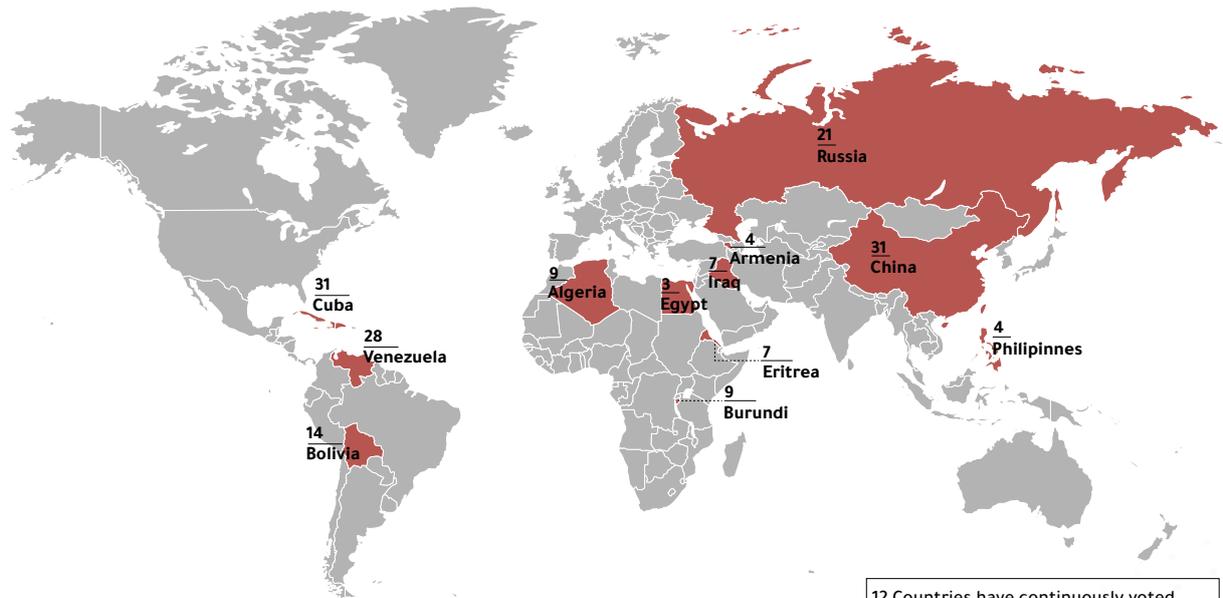


Russia and Its Allied Repressive States Vote in the UN Human Rights Council in Favor of the Syrian Regime, That Is Involved in Crimes against Humanity

The UN General Assembly Should Have Suspended Russia's Membership of the Human Rights Council Over Its Illegal Intervention in Syria in 2015, As It Suspended Its Membership Over Its Intervention in Ukraine

SNHR
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان



12 Countries have continuously voted against Human Rights Council resolutions condemning the violations against Syrian people since March 2011 up to April 2022

The numbers on the map represent the number of votes for every country

Thursday 21 April 2022

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.

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I. Welcoming the COI's Report and Affirming Our Continuous Mutual Cooperation Since 2011:

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI) submitted its [twenty-fifth report](#) to the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC), on Tuesday, February 8, 2022. The report, which covers the period between July 1, 2021, and December 31, 2021, documents grave violations of fundamental human rights and humanitarian law across Syria. The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reviewed the report, providing a summary of the main points the report addressed:

The report talked about the continuation of various forms of violations by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, referring to the Syrian regime's siege of neighborhoods in Daraa city, which caused the displacement of tens of thousands. The report also stressed the continuation of arbitrary arrests and death due to torture and explained that refugees and internally displaced persons face increasing administrative obstacles in disposing of and benefiting from their properties. It also cited public auctions in the areas that Syrian regime forces have regained control over, explaining that these auctions have become more formal and systematized, which it noted is indicative of an emerging, deliberate governmental policy in this regard.

The report further added that Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (HTS) has also continued to carry out extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, and restrictions on fundamental freedoms, especially the freedoms of women, in addition to HTS' seizure and use of private property, through the "properties committee", formerly the "spoils of war committee," which have focused on the properties of opponents of HTS. The report additionally stated that the Syrian National Army factions continued carrying out extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and torture, which in some cases resulted in death. Syrian National Army forces also continued to exploit the properties of the displaced in their areas of control. The report indicated that the COI has received reports of increases in recruitment by and use of children by Syrian National Army factions, which are currently under investigation.

The report further confirmed that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continued carrying out extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and torture, noting are cases of death due to torture. The report indicated that SDF personnel have arrested opponents from of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party and the Kurdish self-administration authority. The report also stressed the continued recruitment of children by SDF despite its commitment to stop child recruitment.

In terms of the economic and living situation in Syria, the report stressed that the country's economy is in freefall, with an estimated 90 percent of the population living below the poverty line, noting that the national currency lost close to 80 percent of its value in 2021, while seven million Syrians are now internally displaced and seven million others are refugees.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) welcomes the findings of the COI's report, and we support its mandate and the investigation processes it has carried out since its establishment in the summer of 2011 to the current day. The COI has provided a lot to the Syrian people, professionally and impartially documented the violations perpetrated against them, and always welcomed criticism directed at some points, and reviewed these points. Since the earliest days of the COI's establishment, SNHR has cooperated with its investigators and provided it with data and any information required, as well as facilitating communication and relations with the victims and their families. We affirm our continued support for the COI's work, given its exceptional importance in light of the continued perpetration of atrocious violations in Syria, especially by the Syrian regime.

II. Russia and Other Authoritarian States Have Always Voted against the Syrian People and against the HRC's Resolutions:

On April 1, 2022, the HRC adopted [Resolution 49/27](#), by which it extended the mandate of the COI for a period of one year, requesting that the COI present an oral update to the HRC during its fiftieth session and present an updated written report at the fifty-first and fifty-second sessions. The resolution agreed that all reports and oral updates of the COI would be transmitted to all relevant bodies of the United Nations and recommended that the General Assembly submit the reports to the Security Council for appropriate action.

The resolution reaffirmed the importance of establishing and supporting appropriate processes and mechanisms to achieve justice, reconciliation, truth, and accountability for the perpetrators of violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law, and of ensuring reparations and effective remedies for victims and survivors, in all their diversity, and acknowledged the importance of including victims' perspectives, including the perspectives of women victims and survivors, in the international community's efforts with regard to the situation in Syria.

The resolution condemned all acts of sexual and gender-based violence and abuse, recognized the need for a survivor-centered approach to preventing and responding to such violence and abuse, and called for immediate and non-discriminatory access to services, such as medical and psychosocial support, to be provided to all victims and survivors of such crimes.

The resolution called on all States, relevant United Nations bodies, international organizations and civil society to coordinate further efforts and proactively focus attention on the issue of missing persons in Syria, including those subjected to enforced disappearance, recalling the importance of the full and meaningful participation of victims, survivors and their families in such efforts.

The resolution also condemned the targeting of humanitarian workers and persons engaged in medical duties, and related facilities, as well as condemning the violations that workers in the media sector and civil society activists are subjected to by the Syrian regime and various parties to the conflict.

The resolution noted that more than seven million refugees have so far been forced to flee from Syria, with over seven million more people displaced within the country since the beginning of the conflict, and called upon all parties to the conflict to immediately cease activities that could cause further displacement, and called upon the Syrian regime to protect the human rights of returning refugees and internally displaced persons, especially in light of the findings of the COI in its latest report that the Syrian regime has not yet offered a safe and stable environment for the sustainable and dignified return of refugees and the persons displaced inside Syria.

We note that all the findings of the resolution are in the interest of the Syrian people and state, against the perpetrators of violations. Despite this, however, Russia and repressive states with which it shares interests voted in favor of the Syrian regime, notwithstanding its engagement in committing crimes against humanity; these shameful votes came from [only 7 nations, namely Russia, China, Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela, Armenia, and Eritrea, in contrast to the majority of 23 countries that voted in favor of the resolution and the Syrian people.](#)

Meeting Title: HRC 48th September 2021

A/HRC/48/L.10 - Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic					
YES	ARGENTINA	NO	ERITREA	YES	NETHERLANDS
NO	ARMENIA	YES	FJI	ABST	PAKISTAN
YES	AUSTRIA	YES	FRANCE	ABST	PHILIPPINES
YES	BAHAMAS	YES	GABON	YES	POLAND
ABST	BAHRAIN	YES	GERMANY	YES	REPUBLIC OF KOREA
ABST	BANGLADESH	ABST	INDIA	NO	RUSSIAN FEDERATION
NO	BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)	ABST	INDONESIA	ABST	SENEGAL
ABST	BRAZIL	YES	ITALY	ABST	SOMALIA
YES	BULGARIA	YES	JAPAN	ABST	SUDAN
ABST	BURKINA FASO	ABST	LIBYA	YES	TOGO
ABST	CAMEROON	YES	MALAWI	YES	UKRAINE
NO	CHINA	YES	MARSHALL ISLANDS	YES	UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
YES	COTE D'IVOIRE	ABST	MAURITANIA	YES	URUGUAY
NO	CUBA	YES	MEXICO	ABST	UZBEKISTAN
YES	CZECH REPUBLIC	ABST	NAMIBIA	NO	VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)
YES	DENMARK	ABST	NEPAL		
	YES	23	ABST	17	NO
					7

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III. Only 12 Tyrannical Countries Have Voted in Favor of the Syrian Regime in the HRC Since March 2011:

We, at the SNHR, have continuously monitored all the resolutions issued by the HRC, numbering 38 resolutions on the human rights situation in Syria since the beginning of the popular uprising to date, including 13 resolutions regarding the establishment of the Fact-Finding Mission which later became the International Commission of Inquiry, as well as extending its mandate, and have documented the states that voted in favor of the HRC's resolutions on Syria, and those which abstained or were absent when voting, as well as those states that voted against the HRC's resolutions, expressing their denial of the violations committed by the Syrian regime, denials which thereby effectively encouraged the regime to commit more violations by promising to secure support for it at the HRC.

On October 22, 2020, we issued a [detailed report](#) on this issue, in tandem with the re-election of Russia and China to the HRC, in order to expose those states that voted in favor of the regime committing more violations in Syria over the past 11 years, showing the number of times they voted, and demonstrating in a visible way how dictatorships have rallied in unity with fellow totalitarian states and allies to vote in each other's favor, regardless of the blatant nature of their egregious violations of human rights.

Based on our continued scrutiny of the HRC's resolutions and our monitoring of the voting record, we can say with absolute confidence that the states that have consistently voted against the HRC's resolutions - which are 12 states, including the seven states that voted against the latest resolution - are mutually supportive totalitarian states, all of which are also isolated rogue states by nature; we have found that Russia and China are spearheading a coalition of oppressive countries loyal to them to vote in the Syrian regime's favor. We mentioned in our previous report that the re-election of Russia and China on October 23, 2020, to the HRC meant that they would continue to vote in favor of the Syrian regime as they had done in previous years and to obstruct the work of the COI, and this was indeed what happened when they voted on March 24, 2021, with four other states - Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, and Armenia - against [Resolution 46/22](#), under which the HRC extended the mandate of the COI for a period of one year. [We issued a statement at the time in this regard](#). This was then repeated again when, on April 1, 2022, Russia and China, along with five other countries - Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Armenia and Eritrea - voted against Resolution 49/27, by which the HRC extended the mandate of the COI for one further year.

The following is the number of times each of these seven states voted in favor of the Syrian regime in the Human Rights Council:



**China: Voted 31 times
against resolutions**

in all sessions in which it
was represented in the
Human Rights Council.



**Bolivia: Voted 14 times
against resolutions**

in all sessions in which it
was represented in the
Human Rights Council.



**Cuba: Voted 31 times
against resolutions**

in all sessions in which it
was represented in the
Human Rights Council.



**Eritrea: Voted 7 times
against resolutions**

in all sessions in which it
was represented in the
Human Rights Council.



**Venezuela: Voted 28 times
against resolutions**

in all sessions in which it
was represented in the
Human Rights Council.



**Armenia: voted 4 times
against resolutions**

in all sessions in which it
was represented in the
Human Rights Council.



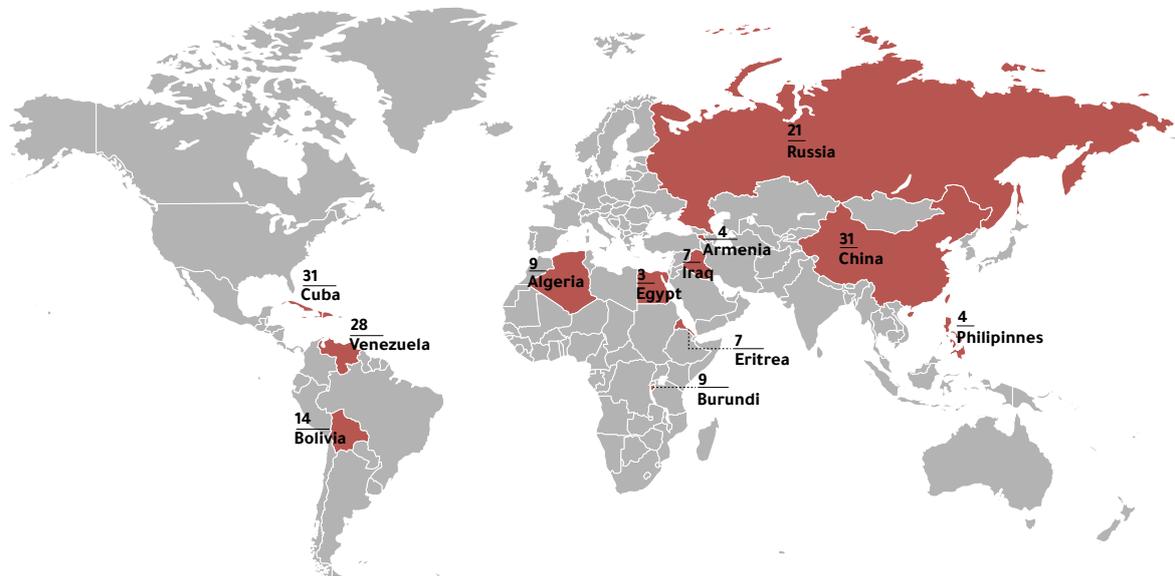
**Russia: Voted 21 times
against resolutions**

in all sessions in which it
was represented in the
Human Rights Council.



The following map shows the 12 countries that have consistently¹ voted against Human Rights Council resolutions condemning violations against the Syrian people from March 2011 to April 2022, and the number of times each of them voted:

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April 21, 2022

The numbers on the map represent the number of votes for every country

The number of countries that have voted in favor of the HRC's resolutions on Syria since March 2011 to date has been far greater than the number of dictatorships that have voted in favor of the Syrian regime; the same can be said of all UN General Assembly resolutions, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' resolutions, and we hope to see a radical change in terms of the UN Security Council's terrible failure with regard to the Syrian situation.

IV. Suspending Russia's Membership of the UNHRC Is a Step Towards Accountability, and Russia's Illegal 2015 Intervention in Syria and Crimes Against Humanity There Underline the Need for Its Full Suspension:

On Thursday, April 7, 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution [No. ES-11/3](#), during the eleventh emergency special session, suspending the membership of the Russian Federation in the HRC, and based on General Assembly resolution 60/251² issued on March 15, 2006, paragraph 8 of which states that "the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, may suspend the rights of membership in the Council of a member of the Council that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights," and relied on HRC Resolution [49/1 issued on March 4, 2022](#), which addressed the grave

¹The Philippines only voted once in favor of one of the resolutions, while it has consistently voted against the rest of the resolutions in all the sessions in which it was represented in the Human Rights Council

² UNGA, Sixtieth Session, Resolution 60/251, 15 March 2006, <https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/60/251&Lang=E>

violations committed by the Russian forces after their invasion of Ukraine.

93 countries voted in favor of the UN General Assembly resolution, while 24 countries voted against, including the Syrian regime, and 58 countries abstained.

Voting Started		07-Apr-22		12:48:47	
Item 5 - Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.4					
Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council					
AFGHANISTAN	CAMEROON	FINLAND	KUWAIT	NEPAL	SAUDI ARABIA
ALBANIA	CANADA	FRANCE	KYRGYZSTAN	NETHERLANDS	SENEGAL
ALGERIA	CENTRAL AFR REP...	GABON	LAO PDR	NEW ZEALAND	SERBIA
ANDORRA	CHAD	GAMBIA	LATVIA	NICARAGUA	SEYCHELLES
ANGOLA	CHILE	GEORGIA	LEBANON	NIGER	SIERRA LEONE
ANTIGUA-BARBUDA	CHINA	GERMANY	LESOTHO	NIGERIA	SINGAPORE
ARGENTINA	COLOMBIA	GHANA	LIBERIA	NORTH MACEDONIA	SLOVAKIA
ARMENIA	COMOROS	GREECE	LIBYA	NORWAY	SLOVENIA
AUSTRALIA	CONGO	GRENADA	LIECHTENSTEIN	OMAN	SOLOMON ISLANDS
AUSTRIA	COSTA RICA	GUATEMALA	LITHUANIA	PAKISTAN	SOMALIA
AZERBAIJAN	COTE D'IVOIRE	GUINEA	LUXEMBOURG	PALAU	SOUTH AFRICA
BAHAMAS	CROATIA	GUINEA-BISSAU	MADAGASCAR	PANAMA	SOUTH SUDAN
BAHRAIN	CUBA	GUYANA	MALAWI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	SPAIN
BANGLADESH	CYPRUS	HAITI	MALAYSIA	PARAGUAY	SRI LANKA
BARBADOS	CZECH REPUBLIC	HONDURAS	MALDIVES	PERU	SUDAN
BELARUS	DEM PR OF KOREA	HUNGARY	MALI	PHILIPPINES	SURINAME
BELGIUM	DEM REP OF THE C...	ICELAND	MALTA	POLAND	SWEDEN
BELIZE	DENMARK	INDIA	MARSHALL ISLANDS	PORTUGAL	SWITZERLAND
BENIN	DJIBOUTI	INDONESIA	MAURITANIA	QATAR	SYRIAN ARAB REP...
BHUTAN	DOMINICA	IRAN (ISLAMIC REP...)	MAURITIUS	REP OF KOREA	TAJIKISTAN
BOLIVIA	DOMINICAN REP...	IRAQ	MEXICO	REP OF MOLDOVA	THAILAND
BOSNIA-HERZEGOV...	ECUADOR	IRELAND	MICRONESIA (FS)	ROMANIA	TIMOR-LESTE
BOTSWANA	EGYPT	ISRAEL	MONACO	RUSSIAN FED...	TOGO
BRAZIL	EL SALVADOR	ITALY	MONGOLIA	RWANDA	TONGA
BRUNEI DARUSSAL...	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	JAMAICA	MONTENEGRO	SAINT KITTS-NEVIS	TRINIDAD-TOBAGO
BULGARIA	ERITREA	JAPAN	MOROCCO	SAINT LUCIA	TUNISIA
BURKINA FASO	ESTONIA	JORDAN	MOZAMBIQUE	SAINT VINCENT-GR...	TURKEY
BURUNDI	ESWATINI	KAZAKHSTAN	MYANMAR	SAMOA	TURKMENISTAN
CABO VERDE	ETHIOPIA	KENYA	NAMIBIA	SAN MARINO	TUVALU
CAMBODIA	FUJI	KIRIBATI	NAURU	SAO TOME-PRINCIPE	UGANDA
IN FAVOUR:93		AGAINST:24		ABSTENTION:58	

The Syrian Network for Human Rights welcomes this resolution and we believe that it is a positive step within the framework of ensuring accountability for Russia for its widespread human rights violations, and is in the interest of the rights of victims in Ukraine; however, as human rights defenders in Syria, we wonder why the UN General Assembly did not take this step towards Russia after its military intervention and its atrocious violations of human rights in Syria, which have been documented by the International Commission of Inquiry, [Human Rights Watch](#), [Amnesty International](#), and the [Syrian Network for Human Rights](#), amongst others, with many of these violations amounting to crimes against humanity and war crimes.



V. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Legal conclusions:

- According to the UN General Assembly's 'Uniting for Peace'³ Resolution of November 3, 1950, the UN General Assembly "Resolves that if the Security Council, because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in any case where there appears to be a threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, the General Assembly shall consider the matter immediately with a view to making appropriate recommendations to Members for collective measures, including in the case of a breach of the peace or act of aggression the use of armed force when necessary, to maintain or restore international peace and security. If not in session at the time, the General Assembly may meet in emergency special session within twenty-four hours of the request therefor." This resolution has not been implemented on Syria despite the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons, the forced displacement of nearly 13 million Syrian citizens, and Russia and China's obstruction of the Security Council by vetoing resolutions 16 times in favor of the Syrian regime⁴.
- The UN General Assembly has not suspended Russia's membership after its military intervention and atrocious violations of human rights in Syria, many of which amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. We believe this encouraged Russia to commit more violations in Syria and incited it to invade Ukraine.
- Twelve of the world's countries (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Burundi, Eritrea, Philippines, Algeria, Iraq, Egypt, Armenia), all of which share the common characteristics of oppression and tyranny, have continuously voted against HRC's resolutions on Syria from March 2011 to April 2022, a shameful act that we condemn in the strongest terms.
- Russia is involved in committing violations that constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes in Syria, which is why it votes against all HRC's resolutions on Syria and fears the work of the COI.
- This report proves that most of the world's countries refuse to support crimes against humanity and war crimes in Syria, and if the decision to move to protect civilians was left to the HRC or the UN General Assembly, these violations would have ended since the summer of 2011; however, the executive power is in the hands of the Security Council, which has failed abjectly and completely to protect civilians in Syria for 11 years to date.

³United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 5/377, 3 November 1950. <http://www.un-documents.net/a5r377.htm>

⁴Syrian Network for Human Rights, Russia and China's Arbitrary Veto Use 16 Times Contributed to Killing Nearly a Quarter of a Million Syrians, the Arrest of Nearly 150,000 Others, and the Spread of Impunity, 17 July 2020. <https://snhr.org/?p=55263>

Recommendations:

Countries of the World:

- The HRC is a human rights body and the resolutions issued by it are closely related to fundamental human rights, and all countries of the world must respect these resolutions and comply with them.
- The countries of the world must stand in solidarity with just causes, and always vote in favor of HRC's resolutions condemning those nations that excessively violate fundamental human rights like the Syrian regime.
- Countries that support the Syrian regime must be exposed, and their votes in favor of the regime at the HRC must be condemned.
- Authoritarian dictatorships, such as Russia, China, Venezuela, Iran, Iraq, and Egypt, must not be elected to the HRC, because their very nature means they will always vote against human rights worldwide, with their votes on Syria serving as a stark example of this.



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