

HRC Elections | How do the candidates for 2021 rate and what have they pledged to do as Council members?

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ISHR has published 'scorecards' for each of the States seeking election to the UN Human Rights Council for 2021- 2023. We called on each of them to make concrete commitments to promote and protect human rights.



To coincide with the **#HRCpledging events** in New York and Geneva hosted by ISHR and Amnesty International, ISHR has published a 'scorecard' for each State standing for election to the UN Human Rights Council.

This year, ISHR has developed a new tool for campaigning around strengthening Council membership.

Together with civil society partners working on the candidate States, we developed a list of concrete measures that each candidate should commit to implement as a Council member. ISHR will work with its partners to closely monitor the implementation of these measures throughout their membership term, if elected.

Objective comparison of all candidates: scorecards

The scorecards offer a quick 'at-a-glance' objective comparison of the candidates, focusing on their cooperation with the Council, their support for civil society, their engagement with UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures, among others.

This year, several new criteria have been added to the scorecards:

- Whether a candidate has accepted all individual complaint mechanisms under the core international human rights treaties;
- Whether a candidate has submitted a mid-term Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report;
- Whether a candidate has published a national action plan for implementation of UPR recommendations; and
- Whether a candidate has paid its UN contributions.

In addition, we developed five scorecards that summarise and compare candidates within each region.

The scorecards are intended to give a brief overview of the candidate's relationship with UN mechanisms, and increase transparency in the elections. However, ISHR acknowledges that data limitations and the need for objectivity mean that many of the criteria are concerned with form rather than substance.

'We encourage these 'at-a-glance' scorecards to be read in conjunction with the more in-depth reporting on country situations and human rights records such as the world reports produced by [Amnesty International](#) and [Human Rights Watch](#), and the [election guide](#) published by the Universal Rights Group,' ISHR's Programme Manager and Legal Counsel Tess McEvoy stated.

Concrete commitments to promote and protect human rights

A State's membership in the Human Rights Council is an [important opportunity](#) to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights at the national, regional and international levels. Through Council membership, States commit themselves to 'uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights,' and to fully cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms.

Candidates are expected to put forward voluntary pledges and commitments on what they will achieve as members - at both domestic and international level - which should inform voting States' decisions of whether to support them in the election.

In this context, ISHR together with civil society partners, have sent letters to all candidate States urging them

to commit to and implement a series of concrete recommendations, should they be elected to the Council. We have also listed indicators which we will use to closely monitor the implementation of those recommendations throughout the candidates' membership term.

'Voting States should urge all of the candidates States to commit to implementing these concrete measures, and to ensure meaningful and broad consultation with independent civil society in the process,' said Salma El Hosseiny, ISHR's Human Rights Council Advocate.

'More importantly, we urge voting States to treat human rights considerations as paramount in electing members to the Council, and to prioritise human rights over political or economic interests,' added El Hosseiny.

ISHR would like to extend its deep appreciation to all of our civil society partners for their contributions to the recommendations prepared for each of the candidates.

ISHR campaign tools for strengthening Council membership

Voting on candidates for the Human Rights Council will take place at the UN General Assembly in October 2020. Ahead of the elections, ISHR and Amnesty International will hold **#HRCpledging** events in Geneva and New York in September 2020. We encourage all States, civil society, national human rights institutions as well as international and regional human rights experts to participate in the events including by posing questions to the candidates via #HRCpledging on Twitter.

The scorecards as well as the recommendations to all of the candidates:

1. **African States:** 4 seats, 4 candidates - [Group scorecard](#)

- Senegal: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- Cote D'ivoire: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- Malawi: [scorecard](#)
- Gabon: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)

2. **Asia-Pacific States:** 4 seats, 5 candidates - [Group scorecard](#)

- China: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- Pakistan: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- Saudi Arabia: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- Nepal: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- Uzbekistan: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)

3. **Eastern European Group:** 2 seats, 2 candidates - [Group scorecard](#)

- Russia: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- Ukraine: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)

4. **Latin American and Caribbean States:** 3 seats, 3 candidates - [Group scorecard](#)

- Bolivia: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- Cuba: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- Mexico: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)

5. **Western European and other States:** 2 seats, 2 candidates - [Group scorecard](#)

- France: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)
- United Kingdom: [scorecard](#) and [recommendations](#)

To date, the following candidate States have published public pledges - [Bolivia](#), [China](#), [France](#), [Gabon](#), [Senegal](#), [Cote d'Ivoire](#), [Cuba](#), [Pakistan](#), [Malawi](#), [Mexico](#), [Russia](#), [Nepal](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Ukraine](#) and [Uzbekistan](#).

Scorecards from 2019 are available [here](#).

The sources and criteria for the scorecards are set out [here](#) and below:

ELEMENT	SOURCE
Previous terms	OHCHR website, List of past members of the Human Rights Council
Voluntary pledges	
Submitted a public pledge on its candidacy	United Nations Documents Search
Submitted its public pledge on its candidacy in a timely manner	United Nations Documents Search or ISHR Web site if the candidate State provides it, by 28 July 2020.
Strengthening the Council's effectiveness	
Pledged to strengthen Human Rights Council membership and adherence to membership standards	Signed the joint statement at the 35 th session of the Human Rights Council presented by the Netherlands, or pledges to sign on to an Incoming Members' Pledge, akin to the joint statement at the 37 th session of the Council delivered by Australia, or the joint statement delivered by Fiji at the 40th session, the joint statement delivered by the Marshall Islands at the 43rd session or otherwise formally commits by way of statement to the Human Rights Council or in its pledge to the principles reflected in these joint statements.
Committed to applying an objective, human rights-based criteria in addressing situations of concern	Signed joint statement at the 32 nd session of the Human Rights Council presented by Ireland, or the joint statement at the 35 th session of the Council presented by the Netherlands, or the joint statement at the 37 th session of the Council delivered by Australia, joint statement delivered by Fiji at the 40th session, the joint statement delivered by the Marshall Islands at the 43rd session , or otherwise formally commits by way of a statement to the Human Rights Council or in its pledge to the principles reflected in these joint statements.
Played a leadership role on country situations at the Council	Fulfilled commitments set out in the joint statement at the 32 nd Council session presented by Ireland, resulting in significant attention on at least two country situations, by leading (pen holder) or delivering a joint statement dedicated fully or substantially to a country situation, or leading a resolution (pen holder or member of core group) or a request for a special session (initiating the request as a sponsor). <i>*This includes any country situation in respect of which the State has played a non-public leadership role resulting in collective action at the Council</i>
Cooperation with Special Procedures	
Issued a standing invitation to Special Procedures	OHCHR website, Standing Invitations
Consistently responded positively to country visit requests (Less than 5 outstanding)	OHCHR website, Country visits and special procedures <i>*Country visits requests made more than 6 years ago without a reminder sent by the special procedures are not counted.</i>
Sent a substantive reply to more than 80% of communications received from Special Procedures	OHCHR database, Communications sent and replies received
Universal Periodic Review (UPR)	

Has the State developed and published an action plan for implementation of the UPR recommendations?	Information provided and published by the State
Has the State submitted a UPR mid-term report?	OHCHR mid-term report page
Treaty bodies	
Ratified the 9 core international human rights treaties plus the related optional protocols?	Ratification status of the 9 core international human rights treaties and optional protocols: ICCPR , ICESCR , ICERD , CEDAW , CRC , CAT , CED , CPRD , ICMW . Optional Protocols: ICCPR-OP2 , CRC-OP-AC , CRC OPSC , OP-CAT
Has accepted all individual complaint mechanisms?	Individual complaints mechanisms of 9 core international human rights treaties: ICCPR-OP1 , CAT (art 22) , CERD (art 14) , CEDAW-OP , CPRD-OP , CED (art 31) , CMW (art 77) , ICESR-OP , CRC-OPIC
Has 3 or fewer outstanding treaty body reports	OHCHR website, Reporting Status
Civil Society	
No case of unresolved reprisals highlighted in Secretary-General reports (2010-2019)	OHCHR website - Acts of intimidation and reprisal for cooperation with the United Nations in the field of human rights
Spoken out expressing concern about particular cases of reprisals	Publicly expressed concern about particular cases of reprisals during the Human Rights Council debates, such as under Items 2, 4 or 5 or during the annual interactive dialogue with the Assistant Secretary-General on reprisals or during the UPR.
The State has consistently sponsored Council and Third Committee resolutions on human rights defenders, civil society space and reprisals	Sponsored more than 50% of the following resolutions: Human Rights Council resolutions 13/13, 22/6 & 31/32, 40/22 (human rights defenders), 24/21, 32/31, 27/31, 38/12 (civil society space), 12/12, 24/24, 36/21, 42/28 (reprisals), 25/18 & 34/5 (renewal of mandate of Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders); General Assembly resolutions: 66/164, 68/181, 70/161, 72/247, 74/146
National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)	
Has an NHRI in conformity with the Paris Principles (A-status)	GANHRI
United Nations Contributions	
Has paid its UN contributions?	Paid its UN contributions in the first three quarters of the calendar year; UN Committee on Contributions (last update 19 August 2020)

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