

Security Council Elections 2015

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Council Seats
- 4 Potential Evolving Council Dynamics in 2016
- 5 Established Practices in Becoming a Candidate
- 5 Campaigning for the Security Council
- 6 Modern Regional Groups and Established Practices
- 8 UN Documents on Security Council Elections
- 9 Useful Additional Resources
- 9 Annex 1: Rules and Process for Election to the Council: Relevant Charter Provisions and Rules of Procedure
- 10 Annex 2: Historical Background
- 11 Annex 3: Results of Recent Elections for Non-Permanent Members of the Security Council

Conference officers hold up empty ballot boxes for inspection by designated teller delegates, in advance of collecting Member States' ballots. (UN Photo/Loey Felipe)



Introduction

The 70th session of the UN General Assembly is scheduled to hold elections for the Security Council on 15 October. Five of the ten non-permanent seats in the Security Council will be filled for the 2016-2017 term. The five seats available for election in 2015 will be distributed regionally as follows:

- two seats for the African Group (currently held by Chad and Nigeria);
- one seat for the Group of Asia and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (the Asia-Pacific Group, currently held by Jordan);
- one seat for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC, currently held by Chile); and
- one seat for the Eastern European Group

(currently held by Lithuania).

The Western European and Others Group (WEOG) is contesting no seats this year, as its two seats (currently held by New Zealand and Spain) are up for election every even calendar year.

The five new members elected this year will take up their seats on 1 January 2016 and will serve through 31 December 2017. The procedures governing elections to the Security Council are described in detail in Annex 1.

At press time the five candidates seemed to be running unopposed as sole candidates for their respective regional groups. All five candidates have previously served on the Council:

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Introduction (con't)

- Japan on ten previous occasions (1958-1959, 1966-1967, 1971-1972, 1975-1976, 1981-1982, 1987-1988, 1992-1993, 1997-1998, 2005-2006 and 2009-2010);
- Egypt on five¹ (1946, 1949-1950, 1961-1962, 1984-1985 and 1996-1997);
- the Ukraine on three² (1948-1949, 1984-1985 and 2000-2001);
- Senegal twice (1968-1969 and 1988-1989);
- and Uruguay once (1965-1966).

The table below shows the number of seats available per region in the 2015 election, the declared candidates and their prior terms on the Council.

Among the 2015 candidates, Japan is one of the two member states (along with Brazil) that have served the most terms as elected members of the Council: ten times (despite the fact that Japan only joined the organisation in 1956). None of the 68 UN member states that have never served on the Council (accounting for approximately 35 percent of the membership) is a candidate this year.

A country must obtain the votes of two-thirds of the member states present and voting at the General Assembly session in order to secure a seat on the Council, regardless of whether the election is contested. This means that 129 votes are required at a minimum to win a seat if all 193 UN member states vote. Members who abstain from voting are considered not voting. (A member state can be prohibited from voting as a result of arrears in payment of financial contributions, in accordance with Article 19 of the UN Charter.)

Elections to the Council, as with other principal organs of the UN, require formal balloting, even if candidates have been endorsed by their regional group and are running unopposed. If no candidate obtains the required number of votes in the first round, voting in the next round is restricted to the

REGION	SEATS AVAILABLE IN THE 2015 ELECTION	MEMBER STATES RUNNING AND PREVIOUS TERMS ON THE COUNCIL
Africa	2	Egypt (1946, 1949-1950, 1961-1962, 1984-1985 and 1996-1997) and Senegal (1968-1969 and 1988-1989)
Asia-Pacific	1	Japan (1958-1959, 1966-1967, 1971-1972, 1975-1976, 1981-1982, 1987-1988, 1992-1993, 1997-1998, 2005-2006 and 2009-2010)
Eastern Europe	1	Ukraine (1948-1949, 1984-1985 and 2000-2001)
Latin America and Caribbean	1	Uruguay (1965-1966)

candidates that received the most votes. In this restricted ballot, the number of countries included is limited to twice the number of vacant seats; for example, if one seat is available, only the two countries that received the most votes in the first round could contest the next round. (Any votes for other candidates during this restricted voting round are considered void.) This restricted voting process can continue for up to three rounds of voting. If, at that point, a candidate still fails to garner the minimum number of votes, unrestricted voting is reopened for up to three rounds. This pattern of restricted and unrestricted voting continues until a candidate is successful in securing the required two-thirds of the votes.

In theory, it is possible, although unlikely, that a country running on a “clean slate” might not garner the requisite votes of those present in the General Assembly in the first round of voting. Such a country may then be challenged in subsequent rounds and ultimately not obtain a seat.

Historically, there have been a number of instances in which extended rounds of voting were required to fill a contested seat. This was more common before the Council's

enlargement from 11 to 15 members in 1966, and it resulted in a number of agreements to split terms. Despite the enlargement, extended voting has happened a few times more recently, although such situations have been solved by the withdrawal of one of the contenders or the election of a compromise candidate, rather than by agreeing on a split term. (See Annex 3 for the results of recent elections to the Security Council. A summary of the voting in the General Assembly elections to non-permanent seats on the Security Council since 1946 is available at www.securitycouncilreport.org.)

This will be the last time that elections are held in the month of October. Following concerns that elected Council members did not have enough time to prepare for their terms, and to have enough time and flexibility in the event of an unforeseen circumstance (such as the withdrawal of Saudi Arabia after its election in 2013), the General Assembly decided to hold the elections about six months before the members elected assume their responsibilities. Resolution 68/307 of 18 September 2014 decided that this would start in the 70th session of the General Assembly, so the next election is expected in June 2016.

Council Seats

African Seats

Three non-permanent seats on the Council are allocated to Africa. One seat comes up for election every even calendar year, and two seats are contested during odd years. Although there have been exceptions, elections for seats allocated to Africa tend to be uncontested, as

the Africa Group maintains an established pattern of rotation among its five subregions (Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Eastern Africa, Western Africa and Central Africa).

This year, Egypt is running unopposed for the Northern Africa seat. It will also fill the Arab swing seat, which alternates every odd

calendar year between the Asia-Pacific Group and the African Group and is being vacated by Jordan on 31 December 2015. (The Arab swing seat is described in greater detail below.)

Senegal is running unopposed for the West African seat. The fact that a Francophone country is running for this seat in 2016-2017

¹The third term was as the United Arab Republic.

²The first two terms were as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Council Seats (con't)

follows a familiar pattern, which has seen this seat alternate between Anglophone and Francophone countries. As noted above, the seat is currently held by Nigeria.

Senegal

Senegal has been a UN member state since 1960 and has served on the Council twice (1968-1969 and 1988-1989). It received the endorsement of the AU in January.

In its campaign for the Security Council, Senegal—whose president has held the chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) since May—has highlighted its interest in contributing to peace and security in Africa. It is also expected to contribute to strengthening the Council's cooperation with regional and subregional organisations, particularly in Africa. Among other issues, Senegal has shown interest in contributing to combatting organised and transnational crime and international terrorism during its term. Senegal has also highlighted the importance of accountability and cooperation of the Council with the ICC. Since December 2014, Senegal's Minister of Justice Sidiki Kaba has been the President of the Assembly of States Parties of the ICC.

During its campaign, Senegal has underlined its contribution to peace operations and its commitment to the protection of civilians. With 3,613 military and police deployed as of 31 July, Senegal is the seventh largest contributor to peacekeeping operations and the second largest in police contributions. Senegal's largest contributions are to UNAMID and MINUSMA, but it also contributes to MINUSCA, MINUSTAH, MONUSCO, UNMISS and UNOCI.

Egypt

Egypt is a founding member of the UN and has served on the Security Council five times (1946, 1949-1950, 1961-1962, 1984-1985 and 1996-1997). Its candidacy is endorsed by the African Group, the Arab Group and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Egypt has highlighted its commitment to conflict prevention and mediation and its efforts to reach peace in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Egypt is expected to prioritise counter-terrorism efforts and promoting stability in situations in the Middle East and North Africa that are on the Council's agenda, such as Libya, Syria and Yemen. In its campaign, Egypt has highlighted its commitment

to peacebuilding efforts, believing that peace and security are linked to the advancement of development and rebuilding of national capacities in post-conflict countries. It has also underlined the importance of cooperating with regional organisations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States.

Furthermore, Egypt, which has deployed 30,000 peacekeepers to 37 UN missions since 1960, prioritises enhancing the effectiveness of peacekeeping. As of 31 July, Egypt was the 15th largest contributor with 2,062 military and police personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations. Half of them are deployed within UNAMID, and the rest in MINURSO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MINUSTAH, MONUSCO, UNMIL, UNMISS and UNOCI.

GRULAC Seat

Two non-permanent seats are allocated for Latin America and the Caribbean, with one coming up for election every year. From 2008 on, there has only been one candidate every year for the GRULAC seat. (Although sometimes the candidates did not have the endorsement of the regional group, they have not so far been challenged at the elections stage.)

In 2006, elections for the GRULAC seat on the Security Council were inconclusive after 47 rounds of voting over several weeks. With the General Assembly unable to decide between Guatemala and Venezuela, Panama agreed to stand and was elected on the 48th round as the compromise candidate (the process lasted from 16 October until 7 November).

As a result of this experience, an informal understanding developed among GRULAC members to avoid contested elections, starting with the 2007 elections for the 2008-2009 term. Since then, Mexico (2008), Brazil (2009), Colombia (2010), Guatemala (2011), Argentina (2012), Chile (2013), Venezuela (2014) and now Uruguay have all been sole candidates for Security Council seats. Although some recent elections to the Human Rights Council have been contested, normally elections for the Economic and Social Council remain uncontested as well.

In the future, it is possible that larger countries in the group will negotiate taking the place of smaller countries, or will contest pre-announced candidacies by smaller countries, rather than wait until their rotational turn comes up again.

Uruguay

Uruguay is a founding member of the UN and has only served once before on the Security Council (1965-1966). Its candidacy was endorsed by GRULAC in its January meeting.

Uruguay has highlighted the promotion and protection of human rights and thematic issues on the Council's agenda, such as the protection of civilians; women, peace and security; and children and armed conflict. Uruguay attaches great importance to the rule of law, including the strengthening and preservation of international humanitarian law. It was the first Latin American country to implement in full the Rome Statute by passing legislation regarding cooperation with the ICC. Uruguay is also a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group (ACT), which focuses on reforming the working methods of the Council. During its campaign, Uruguay has underscored its commitment to peacebuilding (it was a member of the Peacebuilding Commission between 2009 and 2012) and conflict prevention.

Uruguay is the largest contributor of troops to peacekeeping operations in relation to population, and almost 20 per cent of its defence operational forces have been allocated to this effort. As of 31 July, it had 1,461 military and police personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations, mostly in MONUSCO and MINUSTAH, but also in UNMIL, UNMOGIP and UNOCI.

Eastern European Seat

One seat on the Council is allocated to the Eastern European group. This seat comes up for election every odd calendar year. Ukraine is running unopposed this year for the seat currently held by Lithuania.

Ukraine

A founding member of the UN, Ukraine has served on the Council three times (1948-1949, 1984-1985 and 2000-2001). It declared its candidacy in 2003, and it was endorsed by the Eastern European Group in 2006.

Ukraine intends to draw from its experience of being on the Council's agenda to strengthen the upholding of the principles of the UN Charter, including the principle of sovereign equality of member states and respect for their territorial integrity. During its campaign, Ukraine has highlighted its commitment to promote changes in the Council's working methods, including

Council Seats (con't)

support for restraint in the use of the veto by permanent members. It is also expected to prioritise issues related to European security and to promote Council cooperation with regional organisations including the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Ukraine has also highlighted the importance of tackling issues to which the Council has not given enough importance, such as the role of youth in peacebuilding or the implications of climate change for small islands and developing states. Furthermore, Ukraine has underscored the need to step up the Council's efforts to counter terrorism.

Ukraine is expected to pay particular importance to issues related to the safety and security of peacekeepers. As of 31 July, there were 557 Ukrainian peacekeepers deployed mostly in MONUSCO and UNMIL, but also in UNFICYP, UNISFA, UNMIK, UNMISS and UNOCI.

Asia-Pacific Seat

One of the two Council seats allocated to the Asia-Pacific Group comes up for election every year. Japan is running unopposed for the Asia-Pacific Group seat this year. It would replace Jordan, whose term expires at the end of the calendar year, and join Malaysia as the two Council members from the Asia-Pacific Group.

Japan

A member of the UN since 1956, Japan has served on the Council on ten occasions (1958-1959, 1966-1967, 1971-1972, 1975-1976, 1981-1982, 1987-1988, 1992-1993, 1997-1998, 2005-2006 and 2009-2010). It announced its candidacy in 2011 and was endorsed by the Asia-Pacific group in January.

Japan has stressed the importance of human security and thematic issues on the Council's agenda, such as protection of civilians and women, peace and security. During its campaign, Japan has highlighted the importance it pays to the Council's work on

disarmament, the control of small arms and light weapons and non-proliferation. In addition to advocating Council reform, Japan has been particularly engaged when previously on the Council in enhancing its working methods. Under Japan's chairmanship, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions developed a note as guidance for the Council's work (S/2010/507) and issued the Council's working methods handbook. Furthermore, Japan has stressed its contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights, including in its immediate vicinity, such as in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Japan is the second largest contributor to the UN regular budget and the peacekeeping budget after the US, accounting for close to 11 percent of both budgets. Since 1992, more than 10,000 personnel have been deployed to 13 peacekeeping operations. As of 31 July, Japan has 272 members of its Self-Defence Forces deployed in UNMISS.

Potential Evolving Council Dynamics in 2016

It seems that the current divisions in the Council over such issues as Syria, Sudan or Israel/Palestine will not significantly change with the arrival of five new elected members. The growing disillusionment with the manner with which the permanent members conduct Council business, often voiced by elected members, is also expected to continue to mark the Council's work. Although it is difficult to evaluate how Council dynamics in 2016 will evolve, the interests of the current candidates provide some indication of general patterns that might emerge.

Several of the candidates appear to have a strong national interest in countries in their respective regions that are on the Council's agenda. Ukraine is likely to prioritise the situation in its own country and immediate region, which has become one of the most divisive issues on the Council's agenda. Japan has been interested historically in non-proliferation issues and the DPRK and is likely to play an important role in those issues. Egypt, a major regional actor, will enter the Council at a time of turmoil in the Middle East and has an important stake in developments in several situations in its neighbourhood that are on the Council's agenda, most notably Libya. During

its campaign, Senegal has shown interest in focusing on threats to international peace and security in Western Africa. Uruguay's engagement in peacekeeping in Haiti is likely to be reflected in the Council's discussions on the ongoing downsizing of the UN mission there.

Following the release of the report by the High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations and the release of a subsequent report by the Secretary-General on its recommendations, thematic discussions on peace operations are expected to attract attention of the Council, especially that of major troop contributors such as Senegal, China, Egypt and Uruguay; as well as major financial contributors such as the US, Japan, China, France and the UK.

There appears to be a strong desire among candidates to enhance the transparency and inclusiveness of the Council's work. It is understandable that most candidates have pledged in their campaigns to listen to interested stakeholders that are not seated on the Council and to take their perspectives into account. One continuing elected Council member—New Zealand—and one candidate—Uruguay—are members of ACT, an initiative launched in May 2013 by a group

of member states focusing on the Council's working methods, in particular those enhancing non-members' interaction with the Council. (ACT members Chile and Jordan are leaving the Council this year.) As noted, Japan has shown interest in the past in improving the working methods of the Council. The goals of ACT are likely to resonate with Council members that are not members of the group but are nonetheless committed to enhancing the accountability, effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council.

Another of the issues which will be a significant focus of attention in 2016 is the selection of the next Secretary-General. So far, Council members have only begun to discuss issues related to the process. There is expected to be more discussion in the coming months about improving the transparency of the selection process. In a 27 April thematic debate at the General Assembly on this issue, three of the five candidates showed interest (whether directly or through statements delivered on behalf of groupings of states) in making the selection process more transparent and structured. On 11 September, the General Assembly adopted without a vote a resolution laying out standards for competence for the

Potential Evolving Council Dynamics in 2016 (con't)

candidate, as well as criteria for the selection process involving both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Although some current Council members have proposed measures to improve the process, others are not keen to see much change, and this could become a contentious issue in 2016. The more substantive discussions in relation to actual candidates will be part of the workload of new Council members during 2016.

Discussions about veto restraint are likely to continue in 2016, as many elected members believe that the veto and the threat of the veto impact negatively on Council decision-making processes. Currently, a French initiative and an ACT proposal on veto restraint, both relating to atrocity crimes, are under discussion among member states. However, the US, Russia and China seem reluctant to commit to curbing their use of the veto. Three of the candidates, Ukraine, Uruguay and Japan, have declared their intention to maintain the momentum around this issue.

Two departing Council members which

have been active in promoting a better relationship between the Council and the ICC—Chile and Lithuania—are leaving this year. The current relationship, which is characterised by the Council's lack of follow-up to ICC decisions on the situations in Darfur and Libya³, is not likely to improve: the five departing Council members are state parties to the Rome Statute, compared with only three of the candidates (Japan, Senegal and Uruguay). On the other hand, having only eight Council members as part of the ICC caucus might enhance its coherence and capacity to speak with a single voice (something that has not happened partly because of internal divisions within the ICC caucus).

Although the informal arrangement of the penholder system—by which P3 members draft most Council outcomes—continues to dominate the Council's work, some of the departing Council members have drafted outcomes on situations on the Council's agenda. This has been the case of Jordan on Libya, Yemen and Israel/Palestine; Chad on Boko

Haram and the Sahel; and Nigeria on Guinea-Bissau and West Africa. Current elected Council members have drafted outcomes on Afghanistan (Spain) and Syria (New Zealand and Spain, along with Jordan). It remains to be seen whether the new Council members will be willing to take the initiative to draft outcomes on country-specific situations.

Among the departing Council members are the chairs of nine of the 16 existing sanctions committees. Over the past two years, there has been a general trend toward increased transparency in the work of sanctions committees, including public briefings by the chair, engagement with regional actors and several field visits (although there has also been push-back by permanent members in some cases). Given the significance of the chair's personal engagement and how it impacts the work of sanctions committees, it is unclear to what extent the trend toward increased transparency and outreach will continue.

Established Practices in Becoming a Candidate

Most candidate countries follow a fairly standard path in announcing and pursuing their bid for the Council, with the exception of candidates from the African Group, which has a more complex process. If the country is a member of a subregional group, it will often first inform members of that group of its intention to run and seek support. The endorsement of the subregional group then becomes an important factor in the next step.

A candidate country formalises its intention to seek a Security Council seat by

notifying the rotating monthly chair of its respective regional group in New York. This is done in writing, specifying the two-year term the country seeks. The chair then incorporates that information into the UN candidacy chart of the regional group, which is maintained by each group and reviewed at monthly group meetings. Most candidate countries then prepare a circular note to all missions in New York, informing them of the candidacy. Most also send a note to the Secretariat or the president of the General Assembly or

both, although this is not required by the General Assembly's rules of procedure.

As the relevant election year approaches, the regional group may decide to give its endorsement, and nearer to the election date the chair of the regional group will inform the president of the General Assembly of whether elections are contested or not. This becomes a guide to help the Secretariat prepare the relevant documentation for the election process.

Campaigning for the Security Council

Candidates seek commitments from member states to vote for them, often years in advance of the election, and may continue to do so up until the day of the vote. Campaigning for the Security Council can involve significant investments of time and financial resources, although funds brought to bear vary greatly depending on a number of factors, including the wealth

of the candidate and whether the campaign is contested. (Candidates predictably tend to spend less in "clean slate" elections.)

Commitments are sought in writing, orally or both. Member states that promise to vote for a particular candidate do not always keep their word, and as votes are cast by secret ballot, it is not possible to determine which

member states might have reneged on their pledges. There are a number of reasons why pledges may be broken. In some cases, there may not be adequate communication within the pledging government. A high-level official in the capital may pledge to vote for a particular candidate but fail to convey the commitment to the permanent mission to the UN

³ For more information on the relation between the Council and the ICC, please refer to Security Council Report's Cross-Cutting Report *The Rule of Law: The Institutional Framework: International Criminal Courts and Tribunals*, August 2015.

Campaigning for a Seat (con't)

in New York, where the votes are cast. Additionally, if there is a change in government, the new government may not regard itself as committed to uphold the pledges made by the preceding administration. Given the secrecy of the ballot, there are incentives to pledge to all different candidates in a competitive election. Knowing that commitments are not always secure, some candidate countries repeatedly cultivate those countries that have already promised to vote for them, seeking reassurances that they have not changed their minds. Candidates often seek pledges from member states at many levels of government.

As candidate countries generally focus their campaigns on influencing the voting decisions of diplomats in member state capitals and at UN headquarters, the foreign minister and permanent representative to the UN play a key role in the campaign process. Additionally, particularly in contested elections, many candidates employ special envoys who try to secure voting pledges from high-level officials in various capitals. These envoys are usually former high-level government officials or diplomats. Depending on their campaign strategies and resources, candidate countries

may use multiple envoys, often focusing their efforts on particular regions where they do not have strong diplomatic representation.

To secure voting commitments from member states, candidate countries may volunteer, or be asked for, certain inducements. For example, a candidate may offer development assistance to a member state in exchange for its vote, or it may promise that while on the Council it will bring attention to or avoid an issue of concern to that member state. Such quid pro quo arrangements are not an uncommon element of the campaign process.

The promotion of candidacies by arranging trips to the capitals or holding workshops on (normally not particularly controversial) issues of interest in attractive locations has been used by several candidates in the last several years to raise the profile of their campaign and attract permanent representatives (those who will finally cast the vote) to these events. “Swag bags”, filled with items imprinted with the logo of the campaign that are handed out within UN circles, are intended to increase the outreach of the campaign. Customarily, on the day of the elections, permanent representatives are offered gifts by most candidates,

even those headed for a “clean slate” election.

As Security Council elections may continue for several rounds in the case of contested elections, candidates try to ensure that member states that vote for them in the first round continue to do so in subsequent rounds, while attempting to secure votes in subsequent rounds from member states that did not commit to voting for them in the first round.

As a result of this strategy by candidate countries to gain second or subsequent round votes, some member states have stated that when they commit their vote to a candidate, they do so for the duration of the electoral process, regardless of the number of rounds. However, member states are sometimes forced to make a difficult choice if, for example, their preferred candidate or candidates do not win or obtain the higher result in the first round in a race with two or more candidates.

It should be noted that member states will often shift their vote in protracted elections that come down to two candidates vying for a single seat, if it appears that their candidate of choice is losing ground and is not likely to win the seat.

Modern Regional Groups and Established Practices

For the purposes of elections to the Security Council, the regional groups have been governed by a formula set out in General Assembly resolution 1991 (XVIII), which was adopted in 1963 and took effect in 1965. The key feature of the resolution was to amend the UN Charter to increase the number of Council members from 11 to 15. Under that resolution, the seats previously corresponding to the African and Asia-Pacific states were combined. In reality, however, the candidates for elections to the African and Asia-Pacific seats operate separately, and this report reflects that customary practice.

Article 23 of the Charter also specifies the criteria that the members of the General Assembly should apply when considering which countries should be elected to serve on the Council. It provides that due regard shall be “specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization”.

The UN Charter also provides that non-permanent members be elected according to equitable geographic distribution. It does not stipulate how that should be achieved. Nor does it suggest a possible composition of appropriate geographical groups. Nevertheless, the principle of equitable geographic distribution gave rise to the establishment of electoral groups as a vehicle for achieving that goal. The regional groups, as they now operate, are as follows:

Kiribati, which had not been participating in any regional group within the UN, joined the Asia-Pacific group in 2013. The US is not a member of any group but attends meetings of WEOG as an observer and is considered a member of this group for electoral purposes. Israel, which did not belong to any group for many years, was given temporary membership in WEOG in May 2000, subject to renewal every four years. (Israel has announced that it plans to run for a WEOG seat on the Council in 2018.)

African Group	54 members
Asia-Pacific Group	54 members
Eastern European Group	23 members
GRULAC	33 members
WEOG	28 members

African Group

Most of the groups have informal understandings that are not codified into actual rules. The African Group is an exception to this in that it has adopted the rules of procedure of the AU Ministerial Committee on Candidatures within the International System for the selection of candidates to occupy the three African seats on the Council. Sub-regional groups within the African Group tend to follow a disciplined rotation system. Theoretically, under this system, every country in Africa should eventually get a turn to be a candidate for a seat on the Council.

Modern Regional Groups and Established Practices (con't)

In most years, this means that the UN membership at large has little choice regarding the African candidates. However, there have been a number of exceptions. The election in 2011 was unusual in that three candidates (Mauritania, Morocco and Togo) ran for two seats. This happened because Mauritania decided to contest the Northern Africa/Arab swing seat with Morocco, rather than wait its turn in the rotational cycle. Morocco prevailed, as did Togo, which won the seat allocated by the African Group to the Western Africa subregion. In 2000, when Sudan was the endorsed candidate, Mauritius decided to contest the seat and won election to the Council.

The African rotation generally follows a systematic cycle based on the following principle:

- Northern Africa and Central Africa rotate running for one seat every odd calendar year;
- Western Africa runs for one seat every odd calendar year; and
- Eastern Africa and Southern Africa rotate running for one seat every even calendar year.

Nonetheless, the picture can become complicated, as some countries which can claim to straddle more than one geographic region have at times chosen to shift from one subgroup to another. Challengers can emerge within the same subregional grouping, upsetting the rotation. Candidate countries can often be persuaded to drop out to avoid a competitive election. However, there have been times when rival candidates have emerged and continued all the way through the election. In addition, within a subgroup some countries may choose to run more often, while others choose to run less frequently or not at all.

The process for selecting a candidate in the African Group usually follows a defined path, in accordance with the above-mentioned rules of procedure on candidatures within the international system developed by the AU. First, the subregional groups select the potential candidate countries and forward their names to the African Group for endorsement. The group submits the candidates to the Committee on Candidatures of the African Group in New York, which transmits the information to the AU Ministerial Committee on Candidatures. The AU committee follows its written rules of procedure in selecting candidates. (The African Group and the AU are made up of the same

members with the exception of Morocco, which is not part of the AU.) Subregional organisations, of which there are several in Africa, may add their endorsement before the list goes to the AU Ministerial Committee. The AU Executive Committee makes the final decision during an AU summit meeting. Despite the written rules of procedure for candidate selection, some countries in the past have submitted their candidature directly to the AU Ministerial Committee on Candidatures, bypassing the process in New York.

Overall, the system of rotation tends to favour “clean slate” elections. There have been times when this has resulted in the election of candidates which might have struggled in a contested election and whose presence on the Council added little to resolving problems or was counterproductive.

A factor that seems to be coming more into play recently is the growing desire by some member states in the region to be elected more often than strict adherence to the rotation system would allow. Nigeria was elected for the 2014–2015 term after having been a Council member in 2010–2011, and South Africa was on the Council in 2007–2008 and again in 2011–2012. Although some have argued against the “miniaturisation” of the Council by including too many small states, smaller countries have suggested that they too contribute to international peace and security and should have the opportunity to serve on the Council.

Asia-Pacific Group

In 2011, the Asian Group officially changed its name to the Group of Asia and the Pacific Small Island Developing States, also called the Asia-Pacific Group. The name change was made to account for the fact that more than 26 percent of the group’s members are Pacific Island countries.

In the Asia-Pacific Group there are no formally established practices for rotation to fill the two seats, one of which becomes available every year. While it has almost the same number of countries as the African Group, the Asia-Pacific Group’s wide geographic span—from the Middle East to Polynesia—has led to much looser regional coordination.

Until the mid-1990s, there was a fairly consistent South Asian presence on the Council, with Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan rotating seats. In practice, South Asian countries rarely run against each other. (One exception occurred in 1975, when India

and Pakistan contested the same seat and eight rounds of voting were needed before Pakistan finally prevailed.)

As mentioned above, since 1958, Japan has also been a regular presence on the Council. Japan has accumulated 20 years on the Council, which ties with Brazil for the highest number of years on the Council among non-permanent members. Since 1966, it has never been off the Council for more than six years consecutively.

Although it is not the case this year, the absence of a formal rotation system has meant that there frequently is competition for the Asia-Pacific seat regardless of whether a candidate declares itself far in advance. While larger member states have tended to declare their candidacy closer to the election year, smaller candidate countries have tended to announce their decision to run many years ahead of time. The only subgroup within the Asia-Pacific Group that endorses its candidates is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), made up of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The Arab Swing Seat

There is an established practice that spans the Asia-Pacific and African Groups. As discussed in Annex 2 below, General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII) provided five seats for “Asia and Africa” and in practice the seats have been divided into three seats for Africa and two for Asia. In 1967, after Jordan ended its two-year term in what had been the Middle East seat, there was a year with no Arab state on the Council, which coincided with the Six-Day War. It appears that at some point there was an informal agreement, although there are no known records, that one seat would be reserved for an Arab state and that Asia and Africa would take turns every two years to provide a suitable candidate. As a result, this seat is often called the “Arab swing seat”. An Arab country has always occupied a seat on the Council since 1968.

Eastern European Group

The Eastern European Group is the smallest UN regional group, consisting of 23 member states, with the election for one seat every odd calendar year. This is the group that has expanded the most in recent decades, with 15 new members since 1991 due to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the splitting

Modern Regional Groups and Established Practices (con't)

of other states in the region (former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia). Today, eleven of its countries are EU members, four are candidates and Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered a “potential candidate”. An Eastern European seat was included in the permanent members’ “gentlemen’s agreement” in 1946. (See Annex 2.) But soon thereafter, the meaning of that agreement was contested, with the Soviet Union and the West vying for 20 years to place their preferred candidates in this seat. It also became a hotly contested seat among new member states that did not have a clear regional grouping. (For example in 1955, when there was no Asian seat, the Philippines competed with members of the Eastern European Group for a seat. When the voting remained deadlocked after 36 rounds between the Philippines and Yugoslavia, the two countries agreed to accept a split term: Yugoslavia served on the Council in 1955 and the Philippines in 1956.)

Western European and Others Group

With 28 members, WEOG is the second-smallest UN regional grouping, and two seats become available to it every even calendar year. Strictly speaking, it is not a geographical group, as it comprises Western Europe plus “others”. Its members, however, share broadly similar levels of economic development and political values. The “others” subgroup is made up of three members of what was previously called the British Commonwealth

Group. The British Commonwealth Group grew rapidly in the late 1950s as states in Africa and Asia became independent. Most of these newly independent states joined the Asian and African Groups and GRULAC. Australia, Canada and New Zealand became the “others” in WEOG. Israel is the other non-European state that participates in WEOG, having been a (temporary) member since 2000. With France and the UK as members and the US attending meetings as an observer, WEOG also includes three of the five permanent members of the Council. The Holy See is also an observer in WEOG.

WEOG practices what might be called an open-market approach to elections, which produces a regular pattern of contested candidatures that is likely to remain highly competitive in the coming years.

There are several subgroups within WEOG: the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), the CANZ (Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and the Benelux (Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). There are informal understandings within the Nordic countries and CANZ subgroups that have encouraged members to support each other’s campaigns.

In its first term on the Council (1951-1952), Turkey served as the Middle Eastern Council member. It occupied the Eastern European seat twice (1954-1955 and 1961) and has since run for the WEOG seat.

Latin American and Caribbean Group

After the expansion of the Council and the reorganisation of the UN regional groups that occurred as a result of General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII), the Latin American Group took in the Caribbean states, several of which were members of the British Commonwealth, and became the Group of Latin American and Caribbean states (GRULAC).

Like most of the other groups, GRULAC has no formal rules regarding rotation. For much of the last 60 years, non-Caribbean countries have tended to dominate regional representation. Historically, the group was often able to reach consensus on “clean slates”. However, the group has also produced two of the most protracted and bitterly contested voting sessions in UN history. In 1979, the contest between Colombia and Cuba went to 154 rounds before Mexico was elected as a compromise candidate in the 155th round. As mentioned above, in 2006, there were 47 rounds between Guatemala and Venezuela, with Panama finally coming in as the compromise candidate in the 48th round.

After the difficult 2006 Council elections, GRULAC moved towards a more coordinated system to avoid highly contentious competitions in future UN elections. There was an emerging sense that there should only be one candidate running each year and that GRULAC countries should not compete with each other.

UN Documents on Security Council Elections

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTS

[A/69/PV.25](#) (16 October 2014) is the record of the 2014 elections of non-permanent members.

[A/RES/68/307](#) (18 September 2014) decided that elections of the non-permanent members of the Security Council would take place about six months before the elected members assume their responsibilities.

[A/59/881](#) (20 July 2005) is a note verbale from Costa Rica containing information on elections from 1946

to 2004.

[A/RES 1991 A \(XVIII\)](#) (17 December 1963) is the resolution adopting amendments to the Charter on the composition of the Council and establishing the allocation of seats to various regions.

[GAOR 1st Session, Part 1, 14th Plenary Session and Part II](#) (12 January 1946) is the first election of non-permanent members.

OTHER

UN Charter

[A/520/Rev.15 and amendments 1 and 2](#) are the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, including amendments and additions.

[Repertory of Practice of the United Nations Organs, Supplement 6, Volume III on Article 23](#) See <http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/> for the online version of the Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council. (The Repertory and the Repertoire are different resources.)

Useful Additional Resources

Loraine Sievers and Sam Daws, *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, Fourth Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) and its update website www.scprocedure.org

David Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All: The UN Security Council and the Making of the Modern World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

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Norman J. Padelford, "Politics and Change in the Security Council", *International Organisation*, vol. 14, no.3 (Summer 1960).

Ruth Russell, *A History of the United Nations Charter*, The Brookings Institute, 1958.

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Ramesh Thakur, ed., *What is Equitable Geographic Representation in the Twenty-First Century?*, International Peace Academy, Seminar Report, 26 March 1999.

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Taking Stock, Moving Forward, Report to the Foreign Ministry of Finland on the 2012 Elections to the United Nations Security Council, International Peace Institute, April 2013.

Rules of Procedure of the AU Ministerial Committee on Candidatures within the International System, Doc. EX.CL/213 (VIII).

United Nations Handbook 2013-2014, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2013).

Annex 1: Rules and Process for Election to the Council: Relevant Charter Provisions and Rules of Procedure

Charter Provisions on Election to the Council

The UN Charter, in article 23, specifies the number of non-permanent members to be elected, as amended in 1963:

The General Assembly shall elect ten other Members of the United Nations to be non-permanent members of the Security Council...

It also stipulates the length of their term: *The non-permanent members...shall be elected for a term of two years.*

The practical impact of rotation occurring every two years is mitigated by staggering the cycle, so that the General Assembly elects five members each year for the stipulated two-year period. This was determined by rule 142 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Despite the specification of a two-year term, there have been exceptions when members have served shorter terms. There have been one-year terms, either to break electoral deadlocks or to establish the required rotational cycle.

Article 23 also contains a provision that ensures that no member can become a de facto permanent member by being re-elected to serve continuously in the Council:

A retiring member shall not be eligible for immediate re-election.

This is further reinforced by rule 144 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which also states that a retiring member of the Council will not be eligible for immediate re-election.

In addition to the provisions stated above, the Charter also specifies the criteria that the members of the General Assembly should apply when considering which countries should be elected to serve on the Council. It provides in article 23 that due regard shall be:

...specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution.

"[C]ontribution ... to the maintenance of international peace and security" is often interpreted in this context as the personnel or financial contributions for peacekeeping operations and peace processes. "[C]ontribution ... to the other purposes of the Organization", by contrast, is a very wide term. In recent years, most discussions regarding article 23 at the General Assembly have focused on the criteria of equitable geographical distribution, with issues related to the candidates' contribution to international peace and security being left aside.

A key procedural provision of the Charter

that is relevant to Security Council elections is article 18(2). This requires a two-thirds majority vote in the General Assembly on important questions. Under that article, election to the Council is defined as an important question.

In addition, article 18(3) defines the required majority by reference to members present and voting. This refers to members casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting are considered not voting.

Relevant Rules of Procedure

Voting, especially during elections to the Security Council, can sometimes produce tense and dramatic situations on the floor of the General Assembly. In such circumstances, understanding the relevant rules of procedure can become very important.

Rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly indicates that once the president of the General Assembly announces the commencement of voting, the process can only be interrupted on a point of order regarding the conduct of the vote. Furthermore, explanations of vote are not permitted when votes are cast by secret ballot.

Elections are governed by rules 92, 93 and 94 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Annex 1: Rules and Process for Election to the Council: Relevant Charter Provisions and Rules of Procedure (con't)

Under rule 92, elections to the Council are held by secret ballot. Nominations are not required. Countries simply declare their intention to run, sometimes many years ahead, either by circular note to all members of the UN or to the chair of their regional grouping, or both.

Rule 93 sets out the procedure that applies when there is only one vacancy to be filled and no candidate obtains the required two-thirds majority in the first ballot. It provides that:

...a second ballot shall be taken, which shall be restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes...if a two-thirds majority is required the balloting shall be continued until one candidate secures two-thirds of the votes cast...

What this first part of rule 93 means is that if there are more than two candidates

and there is no clear winner on the first ballot, the lower-polling candidates drop out and the contest then continues to a second ballot between the top two candidates. The effect of rule 93 is that voting simply continues until one candidate prevails, either by securing the required majority or because the other withdraws.

If neither candidate receives the required majority on the second and third ballots, rule 93 says that after the third inconclusive ballot, votes may be cast for “an eligible ... Member”. This allows new candidates to come into the process, and the fourth ballot is therefore technically referred to as an unrestricted ballot. (It also allows any candidate excluded after the first restricted ballot to come back again.)

If a result is not achieved after three of these unrestricted ballots, rule 93 requires

that the pool again be reduced to the top two. This cycle then repeats until a result is achieved. The emergence of new candidates during the unrestricted stage is rare but not unprecedented. If a trend is starting to emerge in one direction after a succession of inconclusive ballots, it is not unusual for the candidate with fewer votes to withdraw.

Rule 94 is similar to rule 93 but is applied when there are two or more seats to be filled.

When two or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates obtaining in the first ballot the majority required shall be elected.

Rule 94 also specifies that if additional rounds of voting are required, the pool is reduced by a formula that says that remaining candidates should not be more than twice the number of places available.

Annex 2: Historical Background

When the UN was established in 1945, the Charter provided for 11 members of the Security Council: five permanent members and six elected members.

Article 23(2) included a provision that in the first election of Council members, three members would be chosen for a period of one year so that in the future three new members could be elected annually. This was decided by drawing lots for the one- and two-year terms.

In the first election, on 12 January 1946, the following countries were elected: Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, the Netherlands and Poland. The pattern of geographical distribution was: two seats for Latin America, one for the Middle East, one for Eastern Europe, one for Western Europe and one for the British Commonwealth.

The interpretation of what equitable geographic distribution should mean in terms of seats was based on an informal agreement among the permanent members, sometimes known as the London Agreement. From the start there was a lack of agreement about what had been agreed to. The US saw the 1946 formula as only applying to the first election, but the Soviet Union maintained that there had been a gentlemen's agreement

of a more general nature for the future meaning of geographic distribution.

The Charter clearly specifies a two-year term for elected members of the Council, but in addition to the 1946-47 period, split terms started to occur in the late 1950s until the Council was enlarged in 1965. This was in part driven by fall-out from the disagreement over regional rotation and associated Cold War politics. But the aspirations of newly independent countries was also an important factor. The first example of this was seen in 1955 when the Philippines and Poland contested a seat. After four inconclusive ballots, Poland withdrew and Yugoslavia declared its candidacy. However, the stalemate continued, and after two months and more than 30 rounds of voting, it was informally agreed that the Philippines would withdraw and that Yugoslavia would resign after one year, at which point the Philippines would run as the only candidate for that seat. As explained above, over the next few years, this became an increasingly common occurrence.

By the early 1960s, there was a growing acceptance that the original composition of the Council had become inequitable and unbalanced. Between 1945 and 1965, UN membership rose from 51 to 117 member

states, with the proportion of Asian, African and Caribbean states increasing from 25 percent to about 50 percent. On 17 December 1963, the General Assembly adopted resolution 1991 A (XVIII), which contained amendments to the Charter to address the issue by increasing the number of elected members to ten. The resolution also dealt with the issue of geographic distribution, which was resolved as follows:

- five elected members from the African and Asian states—(this was subsequently subdivided in practice into two seats for the Asian Group and three seats for the African Group);
- one from the Eastern European states;
- two from the Latin American states—(this included the Caribbean); and
- two from the Western European states and other states—(this included Australia, Canada and New Zealand.)

At the same time, article 27 was altered so that resolutions of the Council required the vote of nine members instead of seven. This also meant that for the first time the permanent members could be out-voted by non-permanent members, although only on procedural questions.

Annex 3: Results of Recent Elections for Non-Permanent Members of the Security Council

The left-hand column lists the year and the UN General Assembly Session in which the voting was held, as well as the number of the plenary meetings (the ordinal numbers) and the date of meetings. The middle column reflects the highest number of votes and abstentions in a given round of elections. (The number of votes cast to fill the different seats in a given round is not always the same.) Candidate countries that won the election are in bold. A table with the complete results can be found in the PDF of the *Special Research Report on Security Council Elections 2015* at www.securitycouncilreport.org.

2011 UNGA66	17 ROUNDS	
37th 21-10-2011	Round 1: 193 votes, 2 abstentions	Guatemala 191, Morocco 151, Pakistan 129, Togo 119, Mauritania 98, Azerbaijan 74, Slovenia 67, Kyrgyzstan 55, Hungary 52, Fiji 1
	Round 2: 193 votes, 2 abstentions, restricted	Togo 119, Slovenia 97, Azerbaijan 90, Mauritania 72
	Round 3: 193 votes, 1 abstention, restricted	Togo 131, Slovenia 99, Azerbaijan 93, Mauritania 61
38th 21-10-11	Round 4: 192 votes, 1 abstention, restricted	Slovenia 98, Azerbaijan 93
	Round 5: 193 votes, 1 abstention, unrestricted	Azerbaijan 98, Slovenia 93, Hungary 1
	Round 6: 193 votes, 1 abstention, unrestricted	Azerbaijan 96, Slovenia 95, Estonia 1
	Round 7: 193 votes, 1 abstention, unrestricted	Azerbaijan 100, Slovenia 91, Estonia 1
	Round 8: 191 votes, 1 abstention, restricted	Azerbaijan 110, Slovenia 80
	Round 9: 191 votes, 1 abstention, restricted	Azerbaijan 113, Slovenia 77
39th 24-10-11	Round 10: 193 votes, restricted	Azerbaijan 110, Slovenia 83
40th 24-10-11	Round 11: 193 votes, 1 abstention, unrestricted	Azerbaijan 110, Slovenia 82
	Round 12: 193 votes, 1 abstention, unrestricted	Azerbaijan 111, Slovenia 81
	Round 13: 192 votes, 1 abstention, unrestricted	Azerbaijan 111, Slovenia 80
	Round 14: 192 votes, 1 abstention, restricted	Azerbaijan 110, Slovenia 81
	Round 15: 193 votes, restricted	Azerbaijan 117, Slovenia 76
	Round 16: 193 votes, restricted	Azerbaijan 116, Slovenia 77
	Round 17: 193 votes, 24 abstentions, unrestricted	Azerbaijan 155, Slovenia 13, Hungary 1
2012 UNGA67	2 ROUNDS	
27th 18-10-2012	Round 1: 193 votes, 8 abstentions	Argentina 182, Rwanda 148, Australia 140, Luxembourg 128, Republic of Korea 116, Finland 108, Cambodia 62, Bhutan 20, United Republic of Tanzania 3, Barbados 1, Cuba 1, Democratic Republic of the Congo 1
	Round 2: 192 votes, restricted	Republic of Korea 149, Luxembourg 131, Finland 62, Cambodia 43
2013 UNGA68	1 ROUND AND A SPECIAL ELECTION	
34th 17-10-2013	Round 1: 191 votes, 5 abstentions	Lithuania 187, Chile 186, Nigeria 186, Chad 184, Saudi Arabia 176 (declined), Senegal 2, The Gambia 2, Lebanon 1, Croatia 1
61st 6-12-2013	Round 1: 185 votes, 4 abstentions	Jordan 178, Saudi Arabia 1
2014 UNGA69	3 ROUNDS	
25th 16-10-2014	Round 1: 193 votes, 10 abstentions	Angola 190, Malaysia 187, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela 181, New Zealand 145, Spain 131, Turkey 109, Democratic Republic of the Congo 1, Brazil 1
	Round 2: 193 votes, restricted	Spain 120, Turkey 73
	Round 3: 192 votes, 1 abstention, restricted	Spain 132, Turkey 60

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Executive Director

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Security Council Report
One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
885 2nd Ave at 48th St, 21st Floor
New York NY 10017

Telephone +1 212 759 6394
Fax +1 212 759 4038
Web securitycouncilreport.org
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