

# **Key U.S. Outcomes at the UN Human Rights Council 22nd Session**

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## **Fact Sheet**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) underscored the importance of robust engagement at the Council, where the United States continues to work with a diverse range of countries from all regions of the world to address urgent human rights concerns. This was the first session of the United States' second term on the Council, after our re-election by the General Assembly in New York last November. U.S. leadership helped to keep the Council at the forefront of international efforts to promote and protect human rights. We continue to engage strategically with the goal of making the HRC a more effective and credible multilateral forum for promoting and protecting human rights. At the same time, the Council's biased and disproportionate focus on Israel remains a major challenge, as exemplified by the annual Item 7 resolutions. As a member of the Council, our mission remains to emphasize key human rights issues while vigorously opposing efforts to shield human rights violators.

## **MULTILATERAL RESPONSES TO COUNTRY SITUATIONS**

**Sri Lanka:** The United States, along with a group of 41 cross-regional co-sponsors, introduced a resolution that encouraged the Government of Sri Lanka to implement the constructive recommendations of its own Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) report, as well as recommendations from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, on issues of reconciliation, accountability, human rights, and democratic governance. The resolution, built on a 2012 Council resolution, re-affirmed the Council's call for the Government of Sri Lanka to fulfill its public commitments to its own people on these longstanding issues of reconciliation and accountability. By

adopting the Resolution, the Council reiterated that Sri Lanka must take meaningful action on these areas in order to move forward in the wake of its 27 year civil war.

**DPRK:** The United States co-sponsored a landmark resolution on North Korea, establishing a Commission of Inquiry (COI) to investigate the grave and systematic violations of human rights in the DPRK. The creation of a COI sends an important message that the global community is paying close attention to the DPRK, not just on the nuclear front, but on the human rights front as well. The resolution was adopted by consensus.

**Syria:** The Council once again took decisive action regarding the crisis in Syria. The Commission of Inquiry on Syria made a forceful presentation regarding the violations of international law committed by all sides, and highlighted the egregious crimes committed by the Assad regime. The Council voted to extend the mandate of the Commission for one year to investigate ongoing human rights violations in Syria. Sadly, this extended mandate reflects the growing brutality of this crisis, and the COI's work will aid efforts to document abuses for use in future Syrian led transitional justice and accountability processes. The resolution passed with the strongest level of support so far, with only one country, Venezuela, voting to oppose.

**Iran:** A cross-regional group of sponsors, including the United States, led the Council in renewing the mandate for the Special Rapporteur on Iran, which passed by the largest vote margin yet—only two “no” votes. Ahmed Shaheed, the former Foreign Minister of the Maldives appointed as the Special Rapporteur on Iran two years ago, continues to work to maintain international attention on Iran's ongoing and serious violations of human rights. Importantly, the renewal resolution calls on Iran to allow entry for the Special Rapporteur and to cooperate with his work, which Iran so far has refused to do.

**Burma:** The Council adopted by consensus a resolution that focuses on the human rights situation in Burma by welcoming positive developments and urging further progress. The resolution asks Burma to set a timetable for establishing an office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the country and renews the Special Rapporteur's mandate. The resolution also took note of the troublesome situation of ethnic minorities in Rakhine and Kachin states.

**Libya:** The Council adopted its second technical assistance and cooperation resolution on Libya that will further cement cooperation between the Libyan government and the United Nations to address ongoing problems in the country. The High Commissioner for Human Rights will report on this progress at the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the HRC.

**Mali:** The Council adopted by consensus a resolution on the human rights situation in Mali, which calls for an Independent Expert to look into human rights violations and abuses in the entirety of the country. The United States co-sponsored this important resolution, which also calls for the government of Mali to guarantee freedom of expression and to hold free and transparent elections.

**Israel:** This Council session was once again marred by six separate resolutions targeting Israel under the Council's biased Agenda Item 7. The United States strongly opposed all six resolutions, including a resolution following up on the report of the Fact Finding Mission on Israeli Settlements, created at the Council last March.

## **CROSS-CUTTING HUMAN RIGHTS PRIORITIES**

**Human Rights Defenders:** The Council adopted by consensus an important resolution calling on states and the international community to protect human rights defenders and to recognize the legitimacy of their work. The United States, along with 63 other countries, co-sponsored this resolution which reflects one of our most foremost cross-regional human rights priorities.

**Genocide Prevention Resolution:** The United States was a co-sponsor of this important resolution. The resolution emphasized early warning to prevent genocide and underscored the importance of prevention mechanisms to prevent other types of atrocities, issues that are a focus of the U.S. Atrocities Prevention Board.

**Freedom of Religion or Belief and Combating Religious Intolerance, Discrimination, and Violence (16/18):** The Council extended by consensus the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. The Special Rapporteur's most recent report focuses on threats against religious minority communities. In addition, the Council adopted another resolution proposed by the Organization for Islamic Cooperation on

combating religious intolerance, discrimination and violence. The resolution outlines positive steps to address these challenges in a manner consistent with protecting the fundamental freedoms of expression and religion.