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A window onto cooperation, dialogue, leadership,  
and policymaking at the UN Human Rights Council

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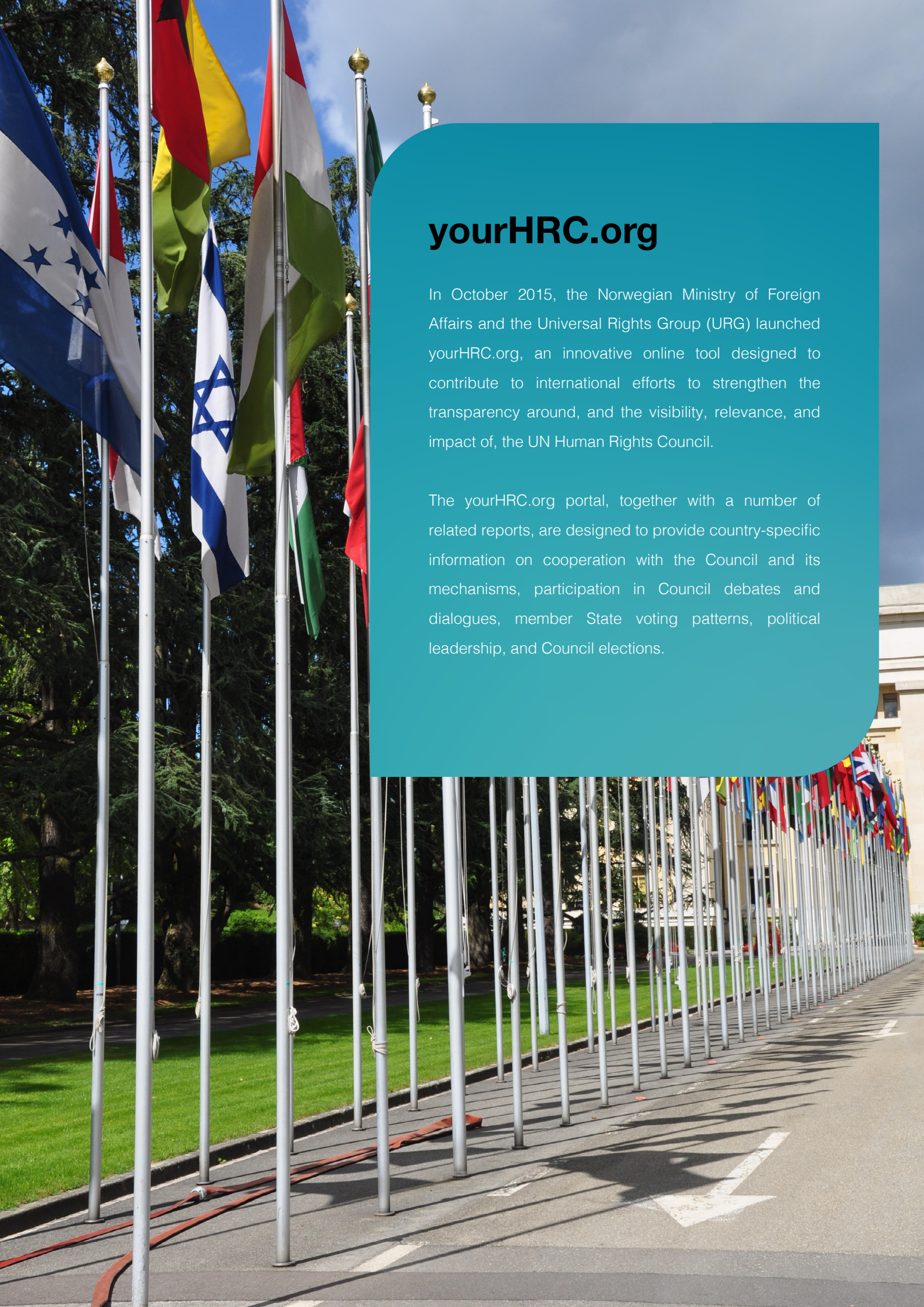
**THE HUMAN RIGHTS  
COUNCIL IN**

**2021**

**LEADERSHIP, RESOLVE AND COOPERATION  
AT THE UN'S MAIN HUMAN RIGHTS BODY**

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# yourHRC.org

In October 2015, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Universal Rights Group (URG) launched yourHRC.org, an innovative online tool designed to contribute to international efforts to strengthen the transparency around, and the visibility, relevance, and impact of, the UN Human Rights Council.

The yourHRC.org portal, together with a number of related reports, are designed to provide country-specific information on cooperation with the Council and its mechanisms, participation in Council debates and dialogues, member State voting patterns, political leadership, and Council elections.

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# Introduction

2021 was one of the most divisive and acrimonious years in the fifteen-year history of the Human Rights Council. Partly, this reflected heightened geopolitical tensions, which spilled over into, and in many ways ‘captured,’ the work of the UN’s principal human rights body. But it was also the culmination of Council-centred trends going back half a decade, during which time power blocs have drifted further and further apart, pursuing mutually exclusive agendas based on opposing visions of what the Council is, and what it was established to do. As member and observer States look forward to 2022, it is essential that they improve lines of communication between groups, identify and pursue areas of common interest, and focus on taking forward each dimension of the Council’s mandate – rather than ‘cherry picking’ only those issues that matter to them.

## Superpower rivalry

Much of the acrimony in 2021, which increased as the year wore on, was centred on, and generated by, the ‘Great Power’ rivalry of, on the one side, the United States (US), together with its Western allies, and on the other side, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and their partners in the ‘Like-Minded Group’ (LMG).

When the US last ‘re-engaged’ with the Council under President Barack Obama (2009-2015), it was indisputably the most powerful and effective actor in Room XX of the *Palais des Nations*. However, it tended to use that power and influence in a measured way, forging cross-regional coalitions on different issues, and sharing its political capacity (often innovatively) across a range of different thematic and country-specific priorities. These included, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, human

rights on the Internet, combatting religious intolerance, the right to a nationality, technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan, Somalia and Tunisia, schoolchildren in Afghanistan, and the situations in Burundi, Iran, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, and Syria.

Yet this time, as the US once again looks to reengage with the Council (it is due to take up a seat on 1 January 2022), things look very different (though it is ‘early days’ – much could change once Congress confirms the new US Ambassador to the Council, Michèle Taylor – possibly by the end of the year). For one thing, America’s alliances (not just in the West) frayed under the Presidency of Donald Trump, and good will towards the US, especially on the part of developing countries, is in short supply. Second, China’s strength and influence has increased sharply in America’s absence. The Council to which the US returns is thus a very different place to the one it abruptly left. Compounding this situation, unlike the period 2009-2015, so far, the US has shown little inclination to develop a ‘wide portfolio’ of initiatives at the Council, including initiatives of importance or benefit to developing countries, and has instead focused almost all its political capital on one issue, namely, the human rights situation in China (especially Xinjiang and Hong Kong).

China, unsurprisingly considering its newfound strength at the Council and its growing confidence internationally, has not taken this lying down. Instead, for every US-led joint statement criticising China, the People’s Republic has delivered its own attacks on the US, United Kingdom (UK), or Canada (e.g., on racism, the slave trade, or indigenous rights); and for every US or UK side event or exhibition about Xinjiang or Hong Kong, China has organised its own, about, for example, ‘poverty alleviation and rural revitalisation in Xinjiang.’



Upping the stakes in this battle of the superpowers, at HRC48 in September, China went even further: during the session, it responded to repeated US attacks by tabling two formal draft resolutions – one, on ‘the negative impacts of the legacies of colonialism on the enjoyment of human rights,’ that was a thinly veiled attack on the US and the UK (but also served to annoy the African Group, which takes the matter of colonialism and its legacies extremely seriously); and a second, on ‘realising a better life for everyone,’ that was a reassertion of China’s ‘vision’ for the future of the universal human rights system (i.e., as primarily there to promote economic and social rights, and development, through cooperation between States).

Unfortunately for China, this new tactic ultimately backfired. First, during open informal negotiations on the draft resolutions on colonialism, proposals were put forward to include references to ‘disputed territorial

claims’, which can be considered a contemporary form of colonialism, and thus, it was argued, should be included in the draft text.

Building on this strategy, ahead of voting at HRC48, the UK tabled three ‘hostile’ amendments to China’s text on ‘colonialism,’ (one was subsequently withdrawn).

These sought to include the following language:

*‘Reaffirming that persecution against members of any identifiable group, collective or community on racial, national, ethnic or other grounds that are universally recognised as impermissible under international law, and the crime of apartheid, constitute serious violations of human rights and, in some cases, qualify as crimes against humanity.’*



And thus, urging States:

*‘[...] to refrain from the forced assimilation of persons belonging to minorities, including indigenous populations, and to work to ensure that educational curricula and other materials do not stereotype minorities and indigenous populations on the bases of their ethnicity.’*

In a blow to China, both amendments were adopted by the Council, the first with 16 in favour, 13 against, and 16 abstentions, and the second by a vote of 15-13-17. The final text, as amended, passed with 27 in favour, 0 against, and 20 abstentions.

A clearly shaken China reacted to this loss of face by withdrawing its draft resolution on ‘realising a better life for everyone.’

## What is the Human Rights Council and what is it for?

Although geopolitical at heart, the struggle during 2021 between the US and its allies on the one side, and China and its allies on the other, was about more than superpower rivalry. It was also about divergent and competing visions of what the Council (and the wider UN human rights system) is, and what it is mandated to do. The competing ideological positions of the two sides were starkly revealed at the 46th session of the Council in March.

The session saw several joint (e.g., one led by Cuba which sought to defend China, and one led by Belarus expressing concern about the ‘situation of human rights in European Union-EU member States and the UK’) and

individual (e.g., by China criticising the human rights record of Australia) statements designed to demonstrate wide political support at the Council for two propositions: first, it is not legitimate (i.e., it is contrary to the UN Charter and GA resolution 60/251) for the Council to criticise or otherwise pass comment on the internal affairs (i.e., the promotion and protection of human rights) of sovereign States, and, second, that Council members and observers that do pass judgement on the internal affairs of others (especially developing countries) are hypocrites – because they themselves routinely violate human rights.

The US responded, at the same session, by delivering a counterstatement on behalf of 50 States, which rejected and rebutted these arguments.

*‘We have heard a great deal,’ the statement began, ‘during the current session, about the importance of non-interference in domestic affairs. In response to these points, we have a very simple position: States that commit human rights violations must be held to account.’*

*‘The UN Charter acknowledges the domestic jurisdiction of member States. But it also affirms that human rights are universal. [Appeals to] State sovereignty cannot be used to shield a country from scrutiny for its behaviour toward those within its borders. Indeed, this notion lies at the very foundations of the UN, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and this very Council. The Human Rights Council has the responsibility to act when States are not meeting their obligations – a responsibility articulated in General Assembly resolution 60/251.’*

As if to reinforce this point, the US joined two important item 4 joint statements at the 46th session, one, led

by Finland, on the human rights situation in Egypt, and another, led by Poland, on the situation in Russia.

## Growing disquiet

As the Council approaches the end of its 15th cycle, this subsuming of multilateralism beneath bilateral Sino-American rivalry, has caused considerable anger and disquiet across all regional groups. To counteract this trend, it will be important, in 2022, for democratic States to reach out across regional groupings and listen to (and try to empathise with) the hopes and concerns of others. Similarly, as occurred during previous ‘difficult’ (i.e., polarised) periods in the Council’s history, it will be important, in the year ahead, for ‘moderate’ and ‘bridge-building’ States (both developed and developing) to work more closely together for example in the now-moribund ‘Article 4 Dialogue’. Countries that typically become stretched when the Council’s political centre of gravity splits towards the poles can instead collaborate to strengthen the political centre, rebuild cooperation and dialogue, and construct a more positive narrative at the Council.

## The Council rejects a resolution for the first time

Although the increasingly febrile atmosphere at the Council over the course of 2021 (and reaching a new low at HRC48) principally centred around the clash between the US and its Anglo-Saxon allies on the one side, and China and Russia on the other, the year also saw other countries and blocs pulled into the fray (voluntarily or otherwise). Most notably, the final session of the year saw Saudi Arabia attack a Dutch-led draft resolution on

the human rights situation in Yemen, through which the Council had been expected to renew the mandate of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts (an accountability mechanism for violations in the country, including those allegedly committed by the Saudi-led coalition).

Saudi Arabia (likely with one eye on the US’ imminent return) took to intense lobbying (many described it as ‘bullying’) of African members against the resolution. This, combined with years of Western neglect (at the Council) of the African Group and those issues of importance to it, resulted in the draft being rejected by the Council (18 in favour, 21 against, and 7 abstentions) – the first time in Council history a draft resolution had ever been rejected. Western ambassadors and NGOs called the result a betrayal of the people of Yemen and a dark day in the history of the Council.

Since the vote, Western States and NGOs have been locked in a process of deep reflection (and in some cases, recrimination) about ‘what went wrong.’ Much of that analysis has blamed the tactics employed by Saudi Arabia, with the support of China, Russia, and others in the LMG. While there is some truth in this, it nonetheless misses a more important, longer-term, cause: namely, that the West has grown increasingly distant from African (as well as Asian) delegations over the past five years, showing little interest in working with developing country delegations on issues of importance to them. A sense of aggrievement, especially amongst African delegates, has been exacerbated by the high number of special sessions in 2021 (four – on Myanmar, the OPT, Afghanistan and Sudan) and by the US’s confrontational approach since its re-engagement. Consequently, when Western States belatedly began lobbying on the Yemen text at the start of HRC48, their entreaties fell on unsympathetic ears.



# The green shoots of hope?

The defeat of the West’s draft resolution on Yemen on 7 October, marked a low point in an increasingly difficult year for the Council. Fortunately, the next day saw moods lift after two important, progressive resolutions on the environment/climate were adopted by large majorities.

With the first of these, presented by Costa Rica, the Maldives, Morocco, Slovenia, and Switzerland, the Council recognised a new universal human right: the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. This was the culmination of a 15-year effort on behalf of the main sponsors and was supported by an unprecedented global campaign involving over 60 States, 15 UN agencies, and over 1,150 civil society organisations. Furthermore, the

adopted resolution invited the General Assembly (GA) to also consider recognising this new universal right. That is expected to happen during the current session of the GA (possibly in April 2022), meaning the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment will become the second new right (and first stand-alone right) to be fully recognised by the UN since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948.

After all ten Russian amendments to the draft text had been comfortably defeated, the Council adopted the resolution by 43 in favour, zero against, and four abstentions – leading to a rare round of applause in the Council chamber, celebrations amongst the more than 1,150 civil society organisations around the world that had campaigned for UN recognition, and widespread (positive) global media coverage.

With the second resolution, tabled by Bahamas, EU, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Panama, Paraguay, and Sudan, the Council decided to establish a new Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change – weeks before the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties started in Glasgow, UK.

## The return of the Special Rapporteurs

The new Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change was one of three new Special Rapporteur mandates established at HRC48 (all sponsored by the EU, either alone or in combination with others). The two other new mandates were established to monitor and report on the human rights situations in Afghanistan and Burundi.



<sup>1</sup> Called for by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC to preempt Western criticism.



Regarding Afghanistan, this result was something of a disappointment for civil society, which had been pushing the EU to promote an investigative mechanism, i.e., a fact-finding mission or commission of inquiry (COI). Notwithstanding, on balance, the EU’s decision was probably both proportionate and politically astute (for example, a Special Rapporteur is more likely to secure the cooperation of Afghanistan’s neighbours than would a COI).

Regarding Burundi, the new Special Rapporteur mandate was established in replacement of the COI mandate on Burundi. The EU’s decision to advance a switch from an investigative mechanism to a Special Procedures mandate was likely due, in part, to criticisms of ‘forever mandates’ (including their spiralling costs), as well as a

wish, on the part of the Europeans, to engage with the country’s new President. Whatever the reason, the move was heavily criticised by NGOs, including Human Rights Watch.

## Vaccine nationalism vs. vaccine multilateralism

HRC46 saw a new initiative on ‘Ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.’ A resolution on this subject, which was adopted without a vote, requested ‘a report on the human rights implications of the lack of affordable, timely, equitable and universal access and distribution of



COVID-19 vaccines, as well as the deepening inequalities between States, and the impact on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.'

## Conservative vs. liberal social values; and the fight against racism

HRC47 saw the continuation of a long-standing trend of increasingly polarised arguments over 'societal issues' (gender and women's rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights), pitting conservative countries against more liberal States.

For example, as in previous years, the session saw a concerted pushback by the likes of Bahrain, Egypt, Eritrea, Russian Federation, and Pakistan, against concepts that they consider to be contrary to their national cultural or religious values, and ungrounded in international human rights law, such as 'comprehensive sexuality education' and 'bodily autonomy.' These countries repeatedly urged the Council to ensure its work remains grounded in 'agreed language,' such as that contained in the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action. Other States, however, especially Western and Latin American States (including the US, which had been aligned with the conservative bloc during the Trump presidency), rejected the notion that the Council should simply ignore 25 years of progress in the area of women's rights since Beijing. At the end of the session, these disagreements played

out in the form of a number of hostile amendments tabled by Egypt and the Russian Federation to draft resolutions on 'Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls with disabilities' and 'Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights.' Those amendments were all defeated, and the two resolutions adopted by consensus.

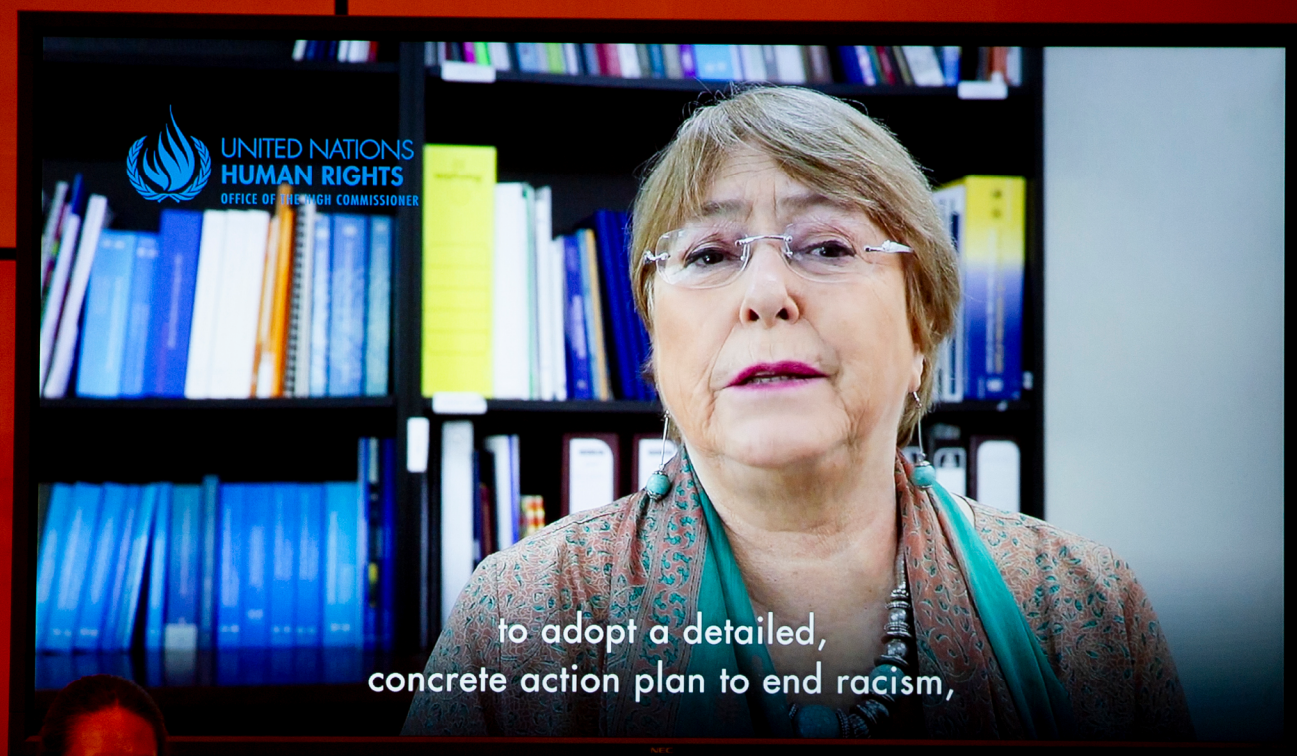
2021 also saw the continuation, and further deepening, of the Council's focus on the issue of racial discrimination, especially in a law enforcement context. Clearly, the fight against racism is not a new issue for the Council, however, it has received new levels of political attention since the killing of George Floyd by a US police officer in May 2020, the suppression of the protests that followed, and the rise of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. Back in 2020, the African Group, with strong civil society support, had convened an urgent debate on 'Current racially inspired human rights violations, systemic racism, police brutality, and violence against peaceful protests.' The resolution adopted after the debate, resolution 43/1, had requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, to present a report on the matter at HRC47 in June 2021.

Presenting her report, the High Commissioner informed delegations that the murder of George Floyd had been a 'tipping point' for global awareness and outrage about the ongoing scourge of racism. In preparing her report, she said, she had spoken with, and listened to, family members of some of the victims of racially motivated police brutality. From those conversations, she argued that such brutality is 'the tip of an iceberg of systemic racial discrimination running through societies, beginning in early childhood, as children of African descent are subjected to racism at

school, and continuing into adulthood as they are often marginalised, suffer from unequal treatment in the labour market (e.g., fewer opportunities, lower wages), face unequal access to housing and health care services, and are often 'treated like criminals.'

In a particularly powerful intervention, the High Commissioner positioned the blight of racism in modern societies in the context of the failure of States to fully reckon with their historic role in, and responsibility for, the slave trade and colonialism.

At the end of the session, the African Group tabled a draft resolution following up on the High Commissioner's report. Through the resolution, the Council decided to establish an independent expert mechanism on racial discrimination and police brutality. Importantly, the US welcomed the establishment of this new mechanism. The US also announced their decision to extend a standing invitation to all Special Procedures, and to prioritise visits in the near future by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues.







## A window onto the work of the UN's human rights pillar...

Members of the Human Rights Council (Council) hold the main responsibility for pursuing and fulfilling the body's important mandate of 'promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all' (GA resolution 60/251).

When establishing the Council, the UN General Assembly (GA) decided that it would consist of 47 member States, elected by a majority of its members. In making their choice, members of the GA would take into account the contribution of the candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments.

The GA, furthermore, decided that elected members should uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and fully cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms. Moreover, it was agreed that the Council's methods of work would be transparent, fair, and impartial, enable genuine dialogue, be results-oriented, allow for subsequent follow-up discussions to recommendations and their implementation, and allow for substantive interaction with Special Procedures and other mechanisms.

yourHRC.org aims to promote transparency around the degree to which the Council and its members are delivering on this crucial mandate, passed to them by the GA and, ultimately, entrusted to them by 'the Peoples of the United Nations' described in the UN Charter.





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PART I

2021

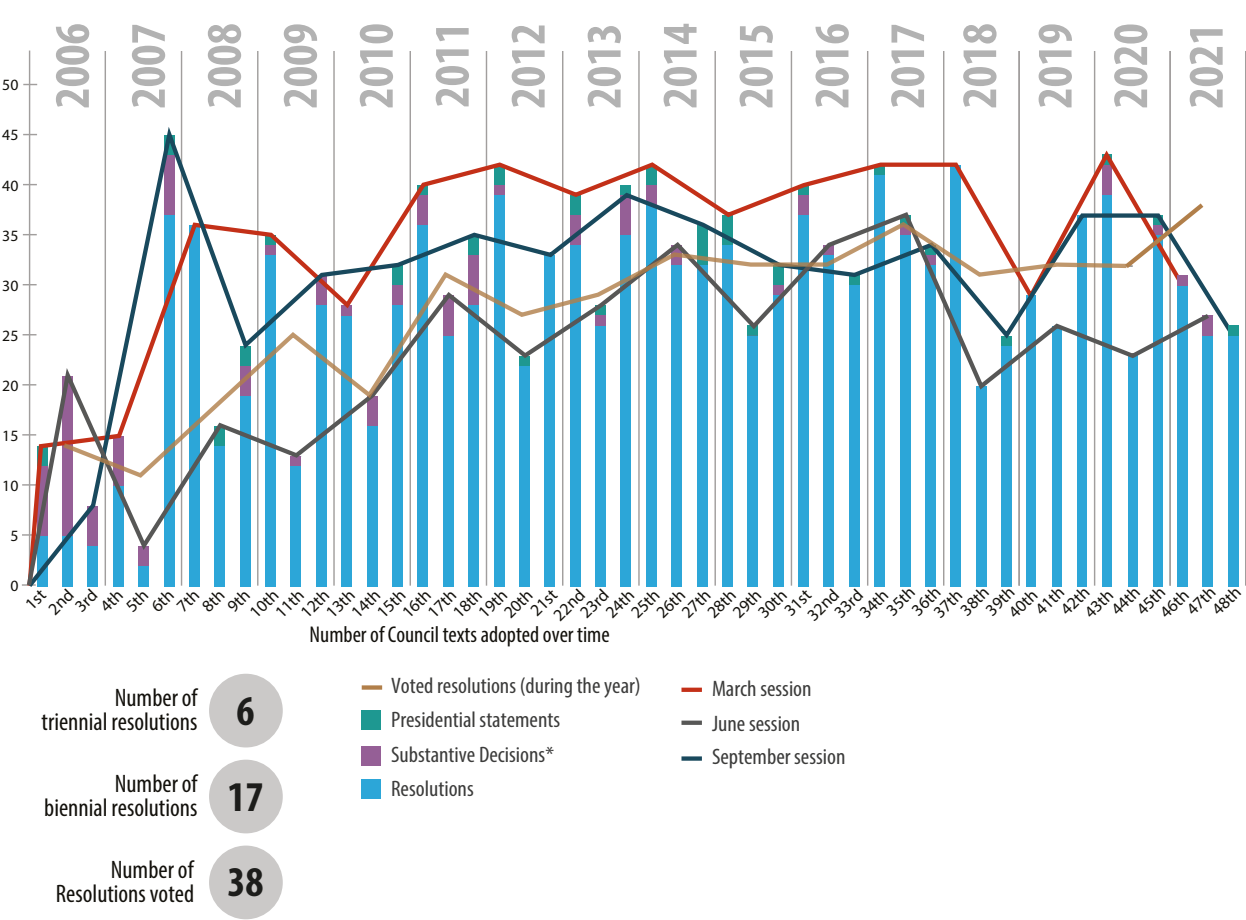
**THE WORK, OUTPUT, AND  
PERFORMANCE OF THE COUNCIL  
AND ITS MECHANISMS**

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# THE COUNCIL'S FOCUS AND OUTPUT: RESOLUTIONS AND MECHANISMS

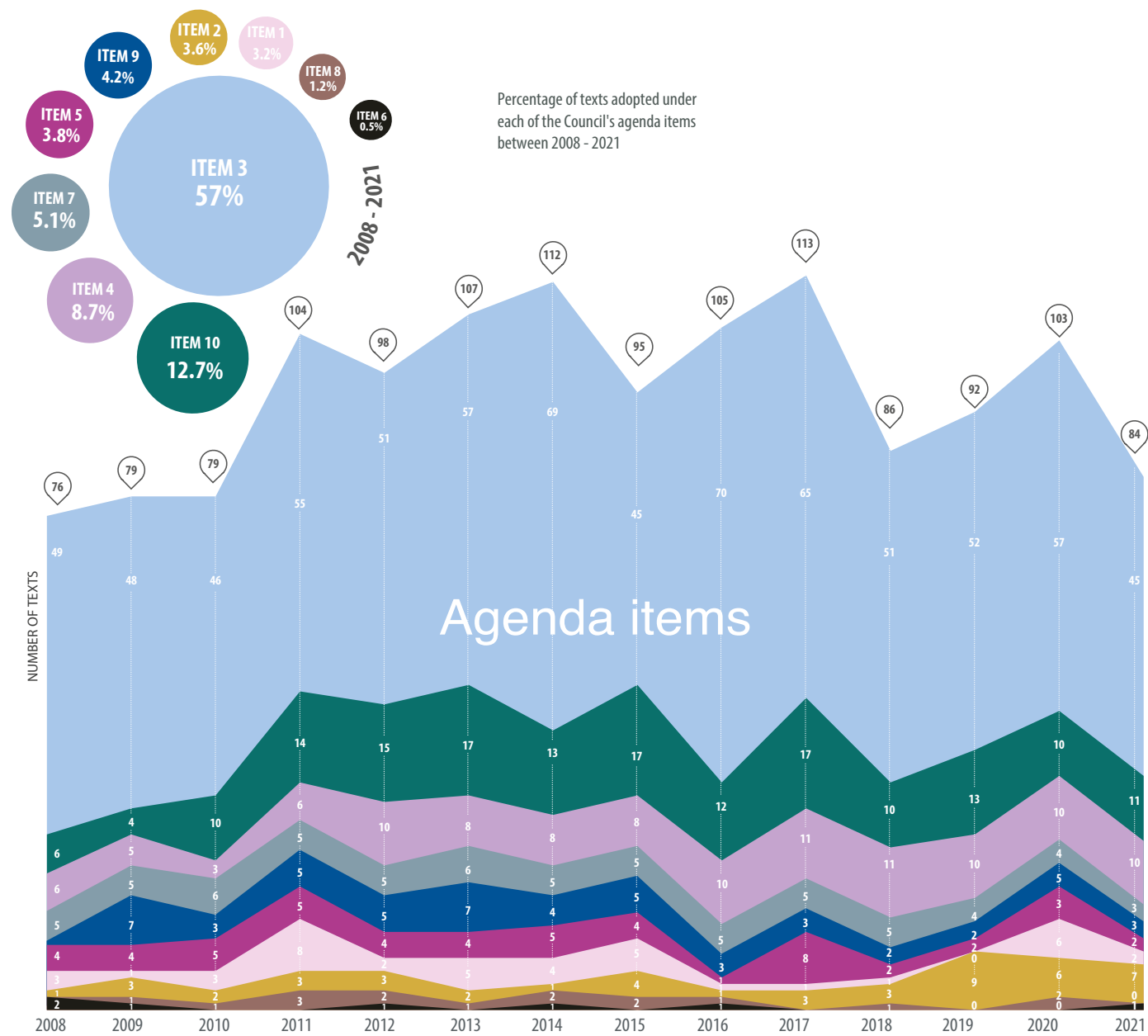
Number of Council texts adopted over time



Data source: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ('OHCHR') website / URG Resolutions Portal.

- The number of texts adopted in 2021 was the lowest since 2011. This is consistent with ongoing efforts to improve the Council's efficiency, which have been yielding positive results since 2015. Two years, however, marked exceptions to this broadly positive picture: 2017 and 2020, when the Council adopted 113 and 103 texts respectively.
- The total number (38) and proportion (45%) of voted texts were the highest in the history of the Council, reflecting growing division and polarisation at the Council in 2021 (see the introduction of this report). Previously, 2018 had seen the highest proportion of voted texts (36%).

The focus of the Council's texts by agenda item (2008-2021)

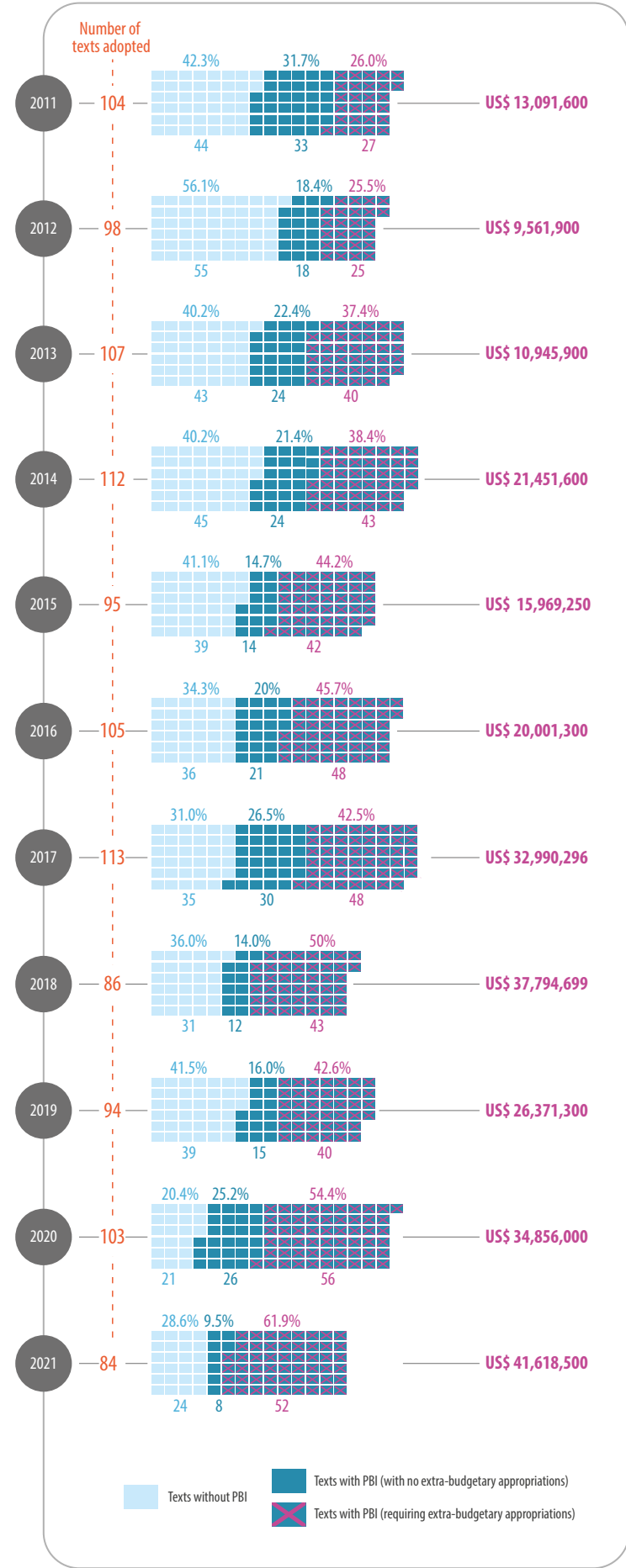


Data Source: Council texts (resolutions, decisions and presidential statements) adopted between 2008-2021, available on the OHCHR extranet and via the URG Resolutions Portal.

- Almost 60% of all texts generated by the Council in 2021 were thematic initiatives adopted under agenda item 3 (the 'Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to development').
- The number of item 4 resolutions has remained relatively steady since 2016, with around ten resolutions per year. Country-specific texts under this agenda item have focused on the human rights situations in Belarus, Burundi, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea (discontinued in 2018), Islamic Republic of Iran, Myanmar, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic (usually more than one text per year), and Venezuela (since 2019).
- 2021 was the year with the second highest number of item 2 country-specific texts, six resolutions; the highest number of country-specific item 2 texts was seven, in 2019. Country-specific texts under this agenda item have focused on the human rights situations Afghanistan (new initiative), Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Philippines, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Yemen.
- The number of resolutions adopted under agenda item 7 ('Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories') – four – was the lowest in the Council's history. One text on the Occupied Palestinian Territories was, for the third consecutive year, adopted under item 2.

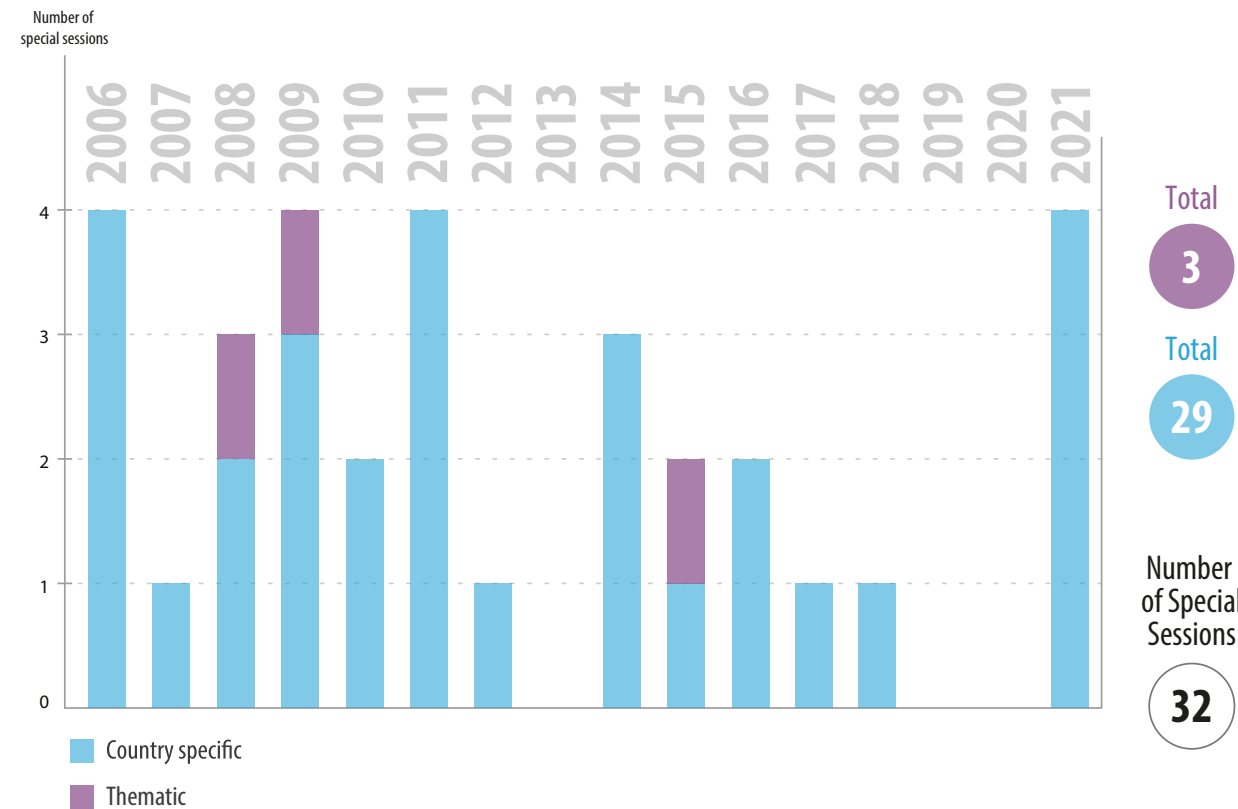


Financial implications of Council resolutions (2011-2021)



Data Source: Programme Budget Implications (PBIs) arising from each resolution (2011-2021) adopted during the Council's regular sessions. available on the OHCHR extranet and via the URG Resolutions Portal.

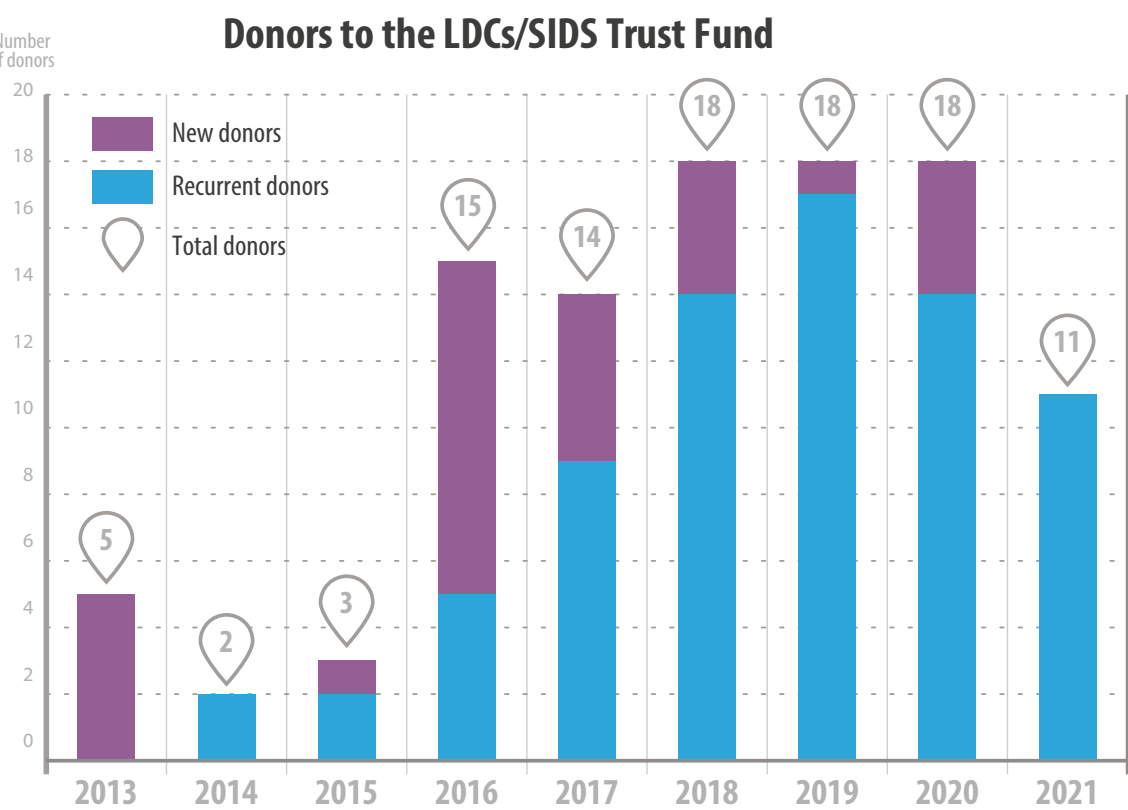
Evolution of Council Special Sessions since 2006



Data Source: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ('OHCHR') website.



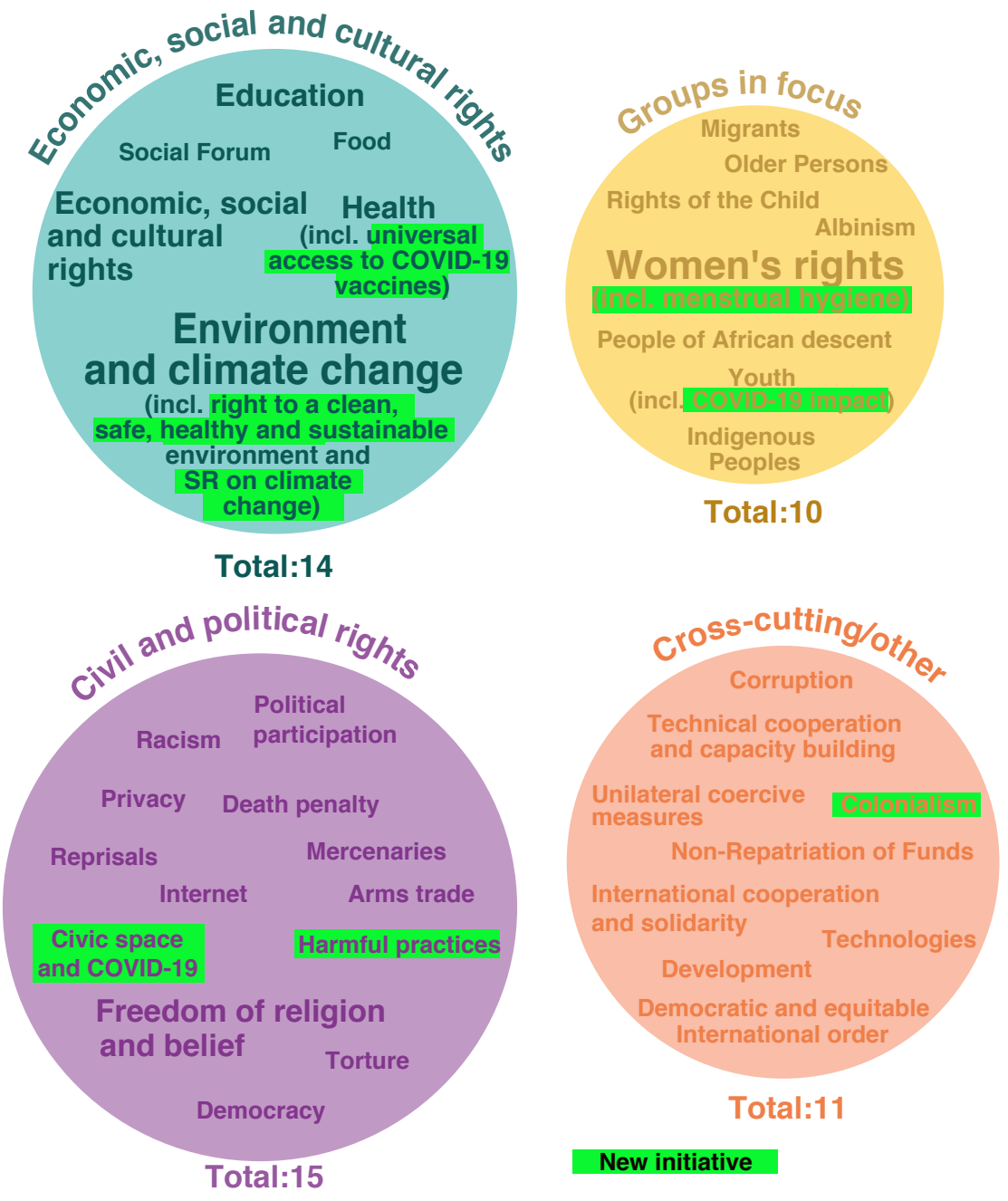
# Donors of the Voluntary Trust Fund to support the participation of LDCs and SIDS in the Council 2021



**DONORS**  
(2013-2021)



# Top themes in 2021: focus of thematic resolutions

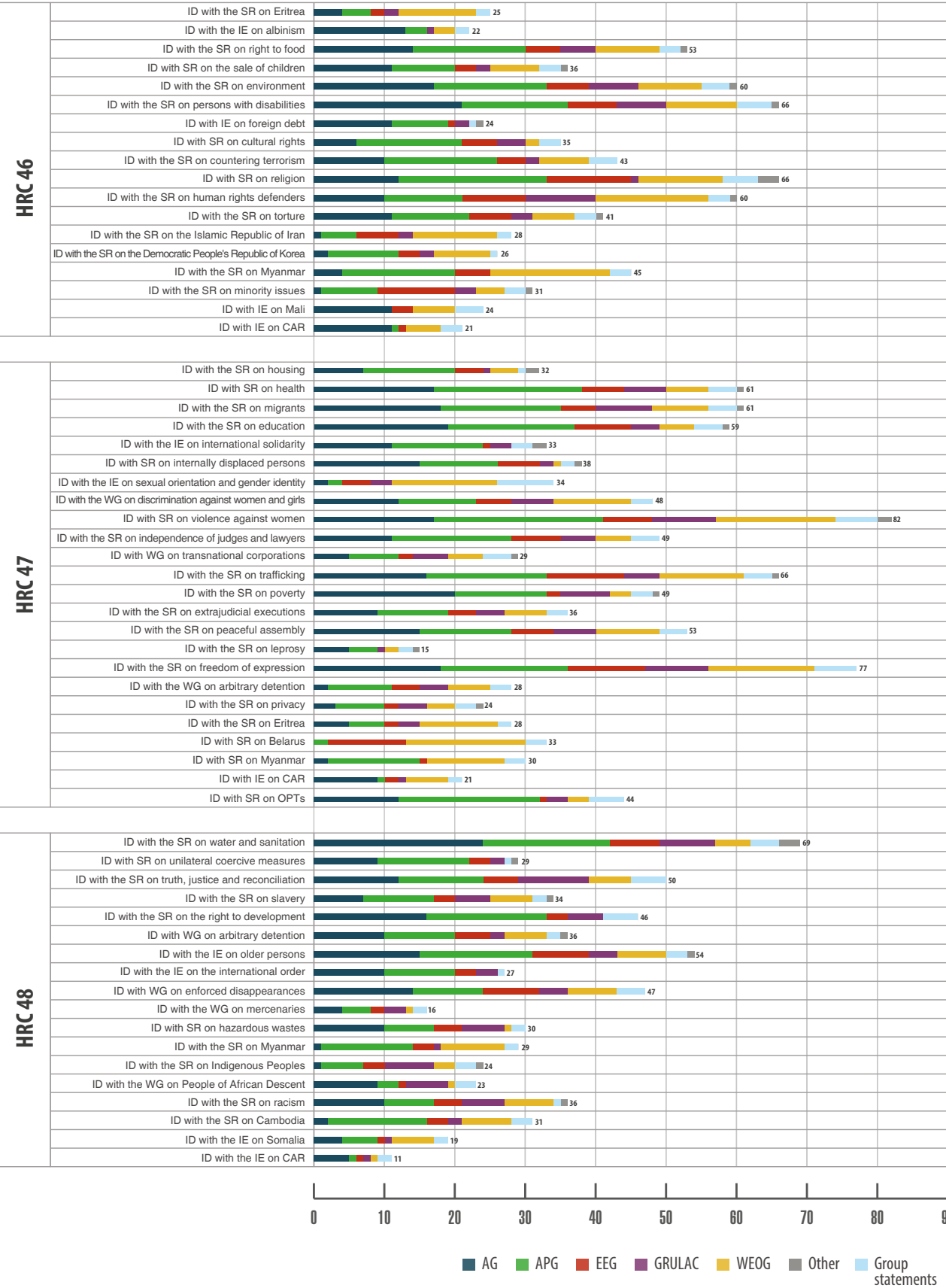


**Note:** The size of each bubble and word/phrase within the bubble relates to the number of resolutions adopted with that focus/theme in 2020. **Data source:** Council resolutions available on the OHCHR extranet and via the URG Resolutions Portal.

- Reflecting the global concern with the world's three interlinked environmental crises (pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss), in 2021, the thematic work of the Council had a special focus on human rights and the environment, including climate change. The Council gave decisive steps to address these crises by recognising the universal human right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, and appointing a Special Rapporteur on climate change.
- Regarding groups in focus, Council resolutions once again displayed a strong focus on women's and girls' rights. A new initiative, on menstrual hygiene management was adopted as part of the Council's efforts to protect women's dignity and achieve gender equality.



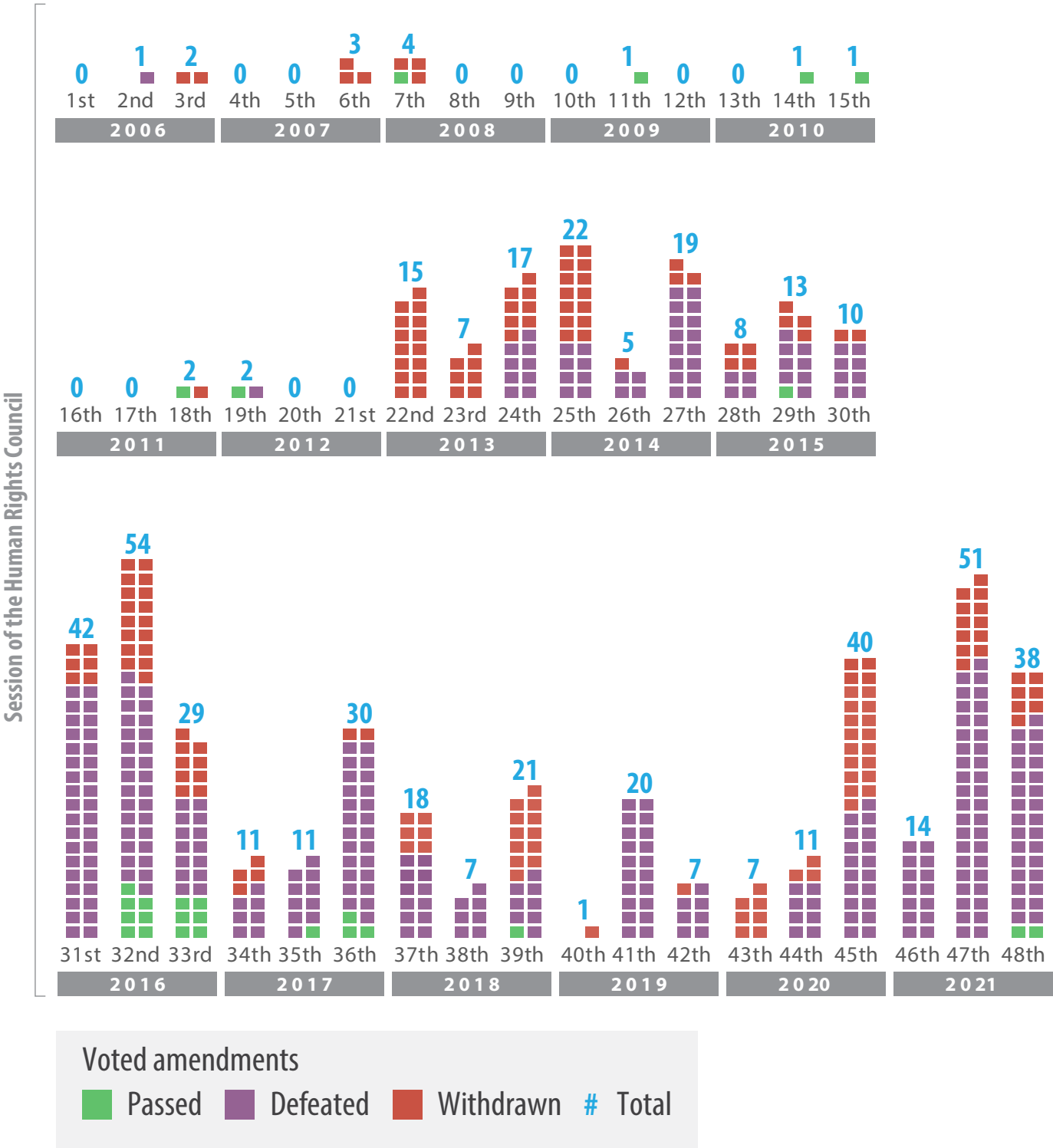
State participation in Interactive Dialogues of the Special Procedures in 2021



Data source: OHCHR extranet.

Note: For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

Evolution of amendments to Council resolutions



Data source: OHCHR extranet.

Note: For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.



# GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS OF THE COUNCIL

Geographic focus of Council texts, special sessions, and panels (2006-2021)

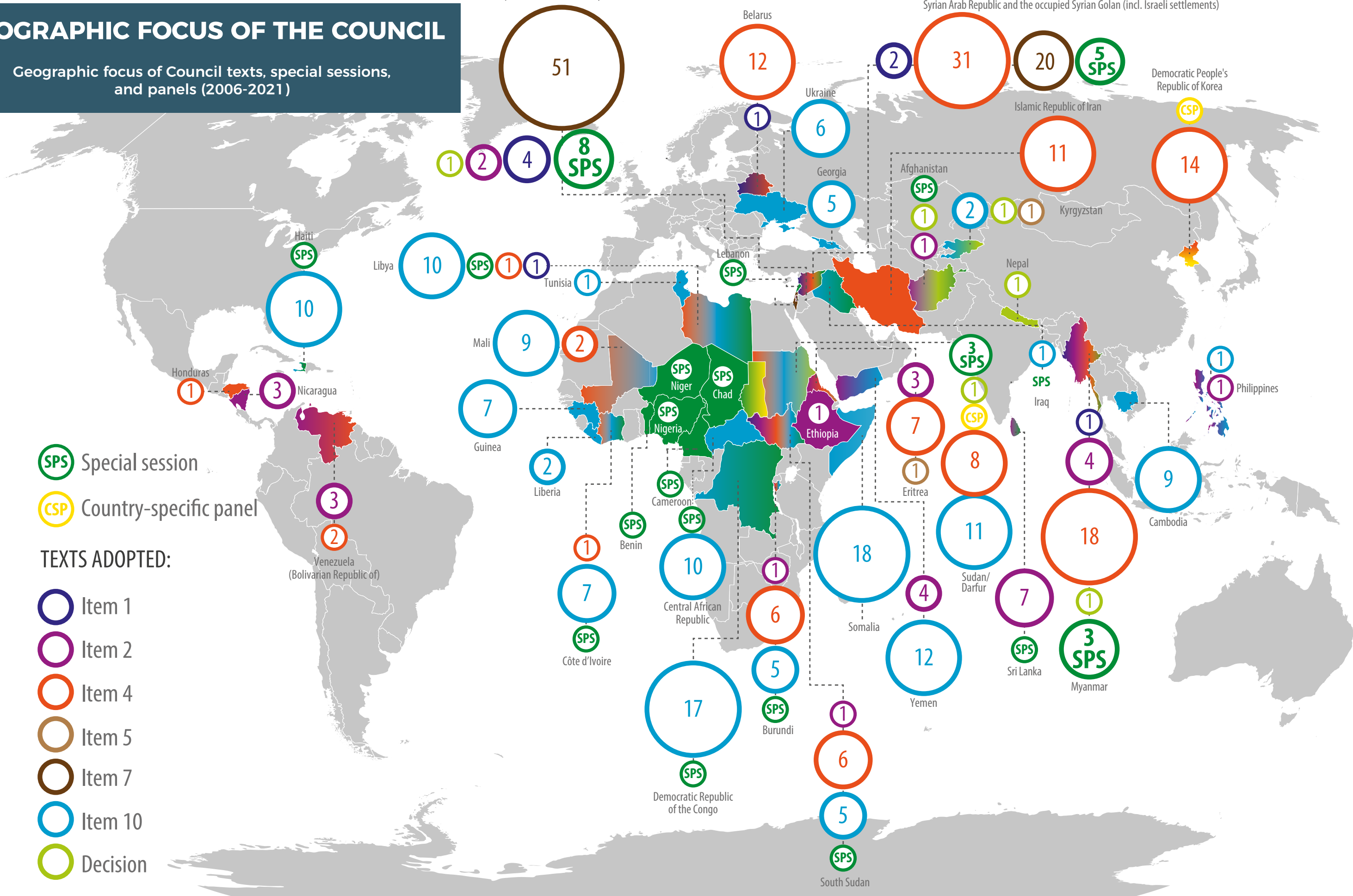
Palestine and Occupied Palestinian Territory (incl. Israeli settlements)

Syrian Arab Republic and the occupied Syrian Golan (incl. Israeli settlements)

**SPS** Special session  
**CSP** Country-specific panel

## TEXTS ADOPTED:

- Item 1
- Item 2
- Item 4
- Item 5
- Item 7
- Item 10
- Decision

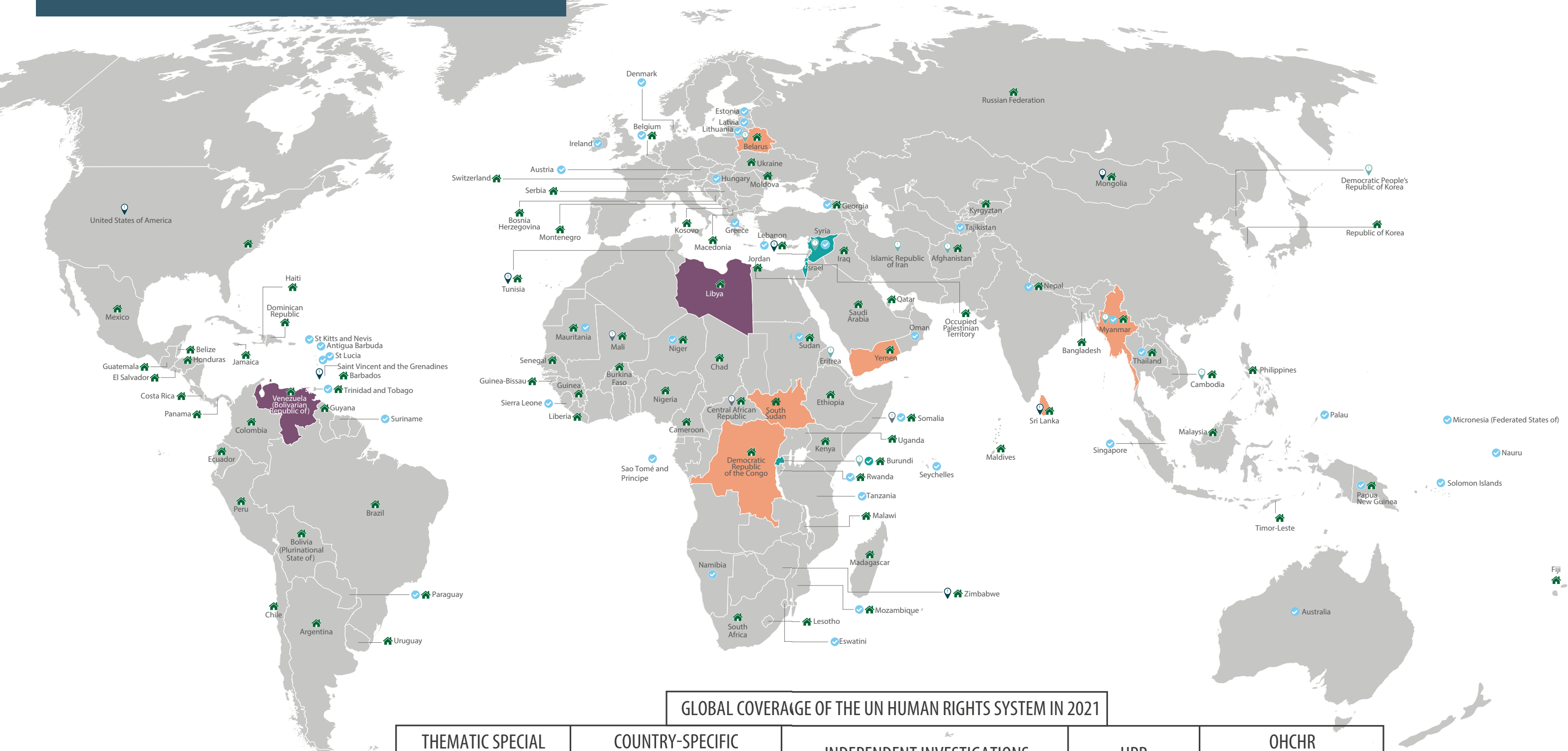


**Data source:** Council texts (resolutions, decisions, or presidential statements) 2006-2021, available on the OHCHR extranet and via the URG Resolutions Portal.

**Note:** For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.



# GLOBAL COVERAGE OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM IN 2021



GLOBAL COVERAGE OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM IN 2021							
THEMATIC SPECIAL PROCEDURES	COUNTRY-SPECIFIC SPECIAL PROCEDURES		INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS			UPR	OHCHR PRESENCE
 Number of visits	 Special Rapporteur	 Independent Expert	 Commissions of Inquiry	 Fact-Finding Mission	 Other	 UPR review completed 2021	 OHCHR field presence during 2021

**Data source:** Council texts (resolutions, decisions, or presidential statements) 2006-2021, available on the OHCHR extranet and via the URG Resolutions Portal.

**Note:** For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.





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PART II

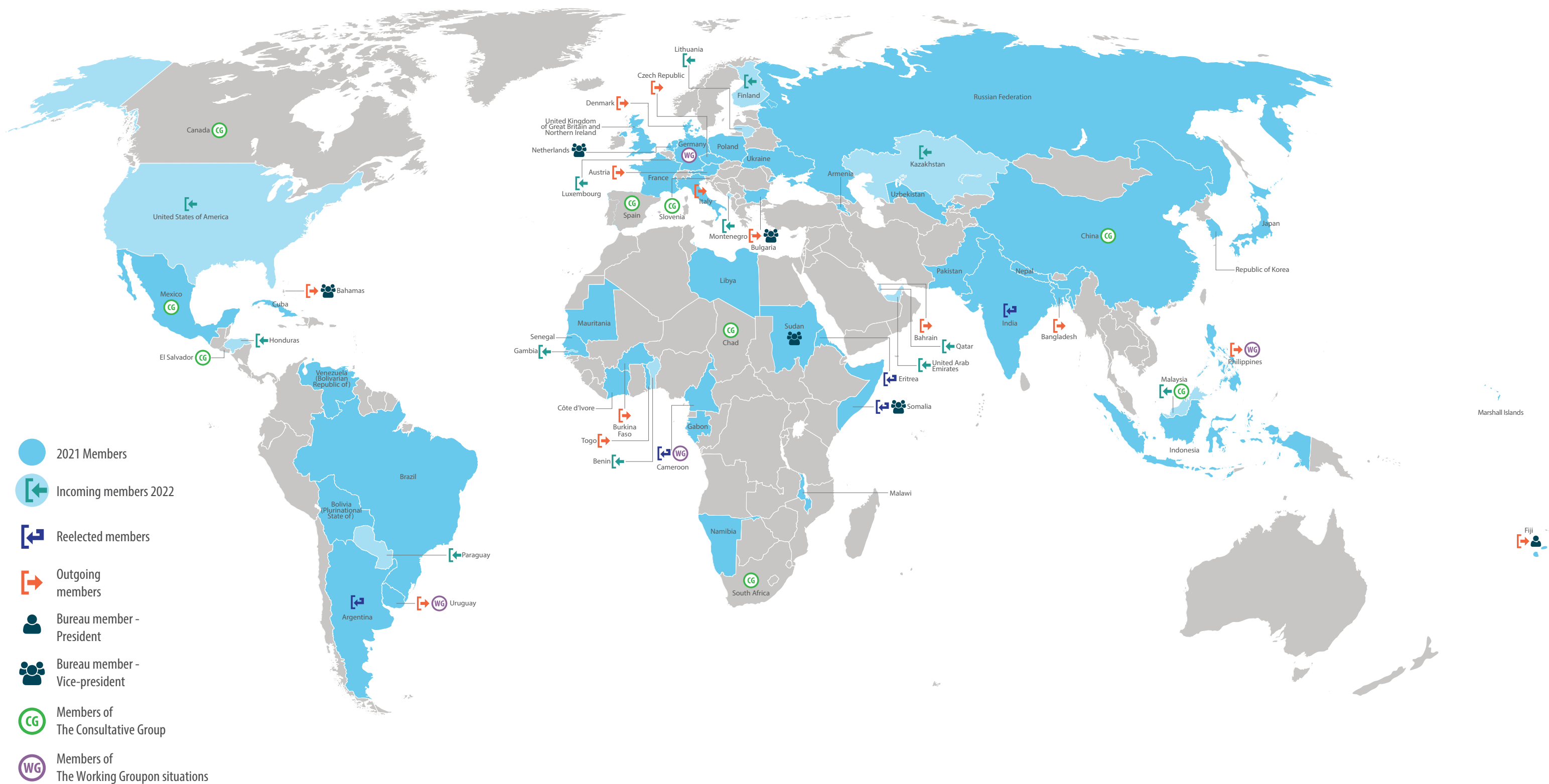
2021

**COUNCIL MEMBER STATES:  
ENGAGEMENT, PRINCIPAL  
SPONSORSHIP, COOPERATION**

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# MEMBERSHIP OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL IN 2021



**Data source:** OHCHR website.

**Note:** For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.



# COOPERATION WITH THE UN, ITS REPRESENTATIVES, AND MECHANISMS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In September 2021, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, presented the twelfth annual report (pursuant to Council resolution 12/2) on: ‘Cooperation with the United Nations its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights.’ The report contains information on allegations of intimidation and reprisals during the reporting period of 1 May 2020 to 30 April 2021, including follow-up to cases included in previous reports.

With resolution 12/2, the Council ‘expressed concern over continued reports of intimidation and reprisals against individuals and groups seeking to cooperate, or having cooperated, with the United Nations (UN), its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights.’<sup>1</sup> The Council further ‘condemned all acts of intimidation and reprisal committed by Governments and non-State actors.’<sup>2</sup>

The 2021 report explains that ‘forms of reprisal, retaliation for ongoing or past cooperation, and intimidation, designed to discourage future

participation or cooperation, have continued in relation to cooperation with a wide range of UN organizations at Headquarters and in the field, perpetrated by both State and non-State actors. During the reporting period, incidents or trends were addressed within the UN system in the Secretariat, its field offices and peace operations, as well as UN-Women, and by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, the treaty bodies, the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.’<sup>3</sup>

The Secretary-General’s report underscores that the number of reported acts of intimidation and reprisal by State and non-State actors against individuals or groups seeking to cooperate or having cooperated with the UN remains high. Victims of violations and abuses, human rights defenders, journalists, and other civil society actors are subject to violence for, *inter alia*, sharing information about or calling the UN’s attention to specific cases. Against

this backdrop, the report highlights a worrying trend: self-censorship and refusals to engage with the UN due to fear of retaliation. Of 240 individual cases, more than 100 were reported as anonymous by the Secretary-General due to security concerns.<sup>4</sup> The report remarks that this silence must be broken.

Specific to the 2021 world context, the COVID-19 pandemic increased worldwide reliance on digital communication. The digital age has enabled civil society actors to engage and participate digitally with the UN, from any part of the world. However, this transformation came with increased risks, including online surveillance and digital attacks, which augmented the potential vulnerability of individuals and organisations to intimidation and reprisals. In the digital sphere, defenders, activists, and journalists have been attacked on social media after speaking at UN meetings, and individuals seeking to cooperate with the UN have been targeted for submitting information or communicating electronically with the organisation.

The Secretary-General’s report highlights that while the most commonly reported incidents concern human rights defenders, activists, and journalists, affected individuals and groups include a wide range of actors, from victims of human rights violations, witnesses, their relatives and lawyers, to public officials, opposition parties, and national human rights institutions. The report notes that particularly vulnerable groups include women, SOGI diverse individuals, and defenders of the environment and land. Furthermore, the Secretary-General’s report underlines that the trend, highlighted in the 2020 report, of allegations of reprisals against women and women’s rights defenders has continued.<sup>5</sup> As women increasingly cooperate with the UN, including online, they face arrest and detention, harassment, and intimidation.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Secretary-General. Annual report of the United Nations Secretary-General. Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. September 2021, UN Symbol: A/HRC/48/28.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Secretary-General. Annual report of the United Nations Secretary-General. Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. September 2021, UN Symbol: A/HRC/48/28.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, Secretary-General. Annual report of the United Nations Secretary-General. Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. September 2021, UN Symbol: A/HRC/48/28.

<sup>4</sup> Oral presentation by Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ilze Brands Kehris of the report of the Secretary-

General on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, Secretary-General. Annual report of the United Nations Secretary-General. Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. September 2020, UN Symbol: A/HRC/45/36

<sup>6</sup> Oral presentation by Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ilze Brands Kehris of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights.



Additionally, as with each annual report on reprisals, the report summarises and provides information on reported allegations of intimidation and reprisals in different UN member States. In 2021 the Secretary-General presents information on cases in the following countries:

Belarus	Saudi Arabia
Burundi	South Sudan
Cambodia	Sri Lanka
Cameroon	Syrian Arab Republic
Central African Republic	Tanzania
China	Turkmenistan
Democratic Republic of the Congo	United Arab Emirates
Egypt	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Ethiopia	Viet Nam
India	Yemen
Indonesia	
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	
Israel	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	
Libya	
Maldives	
Mali	
Mexico	
Myanmar	
Nicaragua	
Pakistan	
Philippines	

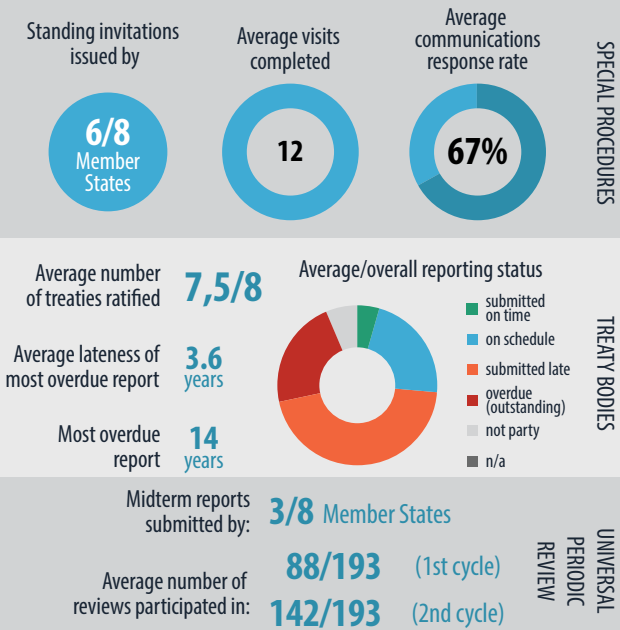
Finally, and again in line with previous annual reports, the document summarises responses it has received from States to the allegations made in previous reports. In 2021, the Secretary-General reports having received responses from the following countries:

Belarus	Mali
Burundi	Mexico
Cambodia	Myanmar
Cameroon	Nicaragua
Central African Republic	Pakistan
China	Philippines
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Saudi Arabia
Egypt	South Sudan
Ethiopia	Sri Lanka
India	Syria
Indonesia	Tanzania
Iran	Turkmenistan
Israel	United Arab Emirates
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Libya	Viet Nam
Maldives	Yemen

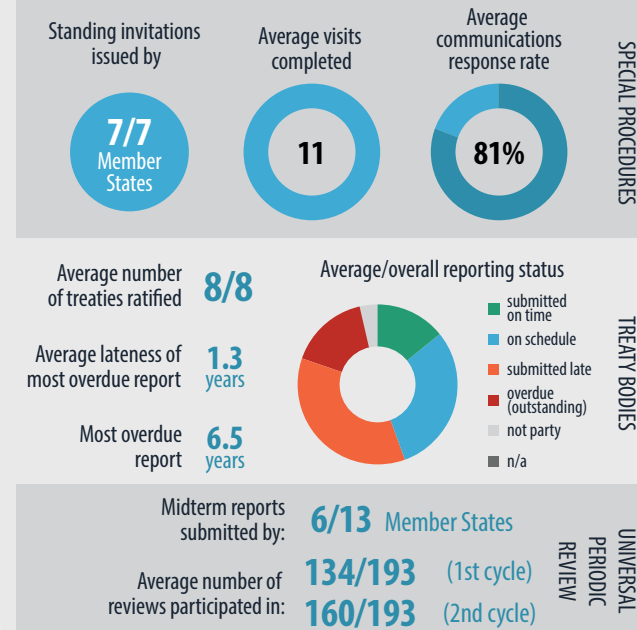


# GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF COOPERATION

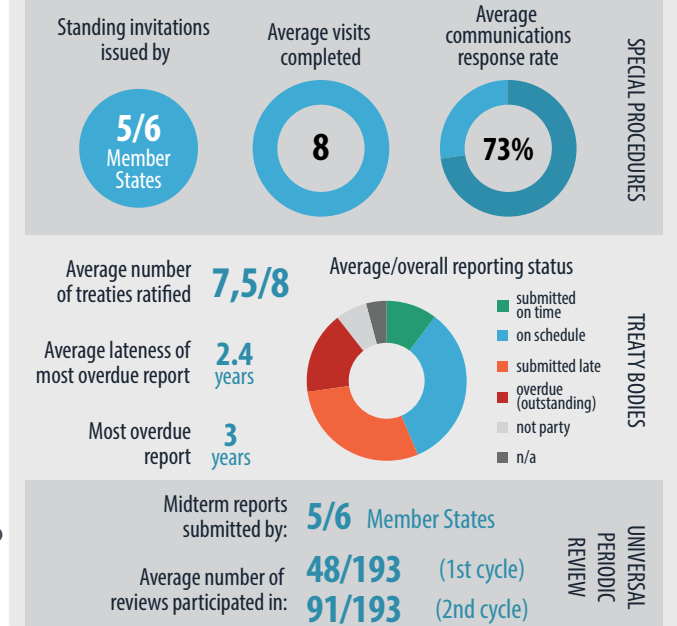
## Latin America and Caribbean Group



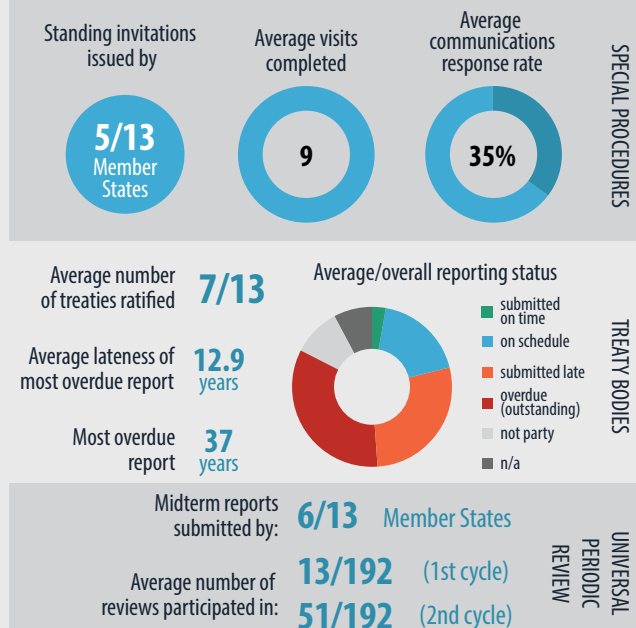
## Western Europe and Others Group



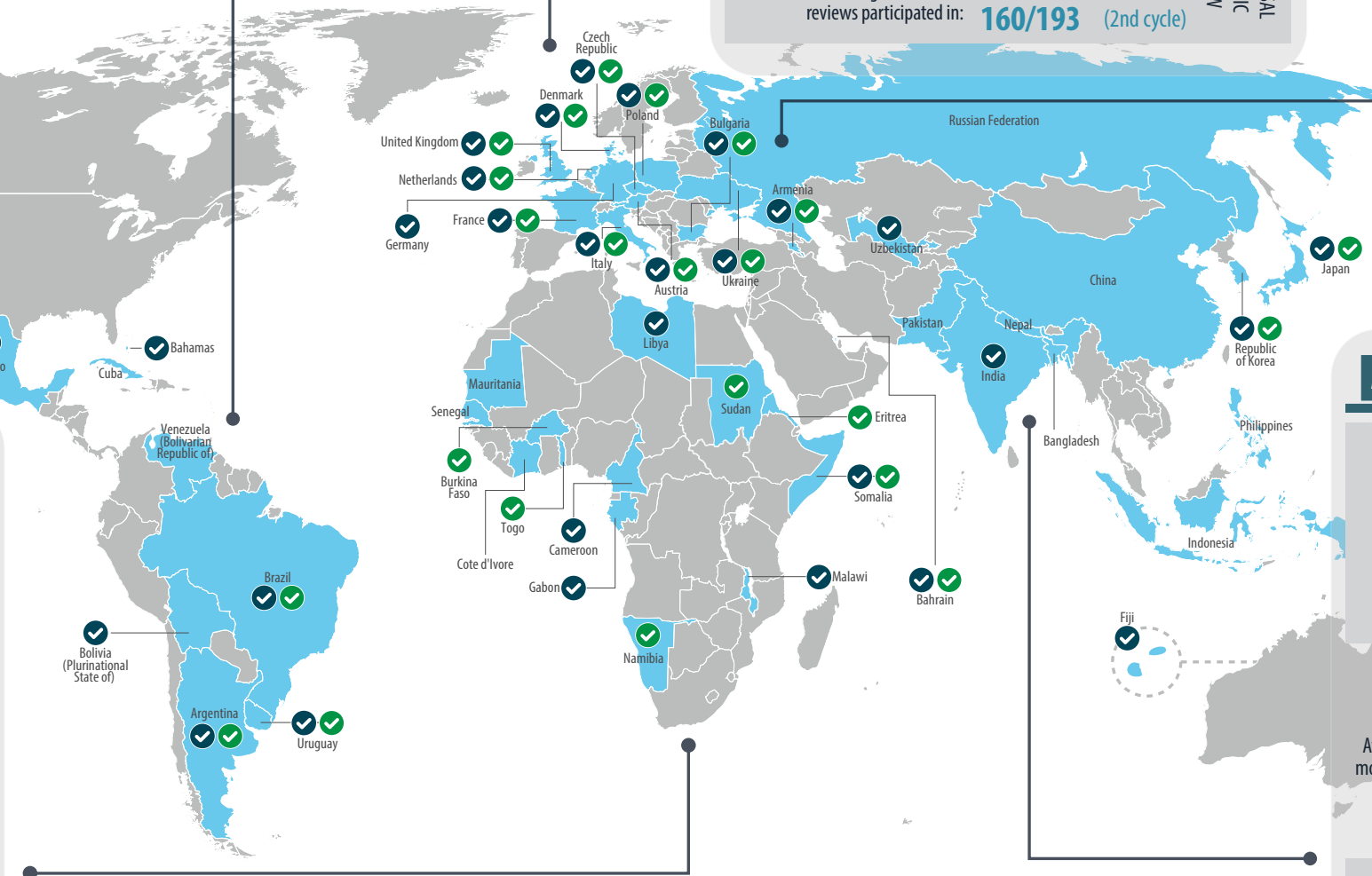
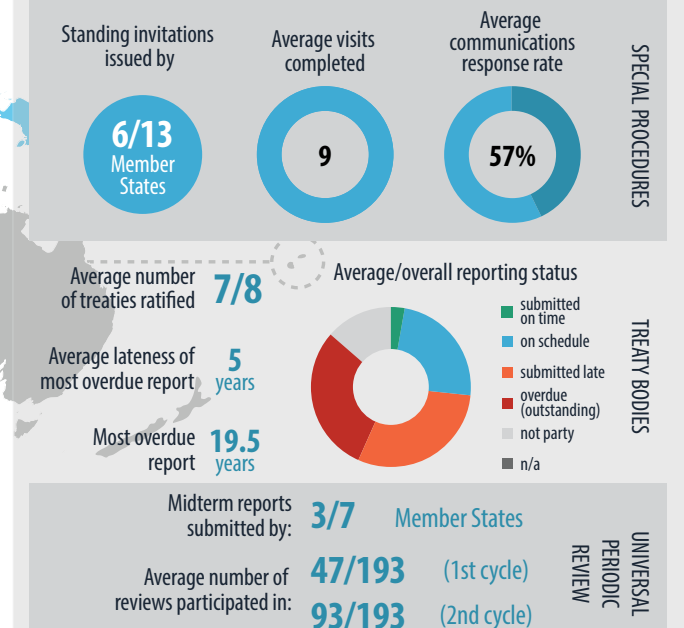
## Eastern European Group



## African Group



## Asia Pacific Group



**Note:** For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.



# African Group (AG)

## Overview of members

		Voluntary contribution to OHCHR (2020)	Voluntary contribution to OHCHR (2021)	NHRI accreditation status	Membership terms to date
Burkina Faso				Lapsed accreditation	3
Cameroon				A	3
Cote d'Ivoire				A B	3
Eritrea				—	1
Gabon				—	4
Libya				B	2
Malawi				A	1
Mauritania				A	2
Namibia				A	2
Senegal				B	4
Somalia				—	1
Sudan				—	1
Togo				A	2

**Note:** For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

## Principal sponsorship

During 2021, African members of the Council led (as main sponsors/part of a core group) on a number of important resolutions, covering both thematic and country-specific issues.

At a thematic level, in 2021 members of the African Group (AG) led, *inter alia*, on the following issues:

**Cote d'Ivoire:** Implications of COVID-19 on young people.

**Sudan:** Special Rapporteur on climate change.

At country-specific level, in 2021, African members led, *inter alia*, on the following situations:

**Malawi:** Promoting reconciliation, accountability, and human rights in Sri Lanka.

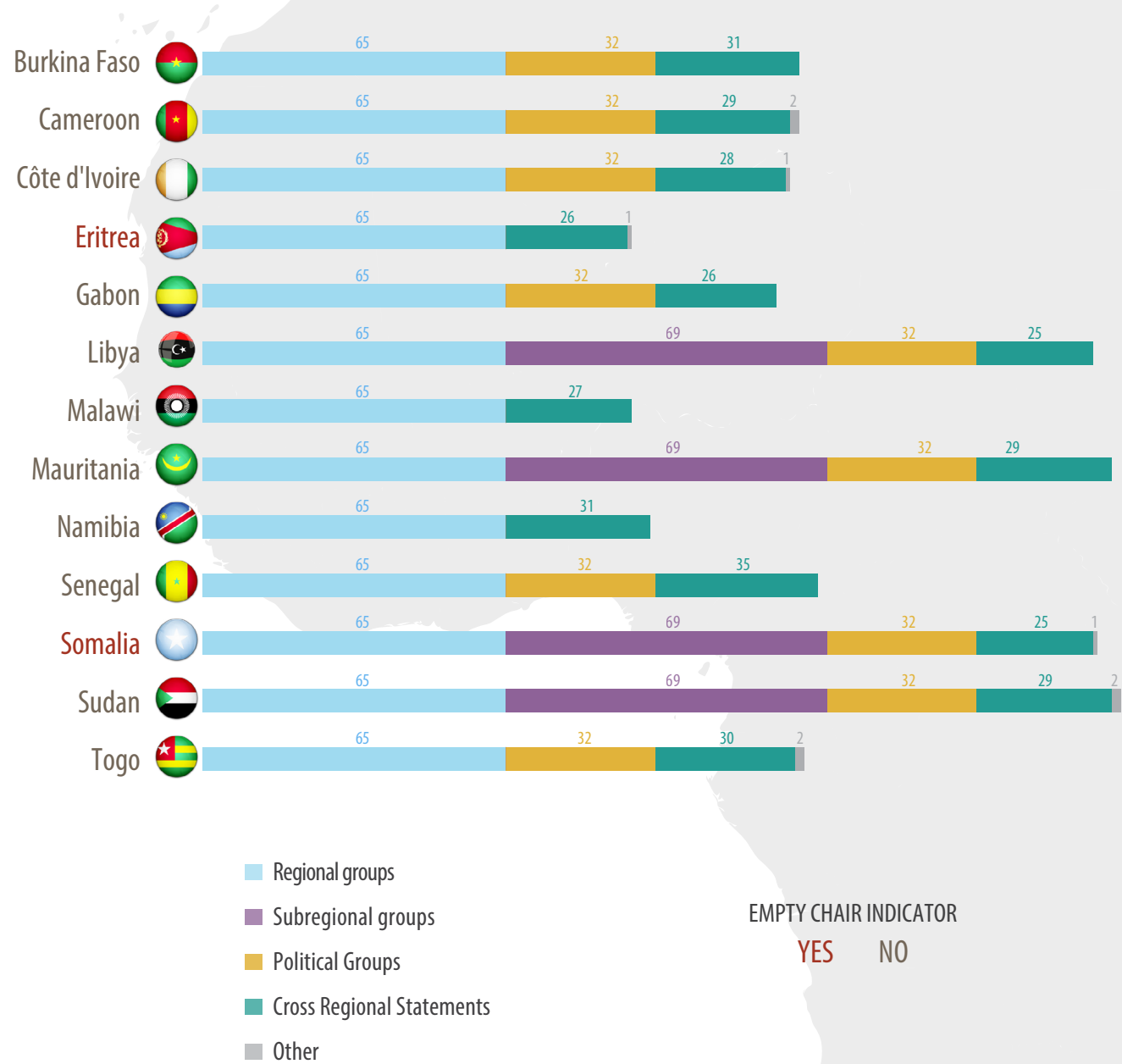
**Somalia:** Assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights.

Notwithstanding such individual leadership, it is important to note that African States often work through their regional group. In 2021, the African Group led on, *inter alia*, the following resolutions: racism; menstrual hygiene management; harmful practices related to accusations of witchcraft and ritual attacks; people of African Descent, non-repatriation of funds; and mandate of the Independent Expert on the human rights of persons with albinism.

The African Group also led on Council initiatives aimed at the delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in certain States, including the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, South Sudan, and Libya.



# Contribution to Council debates, panel discussions, and dialogues in 2021



**Note:** This bar chart shows the number of joint statements each State has joined during Council general debates, panel discussions, and interactive dialogues with the Special Procedures. The empty chair symbol indicates whether, overall, the country, as a Council member, participated (individual statements) in more than 10% of panel discussions, general debates, and interactive dialogues. For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

# Voting analysis

In 2021, when a vote was called on country-specific resolutions tabled under agenda item 2 (report of the High Commissioner), AG members of the Council tended to abstain or vote against. The exception was the resolution on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which most AG members supported (except Cameroon, Malawi, and Togo - voted against). Other notable exceptions include: Côte d'Ivoire and Malawi's votes in favour of the resolution on Sri Lanka; and Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Namibia, Sudan, and Togo's votes in favour of the text on Afghanistan.

Turning to resolutions tabled under item 4 (human rights situations that require the Council's attention), in the absence of consensus, members of the AG tended to abstain or vote against. Nonetheless, there were some exceptions including, *inter alia*:

- Malawi voted in favour of most item 4 texts, but abstained during voting on the resolutions on Belarus and South Sudan, and voted against the text on Burundi.
- Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Togo voted in favour of the three resolutions on the situation in Syria; and Libya and Somalia supported two of these texts.
- Eritrea voted in favour of the resolution on the situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

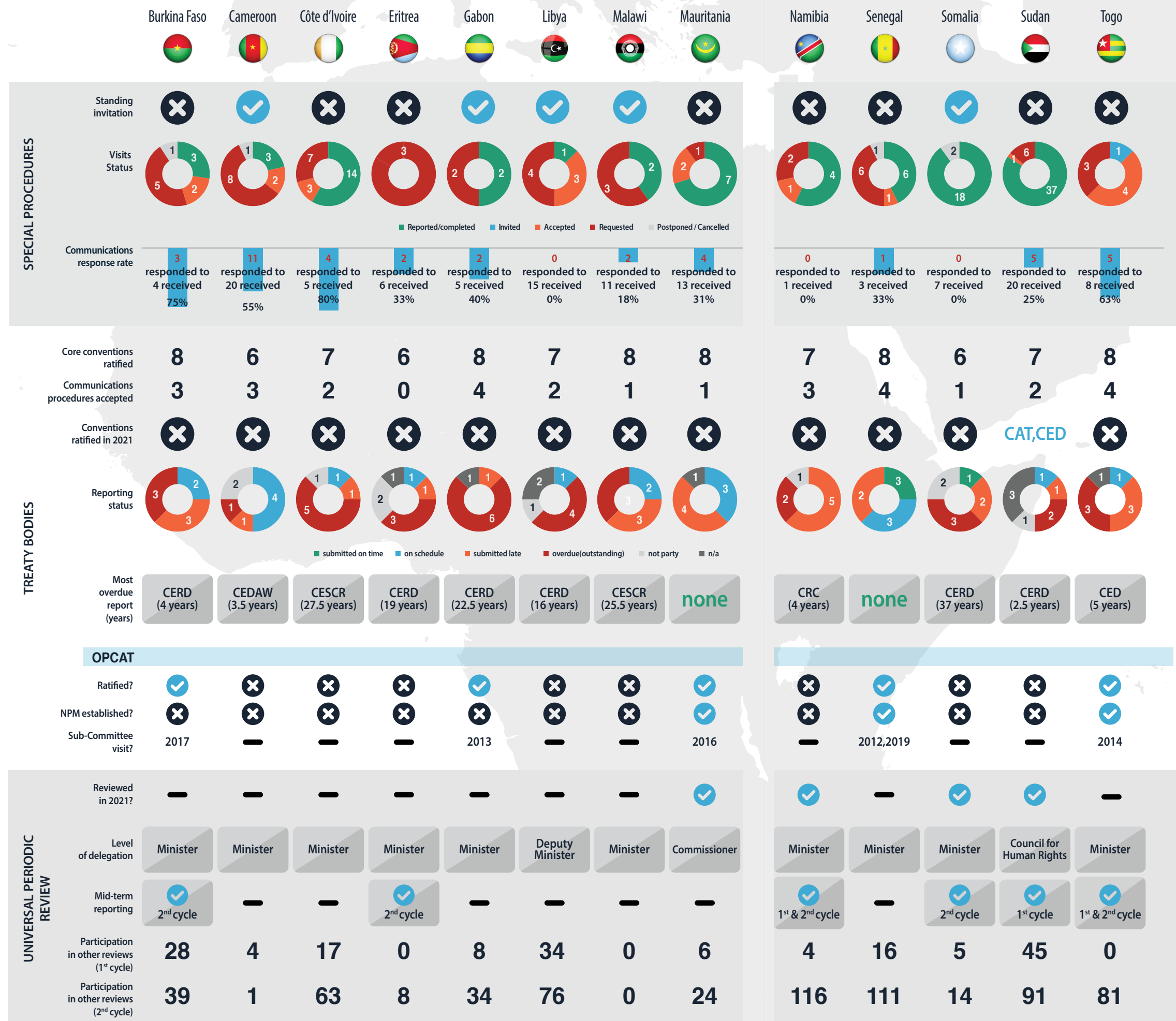
During voting on item 7 resolutions (Occupied Palestinian Territories), African States tended to support all texts. The exceptions were Cameroon, Malawi, and Togo, which tended to abstain or vote against.

Most AG members voted against or abstained during voting on the two item 10 (technical assistance and capacity-building) texts for which a vote was requested in 2021, namely the resolutions on cooperation with Georgia and Ukraine. However, Libya and Malawi supported both texts and Somalia voted in favour of the resolution on cooperation with Georgia.

For thematic resolutions, when a vote was called in 2021, AG members either joined consensus on or voted in favour of nearly all adopted texts. Notable exceptions include, *inter alia*:

- AG members were divided during the voting on the text on the death penalty: Cameroon, Libya, Mauritania, Somalia, and Sudan voted against; Eritrea, Malawi, and Senegal abstained; and Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Namibia, and Togo voted in favour.
- During voting on the resolution on the negative impact of the legacies of colonialism, Libya, Mauritania, Senegal, and Togo abstained.
- Eritrea, Gabon, and Libya abstained during voting on the resolution on human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS.
- Libya and Malawi abstained during voting on resolution on mutually beneficial cooperation.
- Eritrea and Cameroon abstained during voting on the text on human rights on the internet.

## Cooperation with human rights mechanisms
























Ratification and reporting is recorded for eight 'core UN human rights conventions' which include: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

**Note:** for more comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.



# Asia-Pacific Group (APG)

## Overview of members

		Voluntary contribution to OHCHR (2020)	Voluntary contribution to OHCHR (2021)	NHRI accreditation status	Membership terms to date
Bahrain					
Bangladesh					
China					
Fiji					
India					
Indonesia					
Japan					
Marshall Islands					
Nepal					
Pakistan					
Philippines					
Republic of Korea					
Uzbekistan					

**Note:** For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

## Principal sponsorship

During 2021, Asia-Pacific Group (APG) members of the Council led (as main sponsors/part of a core group) on a number of important resolutions, covering both thematic and country-specific issues.

At a thematic level, in 2021, APG members led, *inter alia*, on the following issues:

**Bangladesh:** Climate change.

**China:** Contribution of development to the enjoyment of human rights, mutually beneficial cooperation, and negative impact of the legacies of colonialism.

**Fiji:** Reprisals and mandate of the Special Rapporteur on climate change.

**Indonesia:** The negative impact of corruption, political participation, and enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building.

**Japan:** Civic space and COVID-19.

**Marshall Islands:** Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on climate change.

**Philippines:** Climate change, and implications of COVID-19 on young people.

**Republic of Korea:** Digital technologies, and democracy and the rule of law.

**Uzbekistan:** Implications of COVID-19 on young people.

At a country-specific level, in 2021, APG members led, *inter alia*, on the following resolutions:

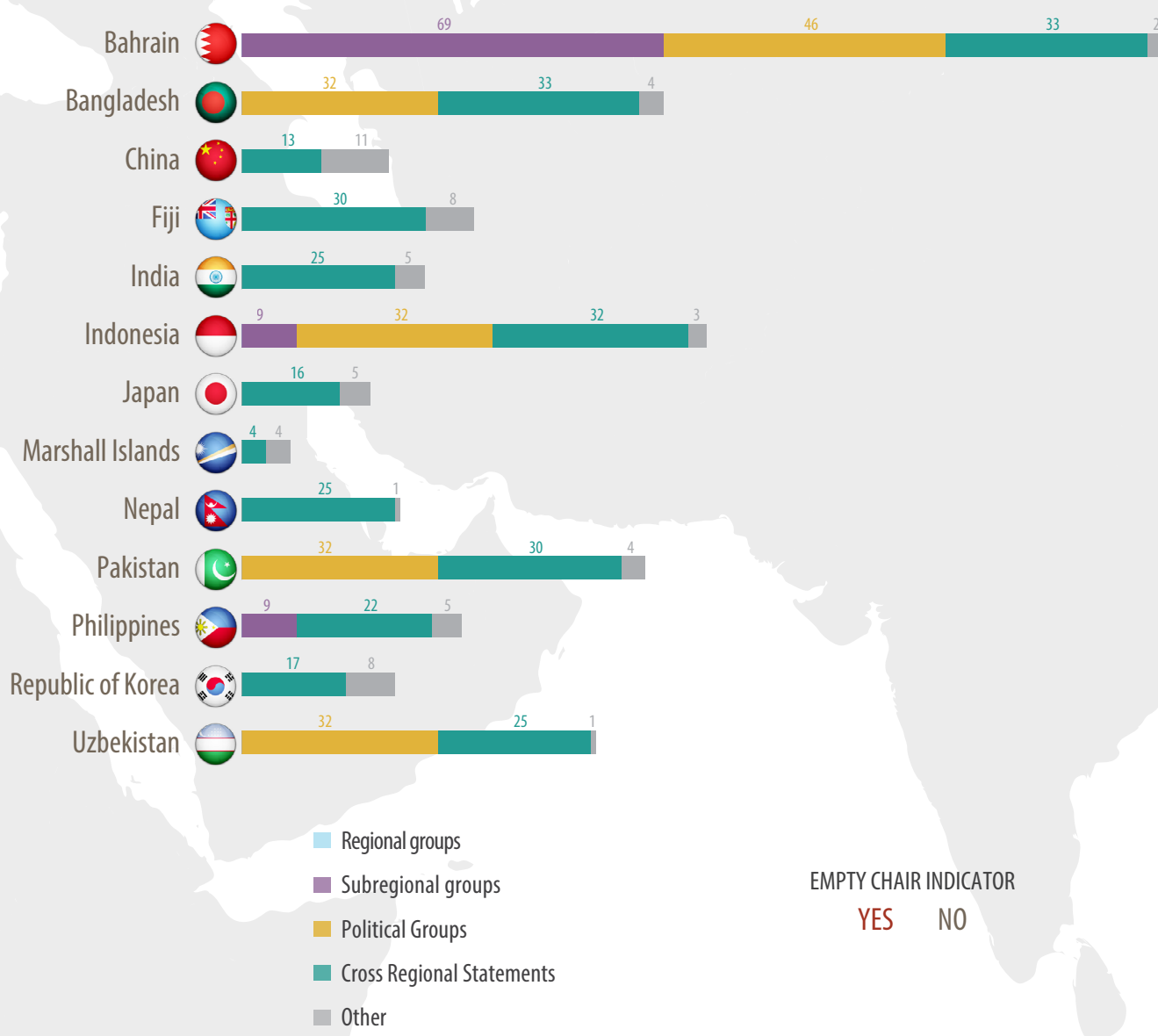
**Japan:** Advisory services and technical assistance for Cambodia.

Notwithstanding such individual leadership, it is important to note that some APG States regularly work through political groups, especially the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab Group. During 2021, the OIC, at thematic level, led on a resolution on combating intolerance and violence based on religion or belief.

At country-specific level, in 2021 the OIC led on the following resolutions: Strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights in Afghanistan, right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan, situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar, and human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

In 2021, the Arab Group led on a country-specific resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen.

# Contribution to Council debates, panel discussions, and dialogues in 2021



**Note:** This bar chart shows the number of joint statements each State has joined during Council general debates, panel discussions, and interactive dialogues with the Special Procedures. The empty chair symbol indicates whether, overall, the country, as a Council member, participated (individual statements) in more than 10% of panel discussions, general debates, and interactive dialogues. For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

## Voting analysis

Regarding country-specific resolutions tabled under agenda items 2 (annual report of the High Commissioner) and 4 (human rights situations that require the Council’s attention), when a vote was called in 2021, APG members tended to abstain or vote against; except for Fiji, Japan, Marshall Islands, and Republic of Korea, which tended to vote in favour of most item 2 and 4 texts.

During voting on item 7 resolutions (Occupied Palestinian Territories), Asia-Pacific members of the Council nearly always voted in favour. The exceptions were Marshall Islands (voted against all texts); Fiji, Philippines (each abstained once), Japan, and Republic of Korea (each voted against once).

Most APG members either abstained or voted against the two item 10 (technical assistance and capacity building) texts for which a vote was requested in 2021, namely a resolution on cooperation with Georgia and a resolution on cooperation with Ukraine. Again, the exception were Fiji, Japan, and the Marshall Islands, which voted in favour of both resolutions, and the Republic of Korea, which voted in favour of the resolution on cooperation with Ukraine.

For thematic resolutions dealing with civil and political rights, APG members:

- Voted in favour of the texts on mercenaries and a global call for concrete action against racism; except Japan, Marshall Islands, and Republic of Korea which voted against the former and abstained during voting on the latter.
- Were divided during voting on the text on the death penalty: Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, and Pakistan voted against; Fiji, Marshall Islands Nepal, Republic of Korea, and Uzbekistan voted in favour; and Indonesia and Philippines abstained.

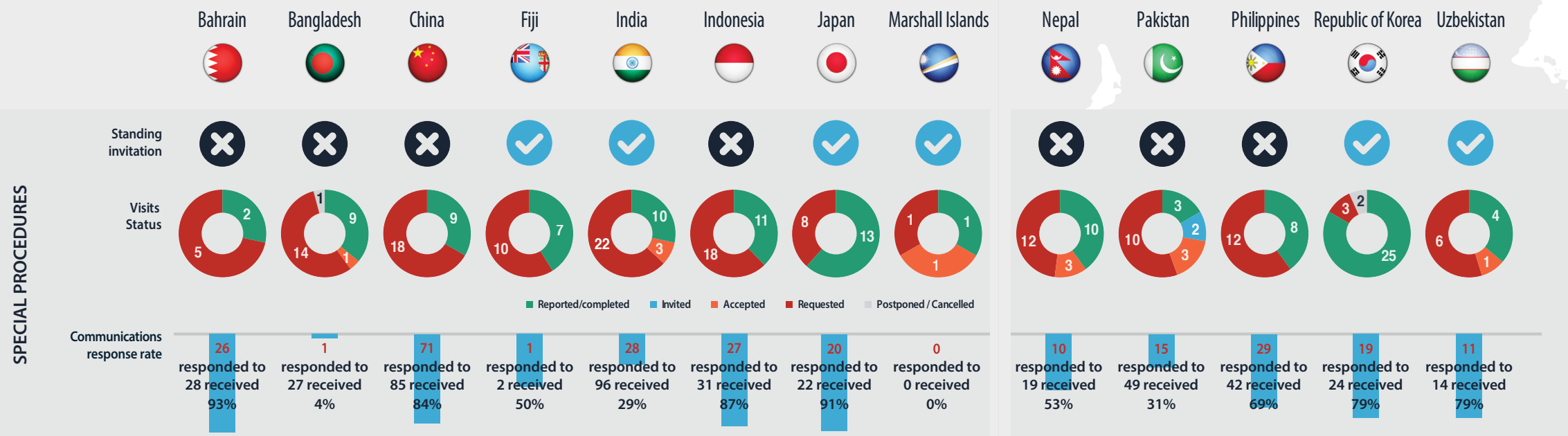
Turning to resolutions dealing with economic, social, and cultural rights, APG members tended to vote in favour of nearly all texts on which a vote was called in 2021. Notable exceptions include:

- Japan, Marshall Islands, and Republic of Korea voted against, and less frequently abstained, during voting on, the resolutions on international solidarity; contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights; the negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin; unilateral coercive measures; international cooperation; mutually beneficial cooperation; and democratic and equitable international order; foreign debt; right to development, (Marshall Islands supported the text on international cooperation).
- China abstained during voting on digital technologies, human rights on the internet, human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS, the right to a clean, safe, healthy, and sustainable environment, and Special Rapporteur on climate change.
- India did not support the resolutions on the right to a clean, safe, healthy, and sustainable environment; the Special Rapporteur on climate change (abstained twice); and mutually beneficial cooperation (voted against once).
- Uzbekistan and Fiji abstained during voting on mutually beneficial cooperation.
- Bahrain and Uzbekistan abstained during voting on the negative impact of the legacies of colonialism.

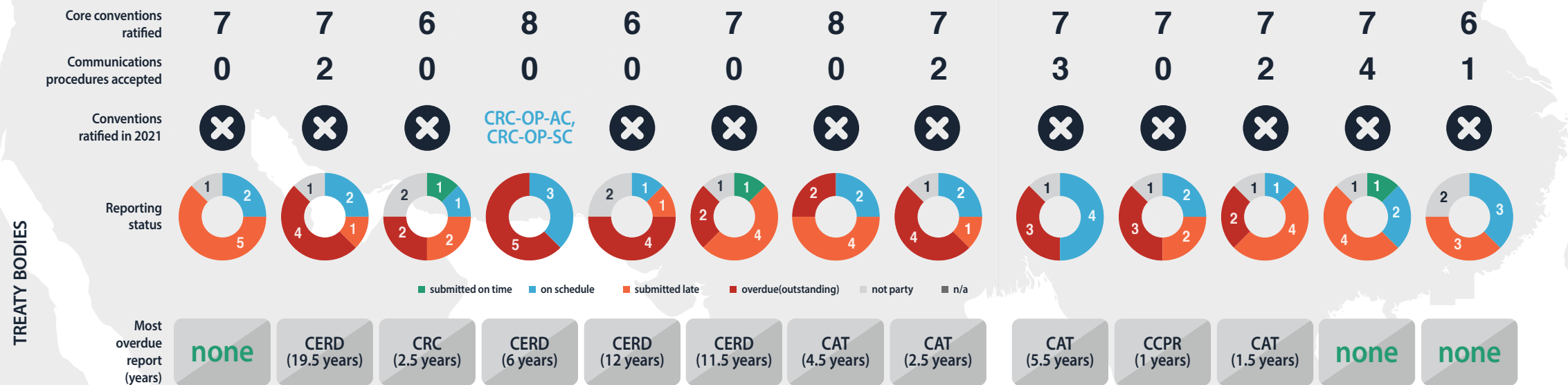


## Cooperation with human rights mechanisms

### SPECIAL PROCEDURES



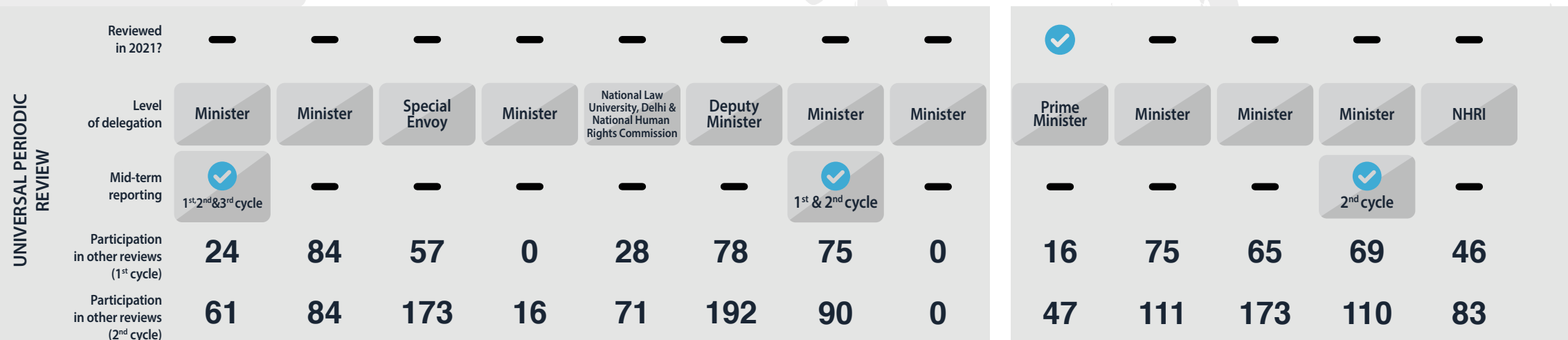
### TREATY BODIES



### OPCAT



### UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW



\* Ratification and Reporting is recorded for eight 'core UN human rights conventions' which include: the ICCPR, the ICESCR, CAT, the CPED, the CEDAW, the CRC, the CERD, and the CRPD.

**Note:** for more comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

# Eastern European Group (EEG)

## Overview of members

		Voluntary contribution to OHCHR (2020)	Voluntary contribution to OHCHR (2021)	NHRI accreditation status	Membership terms to date
Armenia				A	1
Bulgaria				A B	1
Czech Republic				—	3
Poland				A	3
Russian Federation				A	4
Ukraine				A	4

## Principal sponsorship

During 2021, Eastern European Group (EEG) members of the Council led (as main sponsors/part of a core group) on a number of important resolutions, covering both thematic and country-specific issues.

At a thematic level, in 2021, EEG States led, *inter alia*, on the following issues:

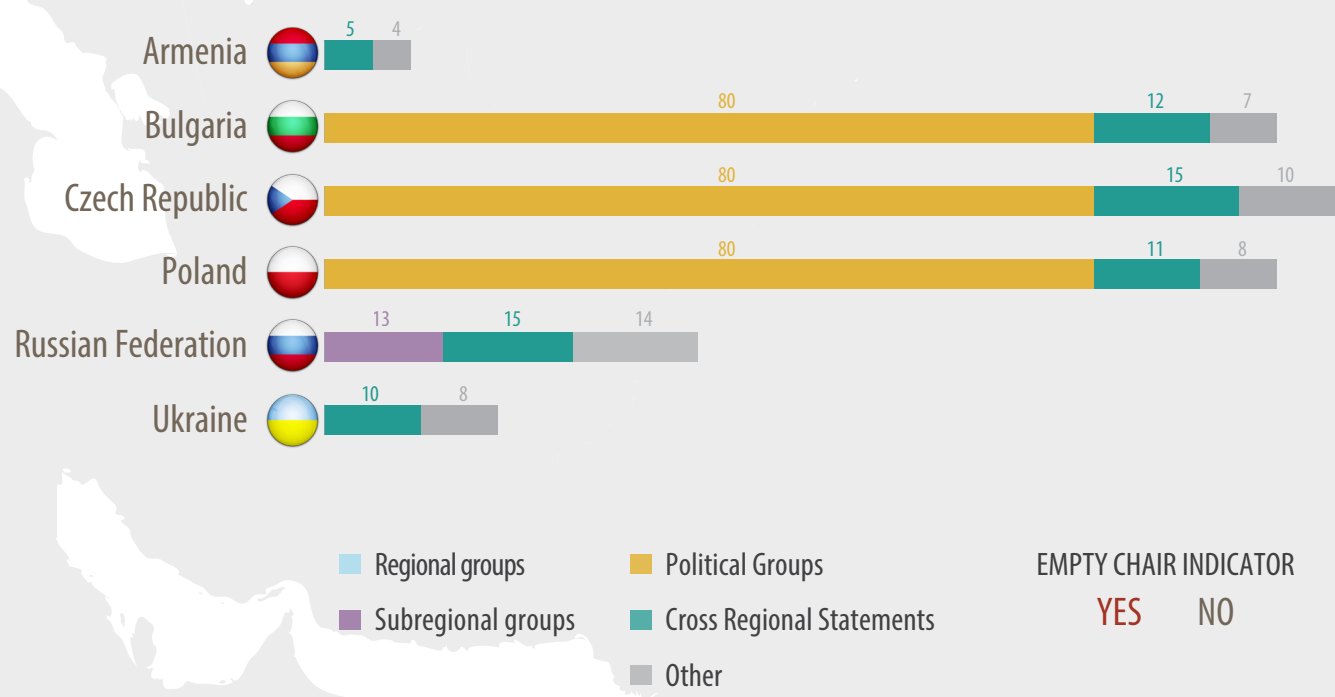
**Czech Republic:** Political participation.

**Poland:** The negative impact of corruption; and child, early and forced marriage in times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the country-specific level, in 2021, EEG members of the Council led, *inter alia*, on the following resolutions:

**Ukraine:** Cooperation with and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights.

## Contribution to Council debates, panel discussions, and dialogues in 2021



**Note:** This bar chart shows the number of joint statements each State has joined during Council general debates, panel discussions, and interactive dialogues with the Special Procedures. The empty chair symbol indicates whether, overall, the country, as a Council member, participated (individual statements) in more than 10% of panel discussions, general debates, and interactive dialogues. For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

**Note:** For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.



Voting analysis

Regarding country-specific resolutions tabled under agenda items 2 (report of the High Commissioner) and 4 (human rights situations that require the Council’s attention), when a vote was called in 2021, EEG members of the Council tended to vote in favour of most texts. Notable exceptions include:

- Russia voted against all country-specific resolutions, except for the item 2 text on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, on which Russia voted in favour.
- Armenia tended to abstain or vote against all texts, but supported the item 2 resolutions on Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Eritrea, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and the item 4 texts on South Sudan and Burundi.
- For the item 2 resolution on human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Bulgaria voted against; and Czech Republic and Ukraine abstained.
- Ukraine did not vote on the resolution on the situation in Yemen (rejected by vote).

Turning to resolutions tabled under agenda item 7 (Occupied Palestinian Territories), EEG members of the Council mostly voted in favour. However, Czech Republic voted against all texts; Bulgaria, Poland, and Ukraine voted against the resolution on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan; and Bulgaria and Ukraine abstained during voting on the resolution on Israeli settlements.

Most EEG members (except Russia and Armenia - voted against) voted in favour of the item 10 (technical assistance and capacity building) texts for which a vote was requested in 2021, namely a resolution on cooperation with Georgia and a resolution on cooperation with Ukraine.

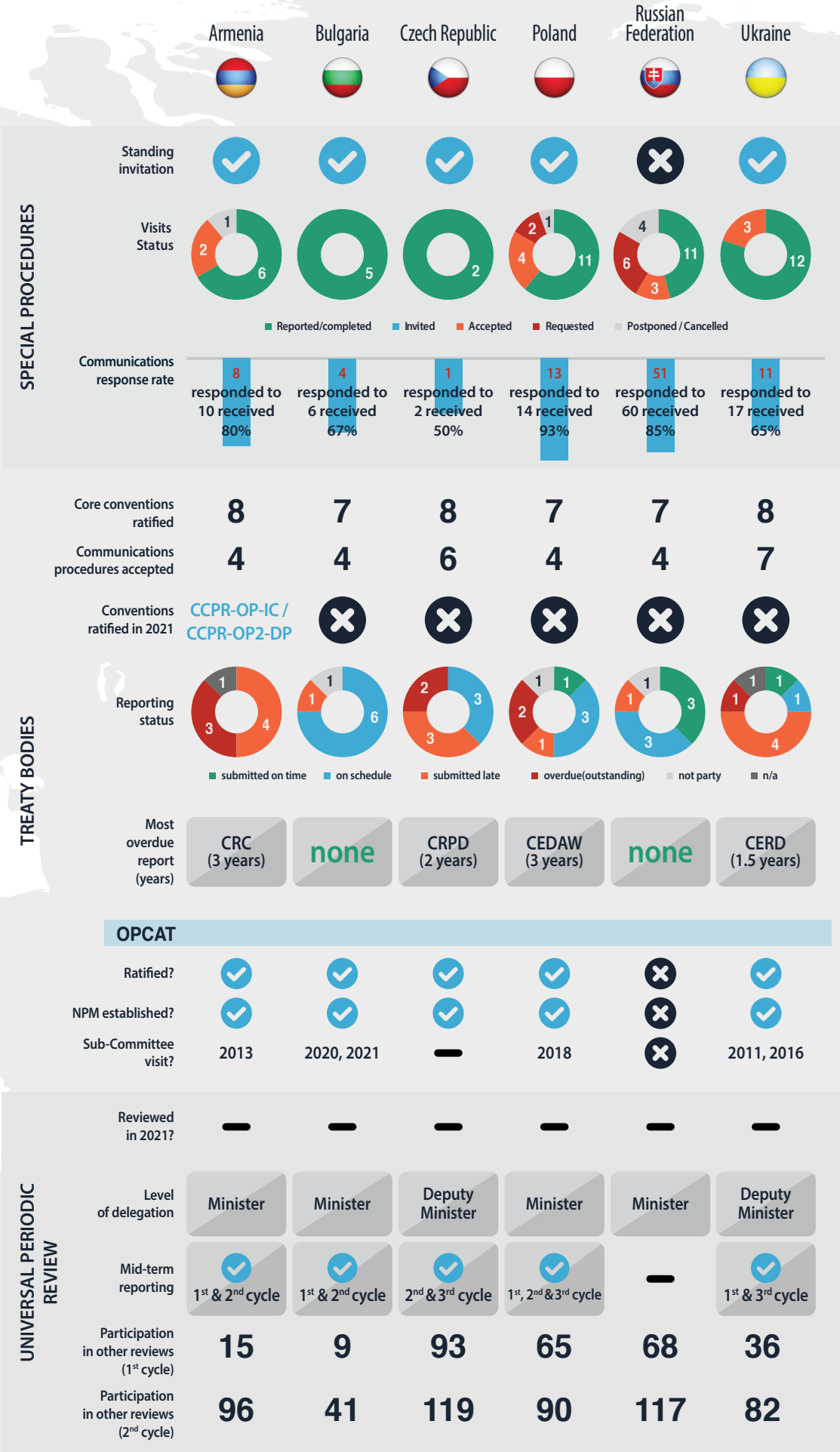
For thematic resolutions dealing with civil and political rights, all EEG members supported the resolution on the death penalty; but were divided during voting on the texts on mercenaries and a global call for concrete action against racism: Armenia and Russia voted in favour; and Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, and Ukraine tended to vote against and to a lesser extent to abstain.

Regarding economic, social, and cultural rights, EEG members of the Council tended to vote in favour of the resolutions on digital technologies; human rights on the Internet; climate change; human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS; the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment; and the Special Rapporteur on climate change; and against all other texts. Notable exceptions include: Russia -which consistently supported all resolutions except climate change; the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment; the Special Rapporteur on climate change; and human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS; and Armenia’s votes in favour of the resolutions on international solidarity, non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin, and negative impact of colonialism.

\* Ratification and Reporting is recorded for eight ‘core UN human rights conventions’ which include: the ICCPR, the ICESCR, CAT, the CPED, the CEDAW, the CRC, the CERD, and the CRPD.





















**Note:** for more comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

Cooperation with human rights mechanisms



# Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC)

## Overview of members

		Voluntary contribution to OHCHR (2020)	Voluntary contribution to OHCHR (2021)	NHRI accreditation status	Membership terms to date
Argentina					
Bahamas					
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)					
Brazil					
Cuba					
Mexico					
Uruguay					
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)					

**Note:** For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

## Principal sponsorship

During 2021, Latin America and the Caribbean Group (GRULAC) members of the Council led (as main sponsors/part of a core group) on a number of important resolutions, covering both thematic and country-specific issues.

At a thematic level, in 2021, GRULAC members of the Council led, *inter alia*, on the following issues:

**Argentina:** The negative impact of corruption; older persons; and child, early and forced marriage in times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Bahamas:** Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on climate change.

**Brazil:** The negative impact of corruption; older persons; digital technologies; privacy in the digital age; mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy; human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS; enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building; and human rights on the Internet.

**Cuba:** International solidarity; Social Forum; foreign debt; mandate of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; the right to food; mercenaries; and democratic and equitable international order.

**Mexico:** Privacy in the digital age; mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy; migrants; death penalty; and indigenous peoples.

**Uruguay:** Child, early and forced marriage in times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic; and reprisals.

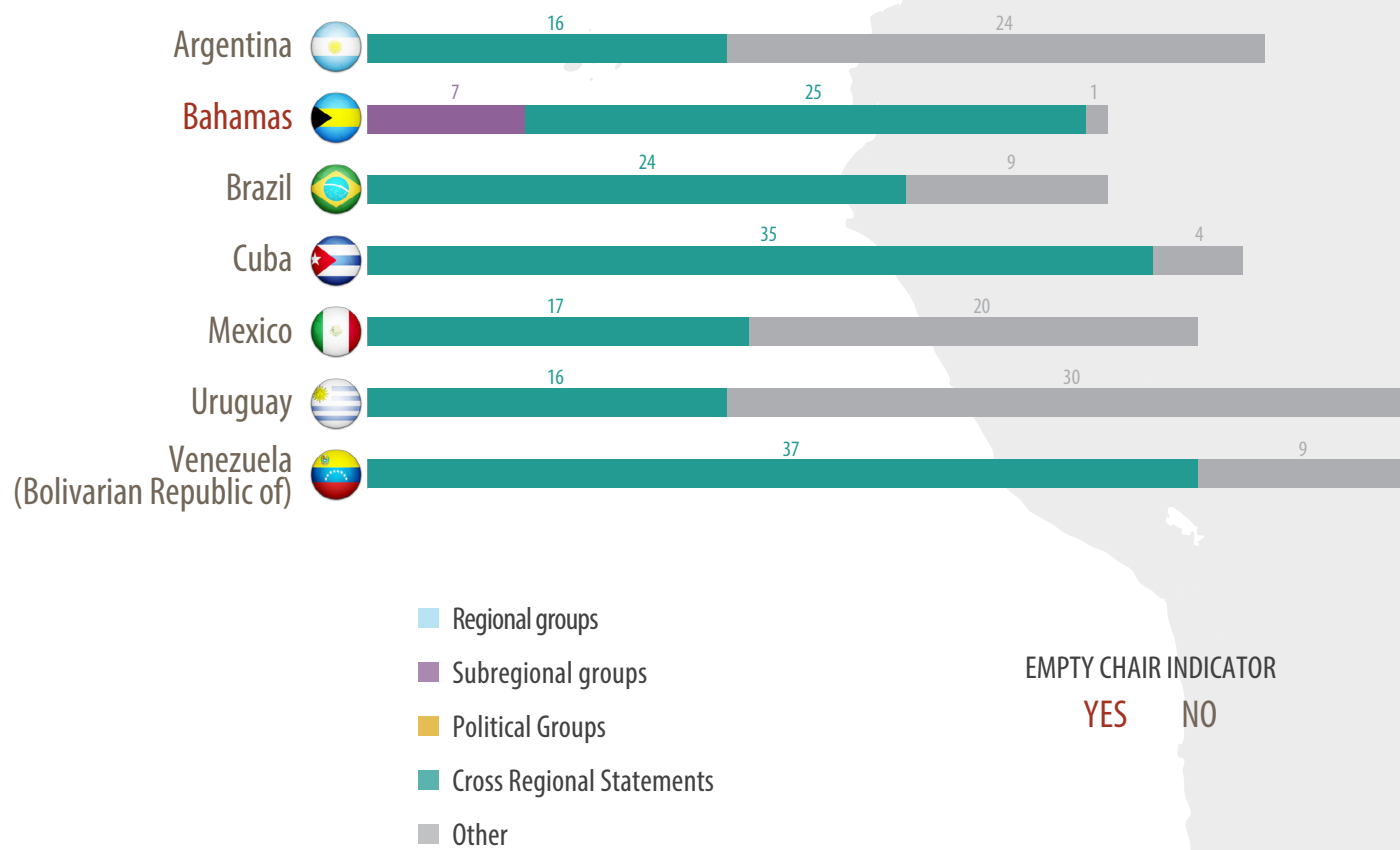
**Venezuela:** Negative impact of the legacies of colonialism.

At country-specific level, in 2021, GRULAC members of the Council led, *inter alia*, on the following resolutions:

**Brazil:** Promotion and protection of human rights in Nicaragua.



### Contribution to Council debates, panel discussions, and dialogues in 2021



**Note:** This bar chart shows the number of joint statements each State has joined during Council general debates, panel discussions, and interactive dialogues with the Special Procedures. The empty chair symbol indicates whether, overall, the country, as a Council member, participated (individual statements) in more than 10% of panel discussions, general debates, and interactive dialogues. For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

### Voting analysis

Regarding country-specific resolutions tabled under agenda items 2 (report of the High Commissioner) and 4 (human rights situations that require the Council's attention), when a vote was called during 2021, GRULAC members were divided:

- Argentina, Bahamas, Mexico, and Uruguay consistently voted in favour of all texts (the only exceptions were Bahamas' abstention during voting on the item 2 text on the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Uruguay's abstention during voting on the item 4 text on Iran).
- Bolivia, Cuba, and Venezuela tended to vote against or (less frequently) to abstain, although they all supported the item 2 text on the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- Brazil voted in favour of all texts except the item 2 text on the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the item 4 resolutions on Syria (September text), Iran, and Sudan.

Turning to country-specific resolutions tabled under agenda item 7 (Occupied Palestinian Territories), GRULAC members voted mostly in favour. However, Bahamas, Brazil, and Uruguay abstained once, and Brazil once voted against.

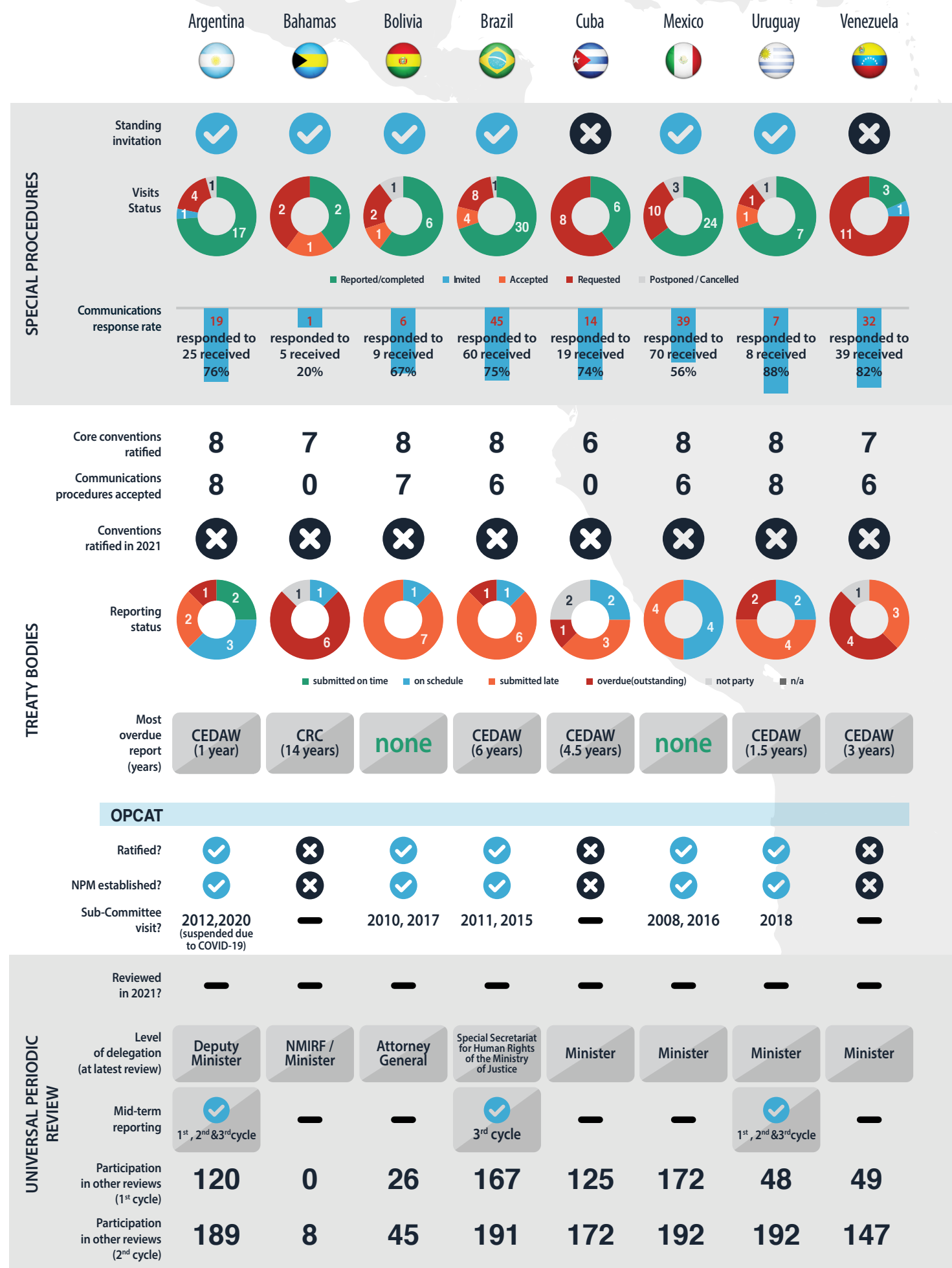
Most GRULAC members voted against or abstained during voting on the texts under item 10 (technical assistance and

capacity building) for which a vote was requested in 2021, namely a resolution on cooperation with Georgia and a resolution on cooperation with Ukraine. The exception were Bahamas and Mexico, which consistently voted in favour.

Turning to thematic resolutions, where a vote was called in 2021, GRULAC members tended to support most texts dealing with civil and political rights. Exceptions include Brazil and Mexico's abstentions during voting on the text on mercenaries; Uruguay's abstention during voting on a global call for concrete action against racism, and Bahamas' vote against the text on the death penalty.

Regarding economic, social, and cultural rights texts, GRULAC members tended to vote in favour of most texts on which a vote was called in 2021. However, Brazil and Mexico abstained or voted against the texts on unilateral coercive measures; enhancement of international cooperation; foreign debt; right to development; and democratic and equitable international order; Mexico also abstained during voting on non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin and international solidarity; and Bahamas abstained during voting on the texts on contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights, non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin, foreign debt, and mutually beneficial cooperation.

## Cooperation with human rights mechanisms



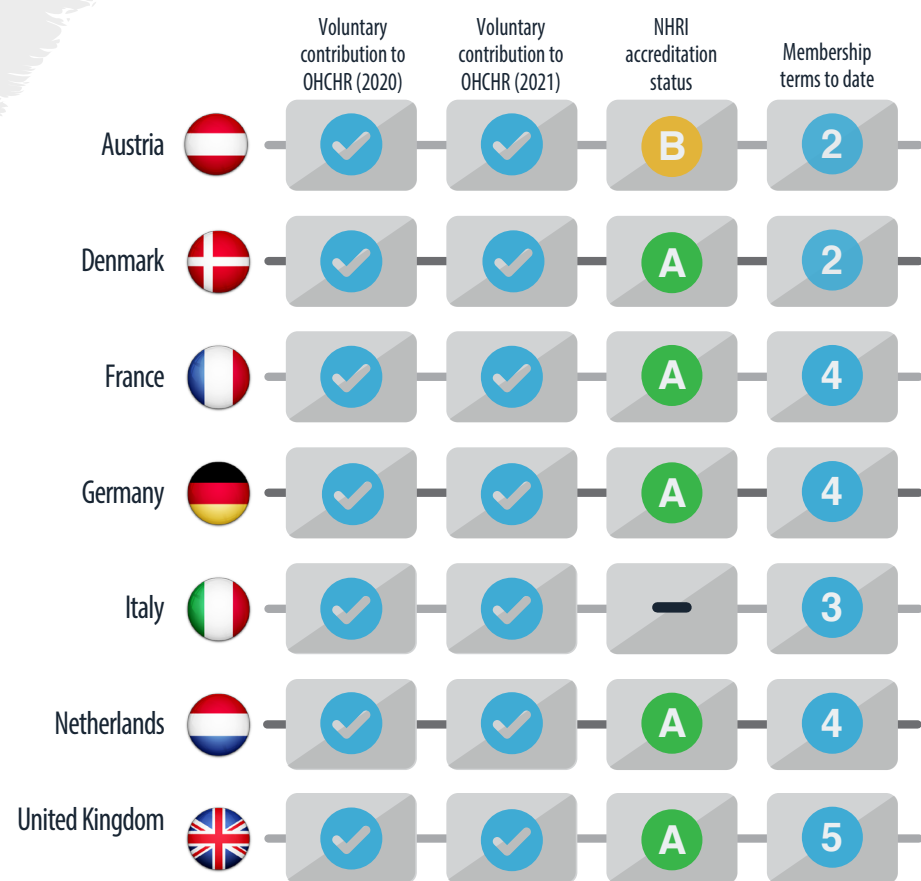
\* Ratification and Reporting is recorded for eight 'core UN human rights conventions' which include: the ICCPR, the ICESCR, CAT, the CPED, the CEDAW, the CRC, the CERD, and the CRPD.

**Note:** for more comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.



# Western European and Others Group (WEOG)

## Overview of members



**Note:** For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

## Principal sponsorship

During 2021, the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) members of the Council led (as main sponsors/ part of a core group) on a number of important resolutions, covering both thematic and country-specific issues.

At thematic level, in 2021, WEOG members of the Council led, *inter alia*, on the following issues:

**Austria:** The negative impact of corruption; digital technologies; privacy in the digital age; and mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy.

**Denmark:** Digital technologies; and torture.

**France:** Death penalty.

**Germany:** Privacy in the digital age; and mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy.

**Italy:** Child, early and forced marriage in times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic; and implications of COVID-19 on young people.

**Netherlands:** Child, early and forced marriage in times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic; and political participation.

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:** The negative impact of corruption; child, early and forced marriage in times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic; and equal right to education by every girl.

At country-specific level, in 2021, WEOG members of the Council led, *inter alia*, on the following resolutions:

**France:** Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (three texts).

**Germany:** Situation of human rights in the Sudan; promoting reconciliation, accountability and human

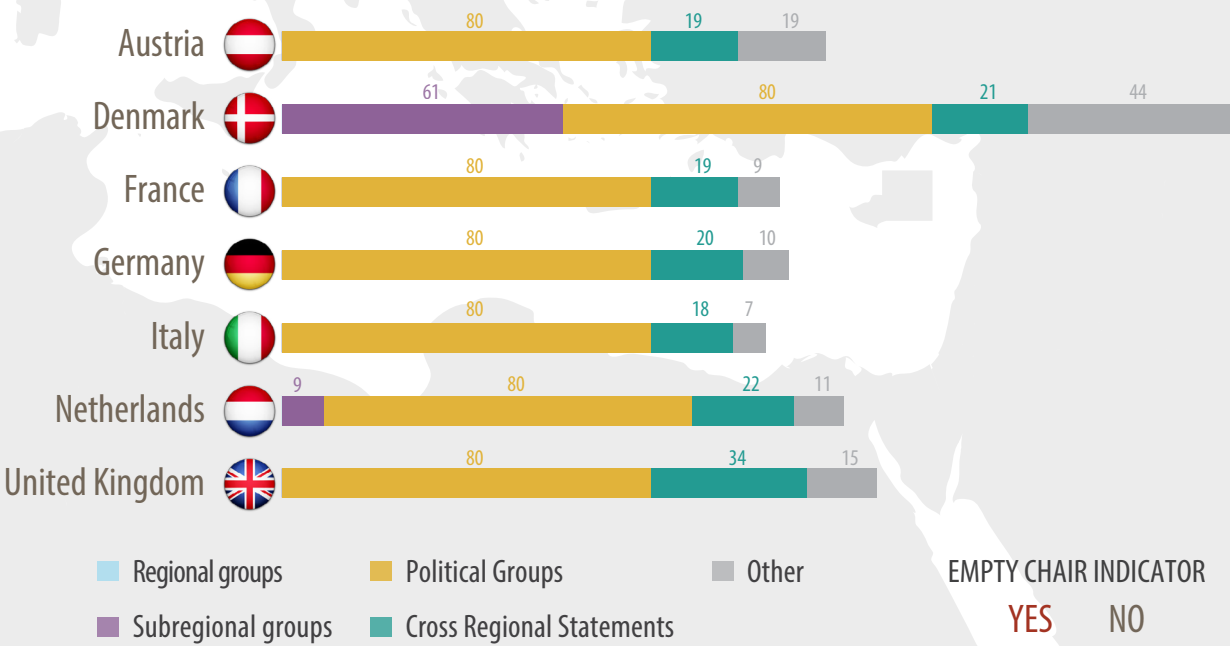
rights in Sri Lanka; and situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (three texts).

**Italy:** Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (three texts).

**Netherlands:** Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (three texts).

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:** Situation of human rights in the Sudan; Human rights implications of the crisis in Myanmar; situation of human rights in South Sudan; promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka; situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (three texts); situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; and assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights. Notwithstanding such individual leadership, it is

## Contribution to Council debates, panel discussions, and dialogues in 2021



**Note:** This bar chart shows the number of joint statements each State has joined during Council general debates, panel discussions, and interactive dialogues with the Special Procedures. The empty chair symbol indicates whether, overall, the country, as a Council member, participated (individual statements) in more than 10% of panel discussions, general debates, and interactive dialogues. For comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

important to note that some WEOG Council members regularly work through the **European Union (EU)**. In 2021, at thematic level, the EU led resolutions on: freedom of religion or belief and mandate of the Special Rapporteur on climate change.

At country-specific level, the EU led on the following resolutions: Situation of human rights in Afghanistan; situation of human rights in Belarus in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election and in its aftermath; situation of human rights in Belarus; situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; situation of human rights in Myanmar; situation of human rights in Eritrea; situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia; and situation of human rights in Burundi.

Voting analysis

In 2021, when a vote was called on agenda **item 2** (reports of the High Commissioner) and **item 4** (human rights situations that require the Council’s attention) country-specific resolutions, WEOG members consistently voted in favour. The exception to this rule was the item 2 text on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; on which Austria voted against and the United Kingdom abstained.

Concerning votes on item 7 (Occupied Palestinian Territories) resolutions, WEOG members consistently voted against the resolution on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan, but in favour of all other texts. However, the United Kingdom voted against all texts, and Austria abstained during voting on the text on Israeli settlements.

All WEOG members voted in favour of the texts under **item 10** (technical assistance and capacity building) for which a vote was requested in 2021, namely a resolution on cooperation with Georgia and a resolution on cooperation with Ukraine.

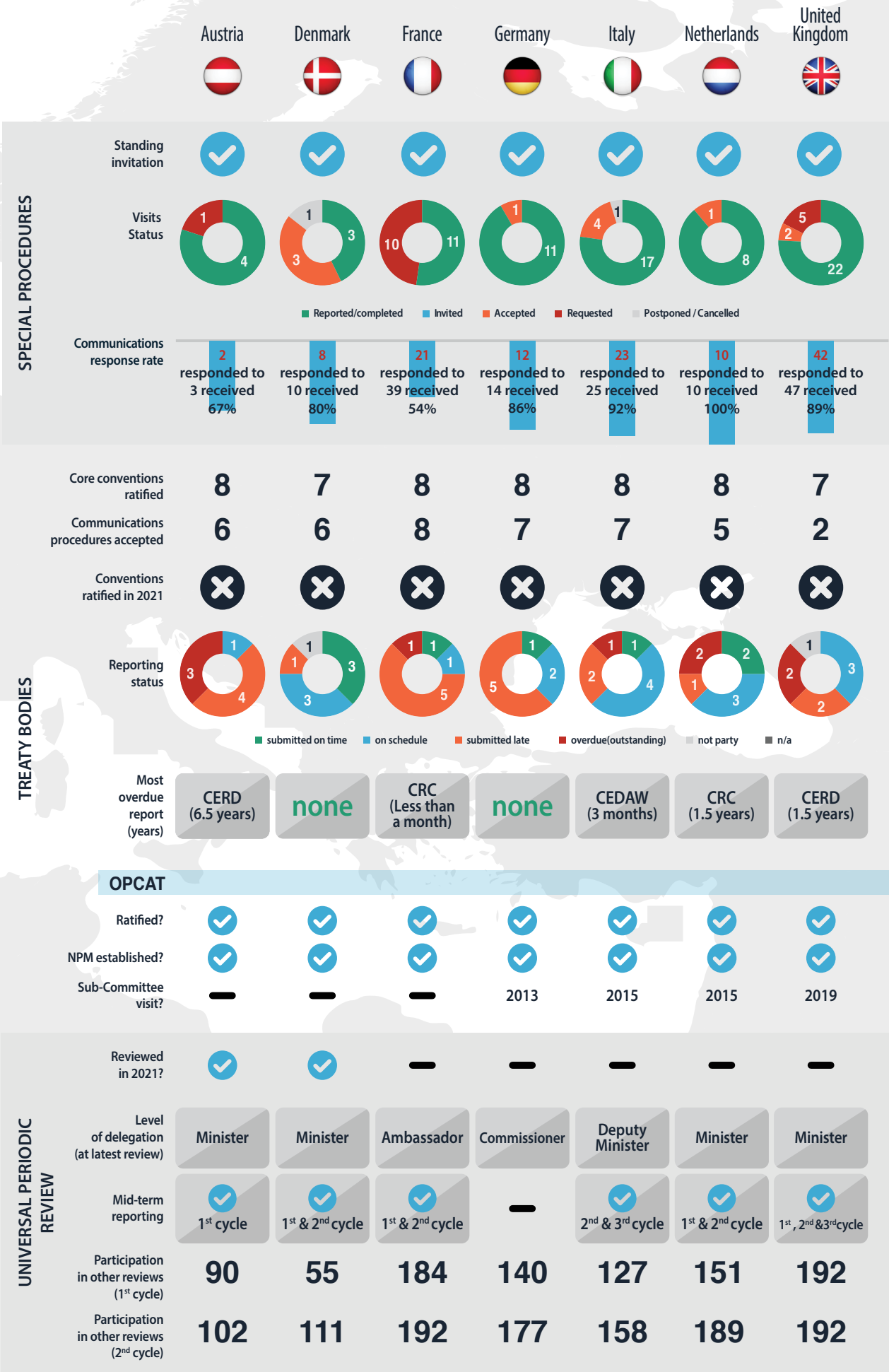
For thematic resolutions dealing with civil and political rights, in the absence of consensus, **WEOG** members consistently voted in favour of the resolution on the death penalty and against the texts on mercenaries and a global call for concrete action against racism.

Turning to economic, social, and cultural rights, and cross-cutting matters, WEOG members supported the texts on climate change; digital technologies; human rights on the Internet; human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS; the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on climate change; and against the texts on international solidarity, the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights, non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin, unilateral coercive measures, enhancement of international cooperation, effects of foreign debt, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation, the right to development, and democratic and equitable international order. All **WEOG** members abstained during voting on the resolution on negative impact of the legacies of colonialism.

\* Ratification and Reporting is recorded for eight ‘core UN human rights conventions’ which include: the ICCPR, the ICESCR, CAT, the CPED, the CEDAW, the CRC, the CERD, and the CRPD.

**Note:** for more comprehensive information on data sources, timeframes, and methodology, please see endnote.

Cooperation with human rights mechanisms





Methodology  
Notes

yourHRC.org uses independent and objective data as the basis of its summaries and analyses. The origin of that data is primarily official UN documents and information produced by other international organisations. To ensure transparency, information on the sources of all data used, together with the methodology applied and the timeframe, is presented below.

Section I.

The Council's focus and output: Resolution and mechanisms

Source: OHCHR website. OHCHR extranet.

Timeframe: 2006-2020.

Data as of: 31 October 2021

Special Sessions

Source: OHCHR website.

Timeframe: 2006-2020.

Data as of: 31 October 2021

The focus of Council texts by agenda item (2008-2020)

Source: Individual resolutions, decisions, and presidential statements. OHCHR extranet.

Timeframe: 2008-2020

Data as of: 31 October 2021

Financial Implications of Council resolutions (2011-2020)

Source: Individual PBIs. OHCHR extranet.

Timeframe: 2011-2020

Data as of: 31 October 2021

Top themes in 2020: focus of thematic resolutions

Source: Individual resolutions, decisions, and presidential statements. OHCHR extranet.

Timeframe: 2020

Data as of: 31 October 2021

Geographic focus of the Council texts, special sessions, and panels (2006-2020)

Source: Council texts: Individual resolutions, decisions, and presidential statements. OHCHR extranet; Special Sessions: OHCHR website; Panels: OHCHR website.

Timeframe: 2006 - 2020

Data as of: 31 October 2021

Global coverage of the UN human rights system in 2020

Source: OHCHR website. UN Human Rights Appeal 2020.

Timeframe: 2020

Data as of: 31 October 2021

State participation on Interactive Dialogues of Special Procedures in 2020

Source: HRC Extranet

Data as of: 31 October 2021

Note: The level of participation in Interactive Dialogues with Special Procedures was calculated based on the individual statements listed on the OHCHR Extranet during the 2020 sessions (i.e. during the Council's sessions 31-33). Joint statements on behalf of a group of States that were not individually listed were not counted. Nevertheless, of course, States do also participate in this broader manner.

Section II.

Overview of membership, members of the Bureau, of the Consultative Group, and the Working Group on Situations

Source: OHCHR website – Human Rights Council.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Voluntary contribution to OHCHR (2019 and 2020)

Source: OHCHR website.

Most recent information published by the OHCHR, data as of 31 October 2021.

NHRI Accreditation Status

Source: Chart of the Status of National Institutions, accredited by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI); <http://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/Documents/Status%20Accreditation%20Chart.pdf>

Most recent information published by the OHCHR, data as of 31 October 2021.

Previous membership terms

Source: OHCHR website.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Contribution to Council debates, panels, and dialogues

Source: HRC Extranet.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Note: The participation of the members of the Council in group statements was calculated based on all joint statements listed on the HRC Extranet from March 2016 until September 2020 (i.e. during HRC sessions 31-39). Figures include statements not delivered due to lack of time.

The Empty Chair indicator was calculated based on the individual statements and joint statements other than political, regional or otherwise 'fixed' groups. A 'YES' shows that, during its current and last most recent membership terms (where applicable), the corresponding State participated in less than 10% of the total number of debates, interactive dialogues, and panel discussions.

Cooperation with human rights mechanisms

Special Procedures

Standing invitation

Source: OHCHR website.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Visits Completed & longest outstanding visit

Source: OHCHR website.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Note: The number of visits undertaken includes only visits that have actually taken place, as listed on the OHCHR website (i.e. visits reported as completed or with report forthcoming). The dates for the most overdue visit are calculated according to the initial request date of the corresponding visit (regardless of subsequent reminders) or with the earliest request date published, when the initial request date is not available. Visits with incomplete information (i.e., dates and status), invitations, and visits postponed/cancelled have been excluded from the analysis. Visits by Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, or visits to regional institutions/organisations are not included in this analysis.

Communications response rate

Source: OHCHR – Communication report and search database.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Treaty Bodies

Status of Ratification and Reporting

Source: OHCHR website.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Note: Ratification and Reporting is recorded for eight 'core UN human rights conventions,' which include: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Treaty Body reporting dates relate to the State's current reporting cycle, as listed on the OHCHR website.

Explanation of Options:

- **SUBMITTED ON TIME:** The State Party Report submitted the report before or on the due date;
- **ON SCHEDULE:** The current cycle due date is in the future;
- **SUBMITTED LATE:** The State Party Report has been submitted for the current cycle but was submitted late, i.e. after the due date;

- **OVERDUE (OUTSTANDING):** The current cycle report has not yet been submitted, and it is overdue;
- **NOT PARTY:** The State has not ratified the corresponding Treaty;
- **N/A:** No deadline has been set, or data is not available.

The ‘most overdue’ report time is for the outstanding report with the earliest due date.

Reporting and ratification scores were calculated with the information published on the OHCHR website on the 31 October 2021.

#### Communications procedures accepted

Source: OHCHR website.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Note: This figure relates to the acceptance of individual complaints procedures under each of the abovementioned core conventions.

#### OP-CAT

Source: OHCHR website.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Note: An ‘NPM’ is a ‘National Preventative Mechanism’.

#### Universal Periodic Review

Level of delegation

Source: The Head of a State’s delegation (for its last UPR) was determined using the report submitted by the corresponding State during its last UPR. Where the rank of the representative was not clear, the URG followed up with the relevant missions as far as possible.

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

#### Mid-term reporting

Source: OHCHR website.<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRImplementation.aspx>

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Note: The ‘mid-term reporting’ score relates to whether the State has submitted a mid-term report for the first and/or the second cycles of UPR.

#### Participation in other reviews

Source: UPR Info - ‘Statistics of UPR Recommendations.’

Data as of: 31 October 2021.

Note: Participation in other reviews relates to the number of other States’ reviews (out of 193) during which the corresponding State made (1 or more) recommendations.

**Note:** For updated information on all current and former Council members, visit [yourHRC.org](https://yourhrc.org).

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UN Flags 2. August 8, 2011, Amaury Laporte. License: CC BY 2.0. [https://live.staticflickr.com/8720/16902547402\\_abb324841c\\_o\\_d.jpg](https://live.staticflickr.com/8720/16902547402_abb324841c_o_d.jpg)

H.E. Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China addresses the High-level Segment of the 46th session of the Human Rights Council, Palais des Nations. 22 February 2021. UN photo by Violaine Martin [https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/50969845107\\_0679d6cc48\\_o\\_d.jpg](https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/50969845107_0679d6cc48_o_d.jpg)

Nasir A. Andisha, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations in Geneva addresses during 48th session of the Human Rights Council. 14 september 202. UN Photo / Jean Marc Ferré. [https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/51478509275\\_fd381f2048\\_o\\_d.jpg](https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/51478509275_fd381f2048_o_d.jpg)

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet addresses during the Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming, 46th session of the Human Rights Council, Palais des Nations. 22 February 2021. UN photo by Violaine Martin [https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/50970034141\\_1ae58b7bb7\\_o\\_d.jpg](https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/50970034141_1ae58b7bb7_o_d.jpg)

High-level segment of the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, February 25th, 2020. – UN Photo/Antoine Tardy License CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 [https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/49582635938\\_9f896c57c4\\_o\\_d.jpg](https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/49582635938_9f896c57c4_o_d.jpg)

# About yourHRC.org

The yourHRC.org project has four parts:

1

A universally accessible and free-to-use web portal - yourHRC.org - providing information on the performance of all States that have stood for and won election to the Council. An interactive world map provides information on the Council’s membership in any given year, and the number of membership terms held by each country. Country-specific pages then provide up-to-date information on: the voting record of the State; its principal sponsorship on important Council initiatives; its level of participation in Council debates, interactive dialogues, and panels; its engagement and cooperation with the Council’s mechanisms (UPR and Special Procedures) and with the Treaty Bodies; and the degree to which it fulfilled the voluntary pledges and commitments made before its previous membership term.

2

An annual ‘yourHRC.org election guide,’ providing at-a-glance information (including comparative information) on candidatures for upcoming Council elections.

3

An annual ‘yourHRC.org end-of-year report’ (to be published each December), providing information (including comparative information) on levels of member State engagement and cooperation over that year.

4

A periodic ‘yourHRC.org candidate alert’ sent to stakeholders informing them of candidature announcements for future Council elections, and providing information on that State’s performance during previous membership terms (where applicable).

The present document is the third annual ‘yourHRC.org end-of-year report,’ offering an assessment of the Council’s work, output, achievements and shortfalls in 2021, and analysing the contributions of member States to the work of the Council and the enjoyment of human rights around the world.

Universal Rights Group  
Maison de la Paix  
Chemin Eugene Rigot 2E  
1202 Geneva  
Switzerland

[info@universal-rights.org](mailto:info@universal-rights.org)  
[www.universal-rights.org](https://www.universal-rights.org)



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A window onto cooperation, dialogue, leadership  
and policymaking at the UN Human Rights Council



UNIVERSAL RIGHTS GROUP



Permanent Mission of Norway  
to the United Nations