



UN WATCH ENDORSEMENTS FOR ELECTIONS TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The list of endorsements below is followed by an explanation of the methodology used and a discussion of key facts regarding the May 9th UN General Assembly election of members to the Human Rights Council.

Candidates from the African Group (for 13 seats)

Country	Pledge	Freedom House Rating	RSF Ranking	Voting Record	UN Watch Endorsement
Algeria	Yes	Not Free	129	Negative	No
Angola		Not Free	76	Negative	No
Cameroon	Yes	Not Free	83	Negative	No
Djibouti	Yes	Partly Free	121	Negative	No
Gabon	Yes	Partly Free	102	Mixed	No
Ghana	Yes	Free	66	Negative	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
Kenya	Yes	Partly Free	109	Negative	No
Mali	Yes	Free	37	Negative	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
Mauritius	Yes	Free	34	Negative	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
Morocco	Yes	Partly Free	119	Negative	No
Nigeria	Yes	Partly Free	123	Negative	No
Senegal	Yes	Free	78	Negative	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
South Africa		Free	31	Negative	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
Tanzania		Partly Free	74	Negative	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
Tunisia	Yes	Not Free	147	Negative	No
Zambia	Yes	Partly Free	90	Negative	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach

Candidates from the Asian Group (for 13 seats)

Country	Pledge	Freedom House Rating	RSF Ranking	Voting Record	UN Watch Endorsement
Bahrain	Yes	Partly Free	123	Negative	No
Bangladesh	Yes	Partly Free	151	Negative	No
China	Yes	Not Free <i>*Worst of the Worst*</i>	159	Negative	No <i>*Threat to Council*</i>
India	Yes	Free	106	Negative	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
Indonesia	Yes	Free	102	Negative	No
Iran	Yes	Not Free	164	Negative	No <i>*Threat to Council*</i>
Iraq		Not Free	157	Negative	No
Japan	Yes	Free	37	Positive	Yes
Jordan	Yes	Partly Free	96	Negative	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
Kyrgyzstan	Yes	Partly Free	111	Negative	No
Lebanon	Yes	Partly Free	108	Negative	No
Malaysia		Partly Free	113	Negative	No
Pakistan	Yes	Not Free	150	Negative	No
Philippines	Yes	Partly Free	139	Negative	No
Saudi Arabia	Yes	Not Free <i>*Worst of the Worst*</i>	154	Negative	No <i>*Threat to Council*</i>
South Korea	Yes	Free	34	Mixed	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
Sri Lanka	Yes	Partly Free	115	Mixed	No
Thailand	Yes	Partly Free	107	Negative	No

Candidates from the Eastern European Group (for 6 seats)

Country	Pledge	Freedom House Rating	RSF Ranking	Voting Record	UN Watch Endorsement
Albania	Yes	Partly Free	62	Positive	Yes
Armenia	Yes	Partly Free	102	Mixed	No
Azerbaijan	Yes	Not Free	141	Negative	No
Czech Rep.	Yes	Free	9	Positive	Yes
Georgia	Yes	Partly Free	99	Positive	Yes
Hungary	Yes	Free	12	Positive	Yes
Latvia	Yes	Free	16	Positive	Yes

Lithuania	Yes	Free	22	Positive	Yes
Poland	Yes	Free	53	Positive	Yes
Romania	Yes	Free	70	Positive	Yes
Russian Fed.	Yes	Not Free <i>*Worst of the Worst*</i>	138	Negative	No <i>*Threat to Council*</i>
Slovenia	Yes	Free	9	Positive	Yes
Ukraine	Yes	Free	112	Positive	Yes

Candidates from GRULAC (for 8 seats)

Country	Pledge	Freedom House Rating	RSF Ranking	Voting Record	UN Watch Endorsement
Argentina	Yes	Free	59	Positive	Yes
Brazil	Yes	Free	63	Mixed	Yes—if commits to positive voting approach
Costa Rica		Free	41	Positive	Yes
Cuba	Yes	Not Free <i>*Worst of the Worst*</i>	161	Negative	No <i>*Threat to Council*</i>
Ecuador	Yes	Partly Free	87	Positive	Yes
Guatemala	Yes	Partly Free	86	Positive	Yes
Honduras		Partly Free	76	Positive	Yes
Mexico	Yes	Free	135	Positive	Yes
Nicaragua	Yes	Partly Free	68	Positive	Yes
Peru	Yes	Free	116	Positive	Yes
Uruguay	Yes	Free	46	Positive	Yes
Venezuela	Yes	Partly Free	90	Negative	No

Candidates from WEOG (for 7 seats)

Country	Pledge	Freedom House Rating	RSF Ranking	Voting Record	UN Watch Endorsement
Canada	Yes	Free	21	Positive	Yes
Finland	Yes	Free	1	Positive	Yes
France	Yes	Free	30	Positive	Yes
Germany	Yes	Free	18	Positive	Yes
Greece	Yes	Free	18	Positive	Yes
Netherlands	Yes	Free	1	Positive	Yes
Portugal	Yes	Free	23	Positive	Yes
Switzerland	Yes	Free	1	Positive	Yes
U. K.	Yes	Free	24	Positive	Yes

Human Rights Council

The UN Human Rights Council was created by [Resolution 60/251](#) of the UN General Assembly on March 15, 2006, and will begin its work on June 19, 2006. The Council replaces the UN Commission on Human Rights. To read more about why the Commission needed reform and the process that led to the creation of the Council, [click here](#).

Election Requirements

The election of the first Council members takes place on May 9, 2006. To become a member, a country must receive the votes of at least 96 of the 191 states of the UN General Assembly (an absolute majority). In electing Council members, the resolution provides that General Assembly members “shall 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 given candidate country 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.”

The Council will have 47 seats, divided among the UN’s five regional groups as follows: 13 from the African Group, 13 from the Asian Group, 6 from the Eastern European Group, 8 from the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), and 7 from the Western European and Others Group (WEOG).

Candidates and Their Qualifications

As of May 1, 2006, by our count, 68 states have declared their candidacies for the Council. Some have done so by writing to the General Assembly secretariat; these countries are listed on the [General Assembly website](#). Some have done so in other ways, such as through diplomatic notes or through the press.

The above list of candidates is compiled from these various sources. Where a candidate has made a voluntary pledge in support of its candidacy, a link to the pledge is provided. For each candidate, we also list the following information, which we believe to be highly relevant to assessing a country’s human rights record and commitment:

- Its rating in [Freedom House's](#) most recent survey, [Freedom in the World 2006](#). This annual study measures political rights and civil liberties worldwide and classifies countries as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. Where applicable, we also noted the Not Free countries designated as the world’s most repressive by Freedom House in its 2005 special report, [The Worst of the Worst](#).
- Its ranking in the [2005 Worldwide Press Freedom Index](#) by [Reporters Sans Frontières](#). This annual evaluation of global press freedom lists countries from best (1 – a rank for which 7 countries tied in 2005) to worst (167). Freedom of

the press is not only a key indicator of freedom of speech—the lifeblood of democracy—but also a vital check against the power of the state, and therefore a principal safeguard for individual liberty and human rights.

- Its voting record on resolutions against egregious human rights violations in the 2005 session of the UN General Assembly’s Third Committee and, if the country was a member, the 2005 session of the Commission on Human Rights. (Voting scorecards, compiled by the [Democracy Coalition Project](#), are available [here](#).) These resolutions pertained to Belarus, Congo, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. We deemed each country’s voting record to be positive, negative, or mixed based on its willingness to criticize these countries, which are some of the world’s worst human rights violators.

Methodology

Based on our evaluation of these factors, UN Watch has decided to endorse, conditionally endorse, or reject each Human Rights Council candidate.

If it is to be credible and effective, and avoid the mistakes of the Commission, the Council needs a *quality* membership—countries with strong records of and credible commitments to respecting and promoting human rights. Resolution 60/251—not to mention the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – requires no less. In our view, the ideal candidates for Council membership are those rated Free by Freedom House, ranked in the top third (56 and above) of the Reporters Sans Frontières index, and with a positive UN human rights voting record.

In today’s regionally-grouped UN, however, the Council will not be made up only of countries that meet our ideal. We still believe in striving for the ideal, but we recognize this reality. We also recognize that Council membership could encourage a less-than-ideal country to make real human rights improvements. Therefore, we endorsed some countries that, although not our ideal, we deemed to be of acceptable quality, considering all of the circumstances. For example, we might endorse a country that was rated Partly Free, if it had a good RSF press freedom ranking, a positive human rights voting record, and/or a strong and credible voluntary pledge in support of its candidacy.

We also gave a conditional endorsement to certain candidates. This category generally includes countries that are Free but have negative or mixed human rights voting records. These countries tend to base their UN votes on regional or developing world loyalty rather than on their democratic values, and as a result too often ally with non-democracies to protect egregious rights violators. For example, in the 2005 Third Committee, India, Mali and South Africa all voted with the mostly non-democratic African Group to block consideration of the human rights crisis in Darfur—despite having pledged, as leading members of the Community of Democracies and the UN Democracy Caucus, to work with other democracies to promote democratic values and human rights at the UN and in the international community. The new standards for

Council membership require members to put the promotion and protection of human rights before UN politics. As these countries are otherwise qualified, we will endorse them if they pledge to do so when they vote in the Council.

We did not endorse any country rated Not Free by Freedom House. We consider such countries unqualified for Council membership under Resolution 60/251's standards. In addition, we believe that certain of the Not Free countries pose a particular threat to the Council's legitimacy. The membership of some of the world's most egregious and systematic human rights violators poisoned the Commission, and would do the same to the Council. Of the current candidates, we view China, Cuba, Iran, Russia, and Saudi Arabia as falling into this category.