

UNHRC Scorecard

Assessing the 2020 performance of UN Human Rights Council members based on their voting record on key resolutions

Large-scale civilian protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

GERMANY	ABST	RWANDA
HUNGARY	YES	SAUDI ARABIA
IRAQ	YES	SENEGAL
JAPAN	ABST	SLOVAKIA
KENYA	YES	SLOVENIA
KYRGYZSTAN	YES	SOUTH AFRICA
MEXICO	YES	SPAIN
MONGOLIA	ABST	SWITZERLAND
NEPAL	ABST	TURCO
NIGERIA	YES	TUNISIA
PAKISTAN	YES	UKRAINE
PANAMA	ABST	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
PERU	ABST	UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
PHILIPPINES	NO	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
QATAR	YES	VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	ABST	

PHOTOGRAPHERS

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About the Cover

Journalists taking photos of the voting board at the UNHRC special session, 18 May 2018.

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About UN Watch

Founded in 1993, UN Watch is a non-governmental organization based in Geneva, Switzerland, that monitors the United Nations by the yardstick of its charter and protects human rights worldwide.

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2020 UNHRC Country Scorecard

This chart ranks the performance of each member of the UN Human Rights Council based on their voting record on 33 key resolutions and amendments during the Council's three sessions in 2020, being the 43 rd , 44 th and 45 th sessions.

Country	Score	Country	Score
Australia	Very Constructive	Afghanistan	Destructive
Bulgaria	Very Constructive	Togo	Destructive
Czech Republic	Very Constructive	DR Congo	Destructive
Marshall Islands	Very Constructive	Libya	Destructive
Austria	Constructive	Qatar	Destructive
Slovakia	Constructive	Nepal	Destructive
Ukraine	Constructive	Somalia	Destructive
Denmark	Constructive	Senegal	Destructive
Netherlands	Constructive	Angola	Destructive
Poland	Constructive	Nigeria	Destructive
Germany	Constructive	Bangladesh	Destructive
Italy	Constructive	Burkina Faso	Destructive
Spain	Constructive	Namibia	Destructive
Japan	Constructive	Cameroon	Very Destructive
South Korea	Constructive	Mauritania	Very Destructive
Brazil	Constructive	Sudan	Very Destructive
Mexico	Mixed	Bahrain	Very Destructive
Peru	Mixed	India	Very Destructive
Chile	Mixed	Indonesia	Very Destructive
Fiji	Mixed	Pakistan	Very Destructive
Uruguay	Mixed	Philippines	Very Destructive
Argentina	Mixed	Eritrea	Very Destructive
Bahamas	Mixed	Venezuela	Very Destructive
Armenia	Mixed		

Very Constructive: Voted positively 90% or more of the time

Constructive: Voted positively 70% to 89% of the time

Mixed: Voted positively 50% to 69% of the time

Destructive: Voted positively 30% to 49% of the time

Very Destructive: Voted positively less than 30% of the time

Methodology and Findings

In 2020, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted 97 resolutions, being 30 country resolutions and 67 thematic resolutions. It also considered amendments to various resolutions.

To assess the performance of Council members, we focused on the Council's most meaningful human rights actions. By meaningful, we mean resolutions that were widely considered among HRC stakeholders to be important and were treated as such by members through their statements and actions. Resolutions on technical issues, and those that passed by consensus and without significant debate, were not considered meaningful for the purposes of our evaluation. We identified 33 key Council actions that fit this criteria as detailed in the attached table titled **Key Actions of the 2020 UN Human Rights Council**.

The most important class of resolutions for diplomats and human rights activists has always been the **"name and shame" votes**, where a specific country is called out by name and criticized. Large and small states alike exert considerable diplomatic efforts to avoid censure. As a result, even major violators such as China or Russia have routinely succeeded in escaping any condemnation.

In 2020, only **12** countries were censured by the Council in **19** resolutions. However, **five** of these were biased and counterproductive resolutions on **Israel**. The only other countries to receive more than one condemnatory resolution were: **Syria** with **three** resolutions and **Belarus** with **two** resolutions. The other countries condemned in one resolution each were **Burundi, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, the United States, Venezuela** and **Yemen**.

Although the Council also passed **one** resolution each on the **Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Libya, Mali, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan** and one additional resolution each on **Venezuela** and **Yemen**, these resolutions did not condemn the countries concerned, and most were adopted under Agenda Item 10 concerning mere technical assistance. Hence, they were not deemed relevant for this study.

In addition, UN Watch identified **13 counterproductive thematic resolutions**, meaning resolutions that are contrary to human rights, or address issues beyond the competency of the Human Rights Council.

To calculate the scores, UN Watch examined the 33 Key Council Actions detailed in the attached tables and awarded each Council member two points for each positive vote, 1 point for each abstention or absence, and 0 points for each negative vote, such that the numerical scores ranged from 0-66. UN Watch then converted these numerical scores into a percentage from 0 to 100 percent and assigned scores of Very Constructive, Constructive, Mixed, Destructive, or Very Destructive, in accordance with the legend in the above scorecard.

Sadly, only **24** of the **47** Council members in 2020 received scores of Mixed or higher (i.e., higher than 50%). Of these 24, only **four** countries received a **Very Constructive** score—**Australia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic** and **Marshall Islands**. This means that these countries contributed constructively to the Council's work more than 90% of the time by supporting Key Council Actions that promoted human rights and democracy, and opposing those that were counterproductive.

Twelve countries received a **Constructive** score: **Austria, Brazil, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, and Ukraine**. These countries contributed constructively to the Council's work between 70% and 89% of the time. **Eight** countries received a **Mixed** score—**Argentina, Armenia, Bahamas, Chile, Fiji, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay**—meaning that their contribution to Key Council Actions supporting human rights and democracy was positive only

some of the time and they also supported some counterproductive Council actions or abstained, resulting in a numerical score of between 50% and 69%.

The remaining **23** Council members all received numerical scores below 50%, and were deemed **Destructive** or **Very Destructive**. The country with the worst score (3%) was **Venezuela** which gained one point for abstaining on a counterproductive Key Council Action. Otherwise, all of its votes were negative. The 10 worst scoring countries with a score of **Very Destructive** were: **Bahrain, Cameroon, Eritrea, India, Indonesia, Mauritania, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sudan** and **Venezuela**. These countries had numerical scores between 0% and 29%, meaning they supported counterproductive Key Council Actions and opposed positive Key Council Actions most of the time. They gained points mostly for a handful of positive votes and some abstentions.

Not far behind, the **13** countries with scores of **Destructive** were: **Angola, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Qatar, Senegal, Somalia**, and **Togo**. These countries had a numerical score of between 30% and 49%.

Disappointingly, **India** received a score of **Very Destructive**, and deserves a particular mark of shame, as the only country ranked by Freedom House as a “Free” democracy among the 10 lowest scoring countries. India received the fifth worst overall score (26%), tied with Bahrain. It voted positively on only two Key Council Actions in 2020. All of its other points were gained by abstaining on Key Council Actions. India failed to support resolutions speaking out for human rights victims in Belarus, Burundi, Iran, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Syria and Venezuela. India also sided with dictatorships on all but one of the counterproductive thematic resolutions that were sponsored by the likes of Cuba and Venezuela. The other democracies rated “Free” that had scores in the bottom half were **Namibia** and **Senegal**, both with scores of Destructive.

In October 2019, UN Watch published a report in which it classified the Human Rights Council candidates for 2020-2022 as unqualified, questionable or qualified. Six out of the 16 candidates were classified as Unqualified—Iraq, Indonesia, Libya, Mauritania, Sudan, and Venezuela.¹

Ultimately, Iraq was not elected. The 2020 voting patterns of the remaining five candidates prove UN Watch’s assessment that they are unqualified for Council membership. Four of these— Indonesia, Mauritania, Sudan and Venezuela—received scores of Very Destructive based on their 2020 voting patterns at the Human Rights Council. Libya received a score of Destructive. Thus, as UN Watch anticipated, these unqualified candidates, now Council Members, have used their membership by voting to frustrate the protection of human rights victims or to undermine the principles of individual human rights, contravening the membership criteria set out in UNGA Resolution 60/251.

¹ Report: Abuser states set to win top U.N. rights posts, UN WATCH (Oct. 11, 2019), <https://unwatch.org/report-abuser-states-set-to-win-top-u-n-rights-posts/>.

Key Actions of the 2020 UN Human Rights Council

Condemnatory Country Resolutions

Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

A/HRC/RES/43/24

Agenda Item 4

Main Sponsors: Sweden, Iceland, Macedonia, Moldova, UK

Analysis

Condemnatory: Iran

Extends mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, a mandate to which Iran has persistently objected.

From the outset, Iran objected to the appointment of a special rapporteur as “a politically motivated and unjust scheme.” Iran strongly rejected this resolution and the mandate it renews, saying it “has nothing to do with human rights,” and called on countries to vote against it.

Regrettably, however, the resolution is only a “short, procedural text” in the words of Sweden on behalf of the core group of sponsors. Unlike the UNGA’s annual resolution on Iran, there is no description of Iran’s violations.

Desired Vote: Yes



Situation of human rights in Myanmar

A/HRC/RES/43/26

Agenda Item 4

Main Sponsor: EU

Analysis

Condemnatory: Myanmar

Expresses “grave concern” about the serious human rights violations in Myanmar and directly attributes violations to the Myanmar government forces.

Extends mandate of special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar.

Myanmar rejected the resolution, as politicized and infringing on Myanmar’s sovereignty.

Desired Vote: Yes



Situation of human rights in Syrian Arab Republic

A/HRC/RES/43/28

Agenda Item 4

Main Sponsors: France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey, UK

Analysis

Condemnatory: Syria

Strongly condemns the Syrian regime for grave human rights violations, including its “continued deliberate obstruction of life- saving humanitarian assistance to those most in need” and “repeated use of chemical weapons.”

Accuses Syrian regime of likely war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Extends the mandate of the Independent Commission of Inquiry.

Desired Vote: Yes



Yes

including all Western democracies



No

Eritrea, Venezuela



Abstain

including Bahrain, Cameroon, DRC, Philippines, Sudan

Situation of human rights in Nicaragua

A/HRC/RES/43/2

Agenda Item 2

Main Sponsors: Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru

Analysis

Condemnatory: Nicaragua

Expresses grave concern over excessive force against protesters and other serious violations, including restrictions on civic space, arbitrary arrests and due process violations.

Although language could have been stronger, government is directly implicated. Also, resolution contains only minimal praise.

Desired Vote: Yes



Yes

including all Western democracies



No

Eritrea, Philippines, Somalia, Venezuela



Abstain

including Bahrain, Cameroon, DRC, Qatar

Situation of human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

A/HRC/RES/43/30

Agenda Item 7

Main Sponsors: OIC

Analysis

Condemnatory: Israel

One-sided resolution which ignores Syrian rejectionism and sponsorship of terrorism.

Also ignores Israel's provision of medical assistance to Syrian citizens, many of them injured by the regime, in urgent need of medical care not available in Syria.

The EU, Germany and Brazil criticized the resolution for being one-sided against Israel and ignoring violations by Syria.

Desired Vote: No



Yes

including Libya, Qatar, India, Pakistan



No

including all Western democracies, Brazil, Japan, Marshall Islands, South Korea



Abstain

including Cameroon, DRC, Fiji, Philippines

Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

A/HRC/RES/43/3

Agenda Item 2

Main Sponsor: OIC

Analysis

Condemnatory: Israel

One-sided text endorsing biased UN Fact-Finding Missions and their reports accusing Israel of war crimes, including most recent Commission of Inquiry on Gaza protests, effectively denying Israel's right to self-defense. While some of the language is vague, referring to "all those responsible" for violations and a reference to "all parties," the resolution is clearly aimed at Israel and Hamas is never mentioned by name.

Ignores Palestinian terrorism and other violations of international law.

For the second year in a row, resolution was tabled under Agenda Item 2. Australia noted that some improvements to the text had been made, but still voted against the resolution because it was unbalanced and did not meaningfully call for accountability from all parties.

Desired Vote: No



Yes

including Argentina, Indonesia, Libya, Pakistan, Venezuela



No

Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Fiji, Togo, Ukraine



Abstain

including Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain

Right of Palestinian people to self-determination

A/HRC/RES/43/33

Agenda Item 7

Main Sponsor: OIC

Analysis

Condemnatory: Israel

One-sided resolution failing to recognize Palestinian rejectionism of Israel or Palestinian terrorism.

Blames Israeli settlements for lack of Palestinian self-determination.

Endorses Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions condemning U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Desired Vote: No



Human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

A/HRC/RES/43/32

Agenda Item 7

Main Sponsor: OIC

Analysis

Condemnatory: Israel

One-sided resolution accusing Israel of multiple international law violations and condemning Israel for "excessive use of force" against the Palestinians.

While the resolution also mentions terrorism and incitement, it does so in the context of condemning Israel and does not attribute responsibility to Palestinian actors.

Similarly, a one-line condemnation of rocket attacks in a six-page resolution, fails to attribute responsibility to Hamas or other Palestinian terrorist groups.

Desired Vote: No



Israeli Settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan

A/HRC/RES/43/31

Agenda Item 7

Main Sponsor: OIC

Analysis

Condemnatory: Israel

Unbalanced text ignores Palestinian terrorism and other violations.

In addition to objecting to Item 7 generally, the Czech Republic specifically objected to language condemning “declarations made by Israeli officials calling for annexation,” and calling for a High Commissioner’s report on this issue. The objection was on grounds that UN resolutions and reports should not deal with statements but with actions and that Israel was entitled to debate the annexation issue, and capable of doing so as a democracy.

Desired Vote: No



Situation of human rights in Eritrea

A/HRC/RES/44/1

Agenda Item 2

Main Sponsor: Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands

Analysis

Condemnatory: Eritrea

Eritrea strongly opposed the resolution, saying it is no longer needed as the country is engaging in regional peace. Eritrea also thanked the countries that opposed the resolution.

Desired Vote: Yes



Situation of human rights in Belarus

A/HRC/RES/44/19

Agenda Item 4

Main Sponsor: EU

Analysis

Condemnatory: Belarus

Criticizing the government of Belarus for various violations, including arbitrary arrests, torture and restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression.

Belarus opposed the resolution as an interference in its internal affairs. It asserted it does not need monitoring by an external rapporteur.

Desired Vote: Yes



Yes

including all Western democracies



No

Armenia, Eritrea, India, Philippines, Venezuela



Abstain

including Bahrain, Mauritania, Qatar, Sudan

Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

A/HRC/RES/44/21

Agenda Item 4

Main Sponsor: France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey, UK

Analysis

Condemnatory: Syria

Strongly criticizes the Syrian government for serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture and sexual violence.

Syria vehemently opposed the resolution and the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry which it said "does not enjoy consensus."

Desired Vote: Yes



Yes

including all Western democracies



No

Eritrea, Venezuela



Abstain

including Angola, Cameroon, DRC, Indonesia, Pakistan

Situation of human rights in Belarus in the run up to the 2020 presidential election and its aftermath

A/HRC/RES/45/1

Agenda Item 1

Main Sponsor: EU

Analysis

Condemnatory: Belarus

Product of an urgent debate called by the EU. Condemns violations in connection with August 2020 presidential elections and ensuing protests, including excessive force by security forces, arbitrary arrests and torture.

Belarus strongly opposed the resolution. Russia submitted 17 amendments to weaken the text, all of which were rejected by a vote.

Desired Vote: Yes



Human rights situation in Yemen

A/HRC/RES/45/15

Agenda Item 2

Main Sponsor: Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Luxembourg

Analysis

Condemnatory: Yemen

Item 2 resolution contains stronger language than parallel Item 10 resolution adopted in same session. Although it refrains from identifying specific perpetrators, instead making general references to "all parties," it is condemnatory.

It endorses the work of the Group of Eminent Experts (GEE) which, in its report, attributes specific violations to each of the parties by name and accuses individuals in the Government of Yemen (as well as its coalition allies) of possible war crimes. The resolution also strengthens the mandate of the GEE, adding to it an instruction "to collect, preserve and analyze information" in order to identify perpetrators, as well as an element focused on accountability mechanisms. The Netherlands, as the main sponsor, criticized the lack of accountability in Yemen and emphasized the necessity to "enhance and streamline the investigative mandate...[to] bring the mandate in line with other comparative investigative mandates." Australia and the EU each expressly welcomed the changes to the mandate.

Government of Yemen in exile and its allied coalition forces strongly opposed the GEE and called for the resolution to be rejected.

Desired Vote: Yes



Situation of human rights in Burundi

A/HRC/RES/45/19

Agenda Item 4

Main Sponsor: EU

Analysis

Condemnatory: Burundi

Condemning serious human rights violations in Burundi and implicating government forces in these violations.

Burundi strongly opposed the resolution and the Commission of Inquiry saying its report was “prefabricated and filled with lies.”

Desired Vote: Yes



Yes

including all Western democracies



No

Cameroon, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Togo, Venezuela



Abstain

including Bahrain, DRC, Eritrea, Indonesia

Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

A/HRC/RES/45/20

Agenda Item 4

Main Sponsor: Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru

Analysis

Condemnatory: Venezuela

Strongly and directly criticizing the government of Venezuela for serious human rights violations ranging from excessive force by security forces to arbitrary arrests and lack of independence in the judiciary.

Venezuela vehemently opposed the resolution and voted against it. It criticized the fact-finding mission as “phantasmagorical,” saying it had worked from Panama to put together “false reports” by “remote control” and with “no scientific rigor.”

Desired Vote: Yes



Yes

including all Western democracies



No

Eritrea, Philippines, Venezuela



Abstain

including Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Nepal, Qatar

Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

A/HRC/RES/45/21

Agenda Item 4

Main Sponsor: France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey, UK

Analysis

Condemnatory: Syria

Condemning serious human rights violations by the Syrian government. Syria opposed the resolution and accused the Council of trying to interfere in the internal affairs of Syria.

Desired Vote: Yes



Yes

including all Western democracies



No

Venezuela



Abstain

including Afghanistan, DRC, Nigeria, Pakistan

Non-Condemnatory Country Resolutions

Cooperation with Georgia

A/HRC/RES/43/37

Agenda Item 10

Main Sponsor: Georgia

Analysis

Non-Condemnatory: Georgia

While the resolution contains several paragraphs critical of the “authorities in control in Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia,” the vague reference to the “authorities in control” is not sufficient to render this resolution condemnatory against Russia, which is never mentioned by name in the resolution. Although many consider these territories to be illegally occupied by Russia, the “authorities in control” are not Russia itself but a local puppet regime.

Moreover, the report mentioned in the resolution similarly uses the term “authorities in control” and refers separately to the Russian Federation when it is talking about Russia. This further confirms that the term “authorities in control” does not mean Russia, even if the criticism is implicitly directed at Russia.

Also, the resolution is adopted under Item 10 which concerns mere technical assistance.

Desired Vote: Yes



Strengthening cooperation and technical assistance in the field of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

A/HRC/RES/45/2

Agenda Item 2

Main Sponsor: Iran

Analysis

Condemnatory: Venezuela

Iranian-sponsored resolution mostly praising the government of Venezuela. Very mild criticism deflects blame from the government by referring to violations as "alleged". Further absolves the government of responsibility by criticizing Western sanctions against Venezuela for having "exacerbated" the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

Venezuela joined as a co-sponsor and voted in favor of the resolution.

Peru criticized the resolution on grounds that it “tries to avoid the necessary level of scrutiny” and fails to recognize “massive human rights violations.” The EU, whose members abstained, added that the resolution did not “accurately reflect the situation on the ground.”

Desired Vote: No



Counterproductive Thematic Resolutions

The negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights

A/HRC/RES/43/15

Main Sponsor: NAM (except Colombia and Honduras)

Analysis

Sponsored by the Non-Aligned Movement, the resolution is a politically-motivated challenge to the US trade embargo on Cuba. Duplicative of the resolution on human rights and unilateral coercive measures.

The resolution is opposed by all Western democracies. The EU explained that sanctions are not intrinsically unlawful and that its own sanctions are fully compliant with international law. The EU added that the resolution deals with relations between states rather than concrete human rights issues. Therefore, the UNHRC is not the proper forum for this.

Desired Vote: No



Mandate of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debts and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights

A/HRC/RES/43/10

Main Sponsor: Cuba

Analysis

Deals with issue beyond competence and expertise of the UNHRC, which should be addressed in other international organizations that deal with debt issues, economic reform and millennium development goals.

Emphasizes collective rights over individual rights.

Western democracies opposed the resolution on the grounds that the UNHRC is not the appropriate forum to discuss foreign debt, and that the issue should be addressed in other UN bodies.

Desired Vote: No



Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights

A/HRC/RES/43/21

Main Sponsor: China

Analysis

Attempt by China to weaken the UN human rights system and weaken states' obligations to protect human rights.

Australia objected to the term "mutually beneficial cooperation," which is not an internationally agreed concept. The term prioritizes state-to-state relations over individual human rights. The resolution also includes the problematic term "community of shared future" and prioritizes the right to development over other human rights.

The EU repeated its objections from two years ago, emphasizing that the resolution did not sufficiently recognize that human rights belong to individuals and must be addressed even if "there is no cooperation from the member states concerned."

No Western democracies supported the resolution.

Desired Vote: No



Mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity

A/HRC/RES/44/11

Main Sponsor: Cuba

Analysis

Cuba-sponsored resolution extending a mandate that has been used for Cuban propaganda. In 2017, the Havana regime invited former mandate-holder Virginia Dandan to visit in order to portray itself as open to UN human rights monitors. However, Ms. Dandan failed to meet with any opposition leaders, and claimed that the issue of political prisoners was beyond her mandate because she was in Cuba only to observe "the international solidarity activities of the government."

In opposing the resolution, the EU expressed concern about whether the principle of international solidarity could be "meaningfully translated into the language of human rights" and said this was not the appropriate forum to deal with the issue of international solidarity.

Desired Vote: No



Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights

A/HRC/RES/44/18

Main Sponsor: NAM

Analysis

Repeats problematic concepts from other resolutions, such as the resolution on Unilateral Coercive Measures, and is opposed by all Western democracies.

The EU emphasized that the primary responsibility for protecting human rights lies with states and objected to any attempt to shift this responsibility to the international community. Japan also criticized the resolution for its “one- sided narratives,” references to unilateral coercive measures, and failure to reflect that human rights belong to individuals.

Australia similarly criticized the resolution and said it was disappointed that a resolution on such an important topic which has consensus in the General Assembly, has not been able to find consensus at the Council due to the inflexibility of the main sponsors and their insistence on including problematic concepts and language.

Desired Vote: No



Amendment L.25 to the resolution titled The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests

A/HRC/RES/44/20

Main Sponsor: Russia

Analysis

Amendment to resolution focusing on the right to peaceful assembly both on and offline.

Russia had proposed three amendments, all seeking to weaken the resolution. Amendments L.25 and L.26 focused on holding protest organizers responsible for violations of individual protesters. As the Czech Republic and Denmark explained, this violates the concept of individual liability. Furthermore, as Denmark explained, contrary to the basic principle of human rights law, it shifts the obligation to respect human rights from the state to the organizers.

Amendment L.24 sought to impose greater limitations on protests than provided for in ICCPR 5.1. As the Netherlands and others explained, the amendment focused on the intentions of the protesters, rather than their acts. Thus it could lead to protests being restricted if not in line with the government view.

Desired Vote: No



Amendment L.30 to the resolution titled Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls

A/HRC/RES/44/17

Main Sponsor: Russia

Analysis

This year’s resolution on discrimination against women was the subject of five amendments (two by Russia, two by Egypt and one by Saudi Arabia), all of which were rejected by vote.

In its amendment L.30, Russia disagreed with lumping women and girls together, saying they are different categories. However, doing so would make girls vulnerable. Mexico explained that the purpose of the reference to girls in Par. 8 was to guarantee their right to be informed and discuss issues that affect them. Many countries pointed out that the amendment denies the contribution of girls to promoting their own rights. Japan added that amendment L.30 seeks to dismiss girls’ human rights organizations and girls’ human rights defenders.

In its amendment L.31, Russia had also opposed references to sex education, because in its view education should be about human rights and not about sexuality.

Both Egypt and Saudi Arabia had submitted amendments (L.32, L.33 and L.34) objecting to references in the resolution to sexual and reproductive health for different reasons.

Desired Vote: No



Human rights and unilateral coercive measures

A/HRC/RES/45/5

Main Sponsor: NAM

Analysis

Sponsored by the Non-Aligned Movement, the resolution seeks to define sanctions that are leveled by democracies against oppressive regimes as “unilateral coercive measures” which negatively impact human rights. Extends the mandate of the “Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures.”

This UNHRC post was held most recently by former Algerian Ambassador Idriss Jazairy, whose reports portrayed human rights abusing regimes like Sudan, Syria, and Russia as victims of unlawful Western sanctions.

The EU criticized the resolution, rejecting “the fundamental underlying premise of this resolution that unilateral coercive measures negatively impact the enjoyment of human rights.” The EU said its sanctions “are not punitive but seek to bring about a change in the policy or conduct of those targeted in line with the objectives of the Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, which include respect for democracy and the rule of law and for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Brazil abstained, explaining that the resolution lacked balance and pointed out that countries have used the concept of UCM as a pretext to violate the human rights of their citizens.

Desired Vote: No



The right to development

A/HRC/RES/45/6

Main Sponsor: NAM (except Colombia)

Analysis

Attempts to create a new human right—the right to development—with the same status as other fundamental human rights, although there is no agreement as to what this right should include.

No Western democracies supported the resolution. The EU criticized the text, saying it does not reflect the right balance of human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance for achieving inclusive sustainable development. The EU and Australia both objected to the resolution's focus on a legally binding document which the EU said was not "the appropriate instrument to realize the right to development." Australia added that there was no international consensus for such a document and existing treaties were sufficient. The EU also criticized the financial implications of the resolution which allocated further OHCHR resources to the issue.

Desired Vote: No



Eliminating inequality within and among States for the realization of human rights

A/HRC/RES/45/14

Main Sponsor: Nepal, Pakistan, South Africa

Analysis

Reaffirming that "extreme poverty, deep inequality and exclusion constitute a violation of human rights and dignity..."

Australia objected to the resolution, saying it does not add to the established resolution on extreme poverty, and the focus on inequality among states "is not pertinent to the question of the enjoyment of human rights." A number of countries, including Australia, the EU and Mexico criticized the resolution for implying that "alleviation of poverty is a precondition for the promotion and protection of human rights." Mexico emphasized that respect for human rights "cannot be subordinated to development considerations."

Desired Vote: No



Positive Thematic Resolutions

Fifteenth anniversary of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as enshrined in the World Summit Outcome of 2005

A/HRC/RES/44/14

Main Sponsor: Liechtenstein, Costa Rica, Morocco, Peru, Qatar, Switzerland

Analysis

Scheduling an intersessional panel on the responsibility of states to protect populations from Genocide.

Venezuela was the only country to vote against the resolution, suggesting this was an issue for the GA, not the HRC. It objected to the concept of a "responsibility to protect" as undermining state sovereignty, calling it a "controversial concept" promoted by actors with an "interventionist and war-mongering agenda" to "justify their military incursion in developing countries."

Australia said that "responsibility to protect" does not undermine sovereignty, but "instead reminds us that sovereignty comes with a fundamental responsibility to protect one's population from human rights abuses and violations and from mass atrocities."

The EU emphasized that the HRC "has an important role to play in preventing and addressing the most serious human rights violations" and that human rights mechanisms contribute to reducing the risk of atrocity crimes by "providing alerts of risk factors and making recommendations on measures needed to comply with international human rights obligations."

Desired Vote: Yes



Contribution of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms to achieving the purposes and upholding the principles of the Charter of the United Nations

A/HRC/RES/44/23

Main Sponsor: Australia, Bulgaria, Fiji, Maldives, Mexico, Togo

Analysis

Commemorating the 75 th anniversary of the UN Charter by requesting a report to facilitate a greater understanding of how respect for the basic principles of "universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of all human rights" contribute to realizing the purposes of the UN as laid out in the UN Charter.

Two countries spoke against the resolution. Venezuela said it was inconsistent with the UN Charter as it placed human rights above the other two pillars of the UN Charter – peace and security. Pakistan said the resolution did not "adequately reflect the importance of the right to development," characterized as "an inalienable human right."

Desired Vote: Yes



The contribution of the Human Rights Council to the prevention of human rights violations

A/HRC/RES/45/31

Main Sponsor: Norway, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Uruguay

Analysis

Resolution focusing on how the HRC and its mechanisms can be more effective in preventing human rights violations, rather than merely responding to emergencies after they occur. However, Venezuela and Pakistan objected on grounds that it went beyond the mandate of the HRC's founding Resolution 60/251, the mechanisms threaten national sovereignty and the preventive mandate overlapped with the work of the Security Council.

Desired Vote: Yes





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