



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 19, 2018

U.S. Set to Withdraw from UN Human Rights Council

The United States is expected to confirm today that it has decided to withdraw from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). The move is not surprising, despite weeks of negotiations to reform the council and address its anti-Israel bias. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and UN Ambassador Nikki Haley are scheduled to address the media on the subject at 5:00 p.m. today.



The Trump administration has long been at odds with the so-called Human Rights Council over its rabid anti-Israel bias. In an article written last year for the *Washington Post*, Haley signaled that the United States was becoming weary with the rank hypocrisy of the council. It's not yet clear whether the United States will completely withdraw from the group or maintain some oversight presence.

"The council must end its practice of wrongly singling out Israel for criticism," Haley wrote. "When the council passes more than 70 resolutions against Israel, a country with a strong human rights record, and just 7 resolutions against Iran, a country with an abysmal human rights record, you know something is seriously wrong."

The 47-member [Human Rights Council](#) began a new session on Monday in Geneva, with the head of the council taking the Trump administration to task over the policy of separating the children of illegal immigrants from their parents at the border. "The thought that any state would seek to deter parents by inflicting such abuse on children is unconscionable," said Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, a Jordanian prince and the current head of the council.

Haley fired back at the council in a statement: "Once again, the United Nations shows its hypocrisy by calling out the United States while it ignores the reprehensible human rights records of several members of its own Human Rights Council."

Many of the council's member states are among the worst abusers of human rights. Among the council's membership are 14 nations — Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, China, Cuba, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela — deemed "not free" by the watchdog group [Freedom House](#). In October of last year, Pakistan was elected to the council [despite being publicly chastened](#) by the same council in March of last year over human-rights violations.

The current Human Rights Council was formed in 2006 out of the ashes of what was once the UN Commission on Human Rights. The latter group was roundly criticized and disbanded because so many of its member governments had terrible human-rights records. Sound familiar?

So, the UNHRC has a credibility problem, to say the least. When the current council was formed, the Bush administration chose not to participate in the group, citing the fact that so many human-rights abusers were allowed a seat on the new council. President Obama reversed this decision in 2009.

Since 2006, the UN Human Rights Council has time and time again criticized Israel, while ignoring the thousands of Palestinian rocket attacks against Israel. They have failed to address attacks by Hezbollah



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against Israel. They have even hosted a Hamas politician to speak at an event in 2012.

The expected U.S. withdrawal from the council is the latest in a series of Trump administration decisions to remove the United States from bad or unnecessary agreements and affiliations — his “America first” policy. In June of last year, the president announced that the United States would [withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord](#). In January, Trump penned an executive order removing the United States from the [Trans-Pacific Partnership \(TPP\)](#), and last month, he withdrew from the [Iran Nuclear Deal](#).

Withdrawing from these spineless agreements and pointless associations such as the UNHRC is a good start. The participation of the United States in such a group lends credibility to it. But unless the group is fair and impartial in dealing with human rights, it shouldn’t have such authority.

Perhaps in time, this president will see that the United Nations itself is a dangerous association that the United States doesn’t need.



Photo of UN Human Rights Council meeting room: AP Images



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