



The United Nations: A Global Institution Facing Challenges in Enforcing Its Mandates

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Abstract

We are facing unprecedented, unpredictable and anxious times with so many wars in the world. The Third world war is looming. Weapons of mass destruction modernised with innovative technology impact causing more devastating destruction. The United Nations as an international recognised world organisation mandated to promote world peace seems to be failing in several instances have not able to call a truce amongst warring nations. With no adequate funding, no army of its own and unable to arrest indicted war criminals prosecuting heinous crime of genocide. One evaluates about the efficacy, effectiveness and continuous relevance of this 79 years old organisation. The author identified several barriers affecting the United Nations as follows: lack of adequate funding by member states, no combat ready army for deployment, era of more sophisticated weaponry, inability to deal with global conflicts, abuse of veto power, security council delays in passing resolutions, poverty reduction, war crimes and genocide and regional organisations. The author argues until these barriers are dismantled, the United Nations stands the risk of losing its legitimacy, undermined, and challenged resulting to its gaining historical insignificant status as a promoter of global peace. We owe the next generation a more peaceful and a safer world.

Keywords: *United Nations; Wars; Conflicts; Global Peace; Military Troops; Genocide*

Introduction

The United Nations is about 79 years old. It came into existence immediately after the end of the Second World War. The United Nation Charter was signed on June 26, 1945, and coming into force on October 24, 1945. The UN goals are as follows: safeguarding peace, protecting human rights, establishing the framework for international justice, and promoting economic and social progress, fight against aids, big data and climate change. The UN is also engaged in other array of human activities to improve people's lifestyle, disaster relief, education and advancement of woman, to peaceful uses of atomic energy. The UN comprises of 193 countries of the world [1].

The Pitbull is a very ferocious fighting dog made popular by its introduction in England around the 19th Century. These dogs were known as “bull and terriers” originally used for bull baiting and bear baiting for entertainment. These dogs were used for dog’s fights and gambling. The Pitbull became a money making bred and was no longer seen as a dog of companion to its owners [2]. The dog bite severity varies by the breed of the dog and recent studies have shown us that the pit bull has both a higher rate of reported bites and high rate of severe injuries, compared to non-pit bull breeds [3,4]. The combination of his its jaw and body strength can result in in the disfigurement, dismemberment, or death of its victims.

The UN has not got the gravitas, fear and proclivity to latch on warring countries whenever it calls for a cease fire amongst war torn countries. In some instances, where the UN has made to call for a cease fire. The warring nations would normally do the opposite by intensifying attacks in mockery of the UN time wasting exercise resolutions. A case in point is the recent conflict between the Israeli/Hamas/Hezbollah war resulting to over 50, 000 people killed. Again, the UN went on sabbatical leave waiting for the United Staes and Nato to bail it out from the corner of embarrassment it normally places itself whenever there is a major war outbreak between countries of the world. The over reliance of the UN on the US and Nato led military interventions has made the UN to become an object of a ridicule to many of us. The unanswered questions in relation to the UN is that why collect annual subscription for members and not able to resolve crisis by these members. I shall argue that I am not a philosopher of doomsday for the existence of the UN, but its survival right now looks very bleak and hopeless.

The UN was gigantic institution created with hope and aspiration of peoples of living at the broken world of its era. The UN of 1945 that gave hope and a promise of a peaceful world to billions of the world population cannot be said to be the same today. The aspiration of global peace has gradually ebbed away as years of the UN failure to bring about world peace is no longer tenable. From the Arab/Israeli conflict to Afghanistan Taleban hegemony, Rwanda genocide, Liberia Civil War, Sudan civil war, Serbs /Bosnian war, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Boko Haram decades of menace in Nigeria, Somalia conflicts, the Iraqi War, Yemen crisis, Lebanon crisis, and the ongoing Russian Ukrainian war.

Some Organs of the United Nations

a. Security Council

The Security Council has primarily responsibility, under the UN Chater, for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members (5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members). Each member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with council decisions. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council are China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States. The are also ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General assembly. These member states are as follows: Algeria, Denmark, Greece, Guyana, Pakistan, Panama, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and Somalia.

b. Secretariat

The Secretariat comprises of the Secretary -General and tens of thousands of international UN staff members who carry out the day-to-day work of the UN as mandated by the general Assembly and the Organization’s other principal organs.

c. Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue, and recommendations or economic, social and environmental issues as well as implementation of internationally agreed development goals.

d. The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the main deliberative, policy making and representative organ of the UN. All 193 Member States of the UN are represented in the General Assembly, making it the only body with universal representation.

e. International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice is the principal organ of the United Nations located at the Peace Palace in The Hague Netherlands. It is only one of the six principal organs of the United Nations not located in New York United States of America. The Court is composed of 15 judges elected for a nine - year term by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations. The international Court of Justice (ICJ) was established by the United Nations Charter in June 1945 and began its activities in April 1946.

Research Problem

Over seven decades of the UN existence, I shall argue that the UN has failed to deliver on its mandate to promote global peace. Its relevance to citizens of the world is beginning to drift into oblivion. If nothing is done now by all nations of the world to restore it, the future will remain bleak and stands a great risk for humanity. In Era where the UN observes the Israelite army to annihilate Palestinians and become a bystander to all the atrocities powerless and handicapped to call for a ceasefire. The UN was unable to request that Hamas free its Israeli hostages. Instead, the UN delegated its international mandate to the United States and Nato to speak on its behalf while they take a back seat or simply gone on a sabbatical leave or in some instances perfected their observation of peace role is characterised by doing nothing.

It was the late Irish philosopher Edmund Burke that postulated to us that “evil will triumph only when good men do nothing” The author argues that UN has been sitting on the sidelines for too long that many people are confused about its current role and that some younger generations do not even know what essence is the UN? Unarguably, the UN has failed so woefully that it could sometimes call for a cease fire, for example, in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. For over three years the UN has gone either missing or remained silent in circumstances where they should have led by example and promote its objectives.

The author unapologetically warns that the next ten years is very crucial for the UN survival and to repositioned itself as a champion for global peace. If the UN fails to do so; it stands a chance of being subjected to justify its legitimacy as a promoter of global peace, this academic predictive twist of events will mark beginning of the UN transition into perpetual irrelevance.

Materials and Methods

This research is a qualitative study. The author consulted a wide range of related textbooks to the topic United Nations. The author employed the use of case studies of countries where the United Nations have failed to deliver its mandate of promoting global peace. The case study research is good for understanding complex issues in real-life settings, and it is often used to understand the perspective of participants in those settings. The characteristics of a case study are a case that is bounded or defined in time, space, and activity. A context-based study of the phenomenon, rather than a study, conducted in a laboratory or through modeling. Case studies have multiple sources of evidence.

There term ‘human rights’ was mentioned seven times in the UN’s founding Charter, making the protection of human rights a key purpose and guiding principle of the Organisation. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights laid down the principles that brought human rights through legal instruments and on the ground activities. It was part of this formation that gave rise to the setting up of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The United Nations Human Rights Council was established in 2006, meets in Geneva. The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe [5].

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG’s)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

The author summarises the UN 17 SDGs as follows: No poverty (SDG 1), Zero hunger (SDG 2), Good health and well-being (SDG 3), Quality education (SDG 4), Gender equality (SDG 5), Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), Industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), Reduced inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), Climate action (SDG 13), Life below water (SDG 14), Life on land (SDG 15), Peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16), and Partnerships for the goals (SDG 17) [7].

Next, the author provided an insight into some global conflict and wars where he thinks the UN has failed in realising it global mandate of promoting world peace.

Case Study 1: The Democratic Republic of Congo/ Rwandan Conflicts

Historical Background to the DRC Congo / Rwandan Wars

By the end of the 1980’s some 480,000 Rwandans had become refugees, primarily in Burundi, Uganda, Zaire and Tanzania. They continued to call for the fulfilment of their international legal right to return to Rwanda. President Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda took the decision that population pressures were already too great and economic opportunities too few to accommodate large numbers of Tutsi refugees. The Rwandan exiles decided to form the Rwandan Patriotic front (RPF) in exile in Uganda with the following stated aims: securing repatriation of Rwandans in exile and reforming of the Rwandan government, including political powers haring. The RPF was composed mainly of Tutsi exiles in Uganda, many of whom had served in President Yoweri Museveni’s National Resistance Army [9,10]

On Aril 6 1994, a plane carrying both President Habyarimana and President Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down over Kigali Rwandan’s capital with everyone on board the plane killed. The few months following saw a wave of anarchy and mass killings. This genocide lasted for about 100 days from April 6, 1994- July 18, 1994. During this period over 800,000 primarily Tutsi civilians were killed. As many as 2,000,000 Rwandans, both Hutu and Tutsi fled into eastern Zaire now called Democratic Republic of Congo.

The author is curious to know what the United Nations and citizens of the world did to prevent it. The author argued that they were mere spectators watching all these senseless and barbaric killings carried out. The fact that we are back to the conflict the UN hold claim to have resolved, is a very much

interesting development and human unpredictability. The ongoing conflict in this area has a long history dating back to the 1980's.

The UN Human Rights Council Thirty-seventh special session held on 7 February 2025 has passed a Resolution S-37/1. Situation of human rights in relation to the current ongoing Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo conflicts as follows:

'Noting the deterioration of an already dire humanitarian situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and demanding rapid, unimpeded and safe humanitarian access, ...to intensify their resource mobilization efforts and upon international partners to increase humanitarian aid for Goma and surrounding areas and guarantee access to food, medical supplies and shelter, especially for women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, Underlining the fact that it is imperative to collect, preserve and analyse evidence of these violations to ensure that those responsible for crimes are held accountable for their actions before international criminal justice and the fact that the seriousness of the situation requires a swift and thorough response to ensure that victims are recognized and supported.

- 1. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the persistent violations and abuses of human rights and the violations of international humanitarian law and international refugee law being committed in the Provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, summary executions, abductions, enforced disappearances, targeted attacks against human rights defenders, journalists, other civil society actors and peacekeepers and the bombing of sites for displaced persons, hospitals and schools;*
- 2. Condemns the unlawful exploitation of natural resources, particularly in North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces, and demands that all armed groups and their networks immediately cease all forms of natural resource exploitation and trafficking and that strict measures be taken to put an end to the looting of these resources, which is fuelling the conflict and financing the armed groups.[6]...*
- 3. Strongly condemns the military and logistical support provided by the Rwanda Defence Force to the Mouvement du 23 mars, which continues to cause many civilian casualties, renewed displacement and significant trauma among the population.*
- 4. Calls upon the Mouvement du 23 mars and the Rwanda Defence Force to immediately end their violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law in North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces, and calls for the strict observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and for the protection of civilians and critical civilian infrastructure in these provinces'*

Next the author provided the reader with an insight into the Liberian civil war and how the UN delayed in their dealing with the incident.

Case Study 2: The Liberian Civil war

First deployed in 2003, the United Nations Mission in Liberia maintained a highly visible presence in the country for 15 years as it reeled from back-to-back civil wars that were notorious for their brutality and the large numbers of people driven from their homes. Between 1989 and 2003, civil war consumed the small West African nation of Liberia, resulting in the estimated deaths of 150,000 to 250,000 men, women and children, and the displacement of over half the country's population [18].

Case Study 3: The Syria Civil War

Death toll estimates from the conflict in Syria 14 years of civil war are as high as 620,000, a staggering number in a country with a prewar population of 22 million. Experts say establishing the true scale of death is complicated, as estimates are drawn from different sources and methods and calculated in varying way. casualty recording organizations are calling for urgent measures to preserve all evidence emerging in the chaotic weeks since Assad's collapse, including securing all mass grave sites. Failure to do so, they warn, may result in tens of thousands of victims becoming permanently unidentifiable [19].

Case Study 4: The Somalia civil War

Since the 1980s Somalia has been in constant civil war. The war has been marked by massacres by rival warlords, Al Shabab terrorists, and Somali government forces. Between 350,000 and 1 million people have died since 1991. 2.6 million Somalis are internally displaced. 3.5 million Somalis, including 1.5 million children, face starvation[20].

Case Study 5: The Afghanistan War

The War in Afghanistan killed 176,000 people in Afghanistan: 46,319 civilians, 69,095 military and police and at least 52,893 opposition fighters, according to the Costs of War Project. At the height of this war, British forces went alongside US troops were more than 130,000 Nato troops on the ground. By July 2021, after 20 years of conflict, NATO led by the US were humiliated out of Afghanistan. Taliban came to power was a shock to world heralding the long-held belief that ideas cannot be fought by conventional weapons alone. Osama bin Laden was killed but his religious ideas survived after him. The United States counted its losses because, the war could not be won by "smoking people out of their caves" alone. Citizens must synthesize into having commitment for a cause worth dying for. One can logically conclude that the UN, Nato failed in Afghanistan, and it was very costly failure because of the total number of lives lost and the number of resources used to prosecute the war [21].

Case Study 6: The Yugoslavia/Bosnian War

Bosnian War, ethnically rooted war (1992–95) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a former republic of Yugoslavia with a multiethnic population comprising Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Serbs, and Croats. After years of bitter fighting that involved the three Bosnian groups as well as the Yugoslav army, Western countries with backing by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) imposed a final cease-fire negotiated at Dayton, Ohio, U.S., in 1995 [22]. Horrific ethnic cleansing campaigns between 1992 and the end of 1995 killed thousands and violently displaced more than two million people in much of Bosnia and Herzegovina[23]

Results and Discussions

Challenges Faced by the United Nations

1. Lack of Adequate Funding by Members States

Where many countries are struggling to reduce inflation in their respective countries and still recovering to the economic effect of Covid 19. It will not be seen or heard that the UN is soliciting for an increase State Membership annual fee. There is no compulsion to pay these fees, it voluntary and any member can decide to stop making payments without any applicable sanctions. Some citizens are also beginning to challenge and question that when they have encountered war crisis, the UN is not able to come to their support. The rationale for making such payment is currently under debate.

2.No Combat Ready Army for Deployment

The UN has no standing army of its own. It becomes very challenging to appeal to member states to send in their troops at short notices. Same troops are needed by member states in the event of any attack from another country. Sending troops to UN peace missions makes countries to be vulnerable in terms of self defence and protecting their own territorial boundaries. The author that 79 years of the United Nations existence is enough time for the UN to put in place its own army. One can also see that the Veto carry members deliberately made the UN not to have its own army to create perpetual dependency on them. Even when these army from these countries are deployed, time is needed to train together, joint military exercises to create and understanding as each country's military training and orientation differs. The author argues that it takes time for army sourced from different countries to be combat ready. A lot of range of issues from manpower, resources, command structure also must be ironed first out before.

3.Era of More Sophisticated Weaponry

The weaponry and arsenals at countries disposal have drastically changed and evolved over the years due to technological advancement in warfare. Ballistic missiles have also been modified to suit prevailing war times. In 1945 when the UN was formed, the talk of hypersonic ballistic missiles was not envisaged, neither was the use of Unmanned Aerial vehicle (Drones). Warfare weapons have changed to become more deadly and devastating. Another example is the AMRAAM.

The AMRAAM– Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile – is the world's most sophisticated, combat-proven air dominance weapon. With more than 30 years of design, upgrades, testing and production, the AIM-120 missile continues to meet war fighter requirements in all weather and beyond visual range. Its capabilities have been fully demonstrated in over 4,900 test shots and more than 13 air-to-air combat victories [11].

The Atacms-The Army Tactical Missile System is a surface-to-surface ballistic missile capable of hitting targets at up to 300km (186 miles). This longer range makes them particularly important for Ukraine. Built by the defence manufacturer Lockheed Martin, the missiles are fired from either the tracked M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) or the wheeled M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (Himars). Each one costs around \$1.5m (£1.2m). Atacms (pronounced “attack-‘ems”) are fuelled by solid rocket propellant and follow a ballistic path into the atmosphere before coming back down at a high speed and high angle, making them difficult to intercept [12].

4.Inability to Deal with Global Conflicts

The author argued that the UN appeared not been placed in a position to be able to halt the ongoing war between Hamas and Israel going on which began 7 October 2023- date with over 50,000 killed. Israel and Lebanon, Russia and Ukraine war ongoing for three years. World superpowers like China, USA, France, UK who are members of the Security Council with veto power seems to be disunited and not speaking with one voice to halt the Russo- Ukrainian war. It is reported by one Russian journalist Olga Ivshina argued that Russia has lost over 150,000 soldiers, while Ukraine has lost over 70,000 soldiers. These total deaths have not factored in the high death toll of civilian casualties [8].

The UN Security Council permanent members are in disarray as the relations between Russia and the Western permanent members of the Security Council, the U.S., UK and France, have continued to deteriorate following Moscow's all-out aggression against Ukraine. The UN Security Council has failed to call Russia to order to stop the war. The Issue of arrest warrant has not deterred President Putin of Russia or Israeli Prime Minister Ben Netanyahu to halt their war campaigns. The arrest warrants being

ignored by sitting presidents is a new trend in global political landscape. This marked the dwindling influence of the UN to promote one of its cardinal objectives -promoting global peace.

5. Abuse of Veto Power

The big powers with Veto (China, Russia, UK, USA and France) are law unto themselves. Simply said they cannot be told by weaker nations of the world what they can do and not do. This superpower mentality provided the foundation for “regime change” to grow. A case in point will be the speedy process of the UN resolution in relation to the removal and killing of Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi. Some countries have manipulated the security council to settle old scores. Some Third world countries no longer want to be exploited and have requested that their former colonial masters return to their countries. In Burkina Fasso, the French were chased out as their presence was no longer welcome by new leader Ibrahim Traore. France made a humiliated and reluctant exist from Niger, Mali and Burkina Fasso because of the mineral wealth of these countries they were exploiting from them since the 1960’s. History tells us that once any member of Security Council has been offended, vengeance will be pursued until that leader is removed from power. One can safely argue that both the Iraqi President Sadam Hussein and President Gaddafi were killed for making things difficult for the colonial exploiters. The retaliatory and vindictiveness is also evidenced years after the regime changes in these countries continued to mar by insecurity, inflation and no development after the demonised tyrants have been forcefully removed from power little or no progress is made in these countries.

6. Security Council Delays in Passing Resolutions

Due bureaucratic process and time and efforts to convene meetings. The passing of resolutions could take longer periods and deliberation to agree in one voice is sometimes difficult to achieve timeously.

7. Poverty Reduction

The United Nations SDGs talked about reduction of poverty in its two Sustainable Development Goals as follows: SDG 1, talks about (No Poverty) and SDG 2, talks about Zero Hunger. The author argued that although these two UN SDGs are laudable, they may seem to be very difficult to attain. As each country has its own fiscal policies put in place and demographics are also different.

8. War Crimes and Genocide

War crimes committed in both the current on-going wars in between Russia and Ukraine, and Isreal and Palestine. Warrants of arrests were issued by the Internation Court of Justice. Both President Putin of Russia and Prime Minister Ben Netanyahu were both indicted for war crimes but to date were never arrested. The double standard of the UN is once again highlighted. If those indicted were from Africa countries, they would have been arrested and sent to the Hague for trial. President Charles Taylor of Liberia is an example.

9. Regional Organizations

Regional Organisations like the European Union, Nato, Brics, African Union (AU) and ASEAN are known to pull to different directions with their own respective military strategies different from the UN’s vision. Some countries of these regional organisations feel reluctant to assist the UN with peace keeping soldiers during crisis, weighing their own national and a regional membership interest.

The European Union

The European Union (EU) was founded in 1951 after the second world war initially by six countries namely: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The EU currently has 27 member states. The EU has a unique setup of institutions, bodies and agencies who all collectively work for the realisation of the common interests of the EU and European people [13].

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

NATO was formed on 4 April 1949. It comprised of 32 member states (30 European and 2 North American States). NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic effort fails, it has the military power to undertake crisis management operations. These are carried out under defence clause of NATO's founding treaty- Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. It states that:

“The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that if such attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations” ... [14].

BRICS

BRICS is not military alliance but an economic coalition that includes major emerging economies such as China, Russia, Brazil, India, South Africa as the original founders. As of 2024, BRICS nations account for approximately 46% of the global GDP and represent about 55% of the world's population. Brics aim to challenge Western economic dominance by promoting trade among member states and creating alternative financial Institutions. Brics combined population exceeding 3.3 billion representing about 40% of the world's population [15].

The African Union (AU)

The African Union (AU) is a continental body consisting of the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. It was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999). The OAU objectives at formation are:

- To promote the unity and solidarity of the African States.
- To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa.
- To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence.
- To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- To promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [16].

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The ASEAN is a political and economic union of 11 States in Southeast Asia representing about 600 million people with a GDP of around USD 10.2 trillion in 2022, approximately about 6.5% of global GDP [16].

Conclusion

The identified challenges call for an urgent solution for our fears to be allayed. We hope for a better and safer world led by responsible leaders to avert imminent catastrophic consequences. As weapons of mass destructions are getting more devastating so also, we must be very careful about the leaders we elected. The UN needs more funding, set up its army as matter of urgency, control the current proliferation of technologically driven weapons and warfare, put a halt to the abuse of veto powers by members of the security council, increase the number of permanent security council members, deal with the bureaucratic challenge related to passing resolutions, pay more attention to poverty reduction in the world and ensured that all pending indicted seating presidents are brought to justice regardless of their countries or origins and regional organisation should support and collaborate with the UN more. The United Nations as it currently stands is under performing and if continues the way it is right now, we may not have the UN in 10 years' time. We hold our next generation a more peaceful and a safer world.

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I acknowledge my wife Mrs Melbourne Kweyama-Yesufu, they are my wonderful and supportive members of my family. They have urged me to do more through my creative writings to make the world a better place.

Dedication

This article is dedicated to my dear mother Princess Muni Momodu-Yesufu and my eldest and only sister Mrs Ebunlola Memunat Yesufu who both passed on to glory in 2024. Farewell Mama and big sis [RIP].

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