

# BETWEEN PRINCIPLES AND PRAGMATISM

How African states vote at the UN Human Rights Council



**DEFENDDEFENDERS**  
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project



**AFRICANDEFENDERS**  
Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network

Published September 2022

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# ACRONYMS

<b>ACHPR</b>	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
<b>AG</b>	African Group (Group of African States, also known as "Africa Group")
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CEFM</b>	Child, early and forced marriage
<b>CHRSS</b>	Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan
<b>COI</b>	Commission of Inquiry (also "Col")
<b>CSS</b>	Civil society space
<b>DAWG</b>	Discrimination against women and girls
<b>DDPA</b>	Durban Declaration and Programme of Action
<b>DPRK</b>	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>ECOSOC</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FGM</b>	Female genital mutilation
<b>G77</b>	Group of 77
<b>GEE</b>	Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen
<b>GRULAC</b>	Group of Latin American and Caribbean States
<b>HRC</b>	United Nations Human Rights Council
<b>HRC15(etc.)</b>	15th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC15, HRC32, etc)
<b>HRD</b>	Human rights defender
<b>ICHREE</b>	International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia
<b>IE</b>	Independent Expert
<b>NAM</b>	Non-Aligned Movement
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OIC</b>	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
<b>OPT</b>	Occupied Palestinian Territory(also "oPt")
<b>PMMM</b>	Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity
<b>PMSCs</b>	Private military and security companies
<b>SOGI</b>	Sexual orientation and gender identity
<b>SR</b>	Special Rapporteur
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence against women and girls
<b>WEOG</b>	Western and Other States Group

# FOREWORD

Since the inauguration of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council ("Council" or "HRC"), which succeeded the Commission on Human Rights in 2006, DefendDefenders has been active during and between Council sessions. We enhanced our engagement when we acquired special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in 2012.

With the opening of DefendDefenders' Geneva office, in March 2018, we took a giant step to advance our advocacy within the UN human rights system, ahead of and during regular Council sessions. Whenever it is needed to respond to human rights emergencies, we also advocate for the convening of special sessions. DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders are proud to contribute to the work of the Council and the adoption of resolutions that address violations in African states.

Beyond interacting with key stakeholders, including states, independent experts, UN officials, and civil society partners, in Geneva, we are in a strategic position to observe political dynamics. In multilateral fora like the HRC, world politics are on display. Sometimes, state interests, power relations, and diplomatic strategies are crystal-clear. At other times, they express themselves in more subtle ways.

African states occupy 13 of the Council's 47 seats. This is over 25% of the Council's total membership. How do they position themselves during debates and when votes take place on resolutions and amendments? What can we conclude about their voting record? Have there been evolutions over time? These are some of the questions that led us to undertake this research project as the HRC approached its 50th regular session.

While I do not want to spoil this report in its foreword, let me flag a few points. The analysis shows the ambiguity of African states' behaviour at the Council. Observers say that African states abstain more often than other states. This was one of our starting hypotheses, and we tested it. We found it to be partly true: African states often abstain – but not systematically. In fact, they support most thematic resolutions and often play a key role in getting these adopted. In other cases, and for country resolutions, they play a more ambiguous role.

Considered as a group, African states are both principled and pragmatic – or alternatively principled and pragmatic. At the individual level, there are significant differences in African states' conduct – and more research could shed light on what these differences are and who the "human rights champions" are.

For now, let me invite you to read this report and use its annexes as a database. Anyone interested in the Human Rights Council, multilateral diplomacy, and African states' foreign policy will find not just raw data but analyses and food for thought. Human rights advocates will also find useful tools to push their governments to support meaningful UN initiatives.

The Council is often as far from national news as Geneva is from their respective capitals, but if human rights defenders (HRDs) pay more attention to multilateral dynamics, they can bring the Council closer to home.



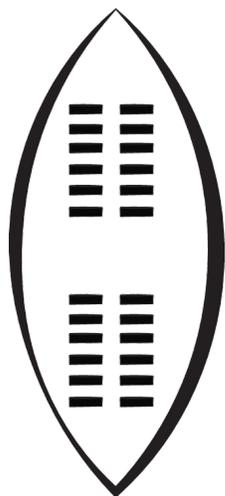
**Hassan Shire**  
Executive Director, DefendDefenders  
Chairperson, AfricanDefenders

# ABOUT DEFENDDEFENDERS AND AFRICANDEFENDERS



Established in 2005, DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project) seeks to strengthen the work of HRDs throughout the sub-region by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and enhancing their capacity to effectively defend human rights. DefendDefenders focuses its work on Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia (with Somaliland), South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

DefendDefenders serves as the secretariat of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, which represents thousands of members consisting of individual HRDs, human rights organisations, and national coalitions that envision a sub-region in which the human rights of every individual as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are respected and upheld.



DefendDefenders also serves as the secretariat of AfricanDefenders (the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network). AfricanDefenders aims to coordinate activities in the areas of protection, capacity building, and advocacy across the African continent, supporting the five sub-regional networks: the North Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies in Tunis, Tunisia), the West African Human Rights Defenders Network (Lomé, Togo), the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by the International Commission of Jurists in Johannesburg, South Africa), the Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (Douala, Cameroon), and the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net)(hosted by DefendDefenders in Kampala, Uganda).

AfricanDefenders leads the continental "Ubuntu Hub Cities" initiative, a holistic emergency protection and relocation programme for HRDs at risk across Africa, through its motto: "Safe but not Silent." Relocation ensures the physical and mental well-being of HRDs, while enabling them to continue their work.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**A**frican states occupy 13 of the UN Human Rights Council's 47 seats. This is over 25% of the Council's total membership. Yet to date, no one has conducted comprehensive research on the voting record of African states and patterns for the African Group.

The present report fills this gap. It examines, among others, how African states vote on resolutions and key amendments; which initiatives they support and oppose the most; whether the behaviour of African states differs from that of states from other regional groups; whether there are differences within the African Group; and whether there have been evolutions over time.

Desk-based research enabled the gathering of information on votes that took place at the Council since 2006, on both resolutions and amendments (country-specific and thematic). For each vote, session reports and/or vote results available on the HRC extranet show how the 47 states that were members of the Council at the time of the vote voted.

The report covers all 223 country resolutions on which a vote took place (48 from 2006 to 2011, 64 from 2012 to 2016, and 111 from 2017 to July 2022). It also covers all 248 thematic resolutions on which a vote took place (69 from 2006 to 2011, 89 from 2012 to 2016, and 90 from 2017 to July 2022). In total, it covers 471 resolutions. In addition to these, the report covers key amendments that were put to a vote.<sup>1</sup>

For each resolution and for each amendment, are shown the overall result of the vote (47 states) and the result of the vote for the African Group (13 states). We relied on quantitative methods (statistical analysis and calculations through Excel tools) to analyse data regarding African states' votes and evolutions over time, as well as qualitative methods to analyse voting behaviour and patterns. We started with several hypotheses, which we tested.

Our main findings are the following:

## Regarding country-specific initiatives:

1. Abstention is African states' most frequent position on country-specific resolutions that are put to a vote. African states are over-represented in abstentions. In the last period (2017-2022), African states massively abstained on country resolutions.
2. Mass African support for country-specific resolutions is only observed for resolutions presented under the Council's agenda item 7 or addressing Palestine.
3. On many country resolutions that are put to a vote, the African Group is divided: while some African states abstain, others vote "Yes" or "No" or prefer not to take part in the vote.
4. Percentages of "No" votes have increased over time. In recent sessions, more and more African states opposed country resolutions. On some of these resolutions, African states made up half or more of the total number of "No" votes. This is a new phenomenon.
5. African states are also over-represented in abstentions on amendments to country resolutions. The African Group often makes up a majority, in absolute numbers, of all abstentions.

<sup>1</sup> The annexes of the report can be used as a database of votes at the Council from its first to its fiftieth sessions (HRC1 to HRC50). Full versions of the Excel spreadsheets are available for download on the report's page, on DefendDefenders website: <https://defenddefenders.org/between-principles-and-pragmatism/>

### Regarding thematic initiatives:

1. On thematic resolutions, African states abstain much less than they do on country resolutions.
2. African states support many thematic resolutions and are over-represented in "Yes" votes. African states are unanimous or quasi-unanimous in their support to a significant number of thematic resolutions, covering a range of human rights issues.
3. On many thematic resolutions, while other regional groups are divided, the African Group is cohesive. Despite making up only one fourth of the Council's membership, African states frequently represent 35%, 40%, and sometimes 45% of the total number of positive votes on thematic resolutions. This is remarkable. Over time, however, more African abstentions (and even negative votes) have been recorded.
4. Resolutions on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) are an exception. They are the only category of resolutions for which mass African opposition is recorded. For the African Group, this is a clear and consistent position.
5. When it comes to amendments to thematic resolutions, African states are over-represented in abstentions as well as in "Yes" votes. They are under-represented in "No" votes.

### African states' voting decisions depend on multiple factors.

Our analysis shows that, in terms of factors and determinants of African states' voting behaviour:

- African states, in general, prefer consensual resolutions over resolutions that are put to a vote.
- African states prefer thematic resolutions over country-specific resolutions.
- When a vote takes place, resolutions addressing human rights violations committed in African countries are the most challenging to support for African states (as opposed to resolutions addressing violations committed in non-African countries).

### Regarding country-specific initiatives:

- The following factors/determinants of vote appear to be the most important: country concerned by the resolution (African vs. non-African); agenda item number; presence of condemnatory language in the resolution; and consent of the country concerned.
- African states are increasingly reluctant to vote "Yes." They often find refuge in abstention. What's more, in recent sessions, a larger number of African states have voted "No". Country resolutions are seen as more divisive and as being at the centre of Big Power politics. They give rise to accusations of "politicisation," "double standards," "interference in domestic affairs," and undue singling out of countries. They also give rise to heated debates, some states claiming to act on principle (based on objective criteria indicating grave human rights violations), others claiming that Council resolutions violate their sovereignty and are political. In this context, African states often prefer not to "pick a side."

### Regarding thematic initiatives:

- The following factors/determinants of vote appear to be the most important: general focus of the resolution; domestic constitution, laws, and/or cultural values; and presence of condemnatory language in the resolution.
- Among the factors making it easier for African states to vote "Yes" to thematic resolutions are the absence of mentions of specific countries, non-resort to agenda item 4, and the absence (or limited presence) of condemnatory elements.
- When a vote takes place on thematic resolutions, African states are less reluctant to "pick a side." They usually vote "Yes", even when opposition by other groups of states is significant. This is related to the fact that thematic resolutions give rise to less polarisation and fewer accusations of "interference in internal affairs."

The report concludes that at the UN Human Rights Council, African states act in both principled and pragmatic (or calculative) ways.

First, they support human rights-based initiatives (including resolutions addressing civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights), show consistency, and act as a leading force within the Council. They should be encouraged, however, to better study the implications and impact of some thematic resolutions.

Second, African states are also pragmatic. When they are not in a position to support country resolutions, they usually prefer to abstain. African states abstain more than states from other groups and more than the average Council member. This shows a hesitancy to use their full potential. Abstaining states leave it to voting states to determine outcomes. In this sense, African states' political weight remains lower than their objective weight (the number of seats they occupy).

Last, African states occasionally contribute to undermining the Council's work to promote and protect human rights for all; for instance, when they oppose SOGI resolutions or support initiatives that harm the international human rights framework, such as China-led resolutions.

In theory, the African Group can exert a great deal of influence on Council outcomes. In practice, its influence is only clear regarding thematic resolutions. Regarding country resolutions, it remains limited. Recent sessions may indicate a shift; unfortunately, this might not be for the better, as more and more African states oppose country resolutions. In this regard, the 2021 "Yemen disaster" came as a shock.

The future will tell whether collectively, the African Group can increase its influence over Council outcomes and whether outliers (positive or negative) emerge.

# INTRODUCTION

To date, there is no comprehensive analysis of how African states contribute to the work of, and vote at, the UN Human Rights Council. While resolution databases exist,<sup>2</sup> no Council observer has conducted in-depth research on the voting record of African states and patterns for the African Group (Group of African states, or AG).

The present report fills this gap. It stems from a simple idea: the African Group is significant in size, and information on how African states contribute to the work of the Council should be easily available. It should include African states' voting behaviour regarding resolutions (including which initiatives they support or oppose), whether their conduct differs from that of other states, and whether their position on resolutions and amendments has evolved over time.

This report examines, among others:

- How African states vote on resolutions and key amendments, when they are members of the HRC (the main question is: are there trends, patterns, and exceptions?);
- Which initiatives African states support and oppose the most (can patterns be identified looking at, among other factors, the nature or geographical focus of the resolutions, or the agenda items under which resolutions are presented?);
- Whether the conduct of African states differs from that of states belonging to other regional groups (Asia-Pacific, the Western and Other States Group (WEOG), Eastern Europe, and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC));
- Whether there are differences within the African Group (which African states are most/least supportive of resolutions and amendments?); and
- Whether there have been evolutions over time (do African states support resolutions and amendments more or less often than in the past?)

As regional human rights organisations with a permanent presence in Geneva, DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders were uniquely placed to undertake this research project.

At each of its regular and special sessions, the Council adopts resolutions – texts that express a collective position. Resolutions can either address the human rights situation in specific countries ("country-specific" or "country" resolutions – for instance, on Burundi, Myanmar, Syria, or Venezuela) or themes ("thematic" resolutions – for instance, on the right to food, freedom of expression, or racism).

Country-specific resolutions are usually the most contentious – no state likes to be under the spotlight. While most thematic resolutions are adopted by consensus (without a vote), many country resolutions are adopted by vote. This means that at least one member state requests that a recorded vote take place.

<sup>2</sup> See Universal Rights Group (URG), "UN Human Rights Resolutions Portal," available at <https://www.universal-rights.org/human-rights/human-rights-resolutions-portal/>; HURIDOCS, "RightDocs," <https://huridocs.org/resource-library/human-rights-research-databases/rightdocs/> (both accessed on 3 August 2022).

Calling for a vote is a way of saying: "we disagree and make it clear." This is the case for many resolutions presented under the HRC's agenda items 2 and 4, and for all resolutions presented under item 7.<sup>3</sup> Resolutions under other items (including item 10) are usually, but not always, consensual.

The Council's 50th session (HRC50, 13 June-8 July 2022) was a milestone. It provided us with an opportunity to gather data, analyse voting records, and reflect. In this report are included all resolutions on which a vote took place since the Council's creation, in 2006. This is a total of 50 regular sessions and 34 special sessions.<sup>4</sup> The report also includes key amendments to resolutions (see the "Methodology" section below). It aims at enhancing transparency about Council dynamics.

Its annexes can be used as a database of votes at the Council from its first to its fiftieth sessions (HRC1 to HRC50). Full versions of the Excel spreadsheets are available for download on the report's page, on DefendDefenders' website: <https://defenddefenders.org/between-principles-and-pragmatism/>

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<sup>3</sup> Item 4 is entitled "Human rights situations that require the Council's attention." It is dedicated to the most serious situations and is seen as more "stigmatising" for the countries concerned, since resolutions under item 4 draw more public and media attention. Over time, item 2 ("Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General") has been used more and more often to address serious situations.

Item 7 is dedicated to the "human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories."

Item 10 ("Technical assistance and capacity-building") is seen as a "soft" item, which relies on the consent of and cooperation with the countries concerned. Its focus is technical cooperation but it can include significant scrutiny elements (in this regard, see DefendDefenders, "No Advice without Knowledge: Scrutiny elements in the UN Human Rights Council's item 10 resolutions," 21 June 2019, <https://defenddefenders.org/no-advice-without-knowledge/> (accessed on 2 August 2022)).

Finally, item 3 is used for most thematic resolutions, as it encompasses civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

See Agenda of the Human Rights Council, with its ten standing items, at: <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/10session/ProvAgenda-10session.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> List and information available on the Council's website: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/sessions>

# METHODOLOGY

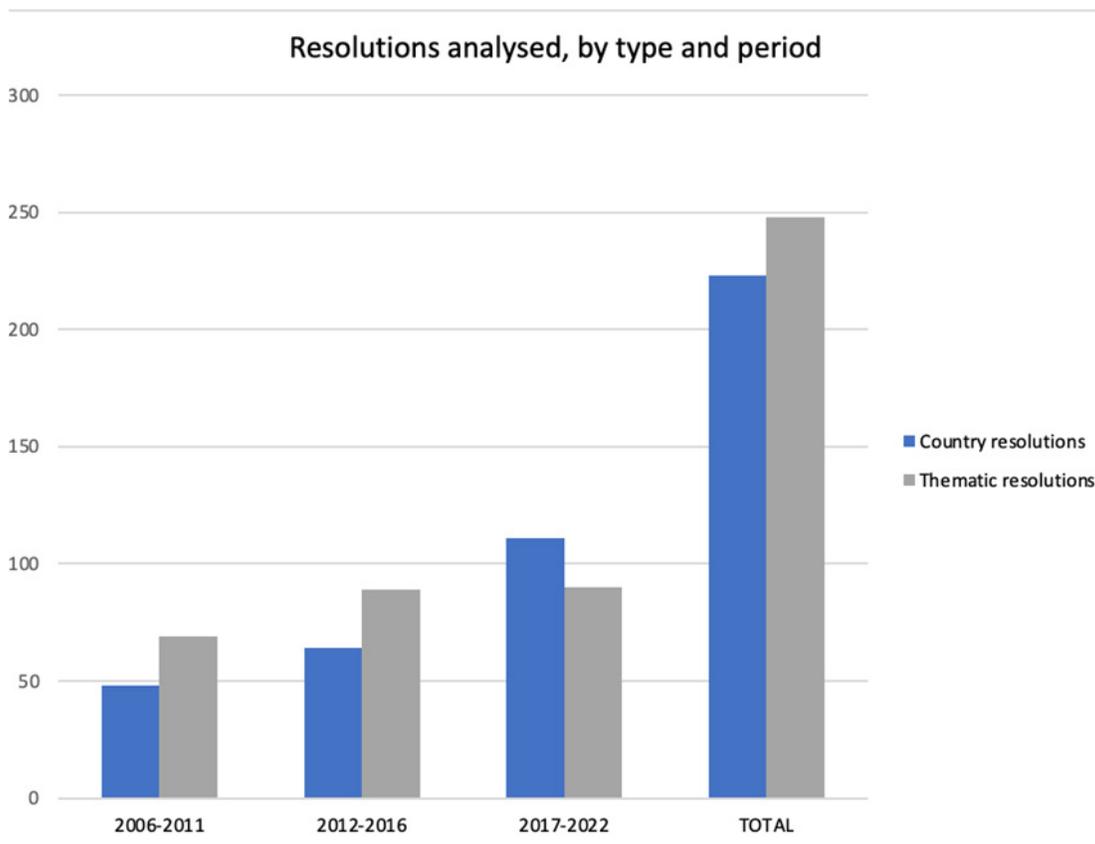
Desk-based research enabled the gathering of information on votes that took place at the UN Human Rights Council since 2006, on both resolutions and amendments. We used session reports and records of Council proceedings, which are available on the Council's website and on the "HRC extranet."<sup>5</sup>

For each vote, session reports and/or vote results available on the HRC extranet show how the 47 states that were members of the Council at the time of the vote voted. Members of the HRC can choose to vote "Yes" ("Y": in favour) or "No" ("N": against), to abstain ("A": no position expressed), or to be absent (no participation in the vote <sup>6</sup>).

All vote results were recorded in Excel spreadsheets, which made aggregation of numbers and calculations of averages and percentages easier. For clarity and to make comparisons easier, the data obtained were broken down in three periods: 2006-2011 (HRC1 to HRC18), 2012-2016 (HRC19 to HRC33), and 2017-July 2022 (HRC34 to HRC50).

The report covers 223 **country resolutions** on which a vote took place, namely 48 from 2006 to 2011, 64 from 2012 to 2016, and 111 from 2017 to July 2022. It also covers 248 **thematic resolutions** on which a vote took place, namely 69 from 2006 to 2011, 89 from 2012 to 2016, and 90 from 2017 to July 2022<sup>7</sup>. In total, this report therefore covers 471 resolutions.

Tables, pie charts, and charts make findings easier to read.



<sup>5</sup> See "HRC – Sessions," <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/sessions> and "Extranet – Human Rights Council," <https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> For some resolutions and amendments, the total number of voting states is below 47. The total number of African states voting may be below 13. This is due to states that did not take part in the vote.

<sup>7</sup> Only the 51st session of the Council (September-October 2022) is left out.

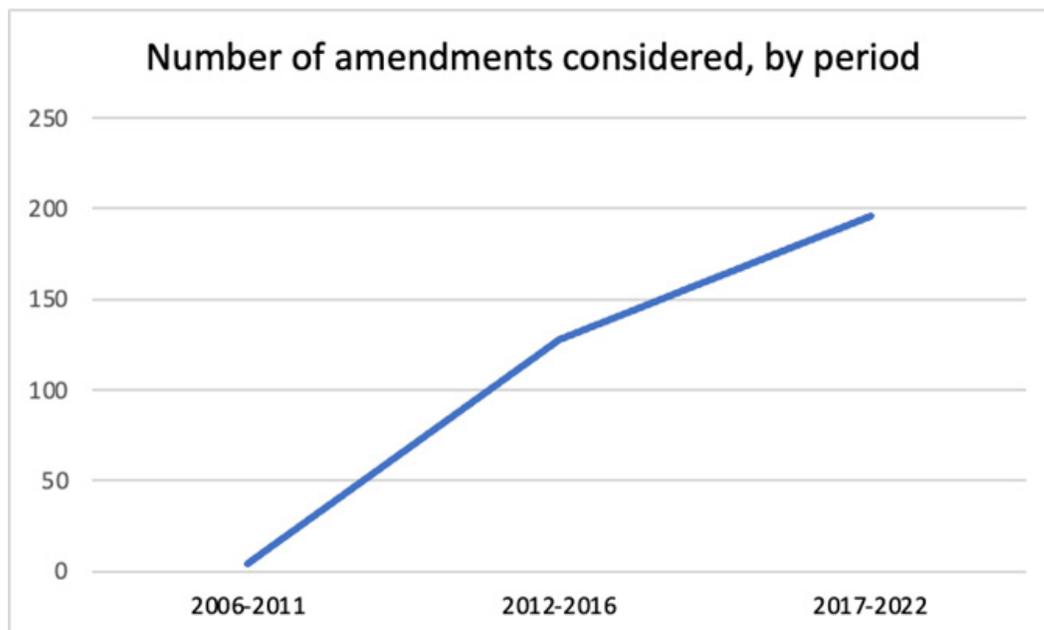
In addition to HRC resolutions, the report focuses on **key amendments** that were put to a vote.<sup>8</sup> We selected amendments on the most divisive or controversial issues. Most of them were eventually defeated. They include proposed amendments to resolutions on countries (Sudan, Syria, Belarus, Ethiopia, Afghanistan) and on thematic issues, covering women's and girls' rights (discrimination against women and girls (DAWG), violence against women and girls (VAWG), child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), and preventable maternal mortality and morbidity (PMMM)), societal issues (sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), protection of the family, the death penalty), and civic space (civil society space (CSS), HRDs, the right to peaceful protest, and reprisals). As the data make clear, over the years, more and more amendments have been proposed, and put to a vote. For the 2006–2011 period, we examine four amendments, as opposed to 128 for the 2012–2016 period and 196 for the 2017–July 2022 period.

Additional Excel spreadsheets present a breakdown by resolution type (country-specific vs. thematic), by country concerned (within the country-specific resolutions category), and by theme (within the thematic resolutions category). (See Annexes and the report's page.<sup>9</sup>)

For each resolution and amendment, are shown the overall result of the vote and the result of the vote for the African Group.<sup>10</sup> Comparisons are thus easy to draw.<sup>11</sup>

We relied on **quantitative methods** (namely, statistical analysis and calculations through Excel tools) to analyse data regarding AG votes and evolutions over time, as well as **qualitative methods** to analyse voting behaviour and patterns. We showed, among others:

- Which resolutions and amendments African states support/oppose the most and the least;
- Patterns and trends (using meta-data to highlight, for instance, how the AG votes differently from the average HRC member/states from other groups);
- Differences within the AG (i.e., between African states); and
- Evolutions over time.



<sup>8</sup> Many of them were put forward by Russia (especially amendments to country resolutions (Syria, Belarus) and resolutions on civic space) or the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (for amendments to resolutions on women's and girls' rights or SOGI).

<sup>9</sup> Link to the report's page on DefendDefenders' website: <https://defenddefenders.org/between-principles-and-pragmatism/>

<sup>10</sup> In 2011, Libya's membership rights were suspended by the UN General Assembly, which means that the total number of members was 46 (and the total number of members for the AG was 12).

<sup>11</sup> Obviously, votes by the 13 AG members are also included in the 'overall result of the vote' category, which includes votes by all 47 members of the HRC.

Qualitative analysis was strengthened using a survey. Respondents (24 people took the survey; we used Microsoft Forms) had the opportunity to indicate which resolutions they regard as the most challenging for African states, evolutions in voting behaviours, and factors behind/determinants of vote for African states (see annexes). We thank all those who took the time to complete the survey.

While formal interviews were not conducted specifically for this report, the analysis draws upon years of experience by DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders staff members, including hundreds of interactions with state representatives ahead of and during Council sessions.

While attempting to be as comprehensive, objective, transparent, and accurate as possible, the report has several limitations. First, it is not a comprehensive review of votes at the UN. We focused on the HRC, as opposed to other UN bodies such as the General Assembly (UNGA) or the Security Council (UNSC). We did so because the HRC is the UN's principal body in charge of the promotion and protection of human rights. The report does not cover resolutions adopted at the UNGA's Third Committee, which also deals with human rights.

Second, while the report is exhaustive regarding resolutions, it is not regarding amendments. We believe, however, that the amendments selected are representative of the main points of contention and political debates in multilateral human rights fora. We focused on the amendments that come back most often, session after session – especially at June sessions, when resolutions on women's and girls' rights, as well as societal issues (SOGI, protection of the family), are discussed.

Third, the report does not systematically examine votes on procedural ploys, such as motions to adjourn ("no-action motions"). Only a few such motions are included in the analysis. Systematic analysis of all procedural motions at the HRC would have taken us to a level of detail that is unnecessary in the framework of this report.

Fourth, the report is not a comprehensive analysis of African states' behaviour at the HRC. Indeed,

much more than voting is at stake: multilateral diplomacy involves negotiations (most of which are not public) and consensus-building (which means avoiding a vote, whenever possible). Resolutions led by the AG (addressing the situation of persons living with albinism, female genital mutilation (FGM), or countries (Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), etc.), as well as other resolutions, especially under item 10, are never put to a vote. They are adopted by consensus. Hence, they are left out of this report. Moreover, the AG can influence outcomes from "behind the scenes"; for instance, by threatening to call for a vote on a draft resolution, African states can push other states to find a compromise and reach consensus. This is not reflected in this report, which focuses on votes.

Last, while we examine a few individual cases (looking at specific African states' voting record), the report mostly examines the African Group as a whole. In practice, although on several categories of thematic resolutions, African states are unanimous, the AG is seldom a monolithic bloc. Regarding votes on country resolutions, for instance, African states are often divided.

We started with a few **hypotheses**, which we tested. The first is that African states abstain more often than other states. The second is that African states usually support thematic resolutions. The third is that African states tend to vote against SOGI resolutions. Fourth, we formulated the hypothesis that African states are reluctant to support resolutions addressing human rights violations in fellow African countries, unless these resolutions enjoy the consent of the countries concerned. Last, we assumed that the African Group supports resolutions on Palestine and occupied Arab territories (item 7 resolutions).

## Glossary:

"Resolution" refers to a document (text), adopted by the HRC, that outlines a collective position on a particular topic. In itself, an HRC resolution is not legally binding, although it can refer to binding instruments and documents (for instance, international treaties or UNSC resolutions) and thus contribute to standard-setting. However, HRC resolutions are endowed with moral and political authority as they are adopted by the UN's principal human rights body.

"Amendment" refers to a proposed change to a resolution that is presented for adoption. Amendments can aim to modify language elements, delete terms, delete or add paragraphs, etc.

In the framework of the Council's voting process, "procedural ploy" refers to an attempt at removing or delaying consideration of a specific item (resolution, amendment, or part thereof) from the Council's agenda – for instance, motions to adjourn or "no-action motions."

"Observer" states are not members. They do not have a right to vote on resolutions and amendments, but they can co-sponsor (officially endorse) them and participate in negotiations. "Member" states have a right to vote on resolutions and amendments and more speaking time during the Council's general debates.

# FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This report analyses African states' contribution to the work of the Council, with a focus on voting record and patterns on country-specific and thematic resolutions, as well as on proposed amendments.

While for some thematic resolutions, a vote takes place on draft amendments but not necessarily on the whole text,<sup>12</sup> for country-specific resolutions, usually, after amendments are considered, a vote also takes place on the resolution itself.

The two sections addressing votes on country (I) and thematic (II) initiatives, respectively, are followed by an analysis, with a discussion of factors and determinants of African states' voting behaviour (section III).

## I. Votes on country-specific initiatives

This section examines resolutions on the following countries: Afghanistan, Belarus, Burundi, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, also known as North Korea), DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Iran, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen, as well as resolutions adopted under item 7 (Palestine (in official UN terminology, "Occupied Palestinian Territory" (OPT or oPt<sup>13</sup>)) and other occupied Arab territories, such as the Syrian Golan).

These are by no means the only country resolutions adopted by the Council since its creation. As mentioned, many resolutions, especially under item 10, have been adopted by consensus (without a vote). Let us mention, among others, country-specific resolutions on Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Libya, or Somalia.

## 1. Abstention: the default position for African Group members?

Except for resolutions on Palestine/item 7 (see section I.2.), abstaining is African states' most frequent position on country-specific resolutions that are put to a vote (i.e., non-consensual country resolutions under the Council's agenda items 2, 4, or 10<sup>14</sup>). As a result, African states are over-represented in abstentions on country resolutions.

This is especially true for resolutions presented under item 4 and for resolutions addressing human rights violations in non-African countries. These include resolutions on the following countries:

### Iran

Looking at the 12 resolutions on Iran adopted by the HRC<sup>15</sup> there are 20 "Yes" votes and 13 "No" votes by African states (see annex). The total number of African abstentions is 120. This means that on average, for each resolution on Iran, ten AG members abstain. For any resolution, the maximum number of "Yes" votes is four and the maximum number of "No" votes is also four (most often, zero to two), as opposed to a maximum of 12 abstentions. In absolute numbers, the AG makes up two thirds of all abstentions on Iran resolutions. For some resolutions (25/24, 46/18), it made up three fourths of abstentions.

<sup>12</sup> Once amendments have been either rejected or adopted (they are usually rejected), the resolution can be adopted by consensus, if no state requests a vote.

<sup>13</sup> In recent sessions, resolutions on the OPT have also been adopted in the framework of the HRC's item 2.

<sup>14</sup> Resolutions under item 4 are usually put to a vote. Exceptions to this rule include: (i) resolutions on Eritrea before 2019 (these resolutions were led by a "core group" (group of states drafting and leading negotiations on a resolution and presenting it for adoption) consisting of Djibouti and Somalia. No AG member or member of another group ever requested a vote); (ii) resolutions on South Sudan until 2020 (the human rights situation in South Sudan was regarded as so serious that the government of South Sudan itself accepted resolutions under item 4. The core group consisted of the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), Albania, and Paraguay (later replaced by Norway)); and (iii) several resolutions on Myanmar and the DPRK.

<sup>15</sup> These yearly resolutions extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran and allow the Council to scrutinise the situation through reports and public debates.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
16/9 (Iran)	22	7	14	2	1	8
19/12 (Iran)	22	5	20	4	0	9
22/23 (Iran)	26	2	17	4	0	9
25/24 (Iran)	21	9	16	1	0	12
28/21 (Iran)	20	11	16	2	0	11
31/19 (Iran)	20	15	11	1	4	8
34/23 (Iran)	22	12	13	2	3	8
37/30 (Iran)	21	7	19	1	1	11
40/18 (Iran)	22	7	18	0	1	12
43/24 (Iran)	22	8	15	0	2	10
46/18 (Iran)	21	12	14	2	0	11
49/24 (Iran)	19	12	16	1	1	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>120</b>

## Belarus

To date, the HRC has adopted 15 resolutions on Belarus.<sup>16</sup> AG members have contributed a total of 30 "Yes" votes and 15 "No" votes. This is an average of two positive votes and one negative vote per resolution. African states have abstained 149 times – an average of 10 abstentions per resolution. They make up more than half the grand total of abstentions.

## Ukraine and Georgia

Despite Ukraine-focused resolutions being traditionally presented under item 10, African states have mostly abstained. Nevertheless, since Russia's aggression against and invasion of Ukraine, in February 2022, a majority of AG members have supported Ukraine resolutions. Before 2022, one counts a maximum of five "Yes" votes and two "No" votes.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
17/24 (Belarus)	21	5	19	3	1	8
20/13 (Belarus)	22	5	20	5	0	8
23/15 (Belarus)	26	3	18	5	0	8
26/25 (Belarus)	24	7	16	4	0	9
29/17 (Belarus)	21	8	18	3	0	10
32/26 (Belarus)	15	9	23	0	2	11
35/27 (Belarus)	18	8	21	1	2	10
38/14 (Belarus)	19	6	21	1	2	10
41/22 (Belarus)	20	6	21	0	2	11
44/19 (Belarus)	22	5	20	1	1	11
45/1 (Belarus) (urgent debate)	23	2	22	0	1	12
46/20 (Belarus)	20	7	20	0	1	12
47/19 (Belarus)	21	7	19	1	1	11
49/26 (Belarus)	22	6	19	3	1	9
50/20 (Belarus)	23	6	18	3	1	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>149</b>

<sup>16</sup> These resolutions address the human rights situation in the country, in particular violations of civil and political rights and repression of civil society, journalists, and opposition members and supporters. The last resolutions requested the Special Rapporteur to investigate political violence and repression.

The number of African abstentions was usually eight, nine, or ten. After February 2022, the two Ukraine-focused resolutions adopted by the HRC show a different pattern, with eight positive votes by African states, four abstentions, and only one negative vote (Eritrea). Eritrea was the only state, with Russia, to vote against resolution 49/1. After Russia's suspension from the HRC, it was the only state, with China, to vote against resolution S-34/1 (special session on Russia's aggression against Ukraine).

For Georgia resolutions, which are under item 10, patterns are similar to pre-2022 Ukraine resolutions. One records a maximum of four positive votes by African states, and between eight and 11 abstentions. Cameroon, however, acted as a proxy for Russia, calling a vote on Georgia resolutions (which address, among other things, violations in Russia-backed secessionist regions of Georgia). This was an exceptional situation, and a clear indication that Cameroon was attempting to build new alliances at a time when European states started considering collective action on Cameroon's human rights situation.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
26/30 (Ukraine)	23	4	19	4	0	8
29/23 (Ukraine)	21	6	20	5	0	8
32/29 (Ukraine)	22	6	19	4	1	8
35/31 (Ukraine)	22	6	19	4	1	8
41/25 (Ukraine)	20	5	22	1	2	10
47/22 (Ukraine)	19	8	20	2	2	9
49/1 (Russia/Ukraine) (urgent debate)	32	2	13	8	1	4
S-34/1 (Russia/Ukraine) (special session)	33	2	12	8	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>59</b>

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
34/37 (Georgia)	18	5	24	3	1	9
37/40 (Georgia)	19	5	23	3	1	9
40/28 (Georgia)	19	3	25	1	1	11
43/37 (Georgia)	20	2	24	2	1	10
46/30 (Georgia)	19	8	19	3	2	8
49/33 (Georgia)	19	6	20	4	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>

## Venezuela and Nicaragua

The five resolutions on Venezuela adopted to date show a more complex pattern. On two of them, adopted under item 2 at the initiative of Venezuela itself (42/4 and 45/2),<sup>17</sup> African states lent their support (with eight and six "Yes" votes, respectively (and five and seven abstentions)). Regarding the other three Venezuela resolutions, adopted at the initiative of a group of Latin American states (39/1, 42/25, and 45/20, the latter two being under item 4), African states massively abstained.

One counts nine, ten, and 12 abstentions, respectively, and only one vote in favour. These resolutions are different in nature: the former two focus on technical assistance and engagement between the Venezuelan authorities and the UN system; the latter three address grave violations through investigations that could pave the way for prosecution of those identified as being responsible.

On the four resolutions on Nicaragua<sup>18</sup> the HRC has adopted so far, African states consistently abstained, with 11, 11, 11, and ten abstentions respectively. Only two African states ever offered a "Yes" vote (on resolution 49/3): The Gambia and Malawi.

## Philippines

Only one resolution on the Philippines was ever put to a vote at the HRC (41/2). It raised concern over the "war on drugs" and the many extrajudicial executions associated with it. No African state supported it. Five voted against and eight abstained.

For these resolutions, which address violations in non-African countries, African states represent a large percentage (often half or more) of the total number of abstentions.

For non-consensual resolutions addressing human rights violations in African countries, the picture is slightly different. The number of abstentions by AG members remains high but AG votes are more split. Over time, one has witnessed more and more African states voting "No" to resolutions on other African countries, in the name of "African solidarity" (see below, sections 1.3. and 1.4.).

Over time, outliers seem to have disappeared. In past sessions, states like Ghana or Botswana (plus Rwanda, regarding Burundi-focused resolutions) voted "Yes" to some resolutions addressing African countries. In recent sessions, however, no AG member did so. This means that abstention has become the new Yes.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
39/1 (Venezuela)	23	7	17	1	3	9
42/4 (Venezuela) (Item 2)	18	6	23	8	0	5
42/25 (Venezuela) (Item 4)	19	7	21	0	3	10
45/2 (Venezuela) (Item 2)	14	7	26	6	0	7
45/20 (Venezuela) (Item 4)	22	3	22	0	1	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>43</b>

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
40/2 (Nicaragua)	23	3	21	0	2	11
43/2 (Nicaragua)	24	4	19	0	2	11
46/2 (Nicaragua)	20	8	18	0	2	11
49/3 (Nicaragua)	20	7	20	2	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>43</b>

<sup>17</sup> Venezuela and its allies, notably Iran, presented these resolutions to compete with, and try and counter, the other resolutions, which are more condemnatory and establish/renew an investigation into violations committed in Venezuela. It is noteworthy that 45/2 gathered a record low number of "Yes" votes for a resolution presented by the country concerned, namely 14 (it passed as there were only 7 votes against and 26 abstentions).

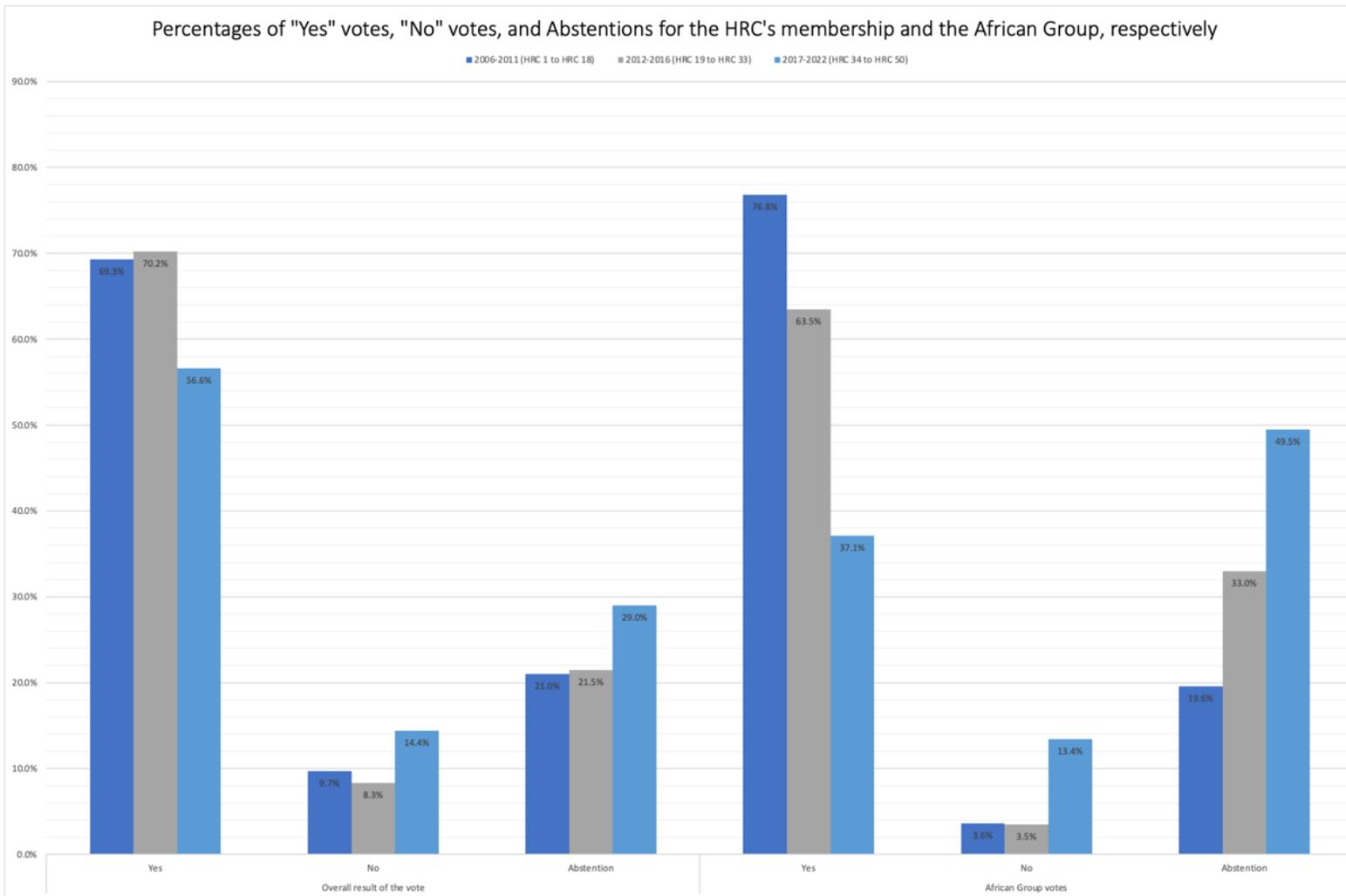
<sup>18</sup> These resolutions address violations committed in Nicaragua, the latter establishing a full-fledged investigation.

Regarding resolutions on non-African countries, at the time of writing (July-August 2022), The Gambia and Malawi seemed to be less reluctant to vote "Yes" than other African states. Eritrea systematically votes "No," like Burundi and Egypt did during their respective terms as members.

A breakdown by period shows that for African states, the share of abstentions has consistently increased. For the period 2006-2011, AG members voted "Yes" to country resolutions 76.8% of the time (above the HRC's average of 69.3%). They voted "No" 3.6% of the time (9.7% for the HRC as a whole) and abstained 19.6% of the time (21% for the HRC as a whole).

As is shown in the next section, this is due to the large number of resolutions addressing Palestine adopted in the Council's early days. For the period 2012-2016, African states abstained much more and lent less support to country resolutions (63.5% of votes in favour, 3.5% of votes against, and 33% of abstentions; as opposed to 70.2%, 8.3%, and 21.5% respectively, for the HRC as a whole).

The last period (2017-2022) confirmed this trend. African states massively abstained: 37.1% of votes in favour, 13.4% of votes against, and 49.5% of abstentions. (These figures include Palestine-focused resolutions. If one excludes the latter, African abstentions on country resolutions would be well over 50% of all African votes.)



RESOLUTION	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
<b>2006-2011 (HRC 1 to HRC 18)</b>						
Total	1534	214	464	454	21	116
Average number (Y/N/A)	32.0	4.5	9.7	9.5	0.4	2.4
Percentage (Y/N/A)	69.3%	9.7%	21.0%	76.8%	3.6%	19.6%
<b>2012-2016 (HRC 19 to HRC 33)</b>						
Total	2098	248	644	523	29	272
Average number (Y/N/A)	32.8	3.9	10.1	8.2	0.5	4.3
Percentage (Y/N/A)	70.2%	8.3%	21.5%	63.5%	3.5%	33.0%
<b>2017-2022 (HRC 34 to HRC 50)</b>						
Total	2935	747	1503	533	193	711
Average number (Y/N/A)	26.4	6.7	13.5	4.8	1.7	6.4
Percentage (Y/N/A)	56.6%	14.4%	29.0%	37.1%	13.4%	49.5%
<b>OVERALL (2006-2022; HRC 1 to HRC 50)</b>						
Total	6567	1209	2611	1510	243	1099
Average	29.4	5.4	11.7	6.8	1.1	4.9
Percentage (Y/N/A)	63.2%	11.6%	25.1%	52.9%	8.5%	38.5%

## 2 Mass African support: only for Palestine

African states massively supporting a country-specific resolution that is put to a vote is a rare sight. Or more precisely: it only happens for a specific category of resolutions, presented under item 7 or addressing Palestine. Agenda item 7 is the standing item the Council uses to address the human rights situation in the OPT and other occupied Arab territories.<sup>19</sup>

To date, the Council has adopted 90 resolutions on the OPT and other occupied Arab territories (list in Annex 2).<sup>20</sup> Four resolutions are traditionally adopted at every March session, namely on the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, on the situation in Palestine (including Jerusalem), on settlements, and on accountability. In addition, a resolution on the occupied Syrian Golan is regularly adopted.

If one looks at aggregate numbers for all Council members, one finds a total number of "Yes" votes of 3,192, as well as 297 "No" votes and 702 abstentions (i.e., 76%, 7%, and 17%, respectively).

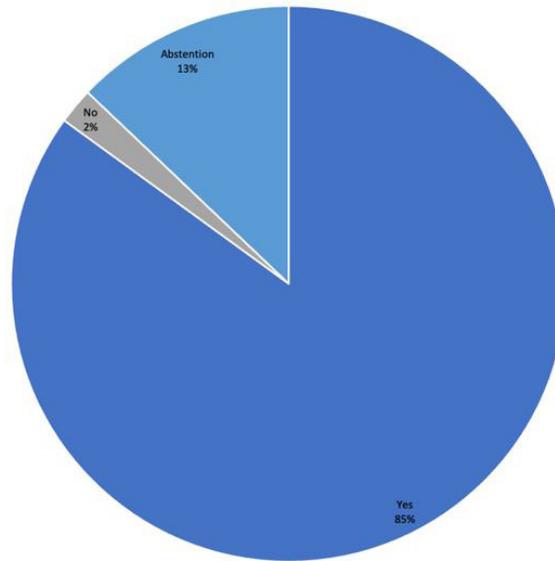
Looking at the African Group, 973 votes are in favour, 24 votes against, and 148 abstentions (85%, 2%, and 13%, respectively). This means that on average, African states contribute 11 positive votes per resolution.

Overall, African states represent one third of all positive votes and only 8% of all negative votes. For several resolutions on Palestine, the AG was unanimous in its support, with 13 "Yes" votes. Often, AG support was substantial, with 11 or 12 "Yes" votes. Only a few resolutions addressing the OPT recorded fewer than ten positive African votes. The record low is seven.

<sup>19</sup> This remark applies to resolutions that are put to a vote. As mentioned above, many country-specific resolutions are not put to a vote but rather adopted by consensus, often at the initiative of the AG or the country concerned. Examples include Somalia, Mali, and the DRC. Past examples include Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Haiti, Liberia, Tunisia, and others.

Two resolutions on the DRC (10/33 and 36/30) and one on Sudan/Darfur (decision 2/115) were put to a vote, but not by the countries concerned. Rather, Western states requested a vote to signal their concern over the weakness of the texts proposed. In these cases, African states massively voted "Yes." Last, in 2017, the Burundian government presented its own resolution to try and counter the other, European Union (EU) proposed resolution. Resolution 36/2, under item 2, was put to a vote, and 11 African states voted "Yes."

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that some of these resolutions were adopted in special sessions (therefore, they have no agenda item number) or, lately, under item 2.



Until the Council's 33rd session, no African state ever voted against a Palestine-focused resolution (Togo did at HRC34). After that, from time to time, one or two AG members voted "No." Only twice did three African states vote "No" to an OPT/item 7 resolution (resolutions 46/3 and 46/24, which addressed accountability and the Syrian Golan, respectively). They were Cameroon, Malawi, and Togo.

African abstentions on the OPT/item 7 were rare in the HRC's early days. They ranged from zero to three until the Council's second special session (four African abstentions). After that, African abstentions ranged from zero to four, with a record of six (on resolution 31/35).

Resolutions on self-determination are the most supported, with no fewer than 11 African votes in favour (usually 12 or 13). Resolutions on the Syrian Golan and accountability, as well as those establishing investigative mechanisms, enjoy slightly less (but still significant) African support, with often ten votes or more. Over time, African support to OPT/item 7 resolutions has become less unanimous. It remains significant. With members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC),<sup>21</sup> the African Group is the number one supporter of these resolutions.

### 3. Split African votes on several country resolutions

Consensus is African states' preferred scenario. A request for a vote forces governments to make a choice

and publicly disclose their position. Section III below will address some of the dynamics related to voting and the position African states find themselves in when voting takes place on country resolutions.

For several reasons, on many country resolutions that are put to a vote, the African Group is divided. This means that while some African states abstain, others vote "Yes" or "No." In some cases, some prefer not to take part in the vote. Split African votes are usually recorded for resolutions on the following countries:

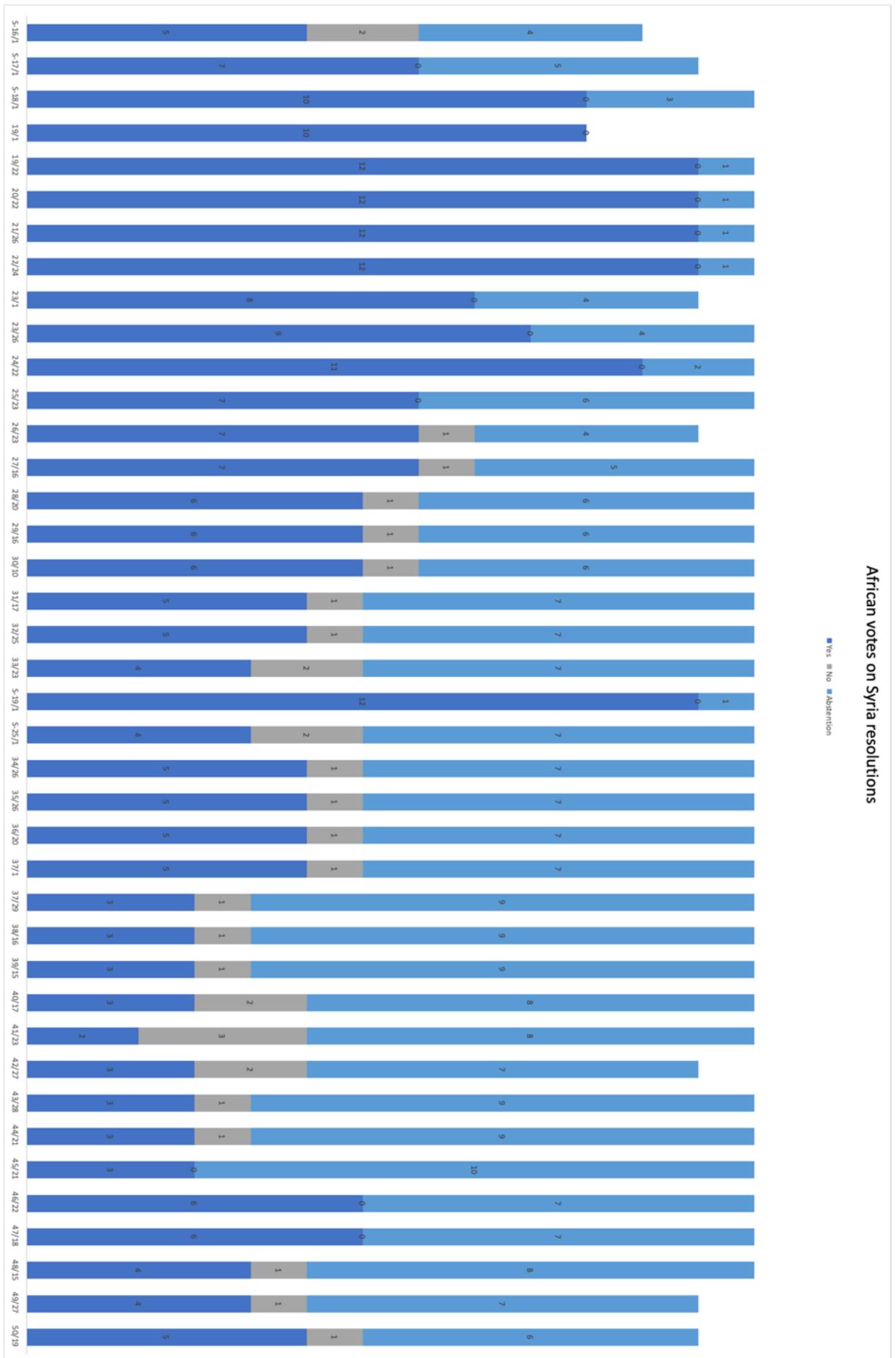
#### Syria

After resolutions on Palestine, resolutions addressing the human rights situation in Syria are the most numerous at the HRC. The Council has adopted 40 of them so far (list in Annex 2). Overall, these resolutions have enjoyed broad support (1,215 votes in favour, 188 against, and 458 abstentions). For African states, one counts a total of 248 votes in favour, 32 votes against, and 229 abstentions. The AG is over-represented in abstentions (exactly 50% of their total number) and under-represented in "Yes" votes (only 20% of their total number) as well as "No" votes (17%).

While African support to Syria resolutions was relatively high in the beginning (after the 16th and 17th special sessions, between eight and 12 African states voted "Yes"), a turning point can be identified at HRC25. Then, African support dropped from 11 to seven. Thereafter, usually between three and seven AG members voted "Yes" to Syria resolutions (with the exception of S-19/1 (12 African votes in favour) and

<sup>21</sup> The OIC's coordinator, Pakistan, is the main sponsor of Palestine-focused and item 7 resolutions.

41/23, a record low with two African votes in favour). Over time, the erosion of African support has been clear.



## Sri Lanka

Council resolutions on Sri Lanka seek to promote accountability for violations committed during and after the civil war (1983–2009). Five of them led to a vote. The overall results are: 123 in favour, 63 against, and 48 abstentions. African votes show the following record: 26 in favour, 11 against, and 27 abstentions. If one excludes resolution S-11/1, adopted at the end of a special session during which Sri Lanka and its allies took control of the negoti-

ation process (11 African states eventually voted "Yes"), the voting record of the AG is almost perfectly split: 5Y, 3N, 5A (resolution 19/2); 4Y, 3N, 5A (resolution 22/1); 4Y, 3N, 6A (resolution 25/1); and 2Y, 2N, 9A (resolution 46/1). On Sri Lanka, the AG has consistently been divided. It should be noted, however, that in 2021, for the first time, an African state joined the "core group" on Sri Lanka. It was Malawi, for its first year as a Council member.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
S-11/1 (Sri Lanka) (special session)	29	12	6	11	0	2
19/2 (Sri Lanka)	24	15	8	5	3	5
22/1 (Sri Lanka)	25	13	8	4	3	5
25/1 (Sri Lanka)	23	12	12	4	3	6
46/1 (Sri Lanka)	22	11	14	2	2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27</b>

## DPRK

Resolutions addressing the grave violations (including possible crimes against humanity) in the DPRK show a slightly different pattern. African votes are split between positive votes and abstentions. Out of six resolutions that led to a vote, only four negative votes by African states were ever recorded (31 positive votes, and 41 abstentions). Except for the initial DPRK resolution, the number of positive African votes has evolved between five and six, and the number of abstentions between five and eight.

## Resolutions on African states: Eritrea and South Sudan

These two categories of resolutions address human rights violations committed in African countries. They used to be under item 4 and are now under item 2. Moreover, they used to be adopted by consensus (until 2018 for Eritrea resolutions; until 2020 for South Sudan resolutions).

Resolutions on Eritrea were unique insofar as their core group consisted of two African states: Djibouti and Somalia (plus Nigeria, initially). This was due

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
7/15 (DPRK)	22	7	18	2	1	10
10/16 (DPRK)	26	6	15	6	2	5
13/14 (DPRK)	28	5	13	6	1	5
16/8 (DPRK)	30	3	11	6	0	6
25/25 (DPRK)	30	6	11	6	0	7
28/22 (DPRK)	27	6	14	5	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>41</b>

to bilateral issues and Eritrea's support to terrorist groups. After Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia restored full diplomatic relations and signed a joint declaration of peace and friendship, in July 2018, Somalia withdrew from the core group and Ethiopia withdrew its tacit support to Eritrea resolutions. This led a group of six Western states, and later the EU, to take up the initiative. Resolutions on Eritrea, however, stopped being consensual. As they were unable to hide behind consensus anymore, African states

had to make a choice. Eritrea resolutions adopted in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 show the following voting patterns: overall, 87Y, 46N, 55A; for the African Group, 0Y, 17N, 35A. This means that while no African state ever voted "Yes" to a resolution on Eritrea, many decided to abstain. A minority of AG members vote against Eritrea resolutions (including Eritrea itself and Somalia). The number of African abstentions has increased over time, from eight to ten.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
41/1 (Eritrea)	21	13	13	0	5	8
44/1 (Eritrea)	24	10	13	0	5	8
47/2 (Eritrea)	21	13	13	0	4	9
50/2 (Eritrea)	21	10	16	0	3	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35</b>

Resolutions on South Sudan also used to be consensual. This was largely due to the ongoing conflict and atrocities committed in the country, which made it difficult for the South Sudanese government (or any other state) to argue that item 4 was unfit to address the situation. The government therefore accepted substantive, condemnatory resolutions under item 4. The situation changed after the signature of a revitalised peace agreement, in September 2018. Thereafter, the South Sudanese government argued that resolutions on the country should be moved to item 10, on technical assistance and ca-

capacity-building. (Indeed, with allies, it prepared resolutions under item 10, which were adopted by consensus). The country's situation, however, remains one of the most serious on the African continent.

In parallel, the core group decided to move the annual resolution, which renews the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS), to item 2. In 2021, for the first time, South Sudan and allies called for a vote. On resolution 46/23, eight African states voted "No" and five abstained. In 2022, however, the voting result

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
46/23 (South Sudan)	20	16	11	0	8	5
49/2 (South Sudan)	19	11	17	0	5	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>

was inverted: in consideration of ongoing grave violations and risks of renewed large-scale conflict in South Sudan, only five African states voted "No" to and eight abstained on resolution 49/2. Resolutions on Eritrea and South Sudan continue to pass, but without African support (and with less and less opposition by African states).

## Myanmar and Afghanistan

Some resolutions on Myanmar are consensual; others led to a vote. This is the case for six of them. The first saw split African votes (6Y, 1N, 6A); however, the following five saw more positive votes by African states (between eight and ten). In parallel, the average number of African abstentions decreased.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
37/32 (Myanmar)	32	5	10	6	1	6
39/2 (Myanmar)	35	3	7	8	1	4
40/29 (Myanmar)	37	3	7	9	0	4
42/3 (Myanmar)	37	2	7	10	0	3
43/26 (Myanmar)	37	2	8	9	0	4
5-27/1 (Myanmar) (special session)	33	3	9	8	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>

In its early days, the Council adopted resolutions on Afghanistan, which focused on technical assistance. After the Taliban took over Kabul, in August 2021,

the Council resumed its action on the country. One resolution (48/1) led to a vote. Five African states voted "Yes," one "No" (Eritrea), and seven abstained.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
48/1 (Afghanistan)	28	5	14	5	1	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

African states made up half of the total number of abstentions in this case. This is also true for most Myanmar resolutions. Consistently, African states have been over-represented in abstentions. For instance, they represent six out of ten abstentions on resolution 37/32, four out of seven on resolutions 39/2 and 40/29, and four out of eight on resolution 43/26.

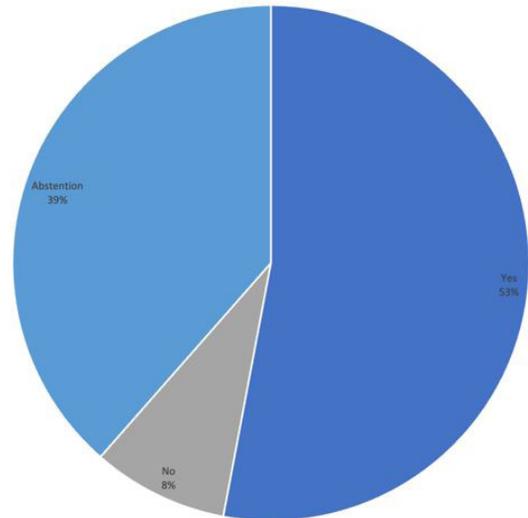
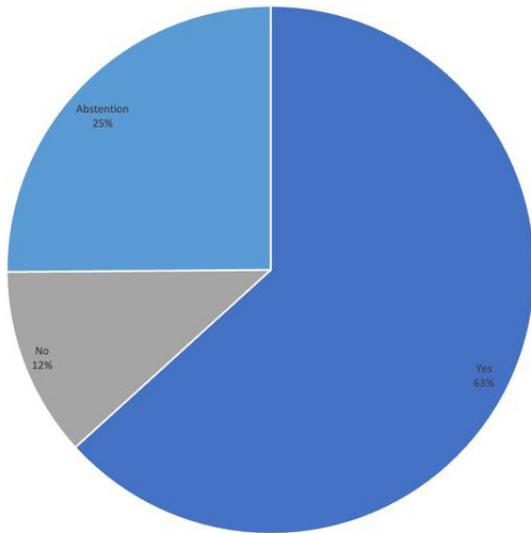
The African Group is often the most divided regional group, with several members voting "Yes" or "No," abstaining, or even refusing to take part in the voting process. The Asia-Pacific Group is often divided too; however, some of its members (Japan, South Korea, Fiji, Marshall Islands) consistently support country resolutions.

The WEOG is usually the most cohesive group, supporting country resolutions and investigative mechanisms (except on Palestine/item 7), four out of seven on resolutions 39/2 and 40/29, and four out of eight on resolution 43/26. The Eastern European Group is usually united and supports country resolutions (apart from Russia, which votes against country resolutions when it is a member of the Council).

Finally, GRULAC states usually support country resolutions, except for Bolivia, Cuba, and Venezuela, who oppose most of these resolutions.

By definition, political groups such as the European Union (EU) or the OIC, are more cohesive than regional groups. On country resolutions, they vote as one, even more since they lead on a number of resolutions (on Belarus, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Myanmar for the EU; on the OPT/item 7 and some Myanmar resolutions for the OIC).

If one looks at the 223 country resolutions adopted since 2006, African states voted as follows: 1,510 times in favour (52.9%), 243 times against (8.5%), and 1,099 abstentions (38.5%). The overall Council membership shows a different picture: a larger share of positive votes (63.2%), a slightly larger share of negative votes (11.6%), and a smaller share of abstentions (25.1%).



A breakdown by period brings more nuance into the picture. Over time, African votes have been more and more split. As mentioned in section I.1., while in the Council's early days, African states were supportive of most country resolutions (many of them addressing Palestine), in the last period (2017-2022) they have been split between "Yes" votes (37.1% of the time) and abstentions (49.5% of the time) (see section I.1.)

#### 4. African opposition to country resolutions: rare, but increasing?

While the AG is both over-represented in abstentions and more reluctant than other groups of states to vote either "Yes" or "No" to country-specific resolutions, percentages of "No" votes within the AG have increased over time (from 3.6% for 2006-2011 to 13.4% for 2017-2022). In recent sessions, more and more African states opposed country resolutions. On some resolutions, African states made up half or more of the total number of "No" votes. This is a new phenomenon.

The following resolutions should be mentioned:

#### Burundi, Ethiopia, and Sudan

In the name of "African solidarity," a number of African states feel that they must vote against resolutions targeting other African countries. This is clear for some states, who in their statements or explanations of vote assert that their position relies on the country concerned not agreeing with the

resolution. Typically, the phrasing used includes: "the resolution does not enjoy the consent of the country concerned." This is also what leads many African states to prioritise the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of fellow African countries. Because it is universal, as opposed to HRC resolutions, the UPR is seen as less confrontational and therefore as an avenue for dialogue and cooperation. Conversely, when it does not enjoy the consent of the country concerned, an HRC resolution is seen as aggressive: it points fingers at a particular country.

In this context, an abstention sounds like a "Yes" vote: abstaining on a resolution targeting an African country can be construed as tacit support for the resolution. In other words: on resolutions concerning African countries, an abstention by an African state does not have the same value as an abstention by a non-African state. Abstaining is a signal sent to the country concerned that you are not ready to oppose human rights scrutiny.

Nevertheless, on resolutions addressing violations in African countries, more and more African states vote "No." Eritrea and South Sudan are mentioned above, but on these resolutions, African abstentions are numerous. For resolutions on Burundi and Ethiopia, a majority of AG members now vote "No." The future will tell whether this trend is confirmed, and whether in front of grave and ongoing human rights violations, a majority of AG members continue to prioritise solidarity with the countries concerned over principled action.

Regarding Burundi, things changed after the swearing in of a new President, Évariste Ndayishimiye, in 2020. After a period in which Burundi was isolated (2015-circa 2018), a form of impatience appeared within the AG. While initially, several African states voted in favour of Burundi resolutions (Botswana, Ghana, and Rwanda, on resolutions 33/24, 36/19, 39/14 and 42/26),<sup>22</sup> this has stopped. The last two resolutions on Burundi (45/19 and 48/16) saw no positive African votes, and a significant increase in African opposition (from three to eight votes against).

In 2021, for the first time, Burundi enjoyed majority support from the AG, with eight African votes against the resolution presented by the EU. (Resolution 48/16 established a mandate of Special Rapporteur (SR) on Burundi, which succeeded stronger resolutions (2016-2020) that established and renewed a Commission of Inquiry (COI).)

Among the factors that explain such a vote result, there is an impression of a "bias" against and "unfair" treatment of African states, all the more since many resolutions are led by Western states or the EU (see section III below).

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
<b>33/24 (Burundi)</b>	19	7	21	1	2	10
<b>36/2 (Burundi) (Item 2)</b>	23	14	9	11	0	1
<b>36/19 (Burundi) (Item 4)</b>	22	11	14	2	5	6
<b>39/14 (Burundi)</b>	23	7	17	1	3	9
<b>42/26 (Burundi)</b>	23	11	13	1	6	6
<b>45/19 (Burundi)</b>	24	6	17	0	3	10
<b>48/16 (Burundi)</b>	21	15	11	0	8	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>47</b>

<sup>22</sup> Resolution 36/2 was adopted at the initiative of Burundi. It was an attempt to undermine the existing track (resolutions 33/24 and 36/19), under item 4. Many African states decided to trust Burundi and supported the initiative.

Things are even clearer for Ethiopia. After armed conflict broke out in the northern Tigray region, in November 2020, and later spread to other areas of the country, the HRC acted. It adopted two resolutions on Ethiopia, including one in a special session, in December 2021, which established the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE). On both occasions, seven AG members voted "No" and six abstained. Overall, AG members contributed half the total number of "No" votes and abstentions (and zero "Yes" votes).

Lastly, on Sudan, recent resolutions, adopted after the 25 October 2021 military coup, were adopted by consensus. Time will tell whether Sudan-focused resolutions remain consensual and how AG members behave in this regard. But in the Council's early days, several resolutions on Sudan led to a vote. If one excludes decision 2/115, which most AG members supported,<sup>23</sup> most African states either voted "No" or abstained on Sudan resolutions (11/10 and 15/27, in 2009 and 2010 respectively).

The latter, presented under item 4, saw eight African states voting "No." For these two resolutions, it was a close call. The voting pattern of African states (increasing opposition) triggered negotiations for consensual Sudan resolutions. Then, from 2011 to 2021, resolutions on Sudan were adopted by consensus – and it is likely that African states, together with Arab Group members, would have defeated draft resolutions that would not have enjoyed the consent of the Sudanese government (that is, resolutions that would have contained too much condemnatory language and/or presented under item 4). The Council discontinued its Sudan resolutions at HRC48, in October 2021, but the military coup led it to reconsider its decision.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
<b>2/115 (Decision) (Sudan/Darfur)</b>	25	11	10	9	0	3
<b>11/10 (Sudan)</b>	20	18	9	2	5	6
<b>15/27 (Sudan)</b>	25	18	3	3	8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>

<sup>23</sup> The text was drafted by Algeria and put to a vote by Western states because it was deemed too weak, considering grave ongoing violations in Darfur/Sudan.

## Yemen

In 2021, for the first time in the Council's history, a draft resolution was defeated. It failed to pass as a majority of states voted against it. This was draft resolution 48/L.11, which sought to renew the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts (GEE) on Yemen.

While only two African states ever voted "Yes" to Yemen resolutions (Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa on

resolutions 39/16 and 42/2, respectively), most AG members used to abstain (ten abstentions on 39/16, seven on 42/2, and seven on 45/15). The number of "No" votes, however, consistently increased: from two to five, then six, and finally nine on 48/L.11. The failure of this draft resolution to pass is to a large extent attributable to African votes. The AG contributed nine negative votes out of a total of 21, zero positive votes (18 in total), and four abstentions (seven in total).

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
39/16 (Yemen)	21	8	18	1	2	10
42/2 (Yemen)	22	12	11	1	5	7
45/15 (Yemen)	22	12	12	0	6	7
48/L.11 (Yemen) <i>(rejected by vote)</i>	18	21	7	0	9	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>

Observers pointed to the role of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which conducted lobbying in African capitals to push them to oppose the GEE, which shed light on violations committed by warring parties in Yemen (including Saudi Arabia and the UAE). The consequence, however, is clear: African states played a key role in discontinuing scrutiny of Yemen. If four of those African states that voted "No" had instead abstained, the resolution would have passed (18Y, 17N, 11A in lieu of 18Y, 21N, 7A). In short: the African Group was instrumental in bringing about the first-ever defeat for a draft resolution at the Council.

Our data show that African states are over-represented in abstentions on these amendments. The AG often makes up a majority, in absolute numbers, of all abstentions. If one looks at amendments to Syria resolutions (16 of them in total, from HRC19 to HRC39), one finds the following. The overall results for the Council membership are: 142 votes in favour, 368 against, and 232 abstentions. For the African Group, results are significantly different: 37 votes in favour, 23 against, and 143 abstentions. In other words: African states contributed 143 out of 232 abstentions, or 62%. Yet African states represent only 28% of the Council's membership.

## 5. Amendments: patterns of African votes

There are usually fewer amendments to country resolutions than to thematic resolutions.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, China, Russia, and other states routinely present draft amendments to country-specific resolutions (mainly on Belarus and Syria). To date, all these have been defeated.

<sup>24</sup> In section II.5, we will see that many amendments concern thematic resolutions on women's and girls' rights, SOGI, and civic space.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
AMENDMENTS to SYRIA RESOLUTIONS	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
Total	142	368	232	37	23	143

If one looks at amendments to Belarus resolutions (33 from HRC45 to HRC49), one sees the following overall results: 230Y, 671N, 650A. But African states' voting results are: 54Y, 9N, 366A. Here again, African states represent a majority (366 out of 650, or

56%) of all abstentions. The picture is the same for amendments to the Afghanistan resolution adopted at HRC48 (with even more abstentions, namely ten out of 13 African states, for each amendment).

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
AMENDMENTS to BELARUS RESOLUTIONS	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
Total	230	671	650	54	9	366

But one needs to refine the analysis. If one looks at "Yes" votes to amendments to country resolutions, one finds that African states are slightly over-represented. This holds true for amendments relating to Syria, but this is even truer for amendments relating to resolutions on African countries. These amendments usually aim at weakening resolutions, removing condemnatory language, or rejecting the creation of investigative mechanisms. If one excludes amendments to resolutions on Sudan and the DRC (which, conversely, aimed at strengthening resolutions – see Annex 4), one finds that on all amendments on Ethiopia, African states voted much more in favour than other HRC members.

They contributed 79 votes in favour of these amendments (an average of five), none against, and 129 abstentions.

Finally, African states are under-represented in "No" votes on amendments to country resolutions. On Syria, Belarus, and Afghanistan (54 amendments from HRC19 to HRC49), their voting record is 96Y, 42N, 559A, as opposed to 401Y, 1,152N, 967A for the entire Council membership. This means that they contributed only 42 negative votes out of 1,152 (less than 4%). For amendments to resolutions on Ethiopia it is even clearer: no African state ever opposed an amendment to Ethiopia resolution.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
AMENDMENTS to ETHIOPIA RESOLUTIONS	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
Total	199	309	244	79	0	129

## 6. African and non-African states: comparisons

As the data on country-specific initiatives make clear, African states often abstain on resolutions; only show massive support for Palestine/item 7 resolutions; and are sometimes divided in their votes. They rarely oppose resolutions, but they have done so more often in recent sessions. On amendments, many African states abstain, some vote "Yes," and very few vote "No."

These findings lead to two remarks:

**(i) Often, African states' voting patterns are not in line with the Council's overall membership and other regional groups.**

### Abstentions:

- The AG is the largest single contributor of abstentions on country-specific resolutions. African states often abstain and often make up most of all abstentions.

- Since many of them abstain, African states vote less often "Yes" or "No" to country resolutions than states from other regional groups. As abstentions do not count in the determination of voting outcomes (only "Yes" and "No" votes are considered to determine whether an initiative gathers a majority),<sup>25</sup> African states contribute to HRC outcomes less than other states.

- On several country situations, African states stay out of the negotiations, do not deliver oral statements or explanations of vote, and find refuge in abstention. This is true for resolutions on Belarus, Iran, Georgia, Ukraine (before 2022), Venezuela, or Nicaragua. Regarding Iran and Belarus, African abstentions are massive and African states contribute only a tiny fraction of positive votes – yet Iran and Belarus resolutions continue to pass with comfortable margins.

### Support to resolutions:

- It is rare to witness zero positive votes by African states, but it happens more and more often. This is the case for resolutions on Belarus, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines.

For example, at HRC41, no "Yes" votes by African states were recorded on three resolutions on Belarus, Eritrea, and the Philippines respectively.

- On Syria, the erosion of African support has been significant. Most African states have decided to leave it to other HRC members to choose what to do with Syria-related initiatives.

- The AG is, however, the largest contributor of "Yes" votes on Palestine and item 7 resolutions. This can be attributed to solidarity with the Palestinian people, opposition to Israeli occupation, and support for Palestinians' right to self-determination. (In this regard, WEOG is the outlier, as several Western states oppose resolutions on the OPT and the existence of item 7 altogether.)

- African states lend support to resolutions drafted by the countries concerned more easily than other states. In a sense, they are less critical: they trust the countries concerned or play the game of technical cooperation (they are usually ready to "give a chance" to the country concerned, even if opening a second track can be a means of undermining the initial track under item 4). This is clear if one looks at resolutions drafted by the countries concerned: Burundi, the DRC, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, Sudan, and Venezuela.

### Opposition to resolutions:

- Regarding resolutions addressing African states, while many AG members consistently abstain, the AG provides more "No" votes than other regional groups. Over time, the proportion of "No" votes has increased.

- On several recent resolutions (Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Venezuela, Yemen), the AG was the only regional group that did not provide a single positive vote.

- "No" votes by African states are usually seen for item 4 resolutions on African countries (Burundi in 2021, Ethiopia in 2021, Sudan in 2009-2010) or for resolutions seeking to establish or renew investigative and accountability mechanisms (Yemen).

Yemen is an exceptional case: as indicated above, African votes led to the unprecedented failure of a draft resolution to pass. On Burundi and Ethiopia, if African states' votes did not prevent resolutions

<sup>25</sup> In theory, a resolution can pass, for example, with three votes in favour and two against, with 42 abstentions.

from passing, they made a significant difference in terms of margins between positive and negative votes. If more AG members had abstained, these resolutions would have passed with broad majorities.

#### **Amendments to resolutions:**

- Regarding amendments, the AG is at odds with the Council's membership. African states massively abstain, and they vote in favour of amendments more often than they vote against. AG members represent a tiny fraction of "No" votes to amendments to country resolutions. Yet the Council routinely and massively rejects these amendments.

#### **(ii) Sometimes, African states' voting patterns are in line with the Council's overall membership.**

#### **Regarding some (but not all) resolutions on Palestine:**

- Some resolutions on Palestine enjoyed quasi-unanimous support from the HRC. In several cases, only one state (the USA) voted against, and resolutions passed with overwhelming majorities of over 40 votes. In these cases, the AG has voted in line with the HRC. This is true, for instance, for resolutions 2/4, 7/18, 10/18, 13/7, 16/30, 16/31, 19/15, 19/16, 22/26, 34/29, 43/33, or 46/25.

#### **Regarding Myanmar:**

- While initially, the AG was split between positive votes and abstention, African states have been more and more consistent in their support. The AG's voting record has started to look more and more like the voting record of other regional groups, which largely support Myanmar-focused resolutions.

#### **Regarding Sri Lanka:**

- Voting records for the African Group are as complex as the overall voting dynamics. Although it adopted several resolutions to address violations in Sri Lanka, the Council has remained divided. On average, the AG has shown less, but by no means no, support to Sri Lanka resolutions. African states have abstained more than the average HRC member, but differences are minor.

#### **Regarding Ukraine:**

- After Russia's aggression against Ukraine, in February 2022, several African states switched from abstention (on earlier Ukraine resolutions) to "Yes." In doing so, they joined the overwhelming majority of the Council, which condemned human rights violations stemming from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

## **II. Votes on thematic initiatives**

This section examines how African states vote on thematic initiatives, including both thematic resolutions and amendments to these resolutions.

At the HRC, thematic resolutions address the following topics: access to medicines, arms transfers and firearms, civil society space, the contribution of development to human rights, the death penalty, defamation of religions, democracy and the rule of law, the effects of terrorism on human rights, enhancement of technical cooperation, foreign debt, freedom of opinion and expression, globalization and human rights, HRDs, incitement to hatred, international solidarity, migrants, mutually beneficial cooperation, non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin, peaceful protests, prevention of human rights violations, private military and security companies (PMSCs), promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, protection of the family, racism and xenophobia, the right to development, reprisals, the right to peace, the rights of peasants, SOGI, composition of staff of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), traditional values, unilateral coercive measures, and the use of mercenaries.<sup>26</sup>

Again, as for country resolutions, these are by no means the only thematic resolutions adopted by the Council since its creation. Many thematic resolutions have been adopted by consensus. This is the case, for instance, for resolutions on freedom of religion or belief, indigenous peoples, the right to privacy, or the right to work, as well as for resolutions on women's and girls' rights (although amendments to these resolutions are usually put to a vote).<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> This is not an exhaustive list of thematic resolutions. Resolutions listed here are resolutions on which several votes took place (or that saw votes on proposed amendments). In addition, on some thematic issues, a vote took place on only one or two occasions (on arbitrary detention or water and sanitation, for example).

<sup>27</sup> See DefendDefenders, "Making a Difference for Women and Girls? East and Horn of Africa countries and women's and girls' rights at the UN Human Rights Council," 25 June 2020, <https://defenddefenders.org/making-a-difference-for-women-and-girls-2/> (accessed on 13 July 2022).

## 1. Abstention: much less than for country-specific resolutions

On thematic resolutions, African states abstain much less than they do on country resolutions. African states represent less than 18% of all abstentions on thematic resolutions. From HRC1 to HRC50, votes took place on 248 thematic resolutions, with the following results: 7,919 in favour (68.4%), 2,316 against (20%), and 1,349 abstentions (11.6%). African states voted as follows: 2,845 votes in favour (89.6%), 89 against (2.8%), and 241 abstentions (7.6%).

They represent 36% of all "Yes" votes (2,845 out of 7,919), 4% of all "No" votes (89 out of 2,316), and 18% of all abstentions (241 out of 1,349). Keep in mind that AG members make up one fourth of the HRC's total membership.

Over time, African states' share of abstentions has remained relatively stable: 6.2% from 2006 to 2011, 7.1% from 2012 to 2016, and 9.1% from 2017 to 2022 (see Annexes 1 and 3 for comprehensive data).

## 2. African unanimity or quasi-unanimity in favour of many resolutions

African states support many thematic resolutions that cover a range of human rights issues. As a result, they are over-represented in "Yes" votes. African states are unanimous or quasi-unanimous in their support to a significant number of thematic resolutions.

Over the years, African states have become the number one supporters of a long list of resolutions, addressing the following issues (see Annex 3 for full data):

### Racism and xenophobia

Out of 20 resolutions covering racism, xenophobia, people of African descent, and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) (complementary standards), one counts 249 "Yes" votes by African states, only one vote against, and four abstentions. This is 98% of "Yes" votes. The AG makes up 36% of all "Yes" votes by HRC members.

RESOLUTION	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
<b>2006-2011 (HRC 1 to HRC 18)</b>						
Total	2201	699	295	790	12	53
Average number (Y/N/A)	31.9	10.1	4.3	11.4	0.2	0.8
Percentage (Y/N/A)	68.9%	21.9%	9.2%	92.4%	1.4%	6.2%
<b>2012-2016 (HRC 19 to HRC 33)</b>						
Total	2909	730	538	1029	43	82
Average number (Y/N/A)	32.7	8.2	6.0	11.6	0.5	0.9
Percentage (Y/N/A)	69.6%	17.5%	12.9%	89.2%	3.7%	7.1%
<b>2017-2022 (HRC 34 to HRC 50)</b>						
Total	2809	887	516	1026	34	106
Average number (Y/N/A)	31.2	9.9	5.7	11.4	0.4	1.2
Percentage (Y/N/A)	66.7%	21.1%	12.3%	88.0%	2.9%	9.1%
<b>OVERALL (2006-2022; HRC 1 to HRC 50)</b>						
Total	7919	2316	1349	2845	89	241
Average	31.9	9.3	5.4	11.5	0.4	1.0
Percentage (Y/N/A)	68.4%	20.0%	11.6%	89.6%	2.8%	7.6%

## The use of mercenaries and PMSCs

16 resolutions on mercenaries and PMSCs have been adopted to date. The overall voting record is: 502 in favour, 209 against, and 37 abstentions. For the AG, it is different: 200 votes in favour, zero against, and only five abstentions. Again, this amounts to 98% of positive votes. The AG represents 40% of all positive votes by HRC members.

## The right to peace

On the 11 resolutions addressing the right to peace adopted so far, African states have been unanimous: 142 votes in favour, zero against, zero abstentions (100% of "Yes" votes). African states represent 40% of all positive votes by HRC members.

## The right to development

The HRC has adopted 17 resolutions on the right to development. They usually pass with broad margins (overall: 626 votes in favour, 77 against, and 92 abstentions). African states show a "100% Yes" voting record. With 219 votes in favour (zero against, zero abstentions), they represent 35% of all positive votes.

## The rights of peasants

On the five resolutions of the rights of peasants adopted by a recorded vote, African states' voting record is as follows: 58Y, 0N, 7A. This substantial support means that 39% of all positive votes came from the AG (58 out of 150, and only seven abstentions out of a total of 65).

## Enhancement of technical cooperation

African unanimity is recorded for these six resolutions. The AG's voting record shows 78 votes in favour, zero against, and zero abstentions. African states represent 44% of all positive votes (78 out of 177).

## Resolutions led or supported by Cuba and/ or the G77 or NAM<sup>28</sup>

- **Composition of staff of OHCHR:** 11 resolutions on strengthening of OHCHR/composition of staff of OHCHR have been adopted so far.<sup>29</sup>

African support has been overwhelming: 137Y, 1N, 3A. African states represent 39% of all positive votes (137 out of 353) and less than 1% of negative votes (only one out of 143).

- **Foreign debt:** Regarding the 19 resolutions on the effects of foreign debt on human rights adopted to date, AG members have contributed 241 votes in favour, zero against, and only one abstention. African states represent 42% of all votes in favour (241 out of 577).

- **Unilateral coercive measures:** A look at aggregate vote results for the 18 resolutions on unilateral coercive measures to date shows that African states have voted "Yes" 97% of the time (223 votes in favour, zero against, and 6 abstentions). They represent 40% of all positive votes (223 out of 553).

- **International solidarity:** The same holds true for resolutions on international solidarity. Out of 243 African votes, 242 have been in favour (zero against, and only one abstention). African states represent 39% of all positive votes by HRC members (242 out of 618).

- **Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order:** On this debated topic, the overall vote result on 12 resolutions to date is: 350 votes in favour, 163 against, and 50 abstentions. The AG has contributed 146 votes in favour (42% of the total number of "Yes" votes), zero against, and nine abstentions.

- **Non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin:** Regarding the nine resolutions on this issue, African states boast a "100% Yes" voting record: 116 votes in favour, zero against, and zero abstentions. They represent 40% of all positive votes by HRC members (116 out of 289).

## Resolutions led by China

To date, three resolutions on "mutually beneficial cooperation" have been adopted at the initiative of China. They have been criticised as undermining the core mandate of the Council, pushing forward a vision based on the principle of sovereignty and

<sup>28</sup> The Group of 77 States (G77) at the UN is a coalition of developing countries (now over 130), which seeks to promote its members' economic and diplomatic interests and to enhance their negotiating capacity in multilateral fora.

With origins in the Cold War period, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a forum of over 120 countries not formally aligned with or against any major bloc. Many members of the G77 are also members of the NAM.

At the UN, and particularly at the HRC, Cuba plays a significant diplomatic role. Among other initiatives, it has been leading on the development of resolutions and creation of special procedure mandates on thematic issues (see "UN special procedures: Thematic mandates" at <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewAllCountryMandates.aspx?Type=TM&lang=en>).

<sup>29</sup> These resolutions aim at increasing diversity within OHCHR staff but have been criticised as opening the door to political interference in OHCHR's work.

presenting the Council as a mere service-provider of technical cooperation.<sup>30</sup> China has also been presenting resolutions on "the contribution of development to human rights" (three so far), also problematic as they focus on development with, between the lines, justifications for violations of individual rights. In 2021, China presented a resolution on the negative impact of colonialism on human rights (48/7). These resolutions have enjoyed substantial African support, with between 11 and 13 positive votes. Only resolution 48/7 has attracted less African support, with nine positive votes and four abstentions.

Using their speaking time in general debates on items 2 and 4, several African states have delivered statements praising China at the Council, some on multiple occasions. Overall, the African Group has been a reliable supporter of China-led initiatives.

### Resolutions on societal issues

Under this category are included resolutions presented in the HRC's early days ("traditional values," "defamation of religions") as well as more recent resolutions on "protection of the family."

- **"Traditional values"**: At the initiative of Russia, the Council adopted three resolutions on traditional values, which were criticised as undermining the universal human rights framework by highlighting cultural particularities as grounds for justifying violations. African states were mostly supportive of these resolutions. Their support, however, eroded over time (from 11 to nine votes in favour, and from one to two votes against). This erosion, as well as erosion of supports within other regional groups, contributed to Russia and allies dropping the initiative, as they feared that the level of support would continue to decrease.

- **"Defamation of religions"**: These series of resolutions, also problematic as independent experts deemed them to be incompatible with the universal human rights framework, were dropped after a compromise was found between groups of states, namely the OIC (the main sponsor of "defamation

of religions" resolutions) and WEOG states. This led to resolution 16/18 and its iterations, all adopted by consensus.<sup>31</sup> African states initially supported the "defamation of religions" initiative, but their support eroded over time: from ten votes in favour (and three abstentions) to seven, eight, and eventually only six (five, five, and four abstentions respectively). As for resolutions on traditional values, the erosion of AG support led the main sponsor (here, Pakistan as coordinator of the OIC) to drop the initiative.

- **"Protection of the family"**: Initiated by Egypt and allies, these resolutions aim to protect "the family" as a right-holder. They have been criticised as failing to recognise that various forms of the family exist and that violations, in particular of women's and girls' rights, also take place within the family.<sup>32</sup> African states have supported them, however, with an almost perfect voting record in favour (51, and only one vote against (South Africa, precisely because of the absence of the diversity of family forms from the resolution) and zero abstentions). Overall, African states are responsible for almost 44% of all positive votes by HRC members.

Overall, on these three categories of resolutions, African states show a much more positive record than the Council's average: 68 "Yes," five "No," and 38 abstentions, as opposed to an overall result of 214 "Yes" votes, 97 "No" votes, and 106 abstentions. AG members represent 32% of all positive votes, but only 5% of all negative votes (five out of 97).

On many of these resolutions, while other regional groups are divided (with states voting "Yes" or "No" or abstaining), the AG is cohesive. Looking at Annex 3, the "Yes" column for African Group votes contains many rows indicating "13" or "12." In the "No" column, most rows indicate "0," which means that no African states voted against the relevant resolution.

Looking at Annex 1, one can draw comparisons and study evolutions in the level of support African states lend to thematic resolutions. From 2006 to 2011, 92.4% of all AG members' votes on thematic

30 See Amnesty International et al., "Joint NGO statement on Item 10 and draft resolution on 'mutually beneficial cooperation' delivered during Item 10 General Debate at HRC43," 19 June 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/2563/2020/en/> (accessed on 2 August 2022).

31 International Mechanisms for Promoting Freedom of Expression, "Joint Declaration on Defamation of Religions, and Anti-Terrorism and Anti-Extremism Legislation," 10 December 2008, available at <https://www.osce.org/fom/35639?download=true>. See also Universal Rights Group, "Combating Global Religious Intolerance: The Implementation of Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18," December 2014, <https://www.universal-rights.org/urg-policy-reports/combating-global-religious-intolerance-the-implementation-of-human-rights-council-resolution-1618/> (accessed 2 August 2022).

32 See DefendDefenders, "Making a Difference for Women and Girls?," op. cit.

resolutions were positive (1.4% were negative, and 6.2% were "abstain"). In this period, the AG represented over one third of all positive votes on thematic resolutions (790 out of 2,201, or 36%). From 2012 to 2016, African states voted as follows: 89.2% "Yes," 3.7% "No," and 7.1% "Abstain." Again, they represented one third of all positive votes on thematic resolutions (1,029 out of 2,909, or 36%). Last, from 2017 to 2022, they voted as follows: 88% "Yes," 2.9% "No," and 9.1% "Abstain." Once again, they represented over one third of all positive votes on thematic resolutions (1,026 out of 2,809, or 36.5%).

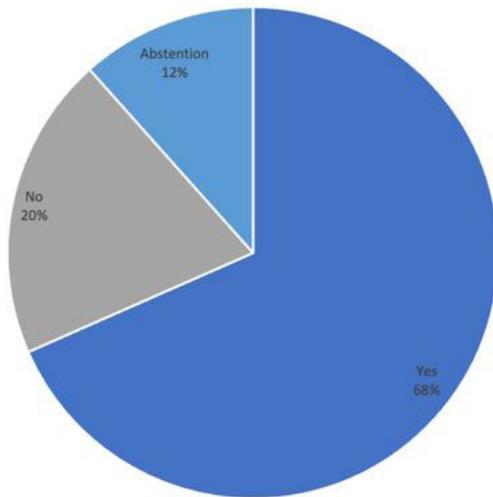
This is remarkable. Despite making up only 27% of the Council's membership, African states frequently represent 35%, 40%, and sometimes 45% of the total number of positive votes on thematic resolutions.

Other resolutions, however, lead to split African votes. (And as shown in section II.4., one category of resolutions attracts mass African opposition – namely, resolutions on SOGI.)

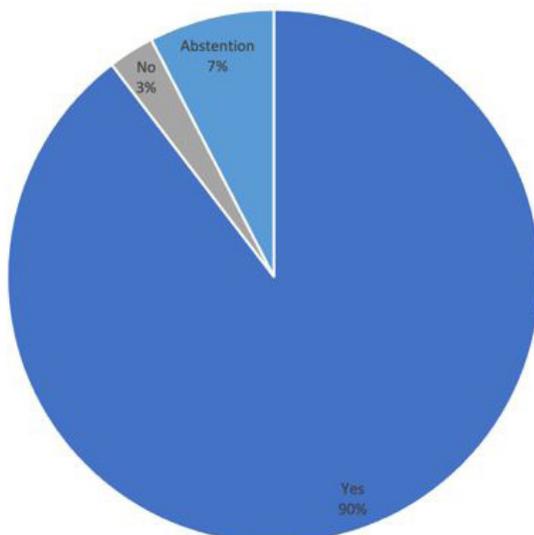
### 3. Split votes on some initiatives

Over the years, more African abstentions, and even negative votes, have been recorded on resolutions on:

Votes on thematic resolutions, 2006-2022, overall HRC membership



Votes on thematic resolutions, 2006-2022, African Group



#### The death penalty

The question of the death penalty remains a divisive issue in multilateral fora. The overall voting record for the Council's membership on six resolutions on the death penalty is: 165 votes in favour, 72 against, and 43 abstentions (59%, 26%, and 15% respectively). The African Group is also divided: 38 votes in favour 21 against, and 19 abstentions (49%, 27%, and 24% respectively). "Yes" votes range between 26 and 29 overall (between five and nine for the AG), "No" votes between ten and 14 (between two and five for the AG), and abstentions between five and nine (between two and five for the AG).

#### Civic space

Several resolutions on civic space (namely on issues pertaining to HRDs, civil society, and freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association) were put to a vote, usually at the request of China, Russia, or Venezuela. Many more resolutions were adopted by consensus. Some of these, however, were targeted by amendments (see section II.5. below).

- **HRDs:** African states were supportive of the two resolutions on HRDs that were put to a vote, with nine and 11 votes in favour, and two and zero votes against, respectively.

- **Civil society space (CSS):** Two resolutions on CSS were put to a vote. The AG shows a split voting record: 7Y, 3N, 3A and 9Y, 0N, 4A, respectively. The latter result shows some progress; however, the resolution in question (38/12) was less ambitious than previous iterations.

- **Reprisals:** <sup>33</sup> The issue of reprisals against those cooperating with the UN gives rise to heated debates at the HRC. Three resolutions on reprisals were adopted by a recorded vote. African states' voting record shows no clear pattern, although "No" votes tend to disappear over time: 7Y, 1N, 5A for resolution 24/24, 6Y, 0N, 7A for resolution 36/21, and 8Y, 0N, 5A for resolution 42/28.

- **The right to peaceful protest:** While a majority of AG members supported the two resolutions on peaceful protests that were put to a vote (25/38 and 31/37), that majority has been thin (seven "Yes" votes). On each, four AG members abstained, and two and one, respectively, voted against.

- **Other resolutions:** Other resolutions pertaining to civic space, namely resolutions on human rights on the internet and on new digital technologies, have enjoyed substantial African support (11 and 12 positive votes, respectively).

Overall, for this group of resolutions, African states lent their support, but less massively than for resolutions examined in the previous section. One counts 94 votes in favour, nine against, and 39 abstentions. They represent 25% of all positive votes (94 out of 382, in line with their weight in absolute number of seats) but are over-represented in abstentions (39 out of 105, or 37%).

## Prevention

Two resolutions on the prevention of human rights violations, which also gave rise to heated debates over early warning signs of crises and tools to respond to human rights emergencies, led to recorded votes, namely resolutions 38/18 and 45/31. In aggregate terms, African states voted as follows: 10Y, 4N, 11A. This means they abstained on more than they supported the resolutions. Three African states (Burundi, Egypt, and, surprisingly, South Africa) even voted against the former, and one (Cameroon) against the latter.

## 4. Mass African opposition: only to SOGI

For African states, SOGI resolutions<sup>34</sup> are an exception. When one looks at African states' voting record and try to identify patterns, this category of resolutions leads to crystal-clear conclusions. It is the only one for which African opposition is massive.

The reasons African states invoke to oppose these resolutions include allegations that SOGI is a "foreign agenda" and that accepting homosexuality would undermine the fabric of African societies. In short, they allege that resolutions on SOGI are contrary to "African culture."

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
24/24 (Reprisals)	31	1	15	7	1	5
25/38 (Peaceful protests)	31	9	7	7	2	4
31/32 (HRDs)	33	6	8	9	2	2
31/37 (Peaceful protests)	31	5	10	7	1	4
32/31 (Civil society space)	31	7	9	7	3	3
36/21 (Reprisals)	28	0	19	6	0	7
38/12 (Civil society space)	35	0	11	9	0	4
42/28 (Reprisals)	36	0	11	8	0	5
47/16 (HR on the Internet)	43	0	4	11	0	2
47/23 (New digital technologies)	44	0	3	12	0	1
49/18 (HRDs)	39	0	8	11	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>39</b>

<sup>33</sup> Officially, these resolutions are entitled "Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights."

<sup>34</sup> SOGI resolutions adopted at the Council are relatively modest. The focus on international human rights standards and equality, aiming to protect all individuals from violence and discrimination, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

For the 2006-2011 period (69 thematic resolutions), one resolution alone gave rise to 75% of the total number of negative African votes: resolution 17/19 on SOGI. The resolution attracted nine "No" votes by African states (the total number of negative votes African votes for the period is 12). For the 2012-2016 period (89 thematic resolutions), a total of 43 negative African votes were recorded. Out of these 43 votes, 16 (that is, over one third) were recorded on two resolutions on SOGI (27/32 and 32/2).

While the fourth resolution on SOGI (41/18) saw, for the first time, three positive African votes (Rwanda, South Africa, and Tunisia) and only four negative votes (plus five abstentions and one state absent), the latest iteration of the resolution (50/10), which renewed the mandate of the Independent Expert (IE), saw 11 African states voting "No" and two abstaining. This means that for the 2017-2022 period (90 thematic resolutions in total), out of the 34 negative African votes recorded, 15 were on SOGI resolutions.

For the AG taken as a whole, this is a clear and consistent position. SOGI resolutions gather a large percentage of the total number of negative votes by African states. SOGI is the only theme that is met with mass African opposition.

Voting patterns on SOGI should also be analysed in conjunction with voting patterns on resolutions on societal issues, such as protection of the family (which AG members massively support), and on amendments to resolutions on women's and girls' rights, in particular those pertaining to sexual and reproductive health.

## 5. Amendments: patterns of African votes

African states are, indeed, over-represented in abstentions and in "Yes" votes on amendments to several thematic resolutions. These include initiatives on women's and girls' rights, SOGI, and some civic space issues (CSS and reprisals). Consequently, African states are under-represented in "No" votes on these thematic amendments.

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
17/19 (SOGI)	23	19	3	1	9	2
27/32 (SOGI)	25	14	7	1	7	4
32/2 (SOGI)	23	18	6	0	9	4
41/18 (SOGI)	27	12	7	3	4	5
50/10 (SOGI)	23	17	7	0	11	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>17</b>

If one looks at votes on amendments (Annex 5), one sees that the Council usually rejects amendments to resolutions on women's and girls' rights (in total, 832 votes in favour (30.3%), 1,413 against (51.5%), and 500 abstentions (18.2%)). For African states, the picture is different: 336 votes in favour (42.6%), 140

against (17.8%), and 312 abstentions (39.6%). This means that African states make up 40% of all "Yes" votes to these amendments (336 out of 832), less than 10% of all "No" votes (140 out of 1,413), and almost two-thirds of all abstentions (312 out of 500).

VOTES on AMENDMENTS: WOMEN'S & GIRLS' RIGHTS RESOLUTIONS	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
Total	832	1413	500	336	140	312
Average	13.6	23.2	8.2	5.5	2.3	5.1
Percentage (Y/N/A)	30.3%	51.5%	18.2%	42.6%	17.8%	39.6%

The figures are even more compelling for amendments to resolutions on DAWG and CEFM, for which African states make up 43% of all "Yes" votes (140 out of 322 and 41 out of 96, respectively). The difference between the AG and the overall HRC membership is less significant for amendments to VAWG resolutions, for which African states make up only 34% of all "Yes" votes (74 out of 218). African under-representation in "No" votes is clear regarding amendments to PMMM resolutions, with 3% of all "no" votes by HRC members (eight out of 237). A majority of AG members' votes on amendments to PMMM resolutions has been in favour of these amendments (81Y, 8N, 67A, as opposed to an overall voting record of 196Y, 237N, 100A, i.e., more votes against than in favour).

This means that AG members are much more supportive of hostile amendments than the average HRC member. The amendments concerned (and usually defeated) include amendments that seek to delete language on women's and girls' "bodily autonomy," "comprehensive sexual education," "sexual and reproductive health," "intimate partner violence," or "women human rights defenders." Without AG votes, these amendments would be rejected with impressive margins. With AG votes, these amendments are defeated with narrower margins.

African states also overwhelmingly support amendments to SOGI resolutions. This is unsurprising given African opposition to SOGI resolutions. These amendments usually seek to delete the expressions "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" from the resolutions or discontinue the IE's mandate.<sup>35</sup>

Overall, the HRC membership voted as follows: 843 in favour of these amendments (41.3%), 941 against (46.1%), and 258 abstentions (12.6%). African states voted as follows: 374 in favour (65.3%), 50 against (8.7%), and 149 abstentions (26%).<sup>36</sup>

To be read in conjunction with the above remarks on resolutions on protection of the family, African states are over-represented in "No" votes to amendments to these resolutions, which aimed to include language on the diversity of family forms and violations committed within the family.

AG members make up a big chunk of "No" votes, namely 40% (96 out of 238) and a small fraction of "Yes" votes (15%, or 26 out of 174).<sup>37</sup>

Finally, African states support or abstain on amendments to civic space resolutions more often than the average HRC member. These amendments usually seek to question terms such as "human rights

<sup>35</sup> See DefendDefenders, "Making a Difference for Women and Girls?," op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> These figures are slightly biased as procedural motions are included in the table. These motions, which aimed to adjourn consideration of the resolutions, enjoyed the support of many African states (see Annex 5). Actual figures (removing procedural motions from the analysis) would show an even higher level of African support (and an even lower opposition) to amendments to SOGI resolutions.

<sup>37</sup> Again, these figures are slightly biased as they include votes on procedural motions, which many AG members supported and few opposed.



VOTES ON AMENDMENTS: CIVIC SPACE RESOLUTIONS	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
Total	1588	2743	1108	390	418	710
Average	13.6	23.4	9.5	3.3	3.6	6.1
Percentage (Y/N/A)	29.2%	50.4%	20.4%	25.7%	27.5%	46.8%

defenders," qualify rights, or emphasise state sovereignty or national security at the expense of individual human rights. If one looks at overall voting records for the HRC, one finds a majority of "No" votes to amendments to resolutions on HRDs, CSS, peaceful protests, and reprisals: 1,588 in favour (29.2%), 2,743 against (50.4%), and 1,108 abstentions (20.4%). The African Group's voting record is different: 390 in favour (25.7%), 418 against (27.5%), and 710 abstentions (46.8%). African states vote "Yes" or "No" less often than other HRC members. They abstain more often. In absolute numbers, they represent two thirds of all abstentions (710 out of 1,108).

Looking specifically at amendments to resolutions on reprisals and peaceful protests, one finds that more African states vote "Yes" than "No": 144Y, 111N, 199A for reprisals, and 54Y, 48N, 143A for peaceful protests. This is significantly different from the overall Council membership: 506Y, 825N, 301A and 217Y, 452N, 214A respectively. African states are over-represented in "Yes" votes and under-represented in "No" votes. Many find refuge in abstention: for both series of amendments, African states make up two thirds of the total number of abstentions.

For resolutions on HRDs and CSS, more African states vote "No" than "Yes." But again, the record is mixed: the call is closer for AG members than for HRC members, with 102Y, 145N, 221A for amendments to HRDs resolutions and 90Y, 114N, 147 for amendments to CSS resolutions. Overall, the HRC has voted as follows: 490Y, 816N, 356A and 375Y, 650N, 237A respectively. Again, many AG members find refuge in abstention.

## 6. African and non-African states: comparisons

Two remarks stem from the above findings:

(i) **Often, African states' voting patterns are not in line with the Council's overall membership and other regional groups.**

### Abstentions:

- African states seldom abstain on thematic resolutions. They are over-represented in "Yes" votes and under-represented in "No" votes.
- This is not the case for all regional groups. Overall, on many of the resolutions supported by the AG, the HRC's membership has a mixed voting record. For instance, several states (mostly from WEOG and Eastern Europe, sometimes from GRU-LAC) vote against resolutions on foreign debt, unilateral coercive measures, international solidarity, PMSCs, promotion of a democratic international order, the right to peace, protection of the family, and mutually beneficial cooperation. On other resolutions (racism, the right to development, non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin, the rights of peasants), one witnesses abstentions.

- African states are over-represented in support to and abstentions on amendments to thematic resolutions – particularly those addressing women's and girls' rights.

### Support to resolutions:

- For African states, it is easier to support thematic resolutions than country resolutions, when a vote takes place. African states are generally enthusiastic about thematic resolutions, many of which address economic, social, and cultural rights and "second-" and "third-" generation rights,<sup>38</sup> addressing

<sup>38</sup> See Council of Europe, "The evolution of human rights," available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/the-evolution-of-human-rights> (accessed on 2 August 2022).

issues ranging from international solidarity to the right to development, the right to peace, and issues intertwined with globalisation and financial flows.

- African states have also been strong supporters of China-led resolutions, however, which is problematic as regards protection of the universality of human rights. The same remark can be made regarding resolutions on traditional values, defamation of religions, and protection of the family. Here, African states often play the role of a leading force: without them, the results would be either different or much closer, in terms of votes. The overall differences between "Yes" and "No" votes are largely attributable to African states. In other words: changes in African votes (meaning: moving from votes in favour to abstentions or votes against) would likely lead sponsors of these resolutions to reconsider their initiatives.

- On several resolutions, African votes are split. Generally, they are timider than the average HRC member. Many AG members support civic space-related resolutions, but overall, the AG offers less support than other groups (WEOG, Eastern Europe, and GRULAC) to resolutions on HRDs, CSS, reprisals, and peaceful protests. They often find refuge in abstention. It is noteworthy that these resolutions address civil and political rights.

- On these resolutions, African states are not exactly in line with the Council's membership. At the same time, they show more cohesiveness (except for civic space-related resolutions) than other regional groups. Only the WEOG shows comparable unanimity on thematic resolutions – except that it is often negative unanimity, exercised to oppose resolutions they regard as undermining the international human rights framework or individual rights

**(ii) Sometimes, African states' voting patterns are more in line with the Council's overall membership.**

- African states vote more in line with the Council's membership on two topics: the death penalty and SOGI. Except for resolution 41/18, all resolutions on SOGI were adopted with narrow margins. A majority of HRC members support SOGI resolutions, but this is due to massive support by WEOG and GRULAC (and some support by Eastern European states).

The Africa and Asia-Pacific groups are split, with many negative votes coming from members of the OIC.

- Regarding the death penalty, a similar remark can be made. While a majority of states support these resolutions, overall voting records show the persistence of strong opposition based on sovereignty-related arguments (and the absence of a general ban, in international human rights law, on the application of the death penalty). African states are also divided, with relatively less support and more abstentions than the average HRC member.

### III. Factors and determinants of African states' voting behaviour

Beyond the data collected for this report, which enabled statistical analysis, we conducted a survey to gather insights on African states' voting behaviour and dynamics at the Council.<sup>39</sup> A total of 24 people took the survey, including 17 state representatives and seven civil society representatives. Respondents took the survey anonymously, but since the survey link was not widely circulated but rather sent to contacts, we assume that all respondents are experts who work closely with the HRC.

#### 1. Preferences and aversions

Unsurprisingly, 23 respondents indicated that African states, in general, prefer consensual resolutions over resolutions that are put to a vote. Furthermore, 22 out of 23 (one respondent abstained on this question) indicated that for African states, when a vote takes place, country-specific resolutions are the most challenging resolutions to support. This means that an overwhelming majority of respondents (96%) think that AG members prefer thematic resolutions and feel less comfortable voting on country-specific resolutions. This confirms our findings and analysis.

Going into more detail, 18 respondents (that is, 75%) indicated that they see resolutions on SOGI as the most challenging thematic resolutions for African states. (Two respondents mentioned resolutions on civic space and four mentioned resolutions on women's and girls' rights.) This is also clearly in line with our own findings and analysis.

<sup>39</sup> Still available for consultation at: <https://forms.microsoft.com/r/7h3vv0QtP8> (accessed on 3 August 2022).

Regarding country-specific resolutions, 22 respondents (92%) indicated that when voting takes place, resolutions addressing human rights violations committed in African countries were the most challenging for African states. Only two respondents mentioned resolutions addressing violations committed in non-African countries.

In terms of evolutions and dynamics, things are less clear for respondents. Almost half (11 out of 24) indicated that they had seen "no noticeable change" in African states' voting behaviour on country resolutions in recent sessions. Nine respondents, however, indicated that African states had voted more often against country-specific resolutions in recent sessions. Only four respondents said the opposite (that African states had voted more often in favour of country-specific resolutions in recent sessions).

These results should be read in conjunction with evolutions highlighted in section I. While long-term patterns (high levels of abstention, lower levels of support than the average HRC member) remain valid, in recent sessions more and more negative votes have been recorded by African states. Yemen is a clear example, but one can also think of resolutions on Ethiopia and Burundi.

## 2. Factors and determinants of vote

Additional questions in the survey provided respondents with more flexibility. Regarding factors and determinants of African states' votes, respondents had the opportunity to rate answers on a scale of plausibility ("Not important" – "Somewhat unimportant" – "Neutral" – "Somewhat important" – "Very important").

Regarding country resolutions, respondents indicated the following factors/determinants of vote as the most important: "Country concerned by the resolution (African vs. non-African)," "Agenda item number," "[Presence of] condemnatory language," "Support/consent of the country concerned," and to a lesser extent, "Existence of an African Group position/solidarity with the country concerned," and "Action already taken by a regional body."

Factor / determinant of vote	Ratings on the scale of plausibility (percentages of positive answers by respondents)	
<b>Country concerned</b> by the resolution (African vs. non-African)	"Not important"	0.0%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	8.3%
	"Neutral"	4.2%
	"Somewhat important"	33.3%
	"Very important"	54.2%
<b>Agenda item number</b> ( <a href="#">item 2</a> , <a href="#">item 4</a> , <a href="#">item 10</a> , other)	"Not important"	0.0%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	8.3%
	"Neutral"	4.2%
	"Somewhat important"	58.3%
	"Very important"	29.2%
<b>Condemnatory language</b> (vs. focus on technical assistance)	"Not important"	0.0%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	0.0%
	"Neutral"	16.7%
	"Somewhat important"	45.8%
	"Very important"	37.5%
<b>New mechanism established</b> (vs. no mechanism established)	"Not important"	0.0%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	25.0%
	"Neutral"	29.2%
	"Somewhat important"	29.2%
	"Very important"	16.7%
Support / <b>consent of the country concerned</b>	"Not important"	0.0%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	0.0%
	"Neutral"	4.2%
	"Somewhat important"	25.0%
	"Very important"	70.8%

Existence of an <b>African Group position</b> / Solidarity with the country concerned	"Not important"	0.0%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	4.3%
	"Neutral"	30.4%
	"Somewhat important"	34.8%
	"Very important"	30.4%
<b>Neutrality</b> / non-alignment / Willingness to "stay out of the brawl"	"Not important"	4.2%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	8.3%
	"Neutral"	37.5%
	"Somewhat important"	37.5%
	"Very important"	12.5%
<b>Membership in a political group</b> (Arab Group, NAM, OIC, etc.)	"Not important"	4.2%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	20.8%
	"Neutral"	25.0%
	"Somewhat important"	41.7%
	"Very important"	8.3%
<b>Pressure</b> exerted by third states / <b>Political alliances</b> with non-African states	"Not important"	4.2%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	12.5%
	"Neutral"	29.2%
	"Somewhat important"	37.5%
	"Very important"	16.7%
<b>New resolution</b> (vs. recurring, already existing resolution)	"Not important"	8.3%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	25.0%
	"Neutral"	41.7%
	"Somewhat important"	25.0%
	"Very important"	0.0%
<b>Personal factors</b> / dynamics (example: personality of an Ambassador)	"Not important"	29.2%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	16.7%
	"Neutral"	16.7%
	"Somewhat important"	29.2%
	"Very important"	8.3%
Action already taken by a <b>regional body</b> (AU, ACHPR, mediation) (vs. no action taken)	"Not important"	0.0%
	"Somewhat unimportant"	12.5%
	"Neutral"	37.5%
	"Somewhat important"	12.5%
	"Very important"	37.5%

Conversely, the following factors/determinants of vote appear to be the least important: "New resolution (vs. recurring resolution)" and "Personal factors/dynamics."

For respondents, factors such as "New mechanism established (vs. no mechanism established)" and "Neutrality/non-alignment" appear to be rather neutral in African states' voting decisions.

Regarding whether action by a regional body (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), African Union (AU), mediation) has an influence on African support to HRC action, which was the object of a specific question, respondents highlighted two answers as the most pertinent. First, they indicated that in their opinion (15 respondents gave a positive answer), an action by the AU or ACHPR on a country (resolution, decision, mediation) makes African support to HRC action on that country easier. Second, they also indicated (17 respondents) that while an AU/ACHPR resolution/decision makes HRC action easier, an ongoing AU-led mediation effort makes HRC action more difficult.

Regarding thematic resolutions, respondents mentioned the following factors/determinants of votes as important or very important: "General focus of the resolution," "Domestic constitution, laws, and/or cultural values," "[Presence of] condemnatory language," and, to a lesser extent, "Voting record/past positions/consistency" and "Existence of an African Group position." Respondents indicated that in their opinion, the following factors are less important in explaining African states' voting behaviour: "Personal factors/dynamics," "New resolution (vs. recurring resolution)," and "Pressure exerted by third states/political alliances."

As regards amendments, the following factors/determinants of vote are the most often mentioned: "Country concerned by the resolution" (21 positive answers), "[Presence of] condemnatory language" (17 answers), and "New mechanism established" and "Neutrality/non-alignment" (12 answers each). For respondents, once again, "Personal factors/dynamics" appear to be unimportant.

Regarding the last factor ("Action already taken by a regional body (AU, ACHPR, mediation, etc.) (vs. no action taken)'), would you say that...	
<u>Action</u> by the AU or ACHPR on a country (resolution, decision, mediation) makes African support to HRC action on that country <u>easier</u>	15 positive answers
<u>Action</u> by the AU or ACHPR on a country (resolution, decision, mediation) makes African support to HRC action on that country <u>more difficult</u>	2 positive answers
<u>No action</u> taken by the AU or ACHPR makes African support to HRC action <u>easier</u>	3 positive answers
<u>No action</u> taken by the AU or ACHPR makes African support to HRC action <u>more difficult</u>	6 positive answers
<u>It depends</u> what type of action: an AU/ACHPR resolution/decision makes HRC action easier; an ongoing AU-led (or sub-regional) mediation effort makes HRC action more difficult	17 positive answers
<u>It depends</u> what type of action: an AU/ACHPR resolution/decision makes HRC action more difficult; an ongoing AU-led (or sub-regional) mediation effort makes HRC action easier	1 positive answer

Regarding African states' over-representation in amendments, respondents mentioned the following factors as being determinants of voting behaviour: "Country concerned" (19 votes), "Neutrality/non-alignment" (16 votes), and "Voting record/past positions/consistency" (14 votes). Only one respondent mentioned "Personal factors/dynamics" as playing a role in African states' voting decisions.

Lastly, 21 respondents answered an open question on "Resolutions for which African states' leadership/support is critically important." They mentioned FGM and albinism most often. These are resolutions led by the AG, which are always adopted by consensus.

### 3. Remarks on our hypotheses and findings

Our initial hypotheses were:

- African states abstain more often than other states;
- African states usually support thematic resolutions;
- African states tend to vote against SOGI resolutions;
- African states are reluctant to support resolutions addressing human rights violations in fellow African countries, unless these resolutions enjoy the consent of the countries concerned; and

- The African Group supports resolutions on Palestine and occupied Arab territories.

These hypotheses were all verified by quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis, however, points to more nuance. If one reads these hypotheses together with our list of factors and determinants of votes, as well as respondents' answers, one can formulate further comments.

The most important factors in African states' voting behaviour (and clear determinants of vote) are:

**Country concerned by the resolution:** When a vote on a country-specific resolution takes place, whether the country concerned is African is a key question for African states. African states prefer not to have to vote on resolutions addressing the situation in other African countries. When they must, if the country concerned is African, then the number of African abstentions and of negative votes increases – in recent sessions, one finds no positive African votes.<sup>40</sup>

**Agenda item number:** African states are item 4-averse. When a vote takes place, they prefer it to take place on a resolution presented under other items. With item 4 resolutions, more abstentions and more negative votes by African states are recorded.

<sup>40</sup> Yemen is an exception as draft resolution 48/L.11, which was defeated, drew massive African opposition.

**Condemnatory language:** The presence of condemnatory elements in a resolution has an influence on African states' voting behaviour. African states prefer to consider resolutions that are focused on technical assistance and capacity-building and contain more positive elements (on progress in the country concerned and positive steps the national authorities have taken). They prefer to avoid "naming and shaming."

**Support/consent of the country concerned:** This is also a key factor. In general, if not always, African states consider the position of the country concerned. If the delegation of the country concerned expresses strong opposition to the resolution being considered, most African states will either abstain (the most frequent position) or vote against. They will seldom vote in favour. Resolutions on Iran, Belarus, Nicaragua, Venezuela and others show a clear pattern. Resolutions on Ukraine and Georgia are exceptions,<sup>41</sup> which are due to the next factor.

**Neutrality/non-alignment:** When debates get heated on country resolutions, in particular between Western states on one side and Russia, Egypt, China and allies on the other side, African states tend to find refuge in abstention. On non-consensual country resolutions, most African states abstain. This is not the case for non-consensual thematic resolutions, most of which enjoy mass African support. On country issues, this reflects a risk-averse position: most African states try to "stay out of the brawl" and of Big Power politics, and they try to keep good relations with all states. Only a few outliers (Burundi, Eritrea, and a few others, less systematically) side with one camp (usually, against Western states) and with the countries concerned, even in the presence of gross, widespread violations.

Additional factors are:

**General focus of the resolution:** Resolutions on economic, social, and cultural rights, and on second- and third-generation rights, draw more (indeed: mass) African support than resolutions on civil and political rights that are put to a vote. However, African states also support resolutions on civil

and political rights; for instance, the last resolution on HRDs attracted 11 positive votes and the last resolution on human rights on the Internet attracted 12 positive votes by African states. SOGI resolutions are the only resolutions that turn the African Group off almost completely, drawing mass opposition.

**Voting record/past positions/consistency:** This factor might also be identified as playing a role for other (non-African) states. Consistency and coherence in foreign policy, including in multilateral fora, are regarded as tokens of legitimacy and reliability.

Although respondents to our survey did not mention this factor as being particularly important for African states, it appears that **membership in a political group** (including NAM, G77, and the OIC and the Arab Group) plays a role in African states' voting behaviour. Myanmar is the only case of substantive African support for an item 4 resolution (the only explanation is the OIC's role on addressing violations against the Rohingya in Myanmar). Similarly, the OPT and item 7 resolutions enjoy mass African support, which cannot be explained without referring to NAM and G77 (with their history of anti-colonial struggle and support to self-determination), as well as the OIC.

Less important factors are:

Factors such as whether a new mechanism is established by the resolution being considered, whether a resolution is new or recurring, and even whether the African Group has a position on the resolution being considered, are less important. There seem to be no clear patterns, as AG members have both supported and abstained (or even voted against) on new resolutions and on resolutions creating new mechanisms, such as a special procedure. Most African states continue to abstain on many country resolutions, including on African states (Eritrea, South Sudan), which do not enjoy the consent of the country concerned, despite statements delivered on behalf of the AG or expressing an AG position.

<sup>41</sup> Most African states, however, have supported the resolutions condemning violations stemming from Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Before 2022, African states' voting record on Ukraine and Georgia resolutions (under item 10) ran counter to their traditional position on item 10, which are resolutions at the initiative of the countries concerned or with their consent. This behaviour risks undermining the AG's position on country resolutions and on technical assistance and capacity-building.

African states' voting decisions depend on multiple factors. Regarding thematic resolutions, African states' default position is support. African support for many resolutions is unanimous or quasi-unanimous. Among the factors making it easier for African states to vote "Yes" are the absence of mentions of specific countries from thematic resolutions (hence, no country is singled out), non-resort to item 4 (most thematic resolutions are under item 3), and the absence (or limited presence) of condemnatory elements – the focus is rather on best practices, standards, and technical advice.

When a vote takes place, African states are less reluctant to "pick a side." They usually vote "Yes," even when opposition (by WEOG, Eastern European, or GRULAC states) is significant. This is in all likelihood related to the fact that thematic resolutions give rise to less polarisation and fewer accusations of "interference in internal affairs." Big Power politics is much more acute for country-specific resolutions, which, especially if presented under item 4, are seen as instruments of finger-pointing, "naming and shaming," and undue singling out the countries concerned.

Regarding country-specific resolutions, African states are increasingly reluctant to vote "Yes." More and more often, they find refuge in abstention. What's more, in recent sessions, a larger number of African states voted "No." Country resolutions are seen as more divisive and as being at the centre of Big Power politics. They give rise to accusations of "politicisation," "double standards," "interference in domestic affairs," and undue singling out of the countries concerned. They also give rise to heated debates, some states claiming to act on principle (based on objective criteria indicating grave human rights violations), others claiming that Council resolutions violate their sovereignty and are political. In this context, African states often prefer not to "pick a side."

But by doing so, they could be harming their own credibility and the principled positions they take on many thematic resolutions. Indeed, when multiple independent sources point to gross, widespread human rights violations being committed in a country, refusing to pick a side amounts

to standing idly by. This is not what the Council's founding resolution, UN General Assembly resolution 60/251, intended for Council members. In the resolution's words, the latter should "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights," and they should strive to support a Council that fulfils its mandate to promote and protect human rights everywhere, including by "address[ing] situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and [making] recommendations thereon."<sup>42</sup>

42 UNGA resolution 60/251, available at: [https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251\\_En.pdf](https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251_En.pdf) See paragraphs 3 and 9, among others.

# CONCLUSION

A comprehensive analysis of African states' voting behaviour at the UN Human Rights Council shows that they act in both principled and pragmatic (or calculative) ways.

First, they act in a principled way when they support human rights-based initiatives. The African Group supports resolutions covering a myriad of human rights issues. These resolutions address civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. In this regard, the question of whether the Council does too much or addresses too many issues is less relevant than the fact that African states are usually enthusiastic about Council initiatives. They show consistency and act as a leading force within the Council.

They should be encouraged, however, to better study the implications and impact of thematic resolutions. Some of them include problematic elements as regards state obligations (lack of clarity), the enforceability of rights for rights-holders (especially for third-generation rights), and dilution of international human rights standards (for instance, through addition of caveats, qualifiers or cultural particularities, or references to "national security").

Second, African states are also pragmatic. When they are not in a position to support country resolutions, African states usually prefer to abstain. This is wiser than opposing resolutions that address serious human rights situations and seek to advance accountability. When most of its members abstain, the African Group does not help the Council adopt resolutions, but it does not prevent their adoption either.

The Council's founding resolution, however, makes clear that the Council has a mandate to promote and protect human rights everywhere, including in country-specific contexts. This means that Council members should decide based on objective criteria whether they support country-specific initiatives. In this respect, abstaining means failing to support principled action and shying away from Council membership obligations.

African states abstain more than states from other groups and more than the average Council member. This shows a hesitancy to use their full poten-

tial. Abstaining states leave it to voting states to determine outcomes. In this sense, African states' political weight remains lower than their objective weight (the number of seats they occupy).

Last, African states occasionally contribute to undermining the Council's work to promote and protect human rights for all. For instance, when they oppose SOGI resolutions, they undermine the fight for equality and non-discrimination. The same remark can be made about support to hostile amendments to thematic resolutions, particularly on women's and girls' rights, or support to initiatives that undermine the international human rights framework, such as China-led resolutions.

In theory, the African Group can exert a great deal of influence on Council outcomes. In practice, its influence is only clear regarding thematic resolutions. Regarding country resolutions, it remains limited. Recent sessions may indicate a shift; unfortunately, this might not be for the better, as more and more African states oppose country resolutions. In this regard, the 2021 "Yemen disaster" came as a shock.

The future will tell whether collectively, the African Group can increase its influence over Council outcomes and whether outliers (positive or negative) emerge. At the time of completing this report, two African members of the Council, The Gambia and Malawi, seem to be attempting to prioritise human rights principles and objective criteria over political considerations. DefendDefenders and African Defenders strongly encourage such attempts.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings and analysis presented above, DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders offer the following recommendations. Although this report focuses on the African Group as a whole, recommendations are mainly addressed to individual states, insofar as voting decisions are individual.

## 1. To African states that are members of the UN Human Rights Council:

- Consider resolutions and other initiatives at the UN Human Rights Council on their merits, using international human rights standards and the universality of human rights as guiding principles in voting decisions;
- In this regard, endorse the "incoming members pledge,"<sup>43</sup> which highlights, among other things, that members of the UN Human Rights Council who sign the document pledge to "address human rights concerns on their merits, applying objective and human rights-based criteria in determining whether and how the Council should respond to a situation of concern, and take leadership and responsibility in initiating action when such criteria are met;"
- Continue to support human rights-based initiatives, in particular thematic resolutions that advance human rights, be they civil and political or economic, social and cultural, that set standards, or that shed light on human rights dimensions of international issues or phenomena;
- Strive for policy coherence; support human rights-based initiatives irrespective of agenda item numbers. In particular, consider supporting all resolutions presented under item 10, unless they constitute attempts to eliminate or evade human rights scrutiny;
- In case gross, widespread, and/or systematic human rights violations are reported by independent experts and/or the High Commissioner for Human Rights in a country concerned by a UN Human Rights Council resolution, consider supporting the resolution; at the very minimum, consider abstaining on the resolution;

- Provide explanations of vote or general comments more systematically to outline reasons that led to voting decisions; when voting against a country resolution, provide an explanation of vote outlining the reasons that led to such a voting decision; and
- Oppose amendments that seek to remove or undermine key components of country-specific resolutions such as investigative mechanisms or the establishment or renewal of special procedure mandates and oppose amendments and initiatives that seek to undermine the universality of human rights.

## 2. To African states that are observers:

- Consider resolutions and other initiatives at the UN Human Rights Council on their merits, using international human rights standards and the universality of human rights as guiding principles in decisions to sponsor, co-sponsor, support or oppose initiatives;
- Ahead of UN Human Rights Council elections, the African Union should ensure competition within the Africa Group. This includes encouraging states to put forward their candidacy to become a Council member and avoiding the presence of "closed slates" (with the same number of candidates as there are seats available for Africa for the following term); and
- At the UN General Assembly, states should commit to voting only for candidates for UN Human Rights Council membership that uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, as per the Council's founding resolution.

## 3. To other UN Human Rights Council members and observers:

- Engage in strategic conversations with African delegations on all resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council, including country-specific and thematic resolutions, and make every effort to ensure that members of the African Group are systematically consulted.

## 4. To civil society organisations:

- Continue to pay close attention to UN Human Rights Council dynamics, in particular voting records of African states and patterns for the African Group.

<sup>43</sup> See Human Rights Watch et al., "Strengthening the UN Human Rights Council from the Ground Up," 23 April 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/23/strengthening-un-human-rights-council-ground> (accessed on 4 August 2022).

# ANNEXES

As annexes, we make available all vote results on country-specific and thematic resolutions, as well as vote results on key amendments, with a breakdown for the African Group.

Given the amount of data collected, all Excel spreadsheets cannot be included in the print version of the report. Full Excel spreadsheets are available for download on DefendDefenders' website.

**Annex 1:**  
**All votes on resolutions (country-specific and thematic)**  
**on which a vote took place (HRC1 (2006) to HRC50 (July 2022))**

Excel spreadsheet also available for download on the report's page:  
<https://defenddefenders.org/between-principles-and-pragmatism/>

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
2006-2011 (HRC 1 to HRC 18)						
RESOLUTION (country-specific)	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
1/106 (Decision) (Palestine)	29	12	5	9	0	3
2/3 (Occupied Golan)	32	1	14	12	0	1
2/4 (Israeli settlements)	45	1	1	12	0	1
2/115 (Decision) (Sudan/Darfur)	25	11	10	9	0	3
3/1 (Palestine)	34	1	12	12	0	1
6/19 (Item 7 - Palestine)	31	1	15	11	0	2
7/1 (Item 7 - Palestine)	33	1	13	12	0	1
7/15 (DPRK)	22	7	18	2	1	10
7/18 (Item 7 - Settlements)	46	1	0	13	0	0
7/30 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	32	1	14	12	0	1
9/18 (Item 7 - Follow-up to S-3/1)	32	9	5	11	0	1
10/16 (DPRK)	26	6	15	6	2	5
10/17 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	33	1	13	12	0	1
10/18 (Item 7 - Settlements)	46	1	0	13	0	0
10/19 (Item 7 - Palestine)	35	4	8	12	0	1
10/21 (Item 7 - Follow-up to S-9/1)	33	1	13	12	0	1
10/33 (DRC)	33	0	14	13	0	0
11/10 (Sudan)	20	18	9	2	5	6
13/5 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	31	1	15	11	0	2
13/6 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	45	1	0	12	0	0
13/7 (Item 7 - Settlements)	46	1	0	13	0	0
13/8 (Item 7 - Palestine)	31	9	7	11	0	2
13/9 (Item 7 - Follow-up Gaza inquiry)	29	6	11	9	0	3
13/14 (DPRK)	28	5	13	6	1	5
14/1 (Palestine) (urgent debate)	32	3	9	9	0	1
15/1 (Palestine) (Follow-up to 14/1)	30	1	15	10	0	2
15/6 (Item 7 - Follow-up to 13/9)	27	1	19	10	0	3
15/27 (Sudan)	25	18	3	3	8	1
16/8 (DPRK)	30	3	11	6	0	6
16/9 (Iran)	22	7	14	2	1	8
16/17 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	29	1	16	10	0	2
16/20 (Palestine - Follow-up to 14/1)	37	1	8	10	0	2
16/29 (Item 7 - Palestine)	30	1	15	10	0	2
16/30 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	45	1	0	12	0	0
16/31 (Item 7 - Settlements)	45	1	0	12	0	0
16/32 (Item 7 - Follow-up Gaza inquiry)	27	3	16	9	0	3
17/10 (Palestine - Follow-up to 14/1)	36	1	8	9	0	2
17/24 (Belarus)	21	5	19	3	1	8
S-1/1 (Palestine) (special session)	29	11	5	9	0	2
S-2/1 (Lebanon) (special session)	27	11	8	8	0	4
S-3/1 (Palestine) (special session)	32	8	6	12	0	0
S-6/1 (Palestine) (special session)	30	1	15	10	0	2
S-9/1 (Palestine) (special session)	33	1	13	12	0	1
S-11/1 (Sri Lanka) (special session)	29	12	6	11	0	2
S-12/1 (Palestine) (special session)	25	6	11	8	0	3
S-16/1 (Syria) (special session)	26	9	7	5	2	4
S-17/1 (Syria) (special session)	33	4	9	7	0	5
S-18/1 (Syria) (special session)	37	4	6	10	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1534</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Average number (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Percentage (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>69.3%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>

2012-2016 (HRC 19 to HRC 33)						
RESOLUTION (country-specific)	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
19/1 (Syria) (urgent debate)	37	3	3	10	0	0
19/2 (Sri Lanka)	24	15	8	5	3	5
19/12 (Iran)	22	5	20	4	0	9
19/14 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	33	1	13	12	0	1
19/15 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	46	1	0	13	0	0
19/16 (Item 7 - Palestine)	44	1	2	12	0	1
19/17 (Item 7 - Settlements)	36	1	10	12	0	1
19/18 (Gaza inquiry)	29	1	17	11	0	2
19/22 (Syria)	41	3	2	12	0	1
20/13 (Belarus)	22	5	20	5	0	8
20/22 (Syria)	41	3	3	12	0	1
21/26 (Syria)	41	3	3	12	0	1
22/1 (Sri Lanka)	25	13	8	4	3	5
22/17 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	29	1	17	10	0	3
22/23 (Iran)	26	2	17	4	0	9
22/24 (Syria)	41	1	5	12	0	1
22/25 (Gaza inquiry)	41	1	3	11	0	2
22/26 (Item 7 - Settlements)	44	1	2	11	0	2
22/27 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	46	1	0	13	0	0
22/28 (Item 7 - Palestine)	46	1	0	13	0	0
22/29 (Palestine inquiry)	45	1	0	12	0	0
23/1 (Syria) (urgent debate)	36	1	8	8	0	4
23/15 (Belarus)	26	3	18	5	0	8
23/26 (Syria)	37	1	9	9	0	4
24/22 (Syria)	40	1	6	11	0	2
25/1 (Sri Lanka)	23	12	12	4	3	6
25/23 (Syria)	32	4	11	7	0	6
25/24 (Iran)	21	9	16	1	0	12
25/25 (DPRK)	30	6	11	6	0	7
25/27 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	46	1	0	13	0	0
25/28 (Item 7 - Settlements)	46	1	0	13	0	0
25/29 (Item 7 - Palestine)	46	1	0	13	0	0
25/30 (Gaza inquiry)	46	1	0	13	0	0
25/31 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	33	1	13	13	0	0
26/23 (Syria)	32	5	9	7	1	4
26/25 (Belarus)	24	7	16	4	0	9
26/30 (Ukraine)	23	4	19	4	0	8
27/16 (Syria)	32	5	10	7	1	5
28/20 (Syria)	29	6	12	6	1	6
28/21 (Iran)	20	11	16	2	0	11
28/22 (DPRK)	27	6	14	5	0	8
28/24 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	29	1	17	10	0	3
28/25 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	45	1	1	12	0	1
28/26 (Item 7 - Settlements)	45	1	1	13	0	0
28/27 (Item 7 - Palestine)	43	1	3	12	0	1
29/16 (Syria)	29	6	12	6	1	6
29/17 (Belarus)	21	8	18	3	0	10
29/23 (Ukraine)	21	6	20	5	0	8
29/25 (Item 7 - Accountability)	41	1	5	11	0	2
30/10 (Syria)	29	6	12	6	1	6
31/17 (Syria)	27	6	14	5	1	7
31/19 (Iran)	20	15	11	1	4	8
31/25 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	31	0	16	11	0	2
31/34 (Item 7 - Palestine)	42	0	5	10	0	3
31/35 (Item 7 - Accountability)	32	0	15	7	0	6
31/36 (Item 7 - Settlements)	32	0	15	11	0	2
32/25 (Syria)	27	6	14	5	1	7
32/26 (Belarus)	15	9	23	0	2	11
32/29 (Ukraine)	22	6	19	4	1	8
33/23 (Syria)	26	7	14	4	2	7
33/24 (Burundi)	19	7	21	1	2	10
S-19/1 (Syria) (special session)	41	3	2	12	0	1
S-21/1 (Palestine) (special session)	29	1	17	9	0	4
S-25/1 (Syria) (special session)	24	7	16	4	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>2098</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>Average number (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Percentage (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>70.2%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>33.0%</b>

2017-2022 (HRC 34 to HRC 50)						
RESOLUTION (country-specific)	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
34/23 (Iran)	22	12	13	2	3	8
34/26 (Syria)	27	7	13	5	1	7
34/27 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	26	3	18	9	1	3
34/28 (Item 7 - Accountability)	30	2	15	9	1	3
34/29 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	43	2	2	12	1	0
34/30 (Item 7 - Palestine)	41	2	4	10	1	2
34/31 (Item 7 - Settlements)	36	2	9	11	1	1
34/37 (Georgia)	18	5	24	3	1	9
35/26 (Syria)	27	8	12	5	1	7
35/27 (Belarus)	18	8	21	1	2	10
35/31 (Ukraine)	22	6	19	4	1	8
36/2 (Burundi) (Item 2)	23	14	9	11	0	1
36/19 (Burundi) (Item 4)	22	11	14	2	5	6
36/20 (Syria)	27	7	13	5	1	7
36/30 (DRC)	45	1	1	13	0	0
37/1 (Syria) (urgent debate)	29	4	14	5	1	7
37/29 (Syria)	27	4	16	3	1	9
37/30 (Iran)	21	7	19	1	1	11
37/32 (Myanmar)	32	5	10	6	1	6
37/33 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	25	14	7	10	1	2
37/34 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	43	2	1	12	0	1
37/35 (Item 7 - Palestine)	41	3	2	10	1	2
37/36 (Item 7 - Settlements)	34	4	8	10	1	2
37/37 (Item 7 - Accountability)	27	4	15	8	1	4
37/40 (Georgia)	19	5	23	3	1	9
38/14 (Belarus)	19	6	21	1	2	10
38/16 (Syria)	26	5	15	3	1	9
39/1 (Venezuela)	23	7	17	1	3	9
39/2 (Myanmar)	35	3	7	8	1	4
39/14 (Burundi)	23	7	17	1	3	9
39/15 (Syria)	27	4	16	3	1	9
39/16 (Yemen)	21	8	18	1	2	10
40/2 (Nicaragua)	23	3	21	0	2	11
40/13 (Accountability/Palestine) (Item 2)	23	8	15	9	0	3
40/17 (Syria)	28	5	14	3	2	8
40/18 (Iran)	22	7	18	0	1	12
40/21 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	26	16	5	8	1	4
40/22 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	41	3	2	11	0	2
40/23 (Item 7 - Palestine)	39	3	5	9	0	4
40/24 (Item 7 - Settlements)	32	5	10	9	1	3
40/28 (Georgia)	19	3	25	1	1	11
40/29 (Myanmar)	37	3	7	9	0	4
41/1 (Eritrea)	21	13	13	0	5	8
41/2 (Philippines)	18	14	15	0	5	8
41/22 (Belarus)	20	6	21	0	2	11
41/23 (Syria)	26	7	14	2	3	8
41/25 (Ukraine)	20	5	22	1	2	10
42/2 (Yemen)	22	12	11	1	5	7
42/3 (Myanmar)	37	2	7	10	0	3
42/4 (Venezuela) (Item 2)	18	6	23	8	0	5
42/25 (Venezuela) (Item 4)	19	7	21	0	3	10
42/26 (Burundi)	23	11	13	1	6	6
42/27 (Syria)	27	6	13	3	2	7
43/2 (Nicaragua)	24	4	19	0	2	11
43/3 (Accountability/Palestine) (Item 2)	22	8	17	10	1	2
43/24 (Iran)	22	8	15	0	2	10

43/26 (Myanmar)	37	2	8	9	0	4
43/28 (Syria)	27	2	18	3	1	9
43/30 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	26	17	4	10	1	2
43/31 (Item 7 - Settlements)	36	2	9	10	0	3
43/32 (Item 7 - Palestine)	42	2	3	10	0	3
43/33 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	43	2	2	11	0	2
43/37 (Georgia)	20	2	24	2	1	10
44/1 (Eritrea)	24	10	13	0	5	8
44/19 (Belarus)	22	5	20	1	1	11
44/21 (Syria)	28	2	17	3	1	9
45/1 (Belarus) (urgent debate)	23	2	22	0	1	12
45/2 (Venezuela) (Item 2)	14	7	26	6	0	7
45/15 (Yemen)	22	12	12	0	6	7
45/19 (Burundi)	24	6	17	0	3	10
45/20 (Venezuela) (Item 4)	22	3	22	0	1	12
45/21 (Syria)	27	1	19	3	0	10
46/1 (Sri Lanka)	22	11	14	2	2	9
46/2 (Nicaragua)	20	8	18	0	2	11
46/3 (Accountability/Palestine) (Item 2)	32	6	8	10	3	0
46/18 (Iran)	21	12	14	2	0	11
46/20 (Belarus)	20	7	20	0	1	12
46/22 (Syria)	27	6	14	6	0	7
46/23 (South Sudan)	20	16	11	0	8	5
46/24 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	26	18	3	10	3	0
46/25 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	42	3	2	11	0	2
46/26 (Item 7 - Settlements)	36	3	8	10	0	3
46/30 (Georgia)	19	8	19	3	2	8
47/2 (Eritrea)	21	13	13	0	4	9
47/13 (Ethiopia (Tigray))	20	14	13	0	7	6
47/18 (Syria)	26	6	15	6	0	7
47/19 (Belarus)	21	7	19	1	1	11
47/22 (Ukraine)	19	8	20	2	2	9
48/1 (Afghanistan)	28	5	14	5	1	7
48/15 (Syria)	23	7	17	4	1	8
48/16 (Burundi)	21	15	11	0	8	5
48/L.11 (Yemen) (rejected by vote)	18	21	7	0	9	4
49/1 (Russia/Ukraine) (urgent debate)	32	2	13	8	1	4
49/2 (South Sudan)	19	11	17	0	5	8
49/3 (Nicaragua)	20	7	20	2	1	10
49/4 (Accountability/Palestine) (Item 2)	37	3	7	11	1	1
49/24 (Iran)	19	12	16	1	1	11
49/26 (Belarus)	22	6	19	3	1	9
49/27 (Syria)	23	7	16	4	1	7
49/28 (Item 7 - Self-determination)	41	3	3	12	0	1
49/29 (Item 7 - Settlements)	38	4	5	11	1	1
49/30 (Item 7 - Occupied Golan)	29	15	3	11	1	1
49/33 (Georgia)	19	6	20	4	1	8
50/2 (Eritrea)	21	10	16	0	3	10
50/19 (Syria)	25	6	15	5	1	6
50/20 (Belarus)	23	6	18	3	1	9
S-27/1 (Myanmar) (special session)	33	3	9	8	1	4
S-28/1 (Palestine) (special session)	29	2	14	9	0	4
S-30/1 (Palestine) (special session)	24	9	14	10	2	1
S-33/1 (Ethiopia) (special session)	21	15	11	0	7	6
S-34/1 (Russia/Ukraine) (special session)	33	2	12	8	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2935</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>1503</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>711</b>
<b>Average number (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>Percentage (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>56.6%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>37.1%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>49.5%</b>

	Overall result of the vote			African Group votes		
2006-2011 (HRC 1 to HRC 18)						
RESOLUTION (thematic)	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
1/2 (UN Decl. on Indigenous Peoples)	30	2	12	4	0	6
1/107 (Dec.) (Incitement to hatred)	33	12	1	12	0	0
2/1 (Review of mandates)	30	15	2	13	0	0
2/109 (Dec.) (Foreign debt)	33	13	1	13	0	0
3/2 (Durban Review Conference)	34	12	1	13	0	0
3/103 (Dec.) (Follow up to Durban)	33	12	1	12	0	0
4/5 (Globalization and HR)	34	13	0	13	0	0
4/6 (Strengthening of OHCHR)	35	12	0	13	0	0
4/9 (Defamation of religions)	24	14	9	10	0	3
4/103 (Dec.) (Unilat. coercive meas.)	32	12	1	11	0	0
6/3 (International solidarity)	34	12	1	13	0	0
6/7 (Unilat. coercive measures)	34	11	2	13	0	0
6/21 (Complem. standards to Durban)	32	10	4	12	0	0
6/22 (Racism and xenophobia)	28	13	5	12	0	0
6/23 (Durban Review Conference)	33	10	3	12	0	0
6/37 (Religious intolerance)	29	0	18	5	0	8
7/2 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	34	10	3	13	0	0
7/4 (Foreign debt)	34	13	0	13	0	0
7/5 (International solidarity)	34	13	0	13	0	0
7/11 (Good governance)	41	0	6	13	0	0
7/19 (Defamation of religions)	21	10	14	7	0	5
7/21 (Use of mercenaries)	32	11	2	12	0	0
7/33 (Racism and xenophobia)	34	0	13	13	0	0
7/36 (Freedom of expression)	32	0	15	13	0	0
8/5 (Democratic int'l order)	33	13	1	12	0	1
8/9 (Right to peace)	32	13	2	13	0	0
9/2 (International solidarity)	33	13	0	12	0	0
9/4 (Unilat. coercive measures)	33	11	2	12	0	0
10/5 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	33	12	2	13	0	0
10/11 (Use of mercenaries)	32	12	3	13	0	0
10/22 (Defamation of religions)	23	11	13	8	0	5
10/24 (Torture)	34	0	13	9	0	4
10/25 (Religious discrimination)	22	1	24	2	1	10
10/30 (Compl. standards to Durban)	34	13	0	13	0	0

11/4 (Right to peace)	32	13	1	13	0	0
11/5 (Foreign debt)	31	13	2	13	0	0
12/9 (International solidarity)	33	14	0	13	0	0
12/21 (Traditional values)	26	15	6	11	1	1
12/22 (Unilat. coercive measures)	32	14	0	12	0	0
12/23 (Right to development)	33	0	14	13	0	0
12/119 (Decision) (Foreign debt)	33	13	2	12	0	0
13/1 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	31	12	3	12	0	0
13/16 (Defamation of religions)	20	17	8	6	0	4
14/3 (Right to peace)	31	14	1	13	0	0
14/4 (Foreign debt)	31	13	3	13	0	0
15/12 (Use of mercenaries)	31	13	2	12	0	0
15/13 (International solidarity)	32	14	0	13	0	0
15/24 (Unilat. coercive measures)	32	14	0	13	0	0
15/25 (Right to development)	45	0	1	13	0	0
15/26 (OEIGWG on PMSC)	32	12	3	13	0	0
16/3 (Traditional values)	24	14	7	10	1	0
16/10 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	31	13	2	12	0	0
16/14 (Foreign debt)	29	13	4	11	0	1
16/117 (Dec.) (Right to development)	45	0	1	12	0	0
16/118 (Dec.) (International solidarity)	32	14	0	12	0	0
17/6 (International solidarity)	32	14	0	12	0	0
17/7 (Foreign debt)	30	13	3	12	0	0
17/16 (Right to peace)	32	14	0	12	0	0
17/19 (SOGI)	23	19	3	1	9	2
17/22 (Migrants and asylum seekers)	32	14	0	12	0	0
17/23 (Non-repatriation of illicit funds)	32	2	12	12	0	0
18/4 (Use of mercenaries)	31	11	4	11	0	1
18/5 (International solidarity)	33	12	1	11	0	1
18/6 (Democratic int'l order)	29	12	5	11	0	1
18/20 (Combating xenophobia)	37	1	8	12	0	0
18/26 (Right to development)	45	0	1	12	0	0
18/27 (Racism and xenophobia)	35	1	10	12	0	0
18/120 (Dec.) (Unil. coerc. measures)	34	12	0	12	0	0
S-10/1 (Financial crises) (special session)	31	0	14	11	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2201</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Average number (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Percentage (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>68.9%</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>92.4%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>

2012-2016 (HRC 19 to HRC 33)						
RESOLUTION (thematic)	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
19/3 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	33	12	2	12	0	1
19/32 (Unilat. coercive measures)	35	12	0	13	0	0
19/34 (Right to development)	46	0	1	13	0	0
19/36 (HR, democracy, rule of law)	43	0	2	13	0	0
19/38 (Non-repatriation of illicit funds)	35	1	11	13	0	0
20/10 (Foreign debt)	31	11	5	13	0	0
20/15 (Right to peace)	34	1	12	13	0	0
21/3 (Traditional values)	25	15	7	9	2	2
21/8 (Use of mercenaries)	34	12	1	13	0	0
21/9 (Democratic int'l order)	31	12	4	13	0	0
21/10 (International solidarity)	35	12	0	13	0	0
21/19 (Rights of peasants)	23	9	15	7	0	6
21/32 (Right to development)	46	1	0	13	0	0
21/33 (Racism and xenophobia)	37	1	9	13	0	0
22/2 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	31	15	1	13	0	0
22/12 (Non-repatriation of illicit funds)	32	2	13	13	0	0
22/30 (IGWG on DDPA)	34	1	12	13	0	0
22/33 (OEIGWG on PMSC)	31	11	5	13	0	0
22/34 (Education against racism)	46	1	0	13	0	0
22/117 (Panel on death penalty)	28	10	9	6	4	3
23/11 (Foreign debt)	30	15	2	13	0	0
23/12 (International solidarity)	32	15	0	13	0	0
23/14 (Access to medicines)	31	0	16	13	0	0
23/16 (Right to peace)	30	9	8	13	0	0
24/4 (Right to development)	46	1	0	13	0	0
24/13 (Use of mercenaries)	31	15	1	13	0	0
24/14 (Unilat. coercive measures)	31	15	1	13	0	0
24/24 (Reprisals)	31	1	15	7	1	5
24/26 (Racism and xenophobia)	32	2	13	13	0	0
24/35 (Arms transfers)	42	1	4	12	0	1
25/4 (Integrity of the judicial system)	27	1	19	9	0	4
25/9 (Non-repatriation of illicit funds)	33	2	12	13	0	0
25/15 (Democratic int'l order)	30	14	3	13	0	0
25/16 (Foreign debt)	30	14	3	13	0	0
25/22 (Armed drones)	27	6	14	8	0	5
25/38 (Peaceful protests)	31	9	7	7	2	4
26/2 (Death penalty)	29	10	8	9	2	2
26/6 (International solidarity)	33	14	0	13	0	0
26/9 (Binding instrument on TNCs)	20	14	13	10	0	3
26/11 (Protection of the family)	26	14	6	13	0	0
26/16 (Firearms)	44	0	3	13	0	0
26/26 (Rights of peasants)	29	5	13	12	0	1
27/2 (Right to development)	42	1	4	13	0	0
27/9 (Democratic int'l order)	29	14	4	13	0	0
27/10 (Use of mercenaries)	32	14	1	13	0	0
27/17 (Right to peace)	33	9	5	13	0	0
27/21 (Unilat. coercive measures)	31	14	2	13	0	0

27/30 (Foreign debt)	33	5	9	13	0	0
27/32 (SOGI)	25	14	7	1	7	4
28/1 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	31	16	0	12	1	0
28/3 (Armed drones)	29	6	12	11	0	2
28/5 (Non-repatriation of illicit funds)	33	2	12	13	0	0
28/7 (OEIGWG on PMSC)	32	13	2	13	0	0
28/8 (Foreign debt)	31	14	1	12	0	0
28/14 (HR, democracy, rule of law)	35	0	12	9	0	4
28/17 (Effects of terrorism on HR)	25	16	6	8	1	4
29/3 (International solidarity)	33	14	0	13	0	0
29/10 (Firearms)	41	0	6	13	0	0
29/22 (Protection of the family)	29	14	4	12	1	0
30/2 (Unilat. coercive measures)	33	14	0	13	0	0
30/5 (Death penalty)	26	13	8	7	3	3
30/6 (Use of mercenaries)	32	14	1	13	0	0
30/12 (Right to peace)	33	12	2	13	0	0
30/13 (Rights of peasants)	31	1	15	13	0	0
30/15 (Violent extremism)	37	3	7	11	1	1
30/16 (Racism and xenophobia)	32	12	3	12	1	0
30/17 (People of African descent)	32	12	3	13	0	0
30/28 (Right to development)	33	10	4	13	0	0
30/29 (Democratic int'l order)	31	14	2	13	0	0
31/1 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	33	13	1	13	0	0
31/4 (Right to development)	34	0	13	13	0	0
31/11 (Foreign debt)	33	12	2	13	0	0
31/22 (Non-repatriation of illicit funds)	32	0	15	13	0	0
31/30 (Effects of terrorism on HR)	28	14	5	11	1	1
31/32 (HRDs)	33	6	8	9	2	2
31/37 (Peaceful protests)	31	5	10	7	1	4
32/2 (SOGI)	23	18	6	0	9	4
32/9 (International solidarity)	33	13	1	13	0	0
32/12 (Arms transfers)	32	5	10	12	0	1
32/23 (Protection of the family)	32	12	3	13	0	0
32/28 (Right to peace)	34	9	4	13	0	0
32/31 (Civil society space)	31	7	9	7	3	3
33/3 (Democratic int'l order)	30	12	5	11	0	2
33/4 (Use of mercenaries)	32	13	2	12	0	1
33/10 (Water and sanitation)	42	1	4	11	0	2
33/14 (Right to development)	34	2	11	13	0	0
33/19 (Transitional justice)	29	1	17	7	1	5
33/21 (HR while countering terrorism)	38	0	9	11	0	2
33/30 (Arbitrary detention)	46	0	1	13	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2909</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>1029</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Average number (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Percentage (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>69.6%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>89.2%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>

2017-2022 (HRC 34 to HRC 50)						
RESOLUTION (thematic)	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
34/3 (Foreign debt)	31	16	0	13	0	0
34/8 (Effects of terrorism on HR)	28	15	4	12	1	0
34/11 (Non-repatriation of illicit funds)	30	1	16	13	0	0
34/12 (Right to food)	45	1	1	13	0	0
34/13 (Unilat. coercive measures)	32	14	0	13	0	0
34/34 (IGWG on Durban)	46	1	0	13	0	0
34/36 (Complem. standards to Durban)	31	4	12	13	0	0
35/3 (International solidarity)	32	15	0	13	0	0
35/4 (Right to peace)	32	11	4	13	0	0
35/8 (Enhancement of cooperation)	32	3	12	13	0	0
35/13 (Protection of the family)	30	12	5	13	0	0
35/21 (Contribution of development)	30	13	3	13	0	0
36/1 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	31	15	1	12	0	1
36/3 (Use of mercenaries)	32	15	0	13	0	0
36/4 (Democratic int'l order)	32	15	0	13	0	0
36/9 (Right to development)	31	11	4	13	0	0
36/10 (Unilat. coercive measures)	30	15	1	12	0	1
36/17 (Death penalty)	27	13	7	6	4	3
36/21 (Reprisals)	28	0	19	6	0	7
36/22 (Rights of peasants)	34	2	11	13	0	0
36/24 (Racism and xenophobia)	32	5	10	13	0	0
37/3 (Integrity of the judicial system)	23	2	22	9	0	4
37/10 (Right to food)	46	1	0	13	0	0
37/11 (Foreign debt)	27	16	4	13	0	0
37/21 (Unilat. coercive measures)	28	15	3	13	0	0
37/23 (Mutually beneficial cooperation)	28	1	17	11	0	1
37/42 (World drug problem)	26	10	11	2	2	9
38/2 (International solidarity)	31	14	1	13	0	0
38/3 (Enhancement of cooperation)	28	14	3	13	0	0
38/12 (Civil society space)	35	0	11	9	0	4
38/18 (Prevention)	28	9	8	5	3	5
39/4 (Democratic int'l order)	28	14	5	13	0	0
39/5 (Use of mercenaries)	30	15	2	13	0	0
39/8 (Water and sanitation)	44	1	2	12	0	1
39/9 (Right to development)	30	12	5	13	0	0
39/12 (Rights of peasants)	33	3	11	13	0	0
40/3 (Unilat. coercive measures)	27	15	5	12	0	1
40/4 (Non-repatriation of illicit funds)	31	2	14	13	0	0
40/8 (Foreign debt)	27	14	6	13	0	0
41/3 (Enhancement of cooperation)	28	14	5	13	0	0
41/4 (Right to peace)	32	13	2	13	0	0
41/5 (International solidarity)	32	14	1	13	0	0
41/18 (SOGI)	27	12	7	3	4	5
41/19 (Contribution of development)	33	13	0	13	0	0
42/1 (Composition of staff of OHCHR)	30	13	4	12	0	1
42/8 (Democratic int'l order)	25	14	8	11	0	2
42/9 (Use of mercenaries)	29	14	4	12	0	1

42/23 (Right to development)	27	13	7	13	0	0
42/24 (Death penalty)	26	14	6	5	3	5
42/28 (Reprisals)	36	0	11	8	0	5
43/10 (Foreign debt)	26	15	6	13	0	0
43/15 (Unilat. coercive measures)	25	16	6	11	0	2
43/21 (Mutually beneficial cooperation)	23	16	8	11	0	2
43/117 (Dec.) (Methods of work of CC)	31	12	4	12	0	1
44/11 (International solidarity)	31	15	1	13	0	0
44/14 (Responsibility to Protect +15)	32	1	14	5	0	8
44/18 (Enhancement of cooperation)	30	15	2	13	0	0
44/23 (HR and the UN Charter)	41	0	6	9	0	4
45/4 (Democratic int'l order)	22	15	10	10	0	3
45/5 (Unilat. coercive measures)	27	15	5	13	0	0
45/6 (Right to development)	27	13	7	13	0	0
45/14 (Inequality among States)	25	8	14	13	0	0
45/31 (Prevention)	32	3	11	5	1	6
46/5 (Unilat. coercive measures)	30	15	2	13	0	0
46/8 (Foreign debt)	28	14	4	12	0	0
46/11 (Non-repatriation of illicit funds)	31	14	2	13	0	0
46/13 (Mutually beneficial cooperation)	26	15	6	11	0	2
47/9 (Enhancement of cooperation)	30	14	3	13	0	0
47/10 (International solidarity)	32	14	1	13	0	0
47/11 (Contribution of development)	31	14	2	13	0	0
47/14 (HIV AIDS)	42	0	5	10	0	3
47/16 (HR on the Internet)	43	0	4	11	0	2
47/23 (New digital technologies)	44	0	3	12	0	1
47/24 (HR and climate change)	46	0	1	13	0	0
48/5 (Use of mercenaries)	29	14	4	11	0	2
48/7 (Negative impact of colonialism)	27	0	20	9	0	4
48/8 (Democratic int'l order)	30	14	3	13	0	0
48/9 (Death penalty)	29	12	5	5	5	3
48/10 (Right to development)	29	13	5	13	0	0
48/13 (Right to clean environment)	43	0	4	13	0	0
48/14 (Climate change)	42	1	4	12	0	1
48/18 (Racism and xenophobia)	32	10	5	13	0	0
49/6 (Unilat. coercive measures)	27	14	6	11	0	2
49/8 (Right to development)	33	0	14	13	0	0
49/15 (Foreign debt)	29	14	4	13	0	0
49/18 (HRDs)	39	0	8	11	0	2
49/19 (Covid-19 recovery)	31	14	2	13	0	0
50/4 (Enhancement of cooperation)	29	16	2	13	0	0
50/8 (International solidarity)	31	15	1	13	0	0
50/10 (SOGI)	23	17	7	0	11	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2809</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>1026</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Average number (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>Percentage (Y/N/A)</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	<b>88.0%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>

**Annex 2:  
African Group votes on country resolutions,  
with a breakdown by country concerned**

Excel spreadsheet available for download on the report's page:  
<https://defenddefenders.org/between-principles-and-pragmatism/>

**Annex 3:  
African Group votes on thematic resolutions,  
with a breakdown by resolution theme**

Excel spreadsheet available for download on the report's page:  
<https://defenddefenders.org/between-principles-and-pragmatism/>

**Annex 4:  
Votes on key amendments (country-specific and thematic)  
on which a vote took place (HRC1 (2006) to HRC50 (July 2022))**

Excel spreadsheet available for download on the report's page:  
<https://defenddefenders.org/between-principles-and-pragmatism/>

**Annex 5:  
African Group votes on key amendments,  
with a breakdown by country concerned by, and theme of, the amendments**

Excel spreadsheet available for download on the report's page:  
<https://defenddefenders.org/between-principles-and-pragmatism/>

**Annex 7:  
Survey questions**

Available at: <https://forms.microsoft.com/r/7h3vv0QtP8>

## Annex 6: Membership in the UN Human Rights Council, African countries (2006-2022)

### Human Rights Council elections<sup>44</sup>

In accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 60/251, the Council consists of 47 Member States, which are elected directly and individually by secret ballot by the majority of the members of the UN General Assembly. The membership is based on "equitable geographical distribution." Seats are distributed as follows among regional groups:

- Group of African States (Africa) (13)
- Group of Asia-Pacific States (Asia-Pacific) (13)
- Group of Eastern European States (Eastern Europe) (6)
- Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) (8)
- Group of Western European and other States (WEOG) (7)

Members of the Council serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after two consecutive terms.

Year*	Members of the Council	Year*	Members of the Council	Year*	Members of the Council
2022	- Benin - Cameroon - Côte d'Ivoire - Eritrea - Gabon - Gambia - Libya - Malawi - Mauritania - Namibia - Senegal - Somalia - Sudan	2016	- Algeria - Botswana - Burundi - Congo - Côte d'Ivoire - Ethiopia - Ghana - Kenya - Morocco - Namibia - Nigeria - South Africa - Togo	2009- 2010	- Angola - Burkina Faso - Cameroon - Djibouti - Egypt - Gabon - Ghana - Madagascar - Mauritius - Nigeria - Senegal - South Africa - Zambia
2021	- Burkina Faso - Cameroon - Côte d'Ivoire - Eritrea - Gabon - Libya - Malawi - Mauritania - Namibia - Senegal - Somalia - Sudan - Togo	2015	- Algeria - Botswana - Congo - Côte d'Ivoire - Ethiopia - Gabon - Ghana - Kenya - Morocco - Namibia - Nigeria - Sierra Leone - South Africa	2008- 2009	- Angola - Burkina Faso - Cameroon - Djibouti - Egypt - Gabon - Ghana - Madagascar - Mauritius - Nigeria - Senegal - South Africa - Zambia
2020	- Angola - Burkina Faso - Cameroon - DRC	2014	- Algeria - Benin - Botswana - Burkina Faso	2007- 2008	- Angola - Cameroon - Djibouti - Egypt

44 See OHCHR, "Human Rights Council Elections," at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/hrcelections.aspx> (accessed 13 May 2022).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eritrea</li> <li>- Libya</li> <li>- Mauritania</li> <li>- Namibia</li> <li>- Nigeria</li> <li>- Senegal</li> <li>- Somalia</li> <li>- Sudan</li> <li>- Togo</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congo</li> <li>- Côte d'Ivoire</li> <li>- Ethiopia</li> <li>- Gabon</li> <li>- Kenya</li> <li>- Morocco</li> <li>- Namibia</li> <li>- Sierra Leone</li> <li>- South Africa</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gabon</li> <li>- Ghana</li> <li>- Madagascar</li> <li>- Mali</li> <li>- Mauritius</li> <li>- Nigeria</li> <li>- Senegal</li> <li>- South Africa</li> <li>- Zambia</li> </ul>
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Angola</li> <li>- Burkina Faso</li> <li>- Cameroon</li> <li>- DRC</li> <li>- Egypt</li> <li>- Eritrea</li> <li>- Nigeria</li> <li>- Rwanda</li> <li>- Senegal</li> <li>- Somalia</li> <li>- South Africa</li> <li>- Togo</li> <li>- Tunisia</li> </ul>	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Angola</li> <li>- Benin</li> <li>- Botswana</li> <li>- Burkina Faso</li> <li>- Congo</li> <li>- Côte d'Ivoire</li> <li>- Ethiopia</li> <li>- Gabon</li> <li>- Kenya</li> <li>- Libya</li> <li>- Mauritania</li> <li>- Sierra Leone</li> <li>- Uganda</li> </ul>	2006-2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Algeria</li> <li>- Cameroon</li> <li>- Djibouti</li> <li>- Gabon</li> <li>- Ghana</li> <li>- Mali</li> <li>- Mauritius</li> <li>- Morocco</li> <li>- Nigeria</li> <li>- Senegal</li> <li>- South Africa</li> <li>- Tunisia</li> <li>- Zambia</li> </ul>
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Angola</li> <li>- Burundi</li> <li>- Côte d'Ivoire</li> <li>- DRC</li> <li>- Egypt</li> <li>- Ethiopia</li> <li>- Kenya</li> <li>- Nigeria</li> <li>- Rwanda</li> <li>- Senegal</li> <li>- South Africa</li> <li>- Togo</li> <li>- Tunisia</li> </ul>	2011-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Angola</li> <li>- Benin</li> <li>- Botswana</li> <li>- Burkina Faso</li> <li>- Cameroon</li> <li>- Congo</li> <li>- Djibouti</li> <li>- Libya</li> <li>- Mauritania</li> <li>- Mauritius</li> <li>- Nigeria</li> <li>- Senegal</li> <li>- Uganda</li> </ul>		
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Botswana</li> <li>- Burundi</li> <li>- Congo</li> <li>- Côte d'Ivoire</li> <li>- Egypt</li> <li>- Ethiopia</li> <li>- Ghana</li> <li>- Kenya</li> <li>- Nigeria</li> <li>- Rwanda</li> <li>- South Africa</li> <li>- Togo</li> <li>- Tunisia</li> </ul>	2010-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Angola</li> <li>- Burkina Faso</li> <li>- Cameroon</li> <li>- Djibouti</li> <li>- Gabon</li> <li>- Ghana</li> <li>- Libya**</li> <li>- Mauritania</li> <li>- Mauritius</li> <li>- Nigeria</li> <li>- Senegal</li> <li>- Uganda</li> <li>- Zambia</li> </ul>		

\* Members from 2006 to 2011 served from 19 June Y to 18 June Y+3. Members for 2011-2012 served from 19 June 2011 to 31 December 2012. Members since 2013 served from 1 January X to 31 December X+2.

\*\* The rights of membership of Libya were suspended by the General Assembly between 1 March 2011 and 18 November 2011. As a result, during HRC16, HRC17, and HRC18, the African Group had only 12 voting members.

Number of terms	Countries	
0 terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cabo Verde</li> <li>- Central African Republic</li> <li>- Chad</li> <li>- Comoros</li> <li>- Equatorial Guinea</li> <li>- Eswatini</li> <li>- Guinea</li> <li>- Guinea-Bissau</li> <li>- Lesotho</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liberia</li> <li>- Mozambique</li> <li>- Niger</li> <li>- Sahrawi Republic***</li> <li>- São Tomé and Príncipe</li> <li>- Seychelles</li> <li>- South Sudan</li> <li>- Tanzania</li> <li>- Zimbabwe</li> </ul>
1 term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Burundi</li> <li>- Dem. Republic of Congo (DRC)</li> <li>- Gambia (current member)</li> <li>- Madagascar</li> <li>- Malawi (current member)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mali</li> <li>- Rwanda</li> <li>- Sierra Leone</li> <li>- Sudan (current member)</li> <li>- Uganda</li> </ul>
2 terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Algeria</li> <li>- Benin (current member)</li> <li>- Botswana</li> <li>- Congo (Republic)</li> <li>- Djibouti</li> <li>- Egypt</li> <li>- Eritrea (current member)</li> <li>- Ethiopia</li> <li>- Kenya</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Libya (current member)</li> <li>- Mauritania (current member)</li> <li>- Mauritius</li> <li>- Morocco</li> <li>- Namibia (current member)</li> <li>- Somalia (current member)</li> <li>- Togo</li> <li>- Tunisia</li> <li>- Zambia</li> </ul>
3 terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Angola</li> <li>- Burkina Faso</li> <li>- Cameroon (current member)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Côte d'Ivoire (current member)</li> <li>- Gabon (current member)</li> <li>- Ghana</li> </ul>
4 terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nigeria</li> <li>- Senegal (current member)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- South Africa</li> </ul>

\*\*\* The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic is a member of the African Union, but not a member of the United Nations.

Defenddefenders (the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project) seeks to strengthen the work of HRDs throughout the subregion by reducing their vulnerability to risks of persecution and by enhancing their capacity to efficiently defend human rights.

Defenddefenders is the secretariat of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, which represents thousands of members consisting of individual HRDs human rights organisations, and national coalitions that envision a sub-region in which the human rights of every individual as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are respected and upheld.

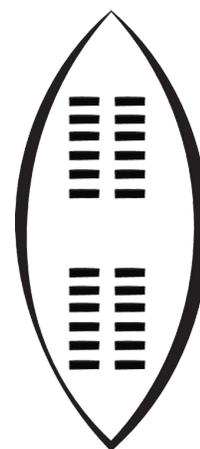
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AfricanDefenders (Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network) is an umbrella network of five African sub-regional networks, dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights defenders across the African continent. DefendDefenders serves as the secretariat of AfricanDefenders.

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