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## **United Nations Security Council Permanent Seats and OIC Requests**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A UN Security Council reform has been overdue for decades. Throughout its entire history, reform only took place in 1963 with the addition of four non-permanent seats. Calls for an increase in the number of the Security Council's permanent seats for representatives of developing nations have been loud. The 57 members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the largest Muslim organisation in the world and the second largest inter-governmental organisation outside the UN spreading over four continents, is demanding a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The need was considered vital due to the spate of events such as the Palestine issue, the September 11, 2001 incident, the global war against radical Islamist terrorists, the Arab Awakening, the UN Security Council's deadlock on the Syrian crisis, Iran and a host of other issues from setting gender policy to human rights, all of which have further amplified a sense of alienation between Muslim communities and the West. This research examines the events that obliged the OIC requests. It identifies the appropriate members for the requested seat and highlights the future benefits of the seat to OIC. The findings of this paper seek to provide a major breakthrough recommendation for the OIC permanent seat on the UNSC.

*Keywords:* Reforms, Security Council, OIC, permanent seats, representation, request, unity, trust

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The UN was established in 1945 to serve as a replacement for the League of Nations. Its existence gave birth to all its organs as enshrined in the UN General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the

UN Secretariat. The UN Charter imposes certain responsibilities on the Security Council (SC), most important of which was the maintenance of international peace and security. The composition of the SC is five permanent and 10 non-permanent members. The permanent members are drawn from the representatives of nation states that were victorious in World War II. These include the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union (now Russia), France, the United Kingdom, and the United States; these five nations are provided with the special position to veto resolutions of the Council, while the 10 non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly for a two-year term (Horgan, 2008).

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to peace or acts of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means. In some cases, the Security Council can impose sanctions or even authorise the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security (Fasulo, 2009). The need for a UNSC reform has been recognised over the years with the first significant change signalling a numerical increase of seats. In March 2005, the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan presented a report known as "In Larger Freedom", in which he proposed two variants of the Security Council reform. Both plans aimed at increasing the total number of seats to 24 (Bourantonis, 2005). Plan A proposed six additional permanent seats, and three rotating, with a

total of 11 veto and 13 non-veto seats. Plan B reserved the veto right exclusively for the P5 countries, and proposed to add eight seats with a four-year renewable tenure, along with 11 two-year non-renewable seats (Muravchik, 2005). The proposal of six additional permanent seats was made by a consolidation of the G4 group: Brazil, Germany, India and Japan, a community of countries supporting each other's bids for a permanent seat. However, the G4 initiative found strong opposition in a broad group of more than a dozen states collectively calling themselves "Uniting for Consensus". In July 2005, Uniting for Consensus presented an alternative proposal that suggested that the P5 seats remain, and that an additional 10 rotating seats be added (Annan, 2005).

### **ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)**

The OIC, which consists of 57 members, is the largest Muslim organisation in the world and the second largest inter-governmental organisation after the United Nations. The event of August 21, 1969 which led to the Al-Aqsa Mosque fire resulted in convening the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the League of Arab States in August 25 to 26, 1969 in Cairo, where the Arab League Council stressed the importance of holding an Islamic summit. Saudi Arabia and Morocco took advantage of the Conference to hold a preparatory conference in Rabat from September 12 to 25, 1969. In March 1970, a conference was held in Jeddah for the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Muslim countries to

study the initial proposals that evolved into a plan to establish an Islamic organisation. It was followed by another conference for the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Islamic countries held in Jeddah in 1972, during which the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Charter was adopted. The name of the OIC was changed from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in June 2011.

Under the OIC Charter, the Organisation aims to strengthen Islamic solidarity among member states and Islamic cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and scientific fields and to uphold the struggle of all Muslim people to safeguard their dignity, independence and national rights. The organisation was also to coordinate action to safeguard the Holy Places, support the struggle of the Palestinian people and assist them in recovering their rights and liberating their occupied territories (Newman, 2013). It also promised to strengthen the organisation by eliminating racial discrimination and all forms of colonialism, while creating a favourable atmosphere for the promotion of cooperation and understanding among member states and other countries. The Charter enumerated the principles governing OIC activities: equality among member states, observation of the right to self-determination and non-interference in internal affairs, observation of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each state and the settlement of any dispute that might arise among

member states by peaceful means such as negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration among others (Newman, 2013).

### **THE NEED FOR OIC IN THE UNSC**

The first meeting of the leaders of the Islamic world was held in the wake of the Zionist attempt to burn down the Al-Aqsa Holy Mosque on August 21, 1969 in the occupied city of Al-Quds. The Organisation decided to pool its resources and speak with one voice to safeguard the interests and well-being of Muslim communities throughout the world. It was clearly shown that the organisation would face numerous challenges within and without, which was later proven when several internal and external disputes arose. These challenges began with the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate after World War I left a vacuum for a pan-Islamic institution. The division of the Muslim world before and after the emergence of independent states further ignited the search for an institution to revive unity among Muslims. Other major incidents include the Arab-Israel conflict, the Kashmir crisis, the former Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, the Chechen issue and other incidents in Eastern Europe and the conditions of Muslim minorities elsewhere. The incident of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively, the Arab Awakening that began in Tunisia and eventually spread to several Arab Nations, Libya, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia and Mali and the on-going Syrian crisis and the UNSC deadlock are

also major events demanding a revised role of the OIC in global politics. Sanctions on Iran and differences of opinion among OIC members and a host of issues from setting gender policy to human rights and the stance on cartoons of the holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have amplified a sense of alienation between Muslim communities and the West, and this has further warranted the urgency of UNSC reforms (Howden, 2006).

Muslim communities saw themselves subjected to a neo-colonial agenda of domination and conquest. As the ultimate multilateral organisation, the United Nations is charged with the task of managing this growing alienation and distrust that has generated such a tumultuous relationship. The UN has been partially responsible for the majority of cases that caused grievance to the Muslim world. However, even when the Organisation resisted US pressure to sanction the military invasion of Iraq, as far as many observers in the Muslim world were concerned, the UN sanctions policy against Iraq prepared the ground for this eventuality. This scenario forced several Islamic countries to rethink the role that OIC can play through the United Nations. Since then, several individuals and state actors of the OIC have advocated having an OIC representative in the UNSC. This was followed by the OIC secretary-general Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu's calls for OIC to have a permanent representative in the Security Council during the summit in Cairo in 2013. He said, "One of the important objectives for which I have been

exerting a lot of efforts was to have a seat for OIC in the Security Council to represent 1.5 billion Muslims in the world" (*"OIC demands seat on top UN body"*, 2013).

Ihsanoğlu cited several challenges facing Muslims and Islamic nations, which include poverty, lack of economic integration, Jewish settlement in occupied Arab territories and Judaisation of Jerusalem (Al-Quds), among others. Furthermore, the UN list of vetoed draft resolutions up until the end of 2012 shows that the Arab world has been the target of 36% of such vetoes. The United States alone is responsible for a whopping 58% of those vetoes, almost all in support of Israel. Russia comes a distant second at 26%. Overall, this means that only two countries have accounted for 84% of draft-resolution vetoes in the history of the Security Council in relation to Arab issues (*Hammar skjöld, 2015*). Recently, Saudi Arabia took an unprecedented step in turning down an offer of non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council until the body should be reformed. The Kingdom justified its action on the basis of the issue of Palestine and on-going crisis in Syria, stressing that the UN had failed to transform the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, a reference to Israel, which has never confirmed or denied possession of nuclear weapons, and Iran's Nuclear Programme (*"France suggests reforming veto power on Security Council"*, 2014).

In addition, the OIC secretary-general asserted in his speech at the University of Brunei Darussalam that it was time for

Muslim countries to be regarded as “global actors” in international politics. Ihsanoğlu argued that the UN secretary general Ban Ki Moon had personally confessed that OIC was a strategic partner of the United Nations. Ihsanoğlu made another request in the Russian Foreign Ministry’s international relations institute where he asserted that OIC already comprised the biggest voting bloc at the United Nations and it was the right time for it to have a seat on the Security Council. He stated, “During the first reconsideration of the reform in the UN, I think there should be a seat for OIC in the Security Council... If you look to the structure of the Security Council of today, you have the P5 and there are representatives of different civilisations, different cultures, and political powers. But you won’t find representative of more than 1.6 billion people of Muslim world” (Economy Watch, 2015).

### **EFFECT OF IHSANOĞLUN’S PROPOSAL**

Ihsanoğlu’s desire for an OIC seat in the Security Council was not formed overnight; it was part of his comprehensive struggle to make OIC play a significant role within the organisation and in the rest of the world. Upon his appointment, he took several strategic initiatives to reform the OIC in various fields with the motto “Modernisation and Moderation”. He was the driving force behind the “Ten-Year Programme of Action to Face the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century”, which was adopted by OIC member states

at their Extraordinary Summit Conference in Mecca in December 2005. Through this programme and the new Charter of the OIC adopted by the Eleventh Summit Conference in March 2008, he introduced the application of certain concepts and principles for the first time in the OIC (Ihsanoğlu, 2010). The issue of human rights was introduced to the new Charter of the OIC and the Ten-Year Programme of Action (Convention of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, July 1999). Objectives were adopted in the same Programme of Action, while emphasising on cultural dialogue (SIPA Lecture, September 2008).

The proposed seat in the Security Council was raised to cater for attendance to Muslim affairs in the SC. Particularly on issues concerning Muslims states, Ihsanoğlu’s proposal is vital because those countries most often viewed as contenders for new permanent seats i.e. India, Japan, Brazil, Germany and South Africa are not members of the OIC. A decade ago, Australia backed permanent membership of Indonesia to the UNSC due to its position as the world’s fourth most populous nation and country with the biggest Muslim population. The idea of Egypt getting a permanent seat was also circulated several years ago but this is undermined by its recent political instability. Pakistan’s chance is very unlikely due to its rivalry with India, while other larger Islamic countries either have a muted international profile, such as Bangladesh, or are too controversial, such as Iran and Nigeria (Organisation of

the Islamic Conference, 2014). Turkey's performance as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2009-10 set off warning bells in the West when it opposed an Iran-sanctions resolution that was so watered-down whenever Russia and China supported it ("*OIC demands seat on top UN body to represent Muslims*", 2015).

Although Ihsanoğlu called for the inclusion of the OIC in the UNSC, he cautioned that it may take time: "An OIC country needs a permanent seat on the security council, although I do not think this will happen during my tenure" (Ihsanoğlu, 2013). Ihsanoğlu is correct based on the fact that after the incident of September 11, 2001, several western countries' perception towards Islam, Muslims and Arab countries dramatically changed. Islam was misconstrued as a provocative, oppressive and tyrannous religion. This mistrust further led to provocative acts such as assaults on the prophet of Islam through cartoons and other means, an attempt to burn the Holy Quran, discrimination against Muslims and enactment of laws banning Islamic fundamental rights of Muslim women with regards to Islamic dressing, such as the state prohibition against wearing headscarves in schools in France or in Tunisia (Howden, 2006). Therefore, it makes sense to analyse the actions that led to such conclusions.

Ihsanoğlu's proposal for a permanent seat for the OIC is not a call for a particular member state to hold the position in perpetuity, but rather to allow countries within the bloc to rotate the seat.

Furthermore, it is also correct to state that it is ambiguous when Ihsanoğlu proposed that OIC should have the same status at the UN as that of the European Union (EU). It should be recalled that EU since 2011 has been enjoying an elevated status at the UN. Ihsanoğlu conceded that the EU has a different structure than that of the OIC (Goodenough, 2013). Ihsanoğlu might have confused or misled the organisation. First, if OIC is hoping for a permanent seat on the UNSC, it must be ready to name a single country that will represent OIC; hence, keeping the seat open for rotation among member states would be ambiguous for the UN to consider. Second, if OIC is expected to enjoy the same status as that of the EU, then it should forget lobbying for a UNSC permanent seat. In other words, Ihsanoğlu's vision of OIC's position in the Security Council is unclear, and any positive hope requires a clearly defined demand before such a proposal can be put forward to the Security Council (Marchesi, 2007).

## **ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED CONTENDERS**

The issues listed above attest to the enormity of the problems faced by Muslims in the world today. The seriousness of the crisis demands immediate action to avert the further descent of the Muslims into despair. The OIC must realise that it should not merely focus on political gain but also on alleviating feelings of alienation and insecurity among Muslims. Therefore, a very determined and firm stand must be

taken in seeking a permanent seat on the Security Council. Certain issues must be settled internally before the proposal is pushed forward, such as precise request and identification of suitable states, while consent and support of all states of the organisation are needed before a formal request is made.

Having looked at all members of the OIC, the researchers have identified several member states that can represent the organisation in its bid for a Security Council seat. Although the OIC comprises several countries that equally qualify for this proposed seat, the research chose to focus on Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

### *Egypt*

Egypt is a trans-continental country spanning the northeast corner of Africa and southwest corner of Asia, through the Sinai Peninsula. The world's only contiguous Eurafasian nation, Egypt has the sixth largest area estimated at 1,010,000 square kilometres (390,000 sq. miles), lies within the Nile Valley and shares a border with several countries. Egypt, for several centuries, has been performing an important cultural and political role between Islam and Christianity, the Arab world and other world civilisations (Boutros-Ghali, 1982). Egypt is the most populous country in North Africa and the Arab World, and the third-most populous in Africa, with a population of 86 million people. It maintains the largest and strongest military force in Africa and the Middle East estimated at 1,468,500 with

a combination of both active personnel and reservists (Egypt Military Strength, August 2010). In 2014, the Egyptian army was ranked the 13th most powerful in the world, consisting of the army, navy, air force and air defence. The permanent Arab League headquarters is located in Cairo and its secretary general has traditionally been Egyptian. Although the Arab League briefly moved from Egypt to Tunisia from 1978 to 1989, protesting the Egypt-Israel Treaty, Cairo has regained its prestige with the ability to convince member states of its normalcy with Israel. Egypt is seen as a vital actor for the progress and development of the region. Due to its current political situation, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirate have promised to aid Egypt financially, to keep it at bay in its recent political turmoil and economic difficulties.

### *Saudi Arabia*

Saudi Arabia occupies approximately 80% of the Arabian Peninsula. It covers 2,149,690 km (830,000 miles), the second largest in the Arab world after Algeria. Apart from sharing borders with eight countries, Saudi Arabia is the only country in the area with coasts on both the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and much of its terrain consists of inhospitable desert. Prior to 2014, Saudi Arabia was the world's second largest oil producer; it has moved to third place after the US overtook the Kingdom and Russia as the largest oil producer from July 10, 2014. The Kingdom remains the largest exporter of oil in the world and controls the world's



second largest hydrocarbon reserves. Saudi Arabia's Human Development Index (HDI) is very high and it is the only Arab country to be part of the G-20. The Kingdom has the highest percentage of military expenditure in the world, spending more than 10% of its GDP. The Kingdom's military spending in 2013 climbed to \$67 billion, overtaking the UK, France, and

Japan to fourth place globally, while the Kingdom rated as the 3rd largest military expenditure in the world with over \$80 billion in 2014, surpassing Russia from fourth place to third. It is also considered the world's second largest arms importer by the SIPRI (Trends in International Arms Transfer, 2014).

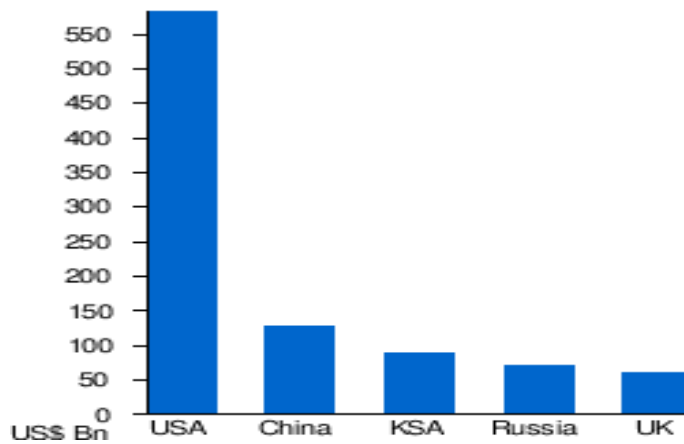


Fig.1: Top five countries with military expenditure, 2014. This figure illustrates the top five countries with military expenditure in 2014 in accordance with the International Institute for Strategic Studies, World Military Balance 2015. Saudi Arabia is in third position.

Saudi Arabia is a founding member of the UN as well as the Arab League (AL), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Muslim World League, the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation and the Organisation of Petroleum Cooperation (OPEC). It became a member of the World Trade Organisation in 2005. Saudi Arabia plays a prominent role in the International Monetary Fund

(IMF). It supports the proposed formation of the Arab Customs Union proposed for 2015 and the Arab Common Market proposed for 2020. Saudi oil pricing policy has generally been considered to have stabilised the world's oil market and it has tried to work for moderate sharp price movements.

TABLE 1  
Saudi Arabian Foreign Aid to UN branches and Other Countries in 2014 – April 2015

Date	Foreign Aid
April 17, 2015	The Kingdom donated \$274 million to support humanitarian needs in Yemen
March 31, 2015	Saudi National Campaign sent 41 tons of relief materials to southern Syria
March 22, 2015	Saudi health centres provided medical assistance to over 2,600 patients a week in Zaatari camp
March 13, 2015	Saudi Arabia pledged \$4 billion in assistance to Egypt
December 11, 2014	King Abdullah donated \$35 million to West African countries to fight Ebola
December 10, 2014	King Abdullah donated \$104 million to the World Food Programme
December 10, 2014	The Kingdom donated \$1 million dollars to the UN High Commission for Refugees
November 4, 2014	The Kingdom handed over \$2 million in annual contribution to UNRWA
October 1, 2014	Saudi Arabia provided \$ 1 million to the UN High Commission for Refugees
August 13, 2014	Saudi Arabia donated \$100 million to the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre
August 6, 2014	Saudi Arabia Donated \$1 billion to the Lebanese Security Services to combat terrorism
July 1, 2014	King Abdullah ordered \$500 million in humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people

Sources: Foreign Aid, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2015

On its foreign aid to the UN and other organisations, Saudi Arabia contributed extensively to the financial pockets of the UN in several areas. The sum of \$104 million was given to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in December 2014 (Table 1) for humanitarian operations in Syria, South Sudan and Somalia to purchase and supply essential food and nutrition assistance at a crucial time when food operations in those areas were under threat of suspension due to lack of financial support (“Generous Contribution by Saudi Arabia”, 2014). In August 2014, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia announced a contribution of US\$500 million for food assistance to hundreds of thousands of Iraqis displaced

from their homes, followed by another \$100 million for the United Nations’ counter-terrorism efforts (see Table 1). The UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) based in the UN headquarters in New York was launched in 2011 with the help of a voluntary contribution from the Saudi government. The contribution to the WFP was part of a US\$500 million donation from Saudi Arabia to UN agencies in July 2015 to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance in Iraq (“Saudi Arabia Contribution Saves Lives”, 2015). Apart from its regular voluntary aid, Saudi Arabia is also well known as a middle contributor to the purse of the United Nations and other countries, as shown in Table 1.

### *Turkey*

Unlike Egypt, Turkey is a transcontinental Eurasian country. Asian Turkey comprises 97% of the country and is separated from European Turkey by the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles. The entire territory of Turkey is more than 1,600 km (1,000 m) long and 800 km (500 m) wide, with a roughly rectangular shape. Turkey is the world's 37th largest nation in terms of area (US Library of Congress, 2006).

Turkey is a founding member of the United Nations and has been a member of NATO since 1952, G-20. It is also a member of other major international organisations. Turkey has the second largest standing armed forces in NATO after the US with an estimated strength of 495,000 deployable forces according to a 2011 NATO estimate (NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2014).

Turkey is one of the five NATO member states that possess the nuclear sharing policy of the alliance, together with Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. A total of 90 B61 nuclear bombers are hosted at the Incirlik Air Base, 40 of which are allocated for use by the Turkey Air Force in case of a nuclear conflict (Der Spiegel, 2010). Turkey has the 17th largest and the largest nominal GDP in the world (Gross Domestic Product, 2013). Turkey's contribution to the OIC has increased tremendously. Apart from the tremendous contributions of its secretary general, who happens to be Turkish, Ankara is one of the leading countries to shed

light on the violence against the Muslim minorities in Myanmar, the Rohingya Muslims, the Arakanese and other Muslim minorities in the Arakan state, according to OIC chief Iyad Madani. Turkey has played an active role in the organisation's day-to-day activities and it has hosted several of its activities like the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in Istanbul in 1976 and August 1991. These conferences led to the resolution on the establishment of two centres, namely "The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture" and "The Statistical, Economic, Social Research and Training Centre" in Istanbul and Ankara, respectively (OIC chief Iyad Madani, January 15, 2014).

### **ANALYSIS OF THE ASSESSMENT RESULT**

The paper relies on eight criteria for evaluating the three contending states for the OIC seat in the Security Council. The criteria are defence budget, military, population, geographical area, *gross domestic product (GDP)*, political stability, external influences and financial contribution to UN. Based on these criteria, positions are awarded in line with points accumulated by each country, and where there is no factual figure e.g. external influences, the historical fact analysis is calculated in terms of value and awarded in points. Table 2 indicates the position awarded to each state based on the figure or fact per criteria. For instance, in defence

budget, Saudi Arabia surpassed other countries with a budget of 80.8 billion and was placed first, followed by Turkey in second place with 18.1 billion, while Egypt was positioned third with 4.4 billion (Economy Watch, 2015). An example of the historical fact in Table 2 is the financial contribution to UN; this is difficult to estimate in terms of specific total amount. It was not merely in terms of cash donations but involved other valuable goods such as aid. The research adopted historical fact in

evaluating these values, and positions were awarded accordingly. As a result, position is associated with points, and the distribution of points is as follows: 1st position earned 30 points; 2nd position earned 20 points; and 3rd position earned 10 points.

Table 2 shows figures recorded for political stability, external influence and financial contribution to the UN calculated on positional bases. These positions were later converted into points in Table 3.

TABLE 2  
Criteria, Positions and Points of the Proposed Contenders

Criteria	Egypt Position		Saudi Arabia Position		Turkey Position	
<b>Defence Budget</b>	4.4bn	3	80.8 bn.	1	18.1bn.	2
<b>Military</b>	1,268500	1	258500	3	596130	2
<b>Population</b>	88.4	1	27.7	3	82.5	2
<b>Geographical Area</b>	10001,450	2	2,149,690	1	783562	3
<b>GDP</b>	324	3	805	2	861	1
<b>Political Stability</b>	10	3	30	1	20	2
<b>External Influences</b>	10	3	30	1	20	2
<b>Financial Contributions to UN</b>	10	3	30	1	20	2
<b>Position Marks</b>		19		13		16

The total estimation of the positions in Table 2 above shows that Egypt had a total of 19 overall positions, followed by Turkey with 16 total positions and Saudi Arabia with 13 total positions. The logic behind

the position awards is that the higher the position obtained, the lower the value received. In other words, a higher position scores fewer points, while a lower position scores higher points.

TABLE 3  
Results of the Estimated Points of the Three Contenders

Criteria	Egypt Position Points		Saudi Arabia Position Points		Turkey Position Points	
	3	10	1	30	2	20
Defence budget	3	10	1	30	2	20
Military	1	30	3	10	2	20
Population	1	30	3	10	2	20
Geographical Area	2	20	1	30	3	10
Economy by GDP per Income	3	10	2	20	1	30
Political Stability	3	10	1	30	2	20
External Influences	3	10	1	30	2	20
Financial Contributions to UN	3	10	1	30	2	20
Overall	3 <sup>rd</sup>	130	1 <sup>st</sup>	190	2 <sup>nd</sup>	160

Table 3 shows the performance of states based on the position and value points generated from each position. Saudi Arabia was placed in 1st position with a total of 190 points, followed by Turkey with 160 points in 2nd position, while Egypt secured 130 points and was placed in 3rd position.

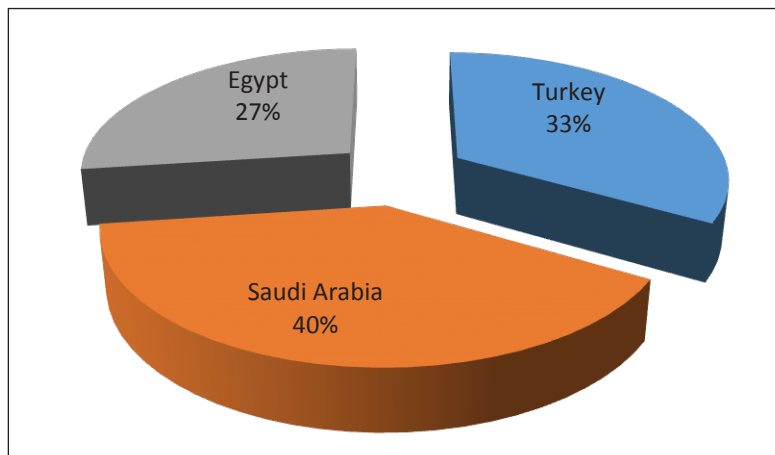


Fig.2: Percentage of each contender.

Fig.2 describes the percentage of each country per overall points. Saudi Arabia scored 190 points and won 40%; Turkey secured 160 points and earned 33%; and Egypt obtained 130 points and scored 27%. These findings show that Saudi Arabia was the best contender for the proposed OIC seat at the UNSC if such

a proposal receives the UNSC merit, while Turkey and Egypt occupied 2nd and 3rd positions, respectively.

## CONCLUSION

The challenges faced by the OIC are complex and require comprehensive solutions. Almost every member of the organisation confronts one challenge or another, and there is no simplistic strategic method to resolve it. The ninth secretary general of the OIC, Ihsanoğlu's proposal for a Security Council seat is just one of the initiatives to raise the OIC's status. While this is considered a good suggestion, no actual initiative has been taken seriously to officially work out how such a goal can be achieved. It was through the discovery of this lapse that the researcher embarked on writing this paper in order to identify the best representative for the proposed seat (Charter of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2014).

Having taken a number of elements into consideration, and despite the fact that not fewer than 10 states can be presented to contest for the assessment, only three countries were selected for assessment. Eight criteria were formulated and the result of the assessment found Saudi Arabia to be the best contender for the position. Among others, financial capability elevates the Kingdom's chance of being the best contender. In fact, Saudi Arabia has channelled a tenth of humanitarian aid to neighbours and foreign countries that is not considered in this work. It can be argued that the Kingdom has provided

foreign assistance more than any other state in the Arab and Muslim world, either to other Muslim countries or directly to the purse of the UN, or its sub branches for various activities. This is imperative even for the UN to conclude on a capable representative. Furthermore, regardless of the absolute monarchical system of government adopted, the kingdom remains a peaceful and stable country in comparison with other contenders.

Notwithstanding, it has to be clear that the solution to the problems of the OIC requires a multidimensional approach. Securing a UNSC seat is not an automatic solution to dozens of challenges faced by the organisation, but merely a way forward. First of all, the OIC needs to call for the revival of unity of its members. That is, Muslim states should achieve unity among themselves. To compare the OIC with the European Union (EU), an economic and political union of 28 member states of Europe, more will need to be done. The OIC should convince its member states to unite for one common goal, that is, Islamic renaissance and a means to enjoy good relations with the rest of the world.

Although the OIC aims to defend the national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of its member states, this can only be realised through a common foreign and security policy. Therefore, coherence in the foreign policies of OIC states is required to safeguard the collective interests of Muslims. Although calls have been made for the OIC to establish a joint action force like NATO, it seems that

the Arab League, a key member of the OIC, is proposing the establishment of a peacekeeping force known as “Defence Force”, a force of 40,000 personnel to respond to any untoward circumstances. Such an initiative can only work effectively if there is unity and trust among the various states (Jones & El-Ghobashy, 2015). The issue of trust remains a big question among Arab nations and, of course, OIC members. Without speaking with one voice, Muslims will continue witnessing a spate of new crises in the future. As a result, this research proposes a candidate for OIC representation in the UNSC instead of candidate by rotation as suggested earlier. A country like Saudi Arabia can be complimented for her prompt and generous contributions and voluntary donations to humanitarian causes to Muslim nations and the UN in addition to other criteria discussed in this research. Clear evidence of these findings is Saudi Arabia’s current leading role in the Yemen crisis. Despite several reactions and differences of opinion on the question of the operation legality, the anticipated success of its leading role in Yemen presumably underlines a precedent for the Arab and Muslim world.

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