

# The UN Human Rights Council's Betrayal of Human Rights

## Big Picture

Serial human rights abusers have hijacked the the U.N. Human Rights Council in order to shield the world's worst regimes, and to use it as a global platform to scapegoat Israel.

The UNHRC elevates and empowers dictatorships, appointing China, Iran, and Turkey to leadership roles, and naming "experts" who abuse their UN positions to whitewash terrorists and attack democracies.

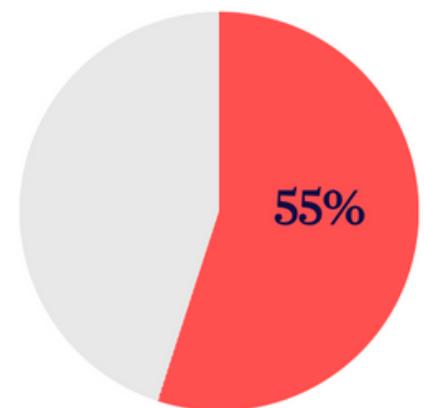
As a result, serial abusers like China, Qatar, Cuba, and Zimbabwe have never once been held to account in a resolution or investigation. Instead, Israel is the only country permanently targeted in every meeting under a special agenda item. The Jewish state is also subjected to more condemnatory resolutions, special sessions, and inquiries than any other nation, while brutal dictatorships escape scrutiny.

Democracies must unite in rejecting bigotry and bias, and in demanding that membership be reserved for states that uphold human rights – not those that violate and weaponize them. Only by ending gross selectivity and politicization can the Council regain credibility and fulfill its founding mandate.

## Go Deeper

### A Platform to Empower Dictatorships

- Currently, [55% of the UNHRC is made up non-democratic nations](#), including serial violators of human rights who use their position as a false badge of international legitimacy. Current and former members have included China, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Venezuela.
- Once they win seats at the table, dictatorships appoint their own to key positions. For example, in 2025, representatives of Beijing and Tehran were [elected](#) to the UNHRC's Advisory Committee. In 2023, just after Iran had executed two people for using social media to criticize religion, the Council [appointed](#) Iran to chair the UNHRC's annual Social Forum – whose theme that year was technology and the promotion of human rights.
- While in session, the UNHRC lends a global platform to murderous regimes. In June 2025, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi was allowed to [address](#) the Council while at war with Israel, having launched 550 ballistic missiles and 1,000 UAVs at Israeli civilians. In March 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [addressed](#) the Council to justify Putin's war on Ukraine – blaming it on the West.



**The majority of members at the UN Human Rights Council are non-democratic**

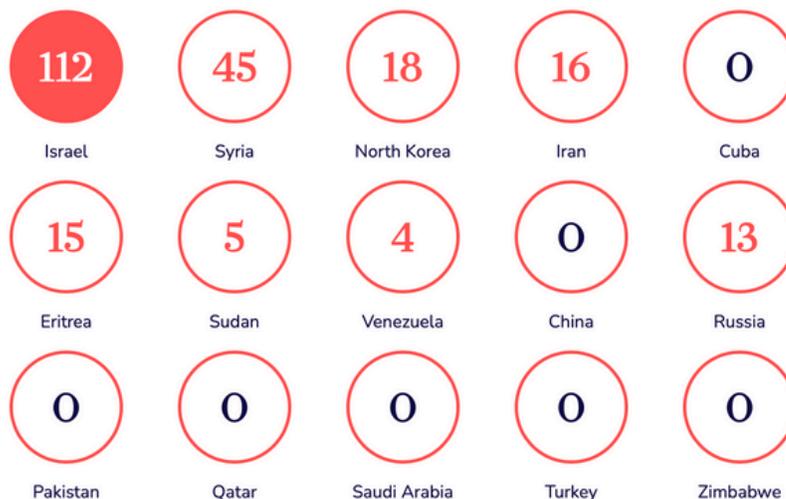
- Once every five years, every country undergoes a review of its record – conducted by its peers, the fellow member states – under the Universal Periodic Review. Yet serial violators like China, Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela were allowed to cheat by arranging for [fake NGO submissions](#) that showered praise on their regimes.
- Members of the UNHRC are elected by the UN General Assembly on the purported criteria that they “uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights.” However, backroom deals typically ensure regional slates with no competition, making it easy for dictatorships to win election. For example, in 2025, there was [no competition in all five regional slates](#), allowing Pakistan, Egypt, Iraq, and Vietnam to win seats. When the UN allows political deals that arrange 14 candidates for 14 seats, they undermine the very premise and rationale for holding elections.

## The Council’s Obsession with Demonizing Israel

- Israel is the only country at the Human Rights Council whose human rights record is examined under a special agenda item ([Agenda Item 7](#)), while all other countries’ records are scrutinized under the generic Agenda Item 4.
- Each year, democratic Israel is condemned by [at least four resolutions](#) and five major reports. By contrast, tyrannies like Iran and North Korea are criticized in only one resolution. And most of the world’s worst regimes – China, Cuba, Pakistan, and Qatar – evade any criticism whatsoever. While the tone of UNHRC resolutions is typically diplomatic, for Israel it is extremely harsh, with zero praise or recognition for any positive steps taken.
- Israel has been the subject of [more special sessions](#) than any other country. Since the Human Rights Council was created, it has held 1 special session on Russia, 2 on Iran, 3 on Myanmar, 4 on Sudan, 5 on Syria, and 9 on Israel.
- Israel has been the subject of more commissions of inquiry than any other country. Since the Human Rights Council was founded, it has created 1 commission of inquiry on North Korea, 1 on Iran, 1 on Russia, 2 on Myanmar, 2 on Syria, and 9 on Israel.
- The latest [Commission of Inquiry on Israel](#) was established in May 2021, after a Hamas-Israeli clash. It has a never-ending mandate, and with the broad scope to examine “root causes” of the conflict, including “systematic discrimination” based on race. As chair, in July 2021 they chose Navi Pillay – who had publicly lobbied governments to “sanction apartheid Israel.”

- Israel is the only country involved in a territorial conflict for which the UNHRC produces a “Boycott Blacklist” – a database of companies doing business in the disputed territory. In July 2023, the Council adopted a resolution approving “financial and human resources and expertise,” to ensure annual updates of the blacklist.

### UNHRC Condemnatory Resolutions (2006-Present)



## Empowering Biased UN “Experts” Who Hate America, Israel, and the West

The UNHRC also appoints experts, known as “special procedures,” under 13 mandates that monitor select countries, and 46 on global themes – including on extreme poverty, the environment, and ensuring an “equitable international order.” Many were created by dictatorships to promote a sharp political agenda.

For example, the UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine is mandated solely to investigate “Israel’s violations” of international law, and not those by the Palestinian Authority or Hamas. Current mandate-holder Francesca Albanese regularly rejects Israel's right to exist, justifies Palestinian attacks against Israelis, and defends terrorists. Since October 7th, she engaged in Hamas atrocity denial, with her immediate reaction on that day being to blame Israeli “aggression.” As a result, Albanese has been condemned for antisemitism, Holocaust inversion, and gross ethical misconduct by numerous democracies including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands.

Albanese also has a [long history of anti-American and anti-Western rhetoric](#). She [spread a conspiracy theory](#) blaming the CIA and the Mossad for the 2015 Paris terrorist attack by ISIS that massacred Charlie Hebdo journalists. In July 2025, she became the first UN human rights expert ever sanctioned by the U.S. government.

Likewise, Alena Douhan is the UN expert on “unilateral coercive measures,” which means to condemn Western sanctions against dictatorships. She has visited Venezuela, China, Iran, Syria, Cuba, and Zimbabwe, in order to publish reports portraying these regimes as the victims. In a clear conflict of interest, her office has [received over a million dollars](#) from China, Russia, and Qatar.

George Katrougalos is the UN expert on “Democratic and Equitable International Order,” a position he uses to promote an anti-Western narrative. In a [recent report](#) to the Council, Katrougalos questioned whether democracy should be regarded as a “universal value” and “the only legitimate form of government.” He has also called for a special Muslim seat on the Security Council.



## The Path Forward: Western States Must Demand Reform

- Western nations must demand major reform to the UNHRC elections, enforcing membership criteria that require “the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights.” If this continues to go ignored, the farce of elections should be scrapped, and all 193 UN member states be made automatic members of the UNHRC, as is the case with the UNGA’s Third Committee on human rights.
- Democracies have a moral obligation to confront the UN Human Rights Council’s one-sided mechanisms that target Israel and the free world. They must redirect the Council’s focus to holding the world’s worst human rights violators to account, and to defending the real victims of oppression.