

Copy below of email pitch from Weintraub Communications to several news organizations offering opinion piece by President of Sierra Leone. It was later published by US News & World Report at https://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2024-09-24/president-of-sierra-leone-when-will-the-united-nations-security-council-give-africa-our-voice?fbclid=IwY2xjawl-iLtleHRuA2FlbQlxMQABHUvqZGifvC_SkUpO5MTARQ0USN5IDbFQJ9hTLsPtwnj79GGtusSoJDwu9Q_aem_snR7P-5uARyyAkL1ZYUQmg

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Subject line: Opinion submission from President of Sierra Leone: expand the UN Sec. Council permanent members to include Africa

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date: Sep 19, 2024, 12:17 PM

subject: Opinion submission from President of
Sierra Leone: expand the UN Sec. Council
permanent members to include Africa

mailed- weintraubcomms.com
by:

Indira. I hope you will consider publishing the opinion piece below by **President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone**. He writes about an extraordinary [announcement last week by the U.S. government](#): an endorsement of a long-standing proposal to expand the number of permanent members on the UN Security Security from five to seven, and that the two additional seats would be occupied by African countries.

When you consider that these five members -- the U.S., Russia, China, France and the U.K. -- have held these permanent member seats since the formation of the UN Security Council in 1946 and that they each have the power to veto anything that goes through the body, this would be an historic change -- if it wins the approval of the rest of the members. With the U.S. behind the proposal, the chances of that happening are far better than they

have ever been. (Other countries and the UN Secretary-General have also made positive signals in that direction.)

President Bio talks about how African countries have been pressing for this change for decades, arguing, among other merits, that Africans have no real control over its decisions made about matters in Africa, which makes up a large part of the Security Council's agenda. Given the recent U.S. announcement and that convergence next week of world leaders in New York City next week for the opening of the UN General Assembly, this is a perfect piece to run right now (if I may say so).

He offers it to you on an exclusive basis. We hope you can publish it.

Thank you,

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This email is distributed by Jeff Weintraub of Weintraub Communications, LLC on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

The UN Must Rectify the Historical Injustice That Has Muted African Voices on the Security Council

By Julius Maada Bio

Last week, the United States [announced](#) it would support expanding the permanent members of the UN Security Council to include two additional seats for African countries. This is a remarkable breakthrough, not just because, at long last, it gives Africa the stronger voice it deserves to have on the body. It also signals a critical shift that will make the Security Council more relevant and responsive to the world we live in today.

Since its establishment in January 1946, the Security Council's composition has remained largely unchanged, with permanent seats held by, as they are called, the victors of World War II who would reshape the world in so many ways – the United States, the United

Kingdom, the Soviet Union (now the Russian Federation), China, and France. Even after a Security Council reform in the mid-1960s that [expanded its overall membership](#) from 11 to 15, Africa still, to this day, has no permanent representation.

This is an injustice that stems from a long and painful history of colonial legacies and power imbalances that persist to this day. The legacy of slavery intersects with other forms of historical injustice, including colonialism, imperialism, and exploitation. Africa has long been left out of global decision-making processes and its voices often drowned out, resulting in a lack of meaningful representation for Africa on issues that directly affect our continent – not least, conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations, conflict resolution, and sustainable development. This systemic bias reinforces the notion of Africa as a passive actor in shaping global affairs.

The proposal to expand the permanent membership of the Security Council is an important priority of my government, which is why I personally [used](#) Sierra Leone's status in August as president of the Security Council to lead a substantive debate on the matter.

To many that was remarkable and says something about why this change is important. Only a few years ago, Sierra Leone returned as a non-permanent member of the Security Council after an absence of 53 years, and this shows we are no longer defined and confined by a troubled past. Twenty-five years ago, our shattering civil war was among the thorniest concerns on the Security Council's agenda. Today the international community views us as a liberal, progressive, confident and enterprising nation capable of shaping and grappling with the Council's agenda.

But Sierra Leone's transformation leading to this moment is about much more than Sierra Leone. It is emblematic of a growing, but not yet fully realized recognition of the need for equitable representation. For too long, the nations that have dominated international institutions such as the UN Security Council have marginalized Africa leaving them, at best, at the periphery. For Africa, this means non-representation in the permanent category, and underrepresentation in the non-permanent category.

No one involved with international institutions can say they are unaware of these concerns, which African countries have for decades made known. The African Heads of State and Government have adopted a Common African Position espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration.

More recently, the leadership of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the reform of the UN Security Council (also known as the C-10, which I coordinate), has coalesced around the Common African Position that calls for two permanent seats in the UN Security Council and an additional two seats in the non-

permanent category, bringing the total of non-permanent seats to five. The African permanent members will be chosen by the African Union. The C-10 is also advocating for the abolishment of the permanent members' power to veto any measures that come before the Security Council. If, however, UN Member States wish to retain the veto, our view is it must be extended to all new permanent members.

In bodies like the UN Security Council, there must be African leadership and solutions for African challenges. From persistent to emerging conflicts, terrorism, man-made famine, and humanitarian crisis, Africa faces a myriad of complex issues that require global cooperation and solidarity. African leadership has to be involved in international responses to these challenges. By prioritizing Africa's concerns within the framework of UN Security Council reform, the UN can demonstrate its commitment to addressing the root causes of conflict and instability on the African continent, thereby advancing the cause of peace and prosperity for all.

These proposed reforms and the justice and equity they represent will not only benefit African countries but the rest of the world as well. We live now in an era when growing fortunes and challenges anywhere in the world reverberate quickly and powerfully across the globe. It is therefore also in the self-interest of countries that dominate international institutions to give a greater voice – and listen – to the second most populous continent and home to a significant portion of the world's nations.

We are truly encouraged by U.S. support for the Common African Position and by some progress on the matter within the UN General Assembly Intergovernmental Negotiations process. It suggests that, after so many years of negotiations in the current format, there may finally be sufficient momentum to do what is right. For its own good and the good of African countries, the UN can no longer delay these urgent and necessary reforms.

Dr. Julius Maada Bio is 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