



Written by [Ann Shibler](#) on May 13, 2009

U.S. Now Holds UN Human Rights Council Seat

Having now entered into what President Obama termed a [“new era of engagement” in the international world](#), the United States will sit with Cuba, Saudi Arabia, China, and Russia, also newly elected and having less-than-stellar human rights records.

U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice noted, "We're gratified by the strong showing of encouragement for the United States to again play a meaningful leadership role in multilateral organizations including the United Nations on the very vitally important set of issues relating to human rights and democracy."



When asked how effective a council could be whose members are accused of serious human rights violations, Rice responded by saying that although the council hasn't lived up to its potential, it's not impossible to try and turn things around. Former U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Bolton disagreed, saying, "I don't think the U.S. election to the [Human Rights Council] will change anything. Our participation legitimizes a fundamentally illegitimate body."

In the May 12 election, 18 new members were added. Russia and Hungary won out over Azerbaijan, even though Russia was criticized for political manipulation, eliminating opposition parties, and egregious suppressions of the press. In Africa, Senegal, Mauritius, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Djibouti defeated Kenya. For Asia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Bangladesh, China, and Saudi Arabia were chosen — not exactly bastions of civil rights and political and religious freedoms — and in Latin America, Mexico, Uruguay and Cuba will be seated members. Some of these new members might easily be labeled as the world's most repressive regimes.

Besides the United States in the Western Group, Norway and Belgium, home of the EU headquarters, were admitted.

The UN Human Rights Council is noted mostly for *not* upholding basic human rights standards, and for giving a voice to the worst offenders of human rights, thereby shedding any and all credibility. The Council is supposed to review all governments' records pertaining to cultural, civil, political and religious freedoms and objectively promote human rights in countries that are particularly lacking through recommendations to the General Assembly. But this is almost never done. [Case in point, once again, China](#). For similar comment sessions on other countries click [here](#) and scroll down the list.

The UN Human Rights Council has instead become a group of sycophants who turn attention away from horrible abuse records and promote their own self interests. Nothing is ever accomplished, with few resolutions ever being adopted because it is impossible in such a climate to get a responsible and objective consensus.

One adoption is the [Outcome Document](#) that is supposed to combat, prevent, and prohibit by law racism around the world, as well as discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerances. But this would



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see the the United States handing over it's own governance to a world body, and losing its sovereignty under a new world order.

That's what the Human Rights Council is actually promoting.

AP Images: Photo of U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice



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