



## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION 2007 HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ELECTIONS**

Forty-seven members of the first UN Human Rights Council were elected on May 9, 2006 according to new election procedures outlined in UNGA Resolution 60/251.<sup>1</sup> The terms of 14 members of the Council will expire on June 18, 2007 and elections for open seats are scheduled for May 17, 2007. Under the resolution which created the Council, countries may run for two consecutive terms, which means countries whose terms are up this year may seek re-election to a three-year term.

While no country has a perfect human rights record, encouraging democratic countries with better records (domestically and at UN bodies) to run for election is vital to a strong and effective Council. Information about a countries' cooperation with UN and regional human rights bodies and instruments is available at <http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/index.htm>.

As of April 2007, it appears that many regions may present a "clean slate" of candidates, or the same number of candidates as seats open in the region. More candidates than seats in each region should be encouraged to allow for the opportunity to defeat poor actors and uncooperative or abusive states. Competition provides critical leverage for civil society with regard to the human rights records of candidates to the Council.

*The table on the next page reflects the current state of play for the 2007 elections, taking into account sources in Geneva, Washington, and New York of our coalition partners.* Official announcements of candidacy and pledges are now available at <http://www.un.org/ga/61/elect/hrc/>. All candidates should be encouraged to make strong public pledges and commitments to promote and protect human rights and cooperate with the Council.

Please note that all NGOs working to influence the outcome of the 2007 elections are adopting different tactics and approaches to each region taking into account the number of candidates, intra-regional vote-trading and analysis of the likelihood candidates can be defeated or elected.

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<sup>1</sup> The new process requires members to win an absolute majority of GA votes and encourages candidates to make pledges in order to fulfill the Resolution's guidance to elect countries that "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights." Election procedures are available at [http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251\\_En.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251_En.pdf).



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2

**Table: State of play for 2007 elections**

	Africa	Asia	Eastern Europe	Latin America	Western Europe and Others
<b>Number of seats up for re-election</b>	4 of 13 seats	4 of 13 seats	2 of 6 seats	2 of 8 seats	2 of 7 seats
<b>Current members <u>not</u> up for re-election</b>	Cameroon Djibouti Gabon Ghana Mali Mauritius Nigeria Senegal Zambia	Japan Pakistan Rep. Korea Sri Lanka Bangladesh Malaysia China Jordan Saudi Arabia	Ukraine Romania Russian Fed Azerbaijan	Brazil Guatemala Peru Mexico Uruguay Cuba	France UK Germany Switzerland Canada
<b>Current members whose terms have expired</b>	S. Africa Morocco Tunisia Algeria	India Indonesia Philippines Bahrain	Poland Czech Republic	Argentina Ecuador	Netherlands Finland
<b>States that have announced or are rumored to run</b>	Angola Egypt Madagascar South Africa	India Indonesia Philippines Qatar	Slovenia <u>Belarus</u> Bosnia and Herzegovina+	Nicaragua Bolivia	Netherlands Italy Denmark

+ Bosnia and Herzegovina has not announced that it will run. In order to increase the odds that Slovenia is elected (they will serve as EU president in January 2008), some countries reportedly urged other Eastern European countries not to run for election and jeopardize Slovenia's ability to win sufficient votes. Reportedly, the EU and the United States have indicated they will support Bosnia if Slovenia wins a seat in the first round of voting and Belarus fails to win the requisite 50 percent of votes.