

Exploring South Africa's Foreign Policy Objectives in the Decolonisation of the Intergovernmental Organisations: The Case of the United Nations Security Council



Thoriso Ntlailane ¹  & Costa Hofisi ¹ 

¹ Afrocentric Governance of Public Affairs (AGoPA), North-West University, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

The United Nations (UN), which is the largest intergovernmental organization (INGO), has a structure mainly focused on global security which is the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). South Africa, which has got Africa's biggest economy and most politically stable, has embodied the principle of decolonisation through the Ubuntu principle. The South African government's key foreign policy objectives seek to advance decolonisation, globally and continentally. These objectives include monitoring international developments, promoting inclusive economic growth and shared prosperity for Africa and its people, building unity, and protecting South Africa's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This study sought to explore South Africa's foreign policy objectives in addressing decolonisation within the UNSC through reform. It employed the exploratory research design in addressing South Africa's foreign policy objectives towards the reform of the UNSC. Furthermore, the study relied on document analysis. The findings show that the process of decolonisation within the UNSC is occurring at a very slow pace, although significant progress has been made within the African Union regarding the decolonisation agenda. The study emphasises the need for an African permanent member with veto power on the UNSC. This would allow Africa to have a strong voice in protecting its interests. The study's findings can be used by the South African government's Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) to inform its foreign policy formulation.

Correspondence

Thoriso Ntlailane

Email:

thorisonntlailane@gmail.com

Publication History

Received: 29th August, 2024

Accepted: 10th October, 2024

Published online:

31st October, 2024

Keywords: *Decolonization, Foreign Policy, South Africa, UNSC, Reform, Ubuntu*

INTRODUCTION

Ndlovu-Gatsheni articulates that the process of decolonisation is very broad, and it should not only be reduced to a political term, however, in its nature, it encompasses many aspects such as the decolonization of institutions, education, and knowledge.¹ Furthermore, he further alludes that decolonisation is a process whereby the colonial institutions that are already existing are being totally liberated and reformed into a civilization that is inclusive to the society and nation on their own principles. The process of decolonisation in Africa is alive and well as the continent has suffered the

¹ Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "The Cognitive Empire, Politics of Knowledge and African Intellectual Productions: Reflections on Struggles for Epistemic Freedom and Resurgence of Decolonisation in the Twenty-First Century," *Third World Quarterly* 42, no. 5 (2021): 882–901.

effects of colonisation for two centuries.² In addition, the political leaders, and civil organisations within the continent are pushing for decolonisation of the sectors that have suffered from the process of colonisation. The terminology of colonisation can be understood as the process whereby one nation conquers and takes control of another nation by imposing cultural and structural assimilation. Furthermore, the two terms are used interchangeably. Ndlovu-Gatsheni has alluded that the year 2010 marked the 50th anniversary of the decolonisation process in Africa.³ However, he has also outlined that the political elites of African states have reduced their citizens to only celebrating their countries' respective independence days rather than fast-tracking the process of decolonisation.

The country of South Africa is not foreign to the process of decolonisation, as it was the last country where its people were liberated from the white minority known as the apartheid government in 1994.⁴ In addition, post the liberation of South Africa from the apartheid government there has been the formation of an all-inclusive government which was led by Nelson Mandela as the President of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Republic of South Africa. The post-apartheid South African government adopted institutions such as the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) which outlines the key foreign policy objectives of South Africa. Moreover, DIRCO outlines the following as South Africa's key foreign policy objectives: Monitoring International Developments; Shared Prosperity for the African continent and its people; and Promoting and building unity within its borders and Africa.⁵ The South African foreign policy is guided by the principle of Ubuntu which asserts that peace, love, and humanity must always prevail at any given time.⁶ Furthermore, they have also asserted that South Africa used the principle of Ubuntu as a soft power to address the conflicts within the continent, for instance, in the case of Zimbabwe in 2008, and Sudan in 2015 which was to foster unity through peaceful means.

The South African key foreign policies promote the national interests of South Africa which is to position the country as the vanguard of peace and stability within the continent of Africa.⁷ In addition, the parliament of South Africa adopted a policy document titled "Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu." The document highlights that South Africa must be at the forefront, advocating for global peace and security within the confines of Ubuntu principles. According to Hosler and Dorfler, the African Union member states and South African government have been at the forefront of advocating for the decolonisation of international governmental organizations through structural reforms in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).⁸ The UNSC is one of the United Nation's (UN) main bodies and it has a responsibility to ensure that there is global peace through the maintenance of peacebuilding.⁹ Furthermore, the UNSC has the responsibility to investigate, mediate, and take measures to achieve peace; and resolve disputes peacefully, however, there is an authority to use force through the use of the responsibility to protect. There have been substantial submissions for the reform of the UNSC as its function is no longer inclusive of contemporary political dynamics.¹⁰ Moreover, the structure of the UNSC vests the veto power among five nations France, the United Kingdom, Russia, the United States of America and China, while other continents do not have veto power to safeguard their continental interests.

² Mahmood Mamdani, "Between the Public Intellectual and the Scholar: Decolonization and Some Post-Independence Initiatives in African Higher Education," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 17, no. 1 (2016): 68–83.

³ Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Fiftieth Anniversary of Decolonisation in Africa: A Moment of Celebration or Critical Reflection?," *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2012): 71–89.

⁴ N.L. Clark and W.H. Worger, *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Routledge, 2016).

⁵ DIRCO, "Official Guide to South Africa 2021/22," International Relations, 2021, <https://www.geis.gov.za/official-guide-south-africa-202122>.

⁶ Dikeledi Madise and Christopher Isike, "Ubuntu Diplomacy: Broadening Soft Power in an African Context," *Journal of Public Affairs* 20, no. 3 (2020): e2097.

⁷ Garth Le Pere, "Ubuntu as foreign policy: The ambiguities of South Africa's brand image and identity." *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 39, no. 1 (2017).

⁸ Madeleine O Hosli and Thomas Dörfler, "Why Is Change so Slow? Assessing Prospects for United Nations Security Council Reform," *Journal of Economic Policy Reform* 22, no. 1 (2019): 35–50.

⁹ Ian Hall, "Tilting at Windmills? The Indian Debate over the Responsibility to Protect after UNSC Resolution 1973," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 5, no. 1 (2013): 84–108.

¹⁰ Adérito R Vicente, "United Nations Security Council Reform: The Question of the Veto Power," *Multilateral Diplomacy Summer School–Student Papers*, 2013, 19.

Academic contributions by Ndlovu- Gatsheni, and Mamdani acknowledge that the process of decolonisation is ongoing, and it has not been fully realised in the countries that have suffered colonisation.¹¹ Furthermore, the literature demonstrates that South Africa is in the process of decolonisation and is even using the principle of Ubuntu as a guide to their foreign policy.¹² Lastly, previous studies by Hosler and Dorfler, Hall, and Vicente outline that there are calls for the decolonisation of the UNSC through reforms that will be inclusive of the other continents that are left outside of the veto power.¹³ However, despite the literature mentioned above, there is scant literature on the use of South Africa's key foreign policy objectives in addressing the decolonisation of the UNSC, which is the motivation behind the study. The study is thus guided by the following research objectives:

- To explore South Africa's key foreign policy objectives in the quest for UNSC Reform
- To explore the Principle of Ubuntu in the advancement of South Africa's National Interests

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Winther, there is an urgent need for the reform of the UNSC and the reform should focus on the aspects of tenacious advocacy of structural reform which will enable greater involvement and representation of the global southern countries.¹⁴ In addition, the scholar indicates that the current structure of the UNSC is not well representative of the geographic countries that make up the Security Council which then affects the legitimacy, effectiveness, and efficiency of the UNSC. The composition structure of the UNSC is outdated and is no longer in touch with the ever-changing global conflict affairs in the sense that it is still using the model of the 1940s.¹⁵ Furthermore, the UNSC composition structure for membership gives the permanent members veto power which promotes dictatorship and illegitimacy of the body because the countries with veto power abuse it for their own national interests. Both Winther and Vicente advocate for the structural reform of the UNSC to be more inclusive of all the continents of the globe and also reform the permanent membership of the Security Council.¹⁶

There have been continuous calls for the decolonisation of the UN Security Council (UNSC) through reform of its permanent membership. For over three decades, Germany, Brazil, Japan, and India, as rising powers, have advocated for their inclusion as permanent members.¹⁷ However, these four rising powers have been accused of prioritising their national interests when it comes to UNSC reform by focusing on gaining permanent seats for themselves rather than advocating for broader representation. As a result, the UN General Assembly rejected their proposal due to its lack of inclusivity for African nations, despite the presence of Brazil as a representative of the Global South. Binder and Heupel acknowledge that the UNSC has ten rotating memberships.¹⁸ However, these rotational memberships do not hold significant influence over agenda-setting and policy formulation. Furthermore, the scholars argue that the five permanent members of the UNSC are resistant to reform proposals that would increase the number of veto-wielding members.

While there is evidence of progress in the UN General Assembly toward addressing the decolonisation of the UNSC with respect to veto power, it has been slow. The 69th UN General Assembly in 2015 adopted a resolution for UNSC reform. This reform proposed clusters, such as the "Global 4"

¹¹ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Fiftieth Anniversary of Decolonisation in Africa: A Moment of Celebration or Critical Reflection?"; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "The Cognitive Empire, Politics of Knowledge and African Intellectual Productions: Reflections on Struggles for Epistemic Freedom and Resurgence of Decolonisation in the Twenty-First Century"; Mamdani, "Between the Public Intellectual and the Scholar: Decolonization and Some Post-Independence Initiatives in African Higher Education."

¹² Clark and Worger, *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*; Madise and Isike, "Ubuntu Diplomacy: Broadening Soft Power in an African Context"; DIRCO, "Official Guide to South Africa 2021/22." Le Pere, "Ubuntu as foreign policy: The ambiguities of South Africa's brand image and identity."

¹³ Hosli and Dörfler, "Why Is Change so Slow? Assessing Prospects for United Nations Security Council Reform"; Hall, "Tilting at Windmills? The Indian Debate over the Responsibility to Protect after UNSC Resolution 1973"; Vicente, "United Nations Security Council Reform: The Question of the Veto Power."

¹⁴ Bjarke Zinck Winther, "A Review of the Academic Debate about United Nations Security Council Reform," *The Chinese Journal of Global Governance* 6, no. 1 (2020): 71–101.

¹⁵ Vicente, "United Nations Security Council Reform: The Question of the Veto Power."

¹⁶ Winther, "A Review of the Academic Debate about United Nations Security Council Reform"; Vicente, "United Nations Security Council Reform: The Question of the Veto Power."

¹⁷ Martin Binder and Monika Heupel, "Rising Powers, UN Security Council Reform, and the Failure of Rhetorical Coercion," *Global Policy* 11 (2020): 93–103.

¹⁸ Martin Binder and Monika Heupel, "The Intricacies of UN Security Council Reform," *Survival* 63, no. 2 (2021): 63–68.

(G4) consisting of Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan, and an African cluster (Anant, 2015). The UN General Assembly emphasised that these clusters would have representation in the UNSC but without veto power in decision-making. The African Union (AU) has adopted an international relations policy position known as the Ezulwini Consensus. This consensus calls for permanent representation of an African country in the UNSC.¹⁹ However, the AU faces a challenge in agreeing on which of its 54 member states would be the best candidate to represent African interests in the UNSC. The growing competition between Nigeria and South Africa for permanent membership further complicates this issue. Anant and Thekiso and Van Wyk acknowledge ongoing global engagements in the UN General Assembly on UNSC reform.²⁰ However, they raise concerns that the permanent members are making it difficult for continents like Africa and South America to gain permanent membership, as this would threaten their own national interests. The South African government has played an active role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa for over two decades since its transition to democracy.²¹ South Africa has utilized the principle of Ubuntu to intervene in conflicts in countries like Burundi, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo by deploying military troops for peacekeeping purposes. In short, the scholar suggests that the South African government has been a leader in peacebuilding and conflict resolution within Africa. In 2015, the International Criminal Court (ICC) ordered the South African government to arrest the Sudanese President on allegations of human rights abuses. This incident occurred during an AU Heads of State meeting held in South Africa.²² The AU heads of state advised the South African government not to arrest the President, and South Africa complied. Boehme's work suggests that the South African government prioritized its key foreign policy objective of shared prosperity for the African continent and its people over the global request from the ICC.

The literature reviewed here highlights the need for UNSC reform to reflect contemporary global political dynamics. Furthermore, it raises concerns over the veto power that has been exclusively held by five countries for over six decades, despite decolonization efforts in continents like Africa. The literature also suggests that South African foreign policy aligns with the development of Africa and supports UNSC reform that includes an African permanent member with veto power.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Realism is an international relations theory that asserts that in global politics the state acts in pursuit of its own national interests by ensuring that they maximise power, security, autonomy and prestige.²³ According to realism, the state is guided by its own national interest in foreign policy-making and decision-making. Moreover, the realism theory acknowledges that the state does not have a permanent friend nor a permanent enemy, hence it is very important that the state at any given time should prioritize itself before others. According to Walt, each state has a solemn responsibility to ensure that in any matters concerning socioeconomic security, the state must ensure that it addresses its affairs independently from any external influence.²⁴ Equally, important the scholar elaborates that in the international relations realist perspective, the state should not depend on other states to assist in decision-making, as a result, the state should practice self-reliance.

The South African government is a sovereign state that has a government that is democratic and elected by its citizens to govern the internal and foreign affairs of the country.²⁵ In addition, the South African government is a member of various multinational organisation that exists around the globe with

¹⁹ Michael Thekiso and Jo-Ansie Van Wyk, "The Quest for African Permanent Membership of the UNSC: A Comparative Assessment of Nigeria and South Africa's Eligibility," *Nigeria-South Africa Relations and Regional Hegemonic Competence*, 2019, 43–67.

²⁰ Arpita Anant, "India, Africa and UN Security Council Reform," *Africa Trends* 4, no. 3 (2015): 14–26; Thekiso and Van Wyk, "The Quest for African Permanent Membership of the UNSC: A Comparative Assessment of Nigeria and South Africa's Eligibility."

²¹ Cheryl Hendricks, "South Africa's Approach to Conflict Management in Burundi and the DRC: Promoting Human Security?," *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 37, no. 1 (2015).

²² Franziska Boehme, "'We Chose Africa': South Africa and the Regional Politics of Cooperation with the International Criminal Court," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 11, no. 1 (2017): 50–70.

²³ Burak Şakir Şeker and Hasret Çomak, "Antarctic and Arctic Maritime Security Interaction within Liberalism, Realism and Critical Theories," *Global Maritime Geopolitics*, Transnational Press London Ltd, 2022, 9–24.

²⁴ Stephen M Walt, "US Grand Strategy after the Cold War: Can Realism Explain It? Should Realism Guide It?," *International Relations* 32, no. 1 (2018): 3–22.

²⁵ Suzanne Graham, "South Africa's Voting Behaviour at the United Nations Security Council," *South African Foreign Policy Review: Volume 2 2* (2015): 73.

a membership at the United Nations. The theory of realism is essential to the study as the government of South Africa recognises it has its own national interests that it seeks to achieve at both continental and global levels. Moreover, one of the key foreign policy objectives states that the government of South Africa has shared prosperity for the African Continent and its people, which entails that it will at any given opportunity seek to promote the continent of Africa. South Africa's key foreign policy objectives are formulated in a way that they will always promote South African national interests.

The Realism Theory is also relevant to the study as the government of South Africa has been advancing its hegemonic status with the continent of Africa by playing a vital role in terms of assisting other states in matters of conflicts and insurgencies.²⁶ Furthermore, the involvement of South Africa in the continental peacekeeping mission is to provide security for African states that are unable to resolve their internal conflicts. As a result, the role played by South Africa in peace-building across the continent advances the interests of South Africa in the continent as an advocate for social and human rights. The South African government has served multiple times in the UNSC as a non-permanent member of the organization and through its tenure it has been firm on decolonisation and anti-colonial in both the continent of Africa and globally.²⁷ In addition, the involvement of South Africa in the peacekeeping mission is to demonstrate its capability of conflict resolution in many conflicts that have occurred. Hence, it strategically avails itself as the best candidate in the continent of Africa to assume the permanent membership position of the UNSC when the reform occurs. In short, the realism theoretical framework is essential in exploring South Africa's foreign policy objectives in addressing decolonisation within the UNSC through reforms.

South Africa's key foreign policy objectives in the quest for UNSC Reform

The South African government has formulated various foreign policy documents that seek to advance the country's national interests abroad. Moreover, there are key foreign policy objectives that have been agreed upon by the South African government which include shared prosperity for the African continent and its people; monitoring international developments, and promoting and building unity within its borders and within Africa.²⁸ As a result, the above-mentioned key foreign policy objectives of South Africa are relevant to the quest of reforming the UNSC. South Africa's foreign policies are pro-African, in the sense that they are concerned with the developments and political affairs of the continent of Africa.

Foreign policy on monitoring international Developments

The South African key foreign policy of monitoring international developments is a very crucial policy in the sense that it continuously updates DIRCO about the ever-changing global political affairs. In addition, the UNSC is the body of the UN that is constantly addressing international security questions on a daily basis due to a number of various cases being brought to the council.²⁹ As a result, the government of South Africa is conversant with international contemporary political affairs that are informed by this key foreign policy. In the year 2011, when South Africa was serving its second term in the UNSC there was an ongoing civil war in Libya, where the UNSC adopted resolution 1973 which authorised the no-fly zone in Libya to protect civilians.³⁰ Furthermore, The South African government voted in favor of the resolution, only to realize later that the resolution would be used to overthrow the government of Libya. As a result, the former President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma in 2012 during the UNSC Heads of State Summit addressed the council by stating that the resolution was used wrongfully to overthrow the government rather than its purpose of protecting civilians. The government of South Africa in monitoring the international developments during the Libyan uprising was to protect the citizens of Libya not to support the notion of destabilising Libya. Moreover, it was unfortunate for the government of South Africa to veto the resolution due to its non-permanent member status of the Security Council.

²⁶ Hendricks, "South Africa's Approach to Conflict Management in Burundi and the DRC: Promoting Human Security?"

²⁷ Makhura Benjamin Rapanyane, "An Afrocentric Exploration of Jacob Zuma's Anti Apartheid Stance: The Question of Israeli-Palestinian Struggle," *Journal of Public Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2020): e2017.

²⁸ DIRCO, "Official Guide to South Africa 2021/22."

²⁹ Hall, "Tilting at Windmills? The Indian Debate over the Responsibility to Protect after UNSC Resolution 1973."

³⁰ Graham, "South Africa's Voting Behaviour at the United Nations Security Council."

South Africa's foreign policy of monitoring international developments is strategic in the sense that it promotes South Africa's national interest of permanent membership of the UNSC. South Africa has been vested in resolving international conflicts to the extent of participating in the UN bodies to advocate for peace in the globe. Rapanyane asserts that the government of South Africa on multiple occasions has been concerned about the ongoing conflict in Palestine.³¹ Moreover, on various occasions, the South African government in the UN and UNSC has been advocating for peace in Palestine.

The government of South Africa continues to monitor international conflict developments with the recent one being the Russia-Ukraine war where the government of South Africa had to make some remarks. According to Kaur, the South African government took a non-aligned stance during the voting in the UN General Assembly where there was a motion tabled against Russia to remove its military in the state of Ukraine.³² Moreover, the government of South Africa did outline that it condemns the conflicts between Russia and Ukraine by indicating that the two countries should put their differences aside and try to resolve the conflict diplomatically without any use of force. Mbandlwa observes that the government of South Africa exercised its conflict resolution and peacebuilding mechanism by opting to non-align itself with any of the conflicting countries as it has the potential to affect its national interests.³³ In addition, the government of South Africa has stronger diplomatic relations with the Russian government than with the Ukraine government, therefore with the South African vested interest in the reforming of the UNSC its ties with Russia will come in handy. The South African government is positioning itself as the relevant candidate to promote the affairs of the continent of Africa in the UNSC as a permanent member.

In terms of monitoring international developments, there has to be a look at the ongoing conflicts that are currently underway in the Sahel region. Since 2020, there have been six military coups in the Sahel region whereby the military removes the civilian government from office forcefully.³⁴ Moreover, the countries that are victims of military coups in Africa are Mali, Chad, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Gabon and Niger. Furthermore, there are factors that are contributing to the military coups which include corruption by political leaders, security, and neo-colonialism by the French Government. Six countries that have suffered military coups are francophone nations, meaning they are all former French colonies.³⁵ The South African government has been condemning the military coups that have rampaged the Sahel region stating that they are illegal, and they are also a threat to a democracy. Moreover, DIRCO has supported the sentiments of the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) which stated that the military should have diplomatic engagements with the elected government on how to better govern the states.³⁶ The government of South Africa has used the ongoing global conflicts to voice out the need for cooperation through conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as it is guided by the key foreign policy of monitoring international developments.

Foreign policy on Promoting and building unity within its borders and Africa

The government of South Africa has a key foreign policy objective of ensuring that there is promotion and building of unity within its borders and Africa.³⁷ Moreover, the policy enables the government of South Africa to aid the continent of Africa be it militarily, socially, financially, and politically. For example, in the northwest of Africa, there has been a conflict between Morocco and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) over the land dispute.³⁸ The SADR has conflicted with Morocco for over five decades over the land that Morocco states that prior to colonisation Western Sahara was part of them.

³¹ Rapanyane, "An Afrocentric Exploration of Jacob Zuma's Anti Apartheid Stance: The Question of Israeli-Palestinian Struggle."

³² Ravinder Kaur, "The Ukraine Question: How Should the South Respond?," *International Politics* 60, no. 1 (2023): 264-68.

³³ Zamokuhle Mbandlwa, "The Impact of the Conflict between Russia and Ukraine on the Global Economy," *Lat. Am. J. Pharm* 42 (2023): 1.

³⁴ G.R. Taruvinga, "The Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa: The Case of West Africa and the Sahel," in *Contemporary Issues on Governance, Conflict and Security in Africa* (Cham.: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023), 147-57.

³⁵ Dirk Kohnert, "Will the UEMOA Survive the Rise of Anti-French Sentiment in West Africa?," 2023.

³⁶ DIRCO, "South Africa Condemns the Coup d'état in Burkina Faso," Department of International Relations & Cooperation., 2022, <https://www.dirco.gov.za/south-africa-condemns-the-coup-detat-in-burkina-faso/>; DIRCO, "South Africa Condemns the Coup d'état in the Republic of Niger," Department of International Relations & Cooperation, 2023, <https://www.dirco.gov.za/south-africa-condemns-the-coup-detat-in-the-republic-of-niger/>.

³⁷ DIRCO, "Official Guide to South Africa 2021/22."

³⁸ Ron Guy, "Polisario Front Marks 50 Years of Struggle," *Green Left Weekly*, no. 1381 (2023): 16.

However, post colonisation, Spain signed a referendum with the Polisario Front, the inhabitants of SADR, which meant that they were given independence to govern themselves. On the other hand, the government of Morocco did not agree with the SADR being a sovereign state by making claims that they are part of Morocco. Based on Nagar and Nagar the SADR is one of the most contested territories in Africa with 42 countries of the UN recognising the sovereignty of SADR whereas 49 countries recognise it as Morocco's territory.³⁹ In addition, the South African government and the African Union recognises the independence of SADR. For example, in October 2022 South African President Cyril Ramaphosa stated that Morocco's illegal occupation of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic remains concerning for both Africa and the international community.⁴⁰ Moreover, he has also stressed that the government of South Africa will continue to support peace efforts of the African Union and the United Nations to end the Western Sahara conflict. Most significantly, the bold remarks by the government of South Africa indicate that there are vested interests in peacebuilding in Africa by even extending to use of the UN to resolve the conflict in Western Sahara.

The continent of Africa is the continent that continuously suffers from conflicts that in most cases involve the military and terrorists in the form of rebels. Mozambique is one of the African countries that has been a victim of conflicts and terror attacks in recent years.⁴¹ In 2017, the province of Cabo Delgado suffered a horrific terror attack from what is believed to be a Jihad group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The terrorist attack in Mozambique has resulted in serious casualties with thousands of people reported dead and others being displaced from their residential areas. In 2020 during the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of States summit, there was a resolution that was adopted which enabled the SADC standby force to go and intervene militarily in the conflict (Mashimbye, 2022). Furthermore, the SADC member states pledged military support by providing their military personnel and ammunition to drive the terrorists out of Mozambique. The South African government deployed the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) through the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM).⁴² Furthermore, the deployment of up to 1495 troops by President Ramaphosa in what is known as Operation Vikela is to ensure that there is conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Mozambique. Above all the South African government's commitment in peacekeeping in Mozambique was to safeguard its national interest of ensuring that the conflict does not become uncontrollable to the point of threatening the border of South Africa. What is equally important is to position South Africa as a military-capable country in SADC to be able to provide security not only to its internal country but also externally. The Humanitarian intervention by the government of South in Mozambique and Western Sahara is strategic in the sense that it addresses the key foreign policy of promoting and building unity within its borders and the African continent. Furthermore, it demonstrates to the world that when reform happens, it does have the capacity to safeguard the interests of the continent of Africa in the UNSC.

Foreign policy on shared prosperity for the African Continent and its people

The government of South Africa is guided by the foreign policy of South Africa, Africa, and the rest of the world, which is fundamental to the shared prosperity of the continent of Africa and its people. Moreover, it alludes to South Africa's position to be invested and more concerned with the continental affairs of Africa, together with its population. Thekiso and Van Wyk have alluded that there is a foreign policy document by the African Union known as the Ezulwini consensus which states that there is an immediate need for the reform of the UNSC which is going to be inclusive of the African states.⁴³

³⁹ Dawn Nagar and Dawn Nagar, "The Role of the United Nations in North Africa: The Case of Morocco and Western Sahara," *Challenging the United Nations Peace and Security Agenda in Africa*, 2022, 253–76.

⁴⁰ RSA (Republic of South Africa), "International Relations and Cooperation on South Africa and the People's Republic of China Commemorate 25 Years of Diplomatic Relations," 2023, <https://www.gov.za/speeches/international-relations-and-cooperation-south-africa-and-people's-republic-china>.

⁴¹ Luca Bussotti and Ermenegildo Júlio Coimbra, "Struggling the Islamic State in Austral Africa: The SADC Military Intervention in Cabo Delgado (Mozambique) and Its Limits," *Frontiers in Political Science* 5 (2023): 1122373.

⁴² J. Gerber, "Ramaphosa Extends SANDF Deployment to Mozambique by a Year, at Cost of R2.8bn.," News 24, 2022, <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/ramaphosa-extends-sandf-deployment-to-mozambique-by-a-year-at-cost-of-r28bn-20220421>.

⁴³ Thekiso and Van Wyk, "The Quest for African Permanent Membership of the UNSC: A Comparative Assessment of Nigeria and South Africa's Eligibility."

Furthermore, the policy elaborates on the importance of African states being at the forefront of their political, and security affairs, especially those that concern the UNSC. The Ezulwini consensus emphasises the fact that the continent of Africa is suffering from conflicts on an ongoing basis and that affects the political stability in Africa. Hence there is a need for the adoption of an African state in the UNSC as a permanent member. According to Mbara et al., the African Union Ezulwini Consensus is a clear document by the AU on the UNSC reform agenda which has a proposed structure to the UNSC which entails:

- i. Africa having two permanent seats in the UNSC with veto powers.
- ii. Africa having five rotational non-permanent seats in the UNSC.⁴⁴

In addition, the aforementioned scholars outline that the AU would have a solemn responsibility to have criteria that will be used to select permanent representation to the UNSC. The Ezulwini Consensus is an important document by the AU to restructure and reform the UNSC to be able to cater for the interests of Africa as it constantly suffers from recurring conflicts. Moreover, South Africa as a member of the AU also agreed to the adoption of the AU Ezulwini Consensus as it directly supports its foreign policy of shared prosperity for the African continent and its people.

Maseng and Mothibinyane articulate that China and Russia as permanent members of the UNSC are in support of the reform of the Security Council and specifically, the inclusion of South Africa as a permanent member.⁴⁵ Equally important, is the fact that they have stated that during two terms when South Africa served in the UNSC as a non-permanent member, on multiple occasions it has supported resolutions of Russia and China. Therefore, the relations between China, Russia, and South Africa have strengthened the national interest of South Africa to serve the UNSC as the permanent member with veto power. Singh and Carvalho have asserted that South Africa during its first term in the UNSC in 2007 promoted the adoption of the resolution by the UNSC to strengthen the relations between the UNSC and the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC).⁴⁶ In addition, the purpose of the establishment of the Annual joint Consultative meeting between the UNSC and AUPSC is to strengthen the relationship between the two organisations and constantly produce annual reports on the work done by the two organisations. Equally important was the establishment of UNSC and AUPSC which clearly indicates the commitment by the South African government to fostering shared prosperity for the African continent and its people.

Ubuntu and the advancement of South Africa's national interest

South Africa's foreign policy is deeply influenced by the spirit of Ubuntu, which emphasises aligning national interests with humanitarian goals that benefit both South Africa and Africa.⁴⁷ The South African government strives to ensure its national interests promote harmony, peace, and humanitarian development throughout the continent and globally. For example, South Africa has deployed over 2,600 military personnel to Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for peacekeeping missions. They aim to address insurgencies in these countries and establish peace and stability. This action demonstrates South Africa's continued use of the Ubuntu principle to mediate conflicts across the SADC region and achieve regional security.

According to Heineken, South Africa has participated in various peacekeeping missions across Africa, deploying troops to countries like Ivory Coast, Liberia, DRC, and Sudan. Their Ubuntu-guided foreign policy prioritises peace and security for citizens in these nations. South Africa consistently demonstrates its capacity to contribute to addressing Africa's security crisis.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ George Chimdi Mbara, Nirmala Gopal, Stanley O. Ehiane, and Hosea Olayiwola Patrick. "Re-evaluating the African Union's Ezulwini Consensus in the Reform of the United Nations' Security Council." *Journal of African Union Studies* 10, no. 1 (2021): 53-70.

⁴⁵ Jonathan Oshupeng Maseng and Poloko Mothibinyane, "An Analysis of Chinese and Russian Positions on South Africa's Inclusion as a Permanent Member of the UNSC," *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 10, no. 1 (2023): 89, <https://mg.co.za/world/2022-11-23-ramaphosa-calls-for-reform-of-un-security-council-during-united-kingdom-visit/>.

⁴⁶ Priyal Singh and Gustavo De Carvalho, "Looking Back, Looking Forward: South Africa in the UN Security Council," 2020.

⁴⁷ Madise and Isike, "Ubuntu Diplomacy: Broadening Soft Power in an African Context."

⁴⁸ Heineken, Lindy, "Peace missions: Preparing for and deployment on peacekeeping operations." *South Africa's Post-Apartheid Military: Lost in Transition and Transformation* (2020): 37-54.

The Ubuntu principle motivates South Africa's national interest in positioning itself as a strong candidate within Africa to drive the UN Security Council (UNSC) agenda.⁴⁹ The South African president actively advocates for UNSC reform to include more African and South American representation. For example, during his 2022 state visit to the United Kingdom, President Ramaphosa raised concerns about the lack of progress on UNSC reform.⁵⁰ South Africa's aim is to amplify the voices of underrepresented continents in the Security Council. Maseng and Mothibinyane note that the G4 countries (including India and Brazil) and Africa are pushing for UNSC reform through expansion and inclusivity.⁵¹ Since India and Brazil are also members of the BRICS bloc (alongside China, Russia, and South Africa), it becomes crucial for China and Russia to safeguard the interests of BRICS members in gaining permanent UNSC seats.

Moreover, two of the G4 countries India and Brazil are members of the BRICS bloc (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). Therefore, it becomes paramount for China and Russia to safeguard the interests of BRICS member states in being absorbed as permanent members of the UNSC.

CONCLUSION

This article sought to explore South Africa's foreign policy objectives in addressing decolonisation within the UNSC through its reformation. The article has demonstrated that the process of decolonisation within the UNSC is occurring at a very slow pace, although significant progress has been made within the African Union regarding the decolonisation agenda. Reflecting on its foreign policy objectives and the principle of Ubuntu, South Africa advocates for UN Security Council (UNSC) reform in various multinational forums. It has emphasised the need for an African permanent member with veto power on the UNSC. This would allow Africa to have a strong voice in protecting its interests. South Africa's foreign policy objectives aim to achieve national interests by promoting UNSC reform and ensuring greater representation for Africa, which is currently underrepresented.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anant, Arpita. "India, Africa and UN Security Council Reform." *Africa Trends* 4, no. 3 (2015): 14–26.
- Binder, Martin, and Monika Heupel. "Rising Powers, UN Security Council Reform, and the Failure of Rhetorical Coercion." *Global Policy* 11 (2020): 93–103.
- . "The Intricacies of UN Security Council Reform." *Survival* 63, no. 2 (2021): 63–68.
- Boehme, Franziska. "'We Chose Africa': South Africa and the Regional Politics of Cooperation with the International Criminal Court." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 11, no. 1 (2017): 50–70.
- Bussotti, Luca, and Ermenegildo Júlio Coimbra. "Struggling the Islamic State in Austral Africa: The SADC Military Intervention in Cabo Delgado (Mozambique) and Its Limits." *Frontiers in Political Science* 5 (2023): 1122373.
- Clark, N.L., and W.H. Worger. *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. Routledge, 2016.
- DIRCO. "South Africa Condemns the Coup d'état in the Republic of Niger." Department of International Relations & Cooperation, 2023. <https://www.dirco.gov.za/south-africa-condemns-the-coup-detat-in-the-republic-of-niger/>.
- . "Official Guide to South Africa 2021/22." International Relations, 2021. <https://www.gcis.gov.za/official-guide-south-africa-202122>.
- . "South Africa Condemns the Coup d'état in Burkina Faso." Department of International Relations & Cooperation., 2022. <https://www.dirco.gov.za/south-africa-condemns-the-coup-detat-in-burkina-faso/>.
- Gerber, J. "Ramaphosa Extends SANDF Deployment to Mozambique by a Year, at Cost of R2.8bn." *News 24*, 2022. <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/ramaphosa-extends-sandf->

⁴⁹ Le Pere, "Ubuntu as foreign policy: The ambiguities of South Africa's brand image and identity."

⁵⁰ Eunice Masson, "South African Police Are Failing Victims of Gender-Based Violence, Report Shows," *Mail&Guardian*, July 2022, <https://mg.co.za/news/2022-07-13-south-african-police-are-failing-victims-of-gender-based-violence-report-shows/#:~:text=South African police stations are,analysing DNA is often prolonged>.

⁵¹ Maseng and Mothibinyane, "An Analysis of Chinese and Russian Positions on South Africa's Inclusion as a Permanent Member of the UNSC."

deployment-to-mozambique-by-a-year-at-cost-of-r28bn-20220421.

- Graham, Suzanne. "South Africa's Voting Behaviour at the United Nations Security Council." *South African Foreign Policy Review: Volume 2 2* (2015): 73.
- Guy, Ron. "Polisario Front Marks 50 Years of Struggle." *Green Left Weekly*, no. 1381 (2023): 16.
- Hall, Ian. "Tilting at Windmills? The Indian Debate over the Responsibility to Protect after UNSC Resolution 1973." *Global Responsibility to Protect* 5, no. 1 (2013): 84–108.
- Hendricks, Cheryl. "South Africa's Approach to Conflict Management in Burundi and the DRC: Promoting Human Security?" *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 37, no. 1 (2015).
- Heineken, Lindy "Peace missions: Preparing for and deployment on peacekeeping operations." *South Africa's Post-Apartheid Military: Lost in Transition and Transformation* (2020): 37-54.
- Hosli, Madeleine O, and Thomas Dörfler. "Why Is Change so Slow? Assessing Prospects for United Nations Security Council Reform." *Journal of Economic Policy Reform* 22, no. 1 (2019): 35–50.
- Kaur, Ravinder. "The Ukraine Question: How Should the South Respond?" *International Politics* 60, no. 1 (2023): 264–68.
- Kohnert, Dirk. "Will the UEMOA Survive the Rise of Anti-French Sentiment in West Africa?" 2023.
- Le Pere, Garth. "Ubuntu as foreign policy: The ambiguities of South Africa's brand image and identity." *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 39, no. 1 (2017).
- Madise, Dikeledi, and Christopher Isike. "Ubuntu Diplomacy: Broadening Soft Power in an African Context." *Journal of Public Affairs* 20, no. 3 (2020): e2097.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. "Between the Public Intellectual and the Scholar: Decolonization and Some Post-Independence Initiatives in African Higher Education." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 17, no. 1 (2016): 68–83.
- Maseng, Jonathan Oshupeng, and Poloko Mothibinyane. "An Analysis of Chinese and Russian Positions on South Africa's Inclusion as a Permanent Member of the UNSC." *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 10, no. 1 (2023): 89. <https://mg.co.za/world/2022-11-23-ramaphosa-calls-for-reform-of-un-security-council-during-united-kingdom-visit/>.
- Masson, Eunice. "South African Police Are Failing Victims of Gender-Based Violence, Report Shows." *Mail&Guardian*, July 2022. <https://mg.co.za/news/2022-07-13-south-african-police-are-failing-victims-of-gender-based-violence-report-shows/#:~:text=South African police stations are,analysing DNA is often prolonged.>
- Mbandlwa, Zamokuhle. "The Impact of the Conflict between Russia and Ukraine on the Global Economy." *Lat. Am. J. Pharm* 42 (2023): 1.
- Mbara, George Chimdi, Nirmala Gopal, Stanley O. Ehiane, and Hosea Olayiwola Patrick. "Re-evaluating the African Union's Ezulwini Consensus in the Reform of the United Nations' Security Council." *Journal of African Union Studies* 10, no. 1 (2021): 53-70.
- Nagar, Dawn, and Dawn Nagar. "The Role of the United Nations in North Africa: The Case of Morocco and Western Sahara." *Challenging the United Nations Peace and Security Agenda in Africa*, 2022, 253–76.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo J. "Fiftieth Anniversary of Decolonisation in Africa: A Moment of Celebration or Critical Reflection?" *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2012): 71–89.
- . "The Cognitive Empire, Politics of Knowledge and African Intellectual Productions: Reflections on Struggles for Epistemic Freedom and Resurgence of Decolonisation in the Twenty-First Century." *Third World Quarterly* 42, no. 5 (2021): 882–901.
- Rapanyane, Makhura Benjamin. "An Afrocentric Exploration of Jacob Zuma's Anti Apartheid Stance: The Question of Israeli–Palestinian Struggle." *Journal of Public Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2020): e2017.
- RSA (Republic of South Africa). "International Relations and Cooperation on South Africa and the People's Republic of China Commemorate 25 Years of Diplomatic Relations," 2023. <https://www.gov.za/speeches/international-relations-and-cooperation-south-africa-and-people's-republic-china>.
- Şeker, Burak Şakir, and Hasret Çomak. "Antarctic and Arctic Maritime Security Interaction within Liberalism, Realism and Critical Theories." *Global Maritime Geopolitics, Transnational Press London Ltd*, 2022, 9–24.

- Singh, Priyal, and Gustavo De Carvalho. "Looking Back, Looking Forward: South Africa in the UN Security Council," 2020.
- Taruvinga, G.R. "The Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa: The Case of West Africa and the Sahel." In *Contemporary Issues on Governance, Conflict and Security in Africa*, 147–57. Cham.: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023.
- Thekiso, Michael, and Jo-Ansie Van Wyk. "The Quest for African Permanent Membership of the UNSC: A Comparative Assessment of Nigeria and South Africa's Eligibility." *Nigeria-South Africa Relations and Regional Hegemonic Competence*, 2019, 43–67.
- Vicente, Adérito R. "United Nations Security Council Reform: The Question of the Veto Power." *Multilateral Diplomacy Summer School–Student Papers*, 2013, 19.
- Walt, Stephen M. "US Grand Strategy after the Cold War: Can Realism Explain It? Should Realism Guide It?" *International Relations* 32, no. 1 (2018): 3–22.
- Winther, Bjarke Zinck. "A Review of the Academic Debate about United Nations Security Council Reform." *The Chinese Journal of Global Governance* 6, no. 1 (2020): 71–101.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Thoriso Arthaniel Ntlailane is a Master of Arts in Political Studies candidate at the North West University. Ntlailane is affiliated with the Research Entity of Afrocentric Governance of Public Affairs under the Faculty of Humanities at North West University. Ntlailane's research focus area encompasses Foreign Policy, the *Trias Politica* Doctrine, Public Policy and the South African Government. Ntlailane is an emerging researcher with only one publication under his name titled "Deconstructing the Trias Politica Doctrine in the post-apartheid South African context: Insights on Judicial Hegemony".

Prof. Costa Hofisi is a Professor and Founding Research Director of the Afrocentric Governance of Public Affairs at North-West University.