

## Human Rights Scorecard: Canada at the UN in 2006-2007

*An assessment of Canada's record on human rights and democratic values  
at the United Nations Human Rights Council and the General Assembly*





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A report by UN Watch

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Executive Summary (French)/Résumé exécutif .....	2
Methodology.....	5
Why Key HRC Votes Were Mostly on Negative Initiatives.....	6
Findings .....	7
The Human Rights Council.....	7
<i>HRC Creation</i> .....	7
<i>HRC Membership</i> .....	8
<i>Key HRC Actions on Human Rights and Democracy</i> .....	10
<i>HRC Treatment of Specific Countries</i> .....	10
<i>HRC Response to OIC Campaign Equating Free Speech and Blasphemy</i> .....	12
<i>HRC Protection of Independent Human Rights Experts</i> .....	13
<i>HRC Ongoing Institution Building</i> .....	14
The General Assembly.....	14
<i>GA Treatment of Specific Countries</i> .....	15
<i>GA Response to OIC Campaign Equating Free Speech and Blasphemy</i> .....	16
<i>GA Protection of Professional UN Human Rights Officials</i> .....	16
Canada's Actions for Victims of World's Worst Abuses.....	16
Recommendations.....	18
Table 1: Scorecard of HRC Members on Key Human Rights Actions.....	19
Table 2: Key HRC Actions on Human Rights and Democracy .....	21
Table 3: Key GA Actions on Human Rights and Democracy .....	23
Table 4: Comparative Analysis of Statements in GA Human Rights Debates.....	24
Table 5: Canada's Actions in the HRC and the GA.....	27
Table 6: HRC Voting Record.....	30



## Executive Summary

Human rights at the United Nations is everywhere under assault. At the newly created Human Rights Council in Geneva, and at the General Assembly in New York, an increasingly brazen alliance of repressive regimes is not only spoiling needed reform but undermining the few meaningful mechanisms of UN human rights protection that already exist. Impunity for systematic abuses is their goal. Amid all of this, where does Canada stand?

This report, presented today to members of the Parliament of Canada, shows that Canada ranks at the very top—in both the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly—for its record of consistent support for positive initiatives, and solid opposition to malicious measures. The data also shows, however, that Canada falls short in its failure to speak out often or strongly enough for victims of most of the world's worst regimes.

The study offers a meaningful evaluation of Canada's actions by comparing them with those of other countries on a selection of votes considered the most significant by Council stakeholders. These include most prominently the “name and shame” resolutions, where a handful of the UN's 192 countries are singled out for censure, along with other resolutions that touch on bedrock democratic principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At the 47-nation Council, inaugurated in June to replace the discredited Commission on Human Rights, there have been only 10 resolutions addressing specific countries: eight harsh condemnations of Israel, and two soft, non-condemnatory resolutions on Sudan. Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan repeatedly urged Council members not to obsessively focus on censuring Israel in a partial manner. Heeding these words, Canada stood shoulder to shoulder with the major democracies in protesting the one-sided special sessions against Israel that marked the first months of the Council, and the resolutions that granted impunity to Hamas and Hezbollah attacks. In certain cases, Canada took the lead in upholding the Council's principles of objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity.

On Darfur, Canada was at the forefront of a minority democratic bloc of 11 countries that demanded strong actions and a special session for the victims of Darfur. Regrettably, to win a majority, the resulting resolution had to be negotiated with Sudan and its powerful allies, and wound up applauding the Khartoum regime for its “cooperation.” The Council did create a team to visit and assess the situation in Darfur, but Sudan has now reneged on admitting the monitors.

Other indicative votes at the Council included that on an Algerian-sponsored initiative to impose a “code of conduct” on the 41 independent rights monitors. Canada was in the minority that strongly defended the experts, most of whom do excellent work. Canada also joined other democracies in resisting repeated attempts by the Islamic group to curb freedom of speech principles at the UN by prohibiting the media and others from “defamation of religions and prophets”—a thinly veiled reference to the controversy over the Danish cartoons of the prophet Mohammed.

At the General Assembly, Canada's support for human rights and democracy issues was on a par with the other major democracies. It led the resolution that held Iran to account for its policies of torture, arbitrary arrest and repression. Canada also joined other democracies in citing major abuses in Belarus, Burma, and North Korea, and in supporting the failed attempt to censure Uzbekistan.

While Canada voted correctly on all of these, it failed to take the floor when the situations in Belarus and North Korea were debated. Atmospheric influence country attitudes—something the repressive regimes have internalized far better than the democracies.

What is perhaps most revealing is the report's analysis of what Canada has done for victims of the most repressive regimes. Looking at the latest list of 19 as compiled by Freedom House, Canada did nothing for 13 of them.

Canada took no action whatsoever at the Human Rights Council or the General Assembly against China's violations of civil, political and religious rights—which harm over a sixth of the world's population. Canada was equally silent regarding Fidel Castro's police state, where journalists languish in jail for daring to speak the truth. It said nothing about Saudi Arabia's refusal to allow women to vote or drive a car, or its state-sponsored schoolbooks that teach children to hate Christians and other non-Muslims. Nor did it protest Robert Mugabe's repression in Zimbabwe.

The horizon ahead offers imperatives as well as opportunities. First, Canada must commit itself to speaking out on far more situations of gross violations, and to do so more vigorously. Second, if it chooses to seize the moment, Canada can marshal the considerable respect it enjoys from both the European Union and the U.S. — which should be encouraged to join the Council — to forge a broader alliance in support of human rights, democracy, and peace. Free countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America should be called upon to vote on human rights issues at the UN based on their democratic values and not on regional-bloc and other group alliances. Canada has the potential to mobilize a democratic alliance that, with conviction, energy, and unity, can retake the initiative to ensure that the UN's foremost human rights bodies live up to their promise.

### **Résumé exécutif**

Au sein des Nations Unies, les droits de l'homme font l'objet d'assauts répétés de toute part. Que ce soit auprès du Conseil des droits de l'homme nouvellement créé à Genève, ou à l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies à New York, une alliance effrontée de régimes répressifs contrecarrent non seulement les réformes tant attendues, mais minent les quelques mécanismes pour les droits de l'homme qui existent déjà. Le but recherché n'est autre que l'impunité pour leurs exactions systématiques. Quelle est la position du Canada au sein de ces institutions?

Ce rapport présenté aujourd'hui aux membres du Parlement du Canada montre qu'aussi bien au Conseil des droits de l'homme qu'au sein de l'Assemblée générale, le Canada se situe aux toutes premières places pour son appui constant à toutes les initiatives positives et sa farouche opposition à toutes les mesures délictueuses. Les données enregistrées montrent toutefois que le Canada n'a pas



toujours réussi à s'élever aussi souvent ou assez fortement en faveur des victimes des régimes iniques du monde.

L'étude de cas permet de dresser une évaluation significative des positions prises par le Canada en les comparant à celles d'autres pays, sur la base de certains votes considérés comme déterminants par les observateurs du Conseil. Ces votes ont trait aux résolutions les plus lourdes qui jettent l'opprobre sur une poignée des 192 membres des Nations Unies, qui sont censurés ou condamnés, alors que d'autres résolutions s'attaquent aux fondements même des principes démocratiques de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme.

Lors des travaux du Conseil fort de 47 membres, qui a ouvert sa session en juin dernier pour remplacer la défunte Commission aux droits de l'homme tant décriée, seules 10 résolutions concernant des pays spécifiquement désignés ont pu être présentées et votées : 8 d'entre-elles condamnaient en termes violents Israël, et deux autres s'adressaient au Soudan en termes édulcorés et non comminatoires. L'ancien Secrétaire-général M. Kofi Annan n'avait pourtant pas manqué de rappeler avec force aux membres du Conseil de ne pas se focaliser d'une manière abusive, obsessionnelle sur la condamnation partielle d'Israël. Tenant compte de cette déclaration, le Canada s'associait immédiatement aux principaux pays démocratiques pour dénoncer les sessions spéciales condamnant Israël d'une manière biaisée et unilatérale dans les premiers mois du Conseil, ainsi que les résolutions garantissant une totale impunité aux attaques du Hamas et du Hezbollah. En certaines occasions, le Canada prit sur lui de rappeler au Conseil ses obligations d'objectivité, d'impartialité et de non-sélectivité.

Sur le Darfour, le Canada pris la tête d'une minorité démocratique de 11 pays qui réclamaient des actions fortes et la convocation d'une session spéciale consacrée aux victimes de cette région. Malheureusement, pour obtenir un vote majoritaire, le contenu de la résolution devait être préalablement négocié avec le Soudan et ses puissants alliés, ce qui se traduisit par des applaudissements nourris en faveur du régime de Khartoum et de sa « coopération. » Le Conseil réussit à mettre sur pied une délégation chargée de visiter et d'analyser sur place la situation au Darfour mais le Soudan vient de refuser l'accès de son territoire à cette délégation.

D'autres votes significatifs présentés au Conseil comprenaient l'initiative soumise par l'Algérie qui avait pour but d'imposer un « code de conduite » aux 41 experts indépendants chargés de superviser le respect des droits de l'homme dans les pays qui leur sont attribués. Le Canada faisait partie de la minorité de pays qui défendaient avec force ces experts, dont la plupart font un excellent travail.

Le Canada a également joint sa voix à celle d'autres démocraties qui s'opposaient aux tentatives répétées du groupe islamique de faire fléchir le principe de liberté d'expression aux Nations Unies. Ce groupe voulait interdire aux médias et autres agences de « diffamer les religions et les prophètes » - une référence à peine voilée aux controverses des caricatures danoises du prophète Mahomet.

A l'Assemblée Générale, le soutien du Canada pour les droits de l'homme et les questions démocratiques se situait au même niveau que les autres grandes démocraties. Ce soutien a conduit à

la résolution exigeant des comptes de l'Iran en matière de torture, d'arrestations arbitraires et de répression. Le Canada s'est également allié à d'autres démocraties pour dénoncer de graves abus au Bélarus, en Birmanie et en Corée du Nord et pour soutenir la tentative infructueuse de censurer l'Ouzbékistan.

Quand bien même le Canada a voté avec justesse sur ces questions, il n'a pas pris la parole lors des débats sur le Bélarus et la Corée du Nord. L'atmosphère peut influencer l'attitude d'un pays – ce que les régimes répressifs ont bien mieux intériorisé que les démocraties.

L'élément le plus révélateur du rapport reste l'analyse de ce que le Canada a fait pour les victimes des régimes les plus répressifs. Sur la liste de 19 pays mentionnés par l'ONG Freedom House, le Canada n'a pas daigné s'engager pour 13 d'entre eux.

Le Canada n'a pas pris la parole au Conseil des droits de l'homme ou à l'Assemblée Générale à l'encontre des violations des droits civiques, politiques et religieux exercées par la Chine – dont souffre plus d'un sixième de la population mondiale. Le Canada est aussi resté silencieux face à l'état policier de Fidel Castro, dans lequel des journalistes croupissent en prison pour avoir osé dire la vérité. Il n'a rien dit non plus à propos de l'Arabie saoudite qui interdit aux femmes de voter ou de conduire une voiture et qui finance des manuels scolaires enseignant aux enfants la haine des chrétiens et autres non-musulmans. Il n'a pas non plus élevé de protestation contre la répression exercée par Robert Mugabe au Zimbabwe.

L'horizon présente à la fois des impératifs et des opportunités. Le Canada doit d'abord s'engager à s'exprimer beaucoup plus souvent et beaucoup plus vigoureusement sur de sérieuses violations. Ensuite, s'il choisit le bon moment, et grâce au considérable respect dont il jouit auprès de l'Union Européenne et des Etats-Unis (qui devraient être encouragés à entrer dans le Conseil), le Canada peut mobiliser une large alliance en faveur des droits de l'homme, de la démocratie et de la paix. Les pays libres en Afrique, en Asie et en Amérique latine devraient être invités à voter sur des questions de droits de l'homme à l'ONU, sur la base de leurs valeurs démocratiques et non plus en fonction de blocs régionaux ou d'autres alliances. Le Canada possède le potentiel de rassembler une alliance démocratique qui, avec conviction, énergie et unité, peut reprendre l'initiative pour assurer que les principaux organismes des droits de l'homme de l'ONU tiennent leur promesse.

## Methodology

For this report, we assessed meaningful human rights actions by the 2006-07 Human Rights Council (the HRC or the Council) and the 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly (the GA). By meaningful, we mean resolutions and motions that were widely considered among HRC and GA stakeholders to be important and that were treated as such by members through their statements and actions. Resolutions on technical issues and those that passed by consensus, without significant debate, were not considered meaningful for purposes of our evaluation.

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 censured. Out of more than 190 UN member states, the Council’s predecessor body each year typically censured only five or six, and the General Assembly similarly few. The power of such denunciations in the world of human rights and the arena of international relations cannot, therefore, be underestimated. Large and small states alike exert considerable diplomatic efforts to avoid censure. Even if they are major violators of human rights, powerful states, such as China or Russia, have routinely been shielded from condemnation. The same has held true for those that belong to large and powerful alliances—e.g., Zimbabwe, which belongs to the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), a political bloc of developing countries; or Saudi Arabia, a member of NAM, the Arab League, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), an alliance of 57 Muslim nations.

There were 10 country-specific resolutions at the Council in 2006: eight censures of Israel and two non-condemnatory resolutions on Sudan. Other meaningful votes concerned:

- An African-sponsored resolution that imposed a “code of conduct” on human rights monitors, an act of intimidation by regimes interested in hiding their abuses. How countries voted reflects their commitment to protect the vital independence of the human rights experts known in UN parlance as the Special Procedures.
- An Islamic-sponsored motion to postpone three thematic resolutions sponsored by Canada, introduced solely out of retaliatory spite against Canada for its declining to approve the Islamic group’s fifth and sixth censures of Israel.
- An Islamic-group text on “incitement to racial and religious hatred,” which was a thinly-veiled endorsement of the fury of violence that followed last year’s Danish cartoons controversy and did not adequately protect free speech interests.

For the GA, including both its plenary and its Third Committee, we examined 10 meaningful votes:

- Six resolutions concerning specific countries (North Korea, Belarus, Iran, Burma/Myanmar, Canada, and the United States) and a motion to block action on a resolution censuring Uzbekistan.

- A resolution sponsored by abuser states Belarus and Uzbekistan limiting country-specific resolutions to shield themselves and their fellow repressive regimes from criticism.
- An Islamic-group resolution on “defamation of religion” with the same problems as the similar HRC text.
- An African Group-sponsored resolution limiting the hiring independence of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN’s professional human rights office.

We also researched Canada’s actions at both the HRC and the GA for the victims of the world’s 19 most repressive regimes, taken from Freedom House’s most recent “Worst of the Worst” list.<sup>1</sup> For each regime, we looked to see whether, in either forum, Canada took any of the following actions: sponsoring a country-specific resolution; voting in favor of a country-specific resolution; making a statement criticizing the country; or making a statement supporting an expert mandate on the human rights situation in the country.

### **Why Key HRC Votes Were Mostly on Negative Initiatives**

Regrettably, the list of votes at the Human Rights Council that met our criteria for meaningfulness includes more counter-productive initiatives by repressive governments than positive initiatives by democracies. This is a consequence of two factors.

First, the positive initiatives that one used to see at the former Commission on Human Rights—country resolutions that objectively address at least some of the world’s worst abuses, or pro-democracy resolutions by the fledgling Democracy Caucus—have been almost entirely absent, the Darfur situation being the exception. Historically, the democracies that initiated these actions were the U.S. or members of the European Union. However, the U.S. is not a member of the new Council, and the European Union has for the most part abandoned initiating any country-specific resolutions this year. The reason it cites for this policy is that the sacrifice of country-specific resolutions is a necessary trade-off to win the support of the Non-Aligned Movement, which is currently led by Cuba and holds more than half of the Council seats, in creating all of the Council’s new mechanisms. This may have some logic, but many observers also attribute the EU’s inaction on specific situations to its traditional reticence to pursue politically sensitive matters.

Second, a consequence of the reform in which the Council was created was that the proportional representation of Western democracies was diminished and that of other alliances increased. In addition to NAM, the UN’s Islamic group was a big winner and, during recent hostilities in the Middle East, it repeatedly used the HRC as a tool to score political points against Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> This list includes the countries with the lowest ratings in Freedom House’s authoritative annual survey of political rights and civil liberties worldwide.

## Findings

### The Human Rights Council

Canada is a Council member, and it has been the leading voice urging the universal applicability of human rights standards and advocating to hold violator countries accountable for their abuses. However, Canada and its fellow Western democracies are outnumbered, and often outmaneuvered, at the Council by repressive regimes and their regional group allies, which unfortunately include many African, Asian, and Latin American democracies from whom one would expect better. As a result, Canada's positions have rarely prevailed.

On the 14 key Council actions we identified, we scored each Council member's position as positive, negative, or neutral. A positive position was assessed as 1 point, a negative position as -1, and a neutral position (abstaining or being absent) as 0. Sadly, only 13 of the 47 Council members received positive total scores. Among these, Canada came in at first place, with 12 of a maximum 14 points. In second place, with scores of 8 points, were seven of the Council's eight European Union members: the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom. France (the eighth EU member) and Ukraine came in third, with a score of 7 points. Other countries receiving positive scores were Switzerland (5 points), Japan (4 points), and South Korea (1 point).

The remaining 34 Council members received negative scores that ranged from -1 to -11 points. The 19 members receiving the worst score included five free democracies—India, Indonesia, Mali, Senegal, and South Africa—that deserve a particular mark of shame. All Council members' scores in descending order are shown on **Table 1: Scorecard of HRC Members on Key Human Rights Actions.**<sup>2</sup>

#### *HRC Creation*

Before examining the key Council actions and Canada's positions in more detail, we must briefly explain the Council's creation and its composition.

The Council was inaugurated in June 2006 to replace the Commission on Human Rights as the UN's main human rights body. The Commission—once chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt and the source of such human rights achievements as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, and the system of independent UN human rights experts that still exists today—unfortunately had been discredited over time by its poor membership and performance. In its later years, it included notorious human rights violators as

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<sup>2</sup> All Council members' votes on the 14 key actions are shown in Table 6: HRC Voting Record.

members,<sup>3</sup> and it was known for ignoring most of the world's worst abuses while repeatedly and one-sidedly condemning one country—Israel.<sup>4</sup>

Regrettably, the Council thus far has not been an improvement. Its members are supposed to be elected based on their human rights records and commitments—yet the first Council, although slightly more democratic than the old Commission, still includes persistent violators like China, Cuba, Russia and Saudi Arabia. It is supposed to promote and protect human rights worldwide “without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equal manner” and to base its work on “the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, and non-selectivity”—yet in its first six months, the only country in the entire world that it has condemned for alleged human rights violations has been Israel.

Room for improvement still remains—particularly through the not-yet-established universal review mechanism that is meant to examine the human rights records of all countries equally—but the Council's record so far is profoundly disappointing.

### ***HRC Membership***

The Council's 47 members are elected by an absolute majority (96 votes) of the UN General Assembly. Although the Council's founding resolution provides that Council members should be chosen based on their human rights records and commitments, it imposes a significant structural constraint: The Council's 47 seats are divided by a set formula among the UN's five regional groups, with 13 for the African Group, 13 for the Asian Group, 6 for the Eastern European Group, 8 for the Latin American and Caribbean Group (“GRULAC”), and 7 for the Western European and Others Group (“WEOG”). Regional allotment was the practice in the Commission as well, but a re-distribution of seats reduced WEOG's representation in the Council, a loss for democracies.

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<sup>3</sup> Cuba, Libya (the 2003 chair), Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, for example.

<sup>4</sup> At the Commission, over a 40-year period, 30 percent of the resolutions condemning specific states for human rights violations were against Israel—and in its last years, that percentage rose to half. In 2005, for example, the Commission adopted four resolutions against Israel and four resolutions against all other states in the world. (Belarus, Cuba, Myanmar, and North Korea were the subject of one resolution each.) As a result, as then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan recognized, the Commission's “credibility deficit” was “cast[ing] a shadow on the reputation of the United Nations system as a whole.” Report of the Secretary-General, “In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all,” March 21, 2005 (A/59/2005). Indeed, from its start, Mr. Annan repeatedly urged the Council not to focus on Israel alone. See, e.g., Statement at Press Conference, June 15, 2005; Statement at Press Conference, November 21, 2006; Address on International Human Rights Day, December 8, 2006; Remarks to the Security Council, December 12, 2006.

As a result, the current Council is 47% non-democratic.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, it includes nine countries—19% of its members—ranked Not Free by Freedom House in its worldwide survey of political rights and civil liberties.<sup>6</sup> Four of these nine—China, Cuba, Russia, and Saudi Arabia—are also among Freedom House’s “Worst of the Worst” human rights abusing regimes, as well as among five countries UN Watch identified, before the May 9, 2006 election, as particular threats to the legitimacy of the Council.<sup>7</sup> Sadly, all four received well over the 96-vote threshold that was supposed to prevent human rights violators from winning Council membership. Saudi Arabia, for example, won 126 votes, close to two-thirds of the Assembly.

The non-democracies control the Council’s two largest regional groups, Africa and Asia, which together hold a majority (26, or 55%) of the Council’s 47 seats. Only 30% of the Asian Group members, and 38% of those from the African Group, are Free countries under Freedom House’s standards.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, the GRULAC members are 63% Free; the Eastern European Group members, 66% Free; and the WEOG members, fully 100% Free.

In addition, the Council is dominated by the OIC, the UN’s Islamic bloc. Seventeen OIC countries are members, representing 36% of the Council’s total membership.<sup>9</sup> This number is significant, as the Council’s founding resolution allows one-third of the Council, or 16 members, to convene a special session.<sup>10</sup> In the Council’s first six months, the OIC exercised this power to call three special sessions to examine Israel.

OIC countries also dominate both the African and Asian blocs that together constitute the Council’s majority. The OIC holds nine of the 13 African seats (69%) and seven of the 13 Asian

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<sup>5</sup> Of the 47 Council members, only 25—a slight majority of 53%—are Free democracies under Freedom House’s standards. This is a small step forward, compared to the 2006 Commission’s figure of 45%, but it is not a significant break from the past. In addition, in terms of press freedom—a key indicator of a country’s respect for individual liberty, human rights, and the rule of law—only 15 of the new Council members (32%) ranked in the top third of the Reporters without Borders (*Reporters Sans Frontières*) worldwide press freedom index. A larger proportion—18 members, or 38%—ranked, disappointingly, in the bottom third of the index. For more information on members’ human rights records, see [UN Watch Statement on the UN Human Rights Council](#), May 15, 2006 (available under “Statements and Letters” at [www.unwatch.org](http://www.unwatch.org)).

<sup>6</sup> These nine are: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, China, Cuba, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia.

<sup>7</sup> [UN Watch Endorsements for Elections to the UN Human Rights Council](#), May 3, 2006 (available under “Reports” at [www.unwatch.org](http://www.unwatch.org)). Thankfully, Iran—the fifth particular threat that we identified—failed in its bid for a Council seat.

<sup>8</sup> The Free countries among the African Group members are Ghana, Mali, Mauritius, Senegal, and South Africa. The Free countries in the Asian Group are India, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea.

<sup>9</sup> They are: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, and Tunisia. Seven of these countries—Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia—are also members of the Arab League.

<sup>10</sup> At the Commission, the support of a majority of the membership was required to convene special sessions.

seats (54%).<sup>11</sup> As a result, OIC countries typically head both the African and Asian Groups at the Council.

In addition, the Non-Aligned Movement, currently led by Cuba, holds a majority—57.5 %—of Council seats.

### ***Key HRC Actions on Human Rights and Democracy***

As explained above, we assessed 14 key Council actions, set forth in **Table 2: Key HRC Actions on Human Rights and Democracy**. These were: all country-specific votes (eight resolutions against Israel and two resolutions and one set of proposed amendments on Sudan); a motion to postpone three Canadian texts in retaliation for Canada's vote on two of the Israel resolutions; an Islamic Group resolution on "incitement to racial and religious hatred" seeking to equate free speech and blasphemy, and an African Group resolution imposing a code of conduct of the human rights experts. In terms of its votes on these actions, Canada received a positive score of 12 of a maximum of 14 points.

### ***HRC Treatment of Specific Countries***

The 2006-2007 Council thus far has passed resolutions on only two specific countries: Israel and Sudan. It has held three special sessions and adopted eight condemnatory resolutions against Israel, and it has held one special session and adopted two non-condemnatory resolutions on Sudan.

The Council adopted by vote seven one-sided, OIC-sponsored resolutions condemning Israel for human rights violations without addressing other parties' violations and without acknowledging Israel's legitimate concerns. Many were also redundant to resolutions passed at the same time in the General Assembly. Canada commendably voted "no" on all of them, the only Council member to do so.<sup>12</sup>

The Council also passed an eighth OIC-sponsored resolution against Israel by consensus. This text adopted the report of the Council's Commission of Inquiry into Israeli actions in Lebanon (established at its third special session) and mandated the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to undertake follow-up activities based on that report. Canada did not call for a vote on this

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<sup>11</sup> Numerically, the OIC wields more power in the Council than it does in the General Assembly, where it represents 29% of the total membership, 51% of the African Group, and 44% of the Asian Group.

<sup>12</sup> All of the Council's European Union members except France (the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, and the United Kingdom) voted "no" to four of the anti-Israel resolutions, abstained on two, and voted "yes" to one. France voted "no" to three, abstained on three, and voted "yes" to one, as did Ukraine. Switzerland voted "no" to one, abstained on five, and voted "yes" to one. Japan was the only other country that opposed any of the anti-Israel resolutions; it voted "no" to three of them, abstained on three, and voted "yes" to one. The one resolution on which all of these countries voted "yes" is Resolution 2/4, concerning Israeli settlements.



measure, but it did dissociate itself from consensus because of the Commission of Inquiry's "limited and one-sided" mandate.<sup>13</sup>

After Canada declined to ratify the Islamic group's fifth and sixth consecutive censures of Israel—and became the sole "no" vote—the OIC retaliated with an unexpected, last-minute motion to postpone the consideration of three theretofore non-controversial Canadian drafts. This motion passed over the objections of Canada, the eight EU countries, Argentina, Brazil, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Peru, South Korea, Switzerland, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Zambia. Canada had solid reasons for its votes<sup>14</sup> and the OIC's politically-motivated tactic, supported by such abuser regimes as China, Cuba and Russia, resulted in the delay of two positive texts.<sup>15</sup> It is particularly interesting to note that Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay, which supported the Islamic bloc on all eight anti-Israel resolutions, voted against this retaliatory motion. Just as with Iran's frivolous move against Canada in the General Assembly, discussed below, the spoilers lost credibility for this action. As the Geneva-based Press Emblem Campaign (PEC) noted, the OIC's "diplomatic tactics delaying action" on Canada's freedom of opinion and expression text "further complicates the situation of journalists in the field who are the only losers. Journalist victims of targeted attacks in armed conflicts and elsewhere will carry the brunt of this delay."

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<sup>13</sup> Although they did not disassociate themselves from consensus, the EU and Argentina also made statements after the adoption of this resolution criticizing the lack of balance in the Commission of Inquiry's mandate and report. The August special session's resolution and commission also had been widely criticized for bias by major international human rights groups, including ones critical of Israel (both generally and for its actions in Lebanon.) Amnesty International said that "members' focus on their narrow political objectives resulted in a highly-politicized resolution that muted the Council's voice by ignoring the violations of one party to the conflict" and that "failed to meet the principles of impartiality and objectivity expected" of the Council. Amnesty International, ["Lebanon/Israel: Human Rights Council members put politics before lives."](#) Press Release, August 11, 2006. Human Rights Watch said that "the one-sided approach . . . is a blow to [the Council's] credibility and an abdication of its responsibility to protect human rights for all. . . . Victims of human rights violations deserve better than the partisan fare that the Human Rights Council has offered so far." Human Rights Watch, ["Lebanon/Israel: UN Rights Body Squanders Chance to Help Civilians."](#) Press Release, August 11, 2006. Reporters Sans Frontières "condemn[ed] this use of the Council for political ends" and said that the Council, so far, had been "a repeat of the worst moments of the defunct Human Rights Commission . . . , with an automatic, blocking majority imposing its will and doing as it pleases," that is, "exploiting human rights for political ends." Reporters Sans Frontières, ["Another sign of failure for Human Rights Council in resolution on Lebanon."](#) Press Release, August 12, 2006. Human Rights First said that it was "deeply disappointed" by the Council's failure to respect its mandate to be universal, impartial, objective, and non-selective. Human Rights First, ["UN Human Rights Council—Recent Resolution on Rights Violations in Lebanon Condemns Israel but Fails to Mention Hezbollah."](#) Press Release, August 22, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> As the Canadian ambassador explained, the General Assembly in New York was adopting its own resolutions on both the Golan and Israeli settlements, and there was no legitimate reason to condemn Israel for the same matters in Geneva—especially when the Council already had passed multiple resolutions against Israel and many other pressing situations around the world remained unaddressed. In addition, both resolutions were unbalanced and did not recognize all victims of the conflict in the Middle East. To address Syrian-related issues in the HRC without mentioning Damascus' brutal torture and its sponsorship of Hamas and Hezbollah rejectionists is unbalanced.

<sup>15</sup> After further negotiations, one of the three Canadian texts (on the effective implementation of international human rights instruments) was adopted by the Council by consensus the following day, but Canada agreed to defer the other two to a later Council session.

Our criticism of the Council's eight resolutions against Israel is not to say that Israel's human rights record should be immune from criticism. To the contrary, Israel should be held accountable for its human rights problems, as should every other UN member state. The problem is that at the Council, Israel is not treated like any other UN member state. Comparing the Council's approach on Israel to its approach on Sudan, the only other specific country that it addressed in 2006, proves this point.

After widespread criticism of its exclusive focus on condemning Israel, including from major human rights groups and then-Secretary-General Annan, the Council finally adopted a resolution addressing the crisis in Darfur, Sudan in late November. (By that point, the Council had held three special sessions and passed six resolutions against Israel.) The result was the adoption of a non-condemnatory, African Group-sponsored text. Canada admirably voted "no" on the ground that the text was too weak, as did the eight EU members, Switzerland, and Ukraine.

Canada and the European Union, which had been vocal in urging the Council to address Darfur since June, sought amendments to the African Group draft that, while still not condemning the government of Sudan for human rights violations in Darfur, would at least have emphasized its "primary obligation . . . to protect all individuals against violations." This proposal, however, was rejected in a close vote. Joining Canada and the EU in supporting the defeated proposal were Argentina, Ecuador, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Mexico, Peru, South Korea, Switzerland, Ukraine, and Uruguay.

After more criticism, this time for the November resolution's soft approach toward the Khartoum regime, the Council convened a mid-December special session on Darfur. However, the brief consensus resolution adopted from this session was again non-condemnatory, merely expressing the Council's "concern regarding the seriousness of the human rights and humanitarian situation" in Darfur. (The Canadian and European proposal would have expressed "grave concern," but even that was too strong for Sudan's African, Arab and Islamic bloc allies.) The word "violation" does not appear in the resolution at all.

The Council, however, did agree at the special session to dispatch an assessment mission, consisting of "five highly qualified persons" and the Council's independent expert on Sudan, to Darfur—but only with conditions imposed by Sudan's supporters: Council President Luis Alfonso De Alba of Mexico could choose the five persons only after consultation with the Sudan-friendly Council, and the mission, in fulfilling its mandate, would have to consult Sudan itself. After exacting these concessions, Khartoum said that it accepted the resolution and would cooperate with the mission, but it later refused to allow entry to the assessment team.

### ***HRC Response to OIC Campaign Equating Free Speech and Blasphemy***

Outraged by the September 2005 publication by a Danish newspaper of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, the OIC has been waging a campaign at the UN to obtain repeated condemnations of such perceived offenses to Islam, which it views as "incitement to religious

hatred,” defamation of the Muslim religion, and blasphemy.<sup>16</sup> While we agree with the OIC on the importance of promoting religious tolerance, the Islamic group’s proposals on these issues have been objectionable because they ignore the countervailing free speech interests and do not recognize that violence is an inappropriate response to offense.

Canada commendably voted “no” to the OIC-sponsored Human Rights Council resolution that was part of this campaign. Eleven other countries also voted against the measure: the eight EU members, Switzerland, Ukraine, and Japan.

### ***HRC Protection of Independent Human Rights Experts***

One positive aspect of the old Commission on Human Rights that the new Council has inherited is its system of Special Procedures: the independent human rights experts who investigate and report to the Council on human rights issues around the world. During 2006, the Council heard more than 40 expert reports identifying serious human rights issues in many countries, including Belarus, Burma/Myanmar, Cuba, and North Korea, which, in almost all cases, were the only attention that these situations received. To their great credit, the experts’ reports forced Council members at least to hear about human rights violations that they would rather ignore.

In its first year, the Council is reviewing the Special Procedures system to determine what, if any, changes to make to it.<sup>17</sup> Predictably, the Council’s abuser states view the review as an opportunity to limit the experts’ independence and to minimize their ability to criticize individual countries for human rights problems. Thus, for example, Resolution 2/1, sponsored by the African Group and supported by such repressive regimes as China, Cuba, Russia, and Saudi Arabia, imposes on the experts a “code of conduct” to be drafted by Council member states. Canada opposed this restriction, as did the eight EU members, Switzerland, Ukraine, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and South Korea.

The abuser states also are campaigning vigorously to eliminate all of the experts who are mandated to investigate specific countries’ human rights violations<sup>18</sup>—except for the one on “Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territories,” which they want to continue indefinitely. Although the issue will not be decided until June, thus far Canada has been among the strongest opponents of this damaging and unfair proposal.

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<sup>16</sup> In deference to the OIC, the Council’s March 2006 founding resolution affirms the media’s “important role . . . in promoting tolerance, respect for and freedom of religion and belief” without referencing free speech concerns or condemning violence. This adopted language was at least better than the OIC’s proposal, which would have banned “actions against religions, prophets and beliefs.”

<sup>17</sup> The Council’s founding resolution envisions that the Special Procedures will continue to exist in some form, although it does not specify the details.

<sup>18</sup> Currently, there are independent experts for the human rights situations in Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, Cuba, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Myanmar, the Palestinian territories, Somalia, Sudan, and Uzbekistan. See <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/special/countries.htm>.

### *HRC Ongoing Institution Building*

Before June, the Council also must complete its first-year review of the expert advice body<sup>19</sup> and the confidential complaints procedure<sup>20</sup> that it inherited from the Commission. In addition, it will have to decide its agenda, working methods, and rules of procedure. On all of these issues, it remains uncertain whether the Council will implement positive changes, preserve the status quo, or backtrack. The abuser regimes have been seeking negative results, such as the inclusion of a special item on the Council's permanent agenda just for Israel, and the limitation of the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Council also is in the process of building a universal review mechanism meant to examine the human rights records of all countries equally. If achieved, this would be a great improvement—but not surprisingly, the spoilers are trying their best to prevent the creation of a meaningful review.<sup>21</sup>

Canada thus far has been a strong voice for the creation of credible, effective Council mechanisms and procedures, and we urge it to continue to oppose the persistent anti-reform efforts of the repressive regimes.

### **The General Assembly**

The General Assembly also addresses human rights issues, both in its plenary sessions and its Third Committee (a committee of the whole, made up of all General Assembly members, that handles social and humanitarian issues).<sup>22</sup> To assess Canada's record, we looked at meaningful 10 plenary and Third Committee actions, set forth **Table 3: Key GA Actions on Human Rights and Democracy**. They were: six resolutions concerning specific countries (North Korea, Belarus, Iran, Burma/Myanmar, Canada, and the United States),<sup>23</sup> a motion to block action on a resolution on Uzbekistan, a resolution limiting country-specific criticisms, a resolution on “defamation of religion,” and a resolution seeking to influence the composition of the staff of the UN Office of the

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<sup>19</sup> The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

<sup>20</sup> The “1503” Procedure.

<sup>21</sup> In their view, the information on which the review is based would come only from the government of the country under review—not from individual victims, non-governmental organizations, the media, or even the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Developed countries would be reviewed more often than developing ones, and the review would vary based on each country's “religious and socio-cultural specificities.” The review panel would be chaired by a country from the reviewed country's regional group, and NGOs would not be allowed to participate in the panel's discussion. And the review would never result in censure of the country.

<sup>22</sup> Most resolutions are presented to the Committee first, only continuing to the General Assembly plenary if they receive Committee approval.

<sup>23</sup> The 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly also adopted 22 resolutions on Israel, but we did not consider these in our analysis since they related more to political issues than human rights.

High Commissioner for Human Rights. In terms of its votes on these actions, Canada received a positive score of 10 out of a maximum of 10 points.

### ***GA Treatment of Specific Countries***

The 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly adopted resolutions condemning four of the world's most egregious abuser regimes—North Korea, Belarus, Iran, and Burma/Myanmar—for their extensive human rights violations. Canada sponsored the resolution against Iran, and it voted in favor of all four resolutions.

Iran and Belarus responded to the Canadian and American sponsorship, respectively, of the resolutions against them by sponsoring retaliatory resolutions in the Third Committee. Committee members rightly saw these resolutions as baseless and politically-motivated and rejected them overwhelmingly. Only six repressive regimes—Belarus, Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Burma/Myanmar, and Syria—voted in favor of the two resolutions.

Another major abuser, Uzbekistan, succeeded in blocking a condemnatory resolution against it through a procedural motion to adjourn debate. Regrettably, the Third Committee approved this resolution in a close vote. Canada was among the 69 countries that voted “no.”

For these five country situations, we also analyzed Canada's statements in the General Assembly, as compared to other members' statements. Our findings are shown in **Table 4: Comparative Analysis of Statements in GA Human Rights Debates**. This research revealed that, although Canada voted in favor of censuring all five countries, it only spoke out for victims in three cases.

On Iran, Canada was the main sponsor of the resolution and spoke out firmly in both the Third Committee and in the Plenary, one of only three countries to speak on Iran's violations. Canada said it was “essential” that the GA send a “sustained and consistent message that the human rights situation in Iran had not been corrected.” By contrast, 17 countries spoke to shield Iran from criticism.

On Uzbekistan, Canada spoke out strongly against the motion to take no action, which it said would “negate the jurisdiction and responsibility of the General Assembly, undermine its credibility, and weaken its relevance.” It was one of only two countries to speak out in opposition to the motion. Four countries spoke to shield Uzbekistan.

On Burma/Myanmar, Canada attempted to take the floor, but was blocked by procedural objections by Burma/Myanmar and Cuba. Five countries did speak out against the regime's abuses, but 10 countries spoke to shield Burma/Myanmar from criticism.

In the other two cases, Canada was silent, although it did vote in favor of the resolutions. On North Korea, five countries spoke out against the government's abuses. By contrast, 11 countries spoke to shield North Korea from criticism. On Belarus, two countries spoke out against abuses and 11 countries spoke to shield Belarus from criticism.

Belarus and Uzbekistan also sponsored Resolution 61/166, which, although innocuously titled “the promotion of equitable and mutually respectful dialogue,” dangerously seeks to limit resolutions on human rights situations in specific countries in order to shield violators from criticism. Unfortunately, this resolution was adopted, with Canada among the 64 opposed.<sup>24</sup>

### ***GA Response to OIC Campaign Equating Free Speech and Blasphemy***

Like the HRC, the 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly adopted an OIC-sponsored resolution in response to the Danish cartoons controversy, on “combating defamation of religion,” that condemns “defamation of all religions, Islam and Muslims in particular” and deplors the incitement of intolerance against “Islam or any other religion” in the media without addressing free speech concerns. Canada was in the minority of 54 states that voted “no.”<sup>25</sup>

### ***GA Protection of Professional UN Human Rights Officials***

The 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly also adopted a resolution, sponsored by Cuba, ordering the UN’s professional human rights office, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to hire employees based on geographic balance rather than competence. Regrettably, only seven countries opposed this damaging resolution, Canada among them.<sup>26</sup>

## **Canada’s Actions for Victims of World’s Worst Abuses**

The above assessment shows that when Canada votes on human rights and democracy issues at the United Nations, it usually votes positively. However, because so few issues actually are put to a vote, this only reveals a small part of what Canada’s role at the UN is and ought to be.

To better examine whether Canada was proactive on human rights and democracy issues, we broadened our research to assess Canada’s actions at the HRC and the GA on behalf of the victims of the world’s 19 worst human rights abusing regimes. The regimes, from Freedom House’s most

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<sup>24</sup> The other “no” votes were: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay.

<sup>25</sup> The other “no” votes were: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

<sup>26</sup> The other “no” votes were: Australia, Israel, Japan, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), and the United States. Most of the UN’s European states abstained.

recent list of the “Worst of the Worst” repressive governments, are: Belarus, Burma/Myanmar, China, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Laos, Libya, Morocco (for Western Sahara), North Korea, Russia (for Chechnya), Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe.

For each country, we examined records of the relevant HRC and GA meetings to look for the following actions on Canada’s part: sponsoring a country-specific resolution; voting in favor of a country-specific resolution; making a statement critical of the country; or making a statement in support of an expert mandate on the human rights situation in the country.

Our findings are shown in **Table 5: Canada’s Actions in the HRC and GA for Victims of World’s Worst Abuses**. We commend Canada for its votes and statements in the HRC and the GA on Belarus, Burma/Myanmar, Haiti, North Korea, Sudan, and Uzbekistan. We are disappointed, however, there were so many “Worst of the Worst” countries—13 of the 19—for which Canada took no action at all.

Canada took no action at the Human Rights Council or the General Assembly against China’s violations of civil, political and religious rights, which harm over a sixth of the world’s population. Not only did Canada fail to introduce a resolution regarding Chinese abuses, it made no UN statement whatsoever. Canada was equally silent regarding Fidel Castro’s police state, where journalists languish in jail for daring to speak the truth. At the HRC, Canada failed to defend the Council’s independent expert on Cuba from verbal attacks by the Castro regime and its allies.<sup>27</sup>

It also said nothing about Saudi Arabia’s refusal to allow women to vote or drive a car, its state-sponsored schoolbooks that teach children to hate Christians and other non-Muslims, or the widespread problems in its justice and prison systems. Nor did it protest the Mugabe government’s repression of political and media freedom in Zimbabwe, or its wanton destruction of its poorest citizens’ homes.

Canada also went along with some of the mindless, absurd or pernicious measures that routinely pass unnoticed at the Council. For example, when Canada joined consensus to renew Jean Ziegler for a third term as Special Rapporteur on the right to food, it is unlikely that Parliament or the prime minister were informed that the former Swiss politician happens to be the 1989 co-founder of the “Moammar Khaddafi Human Rights Prize,” a propaganda vehicle established by the Libyan regime after the Lockerbie bombings.<sup>28</sup> Ziegler went on to win the prize himself in 2002, together with convicted French Holocaust denier Roger Garaudy.

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<sup>27</sup> The expert on Cuba, Ms. Christine Chanet, was excoriated by Cuba, China, North Korea, the Russian Federation, Iran, Belarus, Algeria, Zimbabwe, and Vietnam. Only the United States and European Union spoke out in Ms. Chanet’s defense against these attacks.

<sup>28</sup> For more information, see our report, [Switzerland’s Nominee to the UN Human Rights Council and the Moammar Khaddafi Human Rights Prize](#), June 20, 2006 (available at [www.unwatch.org](http://www.unwatch.org), under “Reports”).

## Recommendations

In 2007, we urge Canada to:

- Continue to try to hold the government of Sudan accountable at the Human Rights Council for its responsibility for the ongoing atrocities in Darfur.
- Seek accountability for the other Worst of the Worst regimes that have not yet been addressed by the Council or the General Assembly. In addition, speak out more often and more strongly against the violations of these regimes.
- Continue to oppose repeated and one-sided Council resolutions against Israel and to support a balanced approach on the human rights problems in the Middle East.
- Continue to support the creation of credible, effective Council mechanisms and procedures, and to oppose the persistent anti-reform efforts of the Council's repressive regimes.
- Continue to act in support of democratic values, for example by opposing the OIC's campaign to equate free speech and blasphemy.
- Work to encourage African, Asian and Latin American free democracies to vote on human rights issues at the UN based on their democratic values rather than on regional-bloc and other group alliances. In particular, seek to hold fellow members of the Community of Democracies to their commitment to work together to uphold democratic values and standards as a Democracy Caucus at the UN.
- Warn Council members that have been counter-productive that their misuse of their membership will be publicized and their reelection to the Council opposed.



**Table 1: Scorecard of HRC Members on Key Human Rights Actions**

Rank	Country	Score
1	Canada	12
2	Czech Republic	8
	Finland	8
	Germany	8
	Netherlands	8
	Poland	8
	Romania	8
	United Kingdom	8
9	France	7
	Ukraine	7
11	Switzerland	5
12	Japan	4
13	Rep. of Korea	1
14	Guatemala	-1
15	Cameroon	-3
16	Ghana	-5
	Mexico	-5
	Peru	-5
19	Argentina	-6
	Uruguay	-6
21	Djibouti	-7
22	Brazil	-8
	Nigeria	-8
	Zambia	-8
25	Ecuador	-9
	Gabon	-9
	Mauritius	-9
	Philippines	-9
29	Algeria	-11
	Azerbaijan	-11
	Bahrain	-11
	Bangladesh	-11
	China	-11
	Cuba	-11
	India	-11
	Indonesia	-11
	Jordan	-11
	Malaysia	-11
	Mali	-11
	Morocco	-11
	Pakistan	-11
	Russian Fed.	-11

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Score</b>
	Saudi Arabia	-11
	Senegal	-11
	South Africa	-11
	Sri Lanka	-11
	Tunisia	-11

**Table 2: Key HRC Actions on Human Rights and Democracy**

Symbol & Title	Sponsors	Content	Result	Desired Vote	Canada's Vote
A/HRC/1/106: Human rights situation in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories	11 Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) members and Cuba	Condemns Israel but ignores Palestinian violations  Calls for expert reports with Israel prejudged as guilty  Forces focus on Israel's conduct at every future Council meeting	Adopted 29-12-5 June 30	No	No
A/HRC/S-1/1: Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory	14 OIC members and Cuba	Condemns Israel for military actions in Gaza but ignores Hamas attack precipitating crisis  Ignores ongoing Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians  Demands fact-finding mission to examine only Israeli conduct	Adopted 29-11-5 July 6	No	No
A/HRC/S-2/1: The grave situation of human rights in Lebanon caused by Israeli military operations	12 OIC members and Cuba	Condemns only Israeli conduct; ignores Hezbollah's incursion into Israel, firing of rockets at Israeli civilians, and use of Lebanese civilians as human shields  Creates inquiry commission to investigate only Israeli conduct  Complicated Security Council peace effort	Adopted 27-11-8 Aug 11	No	No
A/HRC/S-3/1: Human rights violations emanating from Israeli military incursions in the Occupied Territory, including the recent one in Northern Gaza and the assault on Beit Hanoun	13 OIC members, Cuba, and South Africa	Condemns Israel for "willful killing" of Palestinian civilians  Ignores intentional killing of Israeli civilians by Palestinian groups  Dispatches fact-finding mission to investigate Israel only	Adopted 32-8-6 Nov 15	No	No

A/HRC/2/3: Human rights in the Occupied Syrian Golan	8 OIC members and Cuba	One-sided, ignores Syrian rejectionism and sponsorship of terrorism  Redundant to 2 General Assembly resolutions	Adopted 32-1-14 Nov 27	No	No
A/HRC/2/4: Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and in the Occupied Golan	11 OIC members and Cuba	Unbalanced text ignores Palestinian terrorism and other violations  Redundant to General Assembly resolutions of human rights situation	Adopted 45-1-1 Nov 27	No	No
A/HRC/3/1: Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Follow-up on Res. S-1/1	11 OIC members and Cuba	Seeks to require Israel to comply with one-sided fact-finding mission	Adopted 34-1-12 Dec 8	No	No
A/HRC/3/3: Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon	Pakistan For the OIC	Adopts and requires follow-up action on one-sided report	Adopted w/o vote Dec 8	No	Yes
Motion to postpone consideration of Canada's draft resolutions on impunity and freedom of opinion and expression	Pakistan For the OIC	Retaliates for Canada's no votes on two OIC resolutions	Adopted 25-20-2 Nov 28	No	No
A/HRC/2/115: Darfur (Draft decision L.44)	Algeria for the African Group	Does not address Sudan's responsibility  Welcomes Sudan's "cooperation" & calls on international community to give Sudan financial aid	Adopted 25-11-10 Nov 28	No	No
A/HRC/2/L.48: Darfur (Proposed amendments to draft decision L.44)	Canada, Finland for the European Union	Emphasizes Sudan's "primary obligation" to protect all individuals against violations  Asks High Commissioner to report to the Council on Darfur	Rejected 20-22-4 (Nov 28)	Yes	Yes
A/HRC/S-4/101: Darfur	Compromise text from competing African Group and Canada/EU drafts	Emphasizes seriousness of situation in Darfur and dispatches mission to assess situation	Adopted w/o vote Dec 13	Yes	Yes
A/HRC/1/107: Incitement to racial and religious hatred and the promotion of tolerance	6 OIC members	Condemns "incitement of racial and religious hatred" but ignores free speech concerns	Adopted 33-12-2 June 30	No	No
A/HRC/2/1: Intergovernmental Working Group on Review of Mandates	Algeria for the African Group	Imposed "code of conduct" on independent experts	Adopted 30-15-2 Nov 27	No	No

**Table 3: Key GA Actions on Human Rights and Democracy**

Symbol & Title	Sponsors	Content	Result	Desired Vote	Canada's Vote
A/C.3/61/L.39: Adjournment of debate on the situation of human rights in Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan	Blocks resolution condemning Uzbekistan for arbitrary arrest and detention, suppression of independent media, and forced labor	Approved 74-69-24 Nov 20	No	No
A/C.3/61/L.42: Situation of democracy and human rights in the USA	Belarus	Retaliation against USA for sponsoring Belarus condemnation	Rejected 6-114-45 Nov 22	No	No
A/C.3/61/L.43: Situation of indigenous peoples and immigrants in Canada	Iran	Retaliation against Canada for sponsoring Iran condemnation	Rejected 6-107-49 Nov 22	No	No
A/RES/61/159: Composition of the staff of the OHCHR	Cuba	Orders OHCHR to choose employees for geographic balance rather than competence	Adopted 118-7-55 Dec 19	No	No
A/RES/61/164: Combating Defamation of Religion	Azerbaijan for the OIC	Condemns the "defamation of all religions, Islam and Muslims in particular," and deplores its use in media, but ignores free speech considerations	Adopted 111-54-18 Dec 19	No	No
A/RES/61/166: Promotion of equitable and mutually respectful dialogue	Belarus and Uzbekistan	Condemns country-specific resolutions about human rights situations to shield violators from criticism	Adopted 86-64-26 Dec 19	No	No
A/RES/61/174: Situation of human rights in North Korea	Finland for the EU, Japan	Condemns North Korea for its systemic use of torture, forced prostitution, infanticide, degrading treatment of refugees, and restrictions on freedom of thought	Adopted 99-21-56 Dec 19	Yes	Yes
A/RES/61/175: Situation of human rights in Belarus	USA	Condemns Belarus for deterioration of human rights situation, harassment of opposition and journalists, torture, and enforced disappearance	Adopted 72-32-69 Dec 19	Yes	Yes
A/RES/61/176: Situation of human rights in Iran	Canada	Condemns Iran for harassment of journalists and human rights workers, torture, public execution, violence against women, and persecution of ethnic minorities	Adopted 72-50-55 Dec 19	Yes	Yes
A/RES/61/232: Situation of human rights in Myanmar	Finland for the EU	Condemns Myanmar for rape, torture, political arrests, use of child soldiers, landmines, denial of freedom of assembly and expression	Adopted 82-25-45 Dec 22	Yes	Yes

**Table 4: Comparative Analysis of Statements in  
GA Human Rights Debates**

<b>Abuser</b>	<b>Countries speaking out for victims</b>	<b>Countries shielding abuser</b>
<p><b>North Korea</b></p> <p>A/RES/61/174: “Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea”</p> <p>Adopted 99-21-56 Nov 19</p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/17/06:</i> Finland (for EU) Japan Australia South Korea Brazil</p> <p><i>Plenary 12/19/06:</i> Japan</p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/17/06:</i> Cuba (twice: once for NAM and once for itself) DPRK Sudan Belarus Indonesia Egypt Venezuela Syria Algeria Vietnam China</p> <p><i>Plenary 12/19/06:</i> DPRK</p>
<p><b>Uzbekistan</b></p> <p>A/C.3/61/L.39: “Situation of human rights in Uzbekistan”</p> <p>“No action” vote 74-69-24 Nov 20</p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/20/06:</i> Finland (for EU) Canada</p> <p><i>No plenary discussion because of successful “no action” motion</i></p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/20/06:</i> Cuba Uzbekistan Azerbaijan China</p> <p><i>No plenary discussion because of successful “no action” motion</i></p>

Abuser	Countries speaking out for victims	Countries shielding abuser
<p><b>Iran</b></p> <p>A/RES/61/176: “Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”</p> <p>Adopted 72-50-55 Dec 19</p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/21/06:</i> Canada Australia Finland (for EU)</p> <p><i>Plenary 12/19/06:</i> Canada Finland (for EU)</p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/21/06:</i> Cuba (twice: once for NAM and once for itself) Iran Pakistan Indonesia Azerbaijan Panama Sudan Belarus Egypt Zimbabwe China Myanmar Syria Venezuela Uzbekistan Libya Iran Algeria</p> <p><i>Plenary 12/19/06:</i> Iran Pakistan Zimbabwe</p>
<p><b>Myanmar</b></p> <p>A/RES/61/232: “Situation of human rights in Myanmar”</p> <p>Adopted 82-25-45 Dec 22</p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/22/06:</i> Canada (tried to speak but blocked) Norway New Zealand Finland (for EU) Japan Brazil</p> <p><i>No statements made in plenary 12/22/06</i></p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/22/06:</i> Cuba (twice: once for NAM and once for itself) Myanmar China Cuba Sudan Venezuela Uzbekistan Egypt Belarus Indonesia Algeria</p> <p><i>No statements made in plenary 12/22/06</i></p>

Abuser	Countries speaking out for victims	Countries shielding abuser
<p><b>Belarus</b></p> <p>A/RES/61/175: “Situation of human rights in Belarus”</p> <p>Adopted 72-32-69 Dec 19</p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/22/06:</i> Finland (for EU) USA</p> <p><i>Plenary 12/19/06:</i> USA Finland (for EU)</p>	<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> Com 11/22/06:</i> Russia China Cuba Belarus Uzbekistan Sudan Venezuela Iran Myanmar Egypt Syria</p> <p><i>Plenary 12/19/06:</i> Belarus Russia China Cuba</p>



**Table 5: Canada’s Actions in the HRC and the GA  
for Victims of the World’s Worst Abuses**

Country	Abuses	Canada’s Action
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repression of political dissent</li> <li>• Media censorship</li> <li>• Severe restrictions on freedom of association</li> <li>• Systematic use of torture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voted in favor of GA resolution 61/175 condemning Belarus for ongoing “deterioration of human rights” (Dec. 19, 2006)</li> <li>• Noted “a decline in the human rights situation” in Belarus (HRC, Sept. 27, 2006)</li> </ul>
Burma/Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persecution of political activists and ethnic and religious minorities</li> <li>• Media censorship</li> <li>• Severe restrictions on freedom of association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Noted with concern” Burma’s lack of cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms (HRC, Sept. 27, 2006)</li> <li>• “Shared” concern of UN Special Rapporteur on Burma regarding deteriorating human rights situation (HRC, Sept. 27, 2006)</li> <li>• Voted in favor of GA resolution 61/232 condemning Burma for rape, torture, political arrests, use of child soldiers, landmines, denial of freedom of assembly and expression (Dec. 22, 2006)</li> </ul>
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media censorship</li> <li>• Repression of political dissent</li> <li>• Ongoing human rights violations in occupied Tibet</li> <li>• Severe restrictions on freedom of association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media censorship</li> <li>• Imprisonment of journalists and pro-democracy advocates</li> <li>• Government economic control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> <li>• Remained silent when Ms. Christine Chanet, the expert on Cuba, was attacked by Cuba and its allies for her findings on Cuba’s atrocious human rights record (HRC, Sept. 26, 2006)</li> </ul>
Equatorial Guinea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media censorship</li> <li>• Restrictions on freedom of association</li> <li>• Abuse of ethnic minorities by vigilante groups with impunity</li> <li>• Widespread violence against women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Eritrea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media censorship</li> <li>• Persecution of political activists and religious minorities</li> <li>• Widespread use of torture, arbitrary detention, and political arrests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Haiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arbitrary arrests, and extrajudicial killings</li> <li>• Systematic use of torture</li> <li>• Severe police corruption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Welcomed” expert’s review of civil rights in Haiti (HRC, Sept. 26, 2006)</li> </ul>

Country	Abuses	Canada's Action
Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe media censorship</li> <li>• Oppression of religious minorities</li> <li>• Corrupt judiciary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Libya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suppression of political activity</li> <li>• Highly politicized judicial proceedings</li> <li>• Media censorship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Morocco (Western Sahara)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media censorship</li> <li>• Political repression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe political repression</li> <li>• Horrific prison conditions</li> <li>• Systematic use of torture</li> <li>• Severe media censorship</li> <li>• Forced labor</li> <li>• Forced prostitution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Strongly supports the mandate" of the UN expert on human rights in North Korea (HRC, Sept. 26, 2006)</li> <li>• Criticized the DPRK's "unwillingness to fully cooperate with the international community on human rights issues" (HRC, Sept. 26, 2006)</li> <li>• Voted for GA resolution 61/174 condemning North Korea for its use of torture, forced prostitution, infanticide, degrading treatment of refugees, and restrictions on freedom of thought (Dec. 19, 2006)</li> </ul>
Russia (Chechnya)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widespread war crimes against civilians</li> <li>• Political repression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Saudi Arabia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic repression of women and non-Muslims</li> <li>• Regular use of severe corporal punishment</li> <li>• Use of torture and prison abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Somalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe political corruption</li> <li>• Media censorship and restrictions</li> <li>• Continued use of extrajudicial killing, torture, and arbitrary detention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsoring acts of genocide in the Darfur region</li> <li>• Media censorship and restrictions</li> <li>• Suppression of political activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-sponsored unsuccessful amendment in HRC to highlight Sudan's "primary obligation" to protect all individuals from abuse (Nov. 27, 2006)</li> <li>• Stated to HRC that "in the absence of the Government of Sudan's willingness or ability to protect its population, the international community...must do all that it can to provide for protection to the people of Darfur" (Dec. 12, 2006)</li> </ul>

Country	Abuses	Canada's Action
Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of assassinations as a political tool</li> <li>• Media censorship and restrictions</li> <li>• Suppression of political activity</li> <li>• Severe restrictions on freedom of association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Turkmenistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suppression of political activity</li> <li>• Severe restrictions on freedom of association</li> <li>• Forced relocation of ethnic minorities</li> <li>• Severe restrictions on freedom of movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>
Uzbekistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued impunity regarding the Andijan massacre</li> <li>• Intimidation of and violence against journalists and civil society activists</li> <li>• Repression of political activity</li> <li>• Severe media censorship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voted against motion in GA Third Committee to block censure of Uzbekistan for arbitrary arrest and detention, suppression of independent media, and forced labor (Nov. 20, 2006)</li> </ul>
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence and intimidation of journalists and government opposition</li> <li>• Forced relocation of citizens</li> <li>• Media censorship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None found</li> </ul>

**Table 6: HRC Voting Record**

	1/106	S-1/1	S-2/1	S-3/1	2/3	2/4	3/1	3/3	Motion to postpone	2/115	2/L.48	S-4/101 Darfur (SS)	1/107	2/1
	HR in Palestine	HR in OPT	HR in Lebanon	Beit Hanoun	Syrian Golan	Israeli settlements	OPT follow-up	Report of Lebanon Com		Darfur (AG)	Darfur (EU)		Incitement	WG on mandates
<b>Algeria</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Argentina</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	A	Y	Y	Y	A
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Bahrain</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Bangladesh</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Brazil</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y	Y	Y
<b>Cameroon</b>	A	A	A	NP	A	A	A	Y	Y	NP	NP	Y	Y	Y
<b>Canada</b>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
<b>China</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Cuba</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Czech Republic</b>	N	N	N	N	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
<b>Djibouti</b>	NP	NP	NP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	NP	Y
<b>Ecuador</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Finland</b>	N	N	N	N	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
<b>France</b>	N	N	N	A	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
<b>Gabon</b>	Y	NP	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Germany</b>	N	N	N	N	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
<b>Ghana</b>	A	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	A	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Guatemala</b>	A	Y	A	A	A	Y	Y	Y	N	A	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>India</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Indonesia</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
<b>Japan</b>	N	N	N	A	A	Y	A	Y	N	A	Y	Y	N	Y
<b>Jordan</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y

	1/106	S-1/1	S-2/1	S-3/1	2/3	2/4	3/1	3/3	Motion to postpone	2/115	2/L.48	S-4/101	1/107	2/1
	HR in Palestine	HR in OPT	HR in Lebanon	Beit Hanoun	Syrian Golan	Israeli settlements	OPT follow-up	Report of Lebanon Com		Darfur (AG)	Darfur (EU)	Darfur (SS)	Incitement	WG on mandates
Malaysia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Mali	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Mauritius	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	A	Y	Y	Y
Mexico	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Morocco	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Netherlands	N	N	N	N	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Nigeria	A	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Pakistan	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Peru	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	A	Y	Y	Y	N
Philippines	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y
Poland	N	N	N	N	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Rep of Korea	A	A	A	A	A	Y	Y	Y	N	A	Y	Y	A	N
Romania	N	N	N	N	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Russian Fed.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Saudi Arabia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Senegal	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
South Africa	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Sri Lanka	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Switzerland	N	A	A	A	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Tunisia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Ukraine	N	N	N	A	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Unit. Kingdom	N	N	N	N	A	Y	A	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Uruguay	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	A	Y	Y	Y	A
Zambia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	A	A	Y	Y	Y



## About UN Watch

UN WATCH is a non-governmental organization dedicated to monitoring the United Nations according to the principles of its Charter and to promoting human rights worldwide. Based in Geneva, UN Watch was founded in 1993 by the late Morris B. Abram, a leading advocate of the U.S. civil rights movement and former U.S. ambassador to the UN in Geneva. Board members include Chair Alfred H. Moses, former U.S. Ambassador to Romania and Presidential Emissary for the Cyprus Conflict, Co-Chair Per Ahlmark, former Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, and human rights advocates and scholars from around the globe. Affiliated with the American Jewish Committee, UN Watch stands at the forefront in the struggle against anti-Semitism at the UN, and has been a leading voice for victims of genocide in Sudan, religious persecution in China and on many other causes. It is accredited by the UN as a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Major media such as the *New York Times*, the *BBC*, *Reuters*, *Le Figaro*, and *Die Welt* regularly turn to UN Watch for comment and analysis on UN affairs.

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