

IS THE TIDE TURNING?

How states vote on Africa-focused resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council

Asia-Pacific
(13 votes)

Abstention

Yes

Yes

No

11

0

2

11

0

2

2

10

3

8

2

1

6

3

12



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project



AFRICANDEFENDERS

Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network

Published June 2024

DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)

Arie Towers | Plot 16, Mackinnon Road

Nakasero | P.O. Box 70356 | Kampala | Uganda

Phone: +256 200 760 700

Email: program@defenddefenders.org | hassans@defenddefenders.org

Web: www.defenddefenders.org

Social media:

Twitter (X): @DefendDefenders | @AfricaDefenders

Facebook: @defenddefenders | @africandefenders

The publication is available online in PDF format at: www.defenddefenders.org/reports

Report by Nicolas Agostini, with contributions from Memory Bandera, Joseph Bikanda, Estella Kabachwezi, and Hassan Shire.

Cover photo: DefendDefenders

Attribution should be made to DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project). This report is distributed at no charge. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

You are free to share, copy, distribute, and transmit the work under the following conditions:

- Attribution: you must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in a way that suggests they endorse you or your use of the work);
- Non-Commercial: you may not use this work for commercial purposes; and
- No Derivatives: you may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	4
FOREWORD	5
ABOUT US	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
INTRODUCTION	9
METHODOLOGY	11
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	13
I. Consensual resolutions: still a majority of Africa-focused resolutions	13
II. Non-consensual resolutions: a growing minority of Africa-focused resolutions	14
III. Specificities of Africa-focused resolutions	21
IV. Recent trends: are political divisions crystallising?	23
V. Factors and determinants of states' voting behaviour	24
CONCLUSION	26
RECOMMENDATIONS	27
ANNEXES	28

ACRONYMS

AG	Africa Group (Group of African States, also known as “African Group”)
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CHRSS	Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan
COI	Commission of Inquiry (also “CoI”)
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EU	European Union
FFM	Fact-Finding Mission
GRULAC	Group of Latin American and Caribbean States
HRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
HRC45 (etc.)	45th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC45, HRC53, etc.)
HRD	Human rights defender
ICHREE	International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia
IE	Independent Expert
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
P5	The five permanent members of the UN Security Council
SR	Special Rapporteur
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
WEOG	Western European and Other States Group

FOREWORD

Analysing diplomatic dynamics is not a smooth journey. If intuitions and hypotheses are often confirmed, they are sometimes shaken as we process the data collected and attempt to make sense of the trends and evolutions identified.

This new report is no exception. Building on the landmark report we published after the 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), in 2022,¹ it looks at states' voting patterns from a different angle and complements "Between Principles and Pragmatism." Doing so, it acts as its twin report. It analyses not how African states vote on all HRC resolutions, but how all states vote on Africa-focused resolutions.

In this sense, it is broader and narrower than "Between Principles and Pragmatism." It is broader as we analyse not just the behaviour of African states but voting patterns for all states belonging to the United Nations' (UN) five regional groups. It is narrower in scope, however, as we only review votes on resolutions about African countries. We do not cover votes on other (non-African) country resolutions or on thematic resolutions.

This being said, the analysis of Africa-focused resolutions is comprehensive – and the first of its kind. We are proud to share our findings with friends and colleagues, including the human rights defenders (HRDs) who have travelled, and will travel, to Geneva to advocate for meaningful resolutions on our mandate countries. Our findings are also relevant for state representatives, UN experts, and HRC observers as they provide insights into voting patterns and geopolitical divisions that shape the HRC.

Some of the trends we identified are deeply concerning. Geopolitical divisions are not just increasing; they are becoming a defining feature of votes on Africa-focused resolutions. We deplore this situation, cannot overlook it, and must act to address it and build a more consensual atmosphere.

In the Council's 18 years of existence, with civil society partners, we have strived to push the UN's top human rights body to address situations based on their merits and objective criteria. We are fully aware, however, that the HRC is an intergovernmental body, and therefore a political forum. As advocates, our responsibility is to navigate the politics to push states to address human rights crises and advance respect for rights and accountability for violations. To do this, we must know the landscape and keep abreast of developments. The present report is part of this effort.

To achieve DefendDefenders' vision of an African continent where the human rights of every individual as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are respected, we will continue to engage in advocacy at the HRC and beyond. Our advocacy will remain steadfast and evidence-based – guided by the most accurate and reliable information – and it will continue to be led by the people of the countries concerned, with the unwavering support of our team.



Hassan Shire
Executive Director, DefendDefenders
Chairperson, AfricanDefenders

¹ DefendDefenders, "Between Principles and Pragmatism: How African states vote at the UN Human Rights Council," 21 September 2022, <https://defenddefenders.org/between-principles-and-pragmatism/> (accessed on 11 April 2024).

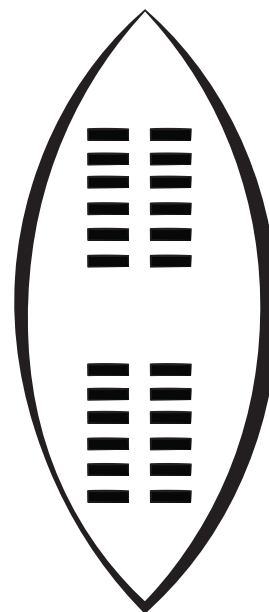
ABOUT US

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, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), 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 (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

Building on “Between Principles and Pragmatism,” a report in which DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders analysed African states’ voting record at the HRC, this new report looks at states’ voting patterns from a different angle. It analyses not how African states vote on HRC resolutions, but how states from all regional groups vote on a subset of resolutions, namely those addressing the human rights situation in African countries. This analysis of Africa-focused resolutions is comprehensive, evidence-based, and the first of its kind.

“Is the Tide Turning?” examines, among others: (i) How states vote on resolutions on African countries; (ii) Whether factors or determinants of vote can be identified; (iii) Why resolutions are put to a vote, as opposed to being adopted by consensus; (iv) What kind of initiatives states support/oppose the most; (v) Whether the behaviour of different groups of states differs; and (vi) Whether evolutions can be identified.

To answer these questions, resolutions and voting results are thoroughly reviewed. The report covers all Africa-focused resolutions on which a vote took place since the Council’s creation, in 2006 (that is, 28 resolutions adopted over the course of 55 regular sessions and 11 special sessions on African states). In addition, the report builds its findings on all Africa-focused resolutions adopted by consensus (148 to date). In total, since its creation, the Council has adopted 176 resolutions addressing the situation in African countries. These form the report’s factual basis. The report’s Annexes can be used as a database of Africa-focused resolutions at the Council, covering 18 years (from 2006 to 2024).

The report's key findings include the following:

- Most Africa focused resolutions are consensual, i.e., they are adopted without a vote, often under the HRC's agenda item 10 ("technical assistance and capacity-building"). This means that when it comes to Africa-focused resolutions, consensus is the typical scenario. Most initiatives enjoy the consent of the country concerned. A breakdown by period shows that in the Council's early days, almost all resolutions on African countries were consensual – voting was a rare occurrence.
- A significant shift occurred around the Council's 10th anniversary (2016), and the trend observed in regular sessions has been mirrored by a similar trend in special sessions. As a result, the scarcity of adversarial Africa-focused resolutions ended. At 18, the Council has reached a situation in which votes on resolutions on African countries are now frequent and expected. This does not mean, however, that consensual resolutions on African countries disappeared. That category remains the largest.
- This trend is concomitant with, and correlated to, shifts in the use of agenda items. In recent sessions, a relative decline in the use of item 10 and a relative increase in the use of item 4 and (this is particularly striking) item 2 have been observed. The increase in the share of adversarial resolutions is the result of, or at least is concomitant with, the decrease in the share of resolutions presented under item 10.
- In terms of voting patterns, disparities between regional groups are significant. African Group members, and to some extent, Asia-Pacific states, are more reluctant to support (and more likely to vote “No” to or to abstain on) Africa-focused resolutions than members of the three other groups. Regional disparities are even more striking when we break the analysis of resolutions by period. African support for Africa-focused resolutions that are put to a vote has become non-existent, and Asia-Pacific support is very modest. The other three groups were, and remain, steady supporters of Africa-focused resolutions.
- The level of support for resolutions addressing African countries is lower than the level of support for resolutions addressing other countries. Given the near-total failure of Africa Group and Asia-

Pacific Group members to support Africa-focused resolutions in recent sessions, the latter have been adopted with the support of only three groups: the Western, Eastern European, and Latin American and Caribbean groups of states.

- The Council has reached a situation marked by division, in which leadership on Africa-focused resolutions that contain strong mechanisms or condemnatory language is assumed by non-African states. A number of resolutions that used to be consensual (Burundi, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan) have become adversarial, and several of these resolutions have moved from item 4 to item 2. The last period in the analysis (HRC45 to HRC55) crystallises these political divisions. More and more Africa-focused resolutions are put to a vote, and votes are closer than in the past (and closer than votes on non-Africa-focused resolutions). Considering that these trends cover several cycles of the HRC, these divisions are not simply attributable to variations in membership but rather reflect deeper shifts. It is more and more difficult for states that sponsor resolutions on African countries that are opposed by the countries concerned to get these resolutions adopted. It is also more and more challenging for African states (and to some extent, for Asia-Pacific states) to vote in favour of a resolution on an African country which the country concerned opposes.
- The following factors and determinants of the vote were found to be the most significant: (i) Agenda item number; (ii) Support/consent of the country concerned; (iii) Presence of condemnatory language in the resolution.

Patterns show that the tide might be turning. While many resolutions are still adopted by consensus, more and more resolutions on African countries are put to a vote. This significant and growing divide reflects broader geopolitical divisions. It makes it increasingly difficult for the Council to adopt resolutions that contain condemnatory and scrutiny elements, or that seek to establish or extend strong mechanisms, on African countries.

The data DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders analysed show that when it comes to Africa-focused resolutions, the most significant divide is not between "Africa and the rest," between "Africa and the West," or between "the West and the rest," but between two regional groups (Africa and Asia-Pacific) and the other three. Almost all of the negative votes and abstentions come from the former two; almost all positive votes come from the latter three.

At the same time, the African Group's influence on country resolutions has become increasingly visible. African states exerting greater influence over resolutions that are put to a vote, in particular Africa-focused resolutions. This goes beyond the traditional strategy of influencing outcomes from "behind the scenes" (by deterring potential initiatives or taking initiatives into their own hands). From 2021-2023, votes and diplomatic processes showed that African states have become less and less hesitant to use their clout. As the Human Rights Council approaches its 20th anniversary, this move from a relatively discreet to a more public use of their influence might be one of the most striking evolutions in multilateral dynamics.

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders filled a gap by publishing a comprehensive analysis of African states' voting behaviour at the HRC. "Between Principles and Pragmatism"² addressed African states' voting history and patterns, covering all votes that took place at the HRC from its first to its 50th session (2006-2022).

The report came amid increasing tensions. The subsequent session, the Council's 51st (HRC51), was marked by votes on initiatives about two permanent members ("P5") of the UN Security Council, namely Russia (a resolution creating a mandate of Special Rapporteur (SR) on the country was adopted) and China (a draft decision seeking to convene a debate on the situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region was rejected). These votes confirmed our analysis of the growing role African states play concerning country-specific resolutions at the Council (almost all of them abstained on the former initiative, and many voted against the latter). "Between Principles and Pragmatism" will be updated in the form of a new report that will include all votes that took place after HRC50.

The present report is its twin and logical complement. It does not examine how African states vote on HRC resolutions, but rather how states vote on Africa-related resolutions,³ i.e., how all states who have been members of the HRC since 2006 have voted on resolutions addressing the human rights situation in African countries.

As such, as DefendDefenders' Executive Director highlighted in his Foreword, it is both broader and narrower than "Between Principles and Pragmatism." It is broader as it addresses the voting behaviour of all states: not one but five regional groups are analysed. However, it is narrower in scope as it only focuses on resolutions on African countries. It covers neither votes on resolutions addressing non-African countries (Iran, Myanmar, Russia, etc.) nor votes on thematic resolutions. It fills a gap: to date, no systematic analysis of states votes on Africa-focused resolutions at the HRC has been published.

The research effort behind this report originates in the will of DefendDefenders' staff and HRD partners to better understand the dynamics around resolutions

on African countries. It also originates in a form of frustration over the increasing number of Africa-focused resolutions on which a vote is called. Division and confrontation are never a desirable scenario.

The present report examines, among others:

- How states vote on resolutions on African countries (when a vote takes place) and on amendments to these resolutions. The question is: Are there patterns?
- Can factors or determinants of vote be identified (Why do states support or oppose Africa-focused resolutions that are put to a vote?).
- Why resolutions are put to a vote, as opposed to being adopted by consensus (What factors lead to resolutions being consensual or adversarial?).
- What kind of initiatives states support/oppose the most. Are there differing patterns depending on the nature or focus of the resolutions, their contents (more or less condemnatory), or the agenda item under which resolutions are presented?
- Whether the behaviour of different groups of states differs. In this report, all five regional groups are examined, namely: (1) the African Group of States; (2) the Asia-Pacific Group of States; (3) the Eastern European Group of States; (4) the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC); and (5) the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG).
- Evolutions over time (Do votes on Africa-focused resolutions happen more often than in the past? Do states (and which ones) support or oppose Africa-focused resolutions more or less often? Can turning points be identified?).

To answer these questions, resolutions and voting results are thoroughly reviewed. At each of its regular and special sessions, the Council adopts texts (resolutions⁴) that express a collective position on either countries ("country-specific" resolutions – for instance, on Afghanistan, Burundi, or Sri Lanka) or themes ("thematic" resolutions – for instance, on the right to food, freedom of peaceful assembly, or violence against women). Country-specific resolutions are usually the most contentious. This means that a number of them are adopted not by consensus (without a vote) but by a recorded vote.⁵

² DefendDefenders, "Between Principles and Pragmatism," op. cit.

³ Throughout this report, we refer to 'Africa-focused resolutions' or to 'resolutions on African countries,' not to 'African resolutions' as this could imply that all resolutions initiated/led by African states are covered. These include not just country resolutions but also thematic resolutions on the rights of persons living with albinism, female genital mutilation, or racism, among others. In this report, we only focus on country-specific resolutions addressing African countries (i.e., one of the 54 states of the regional group).

⁴ For a glossary, see "Between Principles and Pragmatism," Introduction and Methodology.

⁵ For more background information, see Ibid.

The Council's 55th session (HRC55, 26 February-5 April 2024) provided us with an opportunity to complete data collection, analyse voting records, and reflect. In this report are included all Africa-focused resolutions on which a vote took place since the Council's creation, in 2006. This is a total of 28 resolutions adopted over the course of 55 regular sessions and 11 special sessions on African states.⁶ In addition, the report lists, and builds its findings on, all Africa-focused resolutions adopted by consensus since the Council's creation. This is a total of 148 resolutions.⁷ In total, from HRC1 to HRC55 (plus 11 special sessions), the Council has adopted 176 resolutions on African countries. These form the factual basis for this report.

Its Annexes can be used as a database of Africa-focused resolutions at the Council, covering 55 sessions (HRC1 to HRC55).

Excel spreadsheets are available for download on the report's page, on DefendDefenders' website:
<https://defenddefenders.org/is-the-tide-turning/>

As a reminder, the HRC's agenda item 4 ('Human rights situations that require the Council's attention') is dedicated to the most serious situations. 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 10 ('Technical assistance and capacity-building') is seen as a 'soft' item, which relies on the consent of and cooperation with the countries concerned. See Agenda of the Human Rights Council, with its ten standing items, at: <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/10session/ProvAgenda10session.pdf>

⁶ Namely, 26 adopted during regular sessions and two adopted during special sessions.

List and information available on the Council's website: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/sessions> See Annex 1 (Excel spreadsheet) as well as Annex 3, which lists all resolutions on African countries ever adopted by the HRC.

⁷ Namely, 139 adopted during regular sessions and nine adopted during special sessions.

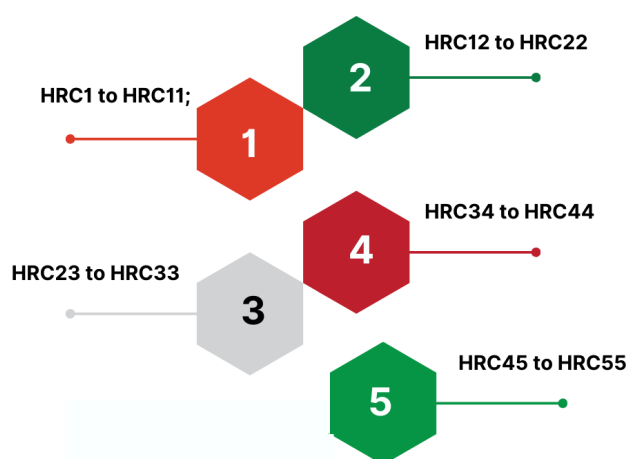
METHODOLOGY

Desk-based research enabled the gathering of information on votes on all Africa-focused initiatives that took place at the UN Human Rights Council since 2006 (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."⁸

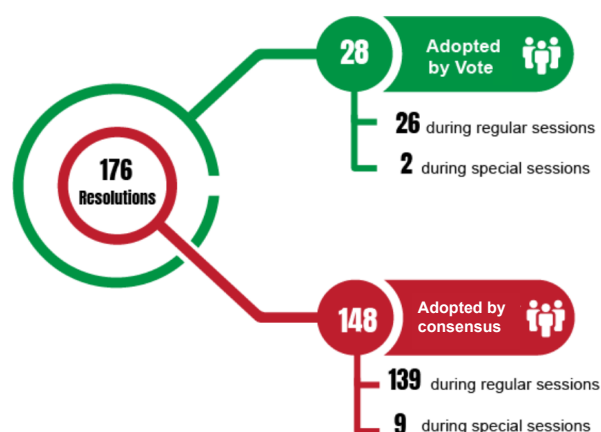
The report is comprehensive with regard to resolutions addressing African countries. It focuses on the HRC (2006-2024) and does not cover resolutions on African countries adopted by the UN General Assembly's (UNGA) Third Committee or the UN Security Council (UNSC). For each vote, session reports and/or 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 vote⁹).

All vote results were recorded in Excel spreadsheets, which made aggregation of numbers and calculations of averages and percentages easier. (We used Excel spreadsheets designed for our 2022 report, making the necessary changes.¹⁰) For clarity and to make comparisons easier, the data obtained were broken down in five eleven-session periods: (1) HRC1 to HRC11; (2) HRC12 to HRC22; (3) HRC23 to HRC33; (4) HRC34 to HRC44; and (5) HRC45 to HRC55 (see Annex 1, Tab 3). The report covers 176 resolutions on African countries, including 28 adopted by vote (26 during regular sessions, two during special sessions) and 148 adopted by consensus (139 during regular sessions, nine during special sessions). A list of all 176 resolutions is found in Annex 3, and a list of all 28 resolutions adopted by vote (with a breakdown by regional group) is found in Annex 1.

The data obtained were broken down in five eleven-session periods as seen below:



The report covers a total of:



⁸ See "HRC – Sessions," <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/sessions> and "Extranet – Human Rights Council," <https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/Pages/default.aspx>

⁹ For some resolutions and amendments, the total number of voting states is below 47. This is due to states that did not take part in the vote.

¹⁰ We used the 2022 templates but made changes as follows: (a) As fewer resolutions are analysed (28 vs. 471), there are fewer rows; (b) As all regional groups are analysed, there are more columns (three more columns ("Yes"/"No"/"Abstention") for each additional group, i.e. four more groups (Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, GRULAC, and WEOG) and thus 12 more columns showing voting results ("Yes"/"No"/"Abstention"); (c) In addition, percentages of Y/N/A votes within each regional group are shown for each resolution.

In addition to resolutions, the report examines amendments to Africa-focused resolutions that were put to a vote (see Annex 4). For each resolution and amendment, are shown the overall result of the vote and the result of the vote for each of the five regional groups. Comparisons are thus easy to draw.¹¹

We relied on quantitative methods (statistical analysis and calculations performed through Excel tools), using spreadsheets designed for the report we published in 2022, "Between Principles and Pragmatism" (making the necessary changes), to analyse data regarding votes and evolutions over time, as well as qualitative methods to analyse voting behaviour and patterns. Data are available in Annexes 1 (Excel spreadsheets) and 2, 3, and 4 (below). We showed, among others:

- Which resolutions on African countries were adopted by consensus vs. by vote;
- What agenda items were used for consensual vs. non-consensual resolutions;
- The ratio of consensual vs. non-consensual resolutions by period (with five 11-session periods, as indicated above);
- How different regional groups vote differently on Africa-focused resolutions (which ones support/oppose these resolutions the most);
- Evolutions over time; and
- The number of countries that have been/are on the HRC's agenda, with a breakdown by regional group (including the Africa Group).

Qualitative analysis was strengthened by referring to our 2022 findings. While formal interviews were not conducted specifically for this report, the analysis draw upon years of experience by DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders staff members, including hundreds of interactions with state representatives ahead of and during Council sessions.

Annexes and charts make findings easier to read.

While attempting to be as comprehensive, objective, transparent, and accurate as possible, the report has limitations. First, it is not a comprehensive review of votes on Africa-related initiatives at the UN. We focused on the HRC, as opposed to other bodies such as the UNGA or the UNSC.

Second, the report is not a comprehensive analysis of states' *behaviour* at the HRC. It only addresses their *voting behaviour*. Much more than voting per se is at stake ahead of and during sessions: multilateralism involves negotiations (most of which are not public) and consensus-building (which means avoiding a vote, whenever possible). Many resolutions led by the African Group (AG), for instance those addressing the situation of persons living with albinism, or countries (Somalia, Mali, etc.), as well as other resolutions (especially under item 10), are usually not put to a vote.

They are adopted by consensus. Moreover, the AG can influence outcomes from "behind the scenes"; for instance, by threatening to call a vote on a draft resolution, African states can push other states to find a compromise and reach consensus – or to withdraw their initiatives. This is not fully reflected in this report, which focuses on votes and on adopted resolutions.

Third, another breakdown by period (instead of a breakdown into five 11-session periods) could have been chosen. Other choices could have been made to show evolutions. We believe, however, that this breakdown (see Annexes 1 and 3) has a heuristic value as it shows trends regarding non-consensual resolutions (namely, a significant increase in the number and percentage of voted resolutions over time).

Last, while we mention individual cases (looking at specific states' voting record, including as "outliers" in their regional group), the report mostly examines the voting behaviour and patterns of groups. In practice, groups are seldom monolithic blocs.

¹¹ Obviously, votes by members of each regional group are also included in the "overall result of the vote" category, which includes votes by all 47 members of the HRC.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This report comprehensively analyses states' voting history, behaviour, and patterns with regard to resolutions addressing African countries at the Human Rights Council.

After an analysis of consensual resolutions (section I), it examines all Africa-focused resolutions that have been put to a vote to date (i.e., up to HRC55) (section II). It then goes on to discuss whether there are African specificities and what African influence means at the Council (section III), especially in light of recent sessions (section IV). Finally, it examines factors and determinants of votes (section V).

I. Consensual resolutions: still a majority of Africa-focused resolutions

Most Africa-focused resolutions are consensual. This means that they are adopted without a vote, often under agenda item 10 ("technical assistance and capacity-building"). Out of the total number of 176 resolutions addressing African countries adopted since the Council's creation, in 2006, 148 (84%) were adopted by consensus. Only 28 were adopted by vote (16%). Among these, if we look at the 11 special sessions that addressed African countries, nine resolutions were adopted by consensus and only two by vote (see Annex 3).

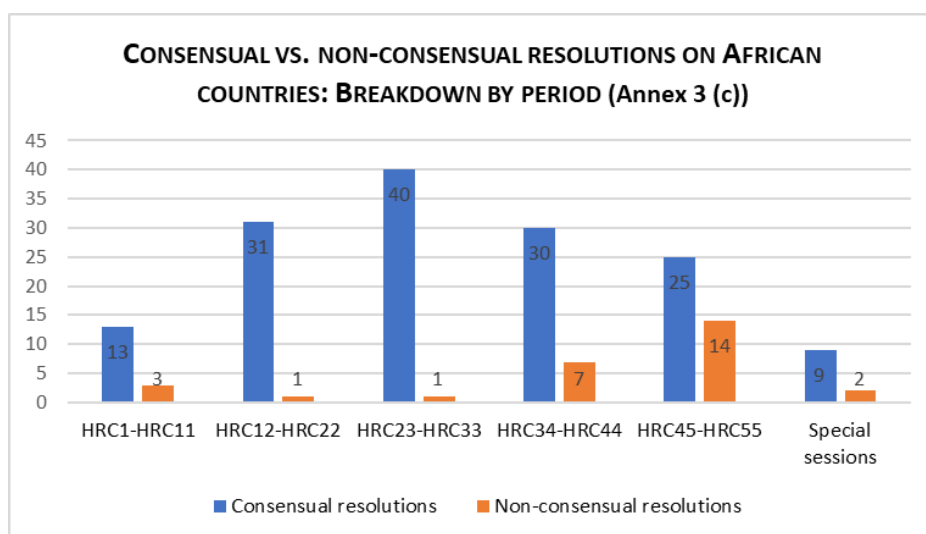
This means that consensus is the typical scenario when it comes to Africa-focused resolutions. Most initiatives enjoy the consent of the country concerned and are adopted at the initiative of the government itself. Out of the 14 African countries that have been or are on the Council's agenda, nine¹² have been there on their own initiative. Governments of the

countries concerned, with the support of the African Group, have led relevant initiatives, drafting the text and chairing negotiations ("informals"). Among the other five countries, three¹³ were initially considered in the framework of item 10 (through consensual resolutions) before opposing initiatives, for various reasons, and being moved to other agenda items (see Annex 2).

Overall, 66 sessions (including 55 regular sessions and 11 special sessions that addressed African countries) delivered 28 non-consensual resolutions on African countries. This is an average of below one resolution every two sessions. Conversely, these 66 sessions delivered 148 consensual Africa-focused resolutions (an average of over two resolutions per session).

A breakdown by period (Annex 3 (c)) shows something remarkable. In the HRC's early days, almost all resolutions on African countries were consensual. Voting was a rare occurrence. This is particularly true for two of our 11-session periods: the second (HRC12 to HRC22), with 97% of Africa-focused resolutions being consensual, and the third (HRC23 to HRC33), with a record 98% consensus. In these two periods (22 sessions in total, HRC12 to HRC33), only two resolutions on African countries were voted upon¹⁴ and 71 were consensual. Considering the first three periods (33 sessions in total, HRC1 to HRC33), only five resolutions on African countries were voted upon out of a grand total of 89.

There were lengthy periods of time without any vote on Africa-focused resolutions; for instance, from HRC15 to HRC33 (six years from September 2010 to September 2016).



¹² The Central African Republic (CAR), Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Guinea, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Somalia, and Tunisia.

¹³ Burundi, South Sudan, and Sudan.

¹⁴ Resolutions 15/27 (Sudan) and 33/24 (Burundi).

Out of 148 consensual resolutions on African countries, 112 were adopted in the framework of item 10 (see Annex 3 (b)). The other 36 were adopted under items 4 (21 resolutions), 1 (two resolutions), 2 (two resolutions), or 5 (one resolution), or did not have any specific agenda item¹⁵ (ten resolutions). Item 10 is the Council's preferred way of addressing African country situations.

This situation underwent a significant shift around the Council's tenth anniversary (2016). In our fourth period (HRC34 to HRC44), seven out of 37 Africa-focused resolutions were adopted by vote. These were resolutions on Burundi, the DRC,¹⁶ and Eritrea. The ratio significantly changed in the fifth (and last) period (HRC45 to HRC55), with 14 (out of 39) resolutions being adopted by vote and 25 by consensus. The shift is noteworthy as several resolutions moved from being consensual to being adversarial, namely (in addition to Burundi and Eritrea) South Sudan and Sudan. During the period, Ethiopia also appeared on the HRC's agenda.

The trend observed in regular sessions was mirrored by a similar trend in special sessions. In 2021, for the first time in the Council's history, a resolution addressing an African country during a special session was adopted by vote (resolution S-33/1 on Ethiopia). In 2023, the 36th special session (Sudan) also failed to reach consensus (resolution S-36/1). The last two special sessions on African countries failed to produce consensual outcomes.

As a result of these changes, the relative scarcity of non-consensual Africa-focused resolutions ended. The Council has reached a situation in which member states now vote on Africa-focused resolutions at every session – and sometimes vote on several Africa-focused resolutions during the same session. Recent sessions, for instance HRC47, HRC51, or HRC54, exemplify this trend. Votes on resolutions addressing African countries are now frequent and expected.

It is important to note, however, that this does not mean that consensual resolutions on African countries disappeared, as that category remains the largest. Even during the last period (HRC45 to HRC55), 25 resolutions were consensual, as opposed to 14 on which a vote took place. Resolutions adopted by consensus include those on CAR, the DRC, Mali, or Somalia, which are testaments to ongoing diplomatic efforts to reach consensus. Resolutions that are now put to a vote include those on Burundi, Eritrea, South Sudan, or Sudan.

II. Non-consensual resolutions: a growing minority of Africa-focused resolutions

As indicated above, 28 (out of 176 Africa-focused resolutions) were adopted by vote. Of these 28, only five were adopted between HRC1 (2006) and HRC33 (2016). Almost five times more (23 resolutions) were adopted since 2017, including seven in the fourth period (HRC34 to HRC44) and 14 in the fifth period (HRC45 to HRC55), as well as two during special sessions held in 2021 and 2023. The trend is clear: more and more resolutions on African countries are adversarial, both in absolute numbers and in relative terms (percentage of all Africa-focused resolutions).

1. Shifts in the use of agenda items

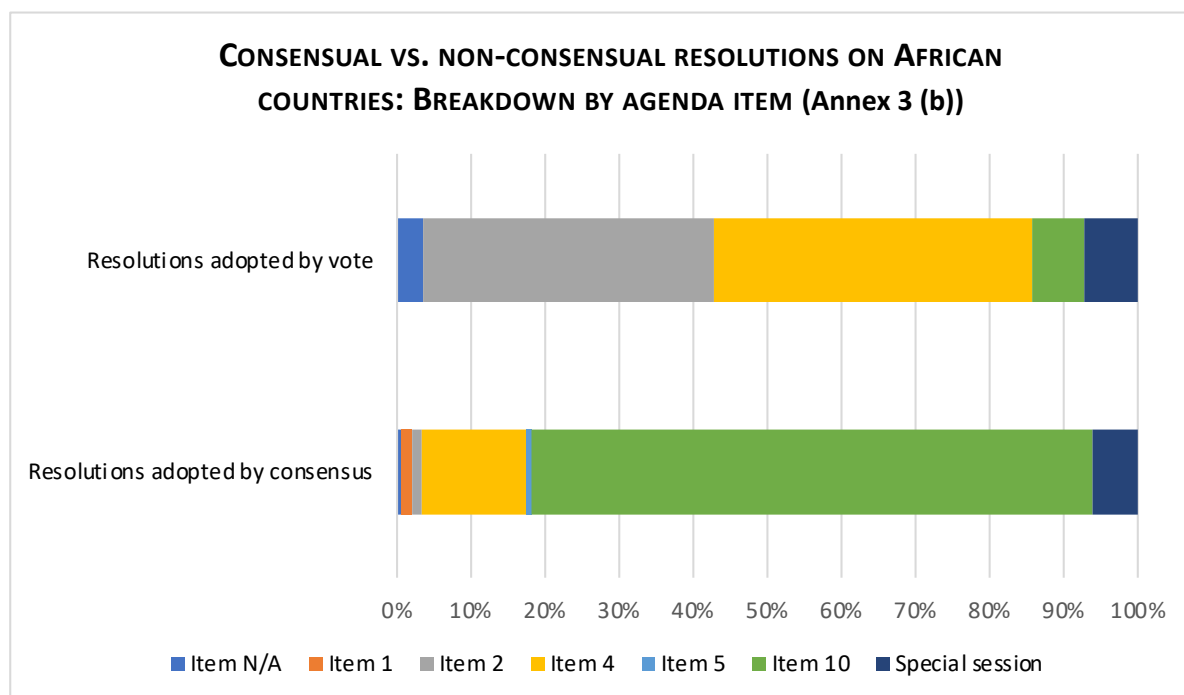
This trend is concomitant with, and correlated to, shifts in the use of agenda items. Over time, only three items have come to be used for resolutions on African countries, items 2, 4, and 10. In recent sessions, a relative decline in the use of item 10 and a relative increase in the use of item 4 and (this is particularly striking) item 2 have been observed (see Annex 3, (b) and (c)).

While resolutions under item 10 represented 75% of all Africa-focused resolutions during the second period (HRC12 to HRC22) and even 80% during the third period (HRC23 to HRC33), this percentage has declined. During the fourth period (HRC34 to HRC44), item 10 resolutions represented 68% of all Africa-focused resolutions – and only 62% during the fifth period (HRC45 to HRC55).

At the same time, resolutions under item 2 moved from 0% in the first two periods (HRC1 to HRC11 and HRC12 to HRC22) to 2% in the third period (HRC23 to HRC33) and 8% in the fourth period (HRC34 to HRC44). The percentage of item 2 resolutions reached 23% of all Africa-focused resolutions in the fifth period (HRC45 to HRC55).

¹⁵ Either because they were adopted before the Council's adoption of its "Institution-Building Package" and standing agenda or because they were adopted during special sessions (which do not allocate specific item numbers to resolutions).

¹⁶ A vote was called on resolution 36/30 (DRC) as the United States of America (USA) deemed the text inadequate (too weak). The resolution was eventually adopted with 45 positive votes out of 47 (one vote against, one abstention). This is an unusual scenario.



Rates of consensual vs. non-consensual resolutions are very different for each agenda item. While 112 out of 114 item 10 resolutions (98% of all item 10 resolutions) were adopted by consensus, only 21 out of 33 item 4 resolutions (64% of all item 4 resolutions) and two out of 13 item 2 resolutions (15% of all item 2 resolutions) were consensual. Thus, the increase in the share of adversarial resolutions is mechanical: it is the result of, or at least is concomitant with, the decrease in the share of resolutions under item 10.

2. Regional groups' voting patterns

This sub-section focuses on the 28 resolutions on African countries that were put to a vote. Annex 1, which we reproduce here, shows overall vote results for each resolution, as well as a breakdown by regional group. For each group (13 votes for African states, 13 votes for Asia-Pacific states; 6 votes for Eastern European states, 8 votes for GRULAC, and 7 votes for WEOG), votes are shown. The right-hand side shows percentages of votes (Y/N/A) within each regional group.

In paragraph (a), we analyse voting patterns with all 28 resolutions considered. In paragraph (b), we look at a smaller subset – we remove resolutions adopted at the initiative of the countries concerned from the analysis.

This allows us to refine the analysis of voting patterns, as four resolutions that were put to a vote¹⁷ were drafted by the countries concerned themselves (sometimes with the support of the AG) and put to a vote not because the countries concerned called for a vote but rather because states from other groups considered them inadequate or weak (it was a vote of protest against the sponsors). This scenario did not repeat itself after HRC36.¹⁸

(a) All adversarial resolutions considered

When we look at all 28 resolutions (Annex 1, Tab 1), we find an overall percentage of "Yes" votes of 47.9%. "No" votes represent half of this figure (24.2%), and abstentions 28%.

¹⁷ 2/115 (Sudan), 10/33 (DRC), 36/2 (Burundi), and 36/30 (DRC).

¹⁸ It repeated itself, however, for other (non-African) countries, e.g., Venezuela.

	Overall result of the vote (absolute numbers)			African Group votes (13 votes)			Asia-Pacific votes (13 votes)			Eastern Europe votes (6 votes)			GRULAC votes (8 votes)			WEOG votes (7 votes)		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
50/51 (Eritrea)	22.4	11.9	11.1	2.0	4.9	5.9	3.6	2.4	6.0	5.0	0.7	0.3	5.5	1.2	0.6			
51/52 (Eritrea)	47.9%	24.2%	28.0%	15.8%	38.1%	46.1%	28.0%	25.8%	46.2%	83.3%	11.9%	4.8%	69.2%	22.8%	8.0%			
52/53 (Eritrea)																		
53/54 (Eritrea)																		
54/55 (Eritrea)																		
55/56 (Eritrea)																		
56/57 (Eritrea)																		
57/58 (Eritrea)																		
58/59 (Eritrea)																		
59/60 (Eritrea)																		
60/61 (Eritrea)																		
61/62 (Eritrea)																		
62/63 (Eritrea)																		
63/64 (Eritrea)																		
64/65 (Eritrea)																		
65/66 (Eritrea)																		
66/67 (Eritrea)																		
67/68 (Eritrea)																		
68/69 (Eritrea)																		
69/70 (Eritrea)																		
70/71 (Eritrea)																		
71/72 (Eritrea)																		
72/73 (Eritrea)																		
73/74 (Eritrea)																		
74/75 (Eritrea)																		
75/76 (Eritrea)																		
76/77 (Eritrea)																		
77/78 (Eritrea)																		
78/79 (Eritrea)																		
79/80 (Eritrea)																		
80/81 (Eritrea)																		
81/82 (Eritrea)																		
82/83 (Eritrea)																		
83/84 (Eritrea)																		
84/85 (Eritrea)																		
85/86 (Eritrea)																		
86/87 (Eritrea)																		
87/88 (Eritrea)																		
88/89 (Eritrea)																		
89/90 (Eritrea)																		
90/91 (Eritrea)																		
91/92 (Eritrea)																		
92/93 (Eritrea)																		
93/94 (Eritrea)																		
94/95 (Eritrea)																		
95/96 (Eritrea)																		
96/97 (Eritrea)																		
97/98 (Eritrea)																		
98/99 (Eritrea)																		
99/100 (Eritrea)																		
100/101 (Eritrea)																		
101/102 (Eritrea)																		
102/103 (Eritrea)																		
103/104 (Eritrea)																		
104/105 (Eritrea)																		
105/106 (Eritrea)																		
106/107 (Eritrea)																		
107/108 (Eritrea)																		
108/109 (Eritrea)																		
109/110 (Eritrea)																		
110/111 (Eritrea)																		
111/112 (Eritrea)																		
112/113 (Eritrea)																		
113/114 (Eritrea)																		
114/115 (Eritrea)																		
115/116 (Eritrea)																		
116/117 (Eritrea)																		
117/118 (Eritrea)																		
118/119 (Eritrea)																		
119/120 (Eritrea)																		
120/121 (Eritrea)																		
121/122 (Eritrea)																		
122/123 (Eritrea)																		
123/124 (Eritrea)																		
124/125 (Eritrea)																		
125/126 (Eritrea)																		
126/127 (Eritrea)																		
127/128 (Eritrea)																		
128/129 (Eritrea)																		
129/130 (Eritrea)																		
130/131 (Eritrea)																		
131/132 (Eritrea)																		
132/133 (Eritrea)																		
133/134 (Eritrea)																		
134/135 (Eritrea)																		
135/136 (Eritrea)																		
136/137 (Eritrea)																		
137/138 (Eritrea)																		
138/139 (Eritrea)																		
139/140 (Eritrea)																		
140/141 (Eritrea)																		
141/142 (Eritrea)																		
142/143 (Eritrea)																		
143/144 (Eritrea)																		
144/145 (Eritrea)																		
145/146 (Eritrea)																		
146/147 (Eritrea)																		
147/148 (Eritrea)																		
148/149 (Eritrea)																		
149/150 (Eritrea)																		
150/151 (Eritrea)																		
151/152 (Eritrea)																		
152/153 (Eritrea)																		
153/154 (Eritrea)																		
154/155 (Eritrea)																		
155/156 (Eritrea)																		
156/157 (Eritrea)																		
157/158 (Eritrea)																		
158/159 (Eritrea)																		
159/160 (Eritrea)																		
160/161 (Eritrea)																		
161/162 (Eritrea)																		
162/163 (Eritrea)																		
163/164 (Eritrea)																		
164/165 (Eritrea)																		
165/166 (Eritrea)																		
166/167 (Eritrea)																		
167/168 (Eritrea)																		
168/169 (Eritrea)																		
169/170 (Eritrea)																		
170/171 (Eritrea)																		
171/172 (Eritrea)																		
172/173 (Eritrea)																		
173/174 (Eritrea)																		
174/175 (Eritrea)																		
175/176 (Eritrea)																		
176/177 (Eritrea)				</														

Disparities between regional groups are significant. WEOG states voted "Yes" to Africa-focused resolutions that were put to a vote 88.8% of the time. Eastern European states did so 83.3% of the time, and GRULAC states 69.2% of the time. Asia-Pacific states voted "Yes" 28% of the time. Finally, African states did so 15.8% of the time.

African Group members, and to some extent, Asia-Pacific states, are much more reluctant to support these resolutions than members of the three other groups. They are also more likely to vote "No" or to abstain than members of the WEOG, Eastern Europe, and GRULAC groups. "No" votes represent 38.1% of all African votes, 25.8% of all Asia-Pacific votes, 22.8% of all GRULAC votes, and only 11.9% and 7.7% of all Eastern European and WEOG votes, respectively.

For abstentions, the gap between African and Asia-Pacific votes, on the one hand, and WEOG/Eastern Europe/GRULAC votes, on the other, is even more staggering. 46.1% of all African votes and 46.2% of all Asia-Pacific votes on Africa-focused resolutions, respectively, were abstentions. These percentages are close to 50%. They need to be compared with percentages for WEOG, Eastern Europe, and GRULAC: 3.6%, 4.8% and 8% respectively. The latter three groups seldom abstain.

Regional disparities are even more impressive when we break the analysis of resolutions by period (Annex 1, Tab 3). Here, it is worth looking at the fourth and fifth periods (HRC34 to HRC44 (seven resolutions) and HRC45 to HRC55 (16 resolutions)), which include 23 of the 28 resolutions considered, including two adopted during special sessions. Over time, the overall decrease in the share of "Yes" votes is obvious. For the fifth period, "Yes" votes represented only 43.3% of the votes. "No" votes rose to 26.1%, and abstentions to 30.6%. This means that even though resolutions passed (as they gathered a simple majority of votes), they almost consistently failed to reach the absolute majority of the Council's membership (24 votes out of 47).

African states, and to a lesser extent, Asia-Pacific states, are particularly reluctant to support non-consensual resolutions on African countries. In the last period (HRC45 to HRC55), only one positive African vote¹⁹ is recorded out of 16 resolutions (i.e., out of a total possible number of 208 [16×13] African votes). This translates into a minuscule 0.5% of all African votes. During the same period, there were 98 African votes (47.3% of all African votes) against these resolutions. Abstentions formed the majority of African votes: 108 votes (52.2% of all African votes).

The trend is similar for Asia-Pacific states: during the same period, 18.8% of them voted "Yes" (these positive votes came almost exclusively from Fiji, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Marshall Islands), 26% voted "No," and 55.3% abstained.

The picture is entirely different for the other three groups. Considering the last period (HRC45 to HRC55), WEOG states voted "Yes" 112 out of 112 times (100%), Eastern European states 88 out of 96 times (91.7%), and GRULAC states 85 out of 128 times (66.4%). No WEOG members have opposed, or even abstained on, Africa-focused resolutions since resolution 36/30 (DRC), which was precisely put to a vote because one state (the USA) deemed it inadequate. Only one Eastern European Group member, Russia, has opposed Africa-focused resolutions. The other members of the group quasi-systematically vote "Yes." Finally, all negative votes by GRULAC come from just three members of the group: Bolivia, Cuba, and Venezuela (the latter two systematically vote against resolutions that do not enjoy the consent of the country concerned as a matter of principle).

Similarly, some African Group members (Burundi, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan) consistently vote against resolutions on African countries that are outside agenda item 10, and some Asia-Pacific states (China) do the same. These patterns have crystallised in recent sessions.

(b) All adversarial resolutions considered, minus those adopted at the initiative of the countries concerned

When we look at the smaller subset of 24 resolutions (Annex 1, Tab 2),²⁰ the patterns are even clearer and disparities more striking. Here, by removing resolutions drafted by the countries concerned, we focus on resolutions that were put to a vote by the countries concerned or their allies (not by other states that deemed the resolutions inadequate).

¹⁹ The Gambia on resolution 51/28 (Burundi).

²⁰ Resolutions 2/115 (Sudan), 10/33 (DRC), 36/2 (Burundi), and 36/30 (DRC) are removed from the analysis.

RESOLUTION	Overall result of the vote (absolute numbers)			African Group votes (13 votes)			Asia-Pacific votes (13 votes)			Eastern Europe votes (6 votes)			GRULAC votes (8 votes)			WEOG votes (7 votes)		
	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention	Yes	No	Abstention
2/115 (Decision) (Sudan/Darfur)																		
10/33 (DRC)																		
11/10 (Sudan)	20	18	9	2	5	6	2	10	1	4	2	0	5	1	2	7	0	0
15/27 (Sudan)	25	18	3	3	8	1	3	8	2	5	1	0	7	1	0	7	0	0
33/24 (Burundi)	19	7	21	1	2	10	2	1	10	5	1	0	4	3	1	7	0	0
36/2 (Burundi) (Item 2)																		
36/19 (Burundi) (Item 4)	22	11	14	2	5	6	3	3	7	6	0	0	4	3	1	7	0	0
36/20 (DRC)																		
39/14 (Burundi)	23	7	17	1	3	9	4	2	7	5	0	1	6	2	0	7	0	0
41/1 (Eritrea)	21	13	13	0	5	8	2	7	4	5	0	1	7	1	0	7	0	0
42/26 (Burundi)	23	11	13	1	6	6	2	4	7	6	0	0	7	1	0	7	0	0
44/1 (Eritrea)	24	10	13	0	5	8	5	4	4	6	0	0	6	1	1	7	0	0
45/19 (Burundi)	24	6	17	0	3	10	4	2	7	6	0	0	7	1	0	7	0	0
46/23 (South Sudan)	20	16	11	0	8	5	4	4	5	5	1	0	4	3	1	7	0	0
47/2 (Eritrea)	21	13	13	0	4	9	4	5	4	5	1	0	5	3	0	7	0	0
47/11 (Ethiopia) (Tigray)	20	14	13	0	7	6	4	3	6	4	1	1	5	3	0	7	0	0
48/16 (Burundi)	21	15	11	0	8	5	4	3	6	5	1	0	5	3	0	7	0	0
49/2 (South Sudan)	19	11	17	0	5	8	3	2	8	5	1	0	4	3	1	7	0	0
50/2 (Eritrea)	21	10	16	0	3	10	3	4	6	6	0	0	5	3	0	7	0	0
5-33/1 (Ethiopia) (special session)	21	15	11	0	7	6	4	4	5	5	1	0	5	3	0	7	0	0
51/27 (Ethiopia)	21	19	7	0	12	1	3	4	6	6	0	0	5	3	0	7	0	0
51/28 (Burundi)	22	12	13	1	6	6	3	3	7	6	0	0	5	3	0	7	0	0
52/1 (South Sudan)	19	9	19	0	6	7	0	1	12	6	0	0	6	2	0	7	0	0
5-36/1 (Sudan) (special session)	18	15	14	0	7	6	0	6	7	6	0	0	5	2	1	7	0	0
53/2 (Eritrea)	18	7	21	0	3	9	0	3	10	5	0	1	6	1	1	7	0	0
54/2 (Sudan)	19	16	12	0	7	6	0	7	6	6	0	0	6	2	0	7	0	0
54/20 (Burundi)	20	10	17	0	6	7	1	2	10	6	0	0	6	2	0	7	0	0
55/1 (South Sudan)	21	8	18	0	6	7	2	1	10	6	0	0	6	1	1	7	0	0
Total	502	291	333	11	137	162	62	93	157	130	10	4	131	51	10	168	0	0
Average	20.9	12.1	13.9	0.5	5.7	6.8	2.6	3.9	6.5	5.4	0.4	0.2	5.5	2.1	0.4	7.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage (Y/N/A)	44.6%	25.8%	29.6%	3.5%	44.2%	52.3%	19.9%	29.8%	50.3%	90.3%	6.9%	2.8%	68.2%	26.6%	5.2%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Tab 2 of Annex 1 shows a clear picture. While percentages of "Yes," "No" and "Abstention" votes remain by and large similar for Asia-Pacific, WEOG, Eastern European, and GRULAC states (from 19.9% to 28%, from 100% to 88.8%, from 90.3% to 83.3%, and from 68.2% to 69.2% of "Yes" votes, respectively²¹), they significantly change for African states. Since most of the latter's "Yes" votes are removed from the analysis,²² the percentage of positive African votes is divided by almost five: from 15.8% to 3.5%. At the same time, percentages of negative votes and abstentions rise from 38.1% to 44.2% and from 46.1% to 52.3%, respectively.

The conclusion is clear: African support for Africa-focused resolutions that are put to a vote is nearly non-existent. In other words, African states do not support Africa-focused resolutions whose sponsors are not African states (or the AG). In this subset of resolutions, only 11 "Yes" votes by African states have been recorded since the Council's creation. Since HRC42 (September 2019), when Rwanda voted "Yes" to a Burundi-focused resolution (42/26), only one African state voted "Yes" to a resolution on another African country (The Gambia, on resolution 51/28 (Burundi)). This is only one "Yes" vote in the last 17 sessions (15 regular sessions and two special sessions), i.e., one vote out of a possible total number of 221 [17×13] African votes. African states almost always choose between voting "No" and abstaining.

By comparison, during the same period, all WEOG votes (i.e., 119 [17×7]) were "Yes" votes. This is due to several WEOG states drafting, sponsoring, or co-sponsoring resolutions on African countries. This is the case for the United Kingdom (UK), the USA and Norway (the "Troika") on South Sudan and Sudan resolutions, and of the European Union (EU) on Burundi, Eritrea, and Ethiopia resolutions.

Other groups, except Asia-Pacific, are steady supporters of Africa-focused resolutions. Eastern Europe's support is quasi-systematic (the only exceptions were Russia, when it was a member and, recently, Georgia (abstention on Eritrea)). GRULAC's support, including to resolutions creating or extending investigative mechanisms and seeking to advance accountability, is significant. Bolivia, Cuba, and Venezuela oppose Africa-focused resolutions that are put to a vote (see above), and Brazil sometimes abstains, but other GRULAC members consistently vote "Yes." The Asia-Pacific Group, for its part, is often split between "Yes", "No," and Abstention.

(c) Amendments to adversarial resolutions on African countries

As shown in section I above, most Africa-focused resolutions are consensual. Hence, informal consultations held during HRC sessions enable the incorporation of textual changes in a more constructive atmosphere than for non-consensual resolutions. This means that very few amendments to these resolutions are presented and voted upon.

Amendments are more likely, albeit not frequent, with regard to adversarial resolutions. When, in the course of a session, it becomes clear that negotiations will not allow states to reach consensus, countries concerned or their allies might be tempted to put amendments forward to remove condemnatory or scrutiny elements from the text.

Annex 4 shows voting patterns on these amendments. The first remark, however, is to note that 21 out of 28 adversarial resolutions on African countries did not see any amendment being presented. Only seven did, including three in recent sessions (resolutions 41/1 (Eritrea), 47/13 (Ethiopia), and 51/27 (Ethiopia)). All amendments to these resolutions were rejected. As indicated in Annex 4, a majority of African states abstained on these amendments, while some voted in favour (and none voted against). The Asia-Pacific Group was split, with a majority of "No" and "Abstention" votes. GRULAC states were split, and WEOG and Eastern European states consistently voted against these amendments.

3. Multilateral trends and turning points

In 2022, "Between Principles and Pragmatism"²³ showed that African states supported thematic resolutions much more frequently than country-specific resolutions, especially those among the latter that pertain to African countries. In another report, published in 2019, DefendDefenders analysed the contents and evolution of item 10 resolutions. Among other things, "No Advice without Knowledge" showed that HRC resolutions had become longer and longer over time, both in terms of preambular paragraphs (PPs) and operative paragraphs (OPs).²⁴

An additional remark can now be made. The level of support for some country-specific resolutions is higher than for other resolutions. HRC resolutions on Afghanistan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Myanmar, the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) or Syria usually gather over half of the Council's membership (i.e., 24 or more votes).

²¹ Percentages of "No" votes and abstentions also remain similar (see Annex 1, Tabs 1 and 2).

²² Nine, 13, 11, and 13 positive African votes to resolutions 2/115, 10/33, 36/2, and 36/30, respectively.

²³ DefendDefenders, "Between Principles and Pragmatism," op. cit.

²⁴ 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 12 April 2024).

See also analysis of Eritrea-focused resolutions in the Annex to DefendDefenders et al., "Eritrea: The annual Council resolution should outline the country's human rights situation and extend the Special Rapporteur's mandate," 17 May 2023, <https://defenddefenders.org/eritrea-hrc-strong-resolution-2023/> (accessed on 12 April 2024).

Recently, resolutions on Belarus, Iran, and Ukraine (violations stemming from Russia's aggression) also gathered a large number of positive votes, including by African states.²⁵ Other resolutions, albeit less successful in terms of "Yes" votes, have met little opposition (that is, a small number of "No" votes). Resolutions on Georgia, Nicaragua, Russia (SR mandate), or Venezuela fall into that category.

The same cannot be said about Africa-focused resolutions. With two exceptions (resolutions 44/1 (Eritrea) and 45/19 (Burundi)), all Africa-focused resolutions that were put to a vote since HRC39 (September 2018) failed to reach the 50%-membership mark (24 votes). Resolutions on Burundi have gathered between 20 and 23 positive votes; those on Eritrea, between 18 and 21 positive votes; those on Ethiopia, between 20 and 21 positive votes; those on South Sudan, between 19 and 21 positive votes; and those on Sudan, between 18 and 19 positive votes.

Given the near-total failure of Africa Group and Asia-Pacific Group members to support Africa-focused resolutions in recent sessions (in 2023, only one positive vote was recorded out of a possible total number of 130 [5× (13+13)] votes²⁶), recent Africa-focused resolutions were adopted with the support of only three groups: WEOG, Eastern Europe, and GRULAC. This is the case for the five Africa-focused resolutions that were put to a vote in 2023, namely resolutions 52/1 (South Sudan), S-36/1 (Sudan), 53/2 (Eritrea), 54/2 (Sudan), and 54/20 (Burundi). The situation slightly evolved with the change in membership in 2024: at HRC55, two Asia-Pacific states (Japan and Kyrgyzstan) voted "Yes" to an Africa-focused resolution (resolution 55/1 (South Sudan)).

Case study: votes on Africa-focused resolutions in 2023

In 2023, five resolutions on African countries were put to a vote, namely resolutions 52/1 (South Sudan), S-36/1 (Sudan), 53/2 (Eritrea), 54/2 (Sudan), and 54/20 (Burundi). (At the same time, resolutions on Libya (52/41), Mali (52/42), South Sudan (52/43), CAR (54/31), Somalia (54/32), and the DRC (54/34) were adopted by consensus.)

The voting record of regional groups is as follows (total number of votes = 235 [5×47]):

Africa Group (total number of votes = 65 [5×13]): 0Y, 29N, 35A

Asia-Pacific Group (total number of votes = 65 [5×13]): 1Y, 19N, 45A

Eastern Europe (total number of votes = 30 [5×6]): 29Y, 0N, 1A

GRULAC (total number of votes = 40 [5×8]): 29Y, 9N, 2A

WEOG (total number of votes = 35 [5×7]): 35Y, 0N, 0A

[Breakdown: Africa + Asia-Pacific (total number of votes = 130 [5×(13+13)]): 1Y, 48N, 80A

Eastern Europe + GRULAC + WEOG (total number of votes = 105 [5×(6+8+7)]): 93Y, 9N, 3A]

With the exception of resolution 54/20 (Kazakhstan brought one positive for the Asia-Pacific Group), resolutions on African countries (52/1, S-36/1, 53/2, and 54/2) were adopted with the support of three regional groups: Eastern Europe, GRULAC, and WEOG. Among the Africa and Asia-Pacific groups, only Kazakhstan voted "Yes" to resolution 54/20 (Burundi). All other members of the Asia-Pacific (12 states) and Africa Groups (13 states), i.e., 25 states, either abstained or voted "No" to all five resolutions on African countries.

It was not the case previously. In 2022, one African state (the Gambia) voted in favour of an Africa-focused resolution (51/28 on Burundi), and three Asian states did so (Japan, Korea, Marshall Islands). In 2021, the Fiji added its positive vote to this total.

Going back to 2023, resolutions on non-African countries also witnessed a different pattern. They were adopted with much more support than resolutions on African countries. This is the case for resolutions on Ukraine (52/32, 53/30), Syria (52/30, 53/18), Belarus (52/29, 53/19), Iran (52/27), or Nicaragua (52/2), which all recorded between three and seven positive African votes. Resolutions on the OPT also traditionally enjoy broad African support.

²⁵ One African state, Malawi, has even been part of a core group (states leading on a resolution), namely on Sri Lanka-focused resolutions.

²⁶ See Case study.

For a number of reasons, many of the Africa-focused resolutions put to a vote since HRC39 were adopted with a high level of opposition. For instance, resolutions on Burundi were met with between 6 and 15 negative votes and those on Eritrea, with between 7 and 13 negative votes; resolutions on Ethiopia were adopted with 14 to 19 negative votes; those on South Sudan, 8 to 16 negative votes; and those on Sudan, 15 to 16 negative votes. Several of these resolutions were "close calls," i.e., they were adopted with a narrow margin. For example, the vote result on resolution 46/23 (South Sudan) was 20Y, 16N, 11A. On resolution 51/27 (Ethiopia), it was 21Y, 19N, 7A. On resolutions S-36/1 and 54/2 (Sudan), they were 18Y, 15N, 14A and 19Y, 16N, 12A, respectively. These are among the closest vote results ever recorded at the Human Rights Council.

In addition, a matter of concern is that, for the first time in the Council's history, special sessions on African countries failed to produce consensual outcomes. This is a departure from the practice. Resolutions S-33/1 (Ethiopia) and S-36/1 (Sudan) were adopted by a recorded vote, further highlighting increasing difficulties in reaching consensus.

Amid these trends, can turning points be identified regarding individual countries or the entire African Group?

"Between Principles and Pragmatism" highlighted the complex voting dynamics at play: "In the name of 'African solidarity,' several 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. [...] In this context, [for an African state] an abstention sounds like a 'Yes' vote: abstaining on a resolution targeting an African country can be construed as tacit support for the resolution. [...] Nevertheless, on resolutions addressing violations in African countries, more and more African states vote 'No.' [...] Among the factors that explain [vote results], 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."²⁷

The session immediately following the report's publication, HRC51 (12 September-7 October 2022), confirmed DefendDefenders' analysis. Resolution 51/27 was adopted with a narrow margin of two votes (21Y, 19N), with an unprecedented 12 out of 13 African states voting against. (At the same session, African states played a key role with regard to initiatives on Russia and China.²⁸) The year 2023 confirmed all trends related to Africa-focused resolutions. Resolutions on Burundi and, to a larger extent, Sudan were met with significant opposition, with 12 to 16 votes against. Furthermore, strong opposition by African states, and an assessment of the risk of rejection (based on the last vote (on resolution 51/27)), led the EU to refrain from presenting a draft resolution on Ethiopia. A resolution could have maintained scrutiny of the country by extending the mandate of the relevant mechanism, the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE). This, and the rejection of a draft decision on China/Xinjiang, came exactly one year after the rejection of a draft resolution on Yemen, in large part due to African states' negative votes.²⁹

The HRC's 15th anniversary can be identified, if not a turning point for African states at the HRC, at least as a key juncture – a moment in which the African Group acted on its full potential and bridged the gap between its political weight and its objective weight (the number of seats African states occupy). At any rate, around 2021-2022, the African Group stopped "punching below its weight" with regard to country resolutions. African states did not necessarily use their influence for good, however. They helped discontinue investigations on Yemen and prevent scrutiny of China, and they deterred further Council action on Ethiopia. What can be said is they did use their influence more visibly than during the first 15 years of the Council.

III. Specificities of Africa-focused resolutions

In sections I and II, we showed, among others, that (i) most Africa-focused resolutions are consensual and that (ii) they are often adopted under agenda item 10, but also that (iii) recent sessions have been marked by a sharp increase in non-consensual resolutions on African countries, and that (iv) the share of item 10 resolutions has decreased as a result of an increase in the use of, among others, item 2.

²⁷ DefendDefenders, "Between Principles and Pragmatism," op. cit., pp. 27-29.

²⁸ Resolution 51/25 created a mandate of SR on Russia. 12 out of 13 African states abstained. At the same session, eight African states voted against a draft decision on Xinjiang, tipping the balance towards rejection of the initiative (four abstained, one (Somalia) voted in favour).

See, for instance, AP, "Western push on China, Russia at UN rights body faces test," 1 October 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-africa-china-united-nations-d48cb9312949425ed1b18aa42f2744a2>; Geneva Solutions, "China debate hangs in the balance as states prepare to vote at UN rights body," 6 October 2022, <https://genevasolutions.news/human-rights/china-debate-hangs-in-the-balance-as-states-prepare-to-vote-at-un-rights-body>; Geneva Solutions, "Human Rights Council shuts down China debate proposal in close vote," 6 October 2022, <https://genevasolutions.news/global-news/human-rights-council-shuts-down-china-debate-proposal-in-close-vote>; Human Rights Council tweet, "#HRC51 | Draft resolution A/HRC/51/L.13 on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation was ADOPTED," 7 October 2022, https://twitter.com/UN_HRC/status/157833377908072448 (accessed on 12 April 2024).

²⁹ DefendDefenders, "Between Principles and Pragmatism," op. cit., p. 30.

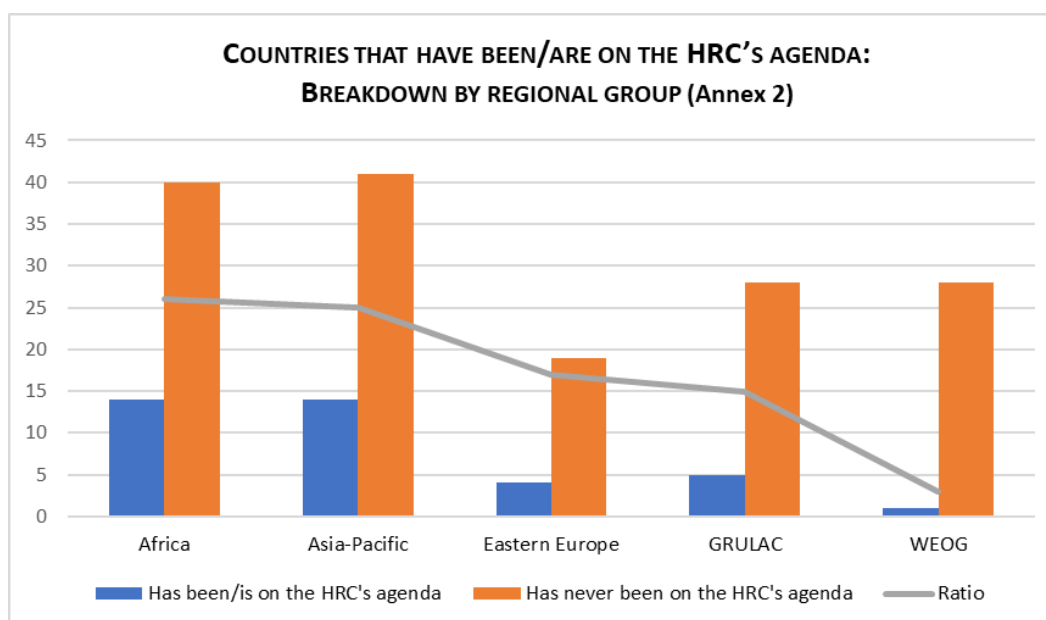
We also showed that (v) regarding voting patterns, Africa-focused resolutions that are put to a vote now almost all fail to reach the absolute majority of the HRC's membership (24 votes) and that (vi) African support to Africa-focused resolutions that are put to a vote is close to non-existent. This translates into a lower level of support for Africa-focused resolutions than for other country-specific resolutions.

What can be said, then, about resolutions addressing African countries vs. resolutions addressing non-African countries? Can specificities of Africa-focused resolutions be identified?

Annex 2 shows that 14 African countries have been, or currently are, on the Council's agenda. This total number (which could even rise to 19 if the five countries that are mentioned in resolution S-23/1 (see Annexes 2 and 3) were counted in) puts the African Group above other regional groups. With 26% of the group's membership (14 out of 54 states) having been/being on the HRC's agenda, Africa is above Eastern Europe (four out of 23 countries, or 17% of the group's membership), GRULAC (five out of 33 countries, or 15% of the group's membership), WEOG (one out of 29 countries, or 3% of the group's membership), and even the Asia-Pacific Group (14 out of 55 countries, or 25% of the group's membership).

At the time of writing, Africa is also the object of five country-specific special procedure mandates (Burundi, CAR, Eritrea, Mali, Somalia) and three independent mechanisms (DRC, South Sudan, Sudan), with over a dozen having completed their work. Only the Asia-Pacific Group has more (currently six special procedure mandates and six independent mechanisms, and over a dozen having completed their work – but most of these were related to the OPT). Few special procedures or mechanisms pertain to countries from other groups (see Annex 2).

This shows that the HRC responds to many African crises. At the same time, several human rights crises on the continent have been ignored by the Council. These include Cameroon and Egypt. These two situations have been the objects of joint oral statements by states (several for Egypt, one for Cameroon), not of resolutions. This should be read in conjunction with the present report's first finding, namely, that many Africa-focused resolutions are consensual. Indeed, it points to the African Group's influence, which also manifests in the form of deterrence or compromise (potential initiatives on African countries being reconsidered or withdrawn, or being considered under item 10 (as opposed to a "stronger" or more condemnatory item) as the concerned country engages or relies on the group to formulate a response that leads to consensus).



In practice, we see that (1) many, but not all, African human rights crises are formally addressed by the HRC (through resolutions), but that (2) most Africa-focused resolutions have been consensual (and adopted under item 10). African engagement (many countries concerned taking the initiative, drafting their own resolutions, or at least engaging in negotiations (or rallying the African Group and others against)) has also resulted in (3) a relatively lower number of special procedures/mechanisms (compared to Asia-Pacific) and, (4) when resolutions are put to a vote, in smaller majorities (some votes being “close calls”).

This points to a relatively more effective intra-group solidarity within the African Group, compared to the level of solidarity within other regional groups. Indeed, the Eastern Europe (Russia and Belarus being pitted against a large number of other states), GRULAC (with clear divisions, some resolutions on countries of the region being led by their neighbours), and Asia-Pacific groups are much more divided (less cohesive) than the Africa Group, and even more so after the discontinuation of the only “unfriendly” African-led initiative on another African country (Djibouti and Somalia vs. Eritrea), in 2019. Only WEOG appears to be more cohesive. The seven WEOG votes are often similar or unanimous (either in favour or against), both on country resolutions and on thematic resolutions.

As mentioned above, resolutions on Afghanistan, the DPRK, Myanmar, Syria, but also on Iran, Sri Lanka or Ukraine, routinely gather a large number of positive votes, including by African states. This means that a number of both Asia-Pacific and African states vote in favour of these resolutions. The same does not hold true for Africa-focused resolutions. Consistently now, Africa and Asia-Pacific Group members refrain from supporting non-consensual resolutions on African countries. In a nutshell, some Asia-Pacific and African states vote in favour of resolutions on non-African countries, but they (with exceptions involving a handful of Asia-Pacific states) do not support resolutions on African countries. This has become even clearer in the last few sessions.

Last, a word should be said on shifting dynamics within the African continent. While the early days of the Council saw resolutions (mostly consensual) on several sub-regions of the continent (Central Africa (CAR, DRC), East Africa (Sudan/Darfur), West Africa (Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali), North Africa (Libya, Tunisia)), most of the attention is now focused on another sub-region, which gathers all Africa-focused resolutions that are put to a vote. This is East Africa, including the Horn and the Great Lakes (Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan). Resolutions on countries of other sub-regions are now all consensual and lower profile (CAR, DRC, Mali).

Other countries have left the HRC’s agenda (Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Tunisia).

This focus on East Africa is due to objective criteria (the existence of conflicts and other grave human rights crises) and other, non-human rights-related factors. These include the absence of leadership at the HRC (with the exception of Somalia (and South Sudan, in parallel to the initial (item 4, then item 2) track), countries of the sub-region do not put forward their own initiatives – if they did, they could attempt to rally the AG and a broader group of states behind them, under item 10).

All these confirm the findings outlined in “Between Principles and Pragmatism.”³⁰ Regarding country resolutions, the most important factors/determinants of vote for African states are: “Country concerned by the resolution,” “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 [...]”

IV. Recent trends: are political divisions crystallising?

Several sections of this report pointed to recent trends. Among these: (i) recent sessions were marked by a sharp increase in the number (and share) of non-consensual resolutions on African countries (the Council now votes on Africa-focused resolutions at every regular session); (ii) a relative decline in the use of item 10 and a relative increase in the use of item 2 have been observed; (iii) some African states consistently vote against resolutions on African countries that are not under agenda item 10; (iv) Africa and Asia-Pacific Group members refrain from supporting Africa-focused resolutions, which results in recent Africa-focused resolutions being adopted with the support of only three groups (WEOG, Eastern Europe, GRULAC).

If anything, these trends appear to be accelerating. At 15, the Council seems to have reached a situation marked by division, in which leadership on Africa-focused resolutions that contain strong mechanisms or condemnatory language (and therefore do not enjoy the consent of the country concerned) is assumed by non-African (in practice: WEOG) states.³¹ When it comes to voting, African and Asia-Pacific states either oppose or abstain on these resolutions, while a large majority of the other three regional groups (including a unanimous WEOG and a quasi-unanimous Eastern European group) support them.

30 DefendDefenders, “Between Principles and Pragmatism,” op. cit., section III, in particular pp. 43-44.

31 The UK, the USA and Norway (+ Albania) on South Sudan resolutions, the UK, the USA, Norway and Germany on Sudan resolutions, and the EU on Burundi, Eritrea, and Ethiopia resolutions.

A number of resolutions that used to be consensual (Burundi, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan) have become adversarial, either because the countries concerned opposed stronger mechanisms or the extension of mechanisms (Burundi, South Sudan, Sudan), or because African sponsors of the resolutions dropped their initiative, leaving it to other states to take it up (Eritrea). Several of these resolutions have moved from item 4 to item 2, although in practice, relevant special procedures and mechanisms (SR on Eritrea, CHRSS, FFM and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reporting on Sudan³²) remain essentially the same.

One could argue that these resolutions would be perfect fits for item 4, in line with previous Council practice.³³ At the time of writing, in the East and Horn of Africa, only Somalia resolutions remain consensual (IE mandate under item 10).

The last period (HRC45 to HRC55) crystallises these political divisions. More and more Africa-focused resolutions are put to a vote, and votes are closer than in the past (and closer than votes on non-Africa-focused resolutions). Divisions have even expanded to special sessions, putting an end to the practice of consensus that had prevailed until 2021 (the first nine Africa-focused special sessions produced consensual outcomes; the last two ended with votes).

Considering that these trends cover several cycles of the HRC, it is clear that these divisions are not simply attributable to variations in membership but rather reflect deeper shifts in geopolitics. It is, in effect, more and more difficult for states that sponsor resolutions on African countries that are opposed by the countries concerned to get these resolutions adopted. In parallel, it is more and more challenging for African states (and to a lesser extent, for Asia-Pacific states) to vote in favour of a resolution on an African country which the country concerned opposes.

V. Factors and determinants of states' voting behaviour

Based on an analysis of the voting record of African states and responses to a survey, "Between Principles and Pragmatism" identified a number of key factors and determinants of voting behaviour. The most important factors in African states' voting behaviour were found to be: (i) whether the country concerned is African or not (if the country concerned is African, then the number of African abstentions and negative votes increases); (ii) the agenda item number (African states are item 4-averse); (iii) condemnatory language

(the presence of condemnatory elements is a turn-off for African states, who prefer to avoid "naming and shaming"); and (iv) Support/consent 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 or vote against).

While the present report is broader in terms of analysis of voting behaviour, it is crucial to highlight the significant and growing influence of African states on Africa-focused resolutions. The 13 African votes, which are part of the HRC's overall 47 votes on any given resolution, weigh heavier with respect to Africa-focused resolutions than with regard to other resolutions because they are more often used (they are less often abstentions, and more often votes against). In other words, African states' voting behavior on Africa-focused resolutions plays a pivotal role in shaping voting patterns on these resolutions, underscoring the importance of their role within the HRC.

However, the present report also shows that the trends identified with regard to Africa-focused resolutions (increase in non-consensual resolutions, increase in the use of item 2, negative African votes on resolutions that are not under agenda item 10) are accelerating. Over the last 22 sessions (covered by the last two periods in our analysis, that is, HRC34 to HRC55), a vote was called on almost all Africa-focused resolutions presented under item 2 (11 times out of 12).³⁴ In addition, during that period, all resolutions presented under item 4 (except those on Eritrea, when they were still led by Djibouti and Somalia, and on South Sudan, up to HRC43) were put to a vote.³⁵ During the same period, only one resolution presented under item 10 (out of 49) was put to a vote.³⁶

These lead us to conclude that, indeed, the following factors matter:

(1) Agenda item number:

African states are item 4-averse. They are also increasingly item 2-averse as item 2 can be regarded as "the new item 4."

Asia-Pacific states (with a few exceptions) are reluctant to support Africa-focused resolutions under items 2 or 4. Other groups either unanimously (WEOG), quasi-unanimously (Eastern Europe), or largely (GRULAC) support Africa-focused resolutions, irrespective of the item number. This means these last three groups are the ones that make it possible for Africa-focused

³² With the assistance of the Designated Expert on Sudan.

³³ One direct consequence is that reports on African countries are considered early (during the first week of each session), as agenda item 2 naturally comes before items 4 and 10. As a result, debates on South Sudan, Eritrea, and Sudan are consistently among the first country-specific interactive dialogues of each session.

³⁴ See Annex 3, (a) and (b). These are resolutions on Burundi (36/2), Eritrea (41/1, 44/1, 47/2, 50/2, and 53/2), Ethiopia (47/13), South Sudan (49/2, 52/1, and 55/1), and Sudan (54/2). Only resolution 50/1 (Sudan) was adopted by consensus.

³⁵ Ibid. These are resolutions on Burundi (36/19, 39/14, 42/26, 45/19, 48/16, and 51/28, and 54/20), Ethiopia (51/27), and South Sudan (46/23).

³⁶ Resolution 36/30 on the DRC.

resolutions under items 2 and 4 to be adopted.

(2) Support/consent of the country concerned:

(a) If the government concerned expresses strong opposition to the resolution being considered, most African states will either vote against or abstain – and more than in the past will vote against. (They can of course exert their influence ahead of voting, in the HRC's corridors, to ensure a consensual outcome and choice of item 10, either by taking the initiative or by playing a deterring role to avoid a non-consensual resolution.)

Here, arguments around “sovereignty,” “non-confrontation,” “non-selectivity” or “non-politicization” are in full play. Arguments around the fact that the HRC should give “priority” to mediation efforts (in case of a conflict) or to African Union (AU) organs can also be effective in rallying African and Asian support. This was clear for recent resolutions on Ethiopia (51/27 was adopted as mediation efforts were under way in Pretoria, and 12 African states voted “No”) and Sudan (with arguments deployed by Gulf and Arab states around the “Jeddah Process” and attempts to bring about a ceasefire. Seven African states voted “No” to resolution S-36/1, and only six to resolution 54/2, five months later as it appeared that the Jeddah talks had not brought about concrete improvements on the ground).

Asia-Pacific states by and large follow this rule, although several supported Africa-focused resolutions that did not enjoy the consent of the government concerned. Again, other groups either unanimously (WEOG), quasi-unanimously (Eastern Europe), or largely (GRULAC) support Africa-focused resolutions, irrespective of the consent of the government concerned.

(b) If the resolution is initiated by WEOG states, no African states will vote in favour. Many Asia-Pacific states will either abstain or vote against. All WEOG, almost all Eastern European states, and most GRULAC states, will vote in favour.

(c) If several resolutions on the same country are considered during the same session, African states tend to support the one presented by the country concerned (most often, under item 10) and to either abstain or vote against the other track (under items 2 or 4). Asia-Pacific states behave in a similar manner (although with more abstentions on the relevant item 2/4 resolution). In this case, members of no group call for a vote on the item 10 resolution.

(3) Condemnatory language:

The presence of condemnatory elements, especially in lengthy resolutions, has an influence on African states' voting behaviour, a number of which are led to voting against. Similarly, Asia-Pacific states tend to find it difficult to support strong, scrutinizing, condemnatory language. The other three groups (WEOG, Eastern Europe, GRULAC) support the inclusion of such elements, especially to advance independent investigations and accountability. They support resolutions establishing investigative mechanisms such as Commissions of Inquiry (COIs) or FFM, which African and, to a lesser extent, Asia-Pacific states oppose.

CONCLUSION

A comprehensive analysis of states' votes on Africa-focused resolutions shows that the tide might be turning at the Human Rights Council. While many resolutions are still adopted by consensus, more and more resolutions on African countries are put to a vote as they do not enjoy the consent of the countries concerned.

This significant and growing divide reflects broader geopolitical divisions. It makes it increasingly difficult for the Council to adopt resolutions that contain condemnatory and scrutiny elements, or that seek to establish or extend strong mechanisms, on African countries – even where human rights crises and/or armed conflicts tear societies apart and cause immense suffering. Developing, seeking support for, and getting these resolutions adopted require significant political capital by sponsor states and advocacy efforts by a range of actors, including civil society.

The data DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders analysed show that when it comes to Africa-focused resolutions, the most significant divide is not between “Africa and the rest,” between “Africa and the West,” or between “the West and the rest,” but between two regional groups (Africa and Asia-Pacific) and the other three (Eastern Europe, GRULAC, and WEOG). Almost all of the negative votes and abstentions come from the former two; almost all positive votes come from the latter three.

Recent sessions also beg the question: Is item 2 the new item 4? For several country situations, and for Africa-focused resolutions in particular, sponsor states have become reluctant to use item 4 (because of the stigma associated with it) and have instead resorted to item 2. This is true for resolutions on Eritrea, South Sudan, and Sudan (as well as the first Ethiopia resolution (47/13)). Item 4 is on its way to becoming a “no-go” area for Africa-focused resolutions.

At the same time, item 10, with its texts adopted by consensus, continues to dominate the landscape of Africa-focused resolutions. Calling a vote on an item 10 resolution, which was by no means frequent, is now completely non-existent. Even when states consider that a resolution is inadequate to address challenges in the country concerned or a waste of the Council's resources, they do not call a vote provided the initiative is presented under item 10.

The last point evidenced by this report is the African Group's increasingly visible influence on country resolutions. African states exert greater influence over resolutions that are put to a vote, in particular Africa-focused resolutions. This goes beyond the traditional strategy of influencing outcomes from “behind the scenes” (by deterring potential initiatives or taking initiatives into their own hands). Around the Council's 15th anniversary, the African Group stopped “punching below its weight” with regard to country resolutions. From 2021-2023, votes and diplomatic processes on Yemen, China, and Ethiopia, but also on Burundi, South Sudan, and Sudan, showed that African states have become less and less hesitant to use their clout.

As the Human Rights Council approaches its 20th anniversary, this move from a relatively discreet to a more public use of their influence might be one of the most striking evolutions in multilateral dynamics. Time will tell whether this is confirmed.

Civil society, for its part, will continue to advocate for meaningful resolutions addressing human rights crises and for states to address situations based on their merits and in line with the Council's founding resolution, UN General Assembly resolution 60/251, which provides it with a mandate to, among others, “address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and make recommendations thereon.”³⁷

³⁷ UNGA resolution 60/251, available at: https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251_En.pdf See paragraph 3, among others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings and analysis presented above, we formulate the following recommendations.

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

- Consider resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council on their merits, using international human rights standards, objective criteria, and the universality of human rights as guiding principles in voting decisions; strive to ensure that Council outcomes are objective, consistent, and constructive;
- In this regard, endorse the “incoming members’ pledge,” 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”*;
- 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, support the resolution; at the very minimum, consider abstaining on the resolution; and
- Oppose amendments that seek to remove or undermine key components of country-specific resolutions, such as investigative and accountability mechanisms or the establishment or renewal of special procedure mandates. These components are essential to guarantee that resolutions adequately address human rights issues in the countries concerned and hold those responsible accountable.

2. To states that are observers:

Consider resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council on their merits, using international human rights standards, objective criteria, and the universality of human rights as guiding principles in decisions to sponsor, co-sponsor, support or oppose initiatives.

3. To civil society organisations:

- Continue to pay close attention to UN Human Rights Council dynamics, in particular voting records of states and patterns of votes for all regional groups; and
- Engage states based on knowledge of their voting history and behaviour and encourage them to implement recommendations outlined in the present section.

ANNEXES



Excel spreadsheets (Annex 1) and other documents and data (Annexes 2 to 4) are available for download on DefendDefenders' website.

* * *

Annex 1:
All votes on Africa-focused resolutions (with a breakdown of votes by regional group)
(HRC1 (2006) to HRC55 (2024))

Reproduced in section II. 2. and available (Excel spreadsheet with all three tabs) for download on the report's page:

<https://defenddefenders.org/is-the-tide-turning/>

**Annex 2: Countries that have been/are on the HRC's agenda (objects of resolutions)
Breakdown by regional group**

Regional group	Has been / is currently on the agenda	Has never been on the agenda	Existing special procedure mandate	Existing independent mechanism / OHCHR investigation
Africa Group	14 countries ^{NB} (Burundi, CAR*, Côte d'Ivoire*, DRC*, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea*, Liberia*, Libya*, Mali*, Somalia*, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia*) = 26% of the regional group's total membership	40 countries = 74% of the regional group's total membership	5 (Burundi (SR), CAR (IE), Eritrea (SR), Mali (IE), Somalia (IE))	3 (<u>DRC</u> (International Team of Experts)*, <u>South Sudan</u> (CHRSS), <u>Sudan</u> (FFM)) (Discontinued/ended their work: Burundi (UNIIB), Burundi (COI), Burundi (OHCHR Mission), CAR (FFM), Côte d'Ivoire (COI), Darfur (Sudan) (HLM), DRC (Kasai Team of Experts), Eritrea (COI), Ethiopia (ICHREE), Libya (COI), Libya (OHCHR Investigation), Libya (IFFM), South Sudan (Monitoring Mission))
Asia-Pacific	14 countries (Afghanistan*, Cambodia, DPRK, Iran, Iraq (ISIL/Daesh)*, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon*, Myanmar, Nepal*, Occupied Palestinian Territory* **, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria, Yemen)*** = 25% of the regional group's total membership	41 countries = 75% of the regional group's total membership	6 (Afghanistan (SR), Cambodia (SR), DPRK (SR), Iran (SR), Myanmar (SR), Occupied Palestinian Territory (SR)) (NB: the SR on Syria will start his work once the mandate of the commission of inquiry ends)	6 (DPRK (Accountability project), <u>Iran</u> (FFM), <u>Myanmar</u> (IIMM), <u>Occupied Palestinian Territory</u> and <u>Israel</u> (COI)*, <u>Sri Lanka</u> (Accountability project), <u>Syria</u> (COI)) (Discontinued/ended their work: Beit Hanoun (OPT) (HLFFM), DPRK (COI), Gaza (OPT) (FFM) (and Committee of Experts on follow-up), Gaza (OPT) (COI), Iraq (ISIL) (OHCHR Investigation), Israeli settlements (IIFFM), Lebanon (COI), Myanmar (IIFFM), OPT protests (COI), Sri Lanka (Investigation), Syria (FFM), Yemen (GEE))
Eastern Europe	(Belarus, Georgia*, Russia, Ukraine*) = 17% of the regional group's total membership	— = 83% of the regional group's total membership	2 (Belarus (SR), Russia (SR))	2 (<u>Belarus</u> (OHCHR Examination), <u>Ukraine</u> (COI)*)
GRULAC	5 countries (Colombia*, Haiti*, Honduras*, Nicaragua, Venezuela) = 15% of the regional group's total membership	28 countries = 85% of the regional group's total membership	0	2 (<u>Nicaragua</u> (GHRE), <u>Venezuela</u> (FFM))
WEOG	1 country (Israel**) = 3% of the regional group's total membership	28 countries = 97% of the regional group's total membership	1 (Occupied Palestinian Territory (SR)**)	1 (<u>Israel</u>) (Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel) (COI)) (Discontinued/ended their work: Israeli attacks on flotilla of ships (FFM), Israeli settlements (IIFFM))

^{NB} In addition to these countries, five were mentioned as affected states in resolution S-23/1 ("Atrocities committed by the terrorist group Boko Haram and its effects on human rights in the affected States"): Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad, and Benin.

* Voluntary resolutions (resolutions adopted at the initiative of the concerned country's / with the support of relevant regional/political groups). (In practice, some countries in the list have been the objects of both voluntary resolutions (adopted at the government's own initiative) and undesired resolutions (adopted at the initiative of other states, without the consent of the country concerned). Among these: Burundi, South Sudan, Sudan, Israel [special case as it is considered as part of resolutions on the OPT/occupied Arab territories, under items 2 and 7].)

** Resolutions addressing violations committed in the OPT and other occupied Arab territories (items 2 and 7).

*** A resolution also addressed the Marshall Islands. It was adopted at the initiative of the country's government. We chose not to count it as having set the concerned country "on the agenda" of the HRC for the purposes of the present document, as it is focused on "Technical assistance and capacity building to address the human rights implications of the nuclear legacy" in the country (resolution 51/35). Resolutions on Iraq and Lebanon focused on "abuses committed by the Islamic State [Daesh] in Iraq and the Levant and associated groups" (resolutions S-22/1 and 28/32) and on the situation caused by "Israeli military operations" in Lebanon (resolution S-2/1), respectively.

For independent mechanisms and other investigations, see OHCHR, "International Commissions of Inquiry, Commissions on Human Rights, Fact-Finding missions and other Investigations," <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-is>, as well as full list at OHCHR, "Human Rights Council-mandated Investigative Bodies," <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/list-hrc-mandat> (accessed on 16 April 2024).

Annex 3: Consensual vs. non-consensual resolutions on African countries

(a) Breakdown by session

Session	Resolutions adopted by consensus		Resolutions adopted by vote		Remarks
HRC 1	0		0		
HRC 2	0		1	Dec. 2/115 (Sudan/Darfur): item N/A	- A vote was called as the text (2/115) was deemed too weak.
HRC 3	0		0		
HRC 4	1	4/8 (Sudan/Darfur): item N/A	0		
HRC 5	0		0		
HRC 6	5	6/5 (Burundi): item 10 6/31 (Liberia): item 10 6/34 (Sudan): item 4 6/35 (Sudan/Darfur): item 4 6/103 (Sudan): item 4	0		- Resolutions adopted after the adoption of the HRC's "Institution-Building Package" and standing agenda (agenda item numbers are now allocated to all resolutions).
HRC 7	3	7/16 (Sudan): item 4 7/20 (DRC): item 10 7/35 (Somalia): item 10	0		
HRC 8	0		0		
HRC 9	3	9/16 (Liberia): item 10 9/17 (Sudan): item 4 9/19 (Burundi): item 10	0		
HRC 10	1	10/32 (Somalia): item 10	1	10/33 (DRC): item 10	- A vote was called as the text (10/33) was deemed too weak.
HRC 11	0		1	11/10 (Sudan): item 4	
HRC 12	1	12/26 (Somalia): item 10	0		
HRC 13	2	13/21 (Guinea): item 10 13/22 (DRC): item 10	0		
HRC 14	0		0		
HRC 15	1	15/28 (Somalia): item 10	1	15/27 (Sudan): item 4	- Last non-consensual resolution on Sudan until 2023 (S-32/1 and 54/2). Between 15/27 and these two resolutions, all initiatives on Sudan were consensual (item 10 /focus on renewal of SR/IE mandate).
HRC 16	5	16/19 (Tunisia): item 10 16/25 (Côte d'Ivoire): item 4 16/34 (Burundi): item 10 16/35 (DRC): item 10 16/36 (Guinea): item 10	0		
HRC 17	3	17/17 (Libya): item 4 17/21 (Côte d'Ivoire): item 10 17/25 (Somalia): item 10	0		
HRC 18	4	18/9 (Libya): item 1 18/16 (Sudan): item 10 18/17 (South Sudan): item 10 18/24 (Burundi): item 10	0		
HRC 19	4	19/27 (DRC): item 10 19/28 (Somalia): item 10 19/30 (Guinea): item 10 19/39 (Libya): item 10	0		
HRC 20	4	20/17 (Mali): item 4 20/19 (Côte d'Ivoire): item 10 20/20 (Eritrea): item 4 20/21 (Somalia): item 10	0		
HRC 21	5	21/1 (Eritrea): item 5 21/25 (Mali): item 4 21/27 (Sudan): item 10 21/28 (South Sudan): item 10 21/31 (Somalia): item 10	0		
HRC 22	2	22/18 (Mali): item 10 22/19 (Libya): item 10	0		
HRC 23	5	23/18 (CAR): item 10 23/21 (Eritrea): item 4 23/22 (Côte d'Ivoire): item 10 23/23 (Guinea): item 10	0		

		23/24 (South Sudan): item 10			
HRC 24	4	24/27 (DRC): item 10 24/28 (Sudan): item 10 24/30 (Somalia): item 10 24/34 (CAR): item 10	0		
HRC 25	4	25/35 (Guinea): item 10 25/36 (Mali): item 10 25/37 (Libya): item 10 PRST 25/2 (South Sudan): item 1	0		
HRC 26	3	26/24 (Eritrea): item 4 26/31 (South Sudan): item 10 26/32 (Côte d'Ivoire): item 10	0		
HRC 27	3	27/27 (DRC): item 10 27/28 (CAR): item 10 27/29 (Sudan): item 10	0		
HRC 28	3	28/30 (Libya): item 10 28/31 (Mali): item 10 28/33 (Guinea): item 10	0		
HRC 29	3	29/13 (South Sudan): item 2 29/18 (Eritrea): item 4 29/24 (Côte d'Ivoire): item 10	0		
HRC 30	5	30/19 (CAR): item 10 30/20 (Somalia): item 10 30/22 (Sudan): item 10 30/26 (DRC): item 10 30/27 (Burundi): item 10	0		
HRC 31	4	31/20 (South Sudan): item 4 31/27 (Libya): item 10 31/28 (Mali): item 10 31/29 (Guinea): item 10	0		
HRC 32	2	32/24 (Eritrea): item 4 32/30 (Côte d'Ivoire): item 10	0		
HRC 33	4	33/17 (Somalia): item 10 33/26 (Sudan): item 10 33/27 (CAR): item 10 33/29 (DRC): item 10	1	33/24 (Burundi): item 4	- Resumption, after an 18-session break, of adversarial resolutions on African countries. Use of item 4. First time that a vote took place on a Burundi-focused resolution.
HRC 34	3	34/25 (South Sudan): item 4 34/38 (Libya): item 10 34/39 (Mali): item 10	0		
HRC 35	3	35/33 (DRC): item 10 35/35 (Eritrea): item 4 PRST 35/1 (Côte d'Ivoire): item 10	0		
HRC 36	4	36/25 (CAR): item 10 36/26 (Sudan): item 10 36/27 (Somalia): item 10 36/30 (DRC): item 10	3	36/2 (Burundi): item 2 36/19 (Burundi): item 4 36/30 (DRC): item 10	- A vote was called as the text (36/2) was deemed too weak and considered a diversion designed (by the government) to compete against the other initiative on Burundi (renewal of the COI's mandate). - A vote was called as the text (36/30) was deemed too weak.
HRC 37	3	37/31 (South Sudan): item 4 37/39 (Mali): item 10 37/41 (Libya): item 10	0		
HRC 38	2	38/15 (Eritrea): item 4 38/20 (DRC): item 10	0		
HRC 39	4	39/19 (CAR): item 10 39/20 (DRC): item 10 39/22 (Sudan): item 10 39/23 (Somalia): item 10	1	39/14 (Burundi): item 4	
HRC 40	3	40/19 (South Sudan): item 4 40/26 (Mali): item 10 40/27 (Libya): item 10	0		
HRC 41	1	41/26 (DRC): item 10	1	41/1 (Eritrea): item 2	- End of African leadership on Eritrea-focused resolutions (Djibouti and Somalia leave leadership to WEOG states (and later to the EU)). - Move from item 4 to item 2. First time that a vote took place on an Eritrea-focused resolution.
HRC 42	4	42/33 (Somalia): item 10 42/34 (DRC): item 10 42/35 (Sudan): item 10 42/36 (CAR): item 10	1	42/26 (Burundi): item 4	
HRC 43	3	43/27 (South Sudan): item 4	0		

		43/38 (Mali): item 10 43/39 (Libya): item 10			
HRC 44	0		1	44/1 (Eritrea): item 2	
HRC 45	4	45/25 (Sudan): item 10 45/27 (Somalia): item 10 45/34 (DRC): item 10 45/35 (CAR): item 10	1	45/19 (Burundi): item 4	
HRC 46	2	46/28 (Mali): item 10 46/29 (South Sudan): item 10	1	46/23 (South Sudan): item 4	- First time that a vote took place on a South Sudan-focused resolution.
HRC 47	0		2	47/2 (Eritrea): item 2 47/13 (Ethiopia): item 2	- First-ever resolution on Ethiopia.
HRC 48	4	48/19 (CAR): item 10 48/20 (DRC): item 10 48/22 (Somalia): item 10 48/25 (Libya): item 10	1	48/16 (Burundi): item 4	
HRC 49	2	49/34 (Mali): item 10 49/35 (South Sudan): item 10	1	49/2 (South Sudan): item 2	- Move from item 4 to item 2.
HRC 50	2	50/1 (Sudan): item 2 50/23 (Libya): item 10	1	50/2 (Eritrea): item 2	
HRC 51	3	51/36 (DRC): item 10 51/37 (CAR): item 10 51/38 (Somalia): item 10	2	51/27 (Ethiopia): item 4 51/28 (Burundi): item 4	
HRC 52	3	52/41 (Libya): item 10 52/42 (Mali): item 10 52/43 (South Sudan): item 10	1	52/1 (South Sudan): item 2	
HRC 53	0		1	53/2 (Eritrea): item 2	
HRC 54	3	54/31 (CAR): item 10 54/32 (Somalia): item 10 54/34 (DRC): item 10	2	54/2 (Sudan): item 2 54/20 (Burundi): item 4	- Broad use of item 2, with now Eritrea, South Sudan, and Sudan (all used to be item 4 (also item 10 for Sudan)).
HRC 55	2	55/25 (Mali): item 10 55/26 (South Sudan): item 10	1	55/1 (South Sudan): item 2	
TOTAL (regular sessions)	139 resolutions	Item N/A: 1 Item 1: 2 Item 2: 2 Item 4: 21 Item 5: 1 Item 10: 112	26 resolutions	Item N/A: 1 Item 2: 11 Item 4: 12 Item 10: 2	Σ = 165 resolutions
SS 4	1	S-4/101 (Sudan/Darfur)	0		
SS 8	1	S-8/1 (DRC)	0		
SS 14	1	S-14/1 (Côte d'Ivoire)	0		
SS 15	1	S-15/1 (Libya)	0		
SS 20	1	S-20/1 (CAR)	0		
SS 23	1	S-23/1 (Boko Haram)	0		- Are mentioned in the resolution as affected states: Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad, Benin.
SS 24	1	S-24/1 (Burundi)	0		
SS 26	1	S-26/1 (South Sudan)	0		
SS 32	1	S-32/1 (Sudan)	0		
SS 33	0		1	S-33/1 (Ethiopia)	- First time that a vote took place on a resolution during a special session on an African country.
SS 36	0		1	S-36/1 (Sudan)	
TOTAL (special sessions)	9 resolutions	<i>(Item: N/A for special sessions)</i>	2 resolutions	<i>(Item: N/A for special sessions)</i>	Σ = 11 resolutions
GRAND TOTAL	148 resolutions	Item N/A: 10 (incl. 9 for special sessions) Item 1: 2 Item 2: 2 Item 4: 21 Item 5: 1 Item 10: 112	28 resolutions	Item N/A: 3 (incl. 2 for special sessions) Item 2: 11 Item 4: 12 Item 10: 2	Σ = 176 resolutions

(b) Breakdown by agenda item

Item	Resolutions adopted by consensus			Resolutions adopted by vote			Remarks
	Number of resolutions	Percentage of resolutions within the item number	Percentage of all resolutions on African countries	Number of resolutions	Percentage of resolutions within the item number	Percentage of all resolutions on African countries	
N/A	1 resolution	50%	0.6%	1 resolution	50%	0.6%	(Resolutions adopted before the Institution-Building Package.)
Item 1	2 resolutions	100%	1.1%	0 resolutions	0%	0.0%	
Item 2	2 resolutions	15%	1.1%	11 resolutions	85%	6.3%	- Lowest ratio of consensual resolutions of all agenda items.
Item 4	21 resolutions	64%	11.9%	12 resolutions	36%	6.8%	
Item 5	1 resolution	100%	0.6%	0 resolutions	0%	0.0%	(Discontinued confidential complaint procedure to take up public consideration of Eritrea.)
Item 10	112 resolutions	98%	63.6%	2 resolutions	2%	1.1%	- Highest ratio of consensual resolutions of all agenda items.
TOTAL (regular sessions)	139 resolutions	= 84% of all resolutions on African countries adopted in regular sessions	= 79% of all resolutions on African countries	26 resolutions	= 16% of all resolutions on African countries adopted in regular sessions	= 15% of all resolutions on African countries	Σ = 165 resolutions
Special sessions	9 resolutions	82%	5.1%	2 resolutions	18%	1.1%	- The last two special session resolutions were non-consensual.
TOTAL (special sessions)	9 resolutions	= 82% of all resolutions adopted in special sessions	= 5% of all resolutions on African countries	2 resolutions	= 18% of all resolutions adopted in special sessions	= 1% of all resolutions on African countries	Σ = 11 resolutions
GRAND TOTAL	148 resolutions	84% of all resolutions on African countries were <u>consensual</u>		28 resolutions	16% of all resolutions on African countries were <u>adopted by vote</u>		Σ = 176 resolutions

(c) Breakdown by period

Period (11 sessions each)	Number of resolutions <u>adopted by</u> <u>vote</u>	Number of resolutions <u>adopted by</u> <u>consensus</u>	Item numbers used (resolutions <u>adopted by vote</u>)	Item numbers used (resolutions <u>adopted by</u> <u>consensus</u>)	Percentage (vote/consensus) by agenda item (and remarks)	
HRC 1 - HRC 11 (16 resolutions)	3 = 19% of the period's resolutions	13 = 81% of the period's resolutions	<u>N/A</u> : 1 resolution <u>Item 4</u> : 1 resolution <u>Item 10</u> : 1 resolution	<u>N/A</u> : 1 resolution <u>Item 4</u> : 5 resolutions <u>Item 10</u> : 7 resolutions	Item N/A	50% by vote 50% by consensus
					Item 4	17% by vote 83% by consensus
					Item 10	12% by vote 88% by consensus
			- On two of the three non-consensual resolutions, a vote was called because states deemed these resolutions too weak (unusual scenario, as confirmed later). - Most item 4 resolutions were adopted by consensus (also an unusual scenario compared to the most recent period (HRC45-HRC55)). - Agenda item 10 started being used. In that period, it already made up 50% of all resolutions on African countries.			
HRC 12 - HRC 22 (32 resolutions)	1 = 3% of the period's resolutions	31 = 97% of the period's resolutions	<u>Item 4</u> : 1 resolution	<u>Item 1</u> : 1 resolution <u>Item 4</u> : 5 resolutions <u>Item 5</u> : 1 resolution <u>Item 10</u> : 24 resolutions	Item 1	100% by consensus
					Item 4	17% by vote 83% by consensus
					Item 5	100% by consensus
			- Consensual item 4 resolutions are due to the cooperation of the countries concerned (Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Libya) or the fact that these resolutions were African initiatives (Eritrea (core group: Djibouti/Somalia)). - All resolutions under item 10 were consensual – a practice that endured (with only one exception afterwards).			

					- In that period, item 10 made up 75% of all resolutions on African countries.	
HRC 23 - HRC 33 (41 resolutions)	1 = 2% of the period's resolutions	40 = 98% of the period's resolutions	Item 4: 1 resolution	Item 1: 1 resolution	Item 1	100% by consensus
				Item 2: 1 resolution	Item 2	100% by consensus
				Item 4: 5 resolutions	Item 4	17% by vote 83% by consensus
				Item 10: 33 resolutions	Item 10	100% by consensus
			Item 1: 1 resolution (2% of the period's) Item 2: 1 resolution (2% of the period's) Item 4: 6 resolutions (15% of the period's) Item 10: 33 resolutions (80% of the period's)		- Item 4 resolutions were mostly on Eritrea and consensual – an exceptional scenario due to African leadership on these resolutions (see above). - Large number of resolutions under item 10. In that period, item 10 made up 80% of all resolutions on African countries.	
HRC 34 - HRC 44 (37 resolutions)	7 = 19% of the period's resolutions	30 = 81% of the period's resolutions	Item 2: 3 resolutions	Item 4: 6 resolutions	Item 2	100% by vote
			Item 4: 3 resolutions	Item 10: 24 resolutions	Item 4	33% by vote 67% by consensus
			Item 10: 1 resolution		Item 10	4% by vote 96% by consensus
			Item 2: 3 resolutions (8% of the period's) Item 4: 9 resolutions (24% of the period's) Item 10: 25 resolutions (68% of the period's)		- Item 2 started being used for non-consensual resolutions on Africa countries. - More confrontation on item 4 resolutions (Burundi). - A large majority of resolutions on African countries continued to be presented under item 10 (over two thirds of the total).	
HRC 45 - HRC 55 (39 resolutions)	14 = 36% of the period's resolutions	25 = 64% of the period's resolutions	Item 2: 8 resolutions	Item 2: 1 resolution	Item 2	89% by vote 11% by consensus
			Item 4: 6 resolutions	Item 10: 24 resolutions	Item 4	100% by vote
					Item 10	100% by consensus
			Item 2: 9 resolutions (23% of the period's) Item 4: 6 resolutions (15% of the period's) Item 10: 24 resolutions (62% of the period's)		- Significant increase (both in absolute numbers and in the share of total number of resolutions) in non-consensual resolutions on African countries. Half of the total number of non-consensual resolutions (14 out of 28 (2006-2024)) were adopted during this period.	
					- All resolutions under item 4 were voted upon (no more consensus) (Burundi, Ethiopia, South Sudan). - Significant increase in the use of item 2 for resolutions on African countries (a vote was called on almost all of these).	
Special sessions (11 resolutions)	2	9	(Item: N/A for special sessions)		NB: - While resolutions adopted during special sessions do not have a specific item number, it should be noted that follow-up to the two non-consensual outcomes of special sessions on African countries were under items 2 and 4 (Sudan and Ethiopia, respectively). - Regarding consensual special session resolutions, follow-up resolutions and debates were placed under various items, including item 10.	
TOTAL	28	148	Item N/A: 13 resolutions (7.4% of the total number of resolutions on African countries) (regular sessions: consensual: 0.6% / non-consensual: 0.6% special sessions: consensual: 5.1% / non-consensual: 1.1%) Item 1: 2 resolutions (1.1% of the total number of resolutions on African countries) (consensual: 1.1% / non-consensual: 0.0%) Item 2: 13 resolutions (7.4% of the total number of resolutions on African countries) (consensual: 1.1% / non-consensual: 6.3%) Item 4: 33 resolutions (18.7% of the total number of resolutions on African countries) (consensual: 11.9% / non-consensual: 6.8%) Item 5: 1 resolution (0.6% of the total number of resolutions on African countries) (consensual: 0.6% / non-consensual: 0.0%) Item 10: 114 resolutions (64.7% of the total number of resolutions on African countries) (consensual: 63.6% / non-consensual: 1.1%)			

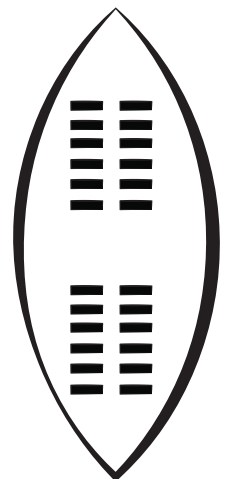
Annex 4: Votes on amendments to resolutions addressing African countries that were adopted by vote

Resolutions adopted by vote, with no amendments considered	21 resolutions (33/24 (Burundi), 36/2 (Burundi), 36/19 (Burundi), 36/30 (DRC), 39/14 (Burundi), 42/26 (Burundi), 44/1 (Eritrea), 45/19 (Burundi), 46/23 (South Sudan), 47/2 (Eritrea), 48/16 (Burundi), 49/2 (South Sudan), 50/2 (Eritrea), S-33/1 (Ethiopia), 51/28 (Burundi), 52/1 (South Sudan), S-36/1 (Sudan), 53/2 (Eritrea), 54/2 (Sudan), 54/20 (Burundi), 55/1 (South Sudan))
Resolutions adopted by vote, with amendments considered and voted upon	7 resolutions - 2/115 (decision) (Sudan/Darfur) <i>Amendments L.44/L.48 by WEOG states, rejected by vote (20Y, 22N, 4A)</i> [Africa Group (1Y, 9N, 2A), Asia-Pacific (2Y, 10N, 1A), Eastern Europe (4Y, 2N, 0A), GRULAC (6Y, 1N, 1A), WEOG (7Y, 0N, 0A)] - 10/33 (DRC) <i>Motion (rule 131) by Egypt, adopted by vote (30Y, 15N, 2A)</i> [Africa Group (13Y, 0N, 0A), Asia-Pacific (11Y, 2N, 0A), Eastern Europe (2Y, 4N, 0A), GRULAC (4Y, 2N, 2A), WEOG (0Y, 7N, 0A)] <i>Amendment L.3 by WEOG states, rejected by vote (18Y, 21N, 8A)</i> [Africa Group (0Y, 8N, 5A), Asia-Pacific (2Y, 10N, 1A), Eastern Europe (4Y, 2N, 0A), GRULAC (5Y, 1N, 2A), WEOG (7Y, 0N, 0A)] - 11/10 (Sudan) <i>Amendment L.19 by WEOG states, adopted by vote (20Y, 19N, 8A)</i> [Africa Group (2Y, 7N, 4A), Asia-Pacific (2Y, 10N, 1A), Eastern Europe (4Y, 1N, 1A), GRULAC (5Y, 1N, 2A), WEOG (7Y, 0N, 0A)] - 15/27 (Sudan) <i>Amendment L.35 by WEOG states, adopted by vote (25Y, 19N, 3A)</i> [Africa Group (3Y, 9N, 1A), Asia-Pacific (3Y, 8N, 2A), Eastern Europe (5Y, 1N, 0A), GRULAC (7Y, 1N, 0A), WEOG (7Y, 0N, 0A)] - 41/1 (Eritrea) <i>Vote on retaining para. 2, rejected by vote (para. 2 retained) (22Y, 13N, 12A)</i> [Africa Group (0Y, 5N, 8A), Asia-Pacific (3Y, 7N, 3A), Eastern Europe (5Y, 0N, 1A), GRULAC (7Y, 1N, 0A), WEOG (7Y, 0N, 0A)] <i>Vote on retaining para. 3, rejected by vote (para. 3 retained) (22Y, 13N, 12A)</i> [Africa Group (0Y, 5N, 8A), Asia-Pacific (3Y, 7N, 3A), Eastern Europe (5Y, 0N, 1A), GRULAC (7Y, 1N, 0A), WEOG (7Y, 0N, 0A)] <i>Vote on retaining para. 4, rejected by vote (para. 4 retained) (22Y, 13N, 12A)</i> [Africa Group (0Y, 5N, 8A), Asia-Pacific (3Y, 7N, 3A), Eastern Europe (5Y, 0N, 1A), GRULAC (7Y, 1N, 0A), WEOG (7Y, 0N, 0A)] - 47/13 (Ethiopia) <i>Total of 16 amendments (L.30, L.31, L.32, L.66, L.68, L.69, L.70, L.71, L.72, L.73, L.74, L.75, L.76, L.77, L.78, L.79) by Ethiopia, all rejected by vote (between 10 and 18Y, between 18 and 21N, between 11 and 18A)</i> [Africa Group (between 4 and 7Y, consistently 0N, between 6 and 9A), Asia-Pacific (between 2 and 6Y, between 4 and 5N, between 5 and 7A), Eastern Europe (consistently 1Y, 4N, 1A or 1Y, 5N, 0A), GRULAC (either 3Y, 3N, 2A, or 3Y, 4N, 1A, or 4Y, 3N, 1A), WEOG (consistently 0Y, 7N, 0A)] - 51/27 (Ethiopia) <i>Oral amendment L.19 by Ethiopia, rejected by vote (18Y, 21N, 8A)</i> [Africa Group (11Y, 0N, 2A), Asia-Pacific (4Y, 3N, 6A), Eastern Europe (0Y, 6N, 0A), GRULAC (3Y, 5N, 0A), WEOG (0Y, 7N, 0A)]
[NB: Resolutions adopted by consensus]	148 resolutions (see Annex 3 for full list)

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.

 www.defenddefenders.org
 +256 200 760 700
 info@defenddefenders.org
 @DefendDefenders
 /defenddefenders



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.

www.africandefenders.org 
info@africandefenders.org 
@AfricaDefenders 
/AfricanDefenders 