organizations to achieve the independence and sovereignty of African countries. The same context is related to the fight against colonialism and liberation. Soon after, many African countries gained independence, and 15 of them were accepted as members of the United Nations. Others have also successively joined, with their number reaching 54 countries as of today.

CHANGING STATUS

It is a fact that the United Nations was established more than seven decades ago, when most African countries were under European colonialism, and they did not have the sovereignty and the freedom that would enable them to fulfill the membership conditions. There was more than a decade between its inception and the accession of some countries on the continent. At the time the U.N. Charter was drafted, only four African states were independent: Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, and South Africa. But with the decolonization processes, during the 1960s, Africa's status in the United Nations began to change. The newly independent states became members of the international community of nations and were able to use the global organization as a platform to express their interests and raise their per-

continent issues, such as economic development and complete decolonization. It was not long before African countries made up the largest regional grouping of the United Nations, or more than a quarter of all U.N. member states.

However, the size of the group itself did not automatically translate into its ability to produce proactive and unified positions and decisions. It was meant to serve the interests, address issues, and express ambitions. However, this potential was never fulfilled, and instead of speaking with one voice and synchronizing their positions, divisions become the norm and an ongoing challenge for African member states at the United Nations. Thus, relations have gradually developed over decades and through various efforts in which the role of the United Nations itself ranged from positive engagement at times and less positive or negative on some critical issues of concern for Africa. Although these issues were seen from the outside as dominated by efforts to settle conflicts within the continent, the U.N. appeared to be reluctant to use reliance or preventive diplomacy. That does not imply the U.N. failed to provide peacekeeping missions, humanitarian aid and, in rare cases, military intervention, but most of the time when it was too late. To secure humanitarian relief operations and humanitarian intervention, as in the cases of Rwanda and Darfur in recent years, which were interpreted as positive, the U.N. extended its mission to post-conflict peace-building processes and the legitimization of independent states.

These roles differed greatly on the political, economic, social, or security levels, which constituted the bulk of the collective efforts. Hence, because of many factors, whether related to the emerging realities of the newly independent African countries themselves or the mechanisms used by the United Nations in performing its tasks, some of the goodwill decisions were suc-

cessful, and some of them failed. The U.N. has gained credibility with newly independent states joining in. Expectations were high for a decisive U.N. contribution to the stabilization of these countries that would lead them toward development. On the contrary, it failed them. In some cases like Angola, it was accused of delivering arms to Jonas Savimbi¹ with U.N. flights, which led to harsh criticism and many questions about the feasibility of such missions in African countries.

PARADOXICAL RELATIONS

Africans are not alone in recognizing the shortcomings of the current relations between Africa and the United Nations, which are stained with many contradictions, amounting at times to accusations of negligence, if not conspiracies. Reputable Western organizations, including Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), have also been critical of the situation. The FES described these relations as “paradoxical,” confirming that “while there may be a lot of talk about Africa, there is not so much talk with Africa and even less so of Africa itself and its role at the UN”.² Though, the FES acknowledges the fact that the bond between the two institutions “has undergone several transformations”,³ it says: “African countries form the largest regional grouping at the UN, with over a quarter of all UN member states. Yet group size per se does not automatically translate into pro-active, uni-

1 Jonas Malheiro Savimbi, (3, 8, 1934-22, 2, 2002), Angolan politician, the leader of a long-continuing guerrilla insurgency against the post-independence government of Angola.

2 Volker Lehmann, “*The Relationship between Africa and the UN: From Disenchantment to a more Effective Cooperation*”, Conference Report, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) New York, Tarrytown, in association with the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town hosted a day-and-a-half long conference on June 20-21, 2008.

3 The transformation requires strengthening the dialogue between African states and the U.N., this is why the FES conference addressed some of the outstanding challenges to the relationship between the two sides. http://www.fesglobalization.org/new_york/

fied decision-making. On the contrary, speaking with one voice at the UN and synchronizing their position has become an ongoing challenge for African Member States to the UN”.⁴ So, would it be possible to successfully reverse this relationship between African countries and the U.N. from disenchantment to trust and more effective cooperation, or a win-win situation?

Recent history is not reassuring since it is full of many events that support the radical, and not-so-radical, views and perceptions of Africans, including what they see as biases, prejudices, and blatant discrimination. These accusations are most the of time instilled by the behavior of some of the U.N. employees, whose arrogance and unprofessionally politicized decisions stand as testimony. The collective memory of Africans recalls many examples of what irritates their governments about the conduct of the U.N. agencies. Many of these governments had to order uncounted numbers of the so-called UN staff to leave because they crossed their mandate and did not adhere to principles guiding their professional and ethical contract.

Moreover, the decisions of the U.N. Security Council on some African countries also represent a significant indicator of discrimination, especially regarding the permanent members’ attitudes toward African leaders, through the unfair use of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which many Africans regard as a European court set to punish them. Their logic rests on the built-in bias in its systems, notably the exemption of the United States (U.S.) and its soldiers in war zones. While the U.S. relieved itself from any future ICC prosecutions, it is actively employing it to prosecute others, namely Africans. The U.S. opted out of

the ICC but continued to exploit the Security Council to refer African countries, like Sudan, to the unvetted authorities of this court and hold the whole population captive through its sanctions.

Africans are not alone in recognizing the shortcomings of the current relations between Africa and the United Nations, which are stained with many contradictions, amounting at times to accusations of negligence.

An excellent example of how this played out in the Security Council can only be told by Dr. David Hoile,⁵ a leading British scholar who is very critical of the unjust treatment of African leaders. He said: “There is no doubt whatsoever that permanent members of the UN Security Council have deliberately used the International Criminal Court as an instrument of their foreign policy. The referrals of Sudan and Libya to the ICC are two key examples, referrals that have clearly demonstrated the political nature of the ICC. The politicization of the ICC was built into the Court right from the start in that it accorded the UNSC – that is to say, the Permanent 5 members of the Security Council – the right of referral and deferral of people to the ICC. This process is independent of the court, which is itself a very questionable institution legally and professionally.”⁶ Though Hoile acknowledged:

⁵ David Hoile, a leading British scholar of International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis, who wrote many books, delivered hundreds of lectures, and appeared in numerous shows explaining why it is very wrong for the Security Council to single out only Africans and target their leaders under the jurisdiction of the ICC.

⁶ This quotation was recorded during my recent conversation on September 9, 2022, with Dr. David Hoile, during which he reiterated his long-held views on the ICC.

⁴ In the FES conference, the organizers sought insights and policy guidance from a distinguished group of African diplomats, U.N. practitioners and scholars from the continent on some of the challenges that both the AU and the U.N. face. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/usa/05713.pdf>

“This mechanism was written into the Rome Statute and resulted in another anomaly, which is to say that the permanent members, three out of five were not members of the ICC, were able to refer other non-members of the court – Libya and Sudan – to a court, they had themselves not signed up to.”

The referrals of Sudan and Libya to the ICC are two key examples, referrals that have clearly demonstrated the political nature of the ICC.

“The result ultimately is that two African states were arbitrarily referred to a deeply questionable and overwhelmingly European-funded ‘court’ by the U.N. Security Council as part and parcel of Western and European foreign policy. The double standards, injustice, and colonial overtones of this and other manifestations of the International Criminal Court are deafening.”⁷ This confirms there was no consensus among scholars, or the community of nations, in answering the fundamental question about the real purpose of the ICC, and international law, which is thought to preserve human dignity, justly and equally.

AREAS OF COOPERATION

In areas of cooperation, development comes first, and the U.N. has strategies for different regions of Africa, notably the Sahel and the Great Lakes, with a limited impact on the poverty and development of different countries. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is more present in support of the Lake Chad sta-

bilization strategy. There is also direct cooperation between different U.N. agencies and the African Union’s (AU) specialized institutions and Regional Economic Communities: ECOWAS,⁸ SADC,⁹ EAC,¹⁰ CEEAC,¹¹ and IGAD.¹² Also, there are several U.N. plans for development, the latest is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030. However, many African countries will not be able to meet the goals by 2030 for various reasons, coupled with the heavy cost of Covid-19 and the devastating impact of climate change.

One of the most important U.N. examples of cooperation is the Economic Council for Africa (UNECA), which was established in 1958 as a specialized regional body that carries out wide-ranging economic activities. It is meant to provide consultation and coordinate policies in various fields of economic and technological development, as well as technical assistance to the member states. It also aids in many development projects, databases, and infrastructure in the fields of transportation, energy, trade, and finance, among others. The committee also pre-

⁸ The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Established on May 28, 1975, via the treaty of Lagos, ECOWAS is a 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries.

⁹ The Southern African Development Community, or for short SADC, is a regional organization that aims to promote economic development in Southern Africa. It was established on August 17, 1992, and was later replaced by the Coordination Conference for the Development of Southern Africa, on April 1, 1980.

¹⁰ The East African Community (EAC) is a regional intergovernmental organization of six partner states, comprising Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.

¹¹ The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), established in October 1983 and its Secretariat General set up in January 1985, currently has 10 member states, namely Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, DR Congo, Sao Tome & Principe, and Chad. It has an area of 6,640,600 km² with a population estimated at 130 million inhabitants.

¹² The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa was created in 1996 to supersede the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), which was founded in 1986 to include to date: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, and South Sudan.

⁷ David Hoile on the ICC.

sented, as part of its main activity, the so-called African Alternative Framework for Structural Adjustment Programs, which is the framework developed by the committee to be an African alternative, in line with the continent's development priorities for the programs it applies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in African countries are known as traditional structural adjustment programs.

To examine the U.N. and African cooperation in solving disputes, conflict settlements, peace keeping and peace building, one must look at the intricate relations between the UNSC and the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC), and the extent of their joint contribution to the settlement of African conflicts and disputes. While some conflicts were considered a hard task by the Security Council, they became a true test for the PSC. Indeed, the decisions made to settle the conflict in Darfur, Sudan, for instance, revealed the large scope of understanding, which is far from being resolved, despite their hybrid mission there. Both sides were able to realize their limitations to deal with large-scale conflicts, the lack of financial resources for the PSC, and frequent foreign interventions through the permanent members of the Security Council. Senior Rwandan diplomats agree on "U.N. peace missions in some of the conflict situations like in Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, and even Sudan's Darfur. With all the flaws, the U.N. missions have helped in those cases. A major case of U.N. failure, which has a regional dimension, may be the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The U.N. mission has been there for decades but nothing has been achieved either by choice or by bad chance."¹³

¹³ A private conversation with a Rwandan diplomat, who requested not to be identified, on August 24, 2022.

On migration, the AU PSC and AU Social Affairs Commission (SAC) created a joint task force with the U.N. and the European Union to work on the prevention, protection, and repatriation of migrants. It functions mainly in Libya where thousands of irregular migrants waiting to cross to Europe were repatriated back to their home countries. Later, both the PSC and SAC were consulted in the process of elaboration of the pact on migration adopted in Morocco. As a voice from Libya, Dr. Mohammed Alghirani, a former foreign minister, attributes the irregular migration of African youth toward Europe and other developed countries to "primarily limited economic opportunities, oppressive regimes, and endless conflicts."¹⁴ He added as reasons: the lack of true democracy, dominations, and abhorrent social inferiority complex and that "all of this was the result of the impoverishment of these peoples, who want to escape their prolonged suffering."¹⁵ Alghirani thinks if Europe is serious about curbing, limiting, or completely stopping this mess of African youth migration they have to stop meddling and interfering in African affairs. "In my opinion, there is no solution to it except by the former colonial masters lifting their heavy hand from their former colonized countries politically, socially and economically if Europe truly wants to curb immigration to it."¹⁶

SECURITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATION

The formidable challenge for Africa-U.N. relations – and the U.N. must come to terms with it – is the outstanding and long overdue demand of Africa

¹⁴ Ambassador Dr. Mohammed Alghirani, former foreign minister of Libya, in a private conversation with the author, on August 25, 2022.

¹⁵ Alghirani, *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Alghirani, *Ibid.*

to have a permanent seat, or seats, in the Security Council. There is no doubt that because of this issue, the level of trust between African countries and the U.N. is very low, shaky, and in many cases nonexistent. After more than 70 years of existence, the African continent is still not permanently represented in the Security Council as the most important body of the U.N. system. What should be taken into consideration is the fact that African Security Council representation is becoming more and more a global demand. As recently as Saturday, August 27, 2022, after the “Tokyo International Symposium on Development in Africa (TICAD),” held in Tunisia, Japan called for “addressing the historical injustice” of Africa and granting it a permanent seat in the Security Council, and for reforming this United Nations institution, according to a speech by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

After more than 70 years of existence, the African continent is still not permanently represented in the Security Council as the most important body of the U.N. system.

In the Tunis Declaration, African countries and Japan also expressed “grave concern about the situation in Ukraine and its impact on African and global economies.”¹⁷ Real doubts about the Japanese call have been expressed by a former AU diplomat, who said: “The strategic objective was the U.N. reform, mainly the Security Council to be enlarged with two permanent seats for Africa. This will not happen

¹⁷ The Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida spoke via video link at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in Tunis, Tunisia on August 27, 2022. <https://www.france24.com/ar/7/20220829>

during our generation unless the actual events in Ukraine dramatically will evolve in a third world war.”¹⁸

On the other hand, Ambassador Ahmed Isse Awad, the longest serving foreign minister of Somalia, said: “Africa is the second largest contingent on earth, in terms of size and population, second only to Asia in both regards. It is also first in terms of the number of sovereign states comprising little more than a quarter of the U.N. membership.”¹⁹ Notwithstanding this reality, he added: “Africa has no representation in the permanent Security Council as the most important organ of the U.N. This situation might have been acceptable at the beginning of the U.N. in 1945, at a time when Africa was under colonization except for four countries. But this unjust international order is thinkable in 2022 and should be done away with. Therefore, reform of the U.N. structure and the international order is urgently needed with intent of allocating at least two permanent memberships for Africa at the U.N.”²⁰

The U.N. Security Council is not only accused of no African representation but also a lack of cooperation with similar African institutions, such as the AU PSC. The International Crisis Group (ICG) noted that since the start of 2019, long-time tensions between the two “over the handling of African crises have broken into the open, as evidenced by friction around how to address this year’s political turmoil in Sudan and the upsurge of violence in Libya. The catalyst of the intensified disagreements was a December 2018 dispute over the proposed use

¹⁸ High-level AU PSC diplomat, who preferred to speak in unanimity.

¹⁹ Ambassador Ahmed Isse Awad, former minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation of the Federal Republic of Somalia (January 2018 to November 2020). He was the longest-serving foreign minister since the collapse of the Somali State in 1991.

²⁰ Ambassador Awad, *Ibid.*

of U.N.-assessed contributions to fund AU-led peace operations.”²¹

Even though the majority of U.N. peace keeping and peace building missions are in Africa, and have produced no decisive results, some Africans will continue to see these missions as a real business – and the cake is shared by the big powers. The DRC and Mali are the best examples of costly missions with no effective results on the ground, thus becoming unpopular among the people of the two countries, who are demanding their immediate departure. A voice from Somalis summed it up well by saying “security risks happen to be the foremost challenge for the U.N.’s operation and implementing projects and programs directly for both the vulnerable people and supporting the Somali government institutions. To mitigate these risks, the U.N. outsources the risks by awarding, including emergency and developmental projects, to both INGOs and LNGOs for easy access to those in need. In layman’s terms, the credit of projects outsourced by the U.N. goes to the implementing partners – the NGOs, since the U.N. largely remains invisible on the ground.”²²

The review of these operations by a panel led by East Timor’s President José Ramos-Horta concluded that the U.N. is not ready to change its doctrine in peace keeping, will not deliver a mandate to its missions to engage directly with terrorist groups, nor replicate the experience of a joint mission like Darfur, Sudan, or a support mission like AMISOM in Somalia.²³ But,

21 International Crisis Group, “*A Tale of Two Councils: Strengthening AU-UN Cooperation Africa*”, Report N°279, 25 June 2019. <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/279-a-tale-of-two-councils.pdf>

22 Ms. Nimo Hassan, director, Somalia NGO Consortium, from a private conversation on

23 José Ramos-Horta, (born December 26, 1949, Dili, East Timor), East Timorese political activist who, along with Bishop Carlos F.X. Belo, received the 1996 Nobel Prize for Peace for their efforts to bring peace and independence to East Timor, a former Portuguese possession that was under Indonesian control from 1975 to 1999. Ramos-Horta served as prime minister of East Timor from 2006 to 2007, as president from 2007 to 2012, and is currently serving another term as president since May 2022.

as the ICG conferred: “There are deeper, longer-term dynamics at work, undermining both councils from within and sharpening debates about which institution should have primacy in pursuit of their common mission. The councils cannot immediately overcome some of these challenges, but both can take practical steps to lower tensions, increase cooperation, and modestly improve prospects for reducing conflict on the continent.”²⁴

The efforts to obtain U.N. financial help for African-led missions on peace and security failed as there were many preconditions from New York, one of which is the never-ending demand to pay 25% of the cost of any operation from the African Union Peace Fund. The AU PSC fund may have reached \$500 million, but this is a small drop in the hat when it comes to imposing stability or maintaining any peace operation. Furthermore, the AU PSC used to struggle to establish a tradition of designating an African to lead any U.N. mission in Africa, which met with little success, especially when the P5 have national interests in a conflict – the example of Libya is here to testify about this.²⁵

CONCLUSION

The African perspective about the United Nations is clearly not all positive. The continent has had its fair share of unpleasant beginnings, stained with colonial experiences that continued looting the continent’s resources. Moreover, the strongly held views among African intellectuals, activists, and politicians alike, which must be justly understood by the U.N., are that the international organization is serving the interest of Western powers, or at best, it is more inter-

24 International Crisis Group, *Ibid*.

25 P5, or the Big Five, referred to as the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

ested in debating society rather than being a real instrument for change. Hence, if Africa's role in the United Nations continued as it is and did not change significantly through having proper representation in the U.N. agencies, notably the Security Council, this perception will continue to persist and permeate the public understanding of its roles. African countries, despite their relative economic and political progress in recent years, have continued to be associated with a state of vulnerability rather than equal partners in the international community. This underdog situation added to the home-grown conflicts within African countries themselves and coupled with constraints arising from lack of institutional capacity, transparency of management, and opera-

tional dysfunction of the economy and politics will continue to hamper any tangible efforts to build peace, security, and stability. This can only be rectified if the U.N. has a proper democratic structure, and the General Assembly's one country, one vote policy will not fall short of legitimacy because of the veto system enjoyed by the five permanent members, who are yet to give the deserving space for Africa to join in this prestigious club of big powers.

Therefore, if the U.N. is to improve its future relations image, the issue of representation in the Security Council must be recalibrated with permanent veto power for Africa and treating its countries as real stakeholders and equal partners in the international community of nations.

THE UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

ELSADIG ELFAQIH

SETA | ANALYSIS

The central idea of this analysis revolves around explaining the African perspective of the United Nations and its role in resolving regional armed conflicts, reducing poverty levels, and preventing or limiting illegal immigration out of the continent. The analysis discusses the limits of the effectiveness of the U.N.'s various organs in joint work and collaboration with the institutions of the African Union on these issues. The importance of addressing the effectiveness of the roles of the U.N. in Africa comes in the wake of the increasing frequency of criticism and growing demands for equitable representation of the continent in the agencies of the international organization, especially the Security Council, and what Africa sees as an objective entitlement to have permanent membership, with two seats, or at least one.

www.setav.org

ANKARA • İSTANBUL • WASHINGTON D.C. • BERLIN • BRUSSELS