Africa can help make Security Council more effective

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By: Roberto Morejón/RHC

If Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' announcement that two African countries will join the Security Council as permanent members comes true, it would be a fair step towards the long-awaited and long-delayed reform of the UN's top body.

During a visit to South Africa, Guterres said that this admission would take place before the end of his mandate.

Both the Secretary-General and the leaders and governments of the so-called black continent have called for his presence on the UN Security Council as a way of partially redressing an injustice.

The global South considers the absence of permanent members from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and developing countries from Asia to be unfair.

They should be part of the relevant decisions to be taken by the UN Security Council, which is currently composed of 15 members, five of which have a permanent seat and veto power and the rest are added on a rotating basis.

There is an urgent need to seek a more balanced composition of the body in order to redress the under-representation of nations from the global South, which make up a large part of the UN membership.

Both Africa and other countries are lobbying the UN for a truly transparent, democratic and representative composition of the Security Council.

This cannot be the case as long as the continent lacks integration, a scenario that has been dragging on since the end of the Second World War, when a large part of African states remained under colonialism and lacked a voice in international affairs.

In essence, the question of the admission of two African countries as permanent members of the Security Council is linked to the long-standing demands of many speakers for the democratization of this appendage.

Not a few governments have called for an end to the Council's interference in matters outside its competence, particularly those falling within the mandate of the General Assembly.

An as yet undecided reform of the UN Security Council should enable it to fulfil its essential responsibility to maintain peace and security on the planet.

A comprehensive and far-reaching reform, including an analysis of the veto power, remains to be seen in the context of global changes, but at least the inclusion of two African countries in permanent seats should be seen as a positive step.

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