UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called for Africa to be granted a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, advocating for reforms to address historical injustices. His remarks come amid longstanding criticism that the Council's structure reflects outdated global dynamics from the post-World War II era, when much of Africa was still under colonial rule.

The Security Council currently comprises five permanent members—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—who wield veto power. The 10 non-permanent members, allocated by region, do not have veto rights. Guterres highlighted that while the world has evolved significantly since 1945, the Council's composition has not kept pace.

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

The African Union has long advocated for two permanent seats on the Council for the continent, along with two additional non-permanent seats. The issue was brought to the forefront during a debate convened by Sierra Leone on Monday, where President Julius Maada Bio emphasized the need for Africa's voice to be heard on the global stage.

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

The UN Security Council plays a crucial role in maintaining global peace and security, with responsibilities that include authorizing peacekeeping missions, imposing sanctions, and determining the UN's response to conflicts worldwide. Other UN officials, including Dennis Francis, the president of the UN General Assembly, echoed Guterres' call for reform.

Guterres pointed out the imbalance in Africa's representation, noting that the continent, home to over a billion people, is significantly under-represented in key global institutions, despite being central to many of the challenges these institutions address.

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