



Evaluation of 2007 – 2010 UN Human Rights Council Candidates: Joint Analysis by Freedom House and UN Watch

May 7, 2007

Background and Methodology

On May 17, 2007, the UN General Assembly will elect 14 new Human Rights Council members. Fifteen countries are candidates. However, each candidate is not competing against all of the others, but only against the ones from the same UN regional group. In the election, the African and Asian Groups will each fill 4 seats and the Eastern European Group, the Latin American and Caribbean Group (“GRULAC”) and the Western Europe and Others Group (“WEOG”) will each fill 2 seats.

To become a Council member, a country must receive the votes of at least 97 of the 192 General Assembly member states (an absolute majority). In voting, General Assembly members are supposed to “take into account the candidates’ contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments made thereto.” An additional consideration ought to be whether the candidate can meet the obligations of Council membership, which include (a) “to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights” and (b) to “fully cooperate with the Council.”

UN Watch and Freedom House evaluated each candidate’s suitability for Council membership based on the following information:

- Its rating in [Freedom House’s Freedom in the World 2007](#), an annual study measuring political rights and civil liberties worldwide that ranks countries as free, partly free, or not free;
- Its rating in the [2007 Worldwide Press Freedom Index](#) by [Reporters Sans Frontières](#), an annual evaluation of global press freedom that classifies countries as having a good situation, a satisfactory situation, noticeable problems, a difficult situation, or a very serious situation;
- Its rating in the [Economist’s 2007 Index of Democracy](#), which considers a country’s electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, government functioning, political

participation, and political culture, and ranks it as a full democracy, a flawed democracy, a hybrid regime, or an authoritarian regime; and

- Its voting record on important human rights issues in the 2006 session of the UN General Assembly's Third Committee and, if the country was a member, in the 2006-07 sessions of the UN Human Rights Council. Each country's record was classified as positive or negative based on the [Democracy Coalition Project's analysis](#) of Third Committee votes and [UN Watch's](#) analysis of Human Rights Council votes.

UN Watch and Freedom House are nongovernmental organizations that monitor human rights mechanisms at the UN and advocate for greater promotion of human rights worldwide.

Ratings of Candidates

Each candidate's suitability for election to the Human Rights Council was evaluated based on its record of human rights protection at home and of human rights promotion at the UN. Four candidate countries are strong in both regards and accordingly are well qualified for Council membership. On the other hand, four candidates are authoritarian regimes with negative UN voting records and are not qualified to be Council members under the applicable standards. The remaining seven countries fall somewhere in between—three are free democracies with negative UN human rights voting records and four are countries with problems in either or both areas—and their qualifications are therefore questionable.

Well Qualified: Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia.

Questionable: Bolivia, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Philippines, South Africa.

Not Qualified: Angola, Belarus, Egypt, Qatar.

For supporting information, see the attached charts.

Candidates from the African Group (for 4 seats)

To replace Algeria, Morocco, South Africa, Tunisia

Country	FH Rating	RSF Rating	Economist Rating	UN Voting Record	Suitability for Membership
Angola	Not Free	Noticeable Problems	Authoritarian Regime	Negative	Not Qualified
Egypt	Not Free	Difficult Situation	Authoritarian Regime	Negative	Not Qualified
Madagascar	Partly Free	Satisfactory Situation	Hybrid Regime	Negative	Questionable
South Africa	Free	Satisfactory Situation	Flawed Democracy	Negative	Questionable

Candidates from the Asian Group (for 4 seats)

To replace Bahrain, India, Indonesia, Philippines

Country	FH Rating	RSF Rating	Economist Rating	UN Voting Record	Suitability for Membership
India	Free	Noticeable Problems	Flawed Democracy	Negative	Questionable
Indonesia	Free	Noticeable Problems	Flawed Democracy	Negative	Questionable
Philippines	Partly Free	Difficult Situation	Flawed Democracy	Negative	Questionable
Qatar	Not Free	Noticeable Problems	Authoritarian Regime	Negative	Not Qualified

Candidates from the Eastern European Group (for 2 seats)

To replace Czech Republic, Poland

Country	FH Rating	RSF Rating	Economist Rating	UN Voting Record	Suitability for Membership
Belarus	Not Free	Very Serious Situation	Authoritarian Regime	Negative	Not Qualified
Slovenia	Free	Good Situation	Full Democracy	Positive	Well Qualified

Candidates from GRULAC (for 2 seats)

To replace Argentina, Ecuador

Country	FH Rating	RSF Rating	Economist Rating	UN Voting Record	Suitability for Membership
Bolivia	Partly Free	Noticeable Problems	Flawed Democracy	Positive	Questionable
Nicaragua	Partly Free	Satisfactory Situation	Hybrid Regime	Positive	Questionable

Candidates from WEOG (for 2 seats)

To replace Finland, Netherlands

Country	FH Rating	RSF Rating	Economist Rating	UN Voting Record	Suitability for Membership
Denmark	Free	Good Situation	Full Democracy	Positive	Well Qualified
Italy	Free	Satisfactory Situation	Flawed Democracy	Positive	Well Qualified
Netherlands	Free	Good Situation	Full Democracy	Positive	Well Qualified