**Libya Wins Seat on UN Human Rights Council**

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Libya - a country with well documented ties to terrorist organizations and an abysmal human rights record has been elected by a majority of its fellow U.N. members to serve on the United Nations' Human Rights Council. In a secret ballot Libya received 155 votes and will serve a three year term. To get elected each country needed to get 97 votes to assure itself a place on the U.N. body. There are a total of 192 countries that make up the United Nations.

Before the vote was announced, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice acknowledged that the Human Rights Council had not lived up to its potential and "remains flawed." She would not reveal how the U.S. voted but said " it's fair to say that this year, there is a small number of countries whose human rights records is problematic that are likely to be elected and we regret that. I'm not going to sit here and name names. I don't think it's particularly constructive at this point. But it's obvious which countries that are on the ballot have more problematic human rights records than others." Rice told reporters that since the U.S. joined the council there had been some progress - notably Iran's attempt to get on the council which was withdrawn in April and the U.S. led effort to pass a unanimous resolution on the freedom of expression.

Anne Bayefsky, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and Touro College feels that the U.S. could have done a lot more to stop Libya and other human rights abusers from getting on the council. She says "at the very least they could have spoken out against it as bringing the Council into serious disrepute. Bayefsky says "the President is invested on propping up the U.N. as a serious place to protect rights and deal with Iran. The fiction suits his foreign policy so he decided the U.S. should join the Council last year and make U.S. taxpayers pay for it - regardless of the fact that its main priority is to demonize Israel and keep the spotlight off abominations around the world."

Meanwhile Libya's ambassador to the U.N. raced by the media stakeout position without taking questions on what his country would do as a new council member. Calls to his office for comment were not returned.

According to Freedom House, an independent watchdog organization that "supports democratic change, monitors the status of freedom around the world, and advocates for democracy and human rights" only five of the fourteen countries that were up for the vote today are considered "qualified" the other countries are categorized as either "not qualified" or "questionable" for their human rights and freedom records.

Former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan created the Human Rights Council in 2006 to replace the discredited U.N. Human Rights Commission which he said had a "credibility deficit." But according to a press release from UN Watch , a Geneva based non-government organization, "The Geneva-based council gives dominance to Africa and Asia, whose 26 seats grant them an automatic majority. Western Europe and North America together are represented by seven countries.

The other countries elected to serve on the Human Rights Council are Angola, Mauritania, Qatar, Malaysia, Uganda, Thailand, Ecuador, Moldova, Spain, Switzerland, Poland, Maldives and Guatemala.